

1 Corinthians – “Unity in Christ”



Introduction and Prayer

I. City of Corinth

a. Historical setting

- i. Romans destroyed Corinth in 146 BC, and “new” Corinth was established by Julius Caesar in about 50 BC.
- ii. Mostly new construction, very “metropolitan” with Roman influence
- iii. Port city with tremendous economic trade
- iv. Map of Greece and Mediterranean (zoom in on Corinth)
 1. No canal, but a type of track or road that could transport ships and cargo from one side to the other
 2. A quicker route between Asia and Europe

b. Society

- i. Mix of Greeks, Romans, Jews and others
- ii. Worshiped Isis (Egyptian God), the temples of Aphrodite, Poseidon and others, also cult of Mithras and many other gods and goddesses.
 1. Some words to describe Corinthian thought:
 - a. Wisdom, knowledge, spiritual, and power¹ – all things that came from their worship and understanding of the gods
- iii. People from all over the modern world brought ideas and religion to Corinth, making it remarkably diverse in thought and belief

II. Authorship

- a. St. Paul of Tarsus
- b. Jewish background – family came out of diaspora
- c. Pharisee / Studied under Gamaliel
- d. Roman citizen by birth
- e. Converted by Jesus Christ Himself / Apostleship (AD 36)

III. Writings of St. Paul

- a. Epistles – 13 letters of the NT
- b. Letters are not necessarily theological treatises
- c. Major contributor to how we do Church and understand Christ
 - i. “After Jesus Himself, no other leader had greater influence on Christianity’s direction.”²
 - ii. Read about Paul’s writings on pg 1899 of Lutheran Study Bible

IV. Connections to Paul other writings

- a. Luke, the author of the Gospel of Luke and Acts, writes of Paul

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=riJ79FDB8KA> - 1Corinthians overview from David Jackman, Proclamation Trust

² Engelbrecht, E. A. (2009). [The Lutheran Study Bible](#) (p. 1899). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

- i. Acts 7 – Saul, or Paul before conversion, oversees stoning of Stephen (the first Christian martyr to die for the faith)
- ii. Acts 9 – conversion of St. Paul on the road to Damascus (AD 36)
- iii. Acts 11 – Barnabas finds Saul / Paul and goes to Antioch
- iv. Acts 13 – Saul / Paul is commissioned and sent on his 1st mission
- v. Acts 17 – Thessalonica and Athens
- vi. Acts 18 - Corinth

b. Peter wrote about Paul's letters

- i. 2 Peter 3:14-18 – Paul's letters are "Scriptures"

V. **Paul's First Letter to the Church in Corinth**

a. "In this epistle St. Paul exhorts the Corinthians to be one in faith and love, and to see to it that they learn well the chief thing, namely, that Christ is our salvation, the thing over which all reason and wisdom stumbles." ³ – Martin Luther, *Preface to the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*

b. St. Paul Emphasizes in 1 Corinthians:

- i. Christ-centered
- ii. Faith
- iii. Love
- iv. Unity

c. St. Paul Addresses in 1 Corinthians:

- i. Christian discord and factions
- ii. Sex and food issues
- iii. Spiritual gifts and the Lord's Supper
- iv. The resurrection

d. Theme verse and purpose of the letter:

- i. 1 Corinthians 1:18
- ii. To help the Corinthian church, and all Christians, focus on Christ crucified. The fruit of this is unity, servanthood, and love.

VI. **Prepare for the next study**

a. Read Acts

- i. The end of chapter 7 and Stephen's martyrdom through chapter 18
- ii. Chapter 18 details Paul's work in Corinth

b. Read chapter 1 of 1 Corinthians

³ Luther, M. (1999). *Luther's works, vol. 35: Word and Sacrament I*. (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, & H. T. Lehmann, Eds.) (Vol. 35, p. 380). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

⁴ Standard Bible Atlas. © (2006) Standard Publishing, Cincinnati, Ohio.



The New Testament World

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