
INTRODUCTION

EPIC Bible study for 2016 will start with the First Letter to the Corinthians. There is no set date to finish the study of this letter. We will let the Holy Spirit lead us in that area as well.

This letter was written to eliminate the carnality that was flourishing in the Corinthian Church rather than discussing issues of heresy. (Heresy - Any belief or practice that goes against the official position of the church is considered heretical; i.e. angel worship, salvation by works, salvation by Christ plus works, disbelief in the resurrection of the body, disbelief in the trinity or questioning the divinity of Christ, declaring that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is co-redemptress, just to name a few!)

Paul is upset with the Corinthian church because of the immoral condition of the church. Paul doesn't just point out errors; Paul instructs them, and us, on how to make corrections and to mark the path which the Lord commands them and us to follow. In the midst of the instructions to the Corinthian church, Paul was instructed by the Holy Spirit to include a chapter describing the power of love (agape).

The "Love Chapter", as chapter 13 is often called, isn't parenthetical as some would attest. Some would say it was a chapter so placed to give the readers a little respite in the middle of tough rebuke and instruction. This is not the case at all. This chapter was intentionally written and placed to provide powerful instruction on how to properly use the gifts and talents God has given us so that we will have an effective witness as we attempt to bring the Gospel to a lost and dying world.

In Chapter 15 Paul explains bodily resurrection. He tells of the order in which resurrection will take place, the moral value of the resurrection, the glorified bodies of the resurrection, the mystery of the resurrection, and the practical value of the resurrection. This chapter strengthens the reader and gives hope eternal knowing that at the end of this life, there is a more glorious life and body waiting for every believer.

1ST COR. 1:10-17 (NKJV) A HOUSE DIVIDED CAN NOT STAND

¹⁰ Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

¹¹ For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's *household*, that there are contentions among you.

¹² Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."

¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

¹⁵ lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name.

¹⁶ Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.

¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

In this passage and many others throughout the New Testament, division is something that the Holy Spirit warns against. The Corinthian church was not blessed as we are to have the benefit of the 3 gospel accounts written by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in which Jesus taught on the dangers of a divided house.

Matthew 12:22-26 (NKJV)

²² Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw.

²³ And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

²⁴ Now when the Pharisees heard *it* they said, "This *fellow* does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

²⁵ But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

²⁶ If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?"

What this passage does not say is that everyone in a fellowship, regardless of its size, will actually say and do everything exactly the same. It says that we must at the very least agree on who the true Head of the church is. The Head of the church and our lives is Jesus the Christ, the Son of the Living God. The head of our fellowship is not one our Pastors or Elders, but Jesus Christ.

Too often churches will look to its earthly leaders and determine that their fellowship is better than any other based on self-imposed doctrine or doctrines, originated in that fellowship, that may or may not be scripturally interpreted correctly. However, if we continue to look to Jesus and receive our wisdom from God, we can be assured of unity within the body of Christ with accurate doctrine.

This teaching can cover many aspects of life. Let's take a look at a few examples and discuss.

- Marriage
- Raising children in a Christian home with both parents
- Blended families
- One spouse gets saved and the other does not
- Ministries for all types of addictions

God already knows that even where there is unity, tribulation can still raise its ugly head. However, Jesus has instructed us to be of good cheer, for He has already overcome it and the world (even if you add a current or past addiction to the mix) (**John 16:33**). Nothing is too hard for God (**Gen. 18:14**). And as we already know, "Everything is Possible In Christ"! (**Matt. 19:26**)