

Lecture 3: The Pauline Epistles (part 2)

Introduction:

1. Today we will continue in the Pauline Epistles by considering First and Second Corinthians.
2. Paul's Corinthian correspondence requires some special attention due to the complexities it presents to us in understanding the historical background that produced it. Furthermore, these letters have unique characteristics due to the serious moral and spiritual issues present in the church and the mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional stress that Paul experienced in addressing those issues.

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- I. 1 Corinthians (The Gospel Applied to Church Problems)
 - A. The Background of Paul's Corinthian Correspondence (*4 letters and 3 visits*)

A Timeline of Paul's Corinthian Correspondence				
Paul's Travels	Informing Scripture Refs	Visit or Letter	Time	Description of Events
2 nd Miss. Journey	Acts 18:1-18	Visit #1	18 mos.	Paul resided in Corinth; he evangelized the city and established the church.
3 rd Miss. Journey	Acts 19:1-10; 20:31		3 years	Paul resided in Ephesus for an extended period of ministry.
	1 Cor. 5:9	Letter "A"		Paul wrote an instructional letter to Corinth, which was not preserved.
	1 Cor. 16:12			Apollos brings a report to Paul of problems in the church.
	1 Cor. 1:11			Members of Chloe's household bring a report to Paul of problems in the church.
	Acts 19:21-22; cp. 1 Cor. 16:10-11			Paul sent Timothy into Macedonia and Achaia (to end up in Corinth).
	1 Cor. 16:17; 1 Cor. 7:1	(Letter from Corinth)		Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus bring a report to Paul about divisions in the church and deliver a letter from Corinth asking Paul's advice.
(c. AD 55)	1 Corinthians	Letter "B"		Paul wrote to deal with problems present in the church of Corinth.
				Timothy finally arrived in Corinth.
	2 Cor. 2:1; cp. 2 Cor. 12:14, 21;	Visit #2	(Short)	Paul traveled to Corinth to deal with problems but faced strong opposition. He quickly

	13:1			returned to Ephesus with these problems unresolved.
	2 Cor. 2:4-10; 7:12	Let. "C" ("Severe Letter")		Paul wrote a strongly worded letter of discipline from Ephesus carried by Titus, which was not preserved.
	2 Cor 1:15-17, 23			Either during his visit (#2) or in his letter, Paul informed the church of his intended travel plans: from Ephesus → Corinth → Macedonia → back to Corinth → Jerusalem with the offering. Ultimately, Paul changed his plans and delayed his arrival to give the church time for repentance.
	2 Cor. 2:12-13			Paul left Ephesus for Troas anxious to meet Titus returning with a report of the situation. Paul left Troas to go into Macedonia.
	2 Cor. 7:5-7			Titus met Paul in Macedonia with report of the Corinthian's repentance in response to the Severe Letter.
c. AD 56)	2 Corinthians (7:8-13; 2:5-11)	Letter "D"		Paul wrote a letter from Macedonia that was again carried by Titus.
	Acts 20:2-3	Visit #3	3 mos.	Paul personally arrived in Corinth soon after.

B. Background of 1 Corinthians

1. Date and location of writing.

2. The city of Corinth

C. Purposes and Themes of 1 Corinthians

1. PURPOSE: To correct problems in the church. The gospel applied is the solution to the problems. KEY VERSE: 1 Cor. 1:18.

2. PURPOSE: To answer questions that the congregation had asked Paul in a letter (7:1).
3. PURPOSE: To announce Paul's intention to visit them to collect and transmit their offering to the poor saints in Jerusalem (16:1-18).

D. Outline of the book

1. Introduction (1:1-9)
2. Correcting Divisions (1:10—4:21)
 - a. Properly Applying the Wisdom of the Cross (1:10—2:15)
 - b. Properly Evaluating God's Fellow Workers (3:1—4:21)
3. Correcting Other Sins (5:1—6:20)
 - a. Discipline of the Incestuous Church Member (5:1-13)
 - b. Taking a Brother to Law before Unbelievers (6:1-8)
 - c. Sexual Immorality (6:9-20)
4. Answering Questions Asked by the Church (7:1—11:1)
 - a. Questions about Marriage and Singleness (7:1-40)
 - b. Questions about Liberty, Conscience, and Idol Worship (8:1-11:1)
5. Instructions about Church Order in Public Worship (11:2—14:40)
 - a. Head Coverings in Worship (11:2-16)
 - b. Correcting Disorders in the Lord's Supper (11:17-34)
 - c. Concerning the Exercise of Spiritual Gifts in Worship (12:1—14:40)
6. Defense of the Doctrine of the Resurrection (15:1-58)
7. Conclusion (16:1-24)

II. 2 Corinthians (The Heart of Paul)

A. Background

B. Purposes and Themes

1. PURPOSE: To inform the church about his sufferings in Asia (i.e., Ephesus, 1:8-11).
2. PURPOSE: To express his joy and consolation at the report of their repentance (7:5-9).
KEY VERSE: 2 Cor. 1:3-4
3. PURPOSE: To explain the reason for his change in travel plans (1:15-17, 23)
4. PURPOSE: To give instructions about forgiving and reconciling the sinning church member who had repented (2:5-11).
5. PURPOSE: To describe the glory of the NT gospel ministry as opposed to the OT law. (2:14—6:10). [Paul's Manifesto of Ministry]

6. PURPOSE: To defend his apostleship from the accusations and attacks made by false Jewish teachers (10—13).
7. PURPOSE: To promote the collection for the saints at Jerusalem (8:1—9:15).

C. Special Characteristics

D. Outline¹

1. Greeting and Thanksgiving (1:1-11)
2. Paul's Relations with the Corinthians (1:12—7:16)
 - a. A Defense of His Travel Plans (1:12—2:13)
 - b. A Description of His New Covenant Ministry (2:14—6:10)
 - c. An Appeal for Separation from Sin and Full Reconciliation to Paul (6:11—7:16)
3. Paul's Call to Complete the Collection for the Saints at Jerusalem (8:1—9:15)
4. Paul's Apostolic Authority (10:1—13:10)
 - a. His Defense of His Authority (10:1—11:15)
 - b. His "Boasting as a Fool" (11:16—12:13)
 - c. His Warning to Prepare for His Arrival (12:14—13:10)
5. Final Greeting (13:11-14)

¹ Adapted from Homer A. Kent, Jr., *A Heart Opened Wide: Studies in II Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1982).