

2 CORINTHIANS

Author: Paul

Date: A. D. 56

This letter from Paul was written to the church in Corinth probably six months to a year after he wrote the letter we call 1 Corinthians. Paul was still on his third missionary journey in Macedonia. In the time since his first letter, some in the Corinthian church had been swayed by false teachers who were challenging Paul's personal integrity and his apostleship. They claimed he was untrustworthy, fickle, proud, unimpressive in both appearance and speech, and that he was keeping some of the money he was collecting for the poverty-stricken believers in Jerusalem. Paul sent Titus to Corinth to deal with these difficulties, and upon his return, rejoiced to hear of the Corinthians change of heart. Paul wrote this letter express his thanksgiving to the repentant majority and to appeal to the rebellious minority to accept his authority. Throughout the letter he defends his conduct, character, and calling as an apostle of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians is considered to be Paul's most autobiographical letter as he defends his faith and actions. It contains numerous references to the trials, hardships, problems and pressures he endured in the course of his ministry. Like the rest of Paul's letters, this book points past Paul's sweat and tears to the power that lay behind his actions and words: the Lord Jesus Christ. There is also much we can learn about the Trinity and apply to our lives from this book. Paul portrays God the Father as the merciful Lord, the Creator, and the One who raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus Christ is the One who suffered, who fulfilled God's promises, who was the proclaimed Messiah, who manifested God's glory, and the One who in His Incarnation became Redeemer for believers. The letter also portrays the Holy Spirit as God, the Helper, the Comforter and the guarantee of believers' salvation.

Theme: God comforts us through troubling times. Paul defends himself, refutes false teachers and defines the mission of the church - sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Key verses: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come," (5:17). "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God," (5:21).

OUTLINE

- I. Paul's Ministry (1:1 - 7:16)
 - A. Greetings (1:1 - 2)
 - B. Praise to the God of All Comfort (1:3 - 11)
 - B. Paul's Plans (1:12 - 2:13)
 - C. Paul's Conduct and Philosophy of Ministry (2:14 - 6:10)
 - D. Paul's Exhortation to the Corinthians (6:11 - 7:16)
- II. Paul's Collection for the Saints (8:1 - 9:15)
 - A. The Patterns of Giving (8:1-9)
 - B. The Purpose of Giving (8:10-15)
 - C. The Procedures of Giving (8:16 - 9:5)
 - D. The Promise of Giving (9:6-15)
- III. Paul's Vindication of His Apostleship (10:1 - 13:14)
 - A. Answers to His Accusers (10:1-18)
 - B. Defense of His Apostleship (11:1 - 12:13)
 - C. Announcement of His Upcoming Visit (12:14 - 13:10)
 - D. Conclusion (13:11-14)