

1 Corinthians

First Corinthians responds to a gifted but divided church, addressing community conflict, worship, embodied ethics, resurrection, and the collection for Jerusalem.



Interpretive reconstruction. The assistants, furniture, and gestures are reconstructed. The blank rolls suggest the reports and written questions behind the letter without inventing their words.

Date · Confidence: Established

c. AD 54–55

The exact year within Paul's long Ephesian ministry remains approximate.

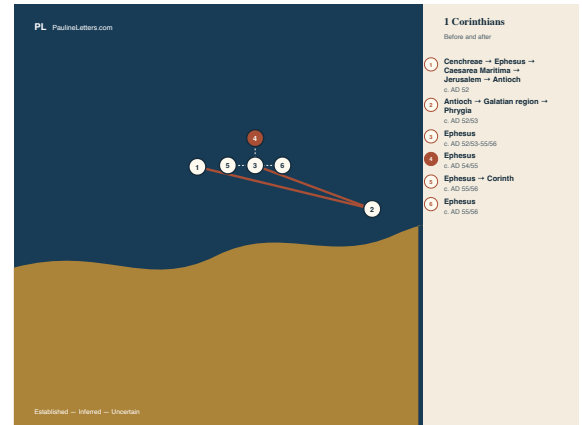
Place · Confidence: Established

Ephesus

The exact year within Paul's long Ephesian ministry remains approximate.

Before and after

- 1 **c. AD 52** Sails from Cenchreae; brief stop at Ephesus; up to greet the church, then down to Antioch.
Cenchreae → Ephesus → Caesarea Maritima → Jerusalem → Antioch · Established
- 2 **c. AD 52/53** Third journey begins; strengthens disciples through Galatia and Phrygia.
Antioch → Galatian region → Phrygia · Established
- 3 **c. AD 52/53–55/56** Two years in the hall of Tyrannus; the word spreads through Asia; magic books burned.
Ephesus · Established
- 4 **c. AD 54/55** Writes 1 Corinthians (Apollos evidently back at Ephesus with Paul, 1 Cor 16:12), answering the Corinthian divisions — Paul/Apollos/Cephas — that "I planted. Apollos watered. But God gave the increase".
Ephesus · Established
- 5 **c. AD 55/56** A painful visit and a severe letter (now lost) to Corinth.
Ephesus → Corinth · Inferred
- 6 **c. AD 55/56** The silversmiths riot over Artemis; Paul leaves for Macedonia.
Ephesus · Established



What the text establishes

Established

First Corinthians responds to a gifted but divided church, addressing community conflict, worship, embodied ethics, resurrection, and the collection for Jerusalem.

The audience is the church in Corinth, a community marked by rival claims to teachers and status tensions within its common life.

Leading reconstruction

Ephesus around AD 54–55 is strongly supported by Paul's plans to remain there and by the setting of the third journey.

The exact year within Paul's long Ephesian ministry remains approximate.

Other credible readings

Another major chronology places the letter in late AD 56 or early 57 while retaining Ephesus as the setting.

A ten-minute teaching plan

1. First Corinthians responds to a gifted but divided church, addressing community conflict, worship, embodied ethics, resurrection, and the collection for Jerusalem.
2. The letter belongs during the Ephesian phase before the painful Corinthian exchanges, Paul's departure for Macedonia, and the composition of Second Corinthians.
3. Ephesus around AD 54–55 is strongly supported by Paul's plans to remain there and by the setting of the third journey.
4. Another major chronology places the letter in late AD 56 or early 57 while retaining Ephesus as the setting.

Primary texts

Romans through Philemon, World English Bible (public domain).

Acts 7–28, World English Bible (public domain).

Sources

Raymond E. Brown, An Introduction to the New Testament (Doubleday, 1997). — Chapter 22, "First Letter to the Corinthians," "General Analysis of the Message"
Brown surveys the letter's argument and pastoral occasion.

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, Paul: A Critical Life (Oxford University Press, 1996). — Chapter 1, "The Chronological Framework," "The Evidence from the Pauline Letters" and "The Evidence from the Acts of the Apostles"

Murphy-O'Connor explains why chronology must weigh the letters and Acts without treating either as a complete timetable.

Scripture references only; no protected Scripture body is included.

<https://paulineletters.com/explore/1-corinthians>

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Questions for discussion

Why was this letter written?

What is secure, and where do careful readers disagree?