

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**I CORINTHIANS 1*****I Corinthians 1***

The Apostle Paul's first letter to the Corinthian Church is an amazing insight into a cosmopolitan church of the first century. Paul opens with greetings to the people he loved and spent eighteen months with as he preached Jesus the Christ and Him crucified as a substitute for sinners. The letter was written in approximately 56 A.D., from the city of Ephesus, in what is modern-day western Turkey. During the days of the Roman Empire, it was Asia Minor. The city of Corinth was located on a narrow strip of land, an isthmus, between the mainland of Greece/Achaia and its capital, Athens, and the Peloponnesian peninsula, and Sparta, also of the Province of Achaia, during the days of Paul.

The City of Corinth is located on the Adriatic, sometimes called the Ionian Sea. Cenchreae is the sister city only four miles away on the Aegean Sea. Today, there is a "canal" that was built in 1893, which was only a dream during the days of the New Testament. The modern-day canal is approximately four (4) miles long and only seventy (70) feet wide. Sheer rock walls rise hundreds of feet on either side of the canal. You can read about both of these cities and the events that took place there in the Book of Acts.

When Paul arrived from Athens, He determined to preach the gospel as it is the power of God unto Salvation to all who believe, both Jew and Gentile. Paul began his ministry there in the Jewish synagogue as usual and then preached to both Jews and Gentiles for

more than one and a half years. The chief ruler of the synagogue, Crispus, became a follower of Jesus, along with many other Jews. The church was probably the most diverse in race and the wealthiest and most gifted of all the early churches of the era.

Corinth was a place where people gathered from all over the Western Roman Empire. Before the canal and during the days of the New Testament, ships in the Aegean Sea would port at Cenchreae, or those on the Adriatic Sea would port at Corinth to unload their ships. They did this so the ship could be taken over land on something of an ancient rail system four miles away to the sister port. This took only four days at most, versus sailing around the Peloponnesian peninsula and risking total disaster in a two-week journey. This brought employment and commerce to this region like no other in the empire. The mix of people this engendered was cause for the mixing of moralities, backgrounds, and the practices of a lifetime that were brought by the new converts. First Corinthians is the Apostle Paul answering questions that arise from such a church where the leadership had been dissipated and chaos ruled. We will get to know the Corinthians well over the next few days together.

Prayer and Action Steps

Lord, thank You for preserving for us this incredible letter Paul wrote to this incredible church in a unique environment in the New Testament. Speak to our hearts, speak to my heart, through these readings. Amen