

Books of The Bible

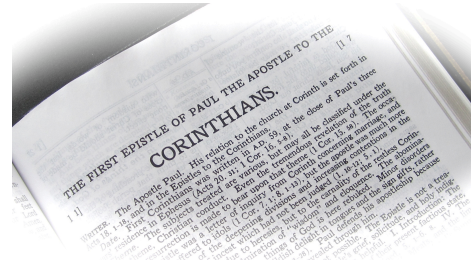
A Survey of 1 Corinthians

Introduction

The Double Burden:

In my reading of Corinthians there is seen the burdens of the heart of Paul. He was aware of the spiritual condition of the Corinthian assembly having heard:

- a) From the house of Chloe Paul learnt of the “contentions among you” (1 Cor. 1:11; possibly also 11:18).
- b) Of the common talk and that which was known about the situation in the assembly (ch. 5:1; 11:18; 15:12). These may have been Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (ch. 16:17).
- c) From a letter he received (ch. 7:1).



When those from the house of Chloe told Paul of the situation, this was not gossip nor was Paul listening to lap up sorry details. This was the concerns of saints who saw that the glory of the Lord was being diminished by the behavior in the church. They did not know the answer to the problems, and in writing to Paul, or going to see him, they sought apostolic wisdom. The concern of these saints was not, “How will it offend Mr So in So, or Mrs So in So?” Neither were they concerned with, “What will we do if the brother or sister leaves?” The glory of God and the Lord was at stake and what they were doing was for the glory of God.

The second burden was Paul saw himself as a father to these saints, for he had not only preached the gospel to them, but having seen them saved he sought to see his children develop and be in unity. When the children at Corinth began to show signs of spiritual illness, lethargy, and fragmentizing, it was not just something to be accepted and nothing could be done about it. Nor was there an attitude of nonchalantness. The glory of the Lord was at stake and Paul, working with the Lord, would seek to restore them in spirit and behavior to the Lord.

The City

Of the many morally corrupt cities in the ancient world, there can be no doubt that the city of Corinth was one of the worst. It was a cosmopolitan city, and in it there was a church of God which was carnal. That is not to say that all those in the assembly were carnal, but it would appear the majority were. These people were by position in fellowship with divine Persons, in position, but not in practice. They were in fellowship with divine persons in standing, but not in their state, therefore it is a book in which there are pleadings with them to correct their spiritual condition before God. It contains a very practical lesson for it is possible for a believer to fall lower than they ever did when unsaved. In another context the Lord gave an illustration of such in the parable of the man who was cleansed of the demons (Matt. 12:45). Since none of us are at the end of our earthly sojourn, there is the need for spiritual preservation.

Author

Evidently Paul wrote this epistle (ch. 1:1) and the use of the first person pronoun as the word “I” is used one hundred and twenty-two times. However, while Paul is the writer, he does not dissociate himself from the other apostles and saints, for he will use the pronoun “we” forty-three times. Whither Sosthenes had any part in writing the book is doubtful, but he may have been the scribe writing the words of Paul, yet Paul did write the salutation (1 Cor. 16:21) as also in Col. 4:18 and 2 Thess. 3:17.

The Purpose of The Letter

In contrast to the Galatians saints who tended toward legalism, the saints in Corinth were going in the opposite direction. There was no place for legalism but a wide open door for profligate living. The letter was informing them where they ought to have restrictions! To have people drunk at the Lord’s table was not acceptable; or a

Books of The Bible A Survey of 1 Corinthians

man having his father's wife, even if it was his step-mother or the father's lady friend; or babbling away in an imagined spiritual language. This was not acceptable and ought not be tolerated.

The Recipients

The nationalistic attitudes of the populous of the church, joined with the prevailing conditions in which they lived, and their own spiritual babyhood (1 Cor. 3:1), meant that they soon took sides and cliques developed with divisions due to:

- a) Allegiance to personalities (ch. 1:12)
- b) Two aspects of immorality: physically (ch. 5:1-13; ch. 7:1-40) and legally (ch. 6:1-20)
- c) Offering and eating foods offered to idols (ch. 8:1, 4)
- d) Misconduct at the Lord's Supper resulting externally from association at the table of devils (demons) (ch. 10:21), and internally by their belittling lack of acknowledging the Headship of Christ (ch. 11:2-16), and being drunk at the Lord's Supper (ch. 11:17-34).
- e) Their attitudes toward the others and their abilities from God by depreciating others or their own gifts (ch. 12:15, 21) the result of the lack of love is that they were like that which is spoken of in chapters 13:1-3 and failed to do (ch. 13:4-8).
- f) The abuse of tongues (ch. 14:1-40)
- g) Three queries concerning the resurrection, namely if there was a resurrection (ch. 15:12). "How are the dead raised up?" and "What body do they come?" (1 Cor. 15:35)

Key Ideas or Truths of The Book

Since the assembly in Corinth had multiple divisions, the question was: "How can unity be brought about?" This was not restricted to that ancient day, for it is a problem today in many churches, whether it is about divorced and remarried persons, or should it be regular bread or unleavened bread at the Lord's Supper, what about wine or grape juice, should we sit in a square or all facing one direction, ought women have their heads covered or not? Sadly, the result in many cases is split assemblies. In reading Corinthians several truths emerge:

- a) The importance of the Lordship of Christ, which is spoken of sixty times. The title "Lord" on its own occurs 46 times; the clause "Jesus Christ our Lord" occurs 3 times; "Lord Jesus Christ" 9 times; "Lord of glory" and "Lord from Heaven" are both mentioned once.
- b) The sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. Spirit is mentioned twenty-one times. "Spirit" and "Ghost" are the same Greek word, the word being used 20 times inclusive of the terms "Holy Spirit" and "Spirit of God".
- c) Finally, the truth is emphasized, the scriptures are the final court of appeal. What Mr So in So says, or what others practice is irrelevant. The only thing that matters is "What does God say?" At Sinai the Children of Israel learnt that God was the unapproachable God, but in Leviticus man is invited to fellowship with Him (Lev. 1:1). However, that did not mean that man could approach God as man desired, or live as he wanted. He had to function as God desired. Their entire life was to be governed by the scriptures. Corinthians teaches that adherence to the scriptures is a priority and this is supported by the repeated word "Written", which occurs 12 times. The word "written" indicates, "it stands written", therefore absolute and unchanging.

Key Verses

- 1) "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (ch. 1:30)
- 2) "According as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:31)
- 3) "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" (1 Cor. 10:24)
- 4) "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31)

Books of The Bible
A Survey of 1 Corinthians

Key Words

The key words of 1 Corinthians are:

Word	No. Of Occurrences
Wise	12
Ignorant	3
Know	27
Knowledge	10
Known	6

Words and Phrases Peculiar to 1 Corinthians

The following words are found only in 1 Corinthians and nowhere else in the New Testament.

Word	Reference	Word	Reference	Word	Reference
Foolishness	Ch. 1:18, 21, 23; 2:14; 3:19	Disputer	Ch. 1:20	Base	Ch. 1:28
Demonstration	Ch. 2:4	Enticing	Ch. 2:4	Husbandry	Ch. 3:9
Master Builder (Architect)	Ch. 3:10	Stubble	Ch. 3:12	Taketh	Ch. 3:19
Appointed to death	Ch. 4:9	No certain dwelling place	Ch. 4:11	Are naked	Ch. 4:11
Off scouring	Ch. 4:13	Filth	Ch. 4:13	Keep the feast	Ch. 5:8
Railer	Ch. 5:11; 6:10	Drunkard	Ch. 5:11; 6:10	Taken/Put away	Ch. 5:2, 13
Unworthy	Ch. 6:2	Things	Ch. 6:3	Shame	Ch. 6:5; 15:34
Consent	Ch. 7:5	Permission	Ch. 7:6	Unmarried	Ch. 7:8, 11, 32, 34
They cannot contain	Ch. 7:9	Freeman	Ch. 7:22	To be loosed	Ch. 7:27
Without distraction	Ch. 7:35	That ye may attend	Ch. 7:35	Snare	Ch. 7:35
Behaveth unseemly	Ch. 7:36; 13:5	The flower of her age	Ch. 7:36	Idol's temple	Ch. 8:10

Books of The Bible
A Survey of 1 Corinthians

Word	Reference	Word	Reference	Word	Reference
Wherefore	Ch. 8:13; 10:14; 14:13	Hinder	Ch. 9:12	Wait	Ch. 9:13
Partake	Ch. 9:13	Against my will	Ch. 9:17	Without charge	Ch. 9:18
Race	Ch. 9:24	Uncertainty	Ch. 9:26	Bring it into subjection	Ch. 9:27
Overthrown	Ch. 10:5	Lust after	Ch. 10:6	Play	Ch. 10:7
Destroyer	Ch. 10:10	Shambles	Ch. 10:25	Offered in sacrifice	Ch. 10:28
Uncovered	Ch. 11:5, 13	Covered	Ch. 11:4, 6	Have long hair	Ch. 11:14-15
Hair	Ch. 11:15	Contentious	Ch. 11:16	Differences/ Diversities	Ch. 12:4, 5, 6
Operations	Ch. 12:6, 10	Interpretation	Ch. 12:10; 14:26	Healing	Ch. 12:9, 28, 30
Smelling	Ch. 12:17	Uncomely	Ch. 12:23	Governments	Ch. 12:28
Cymbal	Ch. 13:1	Its kind	Ch. 13:4	Vaunteth	Ch. 13:4
Darkly	Ch. 13:12	Comfort	Ch. 14:3	Without life	Ch. 14:7
Pipe	Ch. 14:7	Easy to be understood	Ch. 14:9	Understanding	Ch. 14:20
Be ye children	Ch. 14:20	Other tongues	Ch. 14:21	Interpreter	Ch. 14:28
As (of one born)	Ch. 15:8	One born	Ch. 15:8	Order	Ch. 15:23
Communications	Ch. 15:33	Awake	Ch. 15:34	Birds	Ch. 15:39
Earthy	Ch. 15:47, 48, 49	Twinkling	Ch. 15:52	In a Moment	Ch. 15:52
Immovable	Ch. 15:58	Collection/ Gathering	Ch. 16:1, 2	By the way	Ch. 16:7
Quit you like men	Ch. 16:13	Maranatha	Ch. 16:22		

[The Presentation of Divine Persons](#)

As in every book it is important to consider which Divine persons are mentioned and in what contexts. Due to the large number of verses (eighty-eight verses) in which God is mentioned, I am only going to list some of them:

Books of The Bible
A Survey of 1 Corinthians

GOD			
Expression	Reference	Expression	Reference
Church of God	Ch. 1:2	God our Father	Ch. 1:3
God is faithful	Ch. 1:9	The power of God	Ch. 1:18
The wisdom of God	Ch. 1:21	The (seeming) foolishness of God	Ch. 1:25
Chosen of God	Ch. 1:27	Things of God	Ch. 2:9-10
God's husbandry / building	Ch. 3:9	Temple of God	Ch. 3:16
Kingdom of God	Ch. 6:10	Gift of God	Ch. 7:7
Glory of God	Ch. 10:31		

CHRIST			
Expression	Reference	Expression	Reference
Jesus Christ	Ch. 1:1	Christ Jesus	Ch. 1:2
The Lord Jesus Christ	Ch. 1:3	His son, Jesus Christ our Lord	Ch. 1:9
Christ	Ch. 1:23	The Lord	Ch. 1:31
Lord of glory	Ch. 2:8	Lord Jesus Christ	Ch. 5:4
Lord Jesus	Ch. 5:5	Second man	Ch. 15:47
Last Adam	Ch. 15:45	Our Passover	Ch. 5:7

THE HOLY SPIRIT			
Truth expressed	Reference	Expression	Reference
The gospel is preached by the spirit of power	Ch. 2:4	The Spirit reveals	Ch. 2:10
The Spirit of God	Ch. 2:11	Spirit of our God	Ch. 6:11
Diversities of Gifts by the Spirit	Ch. 12:4	The manifestation of the Spirit	Ch. 12:7
Spirit of God	Ch. 12:3		

Suggested Structure

No 01

- a) Answers to Chloe's report, divisions, for which there is concern (ch. 1:11-4:21)
- b) Answers to reports about disorders, for which there is condemnation (ch. 5:1-6:20)
- c) Answers to their letter of questions about difficulties, for which there is counsel (ch. 7:1-16:3)

No. 02

- a) Introduction (ch. 1:1-1:10)
- b) Carnalities, which needed correction (ch. 1:11-11:34)
- c) Spiritualities which needed instruction (ch. 12:1-16:3)
- d) Conclusion (ch. 16:4-24)

While these are excellent divisions, my understanding is that the book is divided according to chapter 1:30 where it is recorded: "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Thus the book is:

- a) A contrast of the wisdom of God's provision in contrast with the wisdom of this world. Note the multiple references to "wise" and "wisdom" in chapters 1-4.
 - i) "Wise" is mentioned in ch. 1:19, 20, 26, 27; 3:10, 18, 19, 20; 4:10
 - ii) "Wisdom" is mentioned in ch. 1:17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 30; Ch. 2:1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; 3:19
- b) A contrast between the righteousness of God and the unrighteousness of men as seen by their behavior: a man having his father's wife (ch. 5:1); taking each other before the secular court (ch. 6:1)
- c) A contrast between sanctification and the filth of idolatry. Note the references to:
 - i) "idol" (ch. 8:4, 7, 10; 10:19)
 - ii) "idols" (ch. 8:1, 4, 10; 10:19, 28)
 - iii) "devils" (ch. 10:20, 21)
 - iv) "idolatry" (ch. 10:14)
- e) The characteristics of those who are living as redeemed (freed from the enslavement of sin) and those who are not regarding attitudes to each other, spiritual growth, and beliefs.

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

Rowan Jennings, Abbotsford, British Columbia