

A LOOK AT THE BOOK

I Corinthians

Ralph Porter
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AUTHOR AND DATE

Paul's authorship of 1 Corinthians is seldom challenged.

It is supported by external evidence beginning with Clement of Rome and never seriously debated.

Internal evidence also supports Paul as the author since it refers to him by name (1:1; 16:21).

Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus.

He was there for three years, from A.D. 52 to 55.

It was probably written shortly before his departure in A.D. 55.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

When Paul first went to Corinth, he settled there for about a year and a half.

He went from there to Ephesus, leaving Apollos behind.

After some time passed, Apollos went to Ephesus to see Paul.

Paul sent a letter to Corinth condemning fornicators and announcing plans to visit them.

He also arranged for a collection to be sent to saints afflicted by the famine.

Later, Paul received news from members of Chloe's house about divisions and doctrinal divergences in the church.

Paul sent Timothy from Ephesus but he only got as far as Macedonia.

While Timothy was on his way, Paul received a letter from Corinth telling of several problems and asking questions.

It was at this time that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians.

PURPOSE AND THEME

Paul's content in 1 Corinthians has been shaped by the various reports he has received.

He hopes to resolve the problem caused by divisions in the church as well as to answer the questions which have arisen.

Because of its problem-centered structure, the book lacks the unity of theme found in others.

Since Paul applies basic principles of Christian living to each area discussed, the central theme of practical sanctification is often applied. This is too general.

Although not universally applicable to all sections, the most serious problem in the church and the central theme deals with their lack of love for one another.

ORGANIZATION

The book is organized around the problems presented.

The most significant problem is the divisions in the church (1:10-4:31).

Several problems concerning discipline are noted (5:1-6:20).

Various disorders in the church are then discussed (7:1-14:40).

Finally, the doctrinal issue of the resurrection is treated (15:1-58).

In typical letter form, these topics are enclosed by the introduction (1:1-9) and conclusion (16:1-24).

1 CORINTHIANS

THE CHURCH THAT HAD EVERYTHING—EXCEPT LOVE

Ralph Porter

INTRODUCTION 1:1-9	DIVISIONS 1:10-4:21	DISCIPLINE 5-6	DISORDER 7-14	DOCTRINE 15	PERSONAL MATTERS 16
<p>Salutation 1:1-3</p> <p>Prayer of Thanksgiving 1:4-9</p>	<p>Exhortation to Unity 1:10</p> <p>Description of Conditions 1:11-12</p> <p>Correction of Their Concept 1:13-17</p> <p>Basis of the Divisions 1:18-4:7 False Concept of the message 1:18-3:4 <i>False wisdom</i> 1:18-2:5 <i>True wisdom</i> 2:6-3:5 False Concept of the ministry 3:5-4:7</p> <p>Application of the Message 4:8-21</p>	<p>Fornication 5 Circumstances 5:1-2 <i>Sin committed</i> 5:1 <i>Lack of action</i> 5:2 Command 5:3-5 Illustration 5:6-8 Clarification 5:9-13</p> <p>Lawsuits 6:1-11 Circumstances lamented 6:1 Suggested correction 6:2-8 Problem of the courts 6:9-11</p> <p>Misuse of the Body 6:12-20 Principle of liberty 6:12 Illustration of abuse 6:13-18 Proper use 6:19-20</p>	<p>Concerning Marriage 7 Purpose of marriage 7:1-9 Instruction 7:10-40 <i>For the married</i> 7:10-24 <i>For the unmarried</i> 7:25-40</p> <p>Concerning Meat Offered to Idols 8:1-11:1 Principle explained 8:1-13 Principle illustrated 9:1-27 Peril of participation 10:1-22 Principle applied 10:23-11:1</p> <p>Concerning Worship 11:2-14:40 Head covering for women 11:2-16 Lord's supper 11:17-34 Spiritual gifts 12-14 <i>Diversity of gifts</i> 12 <i>Superiority of love</i> 13 <i>Exercise of gifts</i> 14</p>	<p>Necessity of the Resurrection 15:1-34 Confirmation of Christ's resurrection 15:1-11 Consequences if Christ be not raised 15:12-19 Consequences of Christ's resurrection 15:20-28 Consequences if we have no resurrection 15:29-34</p> <p>Nature of the Resurrection 15:35-57 Illustration from nature 15:35-41 Interpretation of illustration 15:42-49 Instruction concerning living saints 15:50-57</p> <p>Exhortation based on the Resurrection 15:58</p>	<p>Collection 16:1-4</p> <p>Plan to Visit Them 16:5-9</p> <p>Mission of Timothy 16:10-12</p> <p>Exhortation to Steadfastness and Love 16:13-14</p> <p>Direction concerning Their Teachers 16:15-18</p> <p>Personal Greetings 16:19-21</p> <p>Benediction 16:22-24</p>