

## OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE 1 CORINTHIANS

October 31, 2018

### Lesson 30 – Romans

Page 163: The church became increasingly Gentile in composition and Jewish Christians were being snubbed by the larger Gentile groups in the church. Gentiles believed that God had turned his back on the Jews in favor of them. There were feelings of superiority and pride and they boasted of their new position before God. Groups were not welcoming to each other.

*God's Judgment*: God demands obedience. In Greek the word *obedience* derives from the verb *to hear*. Obedience is good works lived out in faith (the human response to God's faithfulness). But people abandoned God in favor of their idols.

Page 164: In Romans 10:10, the author writes: For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. To be justified is to be declared righteous. It is a legal term that describes what happens to us when we believe in Christ. Guilt of our sin is erased. God restores us to a right relationship with him.

*Results*: An authentic relationship with God gives us access into his grace. It is through the obedience and righteousness of Jesus Christ that righteousness has become available to all.

*Power over Sin*: Our old self was crucified with Christ so that sin might be rendered powerless. We are no longer slaves to sin. We live under grace and not under the law. In our baptismal rite we die to our sins and rise to newness of life (death and resurrection of Christ).

*Power over the Futility of the Law*: Author states that belief in the risen Christ releases us from our imperfect relationship with the law. Law brings to our consciousness our sin but does not give us power over it. Christ has accomplished what the law could not do. He became our sin offering.

*Power of the Holy Spirit*: Holy Spirit is the life-sustaining force and guide for believers. By the power of the Holy Spirit we have been adopted as sons and daughters and co-heirs with Christ. It helps us in our weakness and intercedes for us in accordance with the will of God.

Page 165: God keeps his promises and remains faithful even when the people are not. Even now we hear language of a remnant that is chosen by grace. God has not abandoned Israel but God has preserved Israel through those who remained steadfast.

*All Israel*: Grace of God is extended to Israel. God does not want any to perish but desires that all should come to repentance.

Page 166: We should love one another as the fulfillment of the law. We are to accept those whose faith is weak without passing judgment on them. We are not to put stumbling blocks in the way of others. We are to accept one another.

## Church

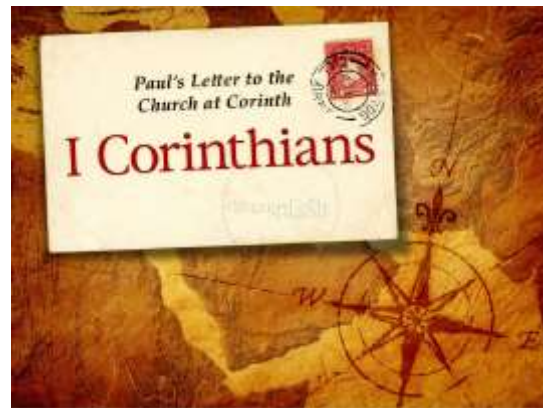
Church is the English translation of the Greek word *ekklesia*.

It means *called out* by God for a special purpose.

The Hebrew term is *qahal* which means assembly.

The term *church* in the New Testament means a local congregation of called out Christians.

Christ is the designated head over all things related to the church (which is his body).



Some 17 years after the death of Jesus Christ, Paul preached the gospel in Corinth.

At the time of Paul, Corinth was a commercial and religious center.

It was best known for its artisan's products of bronze, pottery and earthenware.

Sailors and travelers brought with them their religions (Greek and Egyptian shrines coexisted).

Jews (like Prisca and Aquila) found Corinth attractive and settled there.

Corinth had a special relationship with the Roman Empire.

Government operated under Roman law and Latin was the official government language.

Because of the transitory nature of commerce Corinth became known as *Sin City*.

It had a reputation where the wealthy abused the poor.

In some secular correspondence the wealthy were called disgusting and coarse.

Letters contained details of the groveling the poor did for just a small morsel of food.

Paul arrived in Corinth for the first time in 50 AD.

He had just established churches in Philippi and Thessalonica (major cities in Macedonia).

Paul wrote the Corinthians a previous letter that we learn about in 1 Corinthians 5:9-12.

In this previous letter, Paul told the people not to associate with immoral people.

In part 1 Corinthians is about some ongoing confusion regarding immorality.

Church at Corinth was made up of very few rich believers and most of the people were poor.

In 1 Corinthians there is no evidence of any strife or tension between Jews and Gentiles.

Most of the Corinthian believers were Gentiles.

Gentiles had been taught the Scripture and traditions of Israel.

Paul helped them think of themselves as a part of the ancient people of God.

Structure of this letter is very much like other Pauline letters. It opens with a salutation and words of thanksgiving. It closes with greetings and a blessing. Differences include a string of issues or problems that Paul treats sequentially. No other Pauline letter is structured so deeply around answering questions written to him. Paul had received a letter from the people and needed to respond to the matters they raised.

Prior to the writing of 1 Corinthians, Paul had known the believers for at least three years. From the reference to the previous letter there was the one question of immorality. Paul stresses to them the call for unity as he is the father of their faith. He feels responsible for them and sees problems with their conduct. He is harsh with them, he shames them, he cajoles them, and he encourages them. Between the time of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians his relationship with them worsened.

For Paul, the Christian faith is lived in community. Caring for other believers and building them up are not options but requirements of the faith. The very definition of community requires a give-and-receive transaction. Believers must be willing to accommodate for the sake of the community. It entails contributing to the enrichment of the fellowship by putting their gifts together. Paul strives to integrate the distinctiveness of individuals for the good of all. Believers are not to be driven by the heart alone but with their minds and spirits.

The Book of 1 Corinthians						
Focus	Disruptions		Debates		Doubts	
Divisions	Problems with Divisions	Problems with Immorality	Problems with Marriage	Problems with Food & Idols	Problems with Worship & Gifts	Problems with Doctrinal Error
	1	4 5 6	7 8	9 10	11 14 15	16
Topics	In the Body	In the Home		In the Church		
	Responding to Reports			Answering Questions		
Place	Written in Ephesus					
Time	About A.D. 56					
Author	The Apostle Paul					

### 1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21

1:10 confronts one of the problems that prompted 1 Corinthians (divisions within the church). At the heart of Paul's gospel is *skandalon* (the cross). Paul states that what brings Christians together and holds them together is the crucified Jesus. For a culturally, politically, and socially diverse people the starting point is Jesus Christ. The power of our witness is ultimately the power of God. God is the one who judges and who discerns the secret and hidden purposes of the heart.

Community has the responsibility to guard the God-given holiness of the congregation. It is to warn those who stray and it is essential for the community to remain healthy. There is a delicate balance between personal differences and community needs. Paul expresses his concern that when one person stumbles or strays all will suffer. When one is honored then all will benefit.

Each person is expected to build on the foundation of Jesus Christ. Our life of faith is not a quest for the right materials upon which to build. We are to use what is available to us. Only the one who is right with God can do works that are favorable to God. Grace is at the heart of the life of faith and inspires and motivates us. We are to be God's dwelling place (his temple).

Another issue he addresses is self-deception which appears in 3:18. Problem with the Corinthians is their overestimation of themselves. People were quick to praise and also to blame (honor and shame). Grace is the ground on which all the life of faith stands (the standard by which all is gauged). Our actions should always be governed by our being centered on Christ. To be a Christian is to be claimed by the Spirit.

#### 1 Corinthians 5:1-6:20

Question: Just how fully is love carried out when one never raises a question about the behavior of another (no matter what that behavior happens to be)?

At issue is the difference between meddling and proper responsibility. Former is to be avoided and the latter is an obligation of love. Problem is determining when the action falls far enough in the gray area to be harmful. Paul stresses the nurturing and correcting function of the church (when it functions as it ought). For Paul, holiness and piety are community concerns and responsibilities. His call to the church is to live up to what we have been reconstituted to be in Christ.

Paul discusses two kinds of judging in 6:1-8. One judgment is apocalyptic and occurs at the end of the ages. The other judgment is corrective (caring for others is not an option but an obligation).

Paul compares our relationship to God like that of marriage (like Hosea and Ezekiel 16). If we do not have an ideal relationship with Christ then it is time to work on our marriage. And how we are with God should correspond to how we relate to others. We are all dependent on God to give us meaning and significance.

#### 1 Corinthians 7

In Corinth some married people came to wonder about the propriety of their sexuality (vs. 5). Some people asked about whether marriage was appropriate (vs. 10-11, 28). And those married to unbelievers asked if divorce was a preferred way to maintain holiness. Counsel is given to husbands and wives, those contemplating divorce, and the unmarried. Responses are within the framework of his understanding that Christ is returning soon.

He repeatedly counsels the Corinthians to remain as they are.  
Believers should also make moral choices to minimize their cares and anxieties.  
At the same time they should maximize their devotion to God.  
Paul views the life of faith as a walk (as a way to grow from being a baby to maturity).  
He also distinguishes between what really matters (adiaphora).

#### 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1

Paul turns to a question about eating meat offered to an idol.  
Paul uses it as an occasion for a wider elaboration of what constitutes moral reasoning.  
Eating becomes a metaphor for the larger issue of the proper way to live our lives.  
Love is the most important concept in describing how believers rightly relate to each other.  
He describes people as having stronger and weaker moral consciences.  
It is based on people having different measures of faith (back to Romans 12:3).  
When making choices we are not to harm others who may be less mature.  
Less mature people are more susceptible to outside influences.

Sin is never a private act between an individual and God.  
Such a wrong relation with God inevitably spills over and harms others as well.  
Sin is corrosive for the individual sinner and those in proximity.

A Digression: Paul presents himself as an example of how a believer can properly build up and not destroy others. In Chapter 9 Paul describes himself as an apostle who has rights but he chooses not to exercise them. In his other example Paul describes believers as athletes who must exercise self-control in all things.

Back Again: Paul describes Israel as their ancestors.  
All of the people of God are jointly and equally part of God's family.

**10:13** – *No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.*

#### 1 Corinthians 11:2-14:40

Paul moves from the question about eating idol meat to the Lord's Supper.  
He praises the Corinthians for holding to the traditions of their faith.  
Traditions provide a solid foundation upon which the life of faith may be built.  
It also grounds moral reasoning and action.  
When confronted with a problem Paul rehearses what *we know* and then reasons a solution.

First issue addressed is the proper conduct of women in worship.  
Second issue is how the people made a mockery of the Lord's Supper.  
Finally Paul addressed the differences they were experiencing in the church.  
People were to appreciate their differences and count them as part of God's overall purpose.  
Paul broadened the discussion to the proper function of spiritual gifts.

### 1 Corinthians 15

Paul comes to the last major issue addressed in this letter (discourse on the resurrection).

He goes back to his original encounter with the Corinthians.

It is a reaffirmation that the focus of his preaching is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

At stake is the heart of the gospel and their understanding of it.

Paul makes basic affirmations about the present life of faith and the yet-to-be life of faith.

What one believes has a direct connection with how one behaves.

### 1 Corinthians 16

Final question addressed concerns the practicalities surrounding the collection for the people.

At the Jerusalem conference he promised that he would collect a goodwill offering.

The Corinthians were willing participants in this generous endeavor.

Concern was about the logistics of how to gather it and where to send it.

Unlike 2 Corinthians there is no hint of contention or confusion about participating.

Paul (in Ephesus) recommends to them the same steps he outlined for the Galatians.

### Assignment for November 7

Complete the Exercises from Lesson 31 on Pages 167-170

Read *2 Corinthians* or the portions outlined on Page 170

PAUL'S LETTERS AND MISSIONARY JOURNEYS				
YEAR A.D.	MAJOR EVENTS	ACTS	PERIOD	LETTERS
34	Conversion, Damascus, Arabia	9	3 years - Arabia	
37	Jerusalem, Tarsus, Syria, Cilicia			
46-47	Antioch, Jerusalem	11	1 year - Antioch	
48-49	First Missionary Journey and Antioch	13-14		Galatians
50	Jerusalem Council and Antioch	15		
51-53	Second Missionary Journey	16-18	18 months - Corinth	1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians
53-54	Antioch			
54-57	Third Missionary Journey	19-21	3 years - Ephesus	1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Romans
57	Jerusalem Arrest	22-23		
57-59	Caesarea Prisoner	24-26	2 years	
59-60	Journey to Rome	27-28		
60-67 circa	Rome House Arrest	28	5-7 years circa	Ephesians Colossians Philemon Philippians 1 Timothy Titus 2 Timothy