
1 and 2 CORINTHIANS

BACKGROUND-1 COR.

- 54 (55) A.D. In **Ephesus (16:8)**, Paul wrote the first letter to the Corinthians in response to a letter of inquiry from Corinth.
- Previous letter mentioned in 1 Cor 5:9 has not survived.
- Acts 18:1-11 (planting of Corinthian Church)

When?

- ☒ In Acts 18:12–17, Paul before the Roman proconsul of Achaia, Gallio—name is contained in a fragmentary inscription from Delphi that is dated to the 26th acclamation of Claudius as emperor. **Gallio's term in office from either 51/52 or 52/53.**

1 COR.—Addressing the Church

- The news from Chloe's people: in Paul's absence the church has been divided into various groups.
- 1:12 shows that Corinthian factions claim allegiance to Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, and perhaps Christ (Divergent house churches?).
- At the center of this divisive scene: sexual immorality, civil litigation, marriage, idol meat consumption, hairstyles, proper behavior in community worship and resurrection.

Structure and Arguments

- 1:10-17—Core argument or “thesis”—END DIVISIONS AND ACHIEVE RECONCILIATION.
- FIRST SUBSECTION (of 4): 1:18-4:21
 - 1:5 (“rich in every form of speech and in every form of knowledge”). “speech” (*logos*) and “wisdom” (*sophia*): 1:10–2:16,
 - “knowledge” (*gnōsis*): 3:1–23
 - Corinthian boasting, an obvious expression of “party politics,” is rejected (1:26–31; 3:18–23).

Structure and Arguments (2)

- **SECOND SUBSECTION: 5:1–11:1**
 - Paul treats specific issues now dividing the community (as part of larger argument promoting unity)—namely, relations between Corinthian Christians and outsiders and among Corinthian Christians.
 - Ch. 5–7 *Porneia*. These arguments are grouped around the central issue of *porneia*, “sexual immorality.” Paul must define clearly the boundaries between “insiders” and “outsiders” (5:9–13) in order to argue for UNITY.

SECOND SUBSECTION

- 6:1-11—court battles
- 6:12-20—sexual immorality
- 7:1-40—don't seek to alter your social status (7:8, 17–24, 27, 40) but realize your calling (*klēsis*) (7:15, 17–24; cf. 1:9, 26).
- Chap. 8-10—Idol Worship and Freedom; Paul urges love (*agapē*) over knowledge (*gnōsis*) as the fundamental value. One should sacrifice small “freedoms” for the sake of the many (8:9, 13).

SECOND SUBSECTION

10:1–22 *Idolatry*

- rebellious episodes from Israel's wilderness traditions are presented as *typoi* (10:6, 11) of Corinthian factionalism and strife.
 - Don't face the same fate due to desiring food, idolatry, and *porneia*.
- The unifying role of the Lord's Supper in establishing the *koinōnia* of the community underscored.

SECOND SUBSECTION/THIRD SUBSECTION

- 10:23-11:1
 - The principle of *agapē* is stated: “Let no one seek his/her own advantage, but that of the other” (10:24; cf. 13:5).

THIRD SUBSECTION: 11:2-14:40—Corinthian divisiveness in WORSHIP; specifically, head coverings/hairstyle (11:2-16); disorder at Lord’s Supper (11:17-34); Spiritual Gifts (12:1-14:40)...
“LOVE” and “BODY” defense against SELFISH WORSHIP

FOURTH SUBSECTION

- Divisiveness is caused by the fact that some at Corinth deny the resurrection (15:13)
- Paul refutes argument (15:1–11, 12–28), and presents an argument on the resurrected body (15:35–57).

Paul In Defense and As MODEL

- 1 Cor 9:1–2; 15:3–11
- He will present himself as the example of the nondivisive behavior he urges the Corinthians to adopt (7:7; 8:13; 9:1–27; 10:33–11:1; 14:18–19).
- **Praxis (PRACTICES)** (*erga*) must be up to the same standards as **eloquence and knowledge**; this is goal of chaps. 5–15. The key concept (*agapē*; 4:21; 8:1; 13:1–13; 14:1; 16:14, 24), defined as “***what which builds up***” the community (8:1; 14:4–5; cf. 3:9–15).

2 Corinthians

- 55 A.D. Written in Ephesus; some matters worsened after first letter and new problems arose (e.g., psuedo-apostles).
- Defense of Postponed Visit—**1:12-2:13**
 - **APPEAL TO SOLIDARITY:** “it is God who establishes us together with you in Christ and who anointed us, who also...gave us the Holy Spirit” (1:21-22).
 - **REASON FOR ABSENCE/other LETTER:** avoid another painful visit and “to see if you are obedient in everything” (2:9).
 - **2:12,13—(Acts 20:1-16):** Paul anxious to find Titus.

2 Corinthians

- **The first major apology** (2:14–6:13; 7:1-16) begins with an expression of thanks to God
- Description of the apostle's missionary activity through metaphors/images of a **triumphal procession** (2:14–17). In this procession, Paul functions as ***the herald*** (4:5; 5:20–6:2; 6:11–13; 7:2–4)

2 Corinthians—structure and arguments

- “Donation Sections” 2 Cor. 8,9—collection of donations to Jerusalem. “As you have abundance in everything, in faith and eloquence and knowledge as well as in every kind of zeal and in that kind of love which came from us and dwells in you, you should have abundance in this gift of charity, too” (2 Cor 8:7).
- The “**second apology**” (10:1–13:10), or “letter of tears” was provoked by Paul’s unsuccessful earlier attempts—in particular the earlier apology—to clear himself of suspicion (10:1–2).
 - 11:11—defense from love and STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS (Corinthians ashamed of Paul: “FOOL”-6X)