

1ST LETTER OF SAINT PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

Introduction – Chapter 4

Author and Date

Who wrote this letter and when was it written, specifically what year was it written?

Destination

Where is the city of Corinth located? Was the city economically prosperous? What was the moral climate of the city at the time of the Letter?

Purpose

What was the reason that St. Paul wrote the letter to the Corinthians? What were some of the problems with the Corinthian church?

Themes and Characteristics

What is the primary theme of this Letter? What are the two vices that St. Paul takes aim at in his Letter?

Read 1:1-3 What was the opinion of some of the Corinthians concerning St. Paul's authority to teach? (Note 1:1)

What does it mean to be “sanctified in Christ Jesus”? What is the significance of invoking God’s name in every place as it applies to the prophecy of Malachi 1:11 “For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts.” (Note 1:2)

Read 1:3-9 What is meaning of the phrase “the day of our Lord”? (Note 1:8)

What is St. Paul’s stance as it concerns unity in the Church? (Note 1:10-4:21)

Read 1:10-17 Was the baptism of children a common practice in the early Church? (Note 1:16)

What does St. Paul mean when he says, “For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel...”? (Note 1:17)

Read 1:18-19 What is the meaning of Isaiah 29:14 “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart.” (Note 1:19)

Read 1:20-25 “Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? (Note 1:20)

What is meant by the following passage: “For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles...” (Note 1:22, 1:23)

Word Study -- Wisdom

What is meant by the word “Wisdom”? What are 3 examples of Wisdom applied in the Old Testament?

Read 2:1-6 What does St. Paul mean when he says “the mature”? (Note 2:6)

Read 2:7-15 What is meant by the passage: “The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man judges all things but is himself to be judged by no one.” (Note 2:14, 2:15)

Read 3:1-4 What is the difference between spiritual men and men of the flesh? (Note 3:1)

How must the faithful view the importance of their teachers? (Note 3:5-23)

Read 3:5-15 How does the Church interpret the following passage as it relates to Purgatory?

“Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble— each man’s work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and that temple you are.”
(Note 3:12, 3:15)

Read 3:16 How does St. Paul view the mystery of “you are God’s temple”? (Note 3:16)

Read 4:1 What is meant by the phrase “stewards of the mysteries of God”? (Note 4:1)

Read 4:14-17 What is St. Paul’s relation to the Corinthians? What is the relationship between paternity and priesthood? How did the priesthood differ in patriarchal times vs. the Mosaic age? How do we understand priesthood now in New Testament times? (Note 4:15)