



# PAUL'S MINISTRY IN CORINTH

“One night the Lord said to Paul in a vision, ‘Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to harm you, for there are many in this city who are my people’ ”  
(Acts 18:9, 10, NRSV)



**After the Epistle to the Romans, the Epistles to the Corinthians are the longest epistles written by Paul.**

**The two surviving letters were written only a few weeks apart. In them, we find practical advice for resolving difficult situations that arise from friction between brethren.**

**In order to properly understand their message, we must first know the context in which they were written.**



**The call of Paul**

**The journey to Corinth**

**The city of Corinth**

**The Corinthians**

**The letters to the Corinthians**



# THE CALL OF PAUL

**"Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—"**  
(Galatians 1:1)

In addition to the twelve chosen by Jesus, the Bible mentions other apostles such as Matthias (Acts 1:26), Barnabas (Acts 14:4), James and Paul (1 Corinthians 15:7-9).

**How did Paul become an apostle?**

**By Jesus' choice (Gal. 1:1)**

**When was he elected?**

**From his mother's womb (Gal. 1:15)**

**When was he called?**

**On the road to Damascus (Acts 22:6-7)**

**Whose apostle was he?**

**From the Gentiles (Gal. 2:9)**



**From the moment of his calling, Paul's life was centered on Jesus. He thought about Jesus, he spoke about Jesus, he shared Jesus with everyone.**

**For this reason, from the first moment he arrived in Corinth, Jesus was the center of their message (1 Cor. 2:2).**

# THE JOURNEY TO CORINTH

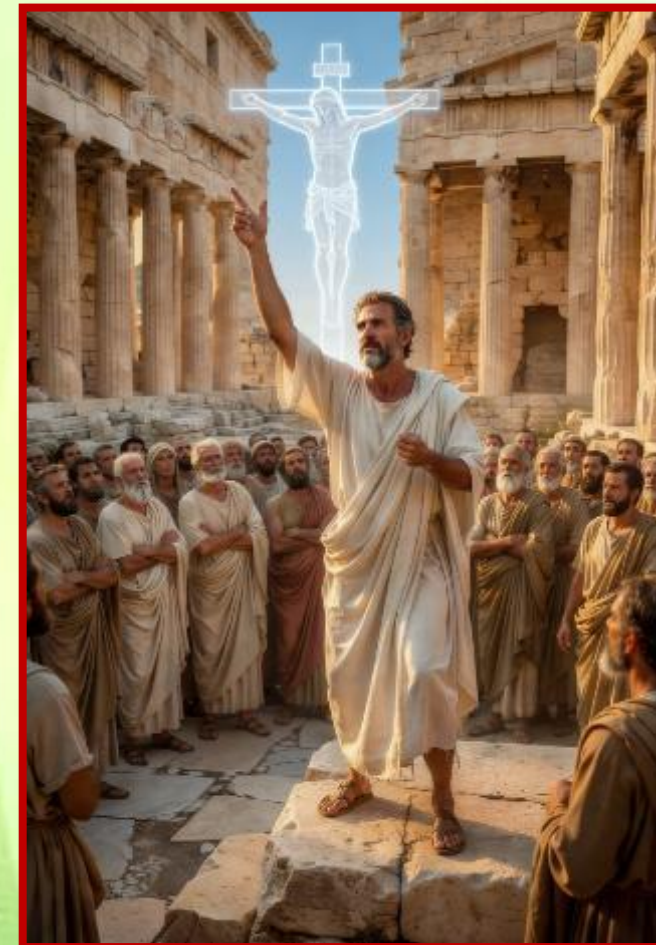
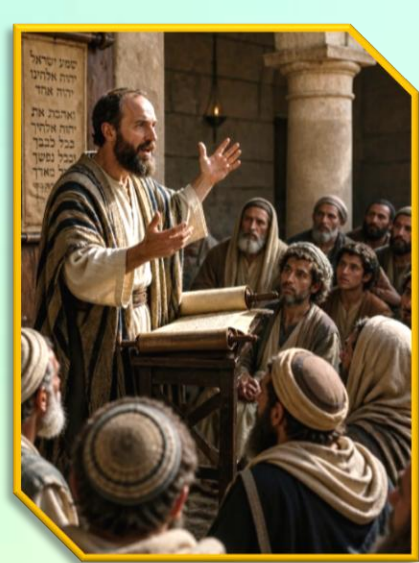
*"After these things, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth" (Acts 18:1)*

On his second missionary journey, Paul was compelled by the Holy Spirit to go to Europe (Acts 16:6-10). There he was expelled from Philippi (Acts 16:12, 38-39), from Thessalonica (Acts 17:1, 5, 9-10), and from Berea (Acts 17:13-14).

In Athens, after preaching to the Jews in the synagogue and to the Gentiles in the marketplace, he was called to preach at the Areopagus (Acts 17:16-21). After an eloquent speech, only a few accepted Jesus (Acts 17:34).

Leaving Athens, Paul went to Corinth and joined Aquila and Priscilla, with whom he worked making tents. (Acts 18:1-3).

As was his custom, he began preaching to the Jews in the synagogue and then to the Gentiles (Acts 18:4-8). During his stay in Corinth, and after the "disappointment" of Athens, Paul decided not to use human wisdom, but to preach only "Jesus Christ, already crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2).



# THE CITY OF CORINTH

*"as indeed there are many 'gods' and many 'lords' "*

*(1 Corinthians 8:5b NIV)*

Corinth was razed by Rome in 146 BC. Later, Julius Caesar sent a colony of veterans and free men in 46 BC. Finally, the city fully recovered in 44 BC. By the time Paul visited, it was already an important commercial center.

The importance of Corinth lay in its location, on the Isthmus of Corinth, supplied by two important commercial ports: Lechaenum, on the Gulf of Corinth; and Cenchreae, on the Saronic Gulf.

His business ventures allowed Paul to work as a tentmaker. But Corinth's wealth (which rivaled that of Athens) had several disadvantages.



Idolatry and sexual immorality filled the city and permeated its culture. Much of Paul's message to the Corinthians attempts to eradicate these problems that were creeping into the church.



# THE CORINTHIANS

**"Then the Lord said to Paul in a night vision, 'Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not be silent' " (Acts 18:9)**



**The Jews of Corinth rejected the message, forcing Paul to leave the synagogue and begin meeting with the Gentiles in a house adjacent to the synagogue (Acts 18:4-7).**

**"The depravity that he witnessed among the Gentiles, and the contempt and insult that he received from the Jews, caused him great anguish of spirit. He doubted the wisdom of trying to build up a church from the material that he found there"**  
(EGW The Acts of the Apostle p. 250).



**At that moment, Jesus appeared in a night vision to encourage Paul to continue his work among the Corinthians, assuring him that there were many who would receive the message (Acts 18:9-10).**



**Strengthened by this vision, Paul remained in Corinth for a year and a half (Acts 18:11). Finally, the Jews brought Paul before the courts (Acts 18:12-13). By the time he left Corinth, a large church had been established (Acts 18:18).**

# THE LETTERS TO THE CORINTHIANS

**"For it has been reported to me concerning you, my brothers, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you" (1 Corinthians 1:11)**

## 1 Corinthians 1-6

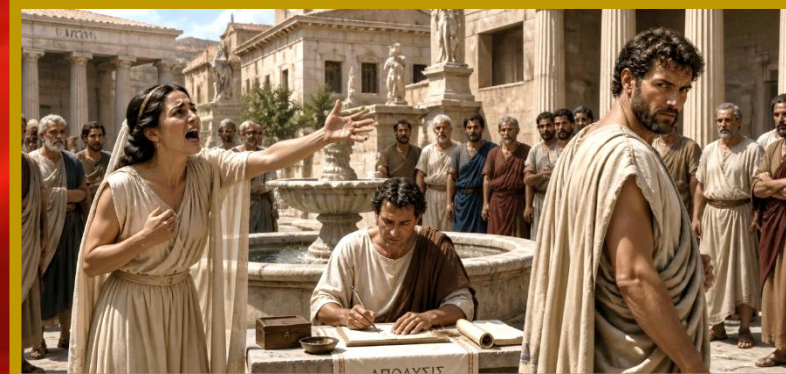
**Informed by Chloe of several problems existing in the church, Paul admonishes them about: factions; sexual immorality; strife; and prostitution.**

## 1 Corinthians 7-16

**Chloe's family also brought him a letter with several questions from the church on topics to which Paul responded regarding: marriage; divorce; celibacy; food sacrificed to idols; conduct in worship; the use of spiritual gifts; and the resurrection.**

## 2 Corinthians

**This is the second epistle that has been preserved, although Paul wrote several more (perhaps before the two that have survived and/or in the interval between them). He commends the Corinthians for the way they had resolved some problems, but urges them to see the world through the lens of the gospel, avoiding the influence of the surrounding culture.**



**“God’s messengers in the great cities are not to become discouraged over the wickedness, the injustice, the depravity, which they are called upon to face while endeavoring to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. The Lord would cheer every such worker with the same message that He gave to the apostle Paul in wicked Corinth: “Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.” Acts 18:9,10... [...] In every city, filled though it may be with violence and crime, there are many who with proper teaching may learn to become followers of Jesus. Thousands may thus be reached with saving truth and be led to receive Christ as a personal Saviour”**

**EGW (Prophets and Kings, p. 277)**