

Contentions Among You

1 Corinthians 1:13 – 31



~ Our Spiritual Safari has well-established Scripturally that the only solution and only answer to our problems in this life is submitting to the Lordship of Christ. When Christ becomes our Savior, Lord, and then Master — then other things will fall into place naturally in our lives. In our last report, we saw how this relates to the modern-day church. We saw the church divide up amongst three earthly men in verse twelve of this chapter. The fourth group wasn't really following Christ — they were the self-appointed, self-anointed, self-important, super-duper spiritually-elevated group. Frankly, they are the worst group in any church. The church in Corinth in the day in which we are studying was a royally dangerous mess of just-such baby believers mixed with contemptuously carnal-minded Christians.

Division, cliques and schism's in the church at Corinth brought strife, envy and jealousy. That meant Christ to them was nothing more than a cult or an exclusive religious racketeer. They were a bunch of spiritual snobs who excluded other believers for various reasons. The astonishing aspect of this is that there was no reason for a division to have taken place. It served no purpose whatsoever except to destroy the church from the inside. The problems of the church are not on the outside today, either, friends. The problems are all *inside* the church. The pulpit was destroyed many, many moons ago by the liberal. Then, crowds began to rally around particular men. These fractures do more harm to the cause of Christ than alcohol and worldliness combined. We don't need fighting and feuding; that's what they were doing in the Corinthian church at the time in which we are studying. Anything that breaks up the unity of the body of believers has something *fundamentally* wrong with it.

As we read on, we see baptism had become a huge point of division. The baptism that matters is that of the Holy Spirit. As believers, if we will meet

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around the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ crucified and risen again, then we can, actually, disagree on *almost* all other doctrine. It doesn't matter what ritual we have or haven't been through. There is a very real danger today of people who think their baptism is what saved them. More specifically, that it holds some mystical power that cannot be obtained otherwise. It's mostly emotion; and the rest is sentiment and sensationalism. We need to be identified with Christ...

13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

~ If the church purports a conversion count, or veers off into end-time prophecy teachings, then you'll have a tremendous turnout of people; and not many problems at all. But if you preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Word of God, then people are not going to be happy with what you have to say. That is an inescapable axiom of truth that you can just write down.

There was a heavy philosophical influence in Corinth at the time in which we are studying. Our safari has already established firmly that there are but two types of people: saved and the unsaved. The wonder of it all is that the Word of God unites the saved; but divides the saved from the unsaved!

Reuben painted a picture of the last judgment and the lost are seen falling into space away from the Throne of God and, as they fall, they cling

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together. That's a hauntingly accurate picture of what the world is working for today. The lost always want to "get together!" They always want to form a union of some kind and unite in a cause.

Well, cutting right across all ecumenical lines and movements today, and of all times, is the Gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus called Himself "a divider of men." That dividing line is the cross. Paul didn't bring any opinions or theories to the Corinthians – just the cross of Christ – and that's where Paul drew the line of division....

¹⁸ For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

¹⁹ For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

²⁰ Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

²¹ For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

²² For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

²³ But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

²⁴ But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

~ Paul divides men into two categories: Jews and Gentiles. The Jews represented a God-given religion. They held the only truth; in that the Old Testament Scripture was the Word of God. The problem was their religious ritual had become empty and vain, because their hearts were not right with

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God; so, the power of the Spirit of God was being suppressed in their lives. Remember, when Christ appeared, they asked for a sign. They wanted some man on a white horse with a charger in His hand — and having the power of Rome to show them the way! That’s what they would have accepted. That’s the *ONLY* scenario they would have accepted. They didn’t turn to Scriptures. They weren’t interested in God’s viewpoint. They had their own ideas and Christ crucified was an insult to them; they didn’t want to accept that — and they weren’t intending to accept it. To accept this man Jesus as the Messiah was seen as a defeat — not a victory.

Romans 9:³³ *As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed ~*

1 Peter 2:⁷ *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,⁸ And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed ~*

Jesus told the religious rulers, “*no sign shall be given unto you save the sign of the prophet Jonah!*” That means resurrection, friends. Well, the Greeks thought the preaching of the cross was foolishness, absurd, utterly preposterous, and ridiculous to believe. It is completely contrary to any known worldly system. The Gospel isn’t a method – it’s a message. Men reject that message today. In Rome, they had crosses with an asses head attached to it. That’s the way they’re doing it today, too. Nothing new here at all. It’s puerile sarcasm towards the Blessed Hope of the world.

On the other hand, the Greek Gentile represented philosophy and learned culture. Unfortunately, philosophy is a blind man in a dark room looking for a black cat that doesn’t exist. Philosophy never lifted man from the cesspool of life’s problems. It only raises more questions and breeds impossible speculation. These people wanted worldly wisdom but *NOT* religious philosophy – they were lovers of artificial intelligence, as it were. They were searching for theories and formulas. They said they were seeking

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their “inner selves” and seeking the truth while scanning the universe for truth determined, as far as I can tell, by the subjective interpretation of the position of the stars, of all things. Utterly preposterous.

To be fair, the Greeks did conform to a pattern of reason, there’s no question about that. They certainly felt they had scientific answers and conclusions. The Greek had a brilliance of mind and an artistic accomplishment that still dazzles and startles mankind. We always take ourselves a little too seriously. Their empirical rule only lasted for about the three centuries before Christ. Then, all the major Greek philosophers just disappeared. They left the peripatetic school, the stoic school and the epicurean school of philosophy; and that was that. We have following two thousand years of sterility and stagnation until Bacon, Hobbs and Descartes arrive on the scene of scholarship. That period didn’t last long, either; and I think the era of great thinking may now have been exhausted altogether. There are plenty of new philosophical men asking the same old questions, in profoundly ignorant ways, and *NONE* are suggesting any plausible answers to the problems of life today....

²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

²⁶ For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

²⁷ But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

²⁸ And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

²⁹ That no flesh should glory in his presence.

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30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

~ The “*elect*” are those who have heard *AND* responded to the message of the cross and the calling of the Lord Jesus Christ. We’re talking about the wisdom and power of God Almighty. He uses the weak things of the world to confound the wise; and those things transform hearts and lives every time if they are genuine. It made new men of them. God is still calling the multitudes to His wisdom today; average people just like you and me. How would you rate yourself? Are you proud of your power and position? Are you proud of your character? The only thing we have to boast of is the cross of Christ. Can you boast of His cross?

At the time in which we are studying, the church in Corinth had a lot of sin going on within. For two thousand years plus now, the Gospel has been taught to the entire world. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only help or hope mankind will ever find in this life; irrespective of where he looks. Christ is everything we need, friends. If I could make that clear, then we would see more people interested in their Bibles. So, that means I am still just a failure in that regard. People just aren’t interested in Bible study; they don’t seem to care about the Lord Jesus Christ as our sanctification, righteousness and our redemption....

31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord ~

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