

Teaching Notes – I Corinthians Chapter One

Background

- Ancient city, mentioned in Homer's *Iliad* (9th Century BC)
- Setting for Jason and the Argonauts searching for the Golden Fleece
- Strategic Location for trade – north, south, east and west all come together here
- Commercially prosperous
- Largest City in Greece
- Roman Colony capital of the region of Achaia
- Cosmopolitan: Greek, Roman, Syrian, Egyptians, Jews, etc. Melting pot
- Temple of Aphrodite – 1000 thousand prostitutes – 2000 feet above the old city where all the pagan gods were worshiped: Apollo, Athena, Hera, Hermes, Isis, Serapis, etc.
- Over 50 different schools of philosophy were in the city
- Known for moral corruption, fornication, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, stealing covetousness, drunkenness, swindling and general debauchery (I Cor 6:9-10)
- Hollywood, Las Vegas, and NYC combined
- Fertile soil so good agricultural production
- Many were educated, intellectual, prosperous, and influential by worldly standards

Paul and Corinth - Second Missionary Journey

- Started in Philippi - Acts 16 – Vision of man of Macedonia; beaten; imprisoned; earthquake; released
- Thessalonica – uproar, escape to Berea
- Berea – more noble than Thess. Received word with gladness and studied scripture to confirm Paul's teaching (Acts 17:11)
- Athens – unknown God – mostly dismissed and mocked – no church ever established?
- Corinth – came with much fear and trembling – 1 Cor 2:1-4
- Stayed with Aquila and Priscilla – tent makers
- Paul never took money to support his ministry for himself – collected for others
- Started with the Jews but they rejected him, so he focused solely on Gentiles
- The Lord strengthens Paul for his ministry there (Acts 18:9)

Paul's Visits and Letters

Three Visits

- First Visit Church founded
- Painful Visit
- Third Visit A visit after he wrote 2 Cor

Four Letters

1. Previous Letter Lost to history
2. 1 Corinthians Written to address problems
3. The Severe Letter Lost to history but reference in 2 Corinthians
4. 2 Corinthians Written after Paul heard from Titus that his message and corrections were received

Authorship of 1 Corinthians – undisputedly Paul

Key Topics

- Discipline Chapter 5
- Law vs Grace Chapter 6
- Marriage and Divorce Chapter 7
- Christian Liberty Chapters 8,9,10
- Lord's Table Chapter 11
- Spiritual Gifts Chapters 12 and 14
- Love Chapter 13
- Resurrection Chapter 15

1 Corinthians Chapter 1: 1-9 – Position in Christ

- Paul is an Apostle of Jesus Christ thru the will of God
- The church is sanctified, and members are saints – position in Christ
- God's grace has been given (gift)
- They received the gospel – “testimony of Christ has been confirmed in you”

Salvation

- Justification Penalty of sin VS 1-9; Position in Christ
- Sanctification Power of sin VS 10-17; Walk with Christ
- Glorification Presence of sin

1 Corinthians 1:10-17 – Learning to walk out the Christian life with others

- Divisions among the members (not denominations)
- Goal – united in mind and judgment
- Of Paul, Apollos, Cephas (Peter)
- Is Christ divided?
- Did Paul die for you?
- It is not who “baptized you” but it's the Lord you need to look to

1 Corinthians 1: 17 – 31 – The Foolishness of God

- The cross is foolishness to those perishing; but salvation to those who believe (only 2 categories)
- God destroys the wisdom of the wise and cleverness I will put aside (Is 29:14)
- God makes foolishness the wisdom of this world
 - Man is basically good – all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23)
 - Money is security – in the day of trouble money will not save you
 - We can save ourselves by our good works – by works of the law no flesh will be justified (Gal 2:16)
 - All people go to heaven – if you believe in me you will not perish (John 3:16)
 - The devil is not real
 - It is my life, and I can do what I want with it – your life is not your own, you were bought with a price (1 Cor 6:19-20)
 - There is no God – the fool has said in his heart that there is no God (Ps 14:1)
- Vain Philosophy of this world – Colossians 2:8 – Voltaire, Rousseau, Kant, Marx, Nietzsche, Hume, Lock, Jean-Paul Sartre, Plato, Socrates, etc.
- The noble vs the humble – not many of means, position, power, prestige and awake to God
- The enlightened and elite mostly think Jesus is a joke – foolishness to those perishing

- God chose what the world thinks is foolish and weak to confound them.

Note:

St. **Paul** was educated and well positioned in society with influence and means. He ultimately declared all those attributes as RUBISH – Philippians 3:7-11

The **Apostles** were mostly middle-class commoners with limited education and worldly power and Jesus chose them (Matthew may be the one exception – wealthy tax collector?)

- What is base and despised by the world God has chosen (James 2:5 – poor rich in faith)
- In Jesus is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption