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A Faulty View of God's Shepherds
3:5 to 4:5



A second and related cause of division in the church at **Corinth** (**to see link click Ak – Splits and Division in the Church at Corinth**) concerned a faulty view of **God's shepherds**. In a series of **three metaphors**, using images from agriculture and architecture, **Paul** proceeds to address three closely related issues.

Beginning with **a farming metaphor** (**At – Only God Makes Things Grow**), **he** takes up the question of how **the Corinthians** as a whole are to regard **their shepherds**, since **their** own "fan clubs" (**I am of Apollo, I am of Paul**) must go. **God's shepherds** are only **servants**, farm laborers, as it were, each with their own task and reward. But **the Corinthians** had focused on **men** when, in fact, **ADONAI** alone was the source of **their** blessing. **He owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10b)** – the farm, the workers, and the growth of the crops. By implication, boasting in mere **servants** of the farm is foolishness in its own right.

Then shifting to **a construction metaphor** (see **Au – God is the Master Builder**), **Paul** speaks directly to those who were currently responsible for the leadership of the church in **Corinth**. **He** warns them in the strongest possible terms to build the church with the eternal materials consistent with the foundation of the Church – **Messiah** crucified. Those who ministered to **the Corinthians** were only

accountable to **Him**.

From that warning **Paul** moves naturally to **the Temple metaphor** (see **Av – God's Spirit Lives in God's Temple**), to the character/nature of the building per se. **YHVH** has chosen to dwell both within us and within the collective gathering of **His people**, which **He** calls "The Church." Later, **Paul** will make the case that **God** dwells *within* each believer since our **bodies** are **a temple for the Ruach Ha'Kodesh who lives inside you (6:19).** Here, **he** states emphatically that **God** similarly dwells *among* us when we come together in corporate worship. **God inhabits the praises of His people (Psalm 22:3).** In that sense, a Messianic synagogue, or a church – be it the church at **Corinth**, or your place of worship today – is **God's temple**.[82]

Finally, **Paul** brings together two principles mentioned earlier: **the apostles** are **God's servants** (see **At – Only God Makes Things Grow**) and the leaders of the church need to be **building on the right foundation** (see **Au – God is the Master Builder**). At the same time, **he** picks up on language that made clear what one may have only suspected up to this point, namely that **the Corinthians** were, in fact, passing judgment on **Paul himself** (**Aw – God's Shepherds are Merely His Servants**).[83]