

Sunday, September 9, 2018—I Corinthians 16:19-24 Saying Good Bye to Corinth

I Corinthians 16:19

- *The churches of Asia salute you*—this statement is further proof that Paul was in Asia when he wrote the book of I Corinthians. More specifically he was in Ephesus in Acts 19 when the epistle of I Corinthians was penned.
- *Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord*—this statement also seems to suggest that Aquila and Priscilla were with Paul in Ephesus when he wrote I Corinthians.
 - Acts 18:1-3—Aquila and his wife were originally from Rome and came to reside in Corinth because of the actions taken by the Roman Emperor Claudius in expelling all the Jews from the city. Upon arriving in Corinth, Paul came to reside with this family because of their like occupation as tentmakers.
 - Acts 18:18—when Paul left Corinth Priscilla and Aquila went with him.
 - Acts 18:19-28—Paul left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus where they met Apollos.
 - Acts 19—Paul comes back to Ephesus.
 - Romans 16:3-4—by the time Paul wrote the book of Romans in Acts 20, Aquila and Priscilla had made their way back to their home city of Rome.
- *with the church that is in their house*—don't get hung up on where a church meets.
 - Acts 19:9—Paul disrupted daily in the school of Tyrannus.

I Corinthians 16:21

- *The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand*—cross references suggest that even though Paul sometimes dictated his letters he always penned the salutation in his own hand.
 - Romans 16:22—in the case of the book of Romans, Tertius was the amanuenses or the one to whom Paul dictated the epistle.
 - Romans 1:1
 - Galatians 6:11—in the case of the book of Galatians it seems that Paul wrote the entire epistle himself.
 - Colossians 4:18

- II Thessalonians 2:17—this verse states that Paul’s hand-written salutations were a token of all his epistles. In short, Paul’s hand-written salutations were a mark of authenticity and apostolic authority.
 - II Thessalonians 2:1-2—the indication from verse 2 is that the Thessalonians had received and were troubled by false letters “as from” Paul. It is therefore fitting that Paul point out the significance of his salutations at the end of the epistle.

Ending Where We Began

- II Timothy 3:16-17—according to Paul all scripture is profitable for four things:
 - Doctrine
 - Reproof
 - Correction
 - Instruction in Righteousness
- It is recognizing these four applications of scripture as well as the overall theme and purpose set forth in each one of Paul’s church epistles that the significance of their canonical order comes into focus.
- In 1960, Christian author J. Sidlow Baxter wrote a book titled *Explore the Book*. In this book Baxter carried forward some ideas first set forth by E.W. Bullinger in both *The Companion Bible* and *The Church Epistles* (1898) regarding the canonical order of Paul’s letters addressed to the churches.
- According to Baxter, these 9 books are divided into “a quartet, a trio, and a pair.” “The first four cohere; so, do the middle three; so do the final two. In the first four the emphasis is on Christ and the Cross. In the middle three it is on Christ and the Church. In the final two it is on Christ and the Coming. In each case the order in which truth is presented corresponds with the order of the wording in II Timothy 3:16.” (Baxter, 93)
 - Doctrine—Romans
 - Reproof—I & II Corinthians—Christ and the *Cross*
 - Correction—Galatians
 - Doctrine—Ephesians
 - Reproof—Philippians—Christ and the *Church*
 - Correction—Colossians
 - Doctrine—I & II Thessalonians—Christ and the *Coming*
- Thus with respect to the quartet of Romans, I & II Corinthians, and Galatians Baxter writes:

- “. . . we find *doctrine* in Romans; *reproof* in Corinthians; *correction* in Galatians. Reproof always has to do with wrong practice. Correction always to do with wrong doctrine. The Roman epistle sets the *norm*. The Corinthian epistle expose *fault*. The Galatian epistle counters *error*.” (Baxter, 93)
- Baxter is quick to concede that there is doctrine in all the epistles on account of the fact that they all teach Christian truth. Therefore, the doctrine, reproof, correction structure is *characteristic* not *absolute*.
- Baxter really does see characteristic differences between the various books. For instance:
 - “. . . in Romans one subject is developed thesis-like form beginning to end, whereas in Corinthians there is a variety of topics provoked by way of reproof or reply. In Romans the doctrinal pronouncements are formal and didactic; in Corinthians they are only incidental to the replies which Paul is writing to requests and reports from Corinth. The Romans epistle is dogmatic; the Corinthian epistles are apologetic.” (Baxter, 93-94)
- Romans 3:27—doctrinally all boasting is excluded from the salvation
 - I Corinthians 1:29-31—this theme reappears to reprove those who were glorying in men.
- Romans 5:13; 7:7-13—demonstrates in doctrine form that “the strength of sin the law.”
 - I Corinthians 15:56—the same doctrine taught in Romans reemerges to enhance the prospect of resurrection-victory.
- Romans 5:12-21—doctrinally set for the contrast between the first Adam and the last Adam (Jesus Christ).
 - I Corinthians 15:21, 22, 45—the same contrast recurs as incidental to the great resurrection argument and exhortation.
- Romans 14—constitute an entire section on general Christian liberty in things debatable around the principle “that no man put a stumbling block in his brother’s way.”
 - I Corinthians 8:12—the doctrine set forth in Romans is applied reprovably to the Corinthians.
- In Romans doctrine is *stated* whereas in Corinthians it is *related* to specific situation and circumstances. According to Baxter, “In Romans evangelical truth is stated as doctrine to be learned and received. In Corinthians it is rather seen as truth already taught and departed from. In Romans we have the *norm*; in Corinthians the *sub-norm*; in Galatians the *ab-norm*.” (Baxter, 94)

- I Corinthians is a book full of reproof for practical errors in life and walk. There is reproof for:
 - Divisions, envyings, and contentions (Chapter 1-4)
 - Unjudged sexual sin (Chapter 5)
 - Selfish litigation between believers (Chapter 6)
 - Inconsiderate use of Christian liberty in doubtful practices (Chapter 8)
 - Quarrelsome questioning of Paul’s apostleship (Chapter 9)
 - Disorders in public meetings (Chapter 11)
 - Errors in the use of spiritual gifts (Chapter 14)
 - Wrong attitudes toward the coming resurrection (Chapter 15)

Outline of the Book

- After considering many interesting and valid ways of outlining I Corinthians, I decided to use Baxter’s outline presented below with some of my own modifications.

FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

JEUS CHRIST MADE UNTO US WISDOM

Introductory 1:1-9

REPROOF—CONCERNING SCHISMS (Chapters 1-6)

The Corinthians were factiously glorying in men—1:12

- Chapter 1—man-exalting schisms (v. 10-17) are wrong because salvation by the Cross sets aside man’s wisdom altogether (v. 18-31).
- Chapter 2—man-exalting schisms are wrong because true wisdom is imparted by the Spirit, not by man (v. 5-13)
- Chapters 3-4—man-exalting schisms are wrong because human teachers are only stewards: power is of God (3:5-6, 21; 4:1)
- Chapter 5-6—such “glorying” (5:2) are a mockery (5:6) while flagrant evils are condoned—incest, law-suits, and impurity!

REPLIES—CONCERNING PROBLEMS (Chapters 7-16)

The Corinthians has written Paul about problems—7:1

- Chapter 7—reply concern marriage and celibacy.
- Chapters 8-10—reply concerning meats. The principles (Cp. 8); Paul’s example (Cp. 9); Scriptures warning (Cp. 10); the issue (10:23 through 11:1)
- Chapter 11—reply on sex propriety in the assembly (v. 2-16) and general behavior at the Lord’s Table (v. 17-34)
- Chapters 12-14—reply concerning spiritual gifts. Dispensed by the Spirit (Cp. 12); Temporary and poor without love (Cp. 13); Orderly functioning of the gifts, prophecy is best (Cp. 14)
- Chapter 15—reply concerning the resurrection of Saints. Relation to Christ’s (v. 1-19); the prospect (v. 20-34); the body (v. 35-49); the “mystery” (v. 50-58)
- Chapter 16—supplementary and conclusion.
- I chose the book of I Corinthians because it chronicles the struggles of a local church to find their way in a culture that was thoroughly corrupt. There are many lessons that can be learned from I & II Corinthians that parallel our current situation in the United States.