

SECOND CORINTHIANS

LESSON ONE

CHAPTER ONE

The book of First Corinthians is one of the most important in the Bible. It covers a wide variety of doctrinal and practical issues. As you study the book of First Corinthians you will learn much about God's will in the areas of sexual morality, marriage and divorce, lawsuits between believers, church discipline and many other topics. Likewise Paul discusses such important doctrinal issues as speaking in tongues and spiritual gifts, the resurrection, the rapture, the baptism of the Holy Spirit and communion. In this letter Paul goes into great detail describing the nature of the Church as a body of believers with different parts but all working together for the benefit of one another.

Before beginning this study you should take time to read through First Corinthians from beginning to end. This will help you better understand each section in the context of the entire book. While doing the study read each question carefully using the given Scripture reference to find your answer. May the Lord bless you as you study the book of First Corinthians.

INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR: The apostle Paul

PLACE OF WRITING: Written from Ephesus.

DATE OF WRITING: First Corinthians was probably written at sometime between 54 and 58 A.D. while Paul was on his third missionary journey.

PURPOSE, THEME AND SUBJECT

MATTER OF THE LETTER: Corinth was the seat of government for Southern Greece or Achaia. It was noted for its wealth, and for the luxurious, immoral and vicious habits of the people. It had a large mixed population of Romans, Greeks, and Jews. Paul visited Corinth for the first time around the year 51 A.D.



1 Corinthians was written in response to a variety of problems that existed in the Corinthian church. Paul learned of these problems through reports that reached him from some members of the church (1 Corinthians 1:11; 5:1) and

through letters that were sent to him (1 Corinthians 7:1). The majority of the specific issues discussed in the letter are of a very practical nature regarding Christian behavior. Some doctrinal issues are also discussed in detail as well, particularly the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead (Chapter 15).

Please read the entire book of 1 Corinthians. _____ Check.

Please memorize the following verse and be prepared to write it out at the end of this lesson.

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18 – KJV).

GREETING AND THANKSGIVING

Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 and answer the following questions.

1. (v. 1) In what way was Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ? _____

2. (v. 2) How does Paul describe the believers in the Corinthian church? _____

3. The word “sanctified” means to be holy. As you read through 1 Corinthians you learn that there was a great deal of sin in the Corinthian church. Why do you think God could call the Corinthian believers “sanctified” when there was such sinful behavior in the church? _____

4. (v. 4) What is Paul’s response to God because of the Corinthian believers? _____

5. (v. 8) What will be the condition of the believers on the day of the Lord Jesus Christ? _____
6. (v. 9) How is God described in this verse? _____

APPEAL FOR UNITY

Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 and answer the following questions.

7. (v. 10) What was Paul’s plea to the Corinthian believers? _____

8. (v. 11) How did Paul learn about the divisions in the Corinthian church? _____

9. The Corinthian church was divided into factions that followed the teachers of various Christian leaders. List the four leaders that various Corinthians claimed to follow (v. 12).

10. Paul responds to these factions with three rhetorical questions (questions with obvious answers). What do you think is the point Paul is trying to make with these three questions (v. 13)? _____

11. (vss. 14-16) Did Paul baptize everyone in the Corinthian church? _____ Did he wish that he had baptized more? _____

12. (v. 17) What did Christ *not* send Paul to do? _____ What did Christ send Paul to do? _____

Note: Compare 1 Corinthians 1:17 with Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15-16. The Lord Jesus Christ commanded the twelve apostles to preach the gospel *and* baptize. This verse is strong evidence that the Apostle Paul was working under a different commission than the one given to the twelve apostles.

MAN'S WISDOM vs. GOD'S WISDOM

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18 – 2:16 and answer the following questions.

13. (v. 18) How does Paul describe the preaching of the cross to two different groups? _____

14. (v. 21) Did the world find God through its own wisdom? _____ Through what means was salvation revealed? _____

15. (v.22) What is the difference between the Jews and the Gentiles (Greeks) in the way in which they expected to find God? _____

16. (vs. 23) What is the central focus of the preaching of Paul? _____

17. Write the point of verse 25 in your own words. _____

18. (v.26 – 28) Describe the type of people that God can use to preach the gospel. _____

19. (v.31) In whom should a Christian boast? _____

CHAPTER TWO

1. (v.1 - 5) How does Paul describe the way he preached to the Corinthians? _____

2. (v.2) Describe the similarity between this verse and what Paul says in chapter 1 verse 23. _____

Note: The term “princes of this world” (KJV) or “rulers of this age” (NIV) can refer to Satan and his demons (John 12:31; John 14:30; John 16:11; Ephesians 2:2).

3. (v.7) How does Paul describe God’s wisdom? _____

4. (v. 8) What reason does Paul give in this verse as to why God kept His plan hidden? _____

Note: Paul is not speaking of the fact that the death of Jesus Christ would bring salvation to the world in these verses. The Old Testament speaks of the substitutionary death of Christ in many places (e.g. Isaiah 53). Paul is referring to the special message revealed to him by God, which he called a “mystery” or secret, that the Jews and Gentiles could be saved and be made part of one Body of believers through faith in Jesus Christ. This message was kept hidden in God’s mind from “before the foundation of the earth” and was not revealed in the Old Testament or the writings of any other author in the Bible. c.f. Ephesians 3:4-6; Romans 16:25-26; Colossians 1:25-27.

5. (vss. 9-10) How did God reveal His wisdom to us? _____

6. (vss. 10-12) Explain these verses in your own words. _____

7. (v. 14) Can the man without the Spirit of God accept the truth of God’s word? (Also read 2 Corinthians 4:4-6)

CHAPTER THREE

DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH

Read 1 Corinthians 3:1 - 9 and answer the following questions.

1. (vss. 1-3) How does Paul describe the Corinthian believers? _____

Why does he describe them this way? _____

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2. (v. 5) Does Paul teach that individual preachers should be given credit for the spiritual growth of the believers? _____
 3. (vss. 6-9) Describe in your own words the point that Paul is trying to make in these verses. _____

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

Read 1 Corinthians 3:10 – 15 and answer the following questions.

4. (v. 10) What does Paul call himself? _____

Note: The “foundation” which Paul laid is what he calls “the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery” (Romans 16:25). It was the unique message he was given as the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13; 1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11).

5. (v.11) What is the only true foundation that any minister can build upon? _____
6. (V.12) What metaphors (word pictures) does Paul use to describe the valuable and worthless deeds that a person does? _____

7. (v. 13) What will be made known at the time Paul calls “the Day.” _____

8. (vs.14-15) Describe what will happen on that day to those whose works were done for the glory of God and those whose works were useless. _____

9. (v. 15) Will the person whose works are burned be lost or saved? _____

Note: The Bible teaches of two great days of judgment. The one mentioned in these verses is found only in writings of Paul and it is called the Judgment Seat of Christ (c.f. Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10). This judgment takes place after the Church, the Body of Christ has been taken from the earth in the rapture. It only involves believers and it is a judgment for rewards based on the works done as a believer. It is not a judgment to determine a persons salvation. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ today this is the judgment you will face.

The other great judgment is called the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11). This judgment will take place after the seven years of tribulation and after the second return of Christ to the earth. This judgment will involve both believers and unbelievers from all other dispensations other than the present Dispensation of Grace. It will be to determine if their names were recorded in the Book of Life. Those whose names are not found in the Book will be sent to eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire. Those whose names are found in the Book will enter into the Messianic Kingdom. (Revelation 20:11-14)

10. (v. 16) Why are we called the temple of God? _____

11. (v. 18) Describe the similarity between this verse and 1 Corinthians 1:25. _____

CHAPTER FOUR

PAUL DEFENDS HIS MINISTRY

Read 1 Corinthians 4:1-21 and answer the following questions.

1. (v. 1) How does Paul describe himself and Apollos? _____

In verse 2 – 4 Paul is talking about judging the validity of his ministry.

2. (v. 4) Who alone has the right to judge the validity of Paul's ministry? _____

3. (v. 5) What will happen when the Lord comes for the Body of Christ? _____

Note: Apparently there were some in Corinth that were questioning Paul's authority as an apostle. In verses 8 – 10 Paul is using sarcasm to make his point that they were in fact not qualified to judge his apostleship.

4. (vss. 11 – 13) How does Paul describe the way he has acted and responded as an apostle of Jesus Christ?

5. (v. 15) How does he describe himself to the Corinthians? _____

6. (v. 16 c.f. 11:1) What does Paul instruct the Corinthian believers to do? _____

Note: Paul instructs believers to follow or imitate him in several places in his epistles (1 Corinthians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17; Philippians 4:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9). He said these things because as the Apostle to the Gentiles he established a pattern of doctrine and behavior that was meant to be an example for all members of the Body of Christ.

7. (v. 17) Whom did Paul send to instruct the Corinthians in how they should behave? _____

8. (v. 19) What does Paul promise he will do soon? _____

Write 1 Corinthians 1:18 from memory on the lines below.

Use the space below for any questions or comments:

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