

Expansions on First Corinthians

Introduction

What we have here is another scripture related document with the express intent to be read...rather prayed or contemplated...within the context of *lectio divina*. In the introductions to other documents of the same format I've gone into some detail with to the definition and significance of *lectio divina*. Because all have the same general orientation, I see no reason to give a further definition of that phrase. If interested, the reader can always refer to those texts.

At the same time I never tire of offering the following two notes of caution. What's presented here is not a commentary on First Corinthians.¹¹ If the reader wishes information along those lines, obviously plenty of other sources are at one's disposal. Furthermore, I am fully aware of the limitations of the document at hand, more precisely, the absence of a disciplined academic approach. To compensate for that, my sole desire is that the material presented here aides the reader to deepen his or her prayer life.

As for the second note of caution, the approach favoring *lectio divina* doesn't mean one should read **Expansions on First Corinthians** in the conventional way. That's more difficult a task than at first imagined. Rather, the document at hand is merely a helper...a point of reference...to shepherd the reader along with regard to a particular verse or part of a verse. That means one shouldn't breeze through the document but needs to take time...yes, considerable time...to absorb what the text is communicating to us. Indeed, what we have here is loaded with Greek words. In one way that can come across as burdensome but in another way is helpful. I say helpful in that the reader must slow down considerably to appreciate the text at hand.

As to First Corinthians in and by itself, it's a letter written in a straight-forward manner. That means the text moves from point to point or from one issue to the next. Such an approach is difficult to expand upon. It leaves little or no wiggle room I've come to associate with the word "expansion" as found in the title of this document. That term had been used with other texts as, for example, **Genesis** which lends itself for expanding since it's a story. The same could be said with regard to more historical documents including the Gospels as well as **Revelation**. And so the

¹¹ Hopefully a sequel to this text will follow, that is, one with regard to Second Corinthians. The two pretty much form one unit. As for the founding of the church at Corinth, see Acts 18.1-17.

material presented with regard to First Corinthians means the text is more limited as it focuses upon points used directly for *lectio divina*.

Moving along through the document, we encounter words which have been explained earlier. To avoid explaining them again, these reoccurring words are marked by a plus sign (+). However, this doesn't preclude offering further thoughts with regard to the context at hand.

As for the texts used: **The Greek New Testament** (Stuttgart, 1968) and **The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha** or **RSV** (New York, 1973) and on occasion **The NIV Study Bible** (Grand Rapids, 1984) is consulted. As for the font, I pretty much stick to the same four. The one at hand...high tower text...is a favorite simply because it's easy on the eyes.

From time to time the document will be updated. Once complete, it will be removed albeit temporarily for reevaluation but restored shortly thereafter.

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Chapter One

1.1: Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus and our brother Sosthenes,

In a way, this opening verse leans more towards being presented as a formal title. Stretching it a bit, the same can apply to verses two and three. In vs. 1 Paul wants to be clear in stating his presence as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Next in vs. 2 he addresses the church in Corinth and finally in vs. 3 he wishes that particular church grace and peace. Thus in one stroke which has a certain majestic air about it all three verses are rolled into one overall format. Actually we can pick up on certain delight he's taking by adopting this tone.

In light of this, we could say that the letter doesn't get underway until vs. 4. Once this formal introduction is put out there for all to behold, Paul feels free enough that the stage is set for him to address those doctrinal and ethical problems which have reached his ears. He's not content to let them slide nor entrust them to other trusted disciples but feels compelled to address them in person.

The first three words opening First Corinthians convey a seriousness of intent by reason of last two letters of each one, that is, -os: *Paulos kletos* and *apostolos* (Paul,

called and apostle). The three terms are almost interchangeable and convey the same meaning. Paul is careful to attribute his role as apostle as one who had been called and not as one who had set himself up as such. This is authenticated not just by *kletos-apostolos* but by these two words associated with Jesus Christ. Paul states both simply and boldly that such a roll had been presented to him through (*dia*) the will of God, *thelema*. We can be certain that not all at Corinth accepted this bold statement but considered it as presumptuous.

Paul also is careful to add “our brother” Sosthenes who had been an official associated with the synagogue in Corinth but later became a Christian. By including him in his opening words, Paul is seeking to put the Corinthians at ease. Thus Sosthenes is a kind of ticket...a way in...to the local church. If he as one of them had now become associated with Paul, then chances are that Paul will be better received.

1.2: To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus called to be saints together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours;

Once the somewhat formal yet important presentation of vs. 1 is out of the way, Paul can now loosen up a bit and get down to business. That is to say, he turns to those whom he’s addressing, that is, the church of God, *ekklesia* also as assembly or community which is located in Corinth. The phrase “church of God” is a phrase implying that a given association has the same essential identity with other Christian communities. All are the same despite being situated in different parts of the world. Practically speaking, a “church of God” doesn’t include the entire city of Corinth, just a fraction of it.

Vs. 2 speaks of one particular church of God in a given location, namely Corinth. In that place are members—we don’t know the exact number, this being considered incidental—who are sanctified in Christ, *hagiazō* being a verb suggestive of having been set aside. Not only that, such persons are called to be saints, *hagios* as derived from *hagiazō*. The verb is not simply *kaleō* or to call but *epikaleō*, to call upon, the preposition *epi-* or upon giving an air of greater significance to the situation at hand.

The saints just mentioned are not in isolation. They tie in with a much larger group we could call the church as a whole or those who call on the name of Jesus Christ. Note that right away Paul assumes a fairly broad or universal stance here. He says that they are in every place acknowledging Jesus as both their Lord and ours, the latter most likely being Christians not in Corinth. While he’s focused upon addressing a given audience, his words have universal application. Surely those in

Corinth pick up on what's involved here. It's to their advantage that they do so. Thus in one verse we see the genius of Paul which combines the local and universal elements of the Christian church.

1.3: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is precisely to this local and perhaps minuscule assembly...*ekklesia*...that Paul imparts grace and peace (*charis* and *eirene*) from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Those in Corinth hearing the words "all those in every place" noted in vs. 2 will feel that Paul is speaking with a first-hand knowledge of other Christian communities. It comes across as a welcomed relief and implies that everyone is in the same boat.

Paul, of course, can come across as somewhat superior and stilted with his language which as noted earlier, gives him a much needed air of legitimacy. If he were to take a more informal approach, chances are the citizens of Corinth would be less receptive. In fact, they just might dismiss him as another quack albeit a good intention-ed one. Now having presented himself most likely to the full *ekklesia*, Paul can proceed and speak with apostolic authority.

1.4: I give thanks to God always for you because of the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus,

The verse at hand is part of an extended sentence which runs through vs. 9. No doubt Paul's way of communicating can be somewhat long-winded which presents difficulty for modern day readers to accept.

Paul starts off on an upbeat note intended in part to have the Corinthians be well disposed to accept him. He's right to adopt such a stance in order to avoid any potential conflict. After all, Paul had come to Corinth to look into some internal strife that had reached his attention. Nevertheless, with full sincerity he gives thanks to God on their behalf, *euchristeo* also to express appreciation or gratitude. He does this *pantote* or always, at all times, not just at the present. Such thanks is not because of any inherent goodness in those at Corinth but because of the divine grace (*charis* +) bestowed on them in Christ Jesus.²² That is to say, this grace (also as gracious care, solicitude), had been freely bestowed. Such wording makes it clear that the

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Already we have two ways of expressing the following divine name: Jesus Christ and Christ Jesus. It seems that the latter is more formal putting the role of the anointed one first followed by what we'd call today the first name, that is, Jesus.

recipients are to accept it do so as a gift, not as something earned. This can't be drilled home enough and is at the issue of any conflict among the Corinthians.

1.5: that in every way you were enriched in him with all speech and all knowledge—

As already noted, the verse at hand is part of a larger sentence. Here Paul acknowledges that the Corinthians had been enriched in Jesus, *ploutizo* also as to cause to abound. He recognized that these Christians were so endowed with speech and knowledge (*logos* and *gnosis*) but needed to keep in mind their divine source. Paul's words reveal that their renown had reached Paul well before his arrival in Corinth. To receive such praise means that the local inhabitants were fortunate to have had gifted teachers. These persons go unrecorded; some may have had the opportunity to be with one of the original apostles.

Though the dash in this verse and in the next aren't in the Greek critical text, the RSV uses them to mark off some remarks Paul wishes to emphasize.

1.6: even as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you—

This verse contains additional words which Paul inserts as further praise of the Corinthians. *Kathos* or even as puts the remarks at hand on the same level as those of the preceding verse, thereby providing a kind of supplement that isn't to be overlooked. Paul recognized the *marturion* or testimony—also witness which implies a steadfastness in the face of opposition—as it applies to Christ.

As for this *marturion* having been confirmed (*bebaioo* also as to establish), most likely Paul is acknowledging the unnamed teachers responsible for having enriched the Corinthians noted in vs. 5. Chances are he may have known some if not all of them who have since departed for other places. For such *marturion* to receive high praise means that Paul was indeed impressed by what he had encountered and that it held up to reports he had heard earlier. Obviously it did the Corinthians good to hear this as well so as remain firm in their faith.

1.7: so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Hoste or so that appears on the other side of the hyphen, that is, with regard to vs. 6. The verse at hand shows the result, if you will, of the enrichment or *ploutizo* of vs. 5. The verb that offsets this is a similar one though put in the negative, *hustero* or to

come up short or to be deficient in something. Here it pertains to not lacking all spiritual gifts or *charisma* also as a favor which has been bestowed.

Such gifts are meant to be temporary while the Corinthians are waiting for the revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ. The verb *apedekomai* suggests an eager expectation with regard to *apokalupsis* or that which is hidden yet already present. And so Paul comes across as being impressed by the way the Christians in Corinth have been engaged in this waiting while knowing what is involved. Again, this is due in large parts to the anonymous teachers who had been among them.

1.8: who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the conclusion of one of scripture's longest sentences begun with vs. 4. The "who" of course is Jesus Christ. He's engaged not just in sustaining the Corinthians, *bebaioo* +, but continues to do so unto the end or *telos*, a word which often means completion or a fullness that has been achieved. Such *bebaioo* involves making the Corinthians guiltless, *anegkletos* or irreproachable. This is a particular location or better time, the day (*hemera* is equal to a *kairos* event) which belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. Note that it is this same Lord Jesus Christ in vs. 7 who's involved here. In other words, Jesus is projecting himself to a future time or *hemera* which will be fulfilled in the Corinthians. Surely some of those listening to Paul have an inkling of what he's saying by reason of having been exposed to those anonymous teachers who had visited Corinth.

1.9: God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul brings to a conclusion his introductory remarks, deliberately favorable but in a way contrived to prepare the Corinthians for discussing the dissensions among their ranks. They knew this is why Paul paid a visit which naturally put them on edge. In a way this was to be expected because the teachers who had spent some time among them had left and sent him a report of their findings. Now the Corinthians had to fend for themselves.

Pistos is the adjective for faithful, also dependable with respect to God. He is responsible for having called (*kaleo* implies summoning) the Corinthians into fellowship with his son, Jesus Christ. *Koinonia* is the noun, an association with mutual interests. Again, this had its origins in those teachers who had spent time in Corinth.

1.10: I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

Now we're getting into the main reason for Paul's visit to Corinth, these words not especially welcomed but necessary for the local church to hear. He starts off with the verb *parakaleo*, literally to call or to summon beside with the preposition *dia* or through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is to say, Paul uses the mediation of *onoma* (name) for the second time, the first being in vs. 2 though in a different context.

The *parakaleo* of Paul is divided into two parts and is aimed at what the Corinthians had anticipated. The first that all the Corinthian agree...that is, the entire *ekklesia*...the verb being *lego* or simply to say. Though a simple verb, it implies ongoing dialogue so as to make all positions clear. The second parts is more specific as to what is involved, that they do not have any dissensions. *Schisme* is a vivid term meaning a crack or fissure, something often associated as with an earthquake. The effect of such a fissure is profound as by the preposition *en* for "in you."

Instead of this fissure in the Corinthian church Paul wishes all to be united in the same mind and same judgment. The verb is *katartizo* where the preposition *kata* or according to prefaced to the root *artao*, to fasten to and serves to make the fastening all the more secure. As for the fastening, both mind and judgment are involved, that is, *nous* and *gnome*. The former often applies to perception, sense and even judgment where as the latter a viewpoint or way of thinking of a matter. Note that the adjective *autos* applies to both which here is rendered as the same. This insertion by Paul is deliberate and intended to offset the *schisme* at hand, the chief reason for his visit to Corinth.

1.11: For it has been reported to me by Chloe's ³³ people that there is quarreling among you, my brethren.

As for the report—*deelo* is a verb meaning to make clear, evident—Paul had gotten word through persons associated with Chloe before coming to Corinth. A footnote in one reference inferred that the people involved could have been slaves. In fact, their

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From a reference off the Internet: "Chloe...reported to Paul about divisions and quarrels within the Corinthian church. While nothing more is definitely known about Chloe, it is widely believed she was a prominent, possibly wealthy, Christian who was a leader in a house church, and her household's credible report prompted Paul to write the letter address the problems."

having-made-clear most likely was what prompted Paul to pay a visit, the prospect of which naturally having set them on edge. As for the *deloo*, it pertained to the dissensions of vs. 11 which here are rendered as discord and even outright strife. It's made worse by being *en* or "in you." Because the matter is so delicate Paul uses familiar language, that is to say, "my brethren."

1.12: What I mean is that each one of you says, "I belong to Paul" or "I belong to Apollos" or "I belong to Cephas" or "I belong to Christ."

Here Paul gets more specific with regard to the report of strife or quarreling that's disturbing the church at Corinth. Nothing is said as to how widespread it is. However, given that Paul made his way there suggests it was quite serious. Surely those anonymous teachers who had taught the faith at Corinth after Paul first came there must have gotten word and were equally dismayed. At the same time they figured the situation was beyond their competency to step in.

Paul cites directly what he had heard, that is, four instances of the Corinthian Christians belonging to four groups, each of which was at odds with the other. As for Paul, Apollos or Cephas (apart from Jesus Christ), they are persons who supposedly had stirred up the church. Paul must have been dismayed to hear that his name was mentioned. Not just that, he was even more disturbed that others gave their allegiance to Jesus Christ. Obviously this is not bad in and by itself but harmful insofar as Jesus is being used as one representative of a particular group over and against others. As for the belonging mentioned four times, the genitive case is used.

1.13: Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Here Paul spontaneously utters three rhetorical questions basically to shake up the Corinthians. Hopefully they'll be disposed to see the divisions existing among them. Certainly Christ is not divided, *merizo* meaning not just to divide but to distribute the parts after such a division. Paul being crucified instead of Jesus is intended to directly shame the Corinthians. The same with regard to being baptized in his name. There's no adequate response to such questioning which means the Corinthians were reduced to silence.

1.14: I am thankful that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius;

This and the next verse form one whole sentence. In the previous verse Paul concludes with the Corinthians supposedly being baptized in his name. Here he

shows deliberate frustration at not having baptized any of the congregation at hand with the exception of two people. A footnote in the **NIV** says that Crispus is probably the synagogue ruler in Acts 18.8 and Gaius as referred to in Rom 16.23. Paul being thankful therefore is a way of showing the foolishness of the Corinthians in their dissensions.

1.15: lest any one should say that you were baptized in my name.

Paul concludes his somewhat sarcastic words about the divisions shown by those at Corinth. Obviously he considers anyone baptized in his name as contrary to every Christian teaching on the matter.

1.16: (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any one else.)

The **RSV** puts this verse in parentheses in light of the cautionary statement of the previous verse. A posting on the Internet also gives this information with regard to Stephanas: "In the Book of 1 Corinthians, Stephanas is presented as a prominent Christian in Corinth whose household was among the first to believe in Achaia and were personally baptized by the Apostle Paul. Paul refers to Stephanas and his family as the "first-fruits of Achaia" and commends them for having "devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints" (1 Corinthians 16:15). Stephanas also came to Paul in Ephesus, along with Fortunatus and Achaicus, possibly to deliver a message from the Corinthian church."

1.17: For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel and not with eloquent wisdom lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

The verb to send here is *apostello*, the root for apostle which Paul proudly applies to himself in the very first verse: "to be an apostle of Christ Jesus." In the verse at hand this sending does not come of his own accord; rather, Paul attributes it directly to Christ. Though baptism is important for a person to become initiated into Christian life, Paul makes it clear that it is not the proper work for an apostle. That can be assigned to those whom Paul appoints within the church at Corinth.

Preaching the gospel is the primary task of an apostle, *euaggelizo* ⁴⁴. Implied is that other persons are to pick up the slack, as it were, and fill in the necessary pieces of this preaching. As for this preaching, Paul is clear about not using eloquent wisdom or literally “in word of wisdom,” *logos* + and *sophia*, the latter also as technique. If Paul used such language, the cross of Christ would run the risk of being emptied of its power. “Power” is lacking in the Greek text; only the verb is used, *kenoo* often as to vanish into nothingness. Here we have the first mention of the importance of the cross as a kind of living presence intimately bound up with Jesus Christ and an essential part of any *euaggelizo*.

1.18: For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Paul now speaks of the cross or more specifically the *logos* + of the cross, its full expression. Most likely the Christians at Corinth head about Jesus having been crucified and had just a basic understanding of what that meant. Indeed this *logos* in and by itself is folly, *moria* also as foolishness which Paul specifies as belonging to those persons who are in the process of perishing, *apollumi* being a vivid verb as to come to utter destruction.

Despite this gloomy prospect which is applicable to some persons, Paul attributes not the cross but the *logos* of it as being the power of God, its *dunamis* also as might or power to function in a given way. Such *dunamis* is operative only with regard to being saved, *sozo* also as to rescue. Thus we have two verbs in the present participle meaning that perishing and being saved are going on concurrently.

1.19: For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart.”

With regard to the bold statement of the previous verse Paul figures he had better back it up with something substantial. That’s why he quotes from Ps 29.14. It’s a partial verse insofar as it’s part of the previous one. Because of this, the two are quoted here as one: “And the Lord said: ‘Because this people draws near with their mouth and honors me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment of men learned by rote; therefore, behold, I will again do marvelous things with this people,

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*This word, so common in Christian circles, is worth a quick examination. We have the root *aggello* or to bear a message prefaced with the adverbial form of *agathos* (good), *eu-* meaning well. This *euaggelizo* comes across as something like to transmit a message well or to do a good job at it. In sum, emphasis is upon action, nothing static.*

wonderful and marvelous; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hid.”

Note the unity of the two verbs, *apollumi* + (as in vs. 18) and *atheteo*, the latter to do away with. The first is with respect to the *sophia* + of those who are *sophos* also as experienced. The second is with respect to *sunesis* of those who are *sunetos*, both from the same root literally as to be with, *sun-*.

1.20: 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?

Paul comes off with four rapid fire rhetorical sentences not meant to be answered but to put the Corinthians on the spot. The first three begin with *pou* or where which infers that the person who's wise, a scribe or debater (*sophos* +, *grammateus* and *suzhtetes*) are not present or better, have melted away before the word or *logos* of the cross in vs. 18. To Paul all three are basically cut from the same piece of cloth. That's why in question number four he says that God himself has made foolish the world's wisdom. The verb is *moraino* which also can be rendered as to make insipid or tasteless. *Sophia* + as belonging to the world (*kosmos*) usually applies to current philosophical schools of thought which Paul see as both a threat and as empty.

1.21: For since in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

Paul presents two types of wisdom or *sophia* +: that of God and that of the world or *kosmos* +. The failure of the latter's wisdom is ignorance of God, the common verb *ginosko* with *ouk* or not. However, God was pleased (*eudokeo*, to consider something as good and worthy of making a choice) to save those who believe (*sozo* + and *pisteuo*) those persons through the folly of preaching, *moria* + and *kerugma*. Such folly rests upon what Paul had just said with regard to the cross of Jesus Christ. Note that he uses the first person plural which is not in the Greek text.

1.22: For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,

This verse and the next two form one extended sentence. Here Paul is speaking from his experience in having dealt with other Christian communities before coming to Corinth. His audience basically consists of Jews and Greeks, the former being of his own kin though he like many other educated persons, were familiar with Greek thought and culture.

Jews = *semeion* or distinguishing mark by which something is known. The verb at hand is *aiteo* also as to request.

Greeks = *sophia* +. The verb at hand is *zeteo* also as to search, to look for.

1.23: but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,

Note the use of *de* beginning this and the next verse rendered as “but” and can be defined as a marker connecting a series of closely related data or lines of narrative. Thus in contrast to the interests of both Jews and Greeks of the previous verse Paul preaches Christ crucified, *kerusso* also as to make a public declaration. He uses the first person plural which can suggest two things. First, he has in mind those associated with him who are engaged in the same work and second, that the first person plural has a way of putting people at ease, that Paul isn’t coming to Corinth as a one man show.

In place of the signs associated with the Jews, Paul presents a stumbling block or *skandalon* and folly or *moria* + associated with the Gentiles instead of wisdom.

1.24: but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

This verse begins with the second *de* as but, the first noted in the previous verse. Paul holds out hope to both Jews and Greeks as being called or *kletos* + suggestive of being invited. To them is offered—and done so directly with any mediating factor involved—Christ as *dunamis* and *sophia* (both +) or power and wisdom of God. He is mentioned twice instead of once, that is, to make sure the Corinthians see God as associated with each noun.

1.25: For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Paul attributes two negative qualities to God which taken on significant meaning and most likely unfamiliar to the Corinthians let alone other Christians. First is foolishness, the adjective *moros* (cf. *moria* as in vs. 23) which turns out to be wiser than men, *sophos* +. Second Paul presents God’s weakness or *to asthenes* (what is weak or also delicate) as being stronger than men, *ischuros*. Note that the adjectives are attributed to God whereas there are none with regard to men.

1.26: For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth;

This and the next verse form one lengthy verse.

Armed with a reversal of how people generally perceive God, Paul starts off by asking the Corinthians to consider their call. *Blepo* or to see is the verb along with *klesis*. In other words, they are to look closely at themselves as Christians. Paul next singles out only a handful of three groups of Corinthians: the first as being wise (*sophos*) according to worldly standards, the second as not powerful (*dunatos*, having *dunamis* as in vs. 24) and third as lacking noble birth, *eugenes* also as well born. The danger of speaking as such is that those who qualify could think themselves as special and set apart which is not the case.

1.27: but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong,

God makes a twofold choice: that which is foolish and that which is weak, *moros* and *asthenes* (both +). The two are located in the world or *kosmos* +, genitive case or “of the world” meaning they are part and parcel of it. This choice has as its aim to impart shame, *kataischuno* where the preposition *kata-* or down, in accord with prefaced to the verbal root *aischuno* intensifies the meaning. This is with regard those who are wise and strong, *sophos* and *ischuros* (both +).

1.28: God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,

This verse continues with Paul speaking of the inverse value at hand, that is, God preferring what the world considers low and despised, *agenes* and *exoutheneo*, not of noble birth and to disdain, to have no merit. Both are of (genitive case) of the world or *kosmos* +. To both Paul adds “those which are not.” At the same time they have a purpose, to reduce to nothing things that are, *katargeo*. The preposition *kata-* as down serves to emphasize the meaning of the verb and the reduction to nothing of those things which are. As for these things, Paul doesn’t spell them out but infers they are useless in light of what he has communicated thus far.

1.29: so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

Hopos or “so that” is important insofar as it serves to make a transition with regard to what Paul has been getting at by speaking of what is despised and lowly. In sum, no human being is to boast in God’s presence. The verb is *kauchaomai* also as to take pride in something. *Sarx* or flesh is the noun used for human being and *enopion* implies face.

1.30: He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption;

The first part of this verse reads literally as “from him you are in Christ Jesus.” God made him not just wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption but ours or at least applied to the first two: *sophia* +, *dikaiosune*, *hagiasmos* and *apolutrosis*.

1.31: therefore as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord."

Hina or therefore serves to bring to a conclusion Chapter One where Paul uses the authority of a scriptural verse, the verb *kauchaomai* + to boast. The quote is from Jer 9.24 which is a partial sentence. In light of this, it and the previous verse run in full as “Thus says the Lord: ‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, says the Lord.’”

I include the following notations taken from **Expansions on the Book of Jeremiah** also on this homepage:

The remaining verses from 23 onward are in prose form, the one at hand beginning with “thus says the Lord” right after these words in the previous verse. The Lord gives a warning to the wise, the mighty and rich man (*chakam*, *gibor* and *hashyr*: cf. vss. 17, 5.16 but not noted there and Ps 45.12). All are not to glory in their respective natural abilities, *halal* (cf. 4.2). Obviously this leads to *halal* being transferred over to the Lord where they will both understand and know him (*sakal* and *yadah*, cf. 5.21 and vs. 3). After all, it’s the Lord, source of steadfast love, justice and righteousness (*chesed*, *mishpat* and *tsedaqah*: 2.2, 8.7 and 4.2). Note that they are done in the earth or ‘erets, the same ‘erets which is ruined and laid waste as a wilderness in vs. 12. Such are the three qualities which delight the Lord, *chaphets* (cf. 6.10). Unfortunately most of the people fail to realize how simple are the requirements and the result, *chaphets* indicative of pure joy.