

1 Corinthians 1:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

Analysis

Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ—Paul identifies four factions centered on human personalities. The **Paul party** likely boasted of their founder's apostolic authority. The **Apollos party** (Acts 18:24-28) probably preferred his eloquence and philosophical sophistication—Apollos was "mighty in the scriptures" and "an eloquent man." The **Cephas party** (Peter's Aramaic name) may have claimed superiority through connection to Jesus' original disciples or favored a more Jewish Christianity. The **Christ party** sounds pious but may have been the most divisive, claiming direct spiritual insight that bypassed human teachers—a form of super-spirituality Paul will critique throughout the letter.

Each slogan—**I am of Paul, I am of Apollos** (ego men eimi Paulou, ego de Apollō, ἐγὼ μέν εἰμι Παύλου, ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ)—mirrors the factional rhetoric of Greek philosophical schools, where students pledged loyalty to a master. Paul rejects this entirely: Christian identity is in Christ alone, not human teachers.

Historical Context

Apollos arrived in Corinth after Paul's departure (Acts 19:1) and impressed many with his rhetorical skill and scriptural knowledge. This unintentionally created comparison and competition. Cephas (Peter) may have visited Corinth or had followers there who valued Jewish tradition and apostolic precedent. These were

godly men, but their admirers turned them into factional mascots. Paul later insists he and Apollos are merely servants through whom they believed (3:5).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How do modern Christians form personality cults around favorite preachers, authors, or theological traditions?
2. Can you claim to follow "Christ alone" while actually being devoted to a particular teacher or movement?
3. How does competition over eloquence, theological sophistication, or spiritual credentials mirror the Corinthian factions today?

Interlinear Text

λέγει δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει Ἐγὼ μέν εἰμι
I say **Now** **this** **that** **every one** **of you** **I say** **I** **G3303** **am**
G3004 G1161 G5124 G3754 G1538 G5216 G3004 G1473 G1510

Παύλου Ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ Ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ Ἐγὼ δὲ
of Paul **I** **Now** **of Apollos** **I** **Now** **of Cephas** **I** **Now**
G3972 G1473 G1161 G625 G1473 G1161 G2786 G1473 G1161

Χριστοῦ

of Christ

G5547

Additional Cross-References

John 1:42 (Parallel theme): And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

1 Corinthians 4:6 (Parallel theme): And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

1 Corinthians 7:29 (Parallel theme): But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;

1 Corinthians 9:5 (Parallel theme): Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?

1 Corinthians 15:5 (Parallel theme): And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

1 Corinthians 15:50 (Parallel theme): Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

1 Corinthians 16:12 (Parallel theme): As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.

2 Corinthians 9:6 (Parallel theme): But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

Galatians 3:17 (References Christ): And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

Galatians 2:9 (Parallel theme): And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

