

1 Corinthians 1:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

Analysis

I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius—Paul expresses relief that he personally baptized only a few Corinthians, precisely to avoid the factional misuse of baptism. **Crispus** was the synagogue ruler who believed (Acts 18:8), a prominent early convert. **Gaius** is likely the same man who hosted Paul and the church (Rom 16:23), a man of means. These exceptions are named, implying Paul remembers clearly because they were so few.

Paul's thanksgiving is ironic: normally an apostle would rejoice to baptize many, but given the Corinthian tendency to form personality cults, Paul is glad he limited his baptizing. This does not diminish baptism's importance—Paul simply refuses to let it become a trophy or tool for factionalism. The priority is the gospel (v. 17), not accumulating baptized followers.

Historical Context

In a culture that valued patron-client relationships, disciples often boasted about who initiated them into a philosophical school or mystery religion. Some Corinthians apparently boasted, "Paul baptized me," as a status marker. Paul deflates this by thanking God he baptized very few—he will not be anyone's factional mascot.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How can even sacred ordinances like baptism be misused to promote human ego or factionalism?
2. What does Paul's relief at baptizing few people teach us about the relative importance of who performs ministry versus the gospel content?
3. How do modern Christians sometimes turn baptism into a status symbol or point of division?

Interlinear Text

εὐχαριστῶ τῷ Θεῷ ὅτι οὐδένα ὑμῶν ἐβάπτισα εἰ μὴ
I thank G3588 God G2316 that G3754 none G3762 of you G5216 I baptized G907 G1487 G3361
G2168 G2316 G3754 G3762 G5216 G907 G1487 G3361

Κρίσπον καὶ Γάιον

Crispus and Gaius
G2921 G2532 G1050

Additional Cross-References

Acts 18:8 (Baptism): And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

Romans 16:23 (Parallel theme): Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

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