

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 216 – August 4th – 1 Corinthians 1:1-17

Introduction to 1 Corinthians

Corinth the City

The City of Corinth had fallen to the Romans and had virtually been demolished in 146 BC but had later been rebuilt and established as a Roman colony by Julius Caesar in 44 BC.

The city is situated on an isthmus commanding the north-south land route between the two halves of Achaia. Five miles to the east was the harbour of Cenchreae facing towards Ephesus and the Roman province of Asia; a mile and a half to the north lay the harbour of Lechaemum facing west towards Italy. An ancient roadway had been laid across the isthmus at its narrowest point allowing transportation of cargo and even light ships. Corinth was therefore an important centre of trade: it was both wealthy and cosmopolitan. Murphy-O'Connor says, "Corinth had more business than it could comfortably handle. The immense volume of trade was augmented by huge numbers of travellers. Profit came easily to those prepared to work hard, and cut-throat competition ensured that only the committed survived." Travellers included the crowds who came to the biennial Isthmian Games.

Corinth provided ready opportunities for the skilful entrepreneur to become wealthy. Social stratification was therefore complex with the competing claims of the nouveau riche and the noble born. Witherington comments, "In Paul's time many in Corinth were already suffering from a self-made-person-escapes-humble-origins syndrome." Self-promotion and patronage were important elements of public life: "Corinth was a city where public boasting and self-promotion had become an art-form. The Corinthian people thus lived with an honour-shame cultural orientation, where public recognition was often more important than facts... In such a culture a person's sense of worth is based on recognition by others of one's accomplishments."¹ Thistleton concludes, "Corinthian culture has much in common with the social constructivism, competitive pragmatism, and radical pluralism which characterises so-called postmodernity as a popular mood."

All of this shaped the role of rhetoric at Corinth. Thistleton comments, quoting Pogoloff, "The pragmatic criterion of becoming a winner in the marketplace, sometimes with a sacrifice of personal integrity, made its impact on Corinthian rhetoric. Declaration increasingly became the major opportunity for oratorical displays... In the classroom the competition might be over theory. But in declamations ... the contrast was ... between rival performers. The drive for adulation, we learn from Seneca the Elder, often overcame the more basic goals of rhetoric.' Seneca observes that too many times the aim was 'to win approval for yourself rather than for the case.' ... The casualty is truth; the focus is 'the speaker,' as in the case of the twenty-first century chat-show host or participant in the mass media."

The founding of the Church

Paul must have been attracted to Corinth as a strategic centre for mission. The city had a sizeable Jewish community, swollen by the edict of Claudius which had driven many from Rome. The travellers and visitors for the games would also have meant that there was considerable demand for Paul's trade as a tentmaker.

"Paul made a firm decision (1:18) not to aspire to the status of a professional rhetorician, newly arrived to market the gospel as a consumer commodity designed to please the hearers and to win their approval... He would earn his keep as a tentmaker and proclaim the cross of Christ." (Thistleton). He began his ministry in the synagogue where he reasoned with both Jews and Greeks, testifying that Jesus was the Christ. However, he soon met the customary opposition from the Jews. In response, Paul shook out his clothes and set up camp next door in the house of the newly converted Titius Justus. Here Paul continued to teach this infant church which now included Crispus and his family – Crispus had formerly been leader of the synagogue.

Paul remained in Corinth for some 18 months. Paul and the Corinthian church continued to face opposition but Paul received encouragement through a vision in which the Lord told him, "Do not be

¹ Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1995.

afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city" (Acts 18:9,10).

After 18 months the Jews sought to have Paul convicted of some crime and so dragged Paul before Gallio the proconsul of Achaia. They claimed that Paul was "persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law" (Acts 18:13). But Gallio refused to get involved in a religious dispute between Jewish factions – for that's how he perceived it.

When Paul left Corinth, "He left behind him a thriving church, throbbing with vitality and full of gifts and services (1:4-8; 12:1-14:40). The problems which would emerge would be those of life, not of decline." (Thistleton).

From Corinth Paul sailed to Ephesus where he stayed for a short while before continuing on his way to Caesarea and Jerusalem. Priscilla and Aquilla left Corinth with Paul but remained at Ephesus.

While Paul was away, a Jew from Alexandria named Apollos came to Ephesus. He was a powerful preacher and had a fine knowledge of the Scriptures. He was a believer and seemed to possess a clear understanding of the gospel except that "he knew only the baptism of John." Priscilla and Aquilla took him under their wing and "explained to him the way of God more accurately." After continuing to minister for a while at Ephesus, Apollos wanted to go off to Achaia. The church at Ephesus sent him off with their blessing and with letters of commendation to the churches. In Achaia, and particularly in Corinth, Apollos' ministry proved the source of great encouragement, "For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ" (Acts 18:28).

Problems at Corinth

Drane writes, "The letters to Corinth ... confront us with one of the most complicated historical puzzles of the entire New Testament... We depend entirely on the vague hints and allusions which Paul made as he wrote." However, there is general agreement that Paul's dealings with the church at Corinth during this time can be summarised in six stages:

- i) Paul received news concerning the church at Corinth in response to which he wrote the letter referred to in 1 Cor 5:11. Some believe this letter is preserved but displaced in 2 Cor 6:14-7:1.
- ii) Members of Chloe's household brought reports of divisions in the church at Corinth, divisions which included challenges to Paul's authority. These reports were later confirmed by Stephanus and two others (1 Cor 16:17) who brought with them a letter from the church asking a series of questions. 1 Corinthians is Paul's response to these divisions and to the Corinthians' questions.
- iii) Paul learned from Timothy that his letter was having no effect and so made a brief and painful visit to Corinth (2 Cor 2:1; 12:14; 13:1).
- iv) After his return from Corinth Paul sent Titus with a much stronger letter written "out of much affliction and anguish of heart" (2 Cor 2:4). Some think this is preserved and displaced in 2 Cor 10-13.
- v) Paul left for Macedonia having been driven out of Ephesus (Acts 20:1). In Macedonia he met Titus who brought news of a change of attitude in the Corinthian church. He also carried an invitation for Paul to go to Corinth (2 Cor 7:5-16).
- vi) Paul sent a letter to Corinth with Titus; this is at least the first nine chapters of what we know as 2 Corinthians.

Some scholars think that 2 Corinthians 10-13 was actually written at a date later than 2 Cor 1-9.

1 Corinthians

The church at Corinth was made up of people from a variety of social backgrounds. Theissen says, "The Corinthian congregation is marked by internal stratification. The Majority of members, who come from the lower classes, stand in contrast to a few influential members who come from the upper classes."² Among the latter would seem to be Stephanus Gaius and Crispus, the last of whom had previously enjoyed a prominent office in the synagogue.

² G. Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*, Philadelphia, Fortress, 1982. See also RJ Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, Exeter, Paternoster, 1980

In his book, *An Introduction to the Sociology of the New Testament*³ Derek Tidball describes how these social divisions gave rise to the variety of controversies at Corinth. He writes, "Many of the problems at Corinth can be understood in the light of the fact that people from different social classes still found it difficult to relate to each other even after their conversion to Christianity. They would be aware that, as far as God was concerned such distinctions were no longer of any importance (1 Cor 7:22; Col 3:4) and yet in reality mutual acceptance still had to be learned through hard experience... In this socially heterogeneous church the leadership fell upon those who were middle class and elitist. They were the natural leaders, not only because of their social and educational skills, but because of their having the property in which to host the meetings of the church. Paul accepts their right to lead and supports them... He is not happy, however, about certain attitudes they adopt or actions to which they are party. Much of 1 Corinthians is a pointed address to them, encouraging them to overcome their deficiencies and forsake their worldly pretensions; however understandable these conceits may have been from a human standpoint. These activist leaders at Corinth needed to be wary lest they run the church as they would an ordinary business and less the working class people did not receive the standing in the church that God intended them to have."

Paul's letter addresses a series of issues, some raised by the news conveyed to him, others in the letter requesting his advice and direction. Thistleton says that "issues of 'knowledge,' the ministry, ethical laxity, advantages sought at law, marriage and celibacy, meat associated with pagan temples or worship, dress codes in public worship, the divisions at the Lord's Supper, misperceptions of the significance of what counts as 'spiritual' in the context of 'gifts' and Christ's Lordship, and perhaps a premature anticipation of eschatological 'glory' all relate to the differing outlooks (some of them manipulative) on the part of specific groups." But he is also keen to emphasise that Paul's response is not fragmentary: "The unifying theme of the epistle is a re-proclamation of the different value system of grace, gifts, the cross, and the resurrection as divine verdict, criterion, and status bestowal within the new framework of respect and love for the less esteemed 'other.' Glorifying in the Lord and receiving status derived from identification with the crucified Christ (1:30-31) lead to a new value system demonstrable in a wide array of life issues. These range from attitudes towards 'the less esteemed' in civil actions (6:1-11) to eating meat in the precincts of temples or bought at market (8:1-11:1); or from dress-codes in public worship (11:2-16) or mutual respect for differing gifts (chs 12-13) to the 'ranking' and use of prophetic discourse and glossolalia (ch 14)."

Works frequently referenced in these notes on 1 Corinthians

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|----------------------|---|
| John Drane | <i>Paul</i> , Lion Publishing, Berkhamstead, 1976 |
| Leon Morris | <i>The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians</i> , Tyndale New Testament Commentary, 2 nd Ed., IVP, Leicester, 1985 |
| Anthony C Thistleton | <i>The First Epistle to the Corinthians</i> , The New International Greek Testament Commentary, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2000 |

³ Exteter, Paternoster, 1983.

Verse 1

Παῦλος κλητὸς ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ καὶ Σωσθένης ὁ ἀδελφός

κλητος, η, ον called, invited

There is a parallel between Paul *called* to be an apostle and the Corinthians *called* to be a holy people (v.2). All Christians are called.

ἀπόστολος Thistleton argues that apostleship entails witness to Christ in both an 'objective' and 'subjective' sense. Apostleship involved witnessing to the events of Christ's death and resurrection, but also entailed "a practical experience of sharing in the weakness of the cross of Christ and in the transforming power of Christ's resurrection... Apostleship thereby entails 'the establishment of the kerygma (1 Cor 1:21) and indeed the proclamation of the kerygma,' in both word and lifestyle."

Thistleton

θέλημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

Cf. Gal 1:1. "What a believing Christian is called to be depends not on what people might judge for themselves to be 'fulfilling' or self-affirming but on the loving and purposive will of God. Thus the pattern of Christ and the cross ('not my will but yours') reflects the sovereign centrality of the will of God for all life and every lifestyle." Thistleton.

It is unclear whether this Sosthenes is the same as the leader of the synagogue mentioned in Acts 18:15-17 – it was a common Greek name in the first century. Commenting on Paul's mention of a fellow-worker Thistleton says, "Paul does not perceive himself as commissioned to lead or to minister as an isolated individual, without collaboration with co-workers. The role of co-workers emerges clearly in 1 Cor 16:13-20." Sosthenes may have been Paul's amanuensis.

Verse 2

τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις, σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν·

ἐκκλησια, ας f assembly, congregation, church

The basic meaning is 'assembly'.

του θεου The church does not belong to any local leader but to God.

Some ancient texts read τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ. Some favour this as the more difficult reading but the UBS committee rejected it as *too* difficult and Thistleton argues that it represents an early corruption in the Western text.

οὔση verb, present part, f dat s εἶμι

Bengel speaks of the "paradox" of a church which is simultaneously 'of God' and, of all places, at *Corinth*.

ἡγιασμένοις Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n dat pl
ἁγιαζω sanctify, make holy, set apart
as sacred to God

Cf. 1 Cor 6:11. Set apart to be God's (people) by virtue of union with Christ.

ἅγιος, α, ον holy, set apart to/by God

Called to live out what they are – they have not yet arrived.

ἐπικαλεω call, name; midd call upon,
appeal to

The Corinthians are part of a wider family and cannot behave as if they were a law to themselves.

ὄνομα, τος n name, person, authority

Cf. Joel 3:5. "It signifies an act of appeal and request which is simultaneously an act of commitment and trust on the part of the worshiper... To call on the name of the Lord, partly in Joel, but more fully here, means not to invoke some shadowy, unknown, deity, but to commit oneself in trust to the one whose nature and character have been disclosed as worthy of this trust." Thistleton

τοπος, ου m place

αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν qualify Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ and not τοπῳ as some suppose. "Jesus Christ is not the exclusive 'Lord' who serves only the interests of some specific group. He may indeed include them within wider Lordship, but he remains 'both their Lord and ours.'" Thistleton

Verse 3

χαρίς ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

χαρις, ιτος f grace, unmerited favour

Paul transforms the conventional greeting χαρειν (cf. Acts 15:23; Jas 1:1) into the Christian greeting and prayer χαρις ὑμῖν.

εἰρηνῃ, ης f peace

Not so much an inner sense of peace as a relationship of peace with God.

πατηρ, πατρος m father

For Paul, 'Father' is "the distinctively Christian way of referring to and addressing God."
Thistleton

Verse 4

Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,

εὐχαριστεω thank, give thanks

The present tense has continuous force.

μου is included by κ^a A C G P Ψ etc. while omitted by κ* B eth Ephraem. The omission is followed by RSV, NJB, NIV, Barrett and Fee while Metzger argues strongly for its retention.

παντοτε always

I.e. 'at every opportunity,' or 'as a regular habit' cf. 15:58.

ἐπι introduces the cause.

δοθείση Verb, aor pass ptc, f dat s δίδωμι
give

Every spiritual benefit the Corinthians possess they have received *in Christ*.

"There are ten references to Christ in the first ten verses. Only overfamiliarity with biblical texts can obscure the remarkable nature of this repetition." Thistleton

Verse 5

ὅτι ἐν παντὶ ἐπλουτίσθητε ἐν αὐτῷ, ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ καὶ πάσῃ γνώσει,

παντι here probably 'every kind ... all sorts'

πλουτιζω enrich, make rich
γνωσις, εως f knowledge, understanding

Paul's words reflect the two gifts the Corinthians prized most, word (prophecy) and knowledge. Despite the abuses at Corinth, Paul speaks of word and knowledge (understanding) as genuine and precious gifts from God.

Verse 6

καθὼς τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐβεβαιώθη ἐν ὑμῖν,

μαρτυριον, ου n testimony, witness
βεβαιοω confirm, verify, strengthen

The word preached to them had become a living reality in their lives. "In multi-cultural, pluralist Corinth, each new experience of God and each new convert confirms as valid this witness to Christ. Calvin observes, 'God set his seal to the truth of His Gospel among the Corinthians.'" Thistleton

Verse 7

ὥστε ὑμᾶς μὴ ὑστερεῖσθαι ἐν μηδενὶ χαρίσματι, ἀπεκδεχομένους τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

ὥστε so that, with the result that
ὑστερεω lack, have need of; pass be lacking; midd be in want

'You fall short in no gift.'

μηδεις, μηδεμα, μηδεν no one, nothing; no;
χαρισμα, τος n gift (from God)

"This word is used (i) of Salvation (Rom 5:15), (ii) of God's good gifts in general (Rom. 11:29), and (iii) of special equipment of the Spirit, for example, speaking with tongues (1 Cor. 12:4ff). Here the thought is the wide one (ii). God has enriched their lives and they lack no spiritual gift." Morris

"Gift, for Paul, draws attention to the free, generous, giving of the Giver." Thistleton

ἀποδεχομαι wait expectantly, welcome

Cf. 16:22 'Our Lord, come.'

ἀποκαλυψις, εως f revelation

Implies public and cosmic disclosure.

"The connection of thought may be that the present foretaste of the Spirit turns our thoughts to the fuller experience of the last great day (cf. Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:13f)." Morris
It also reminds the Corinthians that they have not yet arrived. GE Ladd views the double eschatology of 'now' and 'not yet' as a unifying or common theme in all NT writings.

Verse 8

ὃς καὶ βεβαιώσει ὑμᾶς ἕως τέλους ἀνεγκλήτους ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

It is unclear whether ὃς refers to God or Christ. "Linguistic arguments favour *Christ*; theological arguments favour *God*... The Greek leaves the matter open. This need not trouble us since Paul's language here concerns the promises of God-in-Christ." Thistleton

βεβαιοω see v.6.

ἕως prep with gen to, until, as far as

τελος, ους n end, conclusion

ἀνεγκλητος, ου beyond reproach, without fault

I.e. in that final day, when God pronounces his verdict on them, they will be declared blameless. "The main point is that as night dissolves into day (Rom 13:2) the hidden will become publicly visible and all that is wrong or that disrupts intimacy with God will be set right. It is unfortunate that the very clarity of this theme in Romans has tended to distract attention from its prominence in our epistle. The verdictive character of justification by grace is underlined by the role of definitive judgment on the day of the Lord in the OT, apocalyptic, and the NT." Thistleton

Χριστου is omitted by p⁴⁶ B. It would seem to be an early accidental omission.

Verse 9

πιστὸς ὁ θεὸς δι' οὗ ἐκλήθητε εἰς κοινωνίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.

πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy

The faithful God who called them (and us), will complete the work that he has begun. "Whatever God begins, he will carry through to completion." Calvin

κοινωνια, ας f fellowship, sharing in

Implies communal participation – "being stakeholders in a sonship derived from the sonship of Christ. Just as the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:13) means participating in the sharing out of the Spirit (which then secondarily gives rise to a fellowship experience within a community), so the fellowship of his Son (1 Cor 1:9) means communal participation in the sonship of Jesus Christ. Godet rightly speaks of 'participation in the life of Christ.'... The link with unity in 1:10-17 (cf. chs. 12-14) and with the cross in 1:18-25 seems thus to be established. The Corinthians are called to realise the fellowship into which they have been called by God." Thistleton

1:10-4:21

This constitutes an identifiable section concerning Causes and Cures of Splits within the Community.

Verse 10

Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες, καὶ μὴ ἦ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα, ἥτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῦ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ.

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge

Thistleton argues (at length) that the sense here is 'I ask' or 'I request.' It is a request which draws its force from Paul's relationship with them – not from rhetorical device.

ἀδελφοί is an inclusive term, including the women in the community. It reminds the Corinthians that they belong to one family.

ὄνομα, τος n name, person, authority

The addition of 'in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ' directs the Corinthians to the authority for such a request.

ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες An appeal or request for them to make up their differences.

ἦ Verb, pres subj, 3s εἰμι

σχίσματα Noun, nom & acc pl σχισμα, τος n division, split, opposing group

Paul is seeking to deal with a power struggle, not a theological controversy, though this struggle reflects also "a diversity of spiritualities based on individualism, on loyalty to specific groups or factions as 'spiritual' groups within the one church." Thistleton

κατηρτισμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl καταρτιζω mend, restore, make complete

καταρτιζω A Greek verb used of restoring anything to its rightful condition – such as mending fishing nets.

νοῦ Noun, dat s νοος, νοος, νοι, νου n mind, thought, understanding

Thistleton suggests that "mind-set in the present context draws out the meaning of outlook, stance, orientation, or attitude, without entirely losing the dimension of rational judgment which is nearly always implicit."

γνώμη, ης f purpose, intent, decision

Thistleton suggests that the term here means 'consent'. "Paul tells Philemon that he does not wish to keep the services of Onesimus 'without your consent' (χωρίς δε της σης γνώμης, Philem 14). In this sense 'agreement' entails not uniformity but voluntary constraints of one's 'rights' (cf. on 6:12, below) for the good of the whole. Paul expounds this as a key theme in 8:1-9:27.

Verse 11

ἐδηλώθη γάρ μοι περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί μου, ὑπὸ τῶν Χλόης ὅτι ἐριδες ἐν ὑμῖν εἰσιν.

ἐδηλωθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s δηλωω make clear, indicate, inform

ὕπο των Χλοης 'by Chloe's people.' Thistleton suggests more likely to be business associates, business agents or slaves of Chloe rather than members of her family.

ἔριδες Noun, nom pl ἔρις, ἴδος f strife, rivalry

Verse 12

λέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει· Ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι Παύλου, Ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ.

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every
Κηφας, a m Cephas (Aramaic equivalent of Πέτρος, rock).

"The mood of staking personal loyalty to some group which finds its focus in one of the leaders with whom it has become closely associated may be conveyed by rendering 'I am for Paul' 'I am for Apollos' ... But 'I belong to Paul' ... 'I belong to Apollos' must [also] be considered." Thistleton

Thistleton includes a lengthy discussion on the four 'so called groups' of 1:12.

Apollos was a skilled orator and may unwittingly have lent his name to an overemphasis on rhetoric and 'wisdom' at Corinth. "The lesson for leaders is that too high a personal profile, which substitutes too much personal history and personal style for gospel content, can sidetrack 'followers' into 'taking sides,' even if this was far from the original intention."

The Paul group "almost certainly had as their nucleus Paul's first converts at Corinth." They probably viewed themselves as "maintaining faithfully the old, duly authorised, ways, in contrast to newer trends which emerged with the more recent church members or visiting leaders." This 'group' may also have included some who claimed to follow Paul in resisting patronage.

The Peter group: It is uncertain whether Peter visited Corinth. Barrett thinks that he did and that the Peter party included those who had been converted under his ministry.

The 'Christ' group: Bruce and Barrett think these may have been ultra-spiritual pneumatics who declared they needed no human leader since, unlike others, they had direct communion with Christ. From a similar perspective Chrysostom writes, "Even those who said they were of Christ were at fault because they were implicitly denying this to others and making Christ the head of a faction rather than the head of the whole." Thistleton thinks that this may be correct, but, on the other hand, Paul may here be speaking of *himself* when saying 'I am of Christ'. He may be using rhetorical irony leading naturally into v.13 'Is Christ apportioned out?' and ultimately to 'you all are Christ's' (3:23).

Verse 13

μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός; μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἢ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε;

μεμέρισται Verb, perf pass indic, 3s μερίζω divide, assign, apportion

The picture behind this question is that of the church as a body, all members having a part in the one Christ – Christ has not been divided or fragmented.

σταυροῦ crucify

μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη a question expecting a negative answer, 'Surely Paul was not crucified...'

ὄνομα, τος n name, title, person, authority, reputation

Schnackenburg paraphrases the verse, "Christ is undivided... Christ alone died for you... You belong to Christ alone... You were baptised in the name of Christ (and in the name of no other)."

Verse 14

εὐχαριστῶ ὅτι οὐδένα ὑμῶν ἐβάπτισα εἰ μὴ Κρίσπον καὶ Γάϊον,

εὐχαριστέω thank, give thanks

It is difficult to decide whether the omission of τῷ θεῷ from κ* B and a few versions represents the original.

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδεν no one, nothing

Crispus is almost certainly the Jewish synagogue ruler mentioned in Acts 18:8.

It seems that some were boastful concerning who had baptised them and felt that this gave them a particular connection with the baptiser. The following verse underlines the fact that it is not the one performing the baptism who is significant but the name into which a person is baptised.

Verse 15

ἵνα μή τις εἴπῃ ὅτι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα
ἐβαπτίσθητε·

ἔμος, η, ον 1st pers possessive adj my, mine
ὄνομα see v.10

Verse 16

ἐβάπτισα δὲ καὶ τὸν Στεφανᾶ οἶκον· λοιπὸν
οὐκ οἶδα εἴ τινα ἄλλον ἐβάπτισα.

ἐβάπτισα δὲ καὶ 'On second thoughts, I also
baptised...'

"Lightfoot and Findlay consider the delightful
possibility that in mid-dictation Paul's flow
was interrupted by a tactful reminder from his
amanuensis, who might just possibly have
been either Stephanus himself or one of his
household. 1 Cor 16:17 confirms that
Stephanus was present with Paul when the
letter was being written."

οἶκος, ον m home, household, family
λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other: (το)
λοιπον adv. finally, in addition
οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present
meaning) know, understand

'I do not recall'

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

Verse 17

οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλέν με Χριστὸς βαπτίζειν ἀλλὰ
εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, ἵνα μὴ
κενωθῇ ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

ἀπέστειλέν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s
ἀποστελλω send, send out
εὐαγγελίζω act. and midd proclaim the
good news
σοφία, ας f wisdom, insight, intelligence

"In its context at Corinth, both βαπτίζειν and
ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου are aspects of potential
ministry which, given the Corinthians' own
presuppositions about both, call attention to the
agency and status of the minister, and together
these stand in contrast to εὐαγγελίζεσθαι,
which from any viewpoint calls attention to the
gospel (εὐαγγέλιον)." Thistleton
Thistleton suggests that in context, οὐκ ἐν
σοφίᾳ λόγου means 'not by manipulative
rhetoric.'

κενωθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s κενωω
deprive of power, empty of meaning
σταυρός, ον m cross

"If everything rests on human cleverness,
sophistication, or achievement, the cross of
Christ no longer functions as that which
subverts and cuts across all human distinctions
of race, class, gender and status to make room
for divine grace alone as sheer unconditional
gift... Second, rhetoric alone may win the
emotions and even the mind and perhaps the
will, but the human self is more than all of
these modes of being. Today we may speak of
a 'psychological' conversion which may result
causally from manipulative factors without
touching the self's spiritual depths in an
authentic turning not simply toward a new set
of beliefs and lifestyle, but to God. This
constitutes an authentic recognition of Christ's
Lordship through the work of the Holy Spirit
(1 Cor 12:3). Overreliance on clever rhetoric
may in this sense provide an inauthentic
shortcut to transformation by the cross of
Christ, which becomes nullified as a means of
restoring a relationship with God himself."
Thistleton