

BIBLE TRAINING INSTITUTE

To proactively accelerate the spiritual growth of Grace Bible Church for the purpose of knowing God more intimately and becoming more effective servants of God in the world

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1 & 2 Corinthians

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Paul's Epistles

Couplets

- ✓ 1 & 2 Thessalonians—The Steadfastness of the Church—Eschatology Taught
- ✓ 1 & 2 Corinthians—The Function of the Church—Ecclesiology Taught
- ✓ Romans & Galatians—The Doctrine of the Church—Soteriology Taught
 - ✓ Ephesians & Colossians—The Foundation of the Church—Christology Taught & Applied
- ✓ Philippians & Philemon—The Heart of the Church—Soteriology Applied
- ✓ 1 Timothy & Titus—The Structure of the Church—Ecclesiology Applied
- ✓ (Hebrews &) 2 Timothy—The Endurance of the Church—Eschatology Applied

3

Paul's Corinthians Letters

- ✓ 0 Corinthians (Summer AD 53; 1 Cor 5:9; contrast with 1 Cor 5:11)
- ✓ 1 Corinthians (Spring AD 54)
- ✓ 1.5 Corinthians (Summer AD 54; 2 Cor 2:3, 4, 9; 7:8, 12; speaks to issues not in 1 Corinthians)
- ✓ 2 Corinthians (Fall AD 54)

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Paul's 18-month stay in Corinth (2 nd Missionary Journey)	Fall AD 50 – Spring 52	Longest ministry stay so far
Return to Antioch	Fall AD 52	Length of stay is hard to know Months? Years?
Commences 3 rd Missionary Journey	Spring AD 53	Stays in Ephesus for a while
LETTER A ("Previous Letter")	Summer AD 53 (?)	1 Corinthians 5:9 – 11
Report and Letter	Spring AD 54	1 Cor 1:11; 7:1; 16:17–18
LETTER B (1 Corinthians)	Spring AD 54	1 Corinthians 16: 3–9
"Painful Visit"	Spring AD 54	2 Cor 2:1; 12:14; 13:1–2
LETTER C ("Sorrowful/Severe")	Spring–Summer AD 54	2 Corinthians 2:3–9; 7:8–12
Paul's anxious wait	Summer AD 54	2 Cor 2:12–13; 7:5; cf. 11:28
LETTER D (2 Corinthians)	Summer/Fall AD 54	2 Corinthians 7:5
3 rd Visit to Corinth	Winter AD 54/55	Writes Romans

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Introduction to 1 Corinthians

Title

- ✓ Greek = *Pros Korinthious Alpha* (ΠΡΟΣ ΚΟΡΙΝΘΙΟΥΣ Α΄; "To Corinthians A")



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Introduction to 1 Corinthians

WHO—Authorship

- ✓ Paul (1:1; 16:21)

WHO—Audience

- ✓ Church in Corinth (1:2)
 - ❖ 30% of Paul's New Testament material
 - ❖ Church completely made up of recent raw pagans
- ✓ City of Corinth

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Introduction to 1 Corinthians

WHEN

- ✓ Paul Establishes the Corinthian Church (Second Missionary Journey; AD 50–52; Acts 18:1–11)
- ✓ Paul Returns to Home-Base at Antioch (Acts 18:18–22)
- ✓ Paul Commences Third Missionary Journey (Spring, AD 53)
 - ❖ Paul writes 0 Corinthians (Summer AD 53)
- ✓ Apollos Returns to Ephesus to Paul with Report from Chloe's House in Corinth; not long after, other members bring a letter from Corinth with questions/comments for Paul (Spring AD 54).
 - ❖ Paul Writes 1 Corinthians (Spring AD 54) before Pentecost that year (1 Cor 16:8)

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Introduction to 1 Corinthians

WHERE

- ✓ Written from Ephesus (16:8)
- ✓ Context of Problems (1:1 – 6:20; from Chloe's house, via Apollos; 1:11; 16:12)—Division, Immorality, Court
- ✓ Context of Questions/Comments (7:1 – 16:24)—Sexual Intimacy, Singleness, Meat Sacrificed to Idols, Head-coverings, Lord's Table Participation, Spiritual Gifts (tongues), Resurrection, Giving, Apollos
- ✓ 3 Visits
- ✓ 4 Letters

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Introduction to 1 Corinthians

WHY

To respond to and instruct the immature and impressionable Gentiles of Corinth to deny conceited thinking and partisan loyalties, and instead to embrace the wisdom of God in the humiliation of the cross that unites them as one body, and thereby to reject cultural immorality and philosophy, and rather function in a manner worthy of a church owned by the Lord Jesus Christ.

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Introduction to 1 Corinthians

HOW—Terminology

- ✓ Wisdom (or Wise; 1:17, 20 (2x), 21 (2x), 22, 24, 25, 26, 27; 2:1, 4, 5, 6 (2x), 7, 13; 3:10, 18, 19 (2x), 20; 12:8)
- ✓ Knowledge (1:5, 10, 21; 2:14; 4:19; 7:40; 8:1 (2x), 2 (3x), 3, 7, 10, 11; 14:37, 38 (2x))
- ✓ Spirit (or Spiritual; 2:4, 10 (2x), 11 (2x), 12 (2x), 13 (2x), 14 (2x), 15; 3:1, 16; 4:21; 5:3, 5; 6:11, 17, 19; 7:40; 9:11; 10:3, 4 (2x); 12:3 (2x), 4, 7, 8 (2x), 9 (2x), 10, 11, 13, (2x); 14:1, 2, 12, 14, 15 (2x), 16, 32, 37; 15:44 (2x), 45, 46 (2x))
- ✓ Grace (1:3, 4, 7; 2:12; 15:10 (2x), 11; 16:23)
- ✓ Judge (or Regard, Think; 2:2, 13, 14, 15 (2x); 4:3 (2x), 4, 5, 7; 5:3, 12 (2x), 13; 6:1, 2 (3x), 4, 5, 6, 7)
- ✓ “Now concerning ...” (7:1, 25; 8:1, 4; 12:1; 16:1, 12)
- ✓ “All things are lawful ...” (6:12; 10:23)

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Introduction to 1 Corinthians

HOW—Themes

- ✓ Call to Holiness (1:2, 30; 3:17; 6:1, 2, 11, 19; 7:14; 34; 14:33; 16:1, 5, 20)
 - ❖ Holy Spirit, human spirit, “spiritual/spiritually”
- ✓ Pride of Corinthians
 - ❖ Self-styled wisdom (1:17, 19, 20–22, 24–27, 30; 2:1, 4–7, 13; 3:10, 18–20)
 - ❖ Arrogance (4:6, 18; 5:2; 8:1) & Boasting (1:29, 31; 3:21; 4:7)
 - ❖ Over-assessment of their knowledge (1:5; 8:12; 3:16; 5:6; 6:2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19; 9:13, 24)
- ✓ The “Body”—physical, church, Jesus’ body
- ✓ The Church
 - ❖ God’s Temple (3:16–17)
 - ❖ Body of Christ (12:12–31)
 - ❖ Divisions in the Corinthian Church (1:10 – 4:21, 11:18)

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Introduction to 1 Corinthians

HOW—Literary Structure

- ✓ Addressing Conceited Problems (1:1 – 6:20)
 - ✓ The Wisdom of the Cross Crushes Conceited Cliques (1:1 – 4:21)
 - ✓ Examples of Conceit (5:1 – 6:20)
- ✓ Answers to Conceited Questions (7:1 – 16:24)
 - ✓ Sexual Intimacy in Marriage (7:1–24)
 - ✓ Virgins (7:25–40)
 - ✓ Things Sacrificed to Idols and Conscience Issues (8:1 – 11:1)
 - ✓ Head Coverings (11:2–16)
 - ✓ The Lord's Table (11:17–34)
 - ✓ Spiritual Gifts (12:1 – 14:40)
 - ✓ The Resurrection (15:1–58)
 - ✓ Ministry to the Saints (16:1–24)
- ✓ Tolerating Public Sin (5:1–13)
 - ✓ Not Tolerating One Another (6:1–11)
 - ✓ Tolerating Any Craving (6:12–20)
 - ✓ Monetary Collection for the Churches (16:1–4)
 - ✓ Warmly Receive Missionaries (16:5–12)
 - ✓ Stand Firm in Love (16:13–14)
 - ✓ Kindly Recognize Leaders (16:15–18)
 - ✓ Greetings between the Churches (16:13–18)

The structure is shaped primarily by the dominant term of “wisdom” in section 1, followed by three examples of blind arrogance, and finally a series of questions that Paul answers for the Corinthians, using the phrase “Now concerning ...”

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Introduction to 1 Corinthians

HOW—Interpretative Issues

- ✓ Tongues?
 - ❖ Angelic Speech?
 - ❖ Liturgical, Archaic, or Rhythmic Phrases?
 - ❖ Ecstatic Speech?
 - ❖ Language of the Heart Released and Articulated?
 - ❖ Human Languages
 - Function of Tongues
 - Why was an Interpreter needed?

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Introduction to 1 Corinthians

HOW—Interpretative Issues

- ✓ Women Silence vs. Women Prophesying?
 - ❖ Silence—universal standard (14:33)
 - ❖ Silence—not absolute silence (e.g., 1 Tim 2:9ff)
 - ❖ 1 Corinthians 11—Head-coverings and Prophecy
- ✓ So many other debated issues in 1 Corinthians!

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Key Passages – 1 Corinthians

- ✓ 2:14—The natural man cannot discern spiritual things
- ✓ 3:1–3—Immature Corinthians only able to “drink milk” not “solid food”
- ✓ 5:1–5—Immorality rebuked
- ✓ 6:9–11—The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God; forgiveness: “such were some of you”
- ✓ 7:1–5—Your body is not your own in marriage
- ✓ 7:12–16—Marriage rules for the unequally yoked
- ✓ 11:23–34—Communion instructions
- ✓ 13:4–13—Love never fails; tongues cease; prophesy is done away

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Introduction to 2 Corinthians

Title

- ✓ Greek = *Pros Korinthis Beta* (ΠΡΟΣ ΚΟΡΙΝΘΙΟΥΣ Β'; “To Corinthians B”)

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Introduction to 2 Corinthians

WHO—Authorship

- ✓ Paul (1:1; 10:1)

WHO—Audience

- ✓ Church in Corinth (1:1, 23)
- ❖ Church completely made up of recent raw pagans

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Introduction to 2 Corinthians

WHEN

- ✓ After 1 Corinthians, Paul was in Ephesus until after Pentecost (mid-late Spring AD 54; 1 Cor 16:8; Acts 19)
- ✓ A short visit to Ephesus (2 Cor 2:1; 13:1)—sad, painful visit
 - ❖ Wrote 1.5 Corinthians (sad, painful letter; Spring-Summer AD 54)
- ✓ The Troas Fork-in-the-Road Moment
- ✓ Titus' announcement of Corinthian repentance
 - ❖ Writes 2 Corinthians in response to reported repentance (Fall AD 54)
- ❖ Visits Corinth (Fall AD 54; Acts 20:2–3), collects funds, writes Romans, returns to Macedonia (Spring AD 55; Acts 20:6)

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Introduction to 2 Corinthians

WHERE

- ✓ Written from Macedonia (perhaps Philippi; 2 Cor 2:12–13; Acts 20:1–6)
 - ❖ No longer in Ephesus (2 Cor 1:8)
 - ❖ No longer in Troas (2 Cor 2:13)
- ✓ City of Corinth
 - ❖ Population of 250,000 – “Little Rome” very Roman city
 - ❖ The place where Paul's apostleship to the Gentiles could be tested and affirmed
- ✓ Repentance, Divided Loyalties, Questioning Paul's Apostleship

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Introduction to 2 Corinthians

WHY

To exhort and comfort the believers of Corinth that the grace of God in the New Covenant grants all ministers and followers of the gospel the strength to give everything of themselves for the sake of Christ—no matter the cost—and therefore, they also can take hold of this grace to give of themselves entirely for the sake of gospel and the needs of the churches around the world.

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Introduction to 2 Corinthians

HOW—Terminology

- ✓ Grace (1:2, 11, 12, 15; 2:7, 10 (3x), 14; 4:15; 6:1; 8:1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 16, 19; 9:14, 15; 12:8; 13:14)
- ✓ Ministry (or Minster, Servant; 3:3, 6, 7, 8, 9 (2x); 4:1; 5:18; 6:3, 4; 8:4, 19, 20; 9:1, 12, 13; 11:8, 14, 15, 23)
- ✓ Commend (3:1 (2x); 4:2; 5:12; 6:4; 7:11; 10:12, 18 (2x); 12:11)

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Introduction to 2 Corinthians

HOW—Themes

- ✓ The Attack against Paul
 - ❖ Vacillating (1:17-18; 10:2-4)
 - ❖ Dictatorial (1:24; 7:2)
 - ❖ Non-credentialed (3:1; 10:13, 14)
 - ❖ His gospel was obscure (4:3; 6:2, 3)
 - ❖ He sought to destroy (7:2, 3; 10:8; 13:10) and cause pain (2:2, 4, 5; 7:8)
 - ❖ Coward (10:1, 10)
 - ❖ He did not maintain apostolic dignity (11:7)
 - ❖ Not an 'original' apostle (11:5; 12:11)
 - ❖ Collected for himself (12:16-18)
 - ❖ Walked after the flesh (10:2)

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Introduction to 2 Corinthians

HOW—Themes

- ✓ The Defense of Paul
- ✓ Paul's Characterizations of His Opponent(s)
 - ❖ False apostles (11:13; cf. 11:4)
 - ❖ Super-apostles (exaggeration) (11:5; 12:11)
- ✓ Paul's Afflictions/Weakness but God's Comfort/Strength (e.g., 2 Cor 12)
- ✓ Satan (2 Cor 2; 4; 6; 11; 12)
- ✓ The Ministry (2 Cor 3; 4; 5; 6; 8; 9; 11)
- ✓ The New Covenant (the entire book)

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Introduction to 2 Corinthians

HOW—Literary Structure

- ✓ Grace, Peace, and Comfort Greeting (1:1–7)
 - ✓ Paul Commends All Ministers of New Covenant Grace (1:8 – 7:16)
 - ✓ A Call to Embrace New Covenant Grace—Give to the Churches (8:1 – 9:15)
 - ✓ Paul Commends Himself as a Minister of New Covenant Grace (10:1 – 13:10)
- ✓ Grace, Peace, and Comfort Benediction (13:11–14)

The term “brothers” in reference to the Corinthians is only used three times (1:8; 8:1; 13:11) and acts as a primary transition marker between sections. The only other section starting in 10:1, Paul uses his name uniquely (besides 1:1), calling out a special section that addresses his own personal experience with New Covenant Grace.

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Interpretive Issues

HOW—Interpretative Issues

- ✓ “A thorn in the flesh”—12:7
 - ❖ Physical malady?
 - ❖ Adverse circumstances?
 - ❖ Personal foe(s)
 - False apostles (cf. 11:23)?
 - The Corinthians themselves?
 - Constant Opponent
- ✓ The Opponents of Paul
 - ❖ Early Gnostics?
 - ❖ Jewish Christians?
 - ❖ Judaizers (legalists)

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Key Passages - 2 Corinthians

- ✓ 2 Corinthians 3:18—transformation from glory to glory—sanctification
- ✓ 2 Corinthians 5:16–21—Doctrines of...
 - ❖ Regeneration and New Life in Christ (5:16–17)
 - ❖ Security in Salvation (5:17)
 - ❖ Reconciliation (5:18–19)
 - ❖ Evangelism (5:20)
 - ❖ Justification (5:21)
- ✓ 2 Corinthians 9:6–15—“God loves a cheerful giver”

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