

1 CORINTHIANS

Author: Paul

Date: A. D. 54-56

Paul wrote this letter to the church in Corinth while he was visiting Ephesus during his third missionary journey. The gospel was first preached in Corinth by Paul during his second missionary trip (A.D. 51). He was in the city for eighteen months (Acts 18:1-17) establishing this predominantly Gentile church. Disturbing news about church problems, as well as questions to Paul, were sent in a couple of letters (1:11; 5:1, 7:1) prompting the writing of this letter. Paul's purpose in writing this letter was to deal with those issues and answer questions church members had asked.

There were divisions in the church, lawsuits between members, questionable practices, abuse of the Lord's Supper, problems concerning public worship and spiritual gifts. Many of the Corinthian believers were sliding back into the lifestyle of the pagan society with sexual immorality and other issues.

The city of Corinth was strategically located in the Roman province of Achaia (Greece today). It was a large, vibrant, commercial, seaport city. The location as a center for trade routes resulted in bringing prosperity, luxury and immorality to this cosmopolitan city. Widely recognized as an immoral place, the term "to live like a Corinthian" came to mean "to practice sexual immorality." The city had twelve pagan temples with the most famous one dedicated to Aphrodite, the goddess of love.

Theme: Christian conduct and proper worship while living in an immoral society.

Key verses: "I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment," 1 Corinthians 1:10. "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love," 1 Corinthians 13:13 (ESV).

Outline

- I. Introduction and Greetings (1:1-9)
- II. Divisions in the Church (1:10 – 4:21)
 - A. The Need for Unity (1:10 – 3:23)
 - B. The Need for Servanthood (4:1-21)
- III. Immorality in the Church (5:1 – 6:20)
- IV. Marriage, Celibacy, Divorce, Remarriage in the Church (7:1 – 40)
- V. Liberty in the Church (8:1 – 11:1)
- VI. Worship in the Church (11:2 – 14:40)
 - A. Roles of Men and Women (11:2-16)
 - B. The Lord's Supper (11:17-34)
 - C. Spiritual Gifts (12:1 – 14:40)
- VII. The Hope of the Church: Resurrection (15:1-58)

VIII. Charge to the Church (16:1 – 16:24)

A. Stewardship (16:1-4)

B. Personal Plans and Greetings (16:5 -24)