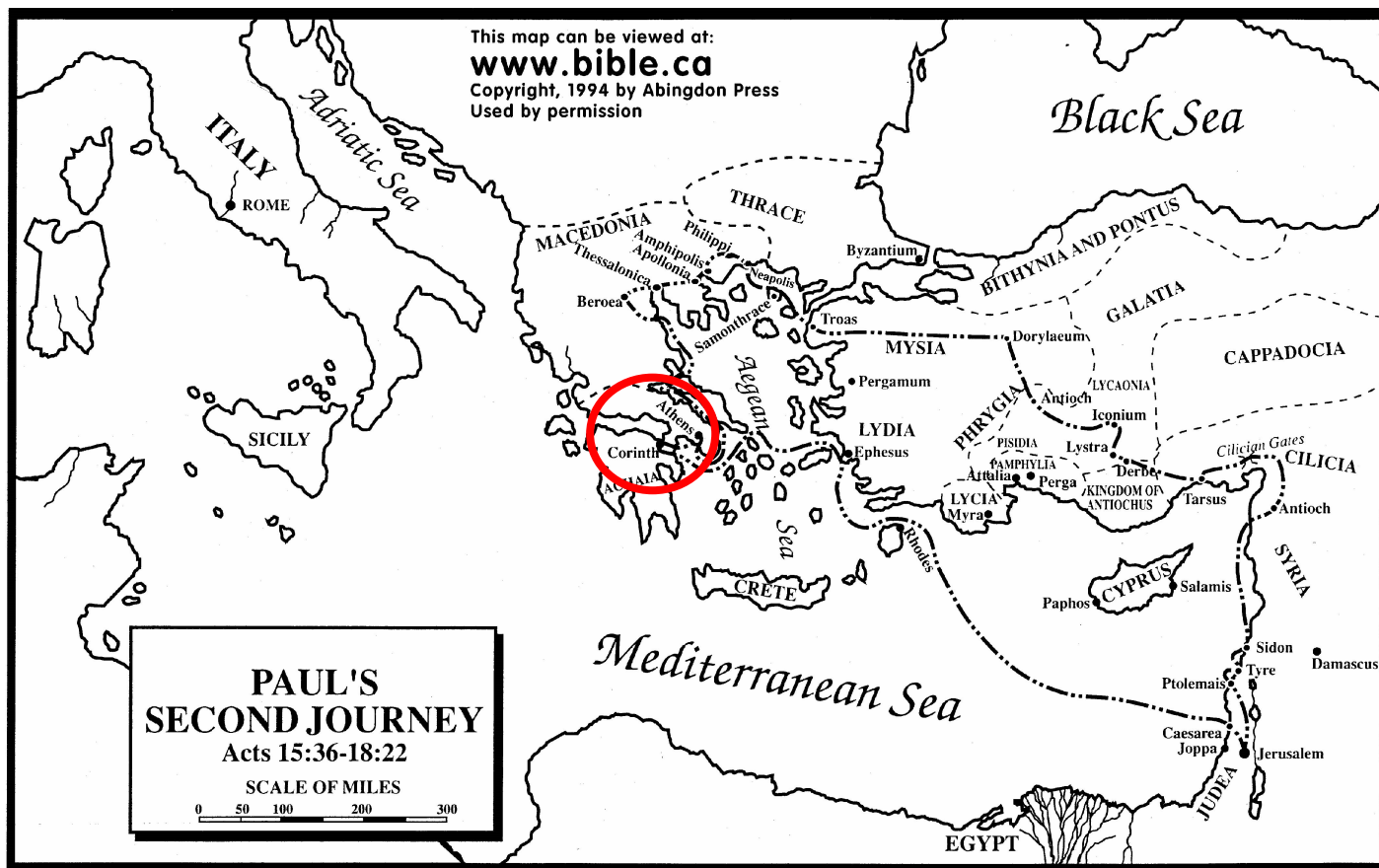


Overview



Short History of Corinth

The Romans under Lucius Mummius destroyed Corinth following a siege in 146 BC; when he entered the city Mummius put all the men to the sword and sold the women and children into slavery before he torched the city, for which he was given the cognomen Achaicus as the conqueror of the Achaean League (see Battle of Corinth). While there is archeological evidence of some minimal habitation in the years afterwards, **Julius Caesar refounded the city as Colonia laus Iulia Corinthiensis in 44 BC shortly before his assassination.** According to Appian, the new settlers were drawn from freedmen of Rome. Under the Romans it became the seat of government for Southern Greece or Achaia (according to Acts 18:12-26). **It was noted for its wealth, and for the luxurious, immoral and vicious habits of the people. It had a large mixed population of Romans, Greeks, and Jews.**

When the apostle Paul first visited the city (AD 51 or 52), Gallio, the brother of Seneca, was proconsul. Paul resided here for eighteen months (see Acts 18:1-18). Here he first became acquainted with Aquila and Priscilla, and soon after his departure Apollos came from Ephesus.

Paul visited Corinth for a "second benefit" (see 2 Corinthians 1:15), and remained for three months, according to Acts 20:3. During this second visit in the spring of 58 it is likely the Epistle to the Romans was written.[5]

Paul also wrote two of his epistles to the Christian community at Corinth, the First Epistle to the Corinthians and the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. The first Epistle reflects the difficulties of maintaining a Christian community in such a cosmopolitan city.



Roman road for hauling ships



Canal built in 1800s

1 Corinthians Overview

First Corinthians is the New Testament's "problem epistle." In it Paul deals with a series of problems that existed in that young church, introducing each new issue with the phrase, *peri dei*, translated in our versions as "Now concerning," or simply, "Now. . . ."

The problems sound like a catalog of problems experienced by local churches today:

Division in the church (1–4) Discipline (5–6) Marriage and divorce (7) Doctrinal disputes (8–10)
Misunderstanding of spiritual (charismatic) gifts (12–14)

In addition, the letter touches on the role of women, the importance of the Lord's Supper, and on the centrality of the Resurrection in Christian teaching.

Key Passage for the Whole Letter

1 Cor 1:⁴ I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. ⁵ For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—⁶ because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. ⁷ Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. ⁸ He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God, ***who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord***, is faithful.

1. They were suffering divisions because they had lost sight of the Lordship of Jesus.
2. They were immoral because they had forgotten that the members of their bodies were the members of Christ.
3. They were in lawsuits with one another because they had failed to see that Jesus was judge of the innermost motives of the heart.
4. They were quarreling because they had forgotten that others were members of Christ's body and, therefore, they were members one of another.

Who was Sosthenes??

Acts 18 ⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. ⁸ **Crispus, the synagogue ruler**, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

⁹ One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. ¹⁰ For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city." ¹¹ So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

¹² While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him into court. ¹³ "This man," they charged, "is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law."

¹⁴ Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, "If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. ¹⁵ But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law—settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things." ¹⁶ So he had them ejected from the court. ¹⁷ **Then they all turned on Sosthenes the synagogue ruler** and beat him in front of the court. But Gallio showed no concern whatever.

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

²To the church of God in Corinth, to those **sanctified** in Christ Jesus and **called to be holy**, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:

³Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving

⁴I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. ⁵For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—⁶because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. ⁷Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. ⁸He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God, who ***has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord***, is faithful.

Divisions in the Church

¹⁰I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ***all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought***. ¹¹My brothers, some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. ¹²What I mean is this: One of you says, “I follow Paul”; another, “I follow Apollos”; another, “I follow Cephas”; still another, “I follow Christ.”

¹³Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? ¹⁴I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. ¹⁶(Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don’t remember if I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human **wisdom**, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Christ the Wisdom and Power of God

¹⁸***For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*** ¹⁹For it is written:

**“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;
the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”** (Isa 29:14)

²⁰Where is the **wise** man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the **wisdom** of the world? ²¹For since in the **wisdom** of God the world through its **wisdom** did not know him, ***God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.*** ²²Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for **wisdom**, ²³***but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,*** ²⁴***but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*** ²⁵***For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength.***

²⁶Brothers, ***think of what you were when you were called.*** Not many of you were **wise** by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the **wise**; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, ²⁹so that no one may boast before him. ³⁰It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us **wisdom** from God—that is, ***our righteousness, holiness and redemption.*** ³¹Therefore, as it is written: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.” (Jer 9:24)

God's Own Fool

Michael Card

*Seems I've imagined Him all of my life
As the wisest of all of mankind
But if God's Holy wisdom is foolish to men
He must have seemed out of His mind*

*For even His family said He was mad
And the priest said a demon's to blame
But God in the form of this angry young man
Could not have seemed perfectly sane*

Chorus

*We in our foolishness thought we were wise
He played the fool and He opened our eyes
When we in our weakness believed we were strong
He became helpless to show we were wrong
And so we follow God's own Fool
For only the foolish can tell
Believe the unbelievable
Come be a fool as well*

*So come lose your life for a carpenter's son
For a madman who died for a dream
And you'll have the faith His first followers had
And you'll feel the weight of the beam
So surrender the hunger to say you must know
Have the courage to say, "I believe"
For the power of paradox opens your eyes
And blinds those who say they can see*

Chorus

*So we follow God's own Fool
For only the foolish can tell
Believe the unbelievable, come be a fool as well*