NEW TESTAMENT · PAUL'S LETTERS · BOOK 46 OF 66

1 Corinthians

Let all your things be done with charity (16:14)

16	Paul	c. A.D. 53–55	Chapter 13
Chapters, 437 Verses	Author (1:1)	From Ephesus	The Love Chapter

STRUCTURE

The Book in Four Parts

Paul first deals with the problems he heard about (chapters 1–6), then answers their letter point by point. Each new question begins "Now concerning" (7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1).



Each bar shows that part's share of the 437 verses.

I 1:1–9 · 9 verses

Greeting

Thanks for God's grace and gifts.

II 1:10–6:20 · 115 verses

Problems

Divisions, immorality and lawsuits.

III 7:1–16:4 · 293 verses

Questions

Marriage, idols, worship, gifts, love, resurrection, giving.

IV 16:5–24 · 20 verses

Closing

Plans, charges and greetings.

BACKGROUND

The Church in Corinth

Paul started the church on his second journey and stayed eighteen months (Acts 18:1–11).

THE CITY

Corinth

A rich port and capital of Achaia, known for trade, temples and loose living.

THE CHURCH

Mostly Gentiles

"Not many wise … not many mighty, not many noble" (1:26).

THE NEWS

Chloe's House

Reports of contentions among them (1:11).

THE LETTER

Their Questions

"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me" (7:1).

The Cross and God's Temple

CHAPTERS 1–4

Divisions and the Cross

The church was splitting into fan clubs. Paul points them to the cross and to God who gives the growth.

"I am of Paul"
Their founder.

"I of Apollos"
The eloquent teacher.

"I of Cephas"
Peter, the apostle.

"I of Christ"
As if He were one party among many.

> *"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)

2:2

Christ Crucified

"I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

3:6

God Gives the Growth

"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."

3:11

One Foundation

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

CHAPTERS 3–6

God's Temple

Paul uses the picture of the temple twice: for the church together and for each believer's body.

3:16 · THE CHURCH

Ye Are the Temple of God

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

6:19–20 · THE BODY

Bought with a Price

"ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body"

1 CORINTHIANS 6:11

Washed, Sanctified, Justified

Some of them had lived very sinful lives, "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

1 CORINTHIANS AT A GLANCE · PART 3 OF 5

Freedom, the Lord's Supper and Spiritual Gifts

CHAPTERS 8–10

Freedom Guided by Love

Could believers eat meat offered to idols? Paul's answer gives principles for any question of conscience.

1 8:1
Love Builds Up
"Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."

2 8:13
Care for the Weak
Do not let your freedom make a brother stumble.

3 9:22
All Things to All Men
Give up rights so that some may be saved.

4 9:24–27
Run to Win
Discipline like an athlete for an incorruptible crown.

5 10:13
A Way to Escape
God is faithful and will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.

6 10:31
To God's Glory
"Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

CHAPTER 11:23–26

The Lord's Supper

The earliest written account of the Lord's Supper, which Paul "received of the Lord."

11:24 · THE BREAD
"Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me."

11:25 · THE CUP
"This cup is the new testament in My blood"

11:26 · UNTIL HE COMES
"ye do shew the Lord's death till He come."

Paul warns against eating "unworthily" and asks each one to examine himself (11:27–28). "This do in remembrance of Me" (11:24).

CHAPTER 12

One Body, Many Gifts

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit" (12:4). Every member is needed.

Word of Wisdom
and the word of knowledge (12:8).

Faith
and gifts of healing (12:9).

Miracles
and prophecy (12:10).

Discerning of Spirits
telling true from false (12:10).

Tongues
and the interpretation of tongues (12:10).

Helps, Governments
apostles, prophets, teachers (12:28).

> *"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ."*
> 1 Corinthians 12:12 (KJV)

Love and the Resurrection

CHAPTER 13

The Love Chapter

The KJV word “charity” means love: the self-giving love of God shown in Christ.

13:1–3
Without Love
Tongues, prophecy, faith and giving all away profit nothing.

13:4–7
What Love Does
Suffers long, is kind, envies not, bears all things, hopes all things.

13:8–13
Love Never Fails
Gifts will pass away; love abides forever.

13:4
“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up”

13:13
“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”

CHAPTER 15

Christ Is Risen

The fullest teaching on the resurrection in the Bible: Christ’s, and ours.

> *“that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures”*
>
> 1 Corinthians 15:3–4 (KJV)

15:5–8
Seen Alive
By Cephas, the twelve, above five hundred brethren at once, James, the apostles, and Paul.

15:17
If Not Raised
“Your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.”

15:20
The Firstfruits
“Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.”

15:42–44
A New Body
Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; sown in weakness, raised in power.

15:51–52
All Changed
“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.”

15:57
Victory
“Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 CORINTHIANS 15:55

O Death, Where Is Thy Sting?

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” Because Christ is risen, believers can be “stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (15:58).

Themes and Key Verse

BIG IDEAS

Key Themes

The Cross
God's power and wisdom.

1:18–25; 2:2

Unity
One body in Christ, not followers of men.

1:10; 12:12–27

Holiness
The church and the body are God's temple.

3:16; 6:19–20

Love
The more excellent way.

8:1; 13:1–13

Worship
Decently and in order, building up the church.

11; 14:26, 40

The Resurrection
Christ the firstfruits; victory over death.

15:20–28, 54–57

KEY VERSE

"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)