

Sunday, August 20, 2017—I Corinthians 11:17-22 When Ye Come Together

### Introduction

- Last week we began a studying the paragraph contained in verses 17 through 22. In doing so, we considered verses 17 through 19 with the bulk of our time being devoted to a consideration of the nature of heresy.
- If you recall we did not quite finish our discussion on The Anatomy of Heresy. This morning I would like to conclude that discussion and finish looking at the rest of the paragraph.
- To accomplish this task, we will be considering the following points:
  - Review
  - Final Thoughts on Heresy
  - Consider Verses 20-22

### Review

- *Verse 17*—the verbs “declare” and “praise” found in first part of verse 17 are in the present tense and the active voice. This means that Paul is in the process of declaring something unto the Corinthians for which he **is not** praising them. Paul’s declaration is that when the Corinthians were “come together” it was “not for the better, but for the worse.” Put another way, their conduct was so bad that it possibly would have been better if they hadn’t come together at all.
- *Verse 18*—the phrase “when ye come together in the church” makes it clear that Paul is talking about their coming together in the local church in verse 17. The first problem was that there were division among them.
- *Verse 19*—a second problem that Paul identifies is the issue of heresies among the Corinthians. It should come as no surprise that if there are “divisions” among the Corinthians that there would also be “heresies” because heresy causes division. Paul seems to be going a step further in verse 19. He says that “there must be heresies among you.” Why must there be “heresies” among the Corinthians. For the purpose and intent (“that”) of manifesting those who are “approved” in the local church.
- Paul is saying therefore that heresy is not an uncommon thing. Not only is it not an uncommon thing it is a useful thing in manifesting who is approved and who is not.
- Galatians 5:20—since all heresies are the work of the flesh according to Paul, it is imperative to realize that pride or the possibility of self-advancement motivates those who hold spurious doctrines to promote their views in an attempt to draw away disciples unto themselves, thereby

forming sects.

- So, what makes someone a heretic?
  - First, they hold some doctrinal belief or position that is contrary to the clear teachings of God's Word rightly divided.
  - Second, they actively promote their false beliefs with the goal of establishing followers.
- Acts 20:28-30—this pattern mirrors Paul's warning to the Ephesian elders.
  - Verse 29—Paul warns of outsiders seeking to enter into their midst with the objective of sowing discord and confusion amongst the brethren, i.e., the Judaizers.
  - Verse 30—he warns about men from within their own assembly that would arise speaking untruth in an attempt to create their own personal following.
- By comparing I Corinthians 11:19 with II Timothy 2:15, a third conclusion about the anatomy of heresy emerges.
  - The approved of God are those who rightly divide the Word of truth and are thereby able to answer the heretical teaching. Therefore, heresy in Paul's view is any doctrine that is contrary to the Word rightly divided.
- II Timothy 2:16-18—contains all the components of heresy we have been discussing:
  - Verse 16—Timothy is given the same instructions that the Ephesians elders were in Acts 20, namely, not to listen to those speaking profane, vain, or perverse things.
  - Verse 17—Paul identifies Hymenaeus and Philetus as the source of these profane and vain babblings and compares the effect of their teaching to that of a canker, i.e., a virulent, corroding ulcer; or anything that corrodes, corrupts or destroys.
  - Verse 18—these men were teaching that “the resurrection is past already.” Herein we see the first component of heresy according to our working definition, the false belief that the resurrection had already occurred. Furthermore, it is clear that these men fulfill the second part of our definition by seeking to draw away disciples after themselves. This is obvious because they publicly promoted their error to the extent that they overthrew the faith of some.
- I Timothy 3:6, 10—those serving in leadership within the local church need to be “proved.” They need to have demonstrated some skill and ability to rightly divide the word of truth. Why? Because they are going to need those skills to answer heretical teaching that will arise from within and

without the local church.

### **Final Thoughts on Heresy**

- Heresy is not something that was determined by church councils or the Roman Catholic Inquisition. We need to remember that Paul wrote his epistles and identified heretics in the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, over one hundred years before the organized church identified any of the traditional heresies associated with the Christian faith. Therefore, we should not allow church tradition to form our definition of heresy.
- II Timothy 2:25-26—teaches that we should try to instruct heretics in the spirit of meekness so that they might recover themselves out of the snare of the devil and acknowledge the truth
- Titus 3:10—informs us that heretics are not to be tolerated indefinitely. The English word “admonition” carries the following meanings according to Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language*:
  - “Gentle reproof; counseling against a fault; instruction in duties; caution; direction.”
- Titus 3:11—the English word “subverted” means overthrown; overturned; entirely destroyed, according to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*. Heretics are sinning and condemning themselves or opposing themselves according to II Timothy 2:25.

### **I Corinthians 11:20**

- **When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper.**
- A third problem that existed when the Corinthians came together was their attitude and conduct as it pertained to the “Lord’s Supper.”
- According to verse 20, the primary goal of the Corinthians coming together “into one place,” was “not to eat the Lord’s Supper.” Paul’s comments here indicate that many believed that it was.

### **I Corinthians 11:21**

- **For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.**
- *For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper*—the Corinthians were literally eating a meal when they came together. The English word “supper” means the following, according to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*:
  - “The evening meal. The dinner of fashionable people would be the *supper* of rustics.”

- The primary meanings of the Greek word translated “supper” are: “a formal meal usually held at the evening,” and “food taken at evening.”
- This “supper” was out of order. “Everyone” or all the Corinthians were looking out for themselves first in taking their own supper without regard for other people.
- *and one is hungry, and another is drunken*—the second half of the verse tells you the results of their conduct in the first half. Some didn’t get anything to eat and went away hungry while others partook to the excess and became drunk.
- This verse challenges our traditional understanding of the Lord’s Supper in the following ways:
  - The Corinthians were eating a meal not just crackers and juice. They were not practicing a sanitized version of the Catholic Mass.
  - Paul rebukes them for the manner in which they were eating this meal, as gluttons drunken feast.
  - I Corinthians 5:2, 8, 11-13—Paul told the Corinthians not to be with this fornicator and to put him out of the assembly. In doing so this person would not have eaten the Lord’s Supper with the Corinthians.

### **I Corinthians 11:22**

- **What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not.**
- Notice that this verse is comprised of a series of questions that end with a statement.
- *What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?*—yes, the Corinthians had houses to eat and drink in. They needed to use them for their rightful purpose.
- *or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?*—their conduct was causing the less fortunate among them to experience shame. Image how those who were sent away from the church meeting hungry felt towards themselves as well as the conduct of others.
- *What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this?*—Paul gives his answer to these questions when he states, “I praise you not.” This statement takes you back to the beginning of the paragraph in verse 17 where Paul said, “Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better but for the worse.”