

1 CORINTHIANS

1 Corinthians is Paul's longest letter in the New Testament exceeding Romans by forty-two words. Even though we call it "*First Corinthians*," Paul had actually written an earlier letter to them which he refers to in 1 Corinthians 5:9. We say that letter has been "lost," but that doesn't mean it has been lost from the New Testament. If God had wanted that letter to be part of the New Testament, then we would have it.

Thanks to the book of Acts, not only do we have information about the founding of the church in Corinth, but we're also able to assign an approximate date to Paul's time in Corinth as well as a date for when he _____[a] 1 Corinthians.

FOUNDING THE CHURCH

In Acts 18 we learn that Paul first came to Corinth on his _____[b] missionary journey. After ministering in Philippi—where he first ministered in _____[c]—Paul went to Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and then to Corinth (Acts 16:11-18:1). When he arrived in Corinth, he met _____[d] and _____[e], Jews who had been expelled from Rome by Emperor Claudius around AD 49. Like Paul, they were tent-makers by trade. He stayed with them for a while and began to preach regularly in the _____[f] every Sabbath (Acts 18:1-4). Silas and Timothy soon joined Paul in Corinth from Macedonia (the area is now northern _____[g]), and their preaching intensified. But as the preaching of Paul and his associates intensified, so did resistance to their preaching. Soon, however, many Corinthians, including Jews, began to believe in Christ. Even the leader of the synagogue and his family—a man named _____[h]—obeyed the gospel (Acts 18:8).

Paul remained in Corinth and ministered there for about _____[i] months (Acts 18:11). It was toward the end of his stay that an event happened which helps us to date his time in Corinth. Luke tells us that some Jews brought Paul before the newly arrived _____[j] of Achaia and accused him of teaching people to worship God contrary to the civil law of Corinth. That newly arrived proconsul was a man named _____[k] (Acts 18:12-18). Gallio dismissed the charges against Paul because he saw it as only a _____[l] dispute among Jews. But the significant point is that Luke identifies the proconsul by name—Gallio. Since we know from a Greek inscription that Gallio was proconsul in early AD 52 (and that his tenure ended in 52), we can conclude

that Paul arrived in Corinth in late AD 50 or early 51, and that he left in AD 52.

After he left Corinth, a man named _____[m] came to Corinth and quickly became an important _____[n] of the church. He was a Jew from Alexandria, Egypt. He was well educated both in Greek learning and in the Old Testament. He was evidently a disciple of Jesus in some sense, but before he came to Corinth, he was deficient in his understanding of Christian _____[o]. So, Priscilla and Aquila accurately taught him the truth about this important doctrine (Acts 18:24-26). Apollos, now armed with the complete message of Christ, came to Corinth where he made quite a impact. He refuted antagonists in debate with ease, and he effectively argued from the Old Testament that Jesus was the _____[p] (Acts 18:27ff). Paul described Apollos' work in Corinth as “_____ [q]” what Paul planted (1 Cor 3:6).

THE CITY OF CORINTH

Today Corinth is a small, not-very-significant town in Greece. It's significance now is almost exclusively its historical connection to the New Testament. In Paul's day, however, Corinth was a thriving, prosperous, and very important city in the Mediterranean world. Its importance was based largely on _____[r]; geographically speaking, it was very strategically located. Greece is divided geographically into two large landmasses. The southern landmass was called the Peloponnesus and it was connected to the northern landmass by a very narrow, four-mile-wide _____[s] (in geography an “isthmus” is a narrow strip of land that connects two larger landmasses, with water on both sides of the isthmus itself). Corinth was located in the middle of that isthmus, and on both sides of the isthmus were seaports. On the western side of the isthmus was the Gulf of _____[t] and port city of Lechaem, and on the eastern side of the isthmus was the _____[u] Gulf and the port city of Cenchreae.

The 250 miles of sailing around the Peloponnesus was both time-consuming and dangerous, so most captains chose to _____[v] their ships over the narrow isthmus on skids or rollers. As they did so, they passed directly by Corinth. In addition to this east-west shipping traffic, all north-south overland traffic between the northern and southern parts of Greece had to pass through Corinth. So, Corinth benefited from traffic in all directions and, as a result, become a major _____[w] center. Corinth was also a major _____[x] center. There were two great _____[y] festivals of that day—the Olympic games and the Isthmian games. The Isthmian games was named after and played on the Isthmus in Corinth.

Like most Greek, Corinth had an acropolis (literally, “high city”), which was used both for defense and for pagan _____[z]. It held the famous temple of _____[aa], goddess of _____[bb]. The temple normally housed about a thousand priestesses—basically ritual _____[cc]—who each night would come down into Corinth and offer their “services” to the many foreign travelers and locals. Even in the pagan world Corinth was known for its _____[dd] corruption. In fact, in the Mediterranean world, the city was so known for its moral depravity that it gave birth to the expression “to behave like a Corinthian.” This expression was used to describe someone involved in gross immorality and drunken debauchery.

PURPOSE & CONTENT OF THE LETTER

1 Corinthians is organized around a cluster of _____[ee] which Paul is striving to remedy by his apostolic instruction. Paul’s information about these problems didn’t come from first-hand knowledge nor through direct inspiration. The majority, if not all, of Paul’s information about the various issues he deals with in the letter came from _____[ff] human sources. Part of the information and problems treated in 1 Corinthians 1-6 came from those from the house of _____[gg]. In 1 Corinthians 1:11 Paul says, “I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe’s people, that there are quarrels among you.” Then, in 1 Corinthians 5:1, Paul says, “It is actually reported that there is immorality among you . . .” This additional information was also probably supplied from Chloe’s house. If it wasn’t, we don’t know who provided this report of immorality to Paul.

A _____[hh] source for Paul’s information is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 7:1: “Now, concerning the things about which you wrote, . . .” Paul is acknowledging here that he’s about to respond to an issue that came from a _____[ii] that the Corinthian believers sent to him. Many scholars believe—rightly so in my opinion—that this document from the Corinthians themselves not only raised the issue discussed in 1 Corinthians 7:1ff, but also the matters discussed in 1 Corinthians 8:1ff (“Now concerning things sacrificed to idols”), 1 Corinthians 12:1ff (“Now concerning spiritual gifts”), and 1 Corinthians 16:1ff (“Now concerning the collection for the saints”).

These two sources of Paul’s information naturally result in a letter that has _____[jj] major sections. In the first major section (1 Cor 1-6), Paul prescribes correction for various _____[kk] in the church reported by Chloe’s house. And in the second major section (1 Cor 7-16), Paul provides guidance and instruction in response to the _____[ll] that had been submitted to him.

PROBLEMS IN THE CHURCH

There were several serious problems in the Corinthian church. One was _____ [mm]. After Apollos ministered for a while in Corinth, some of the members of the church became especially loyal to him. Friction then began to develop between them and others who were loyal to Paul. Others were loyal to Peter (Cephas, his Aramaic name), and still others emphasized their loyalty to Christ. Paul strongly rebuked all of them for quarreling and having such a spirit of _____ [nn] (1 Cor 1:10-13; 3:1-9)

Another problem, and perhaps their most serious one, was not detaching themselves from the _____ [oo] ways in the society around them. In his first letter to them (which we don't have) Paul specifically had warned them "not to associate with _____ [pp] people" (1 Cor 5:9). Some of the Corinthian believers thought Paul meant for them not to associate with unbelievers who were immoral. But the sexually corrupt, covetous, swindling, and idolatrous people to whom Paul referred were fellow church members who refused to give up—or who fell back into—the immoral lifestyle of worldly people (1 Cor 5:9-11).

Still other problems that Paul had to address were, in no particular order, the misunderstanding of spiritual _____ [qq] (1 Cor 12), abuse of the Lord's _____ [rr] (1 Cor 11), misunderstanding of _____ [ss] (it's importance, purpose, and permanency) (1 Cor 7), chaos in the church _____ [tt] (1 Cor 14). And more could be added to this list.

OUTLINE OF 1 CORINTHIANS

- Calling and _____ [uu] of sainthood (1:1-9)
- _____ [vv] and problems in the church (1:10-16:4) regarding:
 - Unity (1:10-3:23)
 - Servanthood (4:1-21)
 - Morality (5:1-6:20)
 - Marriage (7:1-40)
 - Liberty (8:1-11:1)
 - Men and Women in the Church (11:2-16)
 - The Lord's Supper (11:17-34)
 - Spiritual Gifts (12-14)
 - The Resurrection (15)
 - Stewardship (16:1-4)
- Personal _____ [ww] and _____ [xx] (16:5-24)

LESSONS FROM 1 CORINTHIANS

- God has a plan for who can _____[yy] to the gathered church and it matters (1 Cor 14).
- God’s plan for _____[zz] headship and _____[aaa] submission is to be recognized and honored (1 Cor 11).
- We gain insight into the _____[bbb] which were done in the earliest Christian _____[ccc] (Lord’s Supper, singing, teaching and exhortation, contribution) (1 Cor 11, 14, 16).
- God cares about what we do with our _____[ddd] (1 Cor 6).
- Every spiritual _____[eee] is important to the flourishing of the church (1 Cor 12).
- We gain insight into the nature of our _____[fff] bodies (1 Cor 15).
- The Lord’s Supper is as much about _____[ggg] with each other as it is about communion with God (1 Cor 11).
- _____[hhh] is good and necessary for most people, and it is to be a _____[iii] union.
- God hates _____[jjj], and the solution is remembering that _____[kkk] is God and _____[lll] aren’t (1 Cor 1-4).
- Don’t be _____[mmm]—you can’t give yourself over to _____[nnn] and be saved (1 Cor 5-6).

KEY PASSAGES FROM 1 CORINTHIANS

- 1 Corinthians 1:10
- 1 Corinthians 1:18
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
- 1 Corinthians 6:18-19
- 1 Corinthians 10:13
- 1 Corinthians 11:28-29
- 1 Corinthians 13:1-3
- 1 Corinthians 15:17, 55

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK ANSWER KEY

[a] wrote	[ss] marriage
[b] second	[tt] assembly
[c] Europe	[uu] benefits
[d] Aquila	[vv] Errors
[e] Priscilla	[ww] plans
[f] synagogue	[xx] greetings
[g] Greece	[yy] speak
[h] Crispus	[zz] male
[i] 18	[aaa] female
[j] proconsul	[bbb] activities
[k] Gallio	[ccc] assemblies
[l] religious	[ddd] bodies
[m] Apollos	[eee] gift
[n] leader	[fff] resurrection
[o] baptism	[ggg] communion
[p] Messiah	[hhh] Marriage
[q] watering	[iii] permanent
[r] geography	[jjj] factionalism
[s] isthmus	[kkk] God
[t] Corinth	[lll] people
[u] Saronic	[mmm] deceived
[v] drag	[nnn] immorality
[w] trade	
[x] entertainment	
[y] athletic	
[z] worship	
[aa] Aphrodite	
[bb] love	
[cc] prostitutes	
[dd] moral	
[ee] problems	
[ff] two	
[gg] Chloe	
[hh] second	
[ii] document	
[jj] two	
[kk] problems	
[ll] questions	
[mm] factionalism	
[nn] division	
[oo] worldly	
[pp] immoral	
[qq] gifts	
[rr] Supper	