

Epistle of First Corinthians II Background #2 & Chapter One

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I want to go back to Acts 9 and let's cover a few things here. This is where the Apostle Paul was called on his way to actually arrest Christians and throw them in jail. Someone brought up how, in their mind they correlated all the suffering that Paul had to go through because of all the suffering that he brought upon the Church. I think in some ways there's truth in what was said there.

Acts 9:10—after Paul was in Damascus and couldn't see for three days: “Now there was in Damascus a certain disciple named Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision, ‘Ananias.’ And he said, ‘Behold, I *am here*, Lord.’ And the Lord *said* to him, ‘Arise *and go* into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in *the* house of Judas for *one* named Saul from Tarsus; for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming and putting *his* hands on him, so that he may receive sight.’ Then Ananias answered, ‘Lord, I have heard from many *people* about this man, how many evil things he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And *even* in this place he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.’ But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for this *man* is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before *the* Gentiles, and kings, and *the* children of Israel; for I will show him what great things he must suffer for My name” (vs 10-16).

The Apostle Paul's whole life was really one of suffering and sometimes people can read into that that all Christianity must be a suffering, deprived, miserable and lonely existence that Paul had. He really had a miserable existence. He was stoned, left for dead and came back into the same cities.

Acts 16:1—let's follow along with how Paul got to Greece: “He then arrived at Derbe and Lystra; and behold, there was a certain disciple named Timothy...” We covered how he had been circumcised.

Verse 8: “Now when they had passed by Mysia, they came to Troas.” Troas is just on the northwestern shore of Turkey, just across from Greece.

Verse 9: “And a vision appeared to Paul during the night. A certain man of Macedonia... [the area of northern Greece] ...was standing, beseeching him and saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia *and* help us.’ And after he had seen the vision, we immediately sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the

Gospel to them. Therefore, after sailing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and on the next day to Neapolis; and from there *we went* to Philippi, which is *the* primary city in *that* part of Macedonia, *and* a colony. And we stayed in this city *for* a number of days. Then on the [Sabbath] Day of the weeks we went outside the city by a river, where *it* was customary *for* prayer to be *made*; and after sitting down, we spoke to the women who were gathered together *there*” (vs 8-13).

It started out to be a really nice trip over there, but here, again, Paul gets right in the middle of it.

Verse 14: “And a certain woman who worshiped God was listening; *she was* named Lydia *and was* a seller of purple from *the* city of Thyatira; whose heart the Lord opened to receive the things spoken by Paul. And after she and her household were baptized, she besought *us*, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house *and* lodge *there*.’ And she constrained us. Now it came to pass that as we were going to prayer, a certain damsel who had a spirit of Python met us; *and* she brought her masters much gain by divining.... [foretelling of fortunes] ...She followed Paul and us *and* cried out, saying...” (vs 14-17). This would really get irritating. Here she comes yelling, shouting—not weeping.

“...‘These men are servants of the Most High God, and are preaching to us *the* way of salvation.’” (v 17). I want you to think about this for a minute, because when we understand what this woman was possessed of, then we have a situation much like Jesus had when He went into some of the synagogues; there were people possessed of demons, and the demons said that this was the Son of the Most High.

Here Paul gets it now, this woman is chasing him around. Have you ever had someone just ‘dog’ you, just bug you, never leave you alone? Here's this gal possessed of a divination and she was following him around shouting, “...These men are servants of the Most High God...” Talk about publicity. Here's this demon—crazy-type looking woman:

Verse 18: “Now she did this for many days. Then Paul, being grieved... [frustrated] ...turned to the spirit and said, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And it came out the same hour. And when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they laid hold of Paul and

Silas *and* dragged *them* into the marketplace before the magistrates” (vs 18-19). This is really quite an event. I’ve never had anything like this happen to me. You run out there and here comes a mob and they grab you and take you down to the marketplace.

Verse 20: “And they brought them to the captains, saying, ‘These men, who are Jews... [here it starts] ...are greatly troubling our city, And are preaching customs that are not lawful for us, as Romans, to receive or to practice.’ Then a multitude rose up against them, and the captains tore off their garments, *and* commanded *that they* be beaten with rods. And after laying many stripes on them, they cast *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them safely” (vs 20-23). They hadn’t done a thing! They’re grabbed, beaten and thrown in prison.

Verse 24: “After receiving this command, he threw them into the inner prison and secured their feet with stocks.” Talk about uncomfortable! I don’t know if they were sitting with their feet in the stocks. A stock is like a big pair of wooden foot-cuffs that you put on your feet and you lock it down. I don’t know if they had their hands in it, but I’ve seen some of these that they’ve shown in movies, which are accurate portrayals of what they used to have, and they had them where you put the hands and the feet in the stock. I think they used to have them where they had the head, the feet and the hands in the stock. You’d need a chiropractor after that! That would really do you in.

Verse 25: “But about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God...” Think about their attitude; most people would think: ‘Oh, God, why am I suffering all this? Why am I in here? Why did it happen to me?’ *But they didn’t!*

“...and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there was a great earthquake... [God answered the prayer; talk about an answer to prayer, that was really it] ...so *great* that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors opened, and the bonds of all were loosed” (vs 25-26). All the stocks just popped open!

Verse 27: “When the jailer awoke from his sleep and saw the doors of the prison open, he drew a sword and was about to kill himself, supposing *that* the prisoners had escaped, but Paul called out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Do not harm yourself; for we are all here.’ And after asking for lights, he rushed in and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas” (vs 27-29). It doesn’t take long for God to turn the tables; completely turn the tables!

Verse 30: “And when he had brought them out, he said, ‘Sirs, what must I do, that I may be saved?’” You talk about a complete conversion, between an earthquake and a crumbling down of a

prison.

Verse 31: “Then they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, you and your household.’ And they spoke the Word of the Lord to him, and to all those in his house. And he took them in that hour of the night, and washed *their* wounds; and he and all his *household* were immediately baptized” (vs 31-33). That is a fantastic account here of what happened with the Apostle Paul.

Verse 34: “Then he brought them into his house *and* laid out a table *for them*; and he rejoiced with all *his* household, who had believed in God. Now when day came, the captains sent the sergeants, saying, ‘Let those men go.’ And the jailer reported these words to Paul, *saying*, ‘The captains have sent *word* to let you go. Now then, *you may* go out and depart in peace.’ But Paul said to them, ‘After publicly beating us, who are Romans, without condemnation, and casting *us* into prison, do they *think* now *to* secretly thrust us out? No, indeed, but let them come in person *and* bring us out.’ Then the sergeants reported these words to the captains. And when they heard *that* they were Romans, they were afraid. And they came *and* entreated them; and after bringing *them* out, they asked *them* to depart from the city. Now after leaving the prison, they came to Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, and had exhorted them, they departed” (vs 34-40).

Acts 17:1: “And after journeying... [south] ...through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where *there* was a synagogue of the Jews.” Here again Paul goes into the synagogue of the Jews.

Verse 2: “And as was the custom with Paul, he went in to them and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, expounding and demonstrating that it was necessary for Christ to suffer and to rise from *the* dead, and *testifying*, ‘This Jesus, Whom I am proclaiming to you, is the Christ.’ Now, some of them were convinced, and joined themselves to Paul and Silas, including a great multitude of devout Greeks, and of the chief women not a few. But the unbelieving Jews became envious and took to *them* certain evil men of the baser sort; and when they had gathered a huge crowd, they set the city in an uproar; and they assaulted the house of Jason, looking for *Paul and Silas*, to bring them out to the people. And when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before the city magistrates, crying out, ‘Those who have set the whole world in confusion have come here also...’” (vs 2-7). This is referring back to the same kind of attitude that was taking place where the Jews said of Jesus: ‘Behold, the world is going after Him.’ Here they’re *turning the world upside down!*

“...whom Jason has received; and these all do *what is* contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying *that* there is another king, Jesus.’ And they caused *great* agitation among the people and the city magistrates, who heard these things. But after taking security from Jason and the rest, they let them go. Then the brethren immediately sent away by night to Berea both Paul and Silas, who, when they arrived, went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now, these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, *for* they received the Word with all readiness of mind *and* examined the Scriptures daily *to see* if these things were so” (vs 7-11). These are Jews in the synagogue doing this.

The very first book that the Apostle Paul wrote was to the Thessalonians. Apparently it was a pretty heavily Jewish church. Then many of them believed and so forth.

Then Paul came down to Athens and encountered certain ones of the philosophers and so forth. He was telling them about this new doctrine, about Jesus and the resurrection. They said, ‘Okay, we’ll all come back together and hear this new thing.

Verse 22: “Then Paul stood in *the* center of Mars Hill *and* said, ‘Men, Athenians, I perceive *that* in all things you are very **reverent to deities**’—devoted to demon worship. That tells you all about their gods and what kind of religion they had. These people are wrapped up in this demonism and psyche and they had all the things that we have today: crystal ball gazing, foretelling the future, cards. They had one thing in their religions: they would sacrifice a chicken or some other kind of animal and then they would look at the liver and how the liver was configured was foretelling of the future.

Verse 23: “For *as* I was passing through and observing the objects of your veneration, I also found an altar on which was inscribed, ‘To an unknown God.’ So then, He Whom you worship in ignorance *is* the one *that* I proclaim to you. He *is* the God Who made the world and all things that *are* in it. Being *the* Lord of heaven and earth, He does not dwell in temples made by hands; nor is He served by the hands of men, *as though* He needs anything, *for* He gives to all life and breath and all things” (vs 23-25). It must have been a pretty powerful sermon, standing up there and preaching out to all these Greeks.

Verse 26: “And He made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth, having determined beforehand *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their dwelling; in order that they might seek the Lord, if perhaps they might feel after Him and might find Him; though truly, He is not far from each one of us, **for in Him we live**

and move and have our being; as some of the poets among you also have said, ‘For we are His offspring.’” (vs 26-28). That’s really a tremendous Scripture. If you really think about it and just bring that all to bear. “...**for in Him we live and move and have our being**...” When the Spirit of Christ gives the *spirit of man* that is the light that lights every man. God has not left all people out here totally unequipped to find God.

The first time I ever heard about the pygmies was when they showed a movie down in Pasadena about the pygmies and they believed in the great God Who made heaven and earth; they had no idolatry; they did not believe in committing adultery—which is so prevalent in Africa—and they kept to themselves. I thought to myself of this Scripture, right here. Here are those pygmies out there in the middle of the jungle. They don’t know anything. No one has gone out there and taught them anything. But they at least discovered that much about God.

I do not know what you would consider the blessings for them, whether to live in a jungle with their kind of existence is any more cursed or blessed than to live in the jungle of the city like we do. I’m not prepared to say; I haven’t been there. But God made it possible, and the Apostle Paul says for *in Him we live and move and have our being!*

Verse 29: “Therefore, since **we are the offspring of God**, we should not think that the Godhead *is* like that which *is made* of gold, or silver, or stone—a graven thing of art *devised by the* imagination of man.” That covers pretty much everything as far as idolatry goes. Notice how he started out to tell them about their idolatry.

1. Paul said, ‘I perceive you’re very devoted to your demons.’ Of course, to them that was not a derogatory term. That was just spirit to them.
2. ‘I also see that you have a dedication to the unknown God and this is the One Whom I’m going to preach to you.’

He didn’t come in there with the troops to destroy the idols. He didn’t come in and tell them ‘you ought to know better than to make these idols.’ They didn’t know any better. How did he present that to them? *He said*

3. ‘Listen, God has made every human being in His image, made all nations of one blood; gave them all their inheritance that they should seek God!’

I don’t care who you are or where you are, you cannot have too many opponents to that statement. What you say after that is another thing.

4. God is not made of those things of gold or silver or whatever.

Verse 30: “For *although* God has indeed overlooked the times of this ignorance, **He now commands all men everywhere to repent.**”

5. So then, here comes the message of repentance!

I thought this was very interesting the way that he went through and presented this. When we get to 1-Corinthians you’re going to see the way that the Apostle Paul structured the letter. That is, I think, very significant. He uses the same type of approach to everyone.

First he starts out with God, and we’re made in God’s image, and we all need to be drawn to God, then he starts after the problem. That’s exactly what he did here.

Verse 31: “‘Because He has set a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man Whom He has appointed, having given proof to all **by raising Him from the dead.**’.... [now they’re hearing something brand new] ...And after hearing *about the* resurrection of *the* dead, some mocked; but some said, ‘We will hear you again concerning this *matter.*’ And so Paul went out from among them. But certain ones *who* believed joined themselves to him, among whom also *were* Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them” (vs 31-34).

Paul leaves Athens and he comes to Corinth. We finally arrive at Corinth.

Acts 18:1: “Now after these things, Paul departed from Athens *and* came to Corinth; and *there* he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with Priscilla his wife (because Claudius had ordered all the Jews out of Rome). *And* he came to their *house*” (vs 1-2).

Jews, by their very nature, business sense and their political sense, have a very tremendous political sense and business sense that other people don’t have. This puts them into situations where periodically they go through terrible persecutions. They literally do, wherever they are they get everything by the neck and pretty soon the only way you can get rid of them is to pull Hitlerian tactics on them. This is what they did here.

I had an occasion to talk to a man who was a bona fide Nazi in Germany. He told me, with tears in his eyes, that when Hitler came to power he made it wonderful. Germany was in terrible shape, it was awful. Hitler came and eliminated unemployment, sent all the women back home to take care of the

children—they couldn’t hold a job outside of the home. He carted off all the Jews; carted off all the homosexuals and got rid of all the prostitutes and cleaned everything up. He says it was beautiful! He says, ‘I don’t know what happened to him later.’

There would be a lot of people today who would support that kind of thing right here. You get this age thing going much longer and you get all of this stopping of God in communications and schools. They’re going to the same thing. A Hitler will arise! It’s a shame. Here we can see much of the same thing happened here.

Aquila and Priscilla came over to Corinth, v 3: “And because he was of the same trade, he dwelt with them and worked; for they were tent makers by trade.” Not just as we think of working with canvas, but they were also leather-workers and made belts, coats and things like that.

Verse 4: “And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath...” Paul faithfully went to the synagogue. I don’t know how long it took for his reputation to follow him to the different synagogues, but he sure ripped apart those synagogues between the Jewish religion and Christianity.

“...and persuaded *both* Jews and Greeks. Now, when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was stirred in his spirit *and* was earnestly testifying to the Jews *that* Jesus *was* the Christ” (vs 4-5). He was there three Sabbaths and didn’t mention a word about Jesus. When the other two came, he now had his reinforcements and then he testified that Jesus was the Christ.

Verse 6: “But when they set themselves in opposition and were blaspheming, *Paul* shook *his* garments *and* said to them...” Think about this for a minute. He grabbed hold of his clothes and just shook them right there in the synagogue!

“...‘Your blood *be* upon your own heads. I am pure *of it.* From this time forward I will go to the Gentiles.’.... [That’s so painful to a Jew!] ...And after departing from there, he went into *the* house of a certain one named Justus, who worshiped God, whose house adjoined the synagogue.” (vs 6-7). They had a common wall and right next to it was his house.

Verse 8: “But Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with his whole house; and many of the Corinthians who heard believed and were baptized.” You talk about insults of insults! Right next to the synagogue; that’s where they had their services!

Verse 9: “And the Lord said to Paul in a vision in *the* night, ‘Do not be afraid...’” I imagine

so. Everywhere he went what happened? *They would arrest him or stone him, put him in prison!* Would God speak to us in the same way today? *If it became necessary to do so, I would say, yes, God would!* I've made up my own mind that if there ever comes a time for need of another minister I'm not going to run out and lay hands on anybody until literally the Lord tells me. I'm just not going to do it. Not to say that there isn't a need or whatever. But after the experience I've gone through I'm just going to say, 'God, make it real evident if You're speaking to me, or show me clearly.'

This was in a vision, so this would have to be a little more than a dream. I don't know if he was awake or asleep, but the whole essence of it is that at this point Paul needed some encouragement. He really had it rough, and God said, "...Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent.'" (v 9)

I have had dreams that have come true. I cannot say it was a dream where God spoke and said thus and such. I know people who have had reasonable dreams, but I've also run across people who are influenced by demons and they have dreams, too, and they say 'these are from the Lord.' I don't lay a lot of stock into that sort of thing. I know that the Bible shows that it does happen, but it doesn't show that it's happening all the time. Yet, we have this contrasted with what we read in Acts 16 about the woman who had the 'spirit of divinations.' There's a distinct difference here.

But I am sure that there are dreams that we dream that come true. I've also had some dreams that were weird, because your mind is going full speed in neutral—there's no direction—and all these things come sputtering forth. I would have to say that there are times when there will be dreams that will come true, and there will be times when you will be thinking on a problem so much that you'll actually find the solution in a dream. That happens. I remember one time before I was in the Church—having nothing to do concerning the Church of God—I was working on an accounting problem for my Accounting class. I couldn't get the answer and I went to bed thinking on it, and as soon as I woke in the morning I said, 'That's it!' I found the problem and I answered the question and I got the thing corrected. There are things like that.

There are people who are inventors who work on things, who just think on things. All of a sudden it will be kind of like this ad where this guy is driving down a desert road and all of a sudden, BING! 'What if...'

There are times when you really have your mind on something, mental things will take place, but it doesn't necessarily mean that it's a great sign from God. Even though I say that I'm not going to

make another man a minister unless I virtually hear it from God, that doesn't mean that I'm going out and seeking these kinds of things. I'm trying to cover a lot of bases here with it, because there are many different niches into what some of these things could be. If I were the Apostle Paul I would be inclined to watch for my way of escape out of there and watch all the Jews and all these hostile people.

Verse 10: "...For I am with you; and no one shall set upon you to mistreat you because I have many people in this city.' And he remained *there for* a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them. Now, when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews rose up against Paul with one accord and led him to the judgment seat" (vs 10-12).

I'll tell you exactly how you can find out how the Jews will do that today. Get up and make some public statement that is defamatory against Jews and you will have the JDL banging on your doorstep, burning down your car, disrupting your credit, disrupting your place of business—it won't take long. That's exactly what they were doing here. So, they were making insurrection with one accord against Paul.

Verse 13: "Saying, 'This *man* is persuading men to worship God contrary to the law.'" That's quite a statement—isn't it? Notice what Jesus said. We'll see that Jesus was teaching the same thing.

John 4:19: "The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, but you say that the place where it is obligatory to worship is in Jerusalem'" (vs 19-20). Remember, this was the woman from Samaria. One of the suburbs of Samaria was Shiloh. What was at Shiloh? *The tabernacle was at Shiloh!* That's why later in the history of the Jews, when some of them wanted to change something or do something, then they would say, 'It was over here first.' Like she said first, 'This is Jacob's well. We go way back to the patriarchs. We're greater than the Jews.'

Verse 20: "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, but you say that the place where it is obligatory to worship is in Jerusalem." Even Jesus was teaching contrary to what the Jewish law would say; *not contrary to God!*

Verse 21: "Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father. You do not know what you worship. We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when **the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth**; for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner. God *is* Spirit, and those

who worship Him must worship in Spirit and in Truth.” (vs 21-24).

Then we find out exactly what was going on here when they claimed that He was teaching contrary to the law. He wasn't preaching contrary to the Law, not the Law of God. He was preaching contrary to the laws of the Jews.

Acts 18:14: “And when Paul was about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, ‘Now then, if it were a matter of some injustice, or wicked criminality, O Jews, according to reason, I should put up with you; but on the other hand, if it be a question about a message and names and a law of your own, you see *to it* yourselves; for I have no desire to be a judge of these things.’ And he drove them from the judgment seat. Then all the Greeks laid hold on Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. But none of these things mattered to Gallio” (vs 14-16). He just turned his back and walked away and let Sosthenes beat him.

Verse 18: “And after Paul had remained *there* many days, he took leave of the brethren and sailed away to Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. *Now Paul* had shorn *his* head in Cenchrea because he had *made* a vow. And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews” (vs 18-19). You talk about a miserable ministry that Paul had! Can you imagine that every Sabbath you're going to go somewhere and walk into a synagogue of the Jews and come in, and you being a Jew, knowing you're a Jew—you can wear your Pharisee things—and get up there and go through this whole thing again.

Verse 20: “And when they asked *him* to remain with them for a longer time, he did not consent, but took leave of them, saying, ‘I must by all means keep the Feast that is coming at Jerusalem... [almost every commentary I've ever seen on this, places this just before the Feast of Tabernacles in 52_{A.D.}] ...but I will return again to you, God willing.’ And he sailed from Ephesus. And after landing at Caesarea, he went up to *Jerusalem* and visited the Church; *then* he went down to Antioch” (vs 20-22). That's one of those verses that's a lot of summary and tells you nothing of what went on in between.

Verse 23: “And when he had stayed *there* some time, he left and went through the country of the Galatians and the Phrygians in order, establishing all the disciples. Now, a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man who was skilled in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and

taught accurately the things concerning the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. And after hearing him, Aquila and Priscilla took him and expounded the way of God to him more perfectly” (vs 23-26). Here Aquila and Priscilla—husband and wife—expounded to him. Aquila was not doing public speaking, but he sure knew the Scripture and could tell someone in private what to do. That's what they did.

Verse 27: “And when he was determined to travel to Achaia, the brethren wrote to the disciples, exhorting *them* to welcome him; and after arriving, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace, for he powerfully refuted the Jews publicly, showing by the Scriptures *that* Jesus was the Christ” (vs 27-28).

(go to the next track)

1-Corinthians 1:7: “So that you do not lack *even* one *spiritual* gift while you are awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.” How that in 1-Thess. 4, the Apostle Paul said that ‘we which are alive and remain.’

In 1-Corinthians 15:50: “Now, this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit *the* Kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed, in an instant, in *the* twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for *the* trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (vs 50-51). We shall not all ‘sleep’; in other words, being changed at the return of Jesus Christ does not depend upon your being dead, if you're alive.

Verse 50:52: “In a moment, in *the* twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for *the* trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and **we...** [he's including himself] ...shall be changed.” We will see that in some places he uses the word *we*—talking about Paul and Timothy and Apollos, and the other apostles. When he's talking about you, he's talking to the congregation.

1-Corinthians 1:6: “According as the **testimony of Christ** was confirmed **in you.**” There's something that God has done *in you* that is the testimony of Christ. It's more than what it says there when he says the testimony of Christ is the *spirit of prophecy*.

Just to give you a little hint on that: to prophesy does not necessarily mean to be just foretelling events. That also means inspired preaching.

Verse 7: “So that you do not lack *even* one *spiritual* gift while you are awaiting the revelation of

our Lord Jesus Christ, will also strengthen you to *the end that you may be* unimpeachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (vs 7-8). Immediately he points them to God—to God the Father and Jesus Christ—and the return of Christ and the Day of the Lord.

Verse 9: “God *is* faithful, by Whom you were called **into the fellowship** of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” That’s a very important thing to be “...called into *the* fellowship.” The fellowship of God continues always.

When I was studying for this—the testimony of Christ—that was really exciting going through and understanding what God has done. It just helped me realize about being confirmed in Christ. Every day we’re confirmed in Christ. Some of the things that we’re going to learn in 1-Corinthians is going to be just really fantastic because of the Spirit of God. It’s very important for us to be blameless in the Day of the Lord, because that assures our salvation.

1-John 1 talks about this fellowship that we have. This is why one of the problems that comes with a carnal spirited fellowship is that it becomes purely social. We’re going to see that’s part of the problem they had here with the fellowship of Christ.

1-John 1:1: “That which was from *the* beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our own eyes, that which we observed for ourselves and our own hands handled, concerning the Word of life.” John is talking from an experiential point of view. He literally did this! We, in this case, refers to all the apostles.

Verse 2: “(And the life was manifested, and we have seen, and are **bearing witness**... [to testify; to bring assurance] ...and are reporting to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us); that which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order **that you also may have fellowship with us**... [interesting statement] ...for the fellowship—indeed, **our fellowship**—... [all combined now] ...*is* with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ” (vs 2-3). That’s where true fellowship really is, and really needs to be, so that there be no party spirit kind of fellowship. That’s why when we get together—and it is with the Spirit of God—that we can all have that wonderful fellowship.

The first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, to me that was evident. It was really wonderful! Everyone was there, and everything was fine and beautiful and right. Why? *Because we are focusing in on God and the purpose of God!*

That’s what the Apostle Paul did. Notice how God inspires every one of these to be written. Here’s the letter by the Apostle Paul: the first thing

he points them right to God:

- to God the Father
- to Jesus Christ
- to the return of our Lord
- to the testimony of our Christ
- to knowledge and utterance

And all of those things for the Church, *that we may have fellowship!* Notice how John writes here, same thing:

Verse 3: “That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—*is* with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ. These things we are also writing to you, so that your joy may be completely full. And this is the message that we have heard from Him and are declaring to you: that God is light, and there is no darkness at all in Him. **If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth.**” However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, **then we have fellowship with one another...**” (vs 3-7). All of us combined and with God the Father and Jesus Christ. And that makes it wonderful! After experiencing that kind of fellowship you don’t want that to change.

If we’re having that fellowship, we are being confirmed *in Christ* that we may be *blameless* “...and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin” (v 7). That’s how we’re confirmed in it, and with God’s grace over us all the time. That is so good, brethren! That is so marvelous! I don’t know if I can emphasize it enough.

I think too many times, myself included, we go plowing along each week and we get into the things that we need to do each day and BAM! our human nature comes out. But ***God is really for us, and God covers us with His grace!*** That’s what the Apostle Paul is talking about here: *grace that is given to you by Jesus Christ* so that we can be blameless, so that we can be before God in that relationship.

Verse 8: “If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us” (vs 8-10). That fellowship *of*...

1-Corinthians 1:9: “God *is* faithful, by Whom you were called **into the fellowship**...”—not unto; unto brings you up to a point: *I will bring you unto the city limits.* But if I say, ‘I am going to bring

you into town, you're not going to be left off at the city limits.

If we can understand this with the fellowship, *we are brought into that fellowship* "...of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.... [to me that makes a whole lot of difference, and it has a lot more meaning] ...Now, I exhort you, brethren... [I earnestly entreat you] ...by the name... [through the authority] ...of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing..." (vs 9-10). Doesn't take him long to get into the beginning of the problems—does it?

"...and *that* there be no divisions among you..." (v 10). If you all speak the same thing, that doesn't mean that you all march like good little soldiers. Obviously, God has allowed differences and things like this, but concerning Christ, that *we all speak the same thing!*

"...rather, *that* you be knit together in the same mind... [Philip. 2:5—let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus—that's the mind we are to have] ...and in the same judgment" (v 11). There are certain judgments that they had to make.

Verse 11: "For my brethren, it has been declared to me concerning you, by those of *the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you." We have all gone through contentions—haven't we? *Yes, we have!*

The thing that I look back and see on this situation where the Apostle Paul is, almost every church he started, started on a contentious basis. It really did! Fighting among the Jews and the Gentiles.

Verse 12: "Now this I say, since everyone among you says, 'I am of Paul'; or, 'I *am* of Apollos'; or, 'I *am* of Cephas'; or 'I *am* of Christ.'"

I even heard of a letter written by a man who said that you ought to follow this man, and he said, 'Some of these splinter groups have left *the Church* and they say to follow Christ.' I thought to myself, yeah, that's right! Isn't that what the Apostle Paul said here: *follow Christ!*

1-Corinthians 11:1—which is kind a summary of all their problems: "Be imitators of me, exactly as I also *am* of Christ." We are to follow Christ. But could there be those who are of the contentious spirit who say, 'I'm only going to follow Christ,' when Paul was truly their apostle and minister sent to them. Some said, 'You've got to follow Paul.' Then Cephus came and he preached and some said, 'I like Cephus, I'm going to follow him; I've got all my notes on his sermon and I'm going to live by that.' Then here comes Apollos and Apollos could speak eloquently; wonderful speaker.

So then, Paul asked a question, 1-Corinthians 1:13: "Has Christ been divided?... [NO! Christ is not divided! But the problems lie with people.] ...Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul? I thank God that I did not baptize any of you, except Crispus and Gaius, lest someone should say that I baptized *new converts* into my *own* name" (vs 13-15). That one statement tells you how much gossip was going around in that little church.

He even had to guard himself and said, 'lest someone says I baptized in my own name.' I would not have wanted to pastor the Church at Corinth. I tell you, I've gone through every one of these things in my experience as a minister. You do get very defensive like the Apostle Paul did. That's a very defensive statement—isn't it? 'I'm glad I didn't baptize any of you.'

Verse 16: "But I also baptized the household of Stephanas; as for any others, I do not know if I baptized anyone else.... [That in itself is still defensive—isn't it?] ...For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel—not with *the* wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ be made void" (vs 16-17). He's getting in there and preaching Christ.

Verse 18: "For to those who are perishing, the preaching of the cross is foolishness; but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God." That's going to tie in with the testimony of Christ. And it is sure true that when you start basing everything that you have on the Word of God.

This card-carrying Roman Catholic talk show doesn't believe that the Word of God *is* the Word of God. It would be foolishness to call in. They ran a survey and about 5% of the people read their Bible regularly. Those who are 'Christians.' We're an unusual group, brethren. True Christians are unusual! And to put our faith in a Bible, in a book, that everyone *knows* is not the Word of God is stupid. That's the way the world looks at it. Just like the sanctimonious Mormons. They say 'We believe the Bible insofar as it is accurately translated. Which part is not accurately translated? *Oh, we determine that! Besides, we have extra dreams and vision!*

I talked to a guy who is not a Mormon, but he said that he has the 'Second Book of Revelation' which is really ten books and it's 10,000 pages, and it tells all about the life of Christ and everything. Then at the end he says, 'You know, we believe in the Bible, too. But this is really kind of outdated for today.' We end up with the same kind of foolishness—right?

Verse 18: "For to those who are perishing,

the preaching of the cross is foolishness; but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.” I want to affirm something to all of you, brethren: The more that you really study the Bible and internally study it back and forth, the more it proves itself and the more of the power of God that you derive from it with the Spirit of Christ in your mind. I’m sure that you’ve all experienced that.

Verse 19. “For it is written, ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise... [All you have to do is just read the newspaper. That’s what God is doing. All these smart people are so stupid that they believe we came from monkeys.] ... and I will nullify the understanding of those who understand.’ Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Did not God make foolish the wisdom of this world?” (vs 19-20). {note: Rom. 1:17-20—in wisdom ‘the wise’ chose not to know God. }

Isn’t it something how the more educated some people get, the less that they believe in God? The hardest group of people to convert would be all the professors at Stanford, or Harvard, or Cambridge. Can you imagine if you had to preach to a group like that? We call them ‘eggheads,’ too; they’re hardboiled!

Verse 21: “For since in the wisdom of God the world through *its own* wisdom did not know God... [there’s the verse that ties right in with Rom. 1] ...it pleased God to save those who believe through the foolishness of preaching.” There’s a spiritual power that takes place there.

Verse 22: “For *the Jews* require a sign... [or they have a riot to get rid of you] ...and *the Greeks* seek after wisdom; but we proclaim Christ crucified.... [that has to do with the testimony of Christ] ...To *the Jews* it is a cause of offense, and to the Greeks *it is* foolishness; but to those who are called—both Jews and Greeks—Christ *is* God’s power and God’s wisdom” (vs 22-24).

What is the most important thing in your life? *To have the power of God, through God’s Holy Spirit, to be in that fellowship with Jesus Christ!* That’s more important than all the knowledge, all of the technology, everything that is in the world. If you don’t know how to live your life before God, you can be the smartest person in the world and you’re stupid! It’s just the way it is. That’s what Paul is saying here. That we have, with the wisdom of God, knowledge, understanding. As we walk toward the Light, as we are under the grace of God; I tell you, brethren, I can just feel these things in my life! And I’m sure you have, too; you’ve experienced that.

Verse 25: “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God... [that

is *IF* God has any weakness] ...is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh, not many who are powerful, not many who are high-born *among you*. Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world, so that He might put to shame those who are wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world so that He might put to shame the strong things. And the lowborn of the world, and the despised has God chosen—*even* the things that are counted as nothing—in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are; so that no flesh might glory in His presence. But you are of Him in Christ Jesus, Who was made to us wisdom from God—even righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; so that, as it is written, ‘The one who glories, let him glory in *the* Lord.’” (vs 25-31).

Next time we’ll expand some of these things we covered here just so we get the whole story flow of the chapter.

What has this whole civilization based its knowledge on? *The Greeks!* Where did the Greeks get it? *From Babylon!* When Alexander the Great went there, he brought all that back and Grecianized all of the Babylonians.

When I was first learning about the Truth, I was going to the College of San Mateo. I had already made application for going to the University of San Francisco; that is a Catholic institution. I had no connection with the Catholics and I didn’t know anything about that.

I could barely stand it! I had to study philosophy and what’s the first thing? *Aristotle, Socrates and that philosophy is to explain the existence of things without God from these pagan philosophers*, and yet, that’s the whole basis for the Catholic Church. I sat there cross-eyed and brain-scrambled, because I couldn’t make head nor tails out of it.

Every class it bothered me, here was the crucifix right up on the wall. The first time I went to Pasadena at Ambassador College, I wasn’t going to believe anything—nothing!—until they gave me a tour and showed me the classroom, and the first thing I did was look up to see if there was a crucifix. If there would have been a crucifix I would have left instantly!

The fellow who took me on the tour—Paul Kroll—remembers it to this day, because he says, ‘You didn’t say a word, you didn’t smile, you just looked around and kind of shook your head. When I showed you the classroom you looked up there and the only thing you said was *okay*.’ Then I smiled and was more open.

I tell you, I had to take Philosophy-I up here

at the University of San Francisco and I couldn't take it. Of course, I was reading about no idols, no statues, no pictures, and guess what they had everywhere? *Idols and statues!* Then the article came out in the *Plain Truth* about religious workers that walk around and love the greetings in the marketplace and salute. So, here are the priests out there in the morning reading their little missal and saying their prayers as they're going to class and here come the students and they 'ummm.'

It was really getting to me; really eating me up. Then I had to go down to the office and I walked in the office and here's this nun and another nun and a huge picture supposedly of Jesus with this petulant look and crown of thorns on His head and He had one drop of blood coming down and one tear coming out of His eye.

I said, 'That's it! I can't take it anymore!' So, I withdrew immediately! Here are these 'wise'; these 'great,' but it's foolishness! Their philosophy was based on *there is no God!* Yet, that was the mainstay of the Catholic Church. That's when it really dawned on me what the Catholic Church really, really was!

Shortly after that I got the book *The Two Babylons!* That did it!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 9:10-16
- 2) Acts 16:1, 8-40
- 3) Acts 17:1-11, 22-34
- 4) Acts 18:1-13
- 5) John 4:19-24
- 6) Acts 18:14-28
- 7) 1 Corinthians 1:7
- 8) 1 Corinthians 15:50-52
- 9) 1 Corinthians 1:6-9
- 10) 1 John 1:1-10
- 11) 1 Corinthians 1:9-12
- 12) 1 Corinthians 11:1
- 13) 1 Corinthians 1:13-31

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Thessalonians 4
- Philippians 2:5
- Romans 1:17-20

Also referenced: Book:

The Two Babylons by Alexander Hislop

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