

Program: SS Panel 2026 1 Q

Quarterly title: Christ In Philippians & Colossians

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Lesson Title: #01 Paul's Ministry in Corinth

Day Title: Tuesday - The City of Corinth

For Lesson Dates: June 27–July 3, 2026

Record date: April 20, 2026

Note: This color and font = quarterly text

Note: This color and font = John Dinzey notes

First and Last Name 2026 Q3 L# Title of your days lesson

John Dinzey 2026 Q3 L01 The City of Corinth

]]> Emphasize this

Question:

>[=] Story:

REF:>>

READ

NIL: Not in Lesson

Lesson 1

**June 27–July 3*

TUESDAY

June 30

The City of Corinth

Read Acts 18:1–3, 1 Corinthians 5:9–11, and 1 Corinthians 8:4. What can we infer about Corinth's economy, morality, and religious life?

Ref:>> Act 17:22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

Act 17:23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

>>> **chapter 17** Paul - several cities preaching the gospel - before Corinth Athens...

>> The experiences Paul had in his previous missionary journeys helped TP prepare him for the challenges he faced in Corinth.

Acts 18:1-3 1 After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth.

2 And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them.

3 So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.

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Corinth was an important center of the ancient world, renowned for its prosperous commerce. The city was destroyed by Rome in 146 B.C. and rebuilt by Julius Caesar as a Roman colony in 44 B.C. It is this Roman Corinth that appears in the New Testament. In the time of Paul, Corinth was one of Athens' rivals and had even surpassed it in various aspects. Corinth had two important harbors that made the exchange of merchandise and the development of its commerce easy.

READ

Indeed, Paul chose Corinth because of its importance and advantaged geographic location. "An opportunity was thus presented for the spread of the gospel. Once established at Corinth, it would be readily communicated to all parts of the world."—Ellen G. White, *Sketches From the Life of Paul*, p. 99.

Ref: >> From: SDA BC

The city was thus strategically placed, with the overland traffic between the Peloponnesus and Attica passing through the town. Its convenient location between the Saronic Gulf on the east and the Gulf of Corinth on the west of the isthmus made it a market for much of the commerce that flowed from Asia to Europe, and vice versa.

The corruption in Corinth

In addition, the flourishing commerce of Corinth would make it easier for Paul to support himself by producing and selling tents while proclaiming the gospel in that city (Acts 18:2, 3). Obviously, missionary work in a large and wealthy city is not free of challenges. Corinth was marked by a blatant religious pluralism (1 Cor. 8:5), evident by its numerous shrines built in homage to such deities as Apollo, Athena, and Aphrodite, among others, and even the worship of such Egyptian gods as Sarapis and Isis.

READ

From: Believer's Bible Commentary

Ancient Corinth was (and is) in southern Greece, west of Athens, strategically situated on the trade routes in Paul's day. It became a great center for international commerce, and immense quantities of traffic came to this city. Because of the depraved religion of the people, it soon became the center also for the grossest forms of immorality, so that the name Corinth was a byword for all that was impure and sensual. So lewd was the city's reputation, there was even a verb coined, korinthiazomai (from SDA BC: to Corinthianize), which meant to lead a debased life.

From: SDA BC;

An understanding of the religion of Corinth serves to highlight the wonderful grace of God in overcoming the forces of evil and in planting a church of regenerated saints in this notorious city. By its wealth, luxury, trade, and mixed population, Corinth well merited the title given to it by Barnes, "the Paris of antiquity". The principal deity was Aphrodite, the goddess of love in its lowest form, licentious passion, and it is not hard to imagine the effect of this deification of sensuality. The temple of Apollo was built on the north slope of the Acro-Corinthus. According to legal requirement 1,000 beautiful young women officiated as courtesans, or public prostitutes, before the altar of the goddess of love. They were supported chiefly by foreigners, and from the proceeds of their vice the city derived a steady income.

From: Sabbath School quarterly introduction

In Paul's time, Corinth was famous for its wealth and strong commerce, all thanks to its port, architecture, shipbuilding, and ceramics. The city was an important financial center. Nevertheless, it was also known for its sexual immorality, religious cacophony, and shrines dedicated to various gods. Indeed, daily life in Corinth was marked by flagrant idolatry.

This historical-cultural background helps us understand Paul's main concerns regarding the Christians in that city and, consequently, his exhortations to them.

READ

In addition to this religious confusion, Corinth was also known for its sexual licentiousness. Strabo, a Greek geographer and historian, mentions that there were 1,000 sacred prostitutes devoted to the worship of Aphrodite in her temple at Corinth. Although many scholars view this with suspicion and connect this claim to Athenian propaganda against Corinth, ritual prostitution was common in the ancient world. Sexual immorality was a problem in Corinth, as elsewhere. Idolatry and immorality were part of the daily life, and this sad reality explains much of the content of First and Second Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 5:9-11 9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.

10 Yet *I* certainly *did* not *mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

Question: Are you ready for a shock!

not to keep company with — a brother, who is sexually immoral

1 Corinthians 5:11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

1 Corinthians 8:4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* no other God but one.

READ

From: SDA BC:

The task confronting the messenger of the gospel in the ancient city of Corinth is well set forth in these words: "If the Gospel could triumph in Corinth, it can win under any circumstances" (W. D. Chamberlain).

where sin abounded,

Rom 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

Luk 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Rom 5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Rom 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

>>> Jesus Christ is the sinners only hope and for the people of Corinth, and for the people of the day, no matter how filthy and while they may be Jesus is the only hope.

In his missionary activity in Corinth, Paul faced the challenge of an idolatrous and licentious society. What challenges in today's culture can make it hard to preach the gospel? How can we overcome them? How much difference, if any, is there between Corinth and our cities today?

[illegible]

Additional Notes

From: Sabbath School quarterly introduction

On the other hand, whoever reads Paul's letters to the Corinthians will inevitably get perplexed, not only because of some substantial problems within the church—such as sexual immorality—but also because of the nitpicking that results from cheap factionalism among the members. If you think your church has challenging issues, get ready to see the avalanche of quarrelings Paul had to deal with in Corinth. Perhaps your local church's problems are not as significant as you imagine? Very likely, you will see that things in Corinth had been much worse.

As disturbing as the problems in Corinth had been, the letters to the Corinthians capture our attention, not because of the problems but because of the remarkable way Paul faces them. By exhorting the church members to evaluate themselves, their behavior, and the surrounding culture in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ, he exalts the message of the Cross. To use the words of Paul himself elsewhere, any standard lower than the gospel message is to be seen as “anathema” (*Gal. 1:8, 9, ASV*).

In Paul’s time, Corinth was famous for its wealth and strong commerce, all thanks to its port, architecture, shipbuilding, and ceramics. The city was an important financial center. Nevertheless, it was also known for its sexual immorality, religious cacophony, and shrines dedicated to various gods. Indeed, daily life in Corinth was marked by flagrant idolatry. This historical-cultural background helps us understand Paul’s main concerns regarding the Christians in that city and, consequently, his exhortations to them.

The most difficult and humiliating lesson that man has to learn is his own inefficiency in depending upon human wisdom, and the sure failure of his own efforts to read nature correctly. Sin has obscured his vision, and of himself he cannot interpret nature without placing it above God. He cannot discern in it God, or Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. He is in the same position as were the Athenians, who erected their altars for the worship of nature. Standing in the midst of Mars’ Hill, Paul presented before the people of Athens the majesty of the living God in contrast with their idolatrous worship.

“Ye men of Athens,” he said, “I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our beings; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device” (*Acts 17:22-29*).

1SM 292.2-1SM 293

From: SDA BC

1 Corinthians an introduction

3. Historical Setting. First Corinthians was written from Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:8). This city was the scene of Paul's labors for "three years" (Acts 20:31) and the chief center of his activities during his Third Missionary Journey (Acts 19; 20:1). He was about to depart for Greece and Macedonia when the letter was written, but hoped to remain at Ephesus "until Pentecost" (1 Cor. 16:5–8). However, circumstances hastened his departure (Acts 19:21 to 20:3). These observations enable us to date the letter in the spring of A.D. 57 (see p. 103).

The church at Corinth was established during Paul's Second Missionary Journey. The apostle had spent at least 18 months in that center. His work had been arduous but successful, and a thriving church was established (Acts 18:1–11).

The ancient city of Corinth was situated on the isthmus connecting the Peloponnesus with the mainland of Greece. It was at the southern end of the isthmus, on a low plateau at the northern foot of the mountain known as Acro-Corinthus, on the summit of which stood a citadel and a temple. **The city was thus strategically placed, with the overland traffic between the Peloponnesus and Attica passing through the town. Its convenient location between the Saronic Gulf on the east and the Gulf of Corinth on the west of the isthmus made it a market for much of the commerce that flowed from Asia to Europe, and vice versa.** Some Phoenicians settled in the city and carried on their trade of making purple dye from the Murex trunculus of the neighboring seas. They also introduced other

arts, and set up the impure worship of the Phoenician deities.

An important mercantile city, and situated at the passage of the seas, Corinth was cursed with licentiousness to such an extent that the very name of the city became a byword for sensuality. The expression "to Corinthianize" signified luxurious profligacy.

An understanding of the religion of Corinth serves to highlight the wonderful grace of God in overcoming the forces of evil and in planting a church of regenerated saints in this notorious city. By its wealth, luxury, trade, and mixed population, Corinth well merited the title given to it by Barnes, "the Paris of antiquity". The principal deity was Aphrodite, the goddess of love in its lowest form, licentious passion, and it is not hard to imagine the effect of this deification of sensuality. The temple of Apollo was built on the north slope of the Acro-Corinthus. According to legal requirement 1,000 beautiful young women

officiated as courtesans, or public prostitutes, before the altar of the goddess of love. They were supported chiefly by foreigners, and from the proceeds of their vice the city derived a steady income.

The task confronting the messenger of the gospel in the ancient city of Corinth is well set forth in these words: “If the Gospel could triumph in Corinth, it can win under any circumstances” (W. D. Chamberlain).

During Paul’s absence since the founding of the church some three years before (see p. 100), numerous problems had arisen that demanded the apostle’s attention. We learn of these from the epistle itself. First of all, factions had disrupted the church. Because of his eloquence and learning, Apollos was exalted above Paul by many in the church (see 1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4; cf. Acts 18:24 to 19:1). Others boasted that they were followers of neither Paul nor Apollos, but of Peter, one of the original apostles (1 Cor. 1:12). Still others I. A. 1. 2.

disclaimed adherence to any human leader and professed to be followers of Christ (ch. 1:12).

Furthermore, living as did the members of the Corinthian church in the midst of the profligate people of Corinth, many who had renounced their wicked ways slipped back into their old habits of life (ch. 5). Further, disrepute had come upon the church by Christians settling their quarrels in the secular courts. The Lord’s Supper had been made an occasion for feasting (ch. 11:17–34). Questions had also arisen regarding marriage and related social problems (ch. 7), the eating of foods sacrificed to idols (ch. 8), the proper conduct of women in public worship (ch. 11:2–16). There was misunderstanding also regarding the proper function of spiritual gifts (chs. 12–14). Some were skeptical regarding the fact and manner of the resurrection (ch. 15).

Paul received information regarding the state of the Corinthian church from Apollos, who, when factions arose in the church, had left the scene (see AA 280). Apollos was with Paul at Ephesus. Paul urged him to return to Corinth, but without success (see on 1 Cor. 1:12). Other information came from “them which are of the house of Chloe” (ch. 1:11) and from what was probably a delegation, consisting of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (ch. 16:17). The situation was such as to cause Paul serious apprehension. He had already written a letter to the church (see on ch. 5:9), and there is the possibility that he had briefly visited Corinth during his stay at Ephesus (see on 2 Cor. 13:1). He had also sent Timothy (1 Cor. 4:17; cf. ch. 16:10) and Titus to Corinth (see on 2 Cor. 2:13). In addition, he composed the letter now known as 1 Corinthians, in which he dealt with the various problems that had arisen. From: SDA BC
