

1 Corinthians 3:1-23 **Ministering to Carnal Denominationalists**

Babes in Christ

1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?

Ministers are fellow workers – God gives the increase

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

You are the Temple of God

16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

Man's wisdom is foolishness to God – All are God's

18 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness"; 20 and again, "The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." 21 Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come--all are yours. 23 And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

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Facts Revealed:

Babes in Christ [1 Corinthians 3:1-4]

- ✚ Paul views denominational divisions as immaturity in believers, calling them babes in Christ.
 - ✧ The evidence of their immaturity is expressed by the report that some say "I am of Paul," others say, "I am of Apollos." [1 Corinthians 1:11-13, 3:4]
 - ✧ Following men instead of Scriptures of Jesus Christ is a demonstration of immaturity.
 - ✧ Following men is evidence of carnality.
 - ✧ Division in the body of Christ brings envy and strife among groups following different men.
 - ✧ To avoid confusion within the Church and toward those outside the Church, the messages must be consistent and in harmony one with another.

- ✧ Discord and division makes the work of the Church ineffective.
- ✧ Paul therefore, calls for us to be perfectly joined together in mind and judgment.
- ✧ Unity must be based on the Word of God as originally presented as the supreme authority for Christian doctrine. [1 Corinthians 15:1-2, 2 Timothy 1:13, Revelation 3:3]
- ✧ Those who **believe** the Gospel are perfectly agreed.
- ✧ Those who **interpret** the Gospel are widely divided by what they believe and teach, which is the basis of denominationalism with each group following the teachings of different men, their founding leader.

Ministers are fellow workers – God gives the increase [1 Corinthians 3:5-15]

- ✧ The messages of Paul and Apollos are in complete harmony, both teach the same gospel of Jesus Christ, crucified for the sins of the world and risen the Lord of Glory and soon coming King of all. Both prove from the Old Covenant Scriptures that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of Jewish prophecies regarding the Messiah. [Acts 17:1-3, 17, 18:1-4, 19, 24-28, Romans 1:1-6]
- ✧ Therefore, both are fellow workers as ministers through whom you believed.
- ✧ Each of them ministers as the Lord gave him the ability.
- ✧ One plants, the other waters, but it is God who brings forth the fruit and increase.
- ✧ Each one who plants, waters, or builds will receive his own reward according to the grace God has given him.
- ✧ The builders are warned, that there can be no acceptable foundation except the one already laid which is Jesus Christ.
- ✧ The material each one builds with will be tested by fire, and each will receive his reward accordingly.
- ✧ The Day of Judgment will declare the results.
- ✧ Those who built with man's divisive denominational doctrine, their works will be burned up, because they are like wood, hay, and stubble. But they will be saved yet so as through fire, because they believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord.
- ✧ If anyone builds with gold, silver, or precious stones, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, his work will endure and he will receive a reward.

You are the Temple of God [1 Corinthians 3:16-17]

- ✧ **You believers are the Temple of God**, and the Holy Spirit dwells in you.
- ✧ If you defile your mind or body by impure doctrine or behavior, God will destroy you.
- ✧ The Temple of God must be kept holy and pure.

Man's wisdom is foolishness to God – All are God's [1 Corinthians 3:18-23]

- ✧ "Higher Education" often deceives an individual.
- ✧ It is very easy to gain a number of doctorate degrees in schools of higher education and be convinced that you are wise through the wisdom of this world.
- ✧ To God the highest possible education from humanistic thinking whether in psychology, philosophy, theology, biology or whatever it might be is foolishness.
- ✧ The wisdom of God is revealed by the Holy Spirit through His Word the Scriptures.
- ✧ Paul was a highly educated man, but he said:
 - "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; [Philippians 3:7-9]

- ✧ Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours:

- ✧ They have been claiming to be following Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas (Peter), this is the subject of this discourse and a type of denominationalism.
- ✧ The things revealed in Scripture by the Apostles about the world, life, death, things present or things to come – all are yours. What is revealed belongs to man, what is hidden belongs to God. [\[Deuteronomy 29:29\]](#)
- ✧ You belong to Christ, and Christ is God's