

1 CORINTHIANS Chapter 3

Teacher: John M. Brown, Olive Hill Church of Christ, Sunday class, March 2012

I. THE CARNALITY OF THE CORINTHIANS, 3:1-4

- A. Their condition: not spiritual, but carnal – babes.
- B. Paul fed them with milk and not meat (compare Hebrews 5:12-14; 1 Peter 2:2)
- C. The proof they were carnal:
 - 1. Envy, strife, divisions
 - 2. What they said: “I am of Paul...Apollos...” – Are ye not carnal? YES!

II. THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN TEACHERS, 3: 5-9

- A. Who were Paul and Apollos?
 - 1. Ministers by whom ye believed (see Romans 10:14-17).
 - 2. Paul planted; Apollos watered; GOD gave the increase!
- B. The Corinthians belonged to God!
 - 1. Laborers together! God's husbandry (field; tilled land; vineyard), God's building (structure or temple, see 1 Pet. 2:5).
 - 2. The point is: Preachers and teachers are simply God's instruments – one doesn't honor them for being used, but rather honor the One using them (1:31).

III. CHRIST IS THE TRUE FOUNDATION, 3:10-15

- A. Paul laid the TRUE FOUNDATION! (compare Matthew 7:24-27).
 - 1. Christ is the only foundation!
 - 2. Compare Isa. 28:16; 1 Peter 2:4; Matthew 16:18 (another "rock"? see Deut. 32:31)
- B. Two ways to build, vv. 12 ff.
 - 1. Remember - the context is building upon the proper foundation (1 Pet. 2:1-10; Ephesians 2:19 ff).
 - 2. What can be built upon this foundation?

Valuable and Permanent

Gold
Silver
Precious stones

Cheap and Destructible

Wood
Hay
Stubble

3. The verse is referring to two kinds of *WORK* done by persons building upon the foundation of Christ.
 - a. Every man's *WORK* will be tested by fire (Rev. 20:11-15).
 - b. Some men's work will abide, verse 14 (A preacher or teacher takes the gospel to the lost. The lost one obeys it and grows as a Christian. Thus the teacher's work survives and the reward is that the taught man will go to heaven - compare 1 Thess. 2:19-20).
 - c. Some men's work shall be burned, verse 15 (A preacher or teacher takes the gospel to the lost. The lost one obeys, but does not remain faithful. The Lord will take out of His kingdom that which is not right, Matt. 13:37-43. The teacher suffers loss in that the one he taught does not go to heaven, making his labor vain - see Phil. 2:16; Gal. 4:11. BUT note carefully the teacher will not lose his own salvation).

***NOTE: what is built upon the true foundation – PEOPLE – will be tested (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12).**

IV. THE CHURCH AS GOD'S TEMPLE, vv. 16-17

A. "...ye are the temple of God..."

1. Grammatically, "ye" here is second person *plural* pronoun (thus, the church collectively).
2. This verse refers not to the physical body, but to the Lord's spiritual body (in contrast with 1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

B. The CHURCH as God's temple is a continuation of the thought in verse 9:

1. Temples are constructed of gold, silver, precious stone: SAINTS.
2. "Defile" = to corrupt, destroy
3. Putting all this together: *those who had gloried in men had brought division, thereby harming God's Temple* (compare Romans 16:17-18)

V. MAN'S WISDOM, vv. 18-23

A. The possibility of self-deception (compare Gal. 6:3; James 1:26; 1 John 1:8).

1. The one who glories in men and places man's wisdom above God's, deceives himself!
2. GOD'S WISDOM vs. MAN'S WISDOM

B. Thus, no glorying in man or man's wisdom, but only in God!

1. Why? Because "all things are yours..."
Paul, Apollos, Cephas; the world; life & death; things present & things to come
2. The point: the Corinthians should not lay hold on but a small part of that which God had given them (that is, their teachers) when they were recipients of all (cf. Romans 8:38-39).
3. They belonged to CHRIST who belongs to GOD (cf. Galatians 6:14 with 1:29, 31).