

Corinth: the cross in a divided community

How does Corinth help us read Paul's letters?

Corinth was a major setting of Paul's ministry and correspondence. Acts describes sustained work there, while the Corinthian letters address rivalry, worship, sexuality, generosity, and resurrection. Paul answers local problems by returning repeatedly to the crucified and risen Christ.

Work, welcome, and opposition

Acts places Paul with Aquila and Priscilla, working in their shared trade and speaking in the synagogue. The community grows amid opposition, and Paul remains for eighteen months. His appearance before Gallio provides an important chronological anchor: the project follows the commonly reconstructed proconsulship around AD 51–52. That external dating helps locate the ministry; it does not establish every episode in Acts.

Biblical references: Acts 18:1-17

Sources: acts, chronology

Read the questions behind the answers

First Corinthians responds to reports and questions, so readers hear only one side of an ongoing exchange. Factions, lawsuits, a divided meal, and competitive use of gifts reveal tensions inside the church. It is too easy to blame every difficulty on a stereotyped immoral city. Paul also confronts the congregation's own choices and calls it to holiness, mutual responsibility, and love.

Biblical references: 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 · 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 · 1 Corinthians 7:1 · 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Sources: letters

Power redefined by Christ

The cross challenges status-seeking, and resurrection grounds hope and faithful labor. Second Corinthians adds a portrait of ministry through weakness, reconciliation, and generosity. These are not disconnected moral lessons: Paul wants a community whose shared life fits the gospel it proclaims. Read the letters in substantial sections and compare their relationships and travel plans without assuming that every stage of the correspondence has survived.

Biblical references: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 · 1 Corinthians 15:1-28 · 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 · 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Sources: letters

Sources

- [acts] Acts 7–28; passage references are supplied in each section. <https://ebible.org/web/ACT.htm>
- [chronology] Pauline Letters chronology: Acts, the letters, dated external anchors, and explicitly qualified reconstructions. <https://paulineletters.com/explore/timeline>
- [letters] Romans through Philemon; passage references are supplied in each section. <https://ebible.org/web/>

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