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SOUTH WEST BIBLE SCHOOL - July 1998

LET HIM THAT THINKETH HE STANDETH

Speaker: Bro. John Martin

Study #1

I Have Much People in this City

Reading: 1 Corinthians 8

Well good morning, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ. Well, b&s, we are going to be dealing with 1 Corinthians chapters 8, 9 and 10, and you might say, 'that'll be a bit disjointed'. No, it won't be disjointed, you see, because the first of Corinthians is divided into separate subjects; when Paul wrote this letter, there were problems in that ecclesia and he gave certain sections to each problem. So you have for example, chapters 1 to 4, the problem of party factions; he deals with that in those first 4 chapters. 5, 6 and 7 he deals with the relationships between men and women, the questions of marriage and so forth. Then from 8, 9 and 10, now concerning those things which are offered unto idols, the meat which was offered unto idols, and that's the one we'll be considering, b&s. Of course, going on from there, you've got in chapter 11, a special chapter on the memorial feast; chapters 12, 13, and 14 he deals with spiritual gifts. There's a magnificent chapter on resurrection in 15, and then of course, his final salutation and farewell in chapter 16. That's Corinthians! so it's divided up, so the fact that we're going to speak about chapters 8, 9 and 10 doesn't mean it will be disjointed, it will be very much in context.

What we want to do in this first session, b&s, is to tell you about Corinth and the background to the Corinthian ecclesia, that we might better appreciate the sort of people, to whom Paul was writing. And I'm very sorry that I left all my transparencies home, that's what happens when you get to my age, you can't remember anything, and I got them ready and left them all at home; so I'm sorry about that because I wanted to show you a map where Corinth was, that you might appreciate the feelings of the apostle when he got there. But if you can just use your imaginations, you've got Greece here and then there's a little strip of land, it's only about 4 or 5 miles wide, which then joins the continent of Europe as it is, to the Peloponnesian peninsula which is beneath it, which is part of Greece, and you see that on a map; you'll see Greece coming down, there's a little bit of land and then you see this peninsula underneath it. And Corinth, b&s, was just west of that little strip of land, and it was 45 miles to the east of Athens. And Paul had been sent away from Thessalonica because he was in grave danger of losing his life. He'd left Silas and Timothy there and he'd come down to Athens and

there, of course, he gave that famous speech on Mars Hill. And from there he came, of course, to Corinth itself. Now brethren and sisters, you would not get a greater contrast between Corinth here on the west and Athens on the east, only 45 miles divides the two of them, as a matter of fact, on a clear day, if you stood on the acro-Corinthus, that's the hill of Corinth, you could look across to the east and you could actually see the Parthenon and the temple of Athena way up there glowing in the sun. You could actually see them in that distance on a clear day, and so those two cities were in proximity, but only in proximity geographically! They were poles apart as far as the psychology of the people was concerned, and as far as the whole society was concerned. Athens, was the great university city in the Roman empire, that's where it was all centred as far as the Romans were concerned, they're over in Athens where all the professors were, and that's where the youth went to the universities to learn the vocations of life. And Paul stood on Mars hill, b&s, half way up the Acropolis there; up at the top was the temple of Athena, which today has been excavated and you can see there, still standing, part of that great temple worshipping the goddess of wisdom and love and Paul stood on this little bit of ground about the size, twice the size perhaps of this platform, Mars Hill, and it was our privilege to stand there, you would only have been feet from where he was, and there he stood and down below him was the agora and the universities spread around him, and up there stretching to his right, he could see this great temple; there he stood while sitting around him were all the professors of the universities and he said, 'the times of this ignorance, God winked at!' The times of this ignorance, and ignorance indeed, had gripped that great city, b&s, they were ignorant of all that really mattered. But brilliant they were, in the things of this world which come to nought. But because Paul was among that sort, he felt on that occasion, that he ought to wax eloquent you see, and so he tried as it were, to mix the message with eloquence and he even quoted their own prophets in order to make an impression upon them. Well, now, he had a few baptisms! now if we had that sort of success today, we would think it was magnificent, we'd turn a somersault! but to Paul that was rather a disappointment. And so when he came to this city of Corinth, he came to a different class of people, and he knew, b&s, the problem they would have!

Now let's have a look at Corinth, and we move west that 45 miles; now that little bit of land today, the 4 or 5 mile strip, they've cut a canal through there today. It's an amazing thing to see this, a canal I suppose about the width of this hall and the big ships go through it, the clefts are about 50 to 100 feet high just straight through that piece of land, so they joined the Aegean Sea to the Adriatic and, of course, it's a short cut then across to Rome. But to the apostle, they use to drag their boats across that strip of land, in order to save the journey around the bottom of the Peloponnesian peninsula, so shortening the journey to Rome. And when you got to Corinth, b&s, what a difference you had! Here was a busy seaport! Here converged all those trade routes, leading straight on across that strip of land on to Rome, and being that sort of place, it had a cosmopolitan society; every conceivable nation was represented there, and every conceivable type of person. And Corinth was noted, b&s, as a city that was vice ridden and sport crazy, about like Australia. Absolutely like Australia, vice ridden and sport crazy and every second year they have the Isthmian games, called that because of the isthmus, that little strip of land, and they're the Isthmian games every second year there,

and they've even excavated part of that now, b&s, and you can visualize the stadium that was there and the stands they had, and the Olympic games that were run there. And the other thing, of course, the vice for which it was noted, pre-eminent among that, b&s, was sexual depravity; sexual depravity and we'll talk a bit about that later when we get to chapter 10, with the great temple on top of the acro-Corinthus, the hill of Corinth, right behind, and when we have our evening tomorrow night, God willing, we'll show you slides of the land, and bible references in relation to that, and I'll show you that we've been there and seen this remarkable place; and you'll see, b&s, how wonderfully it brings this record alive to you, because Corinth lay right underneath this great hill which towered above it a couple of thousand feet; and up there, that restaurant which was served by the thousand priestess, worshipping the goddess, Aphrodite, sexual depravity.

And the Corinthians, b&s, would drag up out of the mud of society, and Paul knew as he later on wrote to them, that people who come to the truth, b&s, like that, and come into the possession of some intellectualism, as the truth is intellectual; if we're not careful, people like that come almost to worship intellectualism in its own right! And Paul, knowing that (because we know that he knew that, because when he wrote the first epistle he makes mention of this) and it did become a problem in Corinth; he determined, b&s, when he came there, he would not do another Athens.

Now in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 we have his statement in that regard, he didn't want to come like he came to Athens, verse 1, 'And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with the excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God', and he knew, b&s, that if he was to transport that speech from Athens here, it would have a wrong effect upon these people, and they would begin to worship eloquence and intelligence in its own right, which they did in the case of Apollos. And so he says, 'Listen, I know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified'. Now that didn't mean that all he spoke about was the Atonement; because he didn't! it wasn't subject matter that he's talking about, but attitude of mind. And Jesus Christ and Him crucified, b&s, is the flesh displayed for what it is, weak, fearful and trembling! And our Lord, b&s, was reduced to tears and much crying, He prayed unto His God who delivered Him out of death, and He crucified this body, and He was the most wonderful man that ever lived; the most brilliantly intellectual that the world has ever seen, coming from God as He did, and that's what He thought of the flesh, and Paul says, that's the dominating factor when I'm coming to you, and I'm not there to present myself, he says, I'm not going to display my eloquence and power of speech, I'm going to demonstrate to you what really is powerful. And he did that, b&s, among them.

Now in the 18th chapter of Acts we have the background to the establishment of that ecclesia. When Paul came there, he would think to himself, 'well, the quicker I get out of

this place, the better'. He could hardly conceive, b&s, that God would have any people in this city, and so we read in the 18th chapter of Acts and verses 9 and 10, 'Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city'. Now, b&s, the appearances of the Lord to Paul in his lifetime, were rare! they were very rare; and they only happened when occasion called for it, when matters had reached a climatic point, when it was needed. And Paul would be in that city and he would see it; you know, a bubbling caldron of vice and madness, and people coming and going, and he would think, 'who on earth would ever believe the gospel in this city?' And because the Lord would know that Paul was in a deep state of depression, He appeals to him, 'Paul, He said, I've got a lot of people here!'. What an astonishing comment that would have been to the apostle, so much so that he spent 6 months there, we read in this record, he spent 6 months there and the record says, 'he sat there quoting the Greek'. He dwelt there 6 months but the Greek says 'he say there for 6 months, almost making it like his headquarters.

And God gave him help, b&s, because we read in verse 1, 'that after these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born of Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and he came unto them!' Now here's a remarkable set of circumstances, Claudias had told the Jews 'get out of Rome', what for? We don't know, but archeologists tell us that records have been turned up from Claudius stating that there was some sort of an insurrection about one called Crestus, Crestus which they say could have been a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ; and perhaps it was, that Aquila and Priscilla had been ejected from Rome because of their belief in that. They're Jews, and these are a remarkable couple in the bible; Aquila whose name means 'an eagle' and Priscilla whose name means 'a little old woman', and you know, b&s, they were a remarkable couple; you find them here, you find them in Rome, you find them in Ephesus, and you find them in Paul's final letter that he ever wrote before he was executed, telling Timothy to stick with them because they were a good couple in the truth! You know, they're mentioned 6 times in Paul's writings, and in the AV you'll notice that Aquila is mentioned 3 times and Priscilla is mentioned 3 times first. He's mentioned 3 times first and she's mentioned 3 times first; now b&s, it's extraordinary that she's mentioned at all, I mean, Peter's wife accompanied him we learn from 1 Corinthians 9 and the other apostles, their wives accompanied them on their journeys, we don't even know their names! but we know her name and not only that we find her mentioned 3 times out of the 6, that's in the AV; but in the Greek text in this chapter in verse 26 where she appears second, she should appear first! So she's 4 times mentioned in front out of the 6 times that she's mentioned. Why that she's mentioned at all is astonishing, and in this context when they come across this Apollos, an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures, and it was Priscilla and Aquila that took him aside and taught him 'the way of God more perfectly'. More perfectly? a man that was skilled in the baptism of John, who had come from the seat of learning in Alexandria with its 75,000 volumes of books, a man who is a brilliant orator and a wonderful debater, and Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and taught him the way of God more perfectly! And it would appear, b&s, to me, this woman perhaps was the

sharper mind of the two, Aquila was obviously a wonderful man and a faithful man, but it would appear that this woman had come to a keener perception of the things of God. And here is a combination of a married couple who were immensely helpful in the truth. And we know, b&s, don't we? that it is the rule of God, it is right, it is proper, that the husband should take the leadership in the house, because God, God is a Father, not a mother, He's a Father and His Son is a boy, a Son! and that's proper that that should be maintained in the house; it doesn't mean that the women are second grade citizens by any means! It means they're complimentary, b&s, to what goes on in that house! But there are exceptions to that rule; and when that happens, if it happens in your home, sisters, then you have a right, of course, and it's proper that you should assist your husband if he cannot see the things clearly as you do; but do it discreetly! and do it with love and with due consideration of the feelings of that man, who has a God-given right to be seen as the leader of his house. And I've got no doubt in my mind at all, that Aquila and Priscilla got through life marvellously because she would have been a very wonderful person who would have been keenly sensitive to her husband's feelings; but nonetheless, there she is!

Now it says 'they worked together, they wrought together', and you know, that was good for the Corinthians, because in 2 Corinthians chapter 11, b&s, the apostle wrote to the Corinthians like this, and I'll tell you the reason why he had to write this, verse 7 to 9 he said, 'Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? I robbed other ecclesias, taking wages of them, to do you service. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself'. And so he worked with these two in their occupation as tentmakers in order to be free from the Corinthians. Why would he do that? Because of the very reason, b&s, I mentioned earlier; that when you get people that are dragged up from the dregs of humanity, and had nothing and knew nothing, and suddenly they're in the truth, which has, which has for its base intellectualism of the finest sort (because we've all got to learn something) and then of course, produces men and women who are outstanding examples, and if we're not careful, we can begin to worship both the intellectualism and the personalities that present it. And that's what happened to the Corinthians, so when the Judaizer came along with his high sounding phrases, and his self praise of his brilliance in the Law of Moses and his lofty approach and looking down upon them in a demeaning way, they gloried in that! When he asked for expenses, why they said, that was, of course, in due regard for his dignity! And when Paul came and worked with his own hands and refused their expenses, they were offended, because they felt that was below his dignity and he ought to realize what position that he had, and that's exactly the reason why Paul did work with his own hands, because he didn't hold that view, b&s. It's odd, isn't it? how people think like that, but they do you know! Most people are glad when you say you don't want your expenses, but the Corinthians were offended, because they felt that was beneath the apostle's dignity, and he ought not to do that!

Now Luke is a brilliant historian, that's what he is, a historian! we need to know that, you

see, he's not one of those apostles who wrote from the bible expounding it, as Paul would; he'd say, 'it's written here and it means that' and he would stretch that out, those lessons. And it would be wonderful to see him do that, but Luke's not like that, he's writing a history to this Roman dignitary called Theophilus. So he told him in the gospel of Luke, that there's the story about Jesus, he said, 'set in order the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ'. In the Acts of the apostles he said to this Theophilus, he says, 'here are the acts of the apostles of all that Jesus began, began to do and to teach', so Acts is an extension of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the history of Acts can be pinpointed with relative accuracy, to be a period, b&s, of 33 years. So here's an extension of the work of the Lord, but knowing him to be a historian, what we've got to watch is this, that Luke doesn't stop to expound the Old Testament, but he drops in a word, a sentence, in a couple of places, two places I know, a number in which he's telling you to have a look at the Old Testament, and back there you'll see a comparable history out of which this is growing, to which this is related. And we've got one of those gems here! because he said, 'these people were tentmakers'. Why bother to tell us that? later on, (we won't come to this) but if we were doing the Acts of the apostles I could tell you why he said, that Paul was taken to a street called 'Straight', and that's out of the Old Testament too! and that's the only street named in the bible by this historian, because he wants us to see that there's something going on here.

Now if you'll turn to Isaiah 49, b&s, you'll see a remarkable thing, and if we had the time to develop this, I could show you that Paul's work, personally and individually, is set up in the book of Isaiah. It's all here, but Paul didn't know it at the time, but when he was converted by the Lord, the Lord drew his attention to this prophecy, and Paul is in here, personally and individually, and he was astonished to see that! That's why he was to write to the Romans and say, 'I magnify my office'. He was the subject of bible prophecy, personally and individually, and that was revealed to him when he was arrested by the Lord on the way to Damascus. But you see, Paul being in here, so are a lot of Paul's works in here; chapter 49 of Isaiah is about a woman, she's called Zion and she represents the children of Israel, and she's lost her family, and she comes crying to God as if God doesn't care that her family's gone off into captivity and is roaming around the world. God says, 'I do care!' and He said to this woman, He'd give her another family, and we pick it up in verse 20, 'The children which thou shalt have after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too narrow, too small for me: give place to me that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where have they come from?' she says. And so she has this large family that are coming to her and saying, 'Mother, the place is not big enough; you better make it bigger'. And she's got more children than what she'd lost, and she said, 'I didn't even know their father!' The reason she didn't know that, because when Paul uses this in Galatians, he said, 'they're all the children of God by faith', and she thought they were by law. But they were not! and where did they come from? Verse 22, 'Thus saith the LORD God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles', and so here comes the Gentiles!

And when we turn the page to chapter 54 we find that one of the figures that Isaiah uses for the calling of these Gentiles of whom there will be a great influx of them, increasing the family of God enormously over a short period of time, we read in Isaiah 54 and verse 1, 'Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith Yahweh'. Now look at that! here's a woman who never went through the pains of childbirth, a woman who couldn't have children, and all of a sudden, she's got a large family, and what's she going to do? 'Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains', b&s, the figure of the inclusion of the Gentiles in Isaiah's prophecy increasing the family is enlarging tents. And it's only said of Aquila and Priscilla and the apostle that they were tentmakers, and not only that, but Aquila and Priscilla are mentioned of having lived in Rome and the apostle commends them, b&s, he talks about them in Corinth as having 'the ecclesia in their house'. And when they were in Rome he said, 'they provided shelter, to the brethren and sisters, to whom not only I give thanks but all the ecclesias of the Gentiles'. And so in Rome, there was notoriety about the home of Aquila and Priscilla that if you wanted shelter you go there! Imagine, b&s, what would have been necessary for them to do that! and especially that applied to Gentiles, and here were Jews protecting Gentiles not only from the authorities of the day because they were now in Christ, but from the bitterness and hatred and envy of their own people. But they were tentmakers and they would constantly be providing, (they probably didn't live in a tent then) but in their dwelling they would be constantly providing new rooms, new beds, getting more linen, preparing for more visitors; tentmakers, and that's the figure that Isaiah used of this wonderful way in which the gospel would spread and how the Gentiles would be included.

Now you know the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth, and it was Japheth of course, the people of Europe and Asia; the eastern and western worlds were developed from Japheth weren't they? and Japheth is a name which means 'to enlarge' but more than that, the connotation of the Hebrew word is this, that Japheth means 'to enlarge by persuasion', to enlarge by persuasion, got that? Enlarge by persuading people, and the record says in Genesis chapter 9 where the origin of this thought was, 'that Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem', and God would enlarge them! Well, if you're going to enlarge a people you don't put them in other people's tents, do you? You say, buy bigger ones yourself but no, Japheth shall be enlarged by persuasion and dwell in the tents of Shem, and from Shem, of course, came the Semitic people, the Jewish people. And right back there in Genesis the germ of that idea, that figure was there, spread through Isaiah's prophecy and Luke tell us, of all people, that they were tentmakers!

And so brethren and sisters, here the scene was set then in Acts 18 for these Gentiles to come into the truth, and for room to be provided by the preaching of Paul and of Aquila and Priscilla. Now verse 4 of Acts 18 says, 'That Paul reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks'. Of course, you start in the synagogue because it's the Jew first, and then to the Greek, but not only that, b&s, you see, it would be the best place in the world to start because here are people who have the basics of the Old Testament firmly fixed in their mind. You've got a head start in that synagogue, but not only that but there would be mixtures in that synagogue of the

proselytes, the Gentile proselytes; a 'proselyte' is a word which means 'to come near', to come near and was used by the Jews of those Gentiles who had joined themselves to the hope of Israel. There were two classes, proselytes of righteousness and proselytes of the gate. Those of righteousness were those who not only accepted the covenants of promise but were circumcised and accepted the Law. Whereas those of the proselytes at the gate, that were left just outside, were those who accepted the Law and the promises but would not be circumcised; but they were proselytes and they would be in that synagogue. So Paul had an excellent starting point!

But it quickly demoralized him, b&s, because he got a lot of opposition in that synagogue, and I can understand when this record speaks as it does, in the next few verses, what happened here. He's in this vice ridden, sport crazy city, he doesn't know what's going to happen, he hasn't yet been told by the Lord, that He's got much people in the city; he goes to the synagogue and he runs into a brick wall, and they will not listen to him. He finishes up getting out of there, and so Paul's at an all time low, and we get to verse 5 of Acts 18, 'And when Silas and Timotheus had come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ'. Ah, look, if you've never had that experience, b&s, look, it's a thrilling thing; you know what happens in life, we're gregarious people, most of us because we're Christadelphians, we love company, we love to be encouraged by others; people say, 'John, you know, you encourage people'; yes, I do, but I tell you, b&s, if I didn't get encouragement, you'd get none from me! I desperately need the company of my brethren and sisters; I could never, ever live in isolation, I would drift from the truth, there's no question of that! I need people to tell me and to enthuse me! And I can imagine the apostle when Silas and Timotheus came down, pressed in the spirit, you know, Rotherham translates that 'urged on in the Word', urged on with these two wonderful fellows who'd been left at Thessalonica, while he was sent away for the fear of his life. And among them, Silas, of course, and little Timothy.

Little Timothy, b&s, you know if you were an artist, with the information you've got in the bible, you could paint him, you know more about him, perhaps, physically and characteristically, than you do of most people in the bible; little Timothy, who only weeks earlier had been taken from under the roof of his grandmother and his mother, whose father had obviously gone off, who was a Greek and who had gone off and left the two women to bring this little fellow up. A little boy who was as thin as a rake, bones sticking out, and a little pale complexion, and as timid as anything. You know, shy as anything, Paul said to the Corinthians, 'don't you dare frighten him!'; that's what he was like and he writes to Timothy about the old wives' fables, that there were all the old women fussing over him and saying, 'Timothy, you ought to do your daily dozen; pick up the weights and do a bit of running and walking for your physical physique and Paul says, 'you know, that doesn't profit for all time!'. And he wouldn't drink anything but water, oh, no way, only water; Paul said, 'look, a little wine won't hurt you Timothy', and his often infirmities. The little boy had indigestion because he had a nervous disposition; you can absolutely paint him, and he was left at Thessalonica, b&s, to exhort them, that they should not be moved by these things of persecution, of the threat of death, that he withstood there to exhort them that they not be moved by these things. Imagine that kid,

imagine him coming! and what was the wonderful attribute that he had? Paul said, I hadn't got a man in the world like him, he told the Philippians; I've got no one one-souled with me, to quote the Greek, in this respect, his outstanding virtue, b&s, is that he never knew that Timothy existed!

Timothy thought nothing of himself, there was nothing of himself to think about. He gave his whole life for other people, his own existence never entered into his mind! 'I have no man one-souled with me who will naturally care for your state. For all men seek their own and not the things which belong to Jesus Christ; but he's not like that'. And I can imagine that little kid, coming down with Silas and now as he enters this big wide terrible world, and faces it and left by his beloved spiritual father in the truth to fight the good fight of faith, this little timid fellow, and he arrives and Paul sees him, and is urged on in that bible by the very spirit of that boy, and by Silas, b&s. It's a marvellous little picture that Luke is painting here for us, of the way in which we can help each other. And being urged on in the spirit, it says in verse 6, 'and when they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook his raiment and said unto them, 'your blood be upon your own heads, I'm clean. Henceforth, I will go to the Gentiles', and Paul walked out of the synagogue.

Did you notice, they didn't oppose the apostle Paul at all, they opposed themselves? You know, it says concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, when the Pharisees and the common people gathered to Him over the question of who or what John was, when John sent a message, 'art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?' and when the messengers of John had gone away, and there was a little smirk on the people's faces perhaps because they said, 'hah, who would have thought that John the Baptist would have doubted?' And you say, we're all weak aren't we? and he swung around and said, ' what did you go out to see? A reed shaken in the wind, what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment, he said? and He gave them a stinging rebuke about John, but you know, b&s, when He'd finished, the common people were reduced to tears, but the Pharisees turned away. The margin says, 'they frustrated the grace of God within themselves'. John's name means 'the grace of God', they could see, they could see by the very way that he came, the example of singleness that he set, of separation, of dedication to no other distraction but God's Word; no distraction! they knew the message, that a voice had come crying, 'in the wilderness prepare ye the way of the Lord'. This is the way it's got to be done, isolation from all the distractions of the world, that was the message and they knew that! and they frustrated the grace of God in their hearts, so they opposed themselves.

And there are other examples of that, Paul wrote to Timothy and told him to be gentle onto all men; apt to teach, that those that oppose themselves might be recovered. And when Paul walked out of that synagogue, what a tragedy it was that these people had brought down upon their own head, their own condemnation when every opportunity was given them, to succeed in life, b&s. And we don't give up when we're exasperated; if we have to give up, b&s, it's because other people won't respond. And so Paul came out of that place and he went next door, in verse 7, 'He departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus (it says,) one that worshipped God', now

that's an expression used of Gentiles. You see, all the Jews reported to worship God because they were Jews, but when a Gentile was a proselyte it says, he was a worshipper of God. So this man Justus was not a Jew, but he lived next door to the synagogue, right next door! And Paul goes in there, into that man's place, and what happens, verse 8, 'and Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed', and so from the next door neighbour's place he converts the ruler of the synagogue.

Now in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 Paul makes mention of him, he said, 'Look, I thank God (verse 14) that I baptised none of you but Crispus and Gaius', so Paul took the personal trouble to baptise Crispus because it was an important convert, b&s. Right next door to the synagogue, can you imagine it? can you imagine us going to the Vatican in Rome and trying to convince the Pope and all his followers concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, and the truth of that, and we'd be thrown out, and we'd go right next door to the Vatican (well, you wouldn't imagine that the Pope would come to the truth, would you? but what if one of his chief cardinals did?) and here's Crispus the ruler of that synagogue, he's in the truth. And what happened then? Oh, it says in verse 8, 'And many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptised'. It had become a tremendous impetus, b&s, for them to accept the truth, you see! and come, of course, to be baptised. This is what happened there!

Now, Luke says in verse 11, 'That Paul was there about a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them', and the margin says for the word 'continued' it says 'he sat there'. He sat there for that 18 month period making it his headquarters throughout Achaia. Well, of course, the Jews can't stand that, so in verse 12, 'When Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the Law'. Now, b&s, have you ever noticed that in the Acts of the apostles, when Paul defended against these Roman governors, did you ever notice there's one common factor in all of them; you see, this was the point, there was the point! The Jews wanted to put a stop to this, they couldn't do it in their own right, they could insight the people to riot and rebellion, but in the end, the Roman governors would quell the riot and in most cases, the Jews themselves would suffer because of it, and people would lose their lives, because they were the ones who had instigated the riots. So they were limited in what they could do about this crazy Paul who was in their opinion, apostate from the truth! So they dragged him before the Roman governors, Gallio, Felix, Festus, Agrippa and Paul said the same thing in front of all of them; there's a common factor in all his speeches, and it was this, that the Romans you see, would put their Roman stamp and seal of authority upon anybody's religion, so you took it to Rome and you got it approved, as an approved religion!

And when the Romans approved you to preach your religion, you could do that freely in the Roman empire, and you did it under the protection of the Romans. Judaism, which is a term which means 'the Jew's religion' was an authorized religion in Rome; the Jews were free to have their synagogues everywhere, not only free to do it, but the Romans were bound to protect them, b&s, while they preached Judaism. And there's Gallio, and there's Felix and there's Festus, and there's Agrippa, and they're dragging Paul up all

the time, and they get the same answer, as these Roman governors say, 'Answer for yourself!' and he says, 'I practice the Jewish religion, there's only one difference, I know it better; I quote their bible after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers'. See, what can they do? Imagine the Jews tearing their hair out, and the Romans unable to discern which was the best of the two, could do nothing about it! because Paul was exactly right, his was the Jews' religion, 'for the hope of Israel, I'm bound with this chain'. It just so happened that he knew it better, it wasn't a new religion at all, and so his defence before Gallio would run along those lines, b&s.

Of course, there was a riot, wasn't there? and Gallio had to put that riot down! and in the end of verse 17 we read, 'Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes the chief ruler of the synagogue', hey, he'd be the next one to take over from Crispus; and now he's in trouble, 'and the Greeks took Sosthenes the chief ruler of the synagogue'. Now it doesn't say here on whose side he was, but you look how Corinthians opens, b&s, the opening verse of Corinthians is this, you listen, 'Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother', now the word 'our' is in italics, so it's not a part of the original Greek, but what is not there which is part of the original Greek is the definite article, and he really said, 'Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes the brother'. The brother, and he stood, b&s, as a monumental victory for the truth, because when Crispus would have come over to defect from the Jewish synagogue and to become a member of the Christian faith, b&s, you can be absolutely certain that when they appointed the ruler of the synagogue, they'd get a radical Judaizer! a radical man, they didn't want this to happen again, and it did! It did, and he became known as 'Sosthenes the brother'.

And so there we have, b&s, basically the establishment of the Corinthian ecclesia. Well, Paul sailed off, didn't he? to get back to the Land of Israel, and Priscilla and Aquila left with him and he came to Ephesus and he stayed there for a while, and then he left Priscilla and Aquila at Ephesus and verse 24 says, that while Priscilla and Aquila were at Ephesus, 'a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus'. Born in Alexandria, well, Ptolemy Philadelphus, b&s, was the Ptolemy in Egypt, one of those Grecian rulers, one descending from the generals of Alexander the Great, he'd got this section in Egypt and of course, Ptolemy Philadelphus was a great learned man and he loved books, and he opened up a huge library on the northern coast of Africa, in Alexandria. Thousands of volumes there, which the Romans in AD 41 burnt and destroyed, but he had this huge collection of books, among which of course, later on, was the Septuagint Version, the Greek version of the Hebrew Old Testament, which he had commissioned to be translated by Jews. And in that library there was a big, big section of the Jewish faith, because the Jews were so powerful in Alexandria, that there were 50,000 of them there in those days, and there were 3 whole suburbs of Alexandria which were completely Jewish, so powerful was the influence of the Jews in that place and in about AD 64-66 there was riot there and thousands were slaughtered by the Egyptians because they were so jealous because they dominated that place.

And Apollos was born there, and being a very erudite man was a regular visitor to the

gallery and to the library and he was a reader, and he became convinced of the faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and he read up on it and was right up to date to the days of John the Baptist; beyond that he didn't go much further. Now Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and completed his education, and what did he do? He went back to Corinth and he mightily or RSV puts it 'he powerfully confuted the Jews in public', and you can see in the marketplace, can't you? and standing in and around where the Corinthian games were held, you can see him there, b&s, in the open spaces in the synagogue and the Jewish experts with all their jots and tittles of the Law, firing questions at this eloquent man, and brilliantly answering them one after another, and the Corinthians standing with open mouths watching this. And you see, this is why Paul knew them so well, and there arose in the Corinthian ecclesia a party which says, 'I am of Apollos', and Paul had to write to them and say, 'you may have 10,000 instructors in Christ; but not many fathers', because they were squaring off Paul and Apollos, the two major parties, the one said, 'I am of Paul' and the other 'I am of Apollos'. And the 'Apollos' party were those who were carried away with intellectualism and eloquence in its own right; Paul said, 'Listen, you've got 10,000 instructors in Christ, but you've not got many fathers'.

And in the last chapter of 1 Corinthians he said to the Corinthians, 'you wrote to Apollos to come and visit you, but he wrote back and said, I will come when I have a more convenient season' and it's clearly obvious when you go to 2 Corinthians, that Paul and Apollos thoroughly agreed with each other, whose hearts beat in tune, had got together over that matter and Apollos had agreed not to come, because it wasn't an Apollos they wanted, b&s, it was a Paul. The Corinthians badly needed a father, and they got a father in the apostle Paul who fed them, not with meat straight away, but with milk as he told them in 1 Corinthians 3, and as we go into our subject tomorrow morning, and begin to pick up the context of chapters 8, 9 and 10, we will certainly be seeing, b&s, the wise and mature counsel of a father!