

Abridged and adapted for the Pathfinder Bible Experience



Andrews Bible Commentary

1 CORINTHIANS

Title and Authorship. “To the Corinthians A” is the title found in the oldest extant manuscript of the epistle. Paul identifies himself as the author in the opening verses of the letter along with Sosthenes, a ministerial colleague.

Date. Paul appears to have written 1 Corinthians around A.D. 55 while residing in the city of Ephesus during his third missionary journey.

Backgrounds. The city of Corinth known to Paul was not the fabled city-state of Greek history, but the city that Julius Caesar refounded as a Roman colony. As a relatively new city, Corinth was far more welcoming of the presence of foreigners and open to new ideas than most of the much older tradition-conscious cities across the Mediterranean. This made Corinth a promising location for the message of the risen Christ to find a receptive audience among the city’s population, as is evident in Paul’s evangelistic work in the city.

Theology and Purpose. In 1 Corinthians we learn about the experience of a community of Christian believers living in a Roman pagan city under the influence of its idolatry, immorality, and a deep interest in human wisdom. The emphasis throughout the letter is on the biblical understanding of the church of Christ. The church is the result of the saving activity of God and is His most valuable possession on earth. It is the result of the wisdom of God brought to fruition through the work of the Father and the crucified Christ, and it is revealed to believers through the work of the Spirit. The unity of the church sets it apart as a unique phenomenon from God in a society characterized by a host of contradictory expressions of human wisdom and false gods—an ideological market of confusion and darkness. The Christian hope plays a central role in 1 Corinthians and, as in the rest of the New Testament, it is directly related to the work of Jesus.