

I Corinthians

INTRODUCTION TO I CORINTHIANS

Let's open with prayer,

Our heavenly Father,

Thank you for this time and this precious book that you have given to us. We ask that we might receive from your Spirit and understand the things of the Lord, things that are right and not right within the faith. We pray that you would illuminate, enlighten us, and reveal the things of Christ to us as we begin this study. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen!

Alright, we're starting 1 Corinthians.

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Old Testament (Covenant)			
Original Language: Hebrew/Aramaic			
Contents: History/Prophecy			
English Bible Arrangement (according to the Septuagint)			
Law Genesis-Deuteronomy	History Joshua-Esther	Writings Psalms-Song of Solomon	Prophets Isaiah-Malachi
Hebrew Bible Arrangement			
Law Genesis-Deuteronomy	Prophets Joshua-Malachi (numus Ruth, Lamentations & Daniel)	Writings Job-II Chronicles (including Ruth, Lamentations & Daniel)	
Torah	Neviim	Ketuvim	
תּוֹרָה	נְבִיאִים	כְּתוּבִים	

This chart is a summary of the Old Testament. The original language is Hebrew and Aramaic. There are a few chapters in Daniel that are Aramaic, and also in Nehemiah. But the rest is in Hebrew.

The contents of the Old Testament are history and prophecy.

And by the way, the Hebrew language is categorized as a general language. English is a general language. That's why the Hebrew and Jewish people can debate with one another about what scripture means.

It's because sometimes the words that are used are so general that you cannot be specific. And if you ever watched Fiddler on the Roof, you gain some insight as to how the Jewish scholars come to their conclusions about what the scriptures mean.

Two people will sit at a table opposite of each other and they will debate each other about scripture. Once one of the two cannot answer, the person that cannot answer is eliminated. And the person who wins the debate moves on to the winner of the next table.

And the last one that presents logic and reason and meaning, to where the other person cannot answer, he is the winner, and that is the meaning of the text.

So even in some of the synagogues today, when they read the Old Testament that's called the Tanak, they even have people jump up from the congregation and question the man who's presenting the scriptures.

There's an old saying that says "Where there's two Jews, there's three opinions!"

And they love to debate. So somebody's up front with the Hebrew scriptures and they begin to present what they say the scriptures mean and if somebody disagrees with that and has some kind of argument, they just jump right up from the congregation and start arguing. That's how they do things.

But Hebrew is a general language. But that does not diminish the importance of the Old Testament. It is history and prophecy. It is not giving details. You might think that prophecy would be details but prophecy is not detailed in the Old Testament.

In fact, prophecy to us, and prophecy to a Hebrew person denotes two different things. For us, there's a prophecy and there's a fulfillment. With the Hebrew people it's just the opposite.

For them, there might be one, two, or even three fulfillments of the one prophecy. They see prophecy as continuing and not necessarily coming to its conclusion.

So there's a difference in understanding prophecy which is why the Hebrew and Jewish people are surprised at the New Testament and how the New Testament applies prophecy to Jesus Christ as being the Messiah, because most of them haven't even come to that conclusion.

But Hebrew is a general language. It's good to use for prophecy and for history, especially history. If you want to know how God works and if you want to know His ways, how He does things, and understand the things of God, you just go through the Old Testament and read how God dealt with and had an interaction with the children of Israel.

The English bible arrangement is the law, history, the writings, and then at the end is the prophets, Isaiah through Malachi.

But the Hebrew bible is not arranged like our bible. Our bible is actually arranged in the order of the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament.

When the Hebrew and Jewish people returned from their exile in Babylon, they had lost their ability to read Hebrew. They were gone for seventy years and a whole new generation had come in and they didn't know how to read Hebrew.

So around 300 B.C., seventy scholars gathered together in Alexandria Egypt and they made a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. It is called the Septuagint because of the seventy. That's what Septuagint means, the seventy.

And what is interesting is that even when Jesus was here, some three hundred years after they made it, is that Jesus quoted from the Septuagint, not from the Hebrew text. Paul sometimes quoted from the Septuagint and sometimes quoted from the Hebrew. So it is very interesting to note that our bible is in the order of the Septuagint.

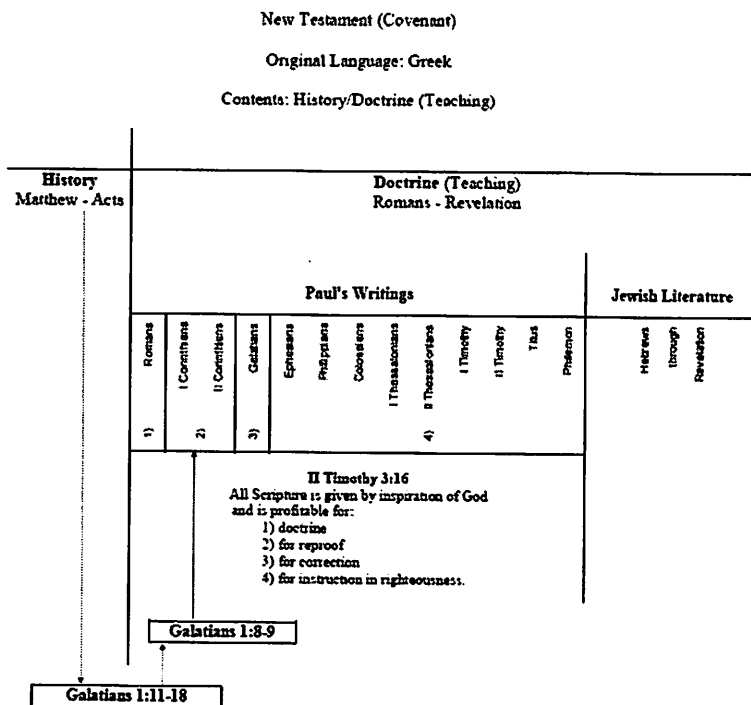
The Hebrew bible, in Hebrew, the arrangement is in three categories, the law, called the Torah, the prophets, called the Neviim, and the writings, called the Ketuvim.

And that's what these Hebrew words in this chart mean, the Torah, the Neviim, and the Ketuvim.

And so they took the first letter of each one of these Hebrew words, the "T," the "N," and the "K," and they put these together and called the entire Old Testament the Tanak. They just inserted the vowels in between the TNK and they call it the Tanak.

We the Gentiles call it the Old Testament. And of course if you call it the Old Testament, you are indicating that there is a New Testament which the Orthodox Jewish people do not recognize.

So that is the Old Testament, history and prophecy.



The New Testament original language is Greek, which is an exact language.

The contents are history and doctrine, or teaching. So you can see God's wisdom in not using a general language in order to inspire teaching.

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The New Testament books are not arranged in chronological order. They are not arranged according to when they were written.

The first section, the historical section, is Matthew through Acts. That would include all four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are the synoptic gospels. They were all written at the same time, around 60-64 A.D.

And then the gospel of John was written 60 years later. It was next to the last book written in the New Testament. But all four gospels are in the front.

And the book of Acts which was written by Luke presents the history and the events of the church, the first 63 years of the church after the Holy Spirit came, and the problems, difficulties, how evangelism took place, and the various events that took place there as God worked through them.

Right after the book of Acts is the book of Romans. And Romans begins what is called the teaching or doctrinal section of the New Testament. All of Paul's writings are at the beginning of the teaching or doctrinal section.

So in the teaching section, we have Paul's writings, Romans through Philemon. And then the back of the New Testament, the second section of the teaching section, is Jewish literature, Hebrews through Revelation, written to Jewish people using symbols and signs and even Hebraisms from the Old Testament.

Even the book of Revelation with its 400 and some verses has a little over 800 references to the Old Testament.

So when we as Gentiles try and take a guess as to what all the symbols mean and try to maybe connect some dates and come up with some dates as to different events that are going to take place, we should understand that these signs and symbols are found in the Old Testament, in the Tanak.

And it was written to Jewish believers who were suffering for their faith to show them what the end result was going to be. They were sitting in a jail cell discouraged, some of them waiting to die.

And so God inspired a book to say "I'm going to show you what the end of the world is going to look like, and even if you should die here for your faith, where your destination will be and the fact that you will have victory."

So the Hebrew literature has to be understood on the basis of the Hebraisms and even the Tanak, the Old Testament.

It is interesting that Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16 that all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.

And so the book of Romans follows in line with that. That is the book of doctrine. We've studied Romans. All the doctrines of the Christian faith are established in the book of Romans.

1 and 2 Corinthians is for reproof, to present to them their guilt. For correction, the book of Galatians, and then all of the rest of the books, from Ephesians down to Philemon, instruction in righteousness.

Again, these books are not in chronological order according to when Paul wrote them but they are in chronological order, and I hate to say this, but in matter of importance.

If you were going to choose and say which one of Paul's letters do I start with, well, you start with Romans because that's the doctrine of the Christian faith.

But the next one in importance is 1 Corinthians that we are going to start and study here. If you take Romans and 1 Corinthians together, you've got the doctrine, and you've got the correction about the doctrine, about the misuse of it.

The way that the New Testament is arranged, it is foolproof! In other words, the historical section, Matthew through Acts, which contains the history of the Lord's teachings, but Paul's writings, and in fact Paul said in Galatians Chapter 1 Verses 8 and 9 that if anybody preaches any other gospel than that which he has preached, let him be accursed.

That's putting yourself "up there" as far as authority goes! How can he make that authority? In fact, some people will say "Well, you go by the apostle Paul's teachings and not by the teachings of the Lord, and that you're putting him above the Lord."

Paul said again later on in Galatians 1:11-18 that he got his teaching from Christ Himself. Paul was out in the Arabian Desert for three years and Christ manifested and revealed Himself to him.

So that's why Paul can say if anybody preaches anything differently than what I preach, let him be accursed. His teachings and the Lord's teachings line up together.

And again you've got your Jewish literature that also must line up as far as teaching goes, though it's in a Jewish and Hebrew presentation.

Now at the bottom of this New Testament chart, you see the scripture that sums up to us why we take the time to go through and study about the arrangement of the New Testament.

Other than a person's salvation, the apostle Paul was concerned about a person's mind. People would get saved, and then false doctrine would come in.

And that's what false doctrine does. It takes a person's mind, their understanding and perception of truth, and takes it down the wrong road and they learn truth and doctrine incorrectly. What they think is truth is really not truth.

And so Paul in 2 Corinthians Chapter 10 Verses 4 through 6, he says "For the tools of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful with God for the pulling down of strongholds; the pulling down of reasonings and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and taking captive every thought into the obedience of Christ;

That was his mission, other than evangelism, as far as believers were concerned, is to attack those strongholds and the human reasoning and the logic that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

And even in the church today, you have those who profess to be Christians but don't like knowledge. They don't like to learn. And so they are susceptible to false teaching.

And if you ever talk to these people, each one will tell you "I know I am right, whatever that means, even though the scripture says just the opposite! Well I know I'm right!"

So now we begin the introduction to 1 Corinthians.

I: About the author:

Paul is the author. His inscription is on all 13 of his letters.

Also from Sosthenes, who is a convert from Corinth who came with Paul. He got saved in Corinth when Paul visited there. What happened was that Sosthenes started a riot in Corinth to try and get Paul beat up by the crowd. Well, it backfired because the crowd started beating up Sosthenes.

And so Sosthenes was taken in by Paul and some of the other Christians to doctor him up and help him. And because of that, Sosthenes received Christ.

And so he now was in danger because they were after him because they already beat him up. So when Paul went over into Ephesus, Sosthenes met him there. In fact, Ephesus is where 1 Corinthians was written from as we'll see in a moment.

So Sosthenes is there in Ephesus with Paul, and because the Christians in Corinth to whom Paul is writing know Sosthenes, he gives them his greeting as well.

II: When it was written:

It was written around 55 A.D. during Paul's third missionary journey. It was written from Ephesus according to Acts Chapter 18 Verse 10. And Paul wrote both 1 and 2 Corinthians to these people about three to five years after evangelizing them.

So when he stopped off at Corinth during his first visit, many people were saved, and of course the riots started so he left. On his third missionary journey, he came straight to Ephesus.

And he was there for quite some time and that's where he met up with Sosthenes because Sosthenes left after the riot. And Paul met him there. And so the two of them were there.

And also, we're going to hear from the household of Chloe. The household of Chloe is going to make a trip. They know that Paul is in Ephesus. It's about three to five years after Paul made his visit on his third missionary journey.

And so a delegation leaves Corinth to go talk to Paul about the problems in the church. And that's what we are studying. We are studying about the problems in the church.

III: Why it was written.

Paul evangelized Corinth during his second missionary journey beginning at Acts Chapter 18 Verse 1.

Paul wrote 1 Corinthians after being visited by some from the house of Chloe.

1 Corinthians is a letter of correction. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to address the corruption that was in the church.

Now the city of Corinth was so corrupt that any immoral person found anywhere in the Roman Empire was called a Corinthianized person.

So no matter where you were, you could have been in Rome and somebody would say "There's a Corinthianized person!" Everybody knows what Corinth means, corruption and sin!

And these Gentiles, the church in Corinth, mostly and mainly Gentiles, had to come out from that atmosphere. They had church in Corinth.

It was pagan worship and prostitution was part of the worship service. And people brought their families. And this was a constant seven day a week influence on that city!

And so now these people have received Christ, and they're gathering together as followers of Jesus after He has saved them, but they still have to live in this environment.

They are in a community where this is all the people do, is participate in perversion and corruption as part of their worship, and it's part of their lifestyle.

So they had a great struggle in the church there because a lot of the problems that they struggled with was in the church in Corinth.

IV: How it was written.

1 Corinthians is the longest letter written by Paul.

The believers in the church in Corinth were mostly Gentiles.

The style of 1 Corinthians mostly addresses the Gentiles about their corruption. There are very few Hebraisms in 1 Corinthians.

V: How it was prepared.

Paul wrote it. This delegation that came to Paul that told him of all the problems, they went back to Corinth and they delivered the manuscript back.

But this delegation that came up, they reported the problems and they also delivered some questions that the church had for Paul.

And those are the two main sections in 1 Corinthians that I'll show you in a moment. One addresses the problems, and one addresses the questions.

1 Corinthians 5:9 indicates that Paul wrote a letter prior to 1 Corinthians. But that is a lost letter. We do not have that one.

And some actually believe that there are two lost letters that Paul wrote to Corinth. So if Paul wrote four, we only have two!

VI: The importance of the first letter to the Corinthians.

Every problem in the modern day church is addressed in 1 Corinthians.

The second point, and I'm giving you my opinion, but we are living in what I call the Corinthian church age where the majority of the body of Christ functions like the church the church in Corinth.

We, just as the Corinthians, we do not know the difference between the ministry of God's Spirit and emotional energy! Some people think that if you can "feel" the emotion of the meeting, that's the power of the Spirit. No it's not!

But that's what the Corinthians thought. They called it the moving of the Spirit. They didn't call it emotion because they didn't know the difference between the flesh and the Spirit.

If there's ever been an era in Christianity where Christians have not understood the difference between the flesh and the Spirit, it's our generation, the age in which we live.

The normal philosophy is that the church considers the whole person as a Christian, human and spirit. And you have to try and get your flesh involved, and the human involved, and the emotions involved, and all you have to do is dedicate your human efforts to God and you're doing right!

No you're not! Not according to God's word.

VII: The spiritual condition of the church in Corinth.

Notice this scripture. This is 1 Corinthians Chapter 3 Verses 1 through 4. This section of scripture tells us the spiritual condition of the church in Corinth.

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Paul says in Verse 1 "And I brethren, I could not speak to you as unto spiritual." When he came there, they were babes in Christ. So he could not talk to them as spiritually mature people. He says "But as unto carnal."

Now there are two Greek words for carnal. The only difference in the two words is one letter. We have Sarkinos, and Sarkikos. It is the word for flesh. That's what the word carnal means.

In the oldest manuscripts, not in the Textus Receptus, but in some of the older manuscripts, the first word here in Verse 1 of Chapter 3 is Sarkinos.

"I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as to Sarkinos, fleshly, even as unto babes in Christ."

So he says you just received the Lord and you're very young in the Lord and you don't understand those things, so I cannot speak spiritual things to you. I had to speak as unto fleshly people.

In Verse 2, he says I have fed you with milk and not with meat. For hitherto, that is up to now, you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are you able.

Approximately five years after Paul visited Corinth, he's writing to them, and what he's saying is that carnal, Sarkinos, is a normal condition.

When a person first receives Christ, they are a babe in Christ. They don't know the things of the Lord. They don't have any spiritual development because they've just been born of the Spirit of God.

And so this is normal to be Sarkinos. It's a babe in Christ. So he says that because of that, I fed you with milk and not meat because you are not able to receive it. But he says that even now you're not able to.

Verse 3 says "For you are yet Sarkikos, abnormal flesh."

He says it's been five years. By now, I should have been able to start sharing the meat with you. But you are just as carnal now as you were when you first received the Lord!

Carnal is not just a spiritual condition. Remember, its flesh. That's what the word means. You are functioning according to a normal human being and not spiritual.

"For you are yet carnal, Sarkikos, for as there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are you not Sarkikos, and walk according to men? For while one says I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are you not carnal, Sarkikos?"

Wait till he rips on us about the divisions in the body of Christ. According to God's word, every believer is under one name, and that's Jesus Christ! We chose all the other names to divide ourselves up. And Paul says that's carnal.

So the spiritual condition of the church to whom Paul is writing is a very carnal church. They are very fleshy people. They are not spiritual at all. They are emotional. They live off of emotional energy.

And they handle all the business of the church and the events of the church according to the human, not according to the Spirit of God or the bible.

This is information that you needed to know before we start in, because there is information at the beginning of Chapter 1 that we need to compare.

VIII: Section outline of 1 Corinthians.

There are two main sections in 1 Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians Chapter 1 Verse 10 through Chapter 6 Verse 20, Paul addresses the problems in the church that were reported to him by those from the house of Chloe.

In 1 Corinthians Chapter 7, beginning at Verse 1 through Chapter 16 Verse 9, Paul answers the questions that were delivered to him from the delegation from Corinth.

Those are the two main sections. There are four sections all together.

Introduction:

1 Corinthians Chapter 1 Verse 1 to 9 is the introduction.

We are introduced to the manuscript authors, Paul and Sosthenes.

We have the mentioning of thanks by Paul, very important information.

Correction:

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The first main section is the section of correction, Chapter 1 Verse 10 through Chapter 6 Verse 20.

Chapter 1 is the message of the gospel.

Chapter 2 is the method of the gospel.

Chapter 3 is the ministry of the gospel.

Chapter 4 is the messenger of the gospel.

Chapter 5 is the mandate of the gospel.

Chapter 6 is the morality of the gospel.

Instruction:

The second main section, which is actually the third, is the instructional part, where Paul is answering their questions.

Chapter 7 is the marriage instructions for Gentiles.

Chapters 8 through 10, the meat offered to idols, and freedom for the believer.

Chapter 11, the meal of the Lord.

Chapters 12 through 14, the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 15, the meaning of the resurrection.

Chapter 16, Verses 1 through 9, the money collected for the saints in Jerusalem.

Conclusion:

The concluding section, which is the fourth one, is Chapter 16 Verses 10 to 24.

In Verses 10 to 12, he talks about the mission of Timothy. He's going to send Timothy to them.

The manner of those who serve, and I almost can't wait to get there, is that Paul says notice the household of Stephanus. They are addicted to the things of the Lord. And he says find those people and follow those people!

Verses 19 and 20, the mention of greetings.

And then the message of Paul as he signs off in Verses 21 through 24.

Let's close with prayer,

Our heavenly Father,

Again we do thank you for this time. We look forward to each and every time we have to spend in your word. Time is short and what you give us is precious.

As we get ready to start in this book, we ask that you will guide us through by your Spirit. We know that this is a correctional letter written by Paul to the church in Corinth.

Help us to understand the errors of the Corinthian church. Help us to grow spiritually so that we also might be able to handle and receive the meat of your word.

We thank you for your provision and we pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen!