

Paul Writes 1 Corinthians



When: On 3rd journey [A.D. 57]
From Where: Ephesus (Acts 19:22)

Synopsis

- One of the “major” N.T. epistles of Paul
- We know Paul wrote this letter from Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:8)
 - He sent Timothy into Macedonia (Acts 19:22)
 - Apparently, Timothy was to afterwards also go to Corinth to deal with some of the problems plaguing these Christians (1 Cor. 4:17)
 - Paul also planned to go himself, possibly wintering with them (1 Cor. 4:19; 16:5-7)
 - However, he was not sure if Timothy would arrive before he did (1 Cor. 16:10-11)
- We can be fairly certain of the events surrounding the writing of this letter
 - Paul mentions a “wide door of effective service” had opened to him (1 Cor. 16:9)
 - He also states this is why he decided to stay in Ephesus until Pentecost (1 Cor. 16:8)
 - The events in Acts 19:13-20 fit very well as to when Paul wrote the epistle
 - The Jewish exorcists are successfully exposed as frauds
 - This caused the name of the Lord to be magnified
 - Many brought their sorcery books and burned them...the combined value was over 50,000 pieces of silver
 - The word of the Lord “grew mightily” and “was prevailing”
 - This would have been a significant “wide door” for Paul to stay on & keep teaching
- Some from Chloe’s house had come to Ephesus and told Paul about Corinth’s infightings (1:11)
- There were also previously written letters...however, their contents are not recorded in the Bible
 - One from Paul addressing their associations with immoral brethren (5:9)
 - One from the Corinthians, asking the apostle some questions (7:1)
- There was also an unmentioned visit by Paul to Corinth (2 Cor. 12:14)
 - It occurred sometime *after* Acts 18 and *before* the writing of this letter
- This letter was carried to Corinth by Titus
 - Given the stern tone in how he addressed the Corinthians’ problems, Paul was obviously anxious to hear how his letter had been received
 - He had instructed Titus to meet him in Troas to receive a report (2 Cor. 2:12-13)
 - Not finding him, he traveled on...only later did Paul & Titus meet somewhere in Macedonia and Paul heard the news he wanted..the Corinthians had received the letter as they should, and had repented of some of their sins (2 Cor. 7:5-16)

The Two Treatises

Lesson 47

Outline

Paul reminds them of how blessed they were as a local group of Christians (1:1-9)

- They were “enriched in everything” by God...they “came short in no gift” (vv. 5, 7)

Paul begins addressing their internal problems (1:10 – 6:20)

- They were divided over preachers...first century “preacheritis” (1:10-17)
- True wisdom resides with God, not in a “favorite preacher” (1:18 – 2:16)
- They had carnal, immature attitudes that was hindering their service to God (3:1 – 4:21)
 - He could not speak to them as “spiritual men” but as “babies” (3:1-3a)
 - Paul urges them to consider the apostles as examples to follow
 - He didn’t want to “shame” them, but encourage them (4:14)
- They were tolerating immorality in the church (5:1-13)
 - A man was fornicating with his step-mother...the church did nothing about it
 - Discipline (*withdrawal of fellowship*) needed to be exercised against him (vv. 4-5, 9, 11)
- They were taking each other to public court...“airing the church’s dirty laundry” (6:1-11)
- They were dishonoring their bodies, engaging in sexual immorality (6:12-20)

Paul answers questions they had written to him (7:1 – 16:4)

- Questions about marriage, divorce, and remarriage (7:1-40)
- Questions about exercising personal liberties (8:1 – 11:1)
 - Particularly, eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols
 - Great care needed to be taken so that eating such meat would not endorse in any way a return to old idolatrous practices, or even mislead younger & more impressionable brethren who had just come out of idolatry (cp. 6:9-11)
 - Again, Paul offers himself as an example to imitate in such sensitive matters (11:1)
- Problems in their public worship assemblies (11:2-34)
 - The issue of woman’s submission to man (11:2-16)
 - A perversion of the Lord’s Supper (11:17-34)
- Questions about possessing & exercising spiritual gifts (12:1 – 14:39)
 - Not only did they argue about which preacher was best, but also which “gift” was superior
 - They were forgetting the importance of the whole body (12:4-14)
 - The problem was self-esteem...too little of it and too much of it (12:15-27)
 - The greatest gift → love...it motivates the use & appreciation of spiritual gifts (13:1-13)
 - Spiritual gifts should edify the body, not be used as a basis for bragging (14:1-40)
- False teaching about the resurrection (15:1-58)
 - Some taught there is no resurrection (v. 12)
 - If no resurrection, not even Christ is raised...we are all still in our sins (vv. 13-19)
 - There will be a resurrection (vv. 20-58)
- Questions about the collection for the needy saints (16:1-4)

