

Sunday, September 20, 2015—I Corinthians 1:27-29: That No Flesh Should Glory in His Presence

### Introduction/Review

- Last Sunday we looked at verses 26 and 27 of I Corinthians chapter 1.
- I Corinthians 1:26—does not say that there **are not any** “wise men after the flesh,” “mighty” or “noble” within the assembly. Rather it says that there **are not many**. This does not mean that the message of Christ crucified is irrational or contrary to reason what it means is that it runs contrary to man’s wisdom.
- What this means is that those who have the most to lose in this world in terms of intellectual prowess, power, position, station, or finances will struggle the most with the preaching of the cross.
  - For the “noble” the message of the cross is too much because they are relying/trusting in the fact that they are something in this world. For the “wise men” believing in the miracle of resurrection is irrational and contrary to the laws of nature and “unscientific.” For the “mighty” they don’t want to relinquish their power. So the result is that not many of these types of people are going to be found in the church in Corinth or any true Bible teaching assembly.
- This morning, I want to reiterate a few points about verse 27 and then look at how verses 27 and 28 build upon each other and lead to the conclusion in verse 29.

### I Corinthians 1:27

- **But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;**
- Once again note the contrast “but” at the beginning of verse 27. Verse 27 is going to help explain what we studied last week in verse 26.
- *But God hath chosen*—God chose out of the pleasure of his own will (see verse 21) that the foolish and weak things of this world would confound the wise and the mighty. This is the way God chose for things to function.
- The English word “confound” carries a host of meanings according to Webster’s 1828 Dictionary: 1) To mingle and blend different things, so that their forms or natures cannot be distinguished; to mix in a mass or crowd, so that individuals cannot be distinguished. 2) To throw into disorder. 3) To mix or blend, so as to occasion a mistake of one thing for another. 4) To perplex; to disturb the apprehension by indistinctness of ideas or words. 5) To abash; to throw the mind into disorder; to cast down; to make ashamed. 6) To perplex with terror; to terrify; to

dismay; to astonish; to throw into consternation; to stupify with amazement. 7) **To destroy; to overthrow.**

- The English word “confounded” occurs 50 times in 47 verses in the King James Bible. Confounded means “mixed or blended in disorder; perplexed; abashed; dismayed; **put to shame and silence**; astonished.” (Webster’s 1828)
- God has chosen for the foolish things of the world to destroy, overthrow, and put to shame and silence the wise (verse 19) and the weak things of the world to destroy, overthrew, and put to shame and silence the things that are mighty.

### **I Corinthians 1:28**

- **And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:**
- Note the continuative use of the word “and” at the beginning of verse 28. Verse 28 is continuing the thought presented in verse 27.
- In the first half of the verse, Paul identifies two things that God has chosen: 1) the base things of the world, and 2) things which are despised.
- The English word “base” carries the following relevant meanings according to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*: 1) Low in place. 2) Mean; vile; worthless; that is, low in value or estimation; used of things. 3) Of low station; of mean account; without rank, dignity or estimation among men; used of persons.
- *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* defines “despised” as condemned; disdained; abhorred. The Greek word translated “despised” occurs 15 times in 11 verses in the Greek text supporting the King James Bible and is variously translated as despise, set at nought, least esteemed, and contemptible.
  - Luke 18:9
  - Luke 23:11
  - I Corinthians 6:4
  - II Corinthians 10:10
- Out of all the things the world has to offer God has chosen to use and utilized the things that are “base” and “despised.”

- *yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are*—the phraseology of the second half of verse 28 is a bit awkward and has caused many to question exactly what Paul is driving at. In preparation for this message I checked all the commentaries in my possession on I Corinthians and every single one refrained from commenting on the second half of verse 28. What this tells you is that no one seems to know exactly what Paul means.
- Paul follows up his statement in the first half of the verse by saying “yea.” According to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* the English word “yea” means: 1) Yes; a word that expresses affirmation or assent. Will you go? Yea. It sometimes introduces a subject, with the sense of indeed, verily, truly, it is so. 2) It sometimes enforces the sense of something preceding; not only so, but more (Philippians 1:18). 3) In Scripture, it is used to denote certainty, consistency, harmony, and stability.
- The “yea” is followed with the word “and.” So after affirming the truthfulness of the first statement with the expression “yea” the second half means to build upon, expand, or provide further elaboration.
- The basic meaning of the word “nought” means nothing. To bring something to nought means to reduce it to nothing.
- Given these factors, I understand Paul to be saying: God is going to use the things that are not i.e., nothing in the world’s estimation to bring to naught the things that are highly valued and esteemed by the world.
- Note the connection between verse 26 and verses 27 and 28:
  - Verse 26—“not many wise men after the flesh . . . are called”
    - Verse 27—God uses the “foolish things of the world to confound the wise.”
  - Verse 26—“not many . . . mighty. . . are called”
    - Verse 27—God chose for “the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.”
  - Verse 26—“not many . . . noble. . . are called.”
    - Verse 28—God chose “the base things of the world”
- Verses 27 and 28 explain why not many “wise men,” “mighty,” and “noble” after the flesh are called. God is choosing to do things in the exact opposite way that man in his wisdom thinks they should be done.
- Verse 29 gives us God’s reason for choosing to do things this way.

**I Corinthians 1:29**

- **That no flesh should glory in his presence.**
- That = the purpose and the intent.
- Verse 29 brings to completion that thought that began back in verse 26. God has chosen to do things in this manner so that “no flesh should glory in his presence.”
  - Romans 3:23—“. . . short of the glory of God.”