

Corinth is a city in Greece and because of its location, became a major trade city. It had two ports, Cenchrates which is to the east of the Saronic Gulf, and Lechaion, which were the heart of Roman culture in Greece. Corinth was situated in a right setting for ships going to Rome which made it geographically, a trading center and was prosperous because of the tariffs that was collected from every corner of the city. It was a destination for religious pilgrimage, an international city that embraced many cultures, and a major port city in the first century. Travelers stayed, spent money, either because they were waiting for their cargo to be unloaded, traded, or participation in the pleasurable, immoral lifestyle that plagued the city.

There were many conflicts and immoral behaviors within the congregation of the church which is one of the core reasons why Paul had written to them. The church, started on his 2nd missionary trip in 51A.D, had become just like the rest of the world. Corinth was known for its prostitution and sex idols, and it became acceptable to all people because it was so prevalent. Travelers would engage in sexual practices because there was no judgment. There was religious plurality and during the visit that Paul made on his missionary journey, there were many temples for idol worshipping on the road to Acro Corinth. Corinth was very cosmopolitan and sinful and there were no boundaries or rules in place for both secular and Christians who were citizens.

Corinth was known for its bronze, marble ceramics, textiles, shipbuilding, and architecture. In order to develop east to west trade, there were discussions of possibly building a canal joining the Corinthian and Saronic Gulfs in the early part of the sixth century (Diog. Laert. 1.99). The first project of the Isthmus canal was abandoned so, Periander (ca. 625—585 B.C.) built a paved road (the diolkos) across the isthmus, permitting light ships to be hauled

from one sea to the other on a platform running in grooves cut in the pavement. This eliminated the journey south of the Peloponnese around Cape Maleae where dangerous winds and waters awaited that caused multiple shipwrecks.

Corinth was the most important city that Paul visited since he left Antioch of Syria. He stayed in Corinth around eighteen months, longer than any other city on his mission journeys. He stayed with Aquila and Priscilla who were missionaries (Acts 18:3), tentmakers by trade. Paul, a tentmaker also, while in Corinth, could have possibly made tents to accommodate the people who travelled to Corinth for the Isthmian games that took place every other year.

The history of Corinth greatly influenced all the citizens, including the Christians. It is very difficult to separate function when there are no guidelines to adhere to. The gentiles brought their old habits with them, thus infiltrating the church with their immoral behaviors causing grief to Paul when he heard of their immoral lifestyles. According to the article the physical evidence for a Jewish community may have been possible (around 4th—5th century A.D.) (Scranton 1957: 26, 116) but only cornice stone reused as a lintel bearing the lettering and a marble impost inscribed with three menorahs, were found after the destruction of Corinth in 146 B.C. by Roman general Lucius Mummius. Therefore, the gentile church had no religious laws to live by and no positive influence.

Corinth was destroyed by an earthquake in 77 A. D. (West 1931: 18—19) but later rebuilt and became even more prosperous than before. However, despite the immoral, lavish, rich lifestyle, Corinth was a place where Paul was able to reach multiple platforms which meant that the gospel would spread to many nations. Corinth was a town where citizens of many

nations would travel so, spending time there would create opportunities that he would not otherwise have or as quoted, it outweighed its danger (Dio Chrysostom, Or. 37.8; Aelius Aristides, Or. 46.24). In addition to excellent communications, the extraordinary number of visitors (Dio Chrysostom, Or. 37.8; Aelius Aristides, Or. 46.24) created the possibility of converts who would carry the gospel back to their homelands.

The message of Paul to the church was simple: his apostolicity was given to him by the will of God and his desire was for them to trust that whatever he did was strictly for the gospel of Christ alone. He was not there to persuade anyone (2Cor 5:11), but giving a clear picture of what the work of an apostle was, and to show that if he did boast, it will only be to boast in the Lord, that he, a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:18) would be used by God for the purpose of salvation to the gentiles (2 Cor 6:2).