

FIRST CORINTHIANS

verse-by-verse



CHAPTER THREE

THE MAIN IDEAS

Key Words: Labor and Reward

Key Verses: v. 8

Key Thought: Our salvation rests solely on the work of Jesus Christ, but rewards are earned by our spiritual service to Christ and the quality of our work in Christ.

SUMMARY

Paul continues to deal with the problem of division in this chapter. Its seriousness is seen in its carnality, which prevented Paul from being able to speak as to spiritually mature people (1-4). To help them see the folly of exalting preachers over each other, Paul shows their relation to one other and to their work, which is building the temple of God (5-17). To the warning not to defile the temple of God, Paul adds another not to glory in the wisdom of this world nor in men (18-23).

OUTLINE

I. THE CARNAL NATURE OF DIVISION (1-4)

A. CARNAL CHRISTIANS AT CORINTH (1-2)

1. Prevented Paul from speaking to them as to spiritual people (1a)
2. Their carnality indicated that they were still babes in Christ, unable to receive solid food (1b-2)

B. EVIDENCE OF THEIR CARNALITY (3-4)

1. The envy, strife, and divisions among them (3)
2. As expressed in their calling themselves after men (4)

II. RELATION OF PREACHERS TO THEIR WORK (5-17)

A. PREACHERS ARE SERVANTS, USED BY GOD (5-7)

1. Ministers given the opportunity to serve God in various ways (5-6a)
2. But it is God who gives the increase (6b-7)

B. THEIR RELATION TO ONE ANOTHER AND THEIR WORK (8-17)

1. United in their work, though their labor and rewards may differ (8)
2. Fellow workers with God, they work on God's building (9)
 - a. Laying the foundation (as Paul did) of Jesus Christ (10-11)
 - b. Building upon the foundation, using various materials to be tested at the Last Day (12-15)
3. A strong warning, since this building is the temple of God and indwelt by the Spirit (16-17)

III. AVOID GLORYING IN WORLDLY WISDOM OR MEN (18-23)

A. REASONS NOT TO GLORY IN WORLDLY WISDOM (18-20)

1. You will only deceive yourself (18)
2. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God (19-20)

B. REASONS NOT TO GLORY IN MEN (21-23)

1. All things (including men) are yours (21-22)
2. You are Christ's, and Christ is God's (23)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

- 1) What prevented Paul from speaking to the Corinthians as unto spiritual people? (1-3)
- 2) What manifested their carnality? (3-4)
- 3) Who was more important, he that planted, or the one that watered? (6-7)
- 4) Upon what foundation is the church built? (11)
- 5) When will the work of ministers be fully made manifest? (13)
- 6) If those converted by preachers are lost, will the preachers be lost? (14-15)
- 7) What sort of building is the church? (16)

8) What is the wisdom of this world to God? (19)

9) Why should we not glory in men? (21-22)

10) And to whom do we belong? (23)