

Subject: *Know Your Bible – Part 18*

Scripture: *1 Corinthians 1:1-9*

Time, Place, and Purpose of 1 Corinthians

1. This letter was written to the church at Corinth by Paul around 55-56 AD.
2. Corinth was a leading business center in southern Greece, about 45 miles west of Athens.

The city had two seaports that supported a large shipping business.

3. Corinth was known for its immorality and idolatry.

The term “Corinthianize” (act like a Corinthian) was used as a term for moral depravity. Many shrines and temples were in Corinth, but the most impressive was the Temple of Aphrodite (goddess of love). Temple prostitution and other sinful practices were common. In spite of an evil culture, Paul called the Corinthian church to holy living and reminded them of God’s grace in sanctification (1:2, 9; 6:9-11).

4. Corinth was also influenced by Greek philosophy.

The teachings of dualism and Gnosticism were prominent. Some in the church questioned the doctrine of bodily resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12, 35).

5. Despite many obstacles Paul established a church in Corinth (Acts 18:1-17). The church began during Paul’s 2nd missionary journey. Paul met and worked with fellow tent-makers, Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth.

6. Paul wrote this letter to address problems and questions.

Outline of 1 Corinthians

I. Answer to the report of disunity in the church (1 Cor. 1:1-4:21)

A. Report of disunity in the church (1:10-17)

B. Reasons for disunity in the church (1:18-4:21)

- 1) Misunderstanding of the gospel message (1:18-3:4)
- 2) Misunderstanding of the gospel messenger (3:5-4:5)
- 3) Misunderstanding of Paul’s ministry (4:6-21)

II. Answer to the report of immorality in the church (1 Cor. 5:1-6:20)

A. Concerning incest (5:1-13)

B. Concerning lawsuits between believers (6:1-11)

C. Concerning sexual immorality (6:12-20)

III. Answer to important questions in the church (1 Cor. 7:1-16:24)

- A. Instruction about marriage (7:1-40)
- B. Instruction about things offered to idols (8:1-11:1)
- C. Instruction about public worship (11:2-14:40)
 - 1) Roles of men and women in the church (11:2-16)
 - 2) Principles for the Lord's Supper (11:17-34)
 - 3) Principles for spiritual gifts (12:1-14:40)
- D. Instruction about the resurrection (15:1-58)
 - 1) The resurrection of Christ (15:1-19)
 - 2) Order of the resurrections (15:20-28)
 - 3) Implications of Christ's resurrection (15:29-34)
 - 4) Resurrection of dead believers (15:35-50)
 - 5) Translation of living believers (15:51-58)
- E. Instruction about the collection for Jerusalem (16:1-4)

Importance of Christ's Resurrection

Apparently some in the Corinthian church were questioning the reality of a bodily resurrection. In 1 Corinthians 15:12-19, Paul shows the impact it would make if the resurrection of Christ never really happened. Paul's argument is very logical. If there is no bodily resurrection from the dead then Christ has not been resurrected. And if He has not been raised from the dead then these are the terrible consequences:

- 1) Preaching about Christ would be pointless (15:14)
- 2) Faith in Christ would be useless (15:14)
- 3) All witnesses of Christ's resurrection would be liars (15:15)
- 4) No one would be saved from sin (15:17)
- 5) All former believers would have died without hope (15:18)
- 6) Christians would be the most pitiable in the world (15:19)

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