

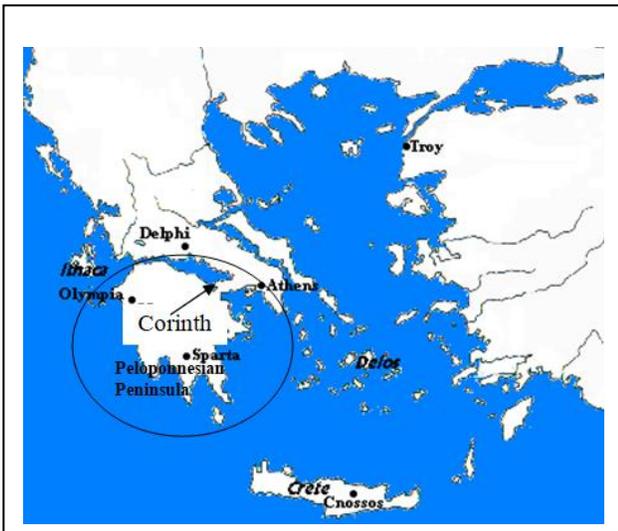
Wednesday Faith Connection
The National Presbyterian Church
April 14, 2021
Dr. David A. Renwick

First Corinthians: Reality TV in the Early Church

SCHEDULE - April 14- June 2, 2021

1. Background
2. Restoring Ruptured Relationships (1 Cor 1-3; 14)
 3. Sex in the City (1 Cor 5-7)
 4. Winning by Losing (1 Cor 8-10)
 5. Did Paul Hate Women? (1 Cor 11)
 6. Spiritually Mature? (1 Cor 11-14)
 7. Life After Death (1 Cor 15)
 8. Generosity (1 Cor 16)

CORINTH -- Location



“Greek” Corinth -- Destroyed in 146BC by the Roman Consul Lucius Mummius. *Resettled by former military.*

“Roman” Corinth -- Founded by Julius Caesar in 44 B.C., as a Roman colony. *Laid out virtually on top of the former Greek city*

Population of region = 100,000?

City Size = < 6-7 square miles/4000 acres (Strabo)

Romans, Greeks, Jews . . . speaking Latin, Greek

Economy:

1. Port Traffic: Located at the land bridge (isthmus) between the Peloponnese and mainland Greece. Two ports Lechaem/ion and Cenchraea.
2. Sports & Entertainment: The Isthmian Games (dedicated to Poseidon, god of the sea). Every two years on either side of Olympic Games. Re-started in Roman Corinth AD40.
3. Religion: Gods and Goddesses (Apollo, Aphrodite, etc.)

Source -- STRABO (Greek geographer and historian. d. AD23) – *Geography* 8.6

Corinth is called "wealthy" because of its **commerce**, since it is situated on the Isthmus and is master of **two harbors, of which the one leads straight to Asia (Cenchraeae), and the other to Italy (Lechaem/ion)**; and it makes easy the exchange of merchandise from both countries that are so far distant from each other.

And just as in early times the Strait of Sicily was not easy to navigate, so also it was a welcome alternative, for the merchants both from Italy and from Asia, to avoid the voyage (around the Peloponnesus) and to land their cargoes here.

And also **the duties on what by land was exported from the Peloponnesus and what was imported** to it fell to those who held the keys. And to later times this remained ever so.

But to the Corinthians of later times still greater advantages were added, for also the **Isthmian Games**, which were celebrated there, were wont to draw crowds of people.

And **the temple of Aphroditê** was so rich that it owned more than a thousand temple slaves, courtesans, whom both men and women had dedicated to the goddess. And therefore it was also on account of these women that the city was crowded with people and grew rich;

Ancient Corinth Animation VIDEO . . . <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEHPfMIyLfc>

Size of the Church (ESTIMATES)

- House church – 30-50 persons max
- Several gathering places? . . . split along those lines?
- Maybe 150-200 members?

PAUL'S 1ST LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH BACKGROUND & AUTHOR?

TWO SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- I. Paul's Own Writings/Letters ("primary")
- II. Acts of the Apostles ("secondary")

THE AUTHOR

THE LETTER ITSELF: 1 Corinthians 1

¹Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,
and our brother Sosthenes,

²To the *church of God* that is in Corinth

PAUL in ACTS

Acts 21:31-40 (*This incident takes place some years after Paul has visited and written to Corinth – maybe AD 57 or later*)

³¹ While the crowd in Jerusalem were trying to kill Paul,
word came to *the tribune of the cohort* that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

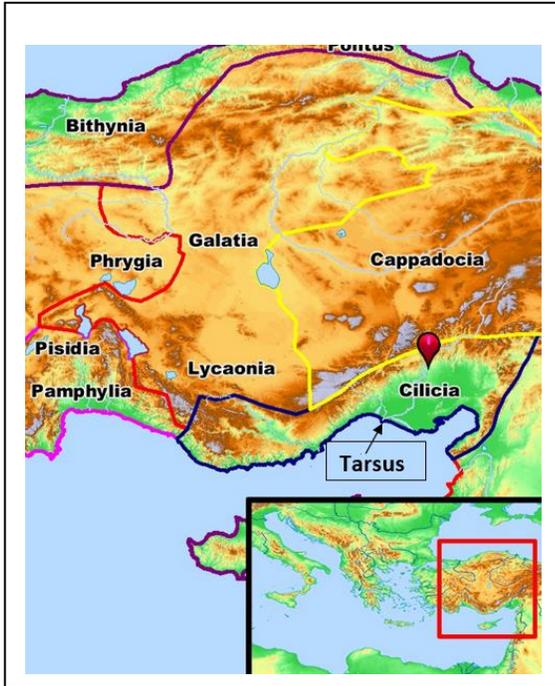
³⁷ Just as Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, "May I say something to you?"

The tribune replied, "**Do you know Greek?**" ³⁸ Then you are not the Egyptian who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?"

³⁹ Paul replied, "I am a Jew, **from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen** of an important city; I beg you, let me speak to the people."

⁴⁰ When he had given him permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the people for silence; and when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the **Hebrew language**, saying, (22)¹ "Brothers and fathers, listen to the defense that I now make before you." ²When they heard him addressing them in Hebrew, they became even more quiet.

Then he said: ³"I am a Jew, **born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city** at the feet of **Gamaliel**, educated strictly according to our ancestral law, being *zealous* for God, just as all of you are today. ⁴**I persecuted this Way** up to the point of death



PAUL 'S SELF-PERCEPTION

Romans 11.1

I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

Philippians 3.4-11

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more:

1. ⁵circumcised on the eighth day,
2. a member of the people of Israel,
3. of the tribe of Benjamin,
4. a Hebrew born of Hebrews;
5. as to the law, a Pharisee;
6. ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church;
7. as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

⁷Yet

1. whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss **because of Christ**.
2. ⁸More than that, I regard everything as loss because of *the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord*.
3. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish,
4. in order that I may **gain Christ**
5. ⁹and be found in him,
6. not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law,
7. but one that comes through faith in Christ,
8. the righteousness from God based on faith.
9. ¹⁰I want to **know Christ** and (i.e.)
 - a. *the power of his resurrection*
 - b. *and the sharing of his sufferings*
 - c. *by becoming like him in his death*,
10. ¹¹if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Paul's Teaching connects with the Risen AND historical Jesus of the Gospels

John 12:24 – Jesus says

“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies -- it remains just a single grain; but if it dies -- it bears much fruit.”

Matthew 16:25

Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

PAUL'S SELF-PERCEPTION, CALLING & TIMELINE

I. Galatians 1.11-2.1, 6-10

1:11 For I want you to know, brothers and sisters,
that *the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin*;
for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it,

but I received it through **a revelation of Jesus Christ**. [AD33-35??]

¹³You have heard, no doubt, of my **earlier life** in Judaism.

I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it.

I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age,
for I was far more *zealous* for the traditions of my ancestors. (see Num. 25:7)

¹⁵But **when God**,

- who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, (see Jeremiah 1)
- was pleased to reveal his Son to me,
so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, (Acts 9)
- I did not confer with any human being,
- nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me,
- but I went away at once into Arabia (modern Syria), and afterwards I returned to Damascus.

¹⁸**Then after three years (AD 36-38?)**

I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas (Peter) and stayed with him fifteen days;

²¹**Then after fourteen years (AD 47-52? – Do these “14 years” include or exclude the “three years”?)**

I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me

⁹and when James and Cephas (Peter) and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, *they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should (continue to) **GO TO THE GENTILES** and they to the circumcised (Jews).*

¹⁰They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do.

PAUL'S MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES in ACTS

Acts 13-14 -- **Paul's First Missionary Journey** (begins **Late AD 40s?**)

-- either just before -- or just after -- the “after 14 years” visit to Jerusalem . . .

Acts 15:36-18:21 – **Paul's Second Missionary Journey** (begins **AD 49-52?**)

Includes **Paul's 1st visit to Corinth**

Dating of this visit – can become more specific

because of reference to the Proconsul Gallio in Acts 18

= March 50/51-Sept 51/52

First Journey (in red); Second Journey (in black)



PAUL ESTABLISHES THE CHURCH IN CORINTH – During 2nd Journey

1 Corinthians 4:15

Though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel

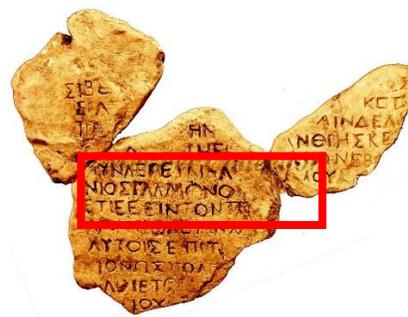
ACTS 18

- ¹ Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.
- ² There he found a **Jew named Aquila**, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome.
- Paul went to see them, ³and, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they worked together—by trade they were tentmakers.
- ⁴ Every sabbath he would argue in the synagogue and would try to convince Jews and Greeks.
- ⁵ When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus.
- ⁶ When they opposed and reviled him, in protest he shook the dust from his clothes and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”
- ⁷ Then he left the synagogue and went to the house of a man named **Titius Justus**, a worshiper of God; his house was next door to the synagogue. ⁸ **Crispus**, the official of the synagogue, became a believer in the Lord, together with all his household; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul became believers and were baptized.
- ⁹ One night the Lord said to Paul in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to harm you, for there are many in this city who are my people.” ¹¹ **He stayed there a year and six months**, teaching the word of God among them.
- ¹² But when **Gallio** was proconsul of Achaia, (Brother of Seneca, Roman Stoic Philosopher & Senator, tutor to Nero, before seeking to assassinate Nero)
- the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal (the “**Bema**”).



The Bema (Speakers Platform). located in the North West Market of ancient Corinth dates to the early first century AD.

Photo Credit: Berthold Werner / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY-SA 3.0



Delphi/Gallio Inscription, Written by Emp. Claudius, includes the date of the inscription, approx AD 52 (“Gallio my friend and proconsul”)

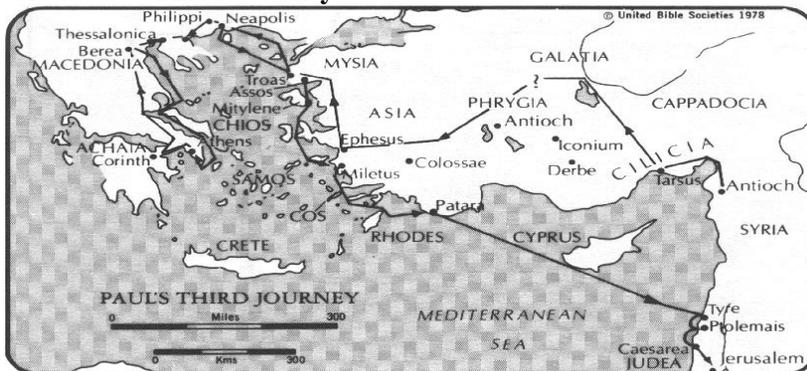
- ¹³ They said, “This man is persuading people to worship God in ways that are contrary to the law.” ¹⁴ Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of crime or serious villainy, I would be justified in accepting the complaint of you Jews; ¹⁵ but since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves; I do not wish to be a judge of these matters.”
- ¹⁶ And he dismissed them from the tribunal (“Bema”). ¹⁷ Then all of them seized **Sosthenes**, the official of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal (“Bema”). But Gallio paid no attention to any of these things.
- ¹⁸ **After staying there for a considerable time**, Paul said farewell to the believers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila.

14. At **Cenchreae** he had his hair cut, for he was under a vow.
15. ¹⁹When **they reached Ephesus**, he left them there, but first he himself went into the synagogue and had a discussion with the Jews.
16. ²⁰When they asked him to stay longer, he declined; ²¹but on taking leave of them, he said, “I will return to you, if God wills.” Then he set sail from Ephesus.
17. ²²When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch.

THIRD JOURNEY BEGINS

18. ²³After spending some time there he departed and went from place to place through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.
19. ²⁴Now **there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos**, a native of Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. ²⁵He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶He began to speak boldly in the synagogue;
20. but when **Priscilla and Aquila** heard him, they took him aside and explained ***the Way of God*** to him more accurately.
21. ²⁷And when **he wished to cross over to Achaia** (includes Athens, Corinth), the believers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. On his arrival he greatly helped those who through grace had become believers, ²⁸for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Messiah is Jesus.

AD 52-57 – Third Journey



Paul writes FROM EPHESUS

1 Corinthians 16

⁵I will visit you after passing through Macedonia—for I intend to pass through Macedonia— ⁶and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way, wherever I go.

⁷I do not want to see you now just in passing, for I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits.

⁸But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

OCCASION FOR WRITING?

TWO REPORTS FROM CORINTH have reached Paul.

1. **From Chloe's People (1:11)**

2. **A Letter (7:1) carried by???** . . . possibly as per 1 Cor 16:17 -- "*I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatas and Achaicus . . .*"

→ **SO – 1 Corinthians** comprises ***a back and forth conversation*** –

but – since there is **no punctuation in Greek** – and therefore ***no quotation marks***

- when is Paul quoting the information he receives? (their side of the discussion?)
- and when are we hearing Paul's response? (Paul's voice?)

1. CHLOE'S REPORT

¹For **it has been reported to me** by Chloe's people that

- 1¹¹ **DIVISIONS OVER PASTORS!!** *there are quarrels among you*, my brothers and sisters. ¹²What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ."
- 5¹ **SEXUAL IMMORALITY. It is actually reported** that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among pagans; for a man is living with his father's wife. ²And you are arrogant! Should you not rather have mourned, so that he who has done this would have been removed from among you? . . . 6¹² "*All things are lawful for me,*" but not all things are beneficial. "*All things are lawful for me,*" but I will not be dominated by anything. ¹³"*Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food,*" and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? *Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute?* Never!
- 6¹ **A LEGAL CASE.** When any of you has a **grievance against another, do you dare to take it to court before the unrighteous**, instead of taking it before the saints? . . . ⁶but a believer goes to court against a believer—and before unbelievers at that?
- 11¹⁸ **LORD'S SUPPER.** ¹⁸When you come together as a church, **I hear that** there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it. ¹⁹Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine. ²⁰When you come together, it is not really to eat the **Lord's supper**. ²¹For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk.
- 15¹² **RESURRECTION.** If Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, *how can some of you say* there is no resurrection of the dead?

2. ANOTHER LETTER

⁷Now concerning the matters about which **you** wrote:

- (Remember → what we do not know for sure is when Paul is quoting the letter, and when are we hearing Paul's voice)

- 7¹ **MARRIAGE** "It is well for a man not to touch a woman." ²But "because of cases of sexual immorality" each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. ³The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.
- 8¹ **EATING IDOL MEAT.** Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that "*all of us possess knowledge.*" Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ²Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; ³but anyone who loves God is known by him. ⁴Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "no idol in the world really exists," and that "there is no God but one."
- 12¹ **SIGNS OF GOD'S SPIRIT (GIFTS)** Now concerning spiritual gifts/matters, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. ³Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says "Let Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.
- 16¹ Now concerning **THE COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS**: you should follow the directions I gave to the churches of Galatia. ²On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come. ³And when I arrive, I will send any whom you approve with letters to take your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

REAL PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH

1 Corinthians 1

¹¹For it has been reported to me by **Chloe's people** that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters.

¹²What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to **Apollos**," or "I belong to **Cephas** (*Simon Peter*)" or "I belong to Christ."

¹⁴I thank God that I baptized none of you except **Crispus and Gaius**,

¹⁵so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name.

¹⁶(I did baptize also **the household of Stephanas**)

²⁶Consider your own call, brothers and sisters:

- **not many of you were wise by human standards,**
- **not many were powerful,**
- **not many were of noble birth.**

1 Corinthians 11

²⁰When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. ²¹For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and *one goes hungry and another becomes drunk*. ²²What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?

1 Corinthians 12

²You know that when *you were pagans*, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak.

1 Corinthians 16

¹⁰If **Timothy** comes, see that he has nothing to fear among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord just as I am; ¹¹therefore let no one despise him. Send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I am expecting him with the brothers.

¹²Now concerning **our brother Apollos**, I strongly urged him to visit you (*DR: a return visit?*) with the other brothers, but he was not at all willing to come now. He will come when he has the opportunity.

¹⁵Now, brothers and sisters, you know that members of **the household of Stephanas** were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; ¹⁶I urge you to put yourselves at the service of such people, and of everyone who works and toils with them.

¹⁷I rejoice at the coming of **Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus**

Romans 16

¹I commend to you our sister **Phoebe**, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae,

²so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.

³Greet **Prisca and Aquila**, who work with me in Christ Jesus,

⁴and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

²¹**Timothy**, my co-worker, greets you;

so do **Lucius** and **Jason** and **Sosipater**, my relatives.

²²I **Tertius**, the writer of this letter, greet you in the Lord.

²³**Gaius**, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you.

Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother **Quartus**, greet you.



. Discovered in 1929, near a paved area northeast of the theater of Corinth. The inscription, dates from mid-first century and reads, "Erastus in return for his ship laid the pavement at his own expense" (Latin: ERASTVS. PRO. AED. S. P. STRAVIT). The reference could be to Erastus, a high-level public official, who sent greetings from Corinth in Paul's Letter to the Romans (Rom. 16:23). www.Bibleodyssey.org/ Inscription Photo by Todd Bolen.