

Bible Commentary - 1 Corinthians – Chapter 3

We present to you our commentary on 1st Corinthians. In our study we will make use of the usual tools of exegesis but we will also support our conclusions by making reference to numerical clues in the Scripture. Our purpose is to show how spiritual numbers can be a valuable study aid. You will find a chapter by chapter exegesis on Page 99 BIBLE of our website www.biblenumbersforlife.com

COMMENTARY

Summary of main points in the text:

- Paul warns the Corinthians ‘**you are still worldly: jealousy and quarreling among you**’ (v.3)
- Acting like men: ‘**I follow Paul**’ and ‘**I follow Apollos**’ (v.4)
- Christ’s ministers each have a task: one sows the other waters (v.8)
- Paul laid a foundation as an expert builder: which is Jesus Christ (v.11)
- Any other foundation: gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay: will burn in the fire (v.13)
- If anyone destroys God’s temple: God will destroy him (v.17)
- ‘**No more boasting about men**’: all things are yours: you are of Christ, Christ is of God (v.23)

Parallel Passage (Numbers 19)

1 Corinthians 3 is the 136th chapter of the New Testament.

Numbers 19 is the 136th chapter of the Bible. In Numbers 19 **a red heifer without blemish that has never been under a yoke** is to be taken outside the camp slaughtered, blood sprinkled 7x in the direction of the Tabernacle, then burned: hide, flesh, blood, and offals. The priest is to take cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet wool and throw them onto the burning fire. The ashes of the red heifer shall be used for the water of cleansing. Uncleaness remains for the Israelite who touches a dead body unless purified by the water of cleansing. Also: touching someone who is killed by the sword, a human bone, or a grave, etc. A priest pours fresh water into a jar plus ashes of the red heifer. The unclean person must bathe and wash their clothes. If an unclean person is not washed by the water of cleansing, they have defiled the sanctuary and are cut off from Israel.

This is **a most unusual offering**: a female bovine, a virgin adult, who had never worked (borne a yoke), without any white or dark hairs. Slaughtered and burned outside the camp. Unlike other offerings, no part of this animal comes near the sanctuary or is offered on the altar. Its blood was sprinkled 7 times in the direction of the Tabernacle. The priest who did the slaughter was unclean until evening.

Interpretation of the red heifer:

- In Scripture and the stars the bull is a type of the King of the Gentiles¹
- Therefore, a cow represents a people of the Gentiles that the King rules over
- A virgin heifer is a people of the Gentiles which has never been subject to an earthly King
- A heifer that has not borne a yoke, means she has never been under the Jewish Law
- No white hairs and no dark hairs indicates she is the purest Gentile, no Jewish blood
- She is a sacrificial animal: her faith is in Jehovah (Jesus) and his sacrifice for her sins

Conclusion: **the red heifer represents righteous Gentiles**

For an in depth analysis of the red heifer we recommend our paper 'Red Heifer' on Page 4.0 Prophecy. There is a prophetic significance of the red heifer which applies to the last days before the rapture. We will focus here on the significance of the red heifer in the context of Paul's message to the Corinthians.

Interpretation of the parallel passage:

The red heifer represents **spiritually guided** Gentiles. As a female she is the follower of a leader, who is the Lord Jesus Christ. She bears no visible yoke representing the control of an oxen driver, but instead is **invisibly guided** like the two Philistine (Gentile) milk cows who pulled the ark back to Israel with ropes:

"Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milk cows, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the cows to the cart, and bring their calves home from them" (1 Sam. 6:7)

"And the cows took the straight way to Bethshemesh, and went along the highway lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh [a town in Israel]." (1 Sam. 6:12)

The connection to 1st Corinthians is clear: Paul is emphasizing that in the body of Christ there must be neither a yoke of religious bondage, nor a human oxen driver in control over the people. Religion is man-made. It has the appearance of good works, e.g. fields ploughed, but it denies and interferes with the spirituality of believers to hear and follow the leading of the Lord. Believers will pull the ark, symbolic of Christ, and will move in the direction of the home of the ark, i.e. Christian community, by divine guidance and by divine power.

This miracle is as much proof of God working among Gentile believers as the Gentile milk cows who pulled the Ark of the Covenant back to Israel.

¹ See our paper 'Taurus – The Times of the Gentiles' in section 7.0 Stars on our website

The author was a livestock farmer for many years and can tell you from experience the bond between a cow and her calf is so strong it brings forth an emotional drive to reunite that borders on frenzy. A cow separated from her calf will immediately cease whatever it is doing and will break through strong fences to reunite to her calf. Cows who have their calves taken away will immediately search for those calves, not head for the exit to town. In addition cows who have never carried a yoke or been tied to a wagon will immediately resist that constraint and fight against it. Two cows that have their calves taken away would never naturally pull in the same direction. The cart with the Ark of the Covenant ought to have been toppled as the cows strained and fought against each other and the ropes tied to the cart in the urgency of finding their calves. None of these things happened because the Spirit of God overcame the fleshly strength and desires of the animals. So it is when a Christian submits to the authority of Christ.

Paul says in 1 Cor 2:23 “**No more boasting of men**”. Case closed. Let Christ be the head of the church and allow the Spirit of God to guide believers without the interference of men (oxen drivers) or man’s rules (yoke of religious obligation).

Spiritual Numbers

1 Corinthians 3 is the 136th book in the New Testament. The spiritual number 136 means ‘**Clean Heart**’. Jesus said “**Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.**” (Matt. 5:8). Believers know the way to go: they watch Jesus and follow him.

The number $136 = 8 \times 17$. Therefore the number 136 may be interpreted ‘**Victory**’ (17) of the ‘**New Man**’ (8). Religion is made for men with hard hearts who do not see God. Christians (8) have a pure heart. As a spiritually reborn man, a ‘**New Man**’ (8), Christians see God and hear God.

There are 23 verses in 1 Corinthians 3. The spiritual number 23 means ‘**Death**’. The first verse of 1 Corinthians 3 is the 48th verse of the book. The last verse of 1 Corinthians 3 is the 70th verse in the book. The spiritual number 48 means ‘**Father’s Blessing**’ and the spiritual number 70 means ‘**Elders**’.

The interpretation: ‘**Father’s Blessing**:’ (48) <equals> ‘**Death**’ (23) <for> ‘**Elders**’ (70). When the people in a spiritual community are hard hearted, elders are needed to guide the flock. However, in a community where the people are spiritually re-born, there is no need for elders to teach them. The book of Proverbs says: “**I have more understanding than my teachers for your testimonies are my meditation. I am wiser than the ancients [elders] because I keep your precepts**” (Psalm 119:99-100).

The gematria of 1 Corinthians 3 is $197,825 = 25 \times 41 \times 193$ [44th prime]. The spiritual meaning of those numbers is ‘**Utter Weakness**’ (25) of ‘**Man’s Rules**’ (41): ‘**Great City Falls**’ (193). The Great City refers to Babylon the Great – the counterfeit ‘civilization’ founded by the ‘**Bloody Murderer**’ (44) Cain. Obedience to Christ and the worship of Christians without the guidance or oversight or organization by men, is the downfall of Religion – **Man’s Rules** (41).