

# Chapter One

First Corinthians, chapter one consists of a thankful greeting (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:1-9), an exhortation regarding schisms (vv.10-17), and an affirmation of the unifying power of the gospel (vv.18-31).

## The Thankful Greeting

1. Paul's identification as the author (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:1).  
Paul, a called apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God.  
Παῦλος κλητὸς ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ.
    - a. Paul includes his office in 9 out of his 13 NT epistles (Rom., 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor., Gal., Eph., Col., 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim., Tit.).
    - b. Paul ascribes his apostleship to the will of God in 5 of those 9 instances (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor., Eph., Col., 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim.).
    - c. Paul identifies himself as a called apostle (κλητὸς ἀπόστολος) only twice (Rom. 1:1; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:1).
  2. Sosthenes' identification as the co-sender (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:1). καὶ Σωσθένης ὁ ἀδελφός.
    - a. Sosthenes had been the leader of the Corinthian synagogue (Acts 18:17).
    - b. Sosthenes was numbered by the Church Fathers to be among the Seventy (Lk. 10:1,17; Eus. *EH* 1.12).
    - c. Co-senders are indicated in eight Pauline epistles (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor., Gal., Phil., Col., 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess., Philem.) (Timothy is a co-sender six times). Co-senders were secretaries and/or couriers, but should not be considered as co-authors.
  3. The church of God which is at Corinth is identified as the recipient (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:2).  
τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ οὖσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ.
    - a. An ἐκκλησία <sup>#1577</sup> is a called body (assembly, congregation, church).
    - b. This called body is consecrated/sanctified (ἀγιάζω <sup>#37</sup>) to God in Christ Jesus.
    - c. All believers are therefore "called saints" (κλητοὶς ἅγιοις).
    - d. Every called saint is then blessed to "call upon" the name of our Lord. ἐπικαλεῖω <sup>#1941</sup>: *to call upon, to invoke*.
- Paul, a **called** apostle, writes to **called** saints in a **called** body who are privileged to **call** upon the Lord in every place.
4. Paul greets the called saints in Corinth with an intercessory prayer request for God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ to sovereignly bestow grace and peace upon them (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:3). This is Paul's intercession for every epistle (Grace, mercy, & peace in 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim.).
  5. Paul's thanksgiving is then detailed (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:4-9).
    - a. His primary thanksgiving was for God the Father's previous work of grace among them.
    - b. Corinth was spiritually enriched in Christ (v.5). πλουτίζω <sup>#4148</sup>: *to make rich*.
      - 1) Enriched in teaching.
      - 2) Enriched in knowledge.
      - 3) Not lacking in any spiritual gift (v.7a).
    - c. Corinth was grounded in grace so that they were awaiting eagerly the revelation of Christ, confident in their blameless estate (vv.7b,8).
    - d. Paul's concluding thanksgiving was for God the Father's faithfulness in His ongoing work of grace among them (v.9 cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:13).

## **The Exhortation**

1. Paul exhorted (παρακαλέω #3870) his brethren by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ to be like-minded (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:10).
  - a. The character/reputation (name) of the Lord Jesus Christ is the instrument of Paul's exhortation.
  - b. Not an imperative—but an appeal for volitional application (cf. Acts 24:4; 27:34; Rom. 12:1; 15:30; 16:17; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:10; 4:16; 16:15; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 2:8; 10:1; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 4:2<sub>x2</sub>; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 2:1; Philem. 9,10; Heb. 13:9; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 2:11; 5:1).
2. Believers with the same mind and judgment will speak with one voice.
  - a. Unity begins with the mind and judgment.
    - 1) καταρτιζω #2675: *to strengthen, perfect, complete; make one what he ought to be.*
    - 2) νοῦς #3563: *mind, the intellectual faculty.*
    - 3) γνώμη #1106: *view, judgment, opinion.*
  - b. Unity of mind and judgment produces a verbal unity (witness). λέγω #2036: *to speak, say.*
  - c. Unity of mind and judgment prevents schisms. σχίσμα #4978: *rent, division, dissension.*
3. Schisms of mind and judgment produce verbal disunity (quarrels).  
ἔρις #2054: *contention, strife, wrangling.*
  - a. Such strife is the product of a depraved mind (ἀδόκιμος νοῦς) (Rom. 1:29).
  - b. Such strife is the expression of the flesh and its lust (Rom. 13:13; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 3:3; Gal. 5:20).
  - c. Such strife is a motivation and tool of false teachers (Phil. 1:15; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 6:4).
  - d. Faithful Pastors will avoid such strife (Tit. 3:9).
4. Schisms arise within a local church when believers' perspective is wrongly focused on the man rather than the message (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:12ff.).
  - a. No minister of the Word hung on the cross for the redemption of any believer.
  - b. No believer is ever baptized into the body of any minister of the Word.
5. A wrong focus on the man rather than the message voids the gospel message of the cross of Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:17).

## **The Affirmation**

1. Either the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the central, unifying issue to the local church, or it is made void through that local church's carnal pursuit of schisms (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:17).
2. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is one of two different things to two different groups of people (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:18).
  - a. To those who are perishing. τοῖς μὲν ἀπολλυμένοις. Pres.mid.ptc. ἀπόλλυμι <sup>#622</sup>: *to destroy, perish, be lost, ruined, destroyed* (Jn. 3:16). This group of people views the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be foolishness. μωρία <sup>#3472</sup>: *foolishness*.
  - b. To those (of us) who are being saved. τοῖς σωζομένοις ἡμῶν. Pres.pass.ptc. σώζω <sup>#4982</sup>: *to save, rescue*. This group of people views the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be the very power of God. δύναμις θεοῦ.
3. The preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the work of God the Father to destroy the wisdom of the wise (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:19-25).
  - a. These circumstances were prophetically described by Isaiah (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:19; Isa. 29:13,14).
  - b. The wise man is the Gentile searching for God through philosophy, the scribe is the Jew searching for God through legalistic religion. Any debates between these two is fruitless, because both need Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:20).
    - 1) The Jews ask for signs (v.22a).
    - 2) The Gentiles seek for wisdom (v.22b).
  - c. Human wisdom views the Gospel as foolishness, but human wisdom cannot apprehend what the Gospel "foolishness" provides in grace (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:21).
  - d. The Gospel of Jesus Christ crucified is a stumbling block to Jewish unbelievers and foolishness to Gentile unbelievers, but power and wisdom to "the called" of both Jew & Gentile (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:23,24).
4. Our salvation ought to be a matter for our deliberate, continuous consideration (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:26-31).
  - a. Consider (NASB, Amp.), You see (KJV, NKJV), Think of (NIV), See (YLT), Take a good look at (Wuest).
  - b. Most believers have very little to boast about in human terms (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:26; cf. Phil. 3:4-7).
  - c. Salvation is entirely by grace (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:27,28).
    - 1) This arrangement provides for a witness to those who have yet to receive such grace.
    - 2) This arrangement removes the possibility of human boasting (v.29).
    - 3) This arrangement ensures the eternal glorification of Jesus Christ (v.31).
5. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a unique message.
  - a. It is the only message of grace that unifies every believer "in Christ Jesus" (v.30).
  - b. It is the only message of grace that can save the perishing unbeliever (Jn. 3:16,36; Acts 4:12; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 2:5).