

## **Introduction**

### ***Lesson 1***

#### ***I Corinthians 1:1-17***

#### ***Background***

#### ***Corinth***

- A. A major harbor and commercial center at the tip of the Greek mainland.
- B. Religion consisted of worship to various gods, with the sea-deities (i.e. Poseidon) and Aphrodite being the major influences.
- C. Julius Caesar made it a Roman colony in 46 B.C. and it came to be one of the prominent centers of Greece.
- D. Jews were abundant in this trade center (Acts 18:1-18).
- E. The population in the first century was approximately 600,000 - 700,000, most of whom were slaves.

#### ***Paul's First Trip to Corinth***

- A. Paul came alone directly from Athens on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1), around 50 A.D., with the intent of preaching Christ (I Cor. 2:1-3).
- B. Paul immediately went to work and converted his co-workers Aquilla and Priscilla (Acts 18:2-3).
- C. Paul, as was his custom upon entering a city, reasoned in the synagogue, persuading Jews and Greeks (Acts 18:4-5). He was eventually rejected and lived next door to the synagogue with Justus (Acts 18:6-7).
- D. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, and many of the Corinthians were converted, most likely forming the nucleus of the church established at Corinth (Acts 18:8, I Cor. 1:14-16).
- E. Paul was brought up on charges before Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, by the Jews (Acts 18:12-16). Gallio refused to judge accusations based on Jewish law, with the result that Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, was beaten.
- F. Paul was in Corinth for a year and a half (Acts 18:11, 18). When he departed (around 52 A.D.), he sailed for Syria, taking Aquilla and Priscilla.
- G. It appears that the church was primarily made up of people from the lower class (I Cor. 1:26, 7:21).
- H. Because he had brought the gospel to them, Paul looked upon the Corinthians as his beloved children (I Cor. 4:14-15).

***The Epistle to Corinth***

- A. The epistle was written around 55 A.D., from Ephesus while Paul was on his third missionary journey (Acts 19:1, I Cor. 16:8).
- B. Motivations for writing the letter:
  - vReports from the household of Chloe (I Cor. 1:11).
  - vReports from Apollos (I Cor. 3:5-6, 16:12).
  - vReports from Corinthians (I Cor. 16:17-18).
  - vGreat concern over immorality (I Cor. 5:9).
  - vTheir letters to Paul (I Cor. 7:1).

***Questions***

1. How does Paul describe the church at Corinth (vs. 2)?
2. How had the Corinthians been enriched in Christ?
3. What did he beseech them to do?
4. How does he describe the contentions that existed among them?
5. Whom had Paul baptized? Why was he glad that he had not baptized others? What was Paul's mission?