

# A Look at the Book 1 Corinthians 1:1

by Dr. Wayne Barber

I had a group of men several years ago from our church who were in a discipleship group with me. We were talking about the rules of Bible study, and I made the statement that Bible study has three steps. It doesn't change. It doesn't matter what book you're studying. There's observation, interpretation and application. It'll never be any different. Whatever book you study, those are the rules of Bible study. Don't jump in and start interpreting. No sir. You must start in observing. Don't apply until you have observed and interpreted. So often we get off track when we do that.

As I was talking about that one of the guys in the group said, "You know what? That's like bass fishing, isn't it?" That caught my attention. I like to put it on levels that I can understand. I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "You know, we fish tournaments, a lot of us. And the first thing a tournament bass fisherman does is observe the lake. He doesn't just go out to the lake and throw his line out with a bobber on the end and a hook and all and expect to catch a fish. No. He doesn't want to know what's on top of the water. He wants to know what's underneath the water. So he spends days finding this out. He gets the pH factor and the oxygen content and the thermo climate. It's got to be between 68 and 72 degrees. He gets a topographical map and finds the places in the lake with that particular temperature. Then he begins to mark it. He marks the creek channels and the coves, etc. He puts out his boat marker. He doesn't do much fishing for about three days. But he does a lot of observation. When tournament day comes immediately he begins to interpret what he has observed and how he is going to fish that lake. The application is when he finally gets to that spot and he uses his equipment."

I thought to myself that's beautiful. If you don't understand observation, interpretation, application, maybe we can put it that way and you can grasp it very quickly. You've got to observe, observe, observe, observe. Then out of that you interpret, and out of that you apply.

We're going to do some observation in 1 Corinthians. That's what we're going to do. You're going to find a lot of similarities with the church of Corinth in the book of 1 Corinthians with the book of Judges. It's incredible. In the book of Judges, we had the willful deception of Israel. They chose not to obey God. They chose rather to give into their flesh. By the way, flesh is flesh no matter which testament you're studying.

Whether it's before the cross or after the cross, flesh is flesh. I don't care whose it is, we all have to deal with it. We're going to find some similarities.

In Israel they chose not to obey God. Therefore, they became idolaters. They became very immoral. Idolatry and immorality are always tied together. They also had to reap the division amongst the tribes. There was no unity among the tribes. You can see that. We see that all through the book of Judges. We're going to see a lot of these same things pop up in the book of 1 Corinthians.

I want you to strap your seatbelts on. We're going to do some observation, and I don't think we're going to get into the text too much. Look at verse 1 Corinthians 1:1. You find out the author and who he's writing to immediately: "Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth,..."

There are three things I want us to see about Corinth. First of all, we want to look at the city of Corinth. There's not much in the scriptures to tell you this. I'm just going to have to historically help you understand the city of Corinth at that time. Actually today Corinth is a small town. There's not much significance to it, except historically. Historically there's a lot of significance to Corinth. It's located about 45 miles from Athens on the eastern side of Greece on an isthmus.

Do you know what an isthmus is? I'll be honest with you. I had to look it up. It's a narrow strip of land that connects two major pieces of land. That's what an isthmus is. Geographically you have to understand that Greece is divided that way. There's a northern part; there's a southern part. They're connected by about a four mile wide isthmus. On the western side was the Gulf of Corinth. On the eastern side was the Saronic Gulf and the port city of Cenchreae. Do you remember in Romans who was from Cenchreae? It was a woman by the name of Phoebe. That's where that was. In the middle of this isthmus that connects the northern and the southern part to the south is Corinth.

It's situated on a very commanding plateau there. It just rises up above where everybody can see it. In ancient times if you were coming from the north to the south, particularly to Athens, you'd have to go right through Corinth which made it a very strategic city in that time.

Did you know that the Olympics started in Greece? There were two sets of games. One was the Olympian games and the other one was the Isthmian games. The Isthmus of Corinth was what it was named after. Corinth hosted that particular event. Corinth was destroyed by the Romans in 146 BC, then rebuilt by Julius Caesar 100 years later. When it was rebuilt it was basically a Roman colony largely populated by Romans, of course. It became the capitol city of the Roman province of Achaia. But because of its location, once rebuilt it didn't take it any time to become a strategic city one more time. People had to go through there. It was a very critical place, a very cosmopolitan area. In Paul's day it was made up of Greeks, Roman officials and businessmen, and near eastern peoples, which included many Jews. So you kind of get a little idea of the city of Corinth.

Like most Greek cities Corinth had an acropolis which is a high place. We've

been to the acropolis there in Athens. They also had one. It was a huge mound of granite which stood 2000 feet. It was called the Acrocorinth. It was used for two things. That high plateau, that high mound was used first of all for pagan worship and secondly for the defense of the people. It was big enough that all the people of Corinth plus all the people in the neighboring farmlands could come up there and actually it would hold every one of them on top of this big huge place that was there.

Also it housed the temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. In that temple were 1000 women priestesses. Can you imagine? They were actually temple prostitutes, ritual prostitutes. That was a part of their religion, the promiscuity of their religion. Remember in the book of Judges that was exactly the same thing that went on with the Baal and Ashtaroth and their kind of idolatry. At night these women would go down into town to lure businessmen and foreigners into their trade. Even to the pagan world Corinth was known for its moral corruption. As a matter of fact, there's a Greek phrase that meant you behave like a Corinthian. It was used any time you got around somebody who was involved in gross immorality and drunkenness. They would use this phrase. You've got to begin to get the understanding of the nature of this city; a very, very evil morally bad city. In that day when you thought of Corinth, you thought of something that was morally depraved.

This begins to give us a setting of 1 Corinthians. You'll see where these people came out of this kind of stuff if you'll turn over to 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. It kind of gives you an idea how these people were saved and had come out of that garbage that Corinth was known for. In 1 Corinthians 6:9 we read, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God." If you stopped right there it wouldn't tell you much, but look at the next verse: "And such were some of you." That's what the city was known for, all of those things above that we just read. Paul goes on to say, "...but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."

Though they were saved out of it, oh, there was like a pull of gravity on them all of the time trying to pull them back into the debauchery of sin Corinth was known for. So when you think of the church of Corinth, you first of all think of a city that was known to be morally evil. The people who were converts there had to live in that kind of garbage every day of their life. That begins to give you a setting now as you see the city of Corinth.

Secondly, let's look at the church of Corinth. Who founded it? Where did it come from? How did they get a church over there? When we looked at the church in the book of Romans we discovered that when God wants a church somewhere God just puts it there. He did the same thing here. Right in the middle of this moral garbage heap God put a church.

The church at Corinth was founded by the apostle Paul. He went there on his second missionary journey. He had gone to Thessalonica, Berea, Athens and then to Greece. Let's look at that. Go over to Acts 16. We won't read all of that. That's a

lot of scripture. I just want to show you some of the things that happened here and how he got over to Corinth. Paul's the founder, the first pastor, I guess you could say, of the church of Corinth. They had no church until Paul went there. I love what he said in Romans. He said, "I would not dare to speak of anything except that which Christ has accomplished through me resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles." And he said, "For I was able to take the good news all the way to Illyricum," which is modern day Bosnia. 1400 miles he had covered with the gospel. Here are some of the results of that right here in the city of Corinth.

Well in Acts 16:12 it talks about the fact that he's over in Philippi. He left Troas and ran a straight course (verse 11) to Samothrace and on to Neapolis and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia. Look what happens there according to verse 13: "And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled." It talks about the woman Lydia. This is Philippi now, not Corinth. This is where we're getting started. He's on his second missionary journey.

Verse 16 is an interesting situation that happened over in Philippi. "And it happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a certain slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling." This is a demon-possessed girl. Look what she says. "Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, 'These men are bond-servant of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.'" Have you ever read that and wondered why a demon-possessed girl would tell the truth about what these men were doing? Has that ever bothered you? Well, good. I'm going to try to answer it for you.

First of all, she was known in that town. Remember, she brought much money to these men as being a demon-possessed person. They used her for that kind of profit. For her to tell the truth about them and the people already knowing about her, what do you think that made them look like? The devil never tells the truth unless he has some way to hurt you. The truth that he tells is not the way in which we would tell it. So she's telling the truth, but she's already known to be a lowlife and to be a demon-possessed girl. Why pay any attention to her? So it was one of the better ways of discrediting what they were doing.

"And she continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!' And it came out at that very moment." Now this makes the people of the city angry and so, therefore, they go to the magistrates. The magistrates come and beat them up. They take Paul and Silas and put them in jail.

Verse 25 reads, "But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;" That's when the earthquake happened and the jail cell opened up. God did it. The jailer was scared to death. They said, "Don't sweat it. We're still here." And he said, "What must I do to be saved?" They led him to the Lord and then went to his house and led his whole family to the Lord.

The next morning the magistrates come and say, "We're going to set you free." The apostle Paul, ... I like him. Look at verse 37: "But Paul said to them, 'They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans...' Roman law says that you could not even put a person in jail until first of all you have tried him. That was the right of a Roman citizen. They never asked him. They beat him up and threw him in jail. They messed up and the apostle Paul knew that. The apostle Paul says, "and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out." They were the ones who disobeyed their own law.

Well, to make a long story short, they talk him into leaving because they had really, really made a fool out of themselves. So they leave there in verse 40. Verse 1 of chapter 17 says, "Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews." Again, Paul preached just like he had before. Many people came to know the Lord and believed in Him. We find in verse 5 and following that the Jews are becoming jealous. They take along some wicked men from the marketplace, form a mob, and set the city in an uproar. So everywhere he goes he preaches the gospel but the disbelieving Jewish people, the religious Jewish, were always stirring up strife.

Therefore, he leaves. They sneak him out in verse 10: "And the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea; and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews." Here's what he found. Verse 11 says, "Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica." Do you know what the word noble-minded means? These had more class than the rest of them. So instead of beating them up and throwing them out of the city look what they did: "for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so."

By the way, if I ever have been an encouragement to your life when you hear me preach or you hear anybody else preach, be a Berean and go to the word to see if these things are so. And if they're not, then you pray for us, because somebody's wrong. It has to be what Scriptures say.

Well, in verse 13 we read, "But when the Jews of Thessalonica found out that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Berea also, they came there likewise." They had to get Paul out of town again in verse 14: "And then immediately the brethren sent Paul out to go as far as the sea." Now he left Silas and Timothy behind. "Now those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens."

Athens is where he walked up there on that acropolis and looked and saw the statues of unknown gods. He couldn't stand it. I'm telling you. That guy, wherever he'd go he'd get stirred up about something. He goes up there and argues with all the stoic Greek philosophers of that day and said, "Hey! You've got a thing down there that says 'The Unknown God.' Let me tell you who He is and let me tell you how you can know Him." That was the apostle Paul.

It wasn't long before he had to leave Athens. So he leaves Athens in chapter 18. Verse 1 reads, "After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth." That's how he got to Corinth on his second missionary journey. You think about it. It's almost as if

God kept squeezing him out of here, squeezing him out of here, and squeezing him out of here. God wanted a church in Corinth and He wouldn't let Paul stay anywhere else. Everybody would get mad and run him out. So, finally, he arrives at Corinth.

In Corinth he meets some folks that you'll readily remember, Aquila and Priscilla. Both were Jews who had been driven out of Rome. They were over in Corinth, and they were tentmakers. Paul was a tentmaker, so he just stayed with them for quite a while and began to preach in the synagogue. Then Timothy and Silas come on down from where he left them in Berea. They finally come on down to where he is. Paul preached the good news of Christ and had great, great results, except the resistance began to build against him even there. Even Crispus the leader of the synagogue was saved. Look in Acts 18:8: "And Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized."

So here he is in Corinth, and he's seeing a great work. Now remember what they're coming out of to be saved. This is a great thing to see people saved in the midst of the garbage they had to live in every day. Well, he ministers in Corinth for one and one-half years. Look at verse 11 of Acts 18: "And he settled there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them."

In the meantime it talks about the Jewish opposition beginning to build against him. These are the main leaders of the Jews, not all Jews.; and as a result of that they tried to put him before the Roman Tribunal. But Gallio was the proconsul there and he said, "No, sir. This is not a political matter. It's a religious matter." So he took the case out of court, and Paul thought, "You know, it might be a good time to leave Corinth." So shortly afterwards, with Priscilla and Aquila, they go to the city of Ephesus. Now in Ephesus he leaves his two friends and goes on to Palestine in Acts 18:12-22. I'm not going to read all that.

The second leader of the Corinthian church was a man by the name of Apollos. Paul started it and spent a year and a half there. We've seen the history of it. The next pastor they had in Corinth was Apollos. He's the guy Priscilla and Aquila had to help out in his doctrine. He's from Alexandria and had come to Ephesus and begun to preach there. Evidently his doctrine wasn't right. So Aquila and Priscilla had to sit him down and straighten him out. After they straightened him out he began to get a good reputation. The "pulpit committee" sent out a plea from over in Corinth, and so all the people in Ephesus even the elders said, "Hey, we've got your man." He goes to Corinth and becomes the second pastor or the leader of the church of Corinth.

Well, amidst the debauchery and gross sin God said, "I want a church there." He squeezed Paul over here and over here and over here and finally got the man to Corinth and a church grew out of that. Now you have Apollos who's there and you see the church that God has planted. But I want you to know it has the distinction of being one of the worst churches in the New Testament. I hope you understand this. Please understand this. You've got to realize it's in the worst place it could possibly be, but it has one of the worst reputations of any church that you'll ever study of in all the books, the epistles, in the New Testament.

We've looked at the city of Corinth. We've taken a glance at the church of Corinth and how it got started. Now let's look at the congregation of Corinth. Let's look at the people who are in the church. This is what the book's about. If you don't know this, then you don't understand the observation. You don't understand what's underneath the water when you first look at it.

Alright, if you're in Corinth and you were looking for a church to attend, this wouldn't be the place you'd want to look. We learn immediately from 1 Corinthians that the church had many problems. One of the main problems was they were followers of men and not of God. Look in verse 11 of chapter 1. He says, "For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you." Then he says, "Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, 'I am of Paul,' and 'I of Apollos,' and 'I of Cephas,' and [here's the spiritual ones] 'I of Christ.'"

You know, when you read this and think about it for just a little bit, it doesn't sound much different than the twentieth century, does it? "I'll tell you who I listen to. I've got all of his tapes. I bought his books. If he'll ever get on the radio and television I'm going to listen and I'm going to watch." Isn't it the same way? "Well, you might believe this way but I'm a such and such." Then the spiritual ones walk in and say, "Hey, we're of Christ." To me they're the scariest ones in this whole bunch" "We're of Christ and nobody else around here is."

Well, anyway that same thing's going on in Corinth. Because of this Paul said they were acting like babies in Christ. If you want to know what a baby in Christ is, a little immature whining little church member over in the nursery, he's about to tell you. First of all, it's people who say, "Well, I'm of Apollos, I'm of Cephas, I'm of Christ" or whatever. They're men followers, etc. Verse 1 of chapter 3 says, "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men." Now why couldn't he? He spent a year and a half with them. They trained Apollos and sent him over there. And he said, "I couldn't speak to you as spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ."

Now I want to tell you something. This whole book really is Paul addressing a bunch of babies in Christ, a bunch of immature whining church members. I'm serious. You've got to see this as we walk through it because that's the mentality that he's dealing with here in Corinth.

Verse 2 says they couldn't receive the solid meat of the word. He said, "I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able." They only could receive the milk and not the meat. Of course, Peter says, "You desire the milk of the word." What Peter is talking about there is how a little baby would desire milk. But Paul's talking about something different here. He's talking about the fact that I've got to feed it.

How do you feed a baby, by the way? Have you ever noticed that? You just have to spoon feed them or in a bottle or whatever. He says, "You can't seem to take the meat. You're too immature. You're the men of flesh. You're babes in Christ. You're not growing up. You're still in the nursery. That's your problem." They were walking like mere men rather than believers in that there was jealousy and strife among them. You see, when you get trapped in the flesh and this kind of thing that's where

your factions develop. That's what we see in Judges. That's what we see in Corinth.

1 Corinthians 3:3 reads, "for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?" Men-followers are simply babes in Christ. Verse 4 goes on, "For when one says, 'I am of Paul,' and another, 'I am of Apollos,' are you not mere men? What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one."

We could go on. We'll touch all of these when we get to them in the context, but I just wanted to give you an idea of the church at Corinth. This immature, men-following group, characterized the church at Corinth. Paul deals with their division from 1:11 all the way through 3:23. He talks about the unity that ought to be there but the divisions that are present.

Because of their fleshly mind-set they even became judgmental of the apostle Paul. Can you imagine that? They started examining him to see if he was really who he said he was. The apostle Paul says in 4:3, "But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord." Then he says, "Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God." In other words, it's one thing to judge himself; it's another thing to let God judge you. But they even became judgmental of the apostle Paul. There was the problem of immorality among them.

It just doesn't get any better so just humor me, and try to listen to it. Paul talks about it in 5:1 all the way through 6:20. Look what he says in 5:1. This shows you some of the immorality that had gotten into the church. But remember the magnetic pull of all the garbage of sin that was around them. It says, "It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife." Well, there was no discipline. There was no discipline at all. He says in verse 2: "And you have become arrogant, and have not mourned instead, in order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst." As a matter of fact, it was immoral the way they were treating one another since they were men of flesh anyway. They seemed to chase after the flesh all the time and not Christ.

This was also seen in the fact of the way they treated each other in legal matters. In 6:7 they were suing each other in court. That made a great testimony. He says, "Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?" On and on and we'll talk about that when we come to chapter 6.

Do you see any symptoms here that come right out of the book of Judges? They were confused about many things. As a matter of fact, in 7:1 it appears they've written a letter to him and asked him some questions about things that were confusing them. In 7:1 through 11:1 he answers those questions that they have been concerned about. Let's look at them. In 7:1 he says, "Now concerning the things about

which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. But because of immoralities let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.” So he gets into marriage. They had a lot of questions about marriage. I want to tell you something. We have the same questions in the twentieth century. They haven’t gone away. When we get to that chapter you’ll understand what I’m talking about. He addresses this and talks about the unbelieving husband leaving his wife, etc. You know, you’ve heard that preached on many times. Well, hopefully, we’ll see it in the context of Corinthians and go through that. It’s a tricky area.

The question of liberty in Christ comes up and from 8:1 he picks up on that and goes through chapter 11. A lot of these things are woven together. He speaks of the freedom to eat whatever we want but speaks of being sensitive to our brother who may be weaker in the faith. In 8:1 he says, “Now concerning things sacrificed to idols.” He talking about whether we can eat the meat of those things and he has to deal with that problem.

In chapter 9 he speaks of the freedom he has as an apostle to take money for what he does but also the freedom to choose against that. He has the freedom to take it, the freedom not to take it. In 10:23 we find, “All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.”

Then in chapter 11 we’re going to deal with the subject (and I guarantee you’ve asked this question many times) of women wearing a covering over their head. A lot of people really struggle with that. We went to Romania and I guarantee you this is a situation. How do you handle that? We will see. We will address that subject in chapter 11.

We’ll see there were many, many divisions among them. It gives me the idea that he’s not covering them all. He’s just referring to the fact this is a factious group of people. They’re divided and the reason they’re divided is because their faith and all is not based on Christ and His word. They’re men-pleasers, etc. In 11:18 he says, “For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part, I believe it.” There are divisions among you when you come together. That would be a tough church to be in, wouldn’t it? Just factions and divisions everywhere. He’s going to say some interesting things about division, however, that we’ll also look at.

They treated the Lord’s Supper as a meal. These people, Lord help them, they’ve come there for supper instead of coming to honor the Lord. This is in 11:20: “Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper, for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God, and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you.”

These are some of the problems we’re going to be dealing with as we walk through Corinthians. Somebody said, “Wayne, are you sure you want to do this book?” You know, I didn’t choose this for any other agenda than I just felt like the Lord was leading me to do it. That’s all I know. We’re going to seek to be obedient

to Him and see what comes out of it. What falls, falls. If the shoe fits we're going to have to wear it. That's the way it's going to be. There are going to be some tough places we're going to have to wade through. This will be one of them.

One of the toughest places we'll wade through is chapters 12-14 when we deal with the spiritual gifts. Paul didn't want them to be ignorant of spiritual gifts. It says in 12:1, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware."

I preached out of chapters 12, 13, and 14 years ago. There was a tension in the church that developed over those three chapters like I don't know if I've ever witnessed since. I mean, it was like people would come tight lipped and just scared to death of what I was going to say? "Is he going to make fun of this? Is he going to do this?"

I want you to know when we get to chapters 12, 13, and 14, I will only share what I believe the word of God says in the context of 1 Corinthians. I want to assure you of that. There should not be any tension. But if we disagree then we don't go on and say, "Well, one's right and one's wrong and let's just live together." Listen, folks, somebody's wrong. But we will live with one another because Christ is the basis of our fellowship not how we feel about chapters 12 through 14. We must remember, doctrine divides. Jesus said it: I come with the sword and that sword is the word and it's going to divide. Folks, it doesn't have to divide the fellowship but it's going to divide where we all stand sometimes and we're going to have to let the love of Christ overpower that if someone has difficulty.

I guarantee you the Scripture's not private interpretation. If Wayne's wrong, he's wrong. I just want to warn you ahead of time. When we get to chapters 12, 13, and 14 let's put it where it fits. Let's don't touch it and leave it there and see what God does. I think it's going to be interesting for all of us. That's chapters 12, 13, and 14.

In chapter 15, you're going to get into another area. It's not going to be easy. It's going to be dealing with the fact that if you don't believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ then you're not saved. That's what he's going to talk about in 1 Corinthians 15. He said, "For if He did not bodily raise from the dead then we have no bodily resurrection and, therefore, there is no gospel and your faith is only now and it makes us all foolish to begin with." That's basically what he's going to say.

Chapter 15 is also going to talk about the order of events of how He was the first fruits and set the pattern and the rest of us follow. It's a great chapter. If you've never understood death chapter 15 will give you an explanation of death that'll just bless you until the day you have to make that journey. Maybe we won't have to make it. Maybe the Lord will come before we get to any of this. I don't know.

Well, in 16:1-4 he deals with the problem of stewardship. And 16:5-24 is the closing out of the letter. That's the book of 1 Corinthians, the letter that Paul writes to the church at Corinth.

Well, we broad-brushed it. That's all I've done. All I'm trying to do is just sort of whet your appetite. This is a church. It's in a very, very difficult place, and they've become men-followers and not God-followers. There's division among them. Like I said, if you were in Corinth during those days, that's not the place you'd want to

recommend somebody to join. This was a tough place and Paul, having founded the church, is really, now, writing to them and straightening them out where they had been wrong. He's trying to put truth back in its rightful place.

Remember where we started? Observation, interpretation, application, that's the way you study Scripture. That's what you've got to do in every book you study. I hope in 1 Corinthians we're beginning to show you the pattern that's in there. When you come across something, it's not like Paul says, "Oh, I've got these great things to teach you", it's like Paul's saying, "Let me straighten you out." See it's different than most of the epistles that he writes. It's similar maybe to Galatians. The Galatians had gotten back under law. It wasn't the same thing.

1 Corinthians is a troubled, factionist church and they're wrong just about every which way you turn. And everything Paul does is trying to turn them back right side up and straighten them out. Then when you take the book, now you fit it into that pattern. And interpretation and application come easy from that point on.