

1 Corinthians 3:18-4:5
 Ministers to be Judged by God According to
 Faithfulness

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 July 11, 2010

Paul's Flow of Thought

1 Cor 3:5-9 = Paul and Apollos are fellow workers – the
 Corinthians are "God's building" (vs.9)

1 Cor 3:10-11
 A. Paul laid the foundation of the Church
 B. Someone else is now building on it
 B. That someone better be careful how he builds
 A. The foundation Paul laid is Jesus Christ

1 Cor 3:12-15 Judgment Seat of Christ: All Believers
 will answer as to how they built: gold, silver, precious
 stones

1 Cor 3:16-17 Warning not to destroy God's Temple

The Need For True Wisdom

1 Cor 3:18 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among
 you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a
 fool that he may become wise.

1 Cor 8:2 If anyone supposes that he knows anything,
 he has not yet known as he ought to know.

1 Cor 14:37 If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual,
 let him recognize that the things which I write to
 you are the Lord's commandment.

	<u>Wisdom</u>		<u>Foolishness</u>
Current age:	Man's thoughts	↘	God's thoughts
Age to come:	God's thoughts	↙	Man's thoughts

God Scoffs At Worldly “Wisdom”

1 Cor 3:19-20 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, “**He catches the wise in their own craftiness**”; and again, “**The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.**”

- Paul now states the reverse of 1:18!
- Paul cites Hebrew version of Job 5:13 (Irony in Eliphaz’s statement)
- Paul cites Psalm 94:11 (93:11 LXX). Paul uses “wise” instead of “men.”

All Things Are Ours In Christ!

1 Cor 3:21-23 ~~Therefore let no one boast in men.~~ For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come – all are yours. And you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.

- Paul concludes argument from 1:10-12 “...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.’”
- For = Explanatory: Why should they not boast in men? Because they have all things in Christ.
- All things: Eph 1:10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ which are in heaven and on earth...

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- Christ is functionally subordinate (submits to Father)
- Christ is ontologically equal (equally God)

Deut 6:4 Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!

Phil 2:5-7 ... Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

For Paul the death and resurrection of Jesus marked the turning of the ages in such a way that nothing lies outside Christ's jurisdiction. In the form of the cross God has planted his flag on planet Earth and marked it off as his own possession; hence the "world" is his. So also with the whole of existence ("life" and "death"), which are immediately placed into eschatological perspective ("the present and the future"). Because in Christ Jesus both "life" itself and therefore "the future" are ours, "death" is ours as well, as is "the present." We die, but "life" cannot be taken from us; we live the life of the future in the present age, and therefore the present has become our own possession. For those in Christ Jesus, what things were formerly tyrannies are now their new birthright. This is the glorious freedom of the children of God. They are free lords of all things, not bound to the whims of chance or the exigencies of life and death. Except the continuing expression of death itself. This is the point of 15:23-28. When this final enemy is subdued, *then* comes the End, when all is turned over to the Father (Fee, NICNT).

Apostles: Servants Judged Only By God

- **3:5-9 Apostles as servants**
- **3:13-15 Coming judgment**

1 Cor 4:1-2 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found **faithful**.

Servants = υπηρέτας - A subordinate, servant, attendant, or assistant in general. The subordinate official who waits to accomplish the commands of his superior.

Steward = οικονόμους - A manager of a household.

- Faithfulness is what is required of a servant of God. Notice that Paul does not call for eloquence, or any other abilities!

Paul Defends His Apostolic Authority

1 Cor 4:3-4 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; **but He who judges me is the Lord.**

- Paul can only be judged by the Owner of the home who had given him the trust – Jesus Christ!
- Paul explains that he has a clear conscience, but he acknowledges that does not clear him – Christ alone judges Paul's ministry.

Paul Defends His Apostolic Authority

1 Cor 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

- **Misapplication:** We shouldn't judge anything or anyone until Christ comes! Context clearly indicates that Paul is prohibiting the Corinthians from judging his apostleship.
- We must judge: 1 Cor 5:12-13 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within *the church*? But those who are outside, God judges. REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES.

Application

Paul's words have tremendous implications for Christians today. The church in America, for example, has suffered from its congregants judging its ministers on faulty grounds. Too often, ministers have been judged unfairly for lacking charisma or perceived leadership skills. The lack of biblical judgment has also had disastrous consequences as ministers have not been judged according to what really matters – biblical faithfulness.
