

#1 Corinth (published version)

THE EARLY SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY

Ministering the Word to the Wider World

[TOM KNUPP]

Taso has done a wonderful job educating us on this wonderful place. We did share with you when you joined the tour, we've got that little booklet on *The Early Spread of Christianity*. The design of that booklet is as we go to these different places, we want to be aware of the people that are involved. I think another aspect of this that's important is to be aware of the different Scriptures that pertain to the situation.

As we learned earlier on the tour, *this is where the first Christian correspondence was written* and later delivered. From Corinth, Paul wrote the epistles of *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, which were about the *hope of the return*. Then also, at a later date, Paul would have written *Romans* from here, which was the foundational treatise on *justification by faith*. Actually, scholars have different opinions about the epistle to the Hebrews, but the epistles of the *Hebrews* very well may have been written from here, *as well as* the one to the *Galatians*. We mentioned that Paul spent 18 months here in Corinth on his first visit, and then on a later visit, he spent three months. Of all the places he stayed, *other than Ephesus, Corinth* would probably be *the place he stayed the most*, and so he would have had an opportunity to write to the various churches from here. And as for Galatians and Hebrews. It's important to have that truth established as far as *justification by faith* and *moving from law to grace*. A lot of those truths were developed here and shared at an early period of time because the Jews who believed were anchored in all that tradition of the rules and regulations and they needed a new start. He wanted to get them out of that while he was here and get them into the *understanding of what God truly provided in Christ*. There's all that great scriptural background in this part of the world.

The other thing [in your booklet](#) that you might enjoy studying afterward, there are [Scriptural references for all the people in the various places](#). That's really what I wanted to focus on in this little talk was to tell you about some of these individuals.

[Apollos](#) was [an apostle](#). He was from the city of [Alexandria in Egypt](#) — which was not an Egyptian city (although it was in Egypt), but it was a [Greek city](#). It was a [center of Greek learning](#), and that's why when he first learned about the baptism of John, he went and shared that at Ephesus. He was so persuasive, because he had been part of the schools there in [Alexandria](#) that had the [world's greatest library](#) and that was also [the place where the Old Testament had been translated into Greek, the Septuagint](#).

He came and he started sharing that in Ephesus, and then we learned this morning about [Aquila and Priscilla](#), and they were there with him in Ephesus, showing him more accurately the way of God. (They had come over here to [Corinth](#) and were with [Paul](#) before they went on to Ephesus as recorded in Acts 18 and met Apollos.)

Then Apollos came over here to Corinth and started teaching. With his teaching here, he was so eloquent and so well versed in Scripture. Some people actually attached themselves to him almost more than to Paul. Apollos didn't encourage that, but there were nevertheless these tendencies among the believers to pick favorites. Paul wrote about that, that we shouldn't be doing that.

Two other individuals from this area, you had Timothy and Titus who spent time here. [Timothy](#) was [from Asia Minor](#). He is [mentioned in the salutation in 2 Corinthians](#) because he was that important to the Corinthians here. (Though he was only once mentioned in Acts 18 at the outset when they first came to Corinth, he did spend time ministering with Paul in the city, and would come back periodically to visit them.) Timothy was the son of a Jew, but [his mother was Jewish](#). [His father was not a Jew](#). He was a [connection to both worlds](#). [Titus](#), on the other hand, was [a non-Jew](#). Most of the English Bibles say that Titus was [a Greek](#), but if you read the Aramaic, it says he was [a Syrian](#).

“Syrian” would have meant like the area of Antioch. But Titus was an important figure to the Corinthian believers and that's why there's a Scripture in your booklet that I've highlighted in this regard.

2 Corinthians 8:16:

But thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same earnest care I have for you.

Titus was the one who [organized the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem](#). He had the collection going up in the Thessalonica area and then continued the project down here in Corinth. He's [never mentioned in the Book of Acts](#), but he is mentioned extensively in Corinthians regarding that collection.

Silas was also here. Silas was [a prophet](#). He was from the Jerusalem area. After the Jerusalem Council, he went with Paul on his second missionary journey. Silas was an important figure in Corinth, also called by the Roman name [Silvanus](#). Silas was also [closely associated with Peter and with Mark](#).

Then we have [Timothy](#), who I mentioned was [an apostle](#). He was [Paul's most frequent companion](#) in all of his journeys.

The [location of Corinth is significant](#) from the standpoint of getting the letters to where they needed to go, because the [isthmus](#) that we crossed this morning at the canal is only four miles long. If you went that way to the west, you're getting up to the Adriatic Sea, and over on the other side of Italy, if you want to go beyond in the Mediterranean. So the letters could go by ship out that way. If you go that way, you're getting over towards Asia Minor, Ephesus, those places. This was [an ideal spot from which to send out the letters](#).

We talked about how [Aquila and Priscilla](#) worked with [Paul](#) in the handicraft of the tent making. They also went with Paul to other places. Later, they were involved with him in [Ephesus](#) and in [Rome](#) with their [household church](#).

Another interesting thing to contemplate here, and it's not definitely known for certain, but we believe that it is surely a [possibility that Titus and Luke were actually brothers](#). There are a number of reasons that you can substantiate this from Scripture that I won't elaborate on at this time. But with Titus having been here, and Luke who often traveled with Paul on his maritime voyages, this was a [maritime city](#).

[Corinth](#) was a [mercantile capital](#). Something I learned in preparation for this trip, I didn't realize that though Athens is so huge today, and was so huge in ancient Greece, I always figured when you're talking about messages to the believers in Achaia, it was always talking about Athens. But really, [in the time of Paul, Corinth was the much more important town than Athens](#), which was almost more like [a university town](#), but it wasn't so huge, it was [not so rich as Corinth](#). This is where they had the tremendous response to the Word.

Corinth had the Jews that came in from when Claudius expelled them from Rome, they ended up here. You had the synagogues and you could have the outreach to the [Jews](#) who wanted to believe, and then you had the [Gentiles](#) who were also here. That's why people like [Timothy](#) were so important, because he was from both worlds. He was [from the Gentile world and from the Jewish world](#).

[Erastus](#) was the [city treasurer](#) here, and I believe that somewhere here there's a...

[TASO IOUAKIMEIDIS]

A little bit farther from here there's an inscription. I didn't go to take you there since it's some more walking right now and it's under excavation, so it's not very easy to visit. But it's written down there in the theater that it's from me, Erastus. He's giving the money, he's offering the money, part of his money for the construction of the theater, and he's the treasurer, something like that.

[TOM KNUPP]

Yes, and then [Erastus](#) actually later was [sent by Paul with Timothy up to Macedonia](#). He's become a companion of Paul, a member of this

Christian community, so one of the chief people in influence and in wealth that was important.

Then [Sosthenes](#) we mentioned over there when you were at the forum. When they were trying to persecute Paul, the Jews who didn't believe him brought their complaint to the Roman governor Gallio. Gallio said, "I don't care, it's up to you to figure it out. It's your religion," and that's when they beat Sosthenes before the tribunal, right over there. Sosthenes is actually mentioned in the [salutation of 1 Corinthians](#). He was not an insignificant figure here.

[Stephanas](#) was the [firstfruits of Achaia](#) with his family, and he was baptized by Paul.

[Crispus](#) was the [synagogue ruler, and his whole household believed](#).

There's also mention of a fellow named [Titius Justus](#), who was probably a [Latin proselyte](#) who believed and who was here at Corinth.

You can study the various verses on these people and see how it all fits together. They're in various places in the Word.

[Corinth](#) was the [heart of the outreach in this part](#) of the world. Corinth basically connected this area all the way to Rome in one direction, all the way to the Black Sea in another direction, all the way to the east through Antioch, on the other side of the Mediterranean, all the way down to Egypt, through Alexandria. It all passed through here. And this city was called the "[Eye of Greece](#)" [because of its unique position astride the trade routes](#).

So there's a lot to think about! But as we go through these places, let's see if we can learn more about the people that populated them and what their contribution was and why they were mentioned in the Word and how that helped to establish the Word further in other places.

Thank you!