

Paul's First Letter to the Church at Corinth

1 Corinthians

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Introduction

- Author: Paul (1:1)
- Place: From Ephesus 56-58 A.D. (16:5-9)
- Is this really his 1st letter to Corinth? (5:9-12)

Church at Corinth

- Corinthian church was established by Paul in Acts 18 around 50 A.D. The church was made up of mainly Greeks (Gentiles), but there is a significant Jewish and Roman population
- The church met in homes, but Paul's home base was next door to the synagogue! (Acts 18:7)...note Sosthenes in Acts 18:17 and also 1 Cor. 1:1
- City of Corinth
 - Wealthy cosmopolitan Greek/Roman city with a population of 500,000 – 1 million
 - Greek sea god Poseidon and sexual goddess Aphrodite had major shrines in Corinth
 - Greek phrase "*to corinthianize*" meant to be immoral

Map of Corinth in the time of Paul

<http://scriptures.lds.org/en/biblemaps/13>



Why written to the church at Corinth

- Disciples and leaders in the church at Corinth had told Paul about some troubling things that were happening (1:11-15, 16:17)
- Paul is in Corinth for a little less than two years, and then travels to Ephesus. He hears about numerous issues in the Corinth church from many of the people who travel between the two churches. (Note 7:1 alludes to a letter written to Paul seeking direction)
- The letter to the Corinthian church addresses the problems one by one (7:1, 8:1, 12:1, 16:1)

Themes in 1 Corinthians

- A pastoral letter correcting wrong theology and poor Christian living (divisions, disorders, difficulties)...see pastoral tone in 4:14-21
- Divisions in the church (1:10-4:21)
- Lack of order and discipline (5:1-6:20)
- Marriage (7:1-40)
- Idols (8:1-11:1)
- Women in public worship (11:2-16)
- Communion (11:17-34)
- Spiritual gifts and worship in the church (12:1-14:40)
- Resurrection (15:1-15:58)

Introduction (1:1-9)

- Greetings, 1:1-3
 - 1:1, Paul establishes his authority as an Apostle and reminds people that he founded the church with the help of Sosthenes
 - 1:2, Paul reminds the church they are called to be holy...this is important since Paul will deal with matters of Christ-like living
- Thanksgiving, 1:4-9
 - In spite of their problems, the church at Corinth was marvelously blessed with all spiritual gifts, and in knowledge and speaking
 - 1:7...Greek for 'gift' is *khar'-is-mah* translated charisma(tic)

Divisions in the church (1:10-4:21)

- Appeal to unity, 1:10..."I beseech/appeal" translated means "I want you to stand beside me" (*paraklete*)
- "No division" is evidenced by
 - Be in agreement
 - Speak the same thing
 - Be "perfectly joined together" is the same phrase used in the Gospels to describe fishermen mending their nets together
 - "in mind and thought" Greek is *gno'-may* meaning knowledge. Christians should have the same judgment regarding spiritual and moral matters
- Divisions based on personalities, 1:11-17
 - 1:11...not just minor differences of opinions or mild discussions, but rather "contentions"; Greek is *er'-is* meaning strife and wrangling. Listed in the "works of the flesh" in Galatians 5:19,20
 - Apollos (Acts 18:24-28)
 - Eloquent Alexandrian
 - Highly educated and skilled orator
 - Possibly wrote Hebrews
 - Paul
 - Blunt speaking Pastor
 - Peter
 - Jewish leader who never visited Corinth, but was used by Judaizers