

Lesson 2: Division over preachers: "Is Christ divided?" 1 Corinthians 1:10 – 4:21

Personal preferences about men [1 Cor 1:10-17]

1) Though Paul is an apostle and has the authority in Christ to issue *commands*, how does he first address the Corinthians with regard to their division? [1:10]

-- What about Paul's appeal shows that it does bear the same weight as a command? [1:10; cp 7:10-12, 25; see also Philemon 8-10, 14, 17]

-- What does Paul call them as he makes his appeal to them? [1:10; cp 1:11, 26; 2:1; 3:1; 4:6; 5:11; 6:5-8; 7:24, 29; 8:11-13; 10:1; 11:2, 33; 12:1; 14:6, 20, 26, 39; 15:1, 6, 50, 58; 16:11-12, 15, 20]

- Why would this term be particularly important to Paul's appeal(s)?

2) Paul's appeal here is basically threefold [1:10; *I am using NKJV, but all versions will work*]:

(a) that the Corinthians "all _____ the same thing" [cp 1:12; 2:1-5]

(b) *and* that "there be no _____ among" them [cp 1:11-13; 3:3-4; 6:1, 6-8; 11:19; etc]

(c) *but* that they "be _____ together in the same _____ and in the same _____." [cp 2:15; 6:2-3; 10:15-16; 11:13; 14:29; etc]

-- In practical terms, what's the only way that the Corinthians could all *speak* the same thing? [1:10; cp 4:17; 11:23; 14:36-37; 15:1-4; 16:1; **1 Peter 4:11**; see also Gal 1:8-9; Eph 4:5; Jd 3; etc]

-- What did God provide so that His disciples should *not* be divided? [1:10; cp John 17:17-23]

3) What does Paul say was "declared" to him concerning the Corinthian brethren? [1:11; cp 1:10]

-- From whom does Paul say he received this declaration? [1:11; (think about why Paul does not treat this as *gossip*; cp 2 Cor 12:20 ("backbitings" is "gossip" in several translations)]

-- From what Paul says, who was involved in this contention? [1:12; cp 14:26; 16:2; etc]

-- From what we know of the context of 1 Corinthians, why might some have been saying, "I am of Paul"? [1:12; cp Acts 18:1-18]

-- From what we know of the context of 1 Corinthians, why might some have been saying, "I am of Apollos"? [1:12; cp Acts 18:24 – 19:1a]

"...there are contentions among you" – 1 Corinthians 1:10 – 6:20

-- From what we know of the context of Peter in the 1st century church (we have no specific reference of him in Corinth other than this epistle), why might some have been saying, "I am of Cephas"? [1:12; "Cephas" is Aramaic for "Peter"; consider Acts 15:7; Gal 2:7-9; etc]

-- Although some in Corinth were saying, "I am of Christ", Paul lists it here together with the other declarations as though this statement was also a part of the problem. Do you believe it is possible to say the right things, yet still create division instead of unity? [1:12; consider 1 Cor 8:1; 11:17-19; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 2:1-4; 4:2-3; etc]

4) What is Paul's first question in response to what they were saying? [1:13; cp John 10:30; 17:20-23; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4-6; Philippians 2:1-2; Colossians 1:18; etc]

-- Based on the obvious answer to this question, why then should the Corinthians not be dividing themselves into factions? [1:13]

-- How does this question help respond to the erroneous teaching that Christ's body is ONE and that DENOMINATIONS are the various members of that body? [cp 1 Cor 12:12-14]

5) What is Paul's second question in response to what they were saying? [1:13; cp 2:1-2; 15:1-11; etc]

-- Based on the obvious answer to this question, why then should the Corinthians not be dividing themselves into factions based on the men who taught them? [cp 1 Tim 2:5; etc]

6) What is Paul's third question in response to what they were saying? [1:13; cp 10:1-2; Gal 3:26-28; Eph 4:4-6; Matt 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; etc]

-- Based on the obvious answer to this question, why then should the Corinthians not be dividing themselves into factions? [1:13; cp Rom 6:1-11; Eph 4:4-6]

-- In this context, why would Paul declare that he is "*thankful*" that he did not baptize many of the Corinthians? [1:14-15]

- Does this statement from Paul indicate that baptism is *not* important in salvation?

- How does this statement actually *strengthen* the argument that baptism was really a *common* and *necessary* part of conversion (at least among the Corinthian church)? [1:13-16; cp Paul's question to the "disciples" in Acts 19:1-3; see also 1 Cor 10:1-2]

-- Based on this question, does God seem to place importance on the one *doing* the baptism?

- How does the fact that Paul (the apostle) did not baptize all the Corinthians actually strengthen this issue? [1:13-17; cp John 4:1-3]

"...there are contentions among you" – 1 Corinthians 1:10 – 6:20

- Based on this question, what (who) should be the emphasis during the moment of Baptism? [1:13-17; cp Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; etc]

7) What does Paul say was *the focus* of his commission when Christ sent him to do His work? [1:17; cp Acts 9:15-16; 22:12-15; 26:16-18; see also 1 Cor 2:1-2; 15:1-11; etc]

-- Does the statement, "For Christ did not send me *to baptize*" mean that Paul did not see baptism as important to his work or that God did not *want* him to baptize all those who believed? [1:17; cp the "*not* this...*but*..." statements in John 6:27; 1 Tim 2:9-10; etc]

-- What does Paul say he *did not use* as he preached the gospel to the Corinthians? [1:17; note that the word used here is "Sophia" (the Greek word from which we get our word "sophisticated", and from which stemmed the Greek philosophical art of "sophistry", in which very cleverly stated but fallacious arguments of logic would be used in an effort to convince people to believe in a position that was inherently untrue); cp 2:1-5; etc]

- What did Paul say was the end result of preaching that relied upon "wisdom of words" (that is, those "sophisticated" arguments)? [1:17; cp Jesus' accusing the Pharisees for their "sophistry" in Mark 7:6-13; cp Gal 1:6-8; 3:1; Col 2:1-4; etc]

8) How does the denominational error perpetuate exactly the same issue that Paul was warning and exhorting against here?

-- What is the danger for us? How might we fall into the same error as these brethren? [cp 1:10; 3:1-3, 18-23; 4:14; Eph 4:1-16; Php 2:1-4; Col 1:19-23; 3:1-2; etc]