

1. What's so great about the letters to Corinth?

Corinthian situation vs the Thessalonians (quick review of last week)

2. Today's Lectures: Overview

Corinth in Paul's Time – Paul's Time in Corinth – The Corinthian Correspondence –
The Corinthian Community – 1 Corinthians – 2 Corinthians –
The Corinthian Situation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and issues in the Corinthian letters

3. Corinth in Paul's Time

Corinth's Geography: Isthmus connecting mainland Greece/Achaea with Peloponnese
Roman: massive Acropolis and Latin inscriptions (and language)
Temples to Roman and Greek gods as well as a "synagogue of the Hebrews"
Destroyed in 146 BCE after rebellion
Refounded by Julius Caesar in 44 BCE and became capital of Achaea
Trade route north/south by road and east/west by boat (*diolkos*)
Large influx of non-Roman, Greek speaking migrants
Host of the Isthmian Games

4. Paul's Time in Corinth

Paul spent time in Corinth around 50/51 and again around 55/56 CE
Initially travelled to Corinth via Athens
Acts 18.1-18 is the Acts account of Paul's first visit to Corinth
Was a tentmaker, connecting with Priscilla (Prisca) and Aquila who were Jews from Rome,
expelled after the Edict of Claudius (49 CE) – see 1 Cor 16.19; Acts 18.2-3
Stayed initially for 18 months
Was brought before Proconsul Gallio (who served 51-52 CE per Delphi inscription)
Paul's community was diverse and met in homes for meals and worship (1 Cor 11.17-34; Rom
16.23)
Size of the church thought to be 30-50 but as many as 100
Paul names 17 individuals within the Corinthian community
The social status of the community is much debated, see 1 Cor 1.26-28
After Paul leaves Corinth, Apollos teaches there

5. The Corinthian Correspondence

There are at least 4-5 and as many as 7 Pauline letters to Corinth, with several also written by
the Corinthians including: the lost letter of 1 Cor 5.9; 1 Corinthians; the "letter of tears" of
2 Cor 2.4; 2 Cor 1-9; 2 Cor 10-13
2 Corinthians is possibly a compilation of 2-4 letters
The letters bring to light the problems within a community that is culturally fraught and
fractious, located in a challenging pluralistic context (see 1 Clement)

Paul's sources for his letters are multiple:

*Chloe's people (1 Cor 1.11) – Letter from Corinth (1 Cor 7.1) with accompanying delegation –
Apollos (1 Cor 16.12) – Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1 Cor 16.17) – Timothy (1 Cor 4.17)
– a second visit (2 Cor 2.1; 7.2) – Titus (2 Cor 7.6-7)*

6. The Corinthian Community

Key issues: unity and reconciliation

Issues of social status?

Varied backgrounds: synagogue leader/patron (Crispus); owner of large home (Gaius);
oikonomos (Erastus: also the aedile?); Jews (Aquila, Priscilla, Crispus); Romans (Fortunatus;
Gaius, Titus Justus; Quartus); Greeks (Stephanus, Erastus, Achaicus)

7. 1 Corinthians

Overview

16 Chapters, by Paul and Sosthenes (1.1); 1 unified letter

Written from Ephesus between 54-57 CE

List of practical and theological problems in 4 sections (and then conclusion)

Outline

1-4: Division and response to reports about factions from Chloe's people

5-11.1: Sexual and Moral issues, including responses to issues raised in Corinthian
letter (7.1) and a long section on meat offered to idols (8.1-11.1)

11.2-14.40: Worship and communal gatherings

15: The Resurrection of the Body

16: Conclusion: including the Collection, Travelogue, and Paul's signature

Key Debates

Who are Paul's opponents?

Issues of 5-11.1

Issues of 11-14

Eucharist

Meaning of Resurrection of the Body

8. 2 Corinthians

Overview

By Paul and Timothy; authentic but not likely 1 unified letter

Options for division include

2 Cor 1-9 – 2 Cor 10-13 – 2 Cor 8-9 or 8+9 – 2 Cor 6.14-7.1

Issues of 1 Cor do not appear to continue into 2 Cor

Significant focus on Paul's apostleship and the Collection

Outline

1.1-11: Introductory Thanksgiving

1.12-9: Paul as reconciler: explanations for postponed visit; letter of tears; forgiveness and the nature of Paul's ministry; appeals for the Collection

10-13.10: Challenges to Paul's Authority and his defence of his ministry

13.11-14: Final greetings and benediction

Key Debates

Letter division/fragments

4.16-5.10: 'jars of clay' vs 'heavenly dwelling' = bodily resurrection replaced by the immortality of the soul?

The Collection (2 Cor 8-9)

'Interchange' in Christ (2 Cor 5.21; 8.9...)

Paul's opponents

9. The Corinthian Situation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and issues in the Corinthian letters

Gerd Theissen and social scientific approach is one of many ways to approach factions

1 Cor 1.11; 1 Cor 1.26-28 ; 1 Cor 4.6 are pointed to as evidence of division in the community

Social stratification in relation to:

The Lord's Supper (ch 11)

Idol meat (ch 8)

Lawsuits (ch 6)

Speaking in tongues (ch 14)

Other options to explain divisions in the community: eschatology, etc.

10. What happens to Corinth?