

Wednesday Evening Bible Study
December 1, 2021
Series - *The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul*
The Corinthian Letters
The Long Letter (First Corinthians)
Text – 1 Corinthians 3

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Building

Introduction

I. Baby Bottle Believers (vs. 1 – 7)

A. Limited Growth (vs. 1–3)

Paul's assessment seems to indicate that they had been saved long enough to be more spiritually mature. How long have you been saved? More importantly, what level of growth have you attained?

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." (2 Peter 3:18)

Peter also said, *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:"* (1 Peter 2:2); It is great to feed exclusively on milk as a new believer. However, as we grow and mature we ought to eventually be able to digest some meat as well. Paul said in his letter to the Hebrews:

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Hebrews 5:12 – 14).

It seems that the carnality of the Church at Corinth was a symptom of their spiritual immaturity.

1 *neither yet now are ye able* (v. 2)

2 *For ye are yet carnal* (v. 3)

B. Elevated Opinion of Men (vs. 4 – 7)

1. The church was guilty of elevating men instead of God. (vs. 4 & 5)
2. Men are tools in the hands of God; but it is God that brings forth the harvest. It is *His harvest*. (Matthew 9:38; Luke 10:2)
3. Spiritually mature men do not have "guru's" that they blindly follow.

4. Spiritually mature people can learn from and even submit when necessary to others without blindly following them.

II. Bema Bench (Seat) (vs. 8 – 17)

This is also referred to in Scripture as the Judgment Seat of Christ. The word *Bema* is Greek for judgment seat.

“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” (Romans 14:10)

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10)

There is debate among theologians as to when this exactly will take place. Some believe it will take place after the second coming of Christ, and others, after the Millennium. It is my belief that it will take place in Heaven during the Tribulation Period. In fact it may take place during the *Marriage Supper of the Lamb* (Revelation 19:9). Remember the Tribulation Period is that seven-year period known as *the time of Jacob’s Trouble* (Jeremiah 30:7) that begins with the Rapture of the Church (1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 18) and ends with the return of Christ to the Earth (Revelation 19). The *Bema* or *Judgment Seat* is a judgment for believers; not for their sin (which was judged at Calvary), but to determine rewards (or loss of rewards) for their works. This is not to be confused with the *Great White Throne Judgment* (Revelation 20:11 – 15), which is the final judgment of unbelievers.

A. The Spiritual House is Judged in Heaven

1. The Foundation (Christ) (vs. 10 & 11)
 - a. Christ is the Corner Stone (v. 11)
 - b. The Foundation is laid by the apostles and prophets. (v. 10)

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;” (Ephesians 2:20)

2. The Framework (our works) (vs. 8 & 9; 12)
 - a. wood, hay, and stubble – works done for self
 - b. gold, silver, and precious stone – works done God
3. The Fire (vs. 13 – 15)

Question – What will be left of your spiritual house after God sets fire to it?

B. The Spirit's Temple Destroyed on Earth (vs. 16 & 17)

These two verses have to do with God's judgment of believers here on this earth who sin against God so seriously that God takes them to Heaven. Our purpose on earth is two-fold: We are to glorify God in everything that we do; and we are to fulfill the Great Commission. The believer that is so far out of the will of God, even after chastisement, may be taken by God to Heaven prematurely. Examples of this in Scripture are Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5), and the man committing fornication with his father's wife (1 Corinthians 5).

III. Brilliance (God's Wisdom) and Buffoons (Man's Foolishness) (vs. 18 – 23)

God now re-visits the comparison of the wisdom of man and the wisdom of God. (Review 1:17 – 31)

A. Recognition of man's limited wisdom is wise. (v. 18)

B. Man's wisdom is foolishness when compared to infinite wisdom. (vs. 19 - 20)

The only wisdom that is of any value in man is the wisdom that he received from God.

Luke 20 gives several examples of men trying with their limited wisdom to challenge the infinite wisdom of Jesus. They failed miserably in every attempt.

C. Bottom line again (as in chapter one – all the glory belongs to God (vs. 21 – 23)

Therefore, let no man glory in men (v. 21)

He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. (1:31)

That no flesh should glory in his presence (1:29)