

## CORINTH

### A Divided Ecclesia



## Corinth – a divided ecclesia

But **God** has combined the members  
of the body...  
so that there should be **no division**  
in the body...

Now **YOU** are the body of Christ!

1 Cor 12: 24-27

## Corinth A city between 2 seas



## Corinth – in the world



## From Athens to Corinth



## Corinth Plain



## Boat Road: Corinth - Cenchrea



## Today's "boat road"



## Harbour at Cenchrea



## Harbour at Corinth



## How was the ecclesia established?

- Athens to Corinth
- Priscilla & Aquilla
- Reasoned with Jews & Greeks
- Silas & Timothy arrive
- **The Jews** abusive – 'I will go to Gentiles'
- Relocates next door
- Crispus the synagogue ruler

## How was the ecclesia established?

- **THE LORD SPEAKS TO PAUL IN A VISION**
- Stays for 1-1/2 years
- Attacked by **The Jews** - Gallio
- **The Jews** beat Sosthenes
- Stays 'for some time' then goes to Ephesus

## The Corinthian Mix



- Converted Jews from synagogue
- Converted Gentile proselytes from synagogue
- Converted Gentiles from idolatry



## 1<sup>st</sup> Letter

### A Response to Theirs

"Now the for matters YOU wrote about"

- Contains Paul's severe reprimands
- His responses to the questions in their letter to him **Ch 7:1**
- It caused the Corinthians great distress **2 Cor 2:3**
- It distressed Paul to have to write it **2 Cor 2:4**
- Titus' feedback **2 Cor 7:7-13**

## Issues prompting 1st Letter

Replies their questions

Divisions

Immorality & immoral relationships

Lawsuits

Idolatry and Food issues

Rivalry of Holy Spirit gifts

Arguments about doctrine

## Paul quotes their words

We do not use **deception** nor do we **distort** the word of God. **2 Cor 4:2**

If we are '**out of our mind**' it is for the sake of God. **2 Cor 4:13**

I Paul, who am '**timid when face to face with you but bold when away**'. **2 Cor 10:1**

## Paul quotes their words

How were you **inferior** to the other churches, except that I was never a burden to you.  
Forgive me this wrong! **2 Cor 12:13**

I have not been a burden to you. Yet **crafty fellow** that I am, I **caught you by trickery**! **2 Cor 12:15**

## Their words – his response

Them: "We know that we all possess **knowledge**"

Paul: **Knowledge puffs up but love builds up.**

The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know.

But the man who loves God is know by God

1 Cor 8:1

## Their words – his response

Them: "Everything is permissible for me"

Paul: But not everything is beneficial

Them: "Everything is permissible for me"

Paul: I will not be mastered by anything

Them: "Food for the stomach & the stomach for food"

Paul: But God will destroy them both

1 Cor 6:12

## Their words -v- God's Words

Them: A man ought not to cover his head since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man...

Is 43:6 Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth – everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.

## Their words – his response

1 Cor 14:34-36

Them: "Women should remain silent in the ecclesia..."

Paul: **WHAT!**

Did the word of God originate with **you**?  
Or are **you** the only people it has reached?  
If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that **what I am writing** to you is the Lord's command.

**If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored!**

## Their words – his response

1 Cor 15:12 & 35

Paul: How can **some of you say**:

Them: 'there is no resurrection of the dead?'

Paul: Someone may ask:

Them: 'How are the dead raised?'  
'With what kind of body will they come?'

Paul: **How Foolish!**

## Paul frets over his 1<sup>st</sup> letter

But God who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of **Titus**...

he told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me so that **my joy** was greater than ever. 2 Cor 7:6

See **what this godly sorrow has produced in you**, What earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. 2 Cor 7:11

## 2 letters: 2 endings: 2 choices



1 Cor 16:22-14

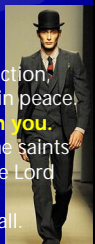
If anyone does not love the Lord – **a curse be on him.**

Come O Lord! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.

2 Cor 13:11-14

Finally brothers good-bye. Aim for perfection; listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. **And the God of love and peace be with you.**

Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints send their greetings. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.



The Corinthian Ecclesia  
Situating in The House of Titius Justus  
The Forum, CORINTH

TO BROTHER PAUL  
C/- THE ECCLESIA AT EPHEBUS

Dear Brother Paul,

We understand that you have been advised by the household of Chloe<sup>A</sup> that there are quarrels and disputes in the ecclesia. You are our father through the gospel<sup>B</sup> for you established the Ecclesia here in Corinth in the face of considerable personal risk to your own safety.<sup>C</sup> Those of us who remember that terrifying occasion when "the Jews" attacked you and brought you into court to appear before the Proconsul, Gallio will never forget their fury when Gallio threw their "case" out of court. They were so enraged that they vented their fury and frustration on Sosthenes, the synagogue ruler and beat him in front of the court. Remember how amazed we were that even this had no effect on Gallio.<sup>D</sup>

Because you established this ecclesia in Corinth, the Elders decided at our last meeting to write to you, outlining the matters that brethren are quarrelling about, as well as setting forth the disputed teachings some are propagating in our midst. Brother Paul, we seek your counsel and guidance to help us "test everything and hold on to that which is good",<sup>E</sup> as you exhorted our brethren at Thessalonica.

**QUESTIONS BRETHREN ARE QUARRELLING ABOUT:**

- 1 There is a dispute about who has the highest status - those who follow Paul; those who follow Apollos; or those who follow Cephas?<sup>F</sup> Those who say they follow you Paul, are saying that you are the greatest **scholar** of the three because you were taught at the feet of Gamaliel.<sup>G</sup> Those who follow Cephas are saying that although he is just an uneducated fisherman, his life at sea has helped him be a great **philosopher**. Those who follow Apollos are saying that his skill as a great orator proves he is **wise**.<sup>H</sup>
- 2 Some of the Jewish brethren are saying the test of a teacher's authority should be determined by a sign; but some of the Greek brethren are saying it should be determined by wisdom.<sup>I</sup>
- 3 What should we do about a brother practicing sexual immorality in his own family?<sup>J</sup>

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<sup>A</sup> 1:11

<sup>B</sup> 4:15

<sup>C</sup> Acts 18:1-11

<sup>D</sup> Acts 18:12-17

<sup>E</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:21

<sup>F</sup> 1:10-13; 3:4-10

<sup>G</sup> Acts 22:3

<sup>H</sup> 1:17, 20-21 and 26-30; 2:1-13; 3:18-22; 4:6

<sup>I</sup> 1:22

<sup>J</sup> 5:1-5; 9-13; 6:9-10; 13, 18-20

- 4 How should trivial disputes between believers be handled?<sup>K</sup>
- 5 Some are saying there is no need for restraint with regard to food because "**food is for the stomach and the stomach for food**".<sup>L</sup>
- 6 There are brethren in the ecclesia who were married when they heard the gospel. They want to know what they should do if their spouse is not a believer? Should they continue in the marriage or should they divorce their non-believing spouse?<sup>M</sup> And if they separate or divorce their non-believing spouse, what is the status of the children of the marriage?<sup>N</sup> They are also concerned about what their options are if an unbelieving spouse leaves the marriage? Is the marriage still binding?<sup>O</sup>
- 7 Paul, some of the Jewish brethren are boasting about being circumcised. The Greek brethren want to know whether the gospel requires them to also be circumcised.<sup>P</sup>
- 8 What is the position of brethren who were serving unbelieving masters when they were called to the gospel? They want to know whether they should continue to serve an unbelieving master.<sup>Q</sup>
- 9 There is confusion for some about whether brethren and sisters who are currently unmarried, should remain unmarried or whether they should marry.<sup>R</sup> This arises because some say '**it is good for individuals not to marry**'.<sup>S</sup>
- 10 Should an engaged couple who haven't yet set a wedding date "**because of the present crisis**",<sup>T</sup> but don't want to delay for long because of age considerations, remain unmarried, or should they go ahead and marry?<sup>U</sup>
- 11 We have a recently widowed sister in our meeting so the question has arisen about the position of a woman whose husband dies? Can she remarry? Or should she remain unmarried?<sup>V</sup>
- 12 Also Paul, some are asking whether teachers in the ecclesia are entitled to receive ecclesial support?<sup>W</sup>
- 13 What about spiritual gifts? Some are arguing about which gift is the most desirable?<sup>X</sup>

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<sup>K</sup> 6:1-8

<sup>L</sup> 6:13; 11:20-22 & 33-34

<sup>M</sup> 7:12-13

<sup>N</sup> 7:14

<sup>O</sup> 7:15-17

<sup>P</sup> 7:17-19

<sup>Q</sup> 7:21-23

<sup>R</sup> 7:25-34; 9:5

<sup>S</sup> 7:1

<sup>T</sup> 7:26

<sup>U</sup> 7:36-38

<sup>V</sup> 7:39-40

<sup>W</sup> 9:6-18

<sup>X</sup> 12:1-11; 12:27-13:3; 14:1

14 How should we manage the collection for God's people?<sup>Y</sup>

15 And many of the brethren want to know when Brother Apollos is coming to our ecclesia?<sup>Z</sup>

**THE DISPUTED TEACHINGS:**

16 Some teach that "**everything is permissible for them**".<sup>AA</sup> They say their "**freedom in Christ**"<sup>BB</sup> allows them to do whatever **they** think is appropriate.<sup>CC</sup>

17 As we mentioned, some teach: "It is good for a **man** (*Gk Anthropos*, ie human being) not to marry, yet some of the Apostles are married."<sup>DD</sup>

18 Some teach that **they** alone "**possess knowledge**"<sup>EE</sup> and this enables **them** to know it is 'defiling to eat food sacrificed to idols'.

19 Some teach it dishonours God when a man prays or prophesies **with** his head covered but it dishonours God when a woman prays or prophesies **without** a head covering. They go so far as to say that if a woman refuses to wear a covering on her head when she prays or prophesies, she should have her hair cut off, or be shaved.<sup>FF</sup> The response of some of the women is that their hair is a covering.<sup>GG</sup> Paul, what do you say? When men or women pray or prophesy, should they wear a covering on their head?<sup>HH</sup>

They take this position on head coverings because a **man** (*Gk Anerie* 'male'), they say, is 'the image and glory of **God**' but a woman is **not**. They say, a woman is 'the glory of **man**' and the reason they give to prove this, is that '**man did not come from woman, but woman came from man**'; and '**man was not created for woman, but woman was created for man**'.<sup>II</sup> They argue that because of this, and "**because of the angels**, the woman ought to have a sign of her authority on her head". Therefore they say, women should wear a head covering an acknowledgement of this.<sup>JJ</sup>

20 Regarding the gift of tongues Paul, those who have this gift are **not** interpreting for the rest of the meeting. A number of them jump up and speak in different tongues at the same time. This is not helpful or edifying<sup>KK</sup> to the ecclesia because no one knows what

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<sup>Y</sup> 16:1

<sup>Z</sup> 16:12

<sup>AA</sup> 6:12; 10:23

<sup>BB</sup> 8:9

<sup>CC</sup> 6:12; 10:23

<sup>DD</sup> 9:5

<sup>EE</sup> 8:1-4

<sup>FF</sup> 11:4-6

<sup>GG</sup> 11:15

<sup>HH</sup> 11:16

<sup>II</sup> 11:8-9

<sup>JJ</sup> 11:10

<sup>KK</sup> 14:4

**any** of them are saying. As a result our meetings are rowdy, unruly and unmanageable. Paul, should we forbid speaking in tongues in the ecclesia?<sup>LL</sup>

- 21 Despite the fact that women have also been given spirit gifts<sup>MM</sup>, there are some teaching that women '**must remain silent in the ecclesia and are not allowed to speak but must be in submission**'. They say '**the Law teaches this**' but refuse to show where this is taught in the Law. They also say that '**if women want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home**'. They teach that **it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the ecclesia**'.<sup>NN</sup> What do you say about this Paul?<sup>OO</sup>
- 22 What should we say in response to those who are teaching that there is no resurrection of the dead?<sup>PP</sup>

They also say that if there is a resurrection of the dead, we should tell them how the dead are raised and what kind of body they will be resurrected with?<sup>QQ</sup>

Paul, the Elders pray you are in good health and await your counsel and advice on these pressing matters which are causing such distress and divisiveness in the ecclesia of God at Corinth.

Your brethren in Christ,

The Elders

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<sup>LL</sup> 14:1-33&39

<sup>MM</sup> 1 Cor 14:5; 14:23; 14:24; 14:26 ("everyone"={man, one, woman}particularly; 14:31 {3x's}("all"=any, every, the whole); 14:39

<sup>NN</sup> 14:34-35

<sup>OO</sup> 14:36-38

<sup>PP</sup> 15:12

<sup>QQ</sup> 15:35