

## I Corinthians

### Chapter 1:10-31

<sup>10</sup> **Now** I **urge** you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no **divisions** among you, but that you be **made complete** in the **same mind and in the same judgment**.

**Now** > (Uteley) This is an adversative\*. Paul begins the main body of the letter.

(\*An adversative conjunction expresses opposition or contrast between two statements.)

**Urge** > (Strong's) *parakaleo* > to call near, i.e. Invite, invoke (by imploration, hortation or consolation) (from *para* > from beside, by the side of, beside and *kaleo* > to call)

**MacArthur** > The basic meaning is that of coming alongside someone in order to help. Paul wanted to come alongside his Corinthian brothers and sisters in order to help correct their sins and shortcomings.

**Divisions** > (Strong's) *schisma* > a split or gap ("schism"), literally or figuratively

**Swindoll** > The word "divisions" is the Greek word *schisma* [4978], from which we get English words like "schisms" or "scissors." It refers to a tear, cleft, or split. The same word is used in Matthew 9:16 in reference to a tear in a garment.

**Made complete** > (Strong's) to complete thoroughly, i.e. repair (literally or figuratively) or adjust

**MacArthur** > is used in classical Greek as well as in the New Testament to speak of mending such things as nets, bones, dislocated joints, broken utensils, and torn garments. The basic meaning is to put back together, to make one again something that was broken or separated.

**Same mind and in the same judgment** > (Vincent) The distinction between *mind* and *judgment* is not between theoretical and practical, since (the Greek word for) *mind*, includes the practical reason, while (the Greek word for) *judgment*, has a theoretical side. Rather between understanding and opinion; *mind* regarding the thing from the side of the subject, *judgment* from the side of the object. Being in the same realm of thought, they would judge questions from the same Christian standpoint, and formulate their judgment accordingly.

<sup>11</sup> For I have been **informed** concerning you, my brothers and sisters, by Chloe's people, that there are **quarrels** among you.

**Informed** > (Strong's) to make plain (by words)

**Quarrels** > (Strong's) a quarrel, i.e. (by implication) wrangling

<sup>12</sup> *Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am with Paul," or "I am with Apollos," or "I am with Cephas," or "I am with Christ."*

**Wuest Expanded Translation** > *Now, what I mean is this; that each one of you is saying, As for myself, I am a follower of Paul; But as for myself, I am a follower of Apollos; But as for myself, I am a follower of Cephas; But as for myself, I am a follower of Christ.*

**Utley** has us look at an interesting comment about **Apollos** in **I Corinthians 16:12** > <sup>12</sup> *Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly encouraged him to come to you with the brothers; and it was not at all his desire to come now, but he will come when he has the opportunity.*

<sup>13</sup> *Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*

**Paul** > (Barnes) It is remarkable here, that Paul refers to himself, and not to Apollos or Peter. He does not insinuate that the claims of Apollos or Peter were to be disparaged, or their talents and influence to be undervalued, as a jealous rival would have done; but he numbers himself first, and alone, as having no claims to be regarded as a religious leader among them, or the founder of a sect.

**Paul was not crucified for you, was he?** > (Robertson) An indignant "No" is demanded by (the Greek grammar).

**In** > (Vincent) correctly, Into the name.

Compare the concept found in **Romans 6:3** > <sup>3</sup> *Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?*

<sup>14</sup> *I am thankful that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,<sup>15</sup> so that no one would say you were baptized in my name!*

**Bruce** > "Crispus" was the ruler of the synagogue in which Paul preached when he first came to Corinth (**Acts 18:8**). "Gaius" may be the same person as Titius Justus. This man was a Gentile convert who lived next door to the synagogue, and who opened his home to the church after the Christians could no longer meet in the synagogue (**Acts 18:7; Rom. 16:23**). "Gaius Titius Justus" would be a complete Roman name (praenomen, nomen gentile, cognomen).

**Acts 18: 6-8** > <sup>6</sup> But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood is on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”<sup>7</sup> Then he left the synagogue and went to the house of a man named **Titius Justus**, a worshiper of God, whose house was next door to the synagogue.

<sup>8</sup> **Crispus**, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord together with his entire household; and many of the Corinthians, as they listened to Paul, were believing and being baptized.

**Rom. 16:23**> <sup>23</sup> **Gaius**, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. **Erastus**, the city treasurer, greets you, and **Quartus**, the brother



In 1929, excavators discovered this inscription near a paved area northeast of the theater of Corinth. The inscription, which dates from the middle of the first century C.E., reads, “Erastus in return for his ship laid the pavement at his own expense” (Latin: *ERASTVS. PRO. AED. S. P. STRAVIT*). This inscription may refer to the New Testament figure Erastus, a high-level public official, who sent greetings from Corinth in Paul’s Letter to the Romans (Rom 16:23) ...There is still debate, however, as to whether the Erastus mentioned in the inscription and the Erastus in Paul’s letter to the Romans were in fact the same person.

<sup>16</sup> But I did baptize **the household of Stephanas** also; beyond that, I do not know if I baptized anyone else.

**The household of Stephanas** > (Constable) The members of Stephanas' family ("household of") were the first converts in the Roman province of Achaia (**I Cor 16:15**).

**I Cor 16:15** > <sup>5</sup> Now I urge you, brothers and sisters: you know the household of Stephanas, that they are the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to ministry to the saints;

<sup>17</sup> **For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made of no effect.**

**For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel** > (Utley) This is not meant to disparage baptism, but to react to the factious spirit in the church of Corinth that was lifting up certain leaders ... However, baptism is the will of God for every believer:

1. it is the example of Jesus (Matt: 3:13-17)
2. it is the command of Jesus (Matt. 28:28-10)
3. it is the expected, normal procedure for all believers (Romans 6; Acts 2:38)

**Cleverness** > (Strong's) *sophia* > wisdom, skill

**Speech** > (Strong's) *logos* > word

**Barnes** > The expression here is a Hebraism, or a form of speech common in the Hebrew writings, where a noun is used to express the meaning of an adjective, and means "not in wise words or discourse."

**No effect** > (Strong's) *empty*

**Barnes** > Paul here introduces a new subject of discourse, which he pursues through this and the two following chapters - the effect of philosophy on the gospel, or the estimate which ought to be formed in regard to it.

**Vincent** > To preach it as a philosophic system would be to empty it of its saving power, a truth which finds abundant and lamentable illustration in the history of the Church.

<sup>18</sup> **For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**

**For the word of the cross** > (Vincent) Lit., the word, that, namely, of the cross.

**Foolishness** > (Strong's) *moria* > silliness, i.e. absurdity (The source word is *moros* and means dull, stupid, foolish)

**Robertson** tells us this word is only found in I Corinthians > 1:18, 1:21, 1:23, 2:14, and 3:19. You HAVE to see the pattern ... it is wonderful!!

**I Cor. 1:18** > For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing

**I Cor. 1:21** > God was pleased through the foolishness of the message preached ...

**I Cor. 1:23** > and to Gentiles foolishness,

**I Cor. 2:14** > But a natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him;

**I Cor. 3:19** > For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the sight of God.

**For the word of the cross is foolishness** > (Fee) "It is hard for those in the Christianized West, where the cross for almost nineteen centuries has been the primary symbol of the faith, to appreciate how utterly mad the message of a God who got himself crucified by his enemies must have seemed to the first-century Greek or Roman"

"What would you think of a church building adorned with a fresco of electric chairs and/or death gurneys? The same sort of shocking horror was associated with the cross and crucifixion in the first century."

<sup>19</sup> ***For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And the understanding of those who have understanding, I will confound."***

**I will destroy the wisdom ...** > (Carson) "In first-century Corinth, 'wisdom' was not understood to be practical skill in living under the fear of the Lord (as it frequently is in Proverbs), nor was it perceived to be some combination of intuition, insight, and people smarts (as it frequently is today in the West). Rather, wisdom was a public philosophy, a well-articulated world-view that made sense of life and ordered the choices, values, and priorities of those who adopted it. The 'wise man,' then, was someone who adopted and defended one of the many competing public worldviews. Those who were 'wise' in this sense might have been Epicureans or Stoics or Sophists or Platonists, but they had this in common: they claimed to be able to 'make sense' out of life and death and the universe."

**MacArthur** > The Greeks were in love with human wisdom. They believed that philosophy (philosophia, "love of wisdom") was all-important. Philosophy provided a view, invented by man, of the meaning of life, values, relationships, purpose, and destiny. Thus there were as many philosophies as there were philosophers, and people tended to line up behind their favorite. They widely disagreed as to which philosophy was the truest and most reliable, and, inevitably, many factions developed, each with its own leaders and adherents. Without an absolute standard for truth, ideas of right and wrong were based entirely on human opinion. We ourselves can fall prey to current trends in human thought. Some Christians frantically look almost everywhere but to God and His Word for values, meaning, guidance, and help.

<sup>20</sup> ***Where is the wise person? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has God not made foolish the wisdom of the world?***

**Clarke** > The deliverance of Judea from Sennacherib is what Isaiah refers to in these words.

**Debater** > (Barnes) The (Greek word) properly denotes one who "inquires" carefully into the causes and relations of things; one who is a subtle and abstruse investigator. It was applied to the ancient sophists and disputants in the Greek academics;

<sup>21</sup> *For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was **pleased** through the foolishness of the message **preached** to save those who believe.*

**For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God** > (Robertson) Article here as possessive. The two wisdoms contrasted.

A possible understanding of the “why” behind the lack of understanding is found in *1 Cor. 2:14* > *But a natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

**Pleased** > (Strong’s) to think well of (The source word is a combination of *eu* > *good, well done ...* and *dokeo* > *to think, to seem*)

**Preached** > (Strong’s) a proclamation

**Robertson** tells us the word used refers to the proclamation ... not the method

<sup>22</sup> *For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom;*

**Ask for signs** > (Robertson) The Jews often came to Jesus asking for signs

**Matthew 12:38** > <sup>38</sup> *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.”*

**Matthew 16:1** > *the Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and putting Jesus to the test, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven.*

**John 6:30** > <sup>30</sup> *So they said to Him, “What then are You doing as a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work are You performing?”*

<sup>23</sup> *but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness,*

**Preach** > (Strong’s) to herald (as a public crier)

**Lightfoot** > We proclaim, “we do not discuss or dispute”

**Stumbling block** > (Strong’s) *skandalon* > a trap-stick (bent sapling), i.e. Snare (figuratively, cause of displeasure or sin) -- occasion to fall (of stumbling), offence, thing that offends, stumbling block.

**Foolishness** > (Strong’s) *moria* > silliness, i.e. absurdity (The source word is *moros* and means dull, stupid, foolish)

**Utley** > The Greeks rejected Christ because the concept of resurrection (i.e., because to them the physical body was the origin of evil) did not fit their preconceived philosophical ideals ... Be careful not to judge the gospel by your own culture or national categories!

<sup>24</sup> *but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.* <sup>25</sup> *For the foolishness of God is wiser than mankind, and the weakness of God is stronger than mankind.*

**The called** > (Strong's) invited, i.e. appointed, or (specially), a saint -- called.

**Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God** > The answer to verse 23!

**Foolishness of God** > (Vincent) Lit., *the foolish thing*

**Robertson** > the foolish act of God (the Cross as regarded by the world).

**Weakness of God** > (Robertson) Same idiom here, *the weak act of God*, as men think, *is stronger*

<sup>26</sup> *For consider your calling, brothers and sisters, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;*

**For consider your calling ...** > (Strong's) to look at, behold, perceive, take heed

**Not many wise, ... not many mighty, not many noble** > (Lightfoot) The names of early converts to Christianity indicate that the majority of them were either slaves or freedmen (i.e., former slaves who had been freed, different from "free men" who had never been slaves), as reflected, for example, in Paul's salutations in Romans 16.3

**According to the flesh** > (Robertson) According to the standards of the flesh and to be used

- *wise, philosophers*
- *men of dignity and power*
- *noble, high birth*

the three claims to aristocracy (culture, power, birth).

<sup>27</sup> *but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,* <sup>28</sup> *and the insignificant things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,*

**Insignificant** > (Strong's) an interesting word in the Greek > *agenés* > The *a* is the alpha negative we saw earlier; the *genes* is the word *genos* > *kin, offspring, family*

<sup>29</sup> *so that no human may boast before God.*

**So that no human may boast before God** > (Utley) The (Greek grammar is one) which implies a settled personal choice. No created flesh entity will vaunt itself before the creator

<sup>30</sup> **But it is due to Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,**

**But it is due to Him** > (Utley) This is literally "out of him," which is a Greek idiom expressing the First Cause, the Prime Mover. The Father sent it, Jesus brought it, and the Spirit energized it. What follows is a list of God's gifts to believers through Christ.

**Who became to us wisdom** ... > (Robertson) All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Christ Jesus. We are made righteous, holy, and redeemed in Christ Jesus. Redemption comes here last for emphasis though the foundation of the other two.

<sup>31</sup> **so that, just as it is written: "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."**

**Jeremiah 9:23-24** > <sup>23</sup> *This is what the LORD says: "Let no wise man boast of his wisdom, nor let the mighty man boast of his might, nor a rich man boast of his riches; <sup>24</sup> but let the one who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises mercy, justice, and righteousness on the earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD.*