

The Journey of Men in Christ – December 2021

An Introduction to The Letters to Corinth

Hebrews 12:2-3a

Focus on the originator and consummator of the faith—Jesus. He, for the joy that would be his, endured a cross, despising its shame, and is enthroned at the right of God. Ponder him who endured terrible hostility against himself from sinners.

1 Corinthians 1:18

Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

I. AUTHOR: The Apostle Paul

A. It is generally agreed by all that Paul was the author of First Corinthians

B. The account of Paul's founding of the church is reported in Acts 18 (see historical reconstruction below)

C. External evidence: also supports this conclusion¹ Clement of Rome (c. 95-97)

D. Internal Evidence:

1. Paul identifies himself as the author in 1 Corinthians 1:1; 16:21

2. Paul refers to himself within the epistle (1:12,13; 3:4,5,6,22)

II. The Founding of the Church

A. The Church in Corinth was planted on Paul's second missionary journey in AD 50-51 after his visit in Athens (cf. Acts 15:36; 18:1-18)

B. Paul stayed with Roman Jews (who were expelled in AD 49 or 50) named Aquila and Priscilla eighteen months in Corinth teaching the word of God and working as tent makers (Acts 18:1-3, 11)

C. Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia and joined Paul in Corinth whereupon Paul devoted himself full time to the ministry of the word (Acts 18:5)

D. When the Jews rejected Paul, he left the synagogue and began meetings in the house of Titus Justus next to the synagogue (Acts 18:7-8)

E. The Jews brought Paul before Gallio (proconsul of Achaia AD 51 or 52) for breaking their law of worship, but he dismissed Paul since it was not a matter of "wrong or of viscous crime" (Acts 18:12-17)

F. Paul set off for Syrian Antioch (Acts 18:18-22)

1. In Cenchrea he had his hair cut from his vow (18:18) Aquila and Priscilla went with Paul on his journey to Ephesus where they remained (18:18-19, 26)

2. Paul set off from Ephesus, landed at Caesarea, greeted the church there and went down to Syrian

Antioch (18:21-22) Paul spent some time in Antioch, and set off on his third missionary journey traveling back through Galatia, Phrygia and coming to Ephesus (18:23; 19:1)

H. Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew, came to Ephesus, was instructed by Aquila and Priscilla (18:24-26), and went over to Corinth to teach God's word (18:27-19:1 cf. 1Cor. 1:12; 3:5-6)