

# Letters to the church in...



# Corinth

**Focus:** 1 Corinthians 1:1-31

**Lesson 1-Introduction. Thanks. Divisions. and God's Wisdom**

- **Introduction to Corinth and Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> letter to the Corinthian Believers**
  - **Paul had founded a church in the City of Corinth** on an earlier visit there (*Acts 18:1-18; esp. v.1-4,7,8,11*). He taught there for 18 months in AD 51 and 52.
  - **Corinth** was a very important city in Ancient Greece until it was destroyed by the Romans in 146 BC. It was later rebuilt by Julius Caesar in 46 BC. It grew and prospered as a Roman province, becoming the capital city of the province of Achaia. *Corinth had two sea ports and became quite a city for commerce as well as immorality! It was proverbial for its immorality.* On top of a large hill was the Temple of Aphrodite. Those who worshipped Aphrodite, the Greek "goddess of love," would often freely use one of the 1000 Hieroduli (the consecrated temple prostitutes). Besides being a place of much business, Corinth was filled with corruption and sin!! **In Paul's day, the population of Corinth would have been about 700,000 people (nearly 2/3 of them were slaves).**
  - **Paul would have written his 1<sup>st</sup> letter to the Corinthian believers** from Ephesus around the year **A.D. 56.** (See 1 Corinthians 16:5-8). This letter became more widely known at an early date. Clement of Rome, an early church leader, writing to the Corinthian church in A.D. 95 made mention of it to try and resolve some struggles in the church there.
  - **The Church in Corinth had been greatly influenced by the evil of that city.** Paul aimed to deal directly against the evils and corrupt ideas that had crept into the church there! We will see how **his letter deals with these matters specifically, and also gives us the principles for having a pure and true Christian experience.**
- **"Paul, called to be an apostle...and Sosthenes [a fellow laborer]" greet the church (v.1-3)**
- **Paul expresses his thanks for the good things that were happening among these believers before he addressed the negative things (v.4-9)**
  - "...that in everything you would be enriched in Him [Jesus Christ]..." (v.5) –Christ is the source of all blessings and enrichment for the Christian.
  - "...the testimony of Christ" and other spiritual gifts were given to the members of this church (v.6,7). We should "come behind in no gift" as we await for the return of Jesus!
- **Paul pleads with the church for them to give up their divisions and be united upon the truth! (v.10-17)**
  - (v.10) "...that you all **speak the same things** and there be no divisions among you...be perfectly joined together in the same mind..." –**God calls his church to unity upon the words of Heaven's truth** (obviously not an artificial unity that lacks any union of belief). "...speak the same things"—As Christians we ought to know and believe the same truths of God's word.

- **Contentions and divisions are not at all God’s plan, but Satan has brought disunion into the church of Christ through false teachers. (See John 17:20,21; Acts 20:27-31).** Paul warned the church that Satan would bring in divisions (Acts 20). A very firm foundation in God’s truth is the only thing that will prevent such divisions. Jesus calls all believers to seek His truth and to stand firm together upon it (ref. John 10:16).
- (v.14) Crispus was the leader of the Jewish Synagogue in Corinth who became a believer in Christ (ref. Acts 18:8).
- (v.17)-the gospel is not about some wise words of men, it is about **Jesus Christ, and him crucified for us!!** (it is not about self-glory, but rather a broken self, and an uplifted Jesus!)
- **Divine wisdom verses the earthly and carnal wisdom of foolish sinful men (v.18-24)**
  - “...to those who perish” the Cross is foolishness (v.18).—their earthly wisdom brings them nothing though.
  - (v.19-21) God brings the wisdom of worldly men to nothing! By the “wisdom [thinking] of the world” they knew not God. But God is pleased to save us by the preaching of Christ crucified.
  - (v.22-24) Christ, foolish to the Greeks, a stumbling block to the Jews, but the power of God to save those of us souls who believe!!
- **God does not need, nor seek for the wisdom of worldly men (v.25-31)**
  - (v.25-28) –The punishment of the cross was despised by men! “How could this death save us?” they wondered. So many would rather trust in some “sciences” or philosophies or technologies of men, as if this could save them. They would believe the Ph. D.s and the worldly stamped “experts” of human wisdom over the simple Cross of Jesus Christ! But, all to their shame! (For Jesus lives today, and He alone has conquered death for us!—It is the “power of God” unto salvation to those who believe!) **God chooses the humble and foolish things in the world’s eyes to confound the “self wise” and “self sufficient” of this world.**
  - “That **no flesh should glory in his presence” (v.29).** “God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble” (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). –those who do not think themselves too wise or self sufficient for God will find that God lives, and that Jesus Christ is the savior of all men. We may have the power, blessing and grace of God, including the gift of eternal life, for it is God himself who sustains our lives!! So let us worship Him!!!
  - Christ is our salvation, wisdom, righteousness, life, and all things!!! Let us glory in Him!! (v.30,31)

*Question (s) for the Heart:*

**Would you like Jesus Christ to be your savior and Lord of Glory? \_\_\_\_\_** *Is it your desire to study and to learn from the blessed words of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_*