

1st Corinthians

Prepared by: Chuck Kozens

Acts 18:1-18 (NKJV)

¹ After these things **Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth.** ² And he found a certain Jew named **Aquila**, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with **his wife Priscilla** (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. ³ So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. ⁴ And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks. ⁵ When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus is the Christ.* ⁶ But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook *his* garments and said to them, "Your blood *be* upon your *own* heads; I *am* clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." ⁷ And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain *man* named Justus, *one* who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. ⁸ **Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.** ⁹ Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; **for I have many people in this city.**" ¹¹ And he continued *there* **a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.** ¹² When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, ¹³ saying, "This *fellow* persuades men to worship God contrary to the law." ¹⁴ And when Paul was about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. ¹⁵ But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look *to it* yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such *matters.*" ¹⁶ And he drove them from the judgment seat. ¹⁷ Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things. ¹⁸ So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila *were* with him. He had *his* hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow.

B. Corinth was a city of culture and influence, distinguished for refinement and learning.

1. In addition to being a great commercial city, it also prided itself upon its culture.

- a. Corinth abounded in studios and workshops, in halls of rhetoric and schools of philosophy.
- b. Every part of literature was cultivated there so that before its destruction by Romans it was called "the light of Greece."

2. This city was known for its athletic events, as the host of the Isthmian games, 1 Cor 9:24-27.

C. Corinth was also noted for its wickedness.

1. With the added vices brought from sailors of all parts of the world, Corinth was a synonym not only for wealth, luxury, but also for drunkenness, immorality, and dissipation.
2. A "Corinthian" became a byword for evil and immoral living, synonymous with drunken and immoral debauchery.
3. The temple of Venus (Roman name), also called Aphrodite (Greek name) was there, the "goddess of love." In this temple were 1000 priestesses, encouraging prostitution in the name of religion. These women attended at sacrifices and sang sacred hymns with other citizens.

First Corinthians by Robert Harkrider pg. 2-3 ~~~

The character of the people of the city was reflected in the problems which the church experienced. They were characterized by dishonesty, suspicion, speculation, egotism, and a voluptuous disposition. Profligacy and vice ruled the city. The temple built to the goddess Venus (Aphrodite) supported 1,000 religious prostitutes. Surely, no place offered less opportunity for the gospel, seemingly, than Corinth, yet providence sent him there and caused Paul to stay a year and six months for God "had much people in that city."

The New Testament Book By Book by Roy E. Cogdill pg. 55

..... Paul left Corinth shortly after Gallio was appointed.

From there he journeyed to Ephesus, tarried there only a short time, and left for Antioch. After reporting to the church at Antioch concerning his preaching activities, he returned to Ephesus where he worked for three years (Acts 20:31). Toward the end of his stay in Ephesus, he wrote 1 Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians 16:8-9, he remarked, "But I shall remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries." Taking into account the time spent in journeying to and from Antioch, time spent in Antioch, and at least two years in Ephesus, the date of this letter can be fixed in the year A.D. 55 or possibly A.D. 56. Obviously, it was written from Ephesus

1st Corinthians Truth Commentaries by Mike Willis pg. vi

Memorize

1 Corinthians 15:57-58 (NKJV)

⁵⁷ But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

¹ Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother,

Paul an apostle = Acts 9 --- Galatians 1:1 "not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead "--- "by the will of God" 2nd Corinthians 1:1, Ephesians 1:1, Colossians 1:1, 2nd Timothy 1:1

² To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

Calling --- 2 Thessalonians 2:14 (NKJV) "to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Remember Romans 1:16 Acts 18:8 (NKJV) *Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.*

a) "Sanctified in Christ Jesus" says they were set apart, separated to God. Even in a wicked city like Corinth, some had believed in Jesus who is able to "sanctify and cleanse with the washing of water by the word," Eph. 5:26; 1 Cor. 6:9-11.

b) "Called to be saints with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." The word "saint" means "holy." This is not a designation reserved for someone who has died and is given a special title of saint. Instead, it describes a common brotherhood who have received the "call" of the gospel, 2 Thess. 2:14, and are striving to be faithful to the Lord, Col. 1:2; Eph. 1:15; Phil.1:1.

First Corinthians by Robert Harkrider pg. 5

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus,

⁵ that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge,

That **in everything ye are enriched by Him. Tbat** (*hoti*) is used here to introduce a result of the giving of God's grace. Because they received God's grace, they are enriched in everything. The words **everything** and **enriched** refer to the quantity of grace which they received. **Everything** is not to be understood in the sense of "all possible respects" but needs to be limited by "in all utterance and in all knowledge." To a body of Christians composed of "not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble" (1:26, *i.e.*, the lower classes of society), Paul said, "You are enriched by him." "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). Thus the Corinthians were enriched by the grace of God given to them through Christ ("in him," *en auto*, refers to Christ and not to God). Repeatedly in this context, Paul has mentioned that God's blessings are communicated through his Son, Jesus Christ.

1st Corinthians (Truth Commentaries) by Mike Willis pg. 13

⁶ even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you,

⁷ so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

⁸ who will also confirm you to the end, *that you may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁹ God *is* faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

¹⁰ Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

John 17:20-21, Ephesians 4:3 & Philipians 1:27

¹¹ For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's *household*, that there are contentions among you.

¹² Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."

Improper focus --- Instead of focusing on the message being preached they focused upon the messenger.

¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

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

¹⁵ lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name.

¹⁶ Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.

¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

v.17-This statement must not be misunderstood to mean that Paul thought one could be saved before and without baptism. Too many passages from his inspired pen prove otherwise, Rom. 6:3-5; I Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-27; Eph. 5:26; Col. 2:11-12; Heb. 10:22. Even he had obeyed in baptism to "wash away his sins," Acts 22:16.

a) His main purpose was to preach the gospel of "the cross of Christ." Paul did like the Lord who let others do the actual administering of baptism, John 4:2. By this, none would claim a special relationship because of Paul rather than Jesus Christ, v. 15.

First Corinthians by Robert Harkrider pg. 11

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

¹⁹ For it is written: "*I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.*"

²⁰ Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (NKJV) ¹ Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

²² For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;

²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,

²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

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

²⁶ For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise **according to the flesh**, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*.

²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;

²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,

Base things (*agene*) is literally translated 'not of noble birth' and, thus, stands opposed to the noble (*eugeneis*) of v. 26. The things despised (from *exoutheneo*) are the things which this world has rejected; as a perfect participle, this denotes a quality that once was despised and continues to be despised. The final stage of degradation is the things which are not (*fa me on/a*); these are not to be considered as literally non-existent but *as if* they were nothing or nobody, from the world's point of view. The things in which the world sees no value and holds to be contemptible are the things which God has chosen. The things which the world considers valuable and profitable, the things which are (*fa onta*), God has chosen to make powerless and ineffective. Thus the world has its values turned upside down so far as God is concerned. The fact that God has chosen the things which are held in low esteem by the world is evidence that the gospel cannot be considered a humanly devised system of philosophy. These are exactly the thoughts conveyed in Jesus' prayer in which he said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Matt. 11:25-26).

1st Corinthians (Truth Commentaries) by Mike Willis pg. 44-45

²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence.

³⁰ But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—

By stating that Jesus is our wisdom, *i.e.*, our righteousness, sanctification and redemption, Paul has said that Jesus is our all in all. That which the wise of this world cast off as foolishness or weakness has been chosen by God to be our all in all. The gospel cannot be another philosophy; it is not like any of the philosophies. It redeems and sanctifies us - not on the basis of our own merit but through what Jesus has done for *us*.

1st Corinthians (Truth Commentaries) by Mike Willis pg. 47

³¹ that, as it is written, "*He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.*"

Questions 1st Corinthians Chapter One

1. What section of the scripture would you use to show the establishment of the church at Corinth?

Questions 1st Corinthians Chapter One

2. When and where was the first letter to the Corinthians written?

3. Describe the conditions of the city of Corinth and where does it state, “... for I have many people in this city.”

4. Where does Paul address the Corinthians “*called to be saints*”?
 - a. Define saint as used in the passage.

 - b. How were the Corinthians enriched?

5. What problem did the house of Chloe present to Paul concerning the Corinthians and how did Paul respond?

6. How would you explain to others that the phrase, “*For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel...*” is NOT eliminating the fact that baptism is NECESSARY to one’s salvation?

7. List three different views of, “*Christ crucified*”.

8. Briefly summarize the explanation of Mike Willis concerning verse 28.

9. Explain the context by Paul’s statement, “*For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.*”

10. What will you remember about chapter one?

¹ And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.

Not with excellency of speech or of wisdom. Not with the eloquent arts of a Grecian orator or the speculations of a Greek philosopher; things highly esteemed at Corinth and among all the Greeks.

The People's New Testament Commentary – B.W. Johnson pg. 80

² For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

See box below **1st Corinthians 1:21** (page 4)

³ I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

Acts 18:9-10 (NKJV) Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city."

⁴ And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

Hebrews 2:4 (NKJV) God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

2 Corinthians 12:12 (NKJV) Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

⁵ that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in **the power of God**.

Romans 1:16 (NKJV) For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for **it is the power of God** to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

⁶ However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

⁷ But we speak the **wisdom of God** in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God **ordained before the ages** for our glory,

“WISDOM OF GOD” --- **Ephesians 3:3-7 & Colossians 1:26-29**

“ORDAINED BEFORE THE AGES” --- **Acts 2:23, Acts 4:27-28 & Galatians 4:4-5**

⁸ which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

⁹ But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

The things which God has prepared for them that love him has frequently been quoted at funerals to say that no one has seen the blessings of heaven which God has prepared for his saints. This interpretation ignores the next verse, "But God revealed them unto us." The things prepared by God under discussion in this verse are the things made available to us through Jesus Christ, such as forgiveness of sins, reconciliation, redemption, sanctification, etc. What God has prepared for us through Jesus can only be learned through revelation.

1st Corinthians by Mike Willis (Truth Commentaries pg.63)

¹⁰ But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

John 16:13-14 (NKJV) However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you.

¹¹ For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

¹³ These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

¹⁴ But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

¹⁵ But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one.

Who is the "natural man"? This verse says he considers the things of God to be "foolishness." One needs to consider the context to identify who is meant. In 1:18 he is one who considers preaching of the cross to be foolishness. He is different from one who is "perfect, full-grown," that receives the word, 2:6. The spiritual versus carnal man is described in 3:1-3 and Rom. 8:5-8. The natural man in this context is one who relies on human reasoning. He refuses to be guided by the inspired revelation of God.

The reason the natural man "cannot know" the things of God is because human wisdom does not have the ability to know God, 1:21. Since he rejects God's wisdom, he reaches different conclusions from the man who discerns God's word in a spiritual manner, 3:1-3.

v.15-The spiritual man who recognizes scripture to be God's word, "judges all things." That is, he perceives and understands the truth because he accepts the revelation as from God and not as based on human reasoning. Yet he is not judged by man. That is, those who reject God's wisdom as foolishness will also consider believers to be foolish, but their judgments are worthless.

First Corinthians by Robert Harkrider pg. 19

¹⁶ For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Questions 1st Corinthians Chapter Two

1. What does Paul mean, "... did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom..."?

Questions 1st Corinthians Chapter Two

2. Which verse of this chapter can Acts 18:9-10 be identified with?

3. What is God's power to convict and convert an individual?
 - a. Who will not benefit from the power of God?

4. Where does it state, "*But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory*" and explain the phrases that are underlined.

5. How does Mike Willis define "*The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*"?

6. How does Robert Harkrider explain verses 14-15?

7. What will you remember about chapter two?