

## Exegetical Notes – 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen for Cornerstone Fellowship

101 Kyllies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320

610-384-1375

charleshjensen@aol.com

**Introduction:** In the books of Corinthians, the Apostle Paul addresses problems with that congregation. These letters from Paul to the Corinthians were shared with other congregations because the problems at Corinth were common and remain common among the Church of Jesus Christ even today. The first problem that Paul has with the Corinthians is the lack of agreement among them. His discussion of this problem begins in chapter 1 of 1 Corinthians at verse 10 and ends in chapter 4, verse 21. That this is the first problem addressed by Paul indicates its importance. The length of his discourse on the problem indicates its importance. Over the next few weeks, we will look at Paul's teaching about the necessity of the church to agree. We will learn that the church cannot function properly as the body of Christ when its members do not agree with one another.

### 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

#### Verse 10

***I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.***

- See Romans 15:5. Clearly, the purpose of the Church and each local manifestation of the Church, each local congregation, is to glorify God by obeying Him. The Church is to speak to the world with one voice, the voice of Christ. The Church is to speak with one voice! When the Church speaks to the world with various opinions that contradict the Scripture and its authority as it does, it confuses the world and undermines its purpose.
- As a local congregation, the Corinthians needed to be agreed with one another in the eyes of the people of Corinth.
- Agreement meant that they were united in what they said and that there were no obvious divisions of opinion among them. They were to be united in mind and in thought.

### Verses 11-12

***<sup>11</sup> My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. <sup>12</sup> What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."***

- A report had reached Paul from the household of Chloe. Apparently, these people were part of the Corinthian congregation. They reported to Paul that there were quarrels among the Christians in Corinth that were dividing the congregation.
- The subject of their "quarrels" was which pastor they liked best. Some of them liked Paul best. Others liked Apollos (Acts 18:24 to 19:1). Others rejected the authority of any pastor and said they only followed Christ. The people meant that to them their favored leader was the only one who had authority over them. Those who listened only to Christ set themselves up as being "more spiritual" than all the others. They listened only to the voice of Jesus.

### Verses 13-17

***<sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul? <sup>14</sup> I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup> so no one can say that you were baptized in my name. <sup>16</sup> (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) <sup>17</sup> For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.***

- Paul's reaction to this situation is overwhelming disbelief. How can anyone who is in Christ think that the body of Christ, the Church, can be so divided. Christ is not divided!
- This is evident in the fact that baptism is not done in the name of any particular baptizer but in the name of Christ. The leaders that God sends are just that, those whom God's sends for His purposes. Paul's purpose was not to collect a following but to preach the Gospel, and even that was not in his own ability or power. His purpose was to present the Gospel so that people would hear the truth and surrender their lives to Jesus Christ. The power was not in him, it was in the message. For him not to do what God

had called him to do would be to empty the cross of its power by focusing peoples' attention on him. Any leader in the church who misunderstands that his purpose is to glorify God has misunderstood his calling.

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