

1 Corinthians

Wisdom & Unity

Meeting the demands of
Christian life and living



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Lesson Outline – May 12, 2022

- Origin of the Letter
- Author of the Letter
- Recipients of the Letter
- Form of the Letter
- Purpose of the Letter

Origin of 1 Corinthians

- Timing
 - 50-51 CE (ref. Acts 18:1-17)
 - Paul visited ~17 years after the events surrounding Calvary
 - A “previous letter” (1 Cor 5:9)
 - 1 Corinthians written ~53-54 CE
- Background/Culture
 - Strategically important
 - Culturally diverse
 - Economically vibrant
 - Socially stratified

Origin of 1 Corinthians (*cont'd.*)

- Theological considerations
 - Christianity in a religiously pluralistic reality
 - Who is the “Lord?”
- Ecclesiological considerations
 - Who the Church is/can be
 - Appreciating diversity among believers
 - Achieving unity among believers

Author of 1 Corinthians

- Paul's personal story
 - A transformed life (1:1)
 - A deep conviction (1:17-25)
- Paul's ministerial mission
 - A certain calling
 - E.g., 2:1-5; 4:10; 9:1-18; 15:1-11
 - Pastorally practical
 - E.g., 4:14-21; 6:1-8:13; 11:1-2, 27-34; 14:26-40

Recipients of 1 Corinthians

- Gentile converts of a Hebrew faith tradition in a Greco-Roman world
 - Aware of rhetorical/persuasive argumentation
 - Questions, at least from Paul, concerning their spiritual maturity
 - E.g., 1:10-17; 3:1-4, 5-10
 - Challenged by cultural and religious syncretism
 - E.g., 6:1-11; 7:17-24; 8:1-13; 10:14-22
 - The foundation of fellowship
 - E.g., 1:18-31; 9:25-27; 11:17-34; 12:4-7; 13:12-14:5; 15:1-11
 - A need for doctrinal affirmation and security
 - E.g., 1:26-30; 11:23-26; 15:1-58

Form of 1 Corinthians

Outline

- I. Greetings & Appeal – Chapters 1-4
 - A. 1:1-9 → Salutations & Thanksgiving
 - B. 1:10-31 → Appeal for the Gospel of Jesus Christ
 - C. 2 → Appeal to wisdom of Holy Spirit
 - D. 3 → Appeal for God-consciousness
 - E. 4 → Appeal Christian morality
- II. Response to Scandals in the Church – Chapters 5 & 6
 - A. 5 → Response to sexual scandal
 - B. 6 → Response to lawsuits

Form of 1 Corinthians (*cont'd.*)

III. Instructions for Living as a Member of the Church – Chapters 7-16

- A. 7 → Marriage
- B. 8-11:1 → Christian liberty
 - 1. 9 – of the minister
 - 2. 10-11:1 – responsible liberty
- C. 11:2-16 → Women's covering
- D. 11:17-34 → The Lord's Supper
- E. 12-14 → Spiritual gifts
- F. 15 → The Gospel
- G. 16:1-9 → Giving

IV. Exhortation & benediction - 16:10-24

Purpose of 1 Corinthians

- Wisdom
 - Christian doctrine
 - Personal conduct
 - Pastoral counsel/instruction
- A Unified Church
 - Display of Christian conduct
 - Diversity of Spiritual gifts
 - Declaration of the Gospel