

2 Corinthians

AUTHOR: Paul

TIME WRITTEN: Late in A.D. 56 from Philippi in Macedonia

POSITION IN THE BIBLE:

- 47th Book in the Bible
- 8th book in the New Testament
- 3rd of 21 epistle books
- 4th of Paul's 13 books
- 43 have preceded it. 19 to follow it.

CHAPTERS: 13

VERSES: 257

WORDS: 6,092

KEY WORD: Paul's defense of his ministry

TWO KEY PASSAGES:

1. **2 Corinthians 4:5-6** - "For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.
For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."
2. **2 Corinthians 5:17-19** - "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation."

KEY CHAPTERS: 2 Corinthians 8 & 9

1. These two chapters comprise the most complete revelation of God's plan for giving found anywhere in the Bible.
2. Contained therein are the:
 - a. Principles for giving. 8:1-6
 - b. The purposes for giving. 8:7-15
 - c. The policies to be followed in giving. 8:16 - 9:5
 - d. The promises realized in giving. 9:6-15

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT 2 CORINTHIANS

1. Since Paul's first letter, the Corinthian church had been swayed by false teachers who stirred the people against Paul.
 - a. They claimed he was:
 1. Fickle
 2. Proud
 3. Unimpressive in appearance
 4. Unimpressive in speech
 5. Unqualified as an apostle of Jesus Christ
 - b. Paul sent Titus to Corinth to deal with these difficulties, and upon his return, rejoiced to hear of the Corinthians' change of heart.
 - c. Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to:
 1. Express his thanksgiving for the repentant majority.

2. To appeal to the rebellious minority to accept his authority.
- d. Throughout the book he defends:
 1. His conduct.
 2. His character.
 3. His calling as an apostle of Jesus Christ.
2. Background Material.
 - a. Paul was in Ephesus when he wrote 1 Corinthians and expected Timothy to visit Corinth and return to him. 1 Corinthians 16:10-11
 - b. Timothy apparently brought Paul a report of the opposition that had developed against him in Corinth, and Paul made a brief and painful visit to the Corinthians
NOTE: This visit is not mentioned in Acts, but it can be inferred from:
 1. **2 Corinthians 2:1** - "But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow."
 2. **2 Corinthians 12:14** - "Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children."
 3. **2 Corinthians 13:1-2** - "This will be the third time I am coming to you. "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."
I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare."
 - c. Upon returning to Ephesus, Paul regretfully wrote his sorrowful letter to urge the church to discipline the leader of the opposition. 2:1-11; 7:8
 - d. Titus carried this letter to the church at Corinth.
 - e. Paul, anxious to learn the results, went to Troas and then to Macedonia to meet Titus on his return trip. 2:12-13; 7:5-16
 - f. Paul was greatly relieved by Titus' report that the majority of the Corinthians had repented of their rebelliousness against Paul's apostolic authority.
 - g. However, a minority opposition still persisted evidently led by a group of Judaizers. 10-13
 - h. There in Macedonia Paul wrote 2 Corinthians and sent it with Titus and another brother.
8:16-24
 1. Probably written while Paul was at Philippi.
 2. Written late in 56 A.D.
 - i. Paul then made his third trip to Corinth (12:14; 13:1-2; Acts 20:1-3) where he wrote his Roman letter.

SUMMARY OF 1 CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Second Corinthians describes the anatomy of an apostle.
 1. Brethren at Corinth had been swayed by false teachers who have stirred the people against Paul, especially in response to 1 Corinthians, Paul's disciplinary letter.
 2. Throughout 2 Corinthians, Paul defends his apostolic conduct, character, and call.
- B. There are three major sections in the book:
 1. Paul's explanation of his ministry. (1-7)
 2. Paul's collection for the saints. (8-9)

3. Paul's indication of his apostleship. (10-13)

PAUL'S EXPLANATION OF HIS MINISTRY. (1-7)

A. After his salutation and thanksgiving for God's comfort in his afflictions and perils (1:1-11), Paul explains why he has delayed his return to Corinth.

1. It is not a matter of vacillation: Paul wants them to have enough time to repent. 1:12 - 2:4
2. Paul graciously asks them to restore the repentant offender to fellowship. 2:5-13
3. At this point Paul embarks on a defense of his ministry in terms of his:
 - a. Message
 - b. Circumstances
 - c. Motives
 - d. Conduct
4. He then admonishes the brethren to separate themselves from defilement. 6:11 - 7:1
5. He then expresses his comfort at the news that Titus brought of their change of heart. 7:2-16

PAUL'S COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS. (8-9)

A. This is the longest discussion of the principles and practice of giving in the New Testament.

1. The example of the Macedonians' liberal-giving for the needy brethren in Jerusalem (8:1-6) is followed by an appeal to the Corinthians to keep the promise of doing the same. 8:7 - 9:15
 - a. This collection would not only assist the poor, but it would also demonstrate the concern of Gentile Christians in Macedonia and Achaia for Jewish Christians in Judea, thus displaying the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the body of Christ.
 - b. In this connection, Paul commends the messengers he has sent to Corinth to make arrangements for the large gift they have promised.
 - c. Their generosity will be more than amply rewarded by God.

PAUL'S VINDICATION OF HIS APOSTLESHIP. (10-13)

A. Paul concludes this epistle with a defense of his apostolic authority and credentials that is directed to the still rebellious minority in the Corinthian church. His meekness in their presence in no way diminishes his authority as an apostle. 10

1. To demonstrate his apostolic credentials, Paul is forced to boast about his: 11:1 - 12:13
 - a. Knowledge
 - b. Integrity
 - c. Accomplishments
 - d. Sufferings
 - e. Visions
 - f. Miracles
2. He reveals his plans to visit them for the third time and urges them to repent so that he will not have to use severity when he comes. 12:14 - 13:10
3. The letter ends with: 13:11-14
 - a. Exhortations
 - b. Greetings
 - c. A benediction