

Sunday, May 10, 2015—I Corinthians 1:1-2: Sanctified in Christ Jesus, Called to be Saints

Introduction

- Last Sunday we began our exposition of I Corinthians by looking at the first phrase of I Corinthians 1:1: “Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God.” In doing so we covered the following aspects of Paul’s unique apostleship.
 - Saul’s name and career change from Saul to Paul and from Pharisee to Apostle of Christ.
 - Paul was “called *to be* an apostle” by the glorified and ascended Christ and sent to the Gentiles in Acts 9 (See Acts 26:17).
 - It was “through” the instrumentality of the will of God the Father that the Son acted with respect the Paul. In making Paul an “apostle” Jesus Christ acted in accordance with the eternal purpose of God to reveal and make known the mystery of his will (Eph. 1:9).
- In today’s study we want to tie up a few loose ends from last week and then move on with our examination of the text.

I Corinthians 1:1, Cont.

- **1) Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother,**
- I Timothy 2:4-7—Paul is the Godhead’s “due time” apostle. Paul is the one who testifies regarding all that Christ accomplished at the cross. Paul explains how the cross is the mechanism through which the church the body of Christ could be formed (Eph. 2:16).
- Crucial to understanding Paul’s “due time” apostleship is the acknowledgment that Paul is not one of the 12 apostles but that his apostleship is wholly unique and distinct.
- Acts 1:21-26—Paul is not the true replacement for Judas as many have asserted. Paul did not meet the qualifications.
- Galatians 1:11-12, 17—Paul did not learn what he preached from Peter and the 12. Rather he was taught it by the direct revelation of Jesus Christ.
- I Corinthians 1:1—the reason the body of Christ is in the condition that it is today is on account of its widespread failure to recognize Pauline authority.
- Paul was called and sent forth by the glorified and ascended Christ in accordance with the will of God the Father. One cannot do the will of God today by ignoring the message and ministry of the Apostle Paul.

- *And Sosthenes our brother*—Paul identified Sosthenes as being with him when he addresses the epistles to the Corinthians.
- Acts 18:17—Sosthenes is only mentioned one other time in Scripture. We learn in Acts 18:17 that Sosthenes, had been “the chief ruler of the synagogue” in Corinth. The Greeks who beat Sosthenes before the judgment seat in verse 17 appear to the Greeks from the synagogue from back in verse 4.
- It appears to be on account of his belief of Paul’s gospel and his faith in Jesus Christ that Sosthenes was beaten. That Sosthenes is a believer is clear from Paul’s reference to him in I Cor. 1:1 as “Sosthenese our brother.” Sosthenes was clearly with Paul in Ephesus when he wrote I Corinthians in Acts 19:21-22.

I Corinthians 1:2

- **Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:**
- *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth*—we have already seen in Part 1 of our introduction that Paul is addressing the believers that comprise the “church of God of God which is at Corinth.”
- This verse highlights the difference between the universal church, i.e., the greater body of Christ of which all believers are members and the local manifestation of the greater body located in Corinth, i.e., the local church.
- Acts 18:7—initially the Corinthians meet in the house of Justus, “whose house joined hard to the synagogue.”
- The word translated “church” does not refer to a meeting-place or a building but the assembling of the believers together to edify and exhort one another in the word of God. Paul was not picky about where the believers chose to meet.
 - Acts 19:9—in the city of Ephesus the church in the school of Tyrannus.
- *To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus*—who is Paul addressing in the verse? The “church of God which is at Corinth.” Notice that Paul states that the Corinthians “are sanctified” i.e., they are in the state of having been sanctified (past tense). In other words, the sanctification of the Corinthians was a done deal; Paul is reporting the reality of their spiritual condition in Christ.

- In Greek the verb “are sanctified” is in the perfect tense and the passive voice. The perfect tense denotes an action or process that took place in the past the results of which continue into the present. Meanwhile the passive voice represents the subject as receiving the action of the verb.
- In other words, God the Holy Spirit had sanctified the believers in Corinth and set them apart in Christ. The Corinthians were both the recipients and beneficiaries of this act of God on their behalf.
- In his book *Dictionary of the Gospel* Pastor Tom Bruscha offers a helpful discussion of the meaning of the word sanctification, i.e., the state, to set apart as holy unto God.
 - “The term “sanctification” is a term that designates ownership. A person, place, or thing is separated from its prior owner and becomes the possession of its new owner. Also in the process of transferring the ownership there is a cleansing. Since the new owner is God, the person, place, or thing must be consecrated (holy). . . The moment a person puts his trust in the finished work of Jesus Our Christ he is sanctified. The cross is the means of cleansing and purifying the Believer from his sins and it he is sanctified.
- Hebrews 10:10
- I Corinthians 3:1-3—even though the Corinthians were carnal and immature they had been and continued to be positionally “sanctified in Christ Jesus.”
- I Corinthians 6:11—believers have been cleansed from their sins and have been set apart unto God.
 - Positional Sanctification—I Stand “In Christ” complete!
- *Called to be saints*—according to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* the first meaning of the English word “saint” is “a person sanctified.” It is on account of their sanctified position in Christ that the Corinthians are “called to be saints.”
- According to *Strong’s Concordance* the Greek word *hagios* means “most holy thing.”
 - Luke 1:35—the same word used to describe the conception and birth of Christ (“holy thing”) is used to describe the Corinthians (“saints”).
 - Romans 1:7
- As a believer, I am a “sanctified one.” This is why the Bible calls all believers “saints.” The Bible declares all who have trusted in the blood of Christ for their salvation to be “saints.” In fact, the Corinthians were the least likely people in the world to be called “saints” that Paul ever wrote to. But just the same he addressed them as “saints.”

- Even though we are “saints” it is possible to have behavior that is unbecoming of a saint, i.e., not in line with who God has made you in Christ. This was certainly a problem for the Corinthians as we shall see throughout our study of I Corinthians.
 - Romans 16:2
 - Ephesians 5:3
- II Corinthians 6:17—now because the believer belongs to God, God instructs the believer to live a life of separation.
- II Corinthians 7:1—we are to live a pure life because we are saved, not in order to get saved.
- II Timothy 2:19-21—as believers we should never forget that God saved us for his glory and for his purpose and that we are saved unto good works.
- We as believers belong to God NOW! Therefore we ought to live for Him TODAY and every day the Lord gives us.
 - Practical Sanctification—the state or condition of the believers Christian walk.
- One day we will experience our final sanctification when we will once and for all time be set apart from this world and the sin that resides in our flesh.

Conclusion

- I Corinthians 1:2—regardless of their sinfulness and extravagance nothing could take away the sanctified position and sainthood that had been given to the Corinthians “in Christ Jesus.”