

First Corinthians

VERSE-BY-VERSE

1st Corinthians

59 A.D.
Date of Writing

Ephesus
Place of Writing

In the last session Paul began to answer the Corinthian's questions about Christian liberty when it came to eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols. The answer: it was okay to eat the meat from the pagan temples, but it had to be done in love for others who didn't have the freedom to eat it. Some believed that the meat had been offered to an actual *god*. They were still immature in their Christian life and had not come to the realization of the truth that there are no other gods. Using himself as an example Paul told them, "if eating meat causes a brother to stumble, I will not eat it." (my paraphrase). Nonetheless, Paul had perfect liberty to eat whatever he wanted, and that is his point as we begin chapter 9. Therefore, the primary issue in chapter 9 is Paul stating, "Yes, I have freedoms, but I am going to give up my freedoms."

Six Questions Paul Answers

1. What about **marriage**? (Chapter 7).
2. What about Christian **liberty**? (Chapter 8-10).
3. What about Church **conduct**? (Chapter 11).
4. What about spiritual **gifts**? (Chapters 12-14).
5. What about the **Resurrection**? (Chapter 15).
6. What about the **collection**? (Chapter 16).

Chapter 9:1-6 | Paul Defends His Rights as an Apostle to Give Up His Freedoms

Verse 1–

Paul begins this section with several rhetorical questions (four of them are in verse 1).

-Am I not an apostle? As an apostle, Paul knew he had the rights and privileges as an apostle to eat whatever he wished.

-Am I not free? He knew he was free from and no longer bound by the Law of Moses. Food (¹Kosher or not) was not an issue.

-Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Paul saw the risen Lord (a requirement of an apostle) and the Lord revealed the truth to him that those who believe are no longer bound by the Law. These things were revealed (Acts 26:16) to Paul by the Lord and he has perfect liberty to teach this freedom in Christ to the church, **are ye not my work in the Lord?** Paul was the one who planted the church and laid the foundation. (See 1 Timothy 1:15,16: They followed his pattern).

Verse 2,3–

-If (since) I be not an apostle to others, Paul is stating a fact: He was not the apostle to everyone (Galatians 2:7). Paul says to the Corinthians **yet doubtless** (or, at any rate) **I am to you:** for you **in the Lord** are **the seal of mine apostleship**. It is not clear what he means by **seal**. A seal keeps something closed, and is also, in the sense that it is used here, bears the mark of the person who sets the seal. Therefore, a **seal** can be read, it is proof that a document is authentic. Although the Corinthian church had fallen into hard times in their behavior, they were still saved and that because of the grace of Jesus Christ. Therefore, they could be read by others (2 Corinthians 3:2). In that sense they were Paul's **seal of his apostleship**.

-Evidently, there were some who wanted to **examine** him to discover why he gave up his rights, even though he preached freedom.

-My answer (or my defense). The point he is making is that he is giving up his rights as an apostle because, going back to 8:13, he is not willing to offend a weaker brother. Since we do not have the letter he is responding to, it makes this a difficult passage to keep clear in our minds because he is defending his right not to do what he has the right to do. Perhaps he was being called into question for not taking a salary and taking advantage of the fruit of his spiritual labors?

¹ Kosher can be considered food that satisfies the Jewish law.