

1 Corinthians

Contextual, Historical, Analysis and Introduction:

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Review and Context: First Missionary Journey- A.D. 46-48 was Paul's first Missionary Journey. In Acts 13:4-14:28 you may read where Paul and Barnabas were set apart by the Holy Spirit and the church for mission work and the first missionary journey. Paul's conversion was about A.D. 33. Paul evangelized the Gentiles without Judaism. Paul preached straight to the Gentiles. The book of Galatians was written at the end of the first missionary journey. The Jerusalem Council or Apostolic Council was also held during this period (c. A.D. 50). The importance of the council was that the elders and apostles of Jerusalem defended the right of Paul and Barnabas to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (Note Acts 15). The converts were not made to obey the Jewish Law. The council was adopted to deal with the Judaizers.

Paul's first missionary journey began in Antioch. You may notice that maps of the ancient world often have two cities labeled Antioch. They're both named after Antiochus, father of Seleucid I. The Antioch in Acts 13 was the third largest city in ancient Rome and capital of the province of Syria. Today, it's part of southern Turkey. The *other* Antioch was part of Pisidia, an ancient region which is also now part of Turkey. Your Bible likely refers to it as Pisidian Antioch or Antioch of Pisidia.

In Antioch (the big city in Syria), the Holy Spirit singled out Paul and Barnabas from the believers worshiping there, and sent them on their first missionary journey, (Ryan Nelson, July 6, 2020- Bible Topics, Overviewbible.com).

(Antioch, Cyprus, Pamphylia, Phrygia, Lycaonia, Back to Antioch).

Paul's Second Missionary Journey was A.D. 49-52. Paul now takes a new partner with him (Timothy joins Silas and Paul- Acts 15:39-18:22). Paul revisited Galatia. He then went to Macedonia and Achaia. Paul visited Two capitals, Thessalonica and Corinth. Paul wrote 1 & 2 Thessalonians from Corinth. Corinth was Paul's

main place to stay during his 2nd missionary journey. Corinth was a major trading place. He stopped at Ephesus before going to Jerusalem and then to Antioch. Paul saw a need to evangelize Ephesus and that is why there was a need for a 3rd missionary journey.

Paul's second missionary journey established many of the churches he would later write to in his pastoral epistles. Interestingly, this may have happened in part because of a "sharp disagreement" he had with Barnabas. Paul's original plan was to essentially have a rerun of their first trip, strengthening the communities they'd formed in each city and telling them what the Council of Jerusalem had ruled in regards to Gentile believers.

But Barnabas wanted to take John Mark—who had left them shortly into their previous journey. Paul was so opposed to the idea that they parted ways, initiating two separate missionary journeys. Barnabas took John Mark and went with the original plan, making their way back to the island of Cyprus. Paul took a man named Silas and travelled through the provinces of Syria and Cilicia (Ryan Nelson, July 6, 2020- Bible Topics).

(Lycaonia, Phrygia, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, Back to Jerusalem).

The Third Missionary Journey was from A.D. 53-55. Paul started in Antioch and went to Galatia and then to Ephesus (Acts 18:23-21:17). Ephesus was the home base this time. Paul was in Ephesus for three years. Paul even spent three years in the Jewish Synagogue. Ephesus had about three Million people in it at the time. While Paul was in Ephesus, he got a visit from Chloe's people in Corinth about the divisions in the church. He also got a visit from a committee of three men. They informed Paul of the sexual immorality in the church and also had questions for Paul to answer.

When you read Acts, there's no transition from Paul's second missionary journey to his third. His arrival in Jerusalem almost

immediately began his next trip. But while his second journey ends in Jerusalem, the beginning of his third journey is actually in Antioch, which is about 300 miles north.

Phrygia and Galatia

From Antioch, Paul once again worked his way west, passing “from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples” ([Acts 18:23](#)). This included Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium. (Ryan Nelson, July 6, 2020- Bible Topics).

(Antioch, Phrygia, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, Greece Asia, The return journey.

The return journey

Paul and his companions stopped briefly in Kos, Rhodes, and Patara before heading across the Mediterranean Sea to Phoenicia (the coastal region south of ancient Syria, which is now part of Syria). They arrived in Tyre, where “through the Spirit” ([Acts 21:4](#)), the local disciples urged Paul not to go to Jerusalem. He ignored them.

From Tyre, the voyage continued to the port city of Ptolemais, and then Caesarea, where the group stayed with Philip the evangelist (not to be confused with [Philip the apostle](#)). Here, a prophet warned Paul that he would be bound by the Jews in Jerusalem and handed over to the Gentiles.

Still, he pressed on to Jerusalem, and by the end of Acts, the Jewish leaders had handed him over to Roman rulers.

Paul’s fourth missionary journey

Acts explicitly records three distinct missionary journeys. But some scholars and even ancient Christian writers have claimed that there was also a fourth missionary journey which was only hinted at in the Bible.

Side note: Some people argue that his trip from Caesarea to Jerusalem was a fourth journey. But Jerusalem was where he had planned to *end* his third journey. He even skipped a stop in Ephesus to try and reach Jerusalem before Pentecost. So it’s a little odd to label the trip from Caesarea to Jerusalem as a completely separate missionary journey. Others suggest that his trip *to prison* was also a missionary

journey, but that wasn't a journey he chose to go on or one that he had any control over, so that usually doesn't get counted, either.

The argument for a fourth journey is primarily based on clues from Paul's letters. He occasionally refers to events and visits that may not be accounted for in Acts or the epistles. For example, Paul suggested he would travel to Spain ([Romans 15:24](#)), but he provides no record of this journey in his letters. However, early church fathers claimed Paul did, in fact, travel to Spain. In his letter to the Corinthians, first-century church father [Clement of Rome](#) said Paul "had gone to the extremity of the west," which at the time presumably meant Spain. Fourth-century church father John of Chrysostom said, "For after he had been in Rome, he returned to Spain, but whether he came thence again into these parts, we know not." And Cyril of Jerusalem (also from the fourth century) wrote that Paul "carried the earnestness of his preaching as far as Spain."

In 2 Timothy 4, Paul makes an ambiguous reference to "my first defense" and claims he was "delivered from the lion's mouth" ([2 Timothy 4:16-17](#)). Some have interpreted this as a reference to his first defense before Emperor Nero, which he was heading for at the end of Acts. Paul's letters make other references to events not recorded in Acts, but since there is so much overlap in the locations mentioned, and Paul spent multiple years in some of these places on his three recorded journeys, it's difficult to say whether or not this fourth journey ever actually happened. (Ryan Nelson, July 6, 2020- Bible Topics).

Paul wrote the **"previous letter"** first (lost). After that He wrote 1 Corinthians, which he sent with Timothy. Then Paul sent a **"severe letter"** (lost) because the letter he sent with Timothy was poorly received. Paul finds out that the severe letter was well received and he sends the 2 Corinthians letter. Two of these letters are obviously lost. 2 Corinthians was sent to reward the repentant and scold the remaining rebels. Titus took the severe letter and while he was gone a riot broke out (Acts 19) and Paul left Ephesus. This is why 2 Corinthians was written from somewhere in Macedonia (Possibly from Philippi or Thessalonica).

Authorship: No doubt that Paul wrote it. Even the liberals must admit that he did. All concur and it reeks of the Pauline style. Written during Paul's second missionary journey.

Date: A.D. 54

Origin: Ephesus

Destination: Corinth. Corinth was a major trade route. It was a major seaport and had great sea traffic. The city benefited greatly from a large port (2 miles across) and a wealthy business center. Corinth was a providential capital and received federal funds. Athens was nearby. Athens was the cultural center but not the capital. Athens was, however, independent. Athens had the goddess Aphrodite in it, which was the love, fertility goddess. The temple could hold 1000 prostitutes. The statement of that day was "To be a Corinthian was to be immoral." Corinth was a significant place for Paul because of its ungodliness. To "Corinthianize" came to mean, "to commit sexual immorality."

Recipients: The Corinthians were largely Gentile Christians from pagan backgrounds. Some had been converted as long as 5 years earlier. Paul had been there c. A.D. 50 and the letter was written c. A.D. 54.

Background: Paul established this church c. A.D. 50 on his 2nd Missionary Journey. 1 Corinthians was written and sent on the 3rd missionary journey. Paul stayed with them about 18 months, longer than other places he started churches. This was a good, strong church. The church was made up of strong "house churches." Paul's associates there were Priscilla and Aquila who were husband and wife. Apollos was the leader of the church after Paul departed. Apollos was known as a great teacher.

Occasion: While Paul was in Ephesus on his third Missionary Journey he wrote a letter to the church which has been lost. It is

referred to as the “**previous letter.**” The previous letter (5:9) warned the church not to associate with immoral people. Paul’s meaning and warning was misunderstood.

- Paul learned from visitors (Chloe’s Household) that the church was divided into 4 groups.
- The church had questions for Paul and they wrote them down for the three men to take with them. The committee of three men consisted of Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus.
- The three men told Paul of the rampant immorality. Paul said that even the Pagans do not act the way the church was acting.
- Paul sent **1 Corinthians** with Timothy to enforce his teaching.
- Paul sent a **severe letter** because the 1 Corinthians was not well received well.
- **2 Corinthians** was further correction and praise for the favorable response to the severe letter.

Order:

1. Previous letter
2. 1 Corinthians
3. Severe letter
4. 2 Corinthians

Purpose: Paul was answering the questions that the household of Chloe brought. He also addressed divisions and immorality.

Paul Addressed 4 Major Areas

1. Divisions 1-4
2. Sexual immorality 5-7 (*peri de*)
3. Food 8-10
4. Worship (women, spiritual gifts, tongues) 11-14
5. The Theology of The Resurrection 15.
6. Collection and Final Greeting 16

Key Concept: Every problem the church has will be solved as the church submits to Christ and the teachings of scripture.

Key Verse: 15:58 “Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that you labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

Key Word: Carnal or worldly

Outline 1 Corinthians

1. Greeting and Thanksgiving 1:1-9
2. Reply from the report that Chloe’s household sent. (Divisions in the church) 1:10-4:21 This was Paul’s famous attack on them because he calls them *carnal* and *babes*.
3. Reply to the report from the committee. (1Cor. 16:17)[Sexual immorality]. 5:1-6:20. 5:19 mentions that they are to not associate with the ungodly and also mentions the earlier letter that was written.
4. Reply to the letter from the congregation... “now concerning” (*peri de*) 7:1-16:18. Paul is answering the questions that they raised.

Topics associated with “Now Concerning, *peri de*”

- Marriage 7:1
 - Virgins 7:25
 - Food sacrificed to idols 8:1
 - Spiritual gifts 12:1
 - The Collection 16:1... (Paul was raising funds for the poor saints in Jerusalem).
5. Conclusion 16:19-24

Special Issues in 1 Corinthians

1. **Sexual immorality:** 6:12-20. Paul commanded total abstinence from fornication by those married, single and same sex relationships (meaning, no same sex relationships). Paul does **not** recognize homosexuality as an alternate lifestyle. No sexual activity outside of marriage was allowed.

πορνεία/porneia = Sexual immorality or fornication.

Why?

- a. The physical body is for the Lord (6:13).
- b. Even the physical body of the Christian is holy (6:15).
- c. The physical body of the Christian will be raised at the resurrection. Some say that the body will die so do as you please (6:14). That's man's wisdom on display.
- d. The physical body of the Christian is the dwelling place of the Lord, via Holy Spirit (6:19).
- e. To engage in sexual misconduct is equal to uniting Christ with fornication (prostitutes)-(6:15-16). We pollute the Christ when we do this.
- f. The command to flee (6:18).

2. **Spiritual Gifts** – Defined as a gift or ability given to each Christian at conversion. Spiritual gifts are given for the **sole** purpose of building up the body. Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift and many have more than one.
 - Greek... **χαρισμα/charisma** ... this is grace given or a gift given from God to you to build up others. In this sense, all Christians are charismatic.
 - The use of the gifts does not prove spirituality. All Christians have a gift so this is not a measure of spirituality. Maturity is seen in the development of *The Fruit of the Spirit*. *Spiritual gifts must also be perfected through maturity.*
 - We all have the responsibility to discover our gifts and develop them.
 - Spiritual gift tests are okay (maybe) but are not the gospel. In my opinion they are not helpful. Learn your gift the same way you learn your natural talents... give it a try. Jump in and serve Jesus. Passion, success, and unconscious spiritual guidance reveals your gift or gifts.

- Sometimes people get gifts fully developed. This also happens with natural ability too. God may have given us natural ability to help us learn about spiritual gifts...or vice versa
- Speaking in tongues in Corinth was not prohibited but had restriction. The church there abused the gift and Pentecostals do the same today. In my opinion, the gift of tongues is a known language, unknown to the speaker. I likewise believe that the gift has ceased unless by way of miracle, and even then... limited (1 Cor. 13:8).

Tongues Compared in Acts and 1 Corinthians

This is a comparison by Dr Kendell Easley MABTS. I do not necessarily agree with it all but it is good for discussion.

Acts:

- Descriptive of a transition period.
- Understood by all.
- All 120 spoke with tongues.
- Tongues were addressed to the nations or to the people.
- No interpreter needed.
- Irresistible initial experience.
- Known language.

1 Corinthians

- Prescriptive for doctrine how we should use them.
- Understood by no one.
- "Do all speak?"
- Addressed to God or spoken to God.
- Interpreter is mandatory. Charismatics and most Pentecostals do not do this.
- Controllable, continuing gift. It was a part of the worship service.

- Unknown to the speaker... “if I speak with the tongues of men and angels.”

**** If people are going to believe in tongue-speaking they will have to use a 1 Corinthians text to base their beliefs on... not Acts. Acts is not normative. We actually do not build doctrine from the book of Acts due to it being a book of transition.

