

2 Corinthians

Defense of Apostolic Authority											
Ministry Sincerity				Giving				Ministry Authority			
Chapters 1–7				Chapters 8–9				Chapters 10–13			
Defense of Paul's Motives				Defense of Paul's Worth				Defense of Paul's Traits			
Character of Paul				Collection for Saints				Credentials of Paul			
Greeting 1:1-11	Defends Conduct 1:12– 2:17	Defends Ministry 3:1– 6:10	Restore Confidence 6:11– 7:16	Examples 8:1-9	Purpose 8:10-15	Arrange- ments 8:16– 9:5	Benefits 9:6-15	Defense 10	Offense 11:1– 12:18	Warning 12:19– 13:10	Closing 13:11-14
Macedonia											
Fall AD 56											

Key Word: Apostleship

Key Verse: “For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:5-6).

Summary Statement: The way the church should respond to God’s sincere care is to open their hearts to Paul, the Jerusalem saints, and God himself.

Applications: Do you need to *respond to God’s care* in an area of your spiritual life that you have neglected?

For Church Lay People: Do you frequently criticize your spiritual leaders? (In other words, do you have a problem submitting to authority?)

For Spiritual Leaders: Are you fearful of defending your God-given spiritual authority?

2 Corinthians

Introduction

- I. **Title** The earliest title for 2 Corinthians is *Πρὸς Κορινθίους β΄* (*Second to the Corinthians*). The β was obviously added later to distinguish this epistle from Paul's first letter to the same church.
- II. **Authorship**
 - A. **External Evidence:** Even very creative critics uphold Paul as the author as the patristic evidence is early. Early church writers upholding Paul include Polycarp (AD 105; *To the Philippians* 11), Irenaeus (AD 185; *Against Heresies* 4, 27, 45), and others, such as the Muratorian Fragment (2nd cent.).
 - B. **Internal Evidence:** The book argues strongly for Pauline authorship as it specifically claims to be written by Paul (1:1). Some critics have speculated that chapters 1–9 and 10–13 actually constitute two different letters (e.g., the letter of 2:4) because of their difference in tone (joy to concern and comfort to self-defense). However, the content of 10–13 never even mentions the offender of 2:5-11. Also, chapter 2 refers to a sorrowful tone that is lacking in the firm declarations of 10–13. Finally, no textual evidence, linguistic evidence, church fathers, or church tradition validates such an attack upon the unity of the letter.
- III. **Circumstances**
 - A. **Date:** Paul makes two comments concerning the Corinthians' giving, which indicate that 2 Corinthians was written less than a year after 1 Corinthians (2 Cor 8:10; 9:2). That he was about to leave Ephesus (1 Cor 16:5-8) indicates that 1 Corinthians was written in May AD 56. The letter of 2 Corinthians followed later that year in the Fall of AD 56.
 - B. **Origin/Recipients:** Paul addressed this second letter to the church at Corinth from the province of Macedonia that was north of Corinth.
 - C. **Occasion:** Paul's planting of the Corinthian church on his second missionary journey took about eighteen months from March AD 51-September AD 52 (1 Cor 3:6, 10; 4:15; Acts 18:1-17). Nearly four years later while in Ephesus on his third missionary journey he received disturbing reports from Chloe's household about divisions in the church (1 Cor 1:10) and a letter from the church carried by three men (1 Cor 16:17) that requested Paul's opinion on certain issues (1 Cor 7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 15:1; 16:1). He answered the problem of divisions and gave the much-needed response to the church's questions in the letter of 1 Corinthians (he had already written a letter before this; cf. 1 Cor 5:9).

However, within a year of Paul's writing 1 Corinthians, false teachers infiltrated the church (2 Cor 11:20) and stirred up the people against him by accusing him of being proud (2 Cor 10:1), fickle (2 Cor 1:16f.), unimpressive in appearance and speech (2 Cor 10:10), dishonest (2 Cor 8:16), and unqualified to be an apostle (2 Cor 11:23; 12:6-7). Paul saw this threat as a valid reason to visit the church personally, and he refers to this second visit as a "painful visit" (2 Cor 2:1; 12:14; 13:1). He anticipates this visit in 1 Corinthians 16:5-9.

After leaving the church this second time, Paul wrote a sorrowful letter (his third letter to the church) to urge the church to discipline the leader of the opposition (2 Cor 2:1-11; 7:8f.). Titus delivered the letter and then met Paul in Macedonia with the good news that most of the Corinthians had repented of rebelling against Paul's apostolic authority (2 Cor 7:6-7). Nevertheless, Paul still felt it necessary to write the letter of 2 Corinthians to defend himself against the minority opposition (2 Cor 10–13). So, Titus turned right around and returned to Corinth to deliver 2 Corinthians, accompanied by two other brothers (2 Cor 8:16-24). Later Paul made a third visit to the church, anticipated in 2 Corinthians 13:1; Acts 19:21 and recorded in Acts 20:2-3.

IV. Characteristics (TTTB, 390, adapted)

- A. This letter reveals Paul's character, motives, priorities, desires, and emotions more than any other NT writing. It notes events about Paul that would otherwise not be known: his persecutions and hardships not recorded in Acts (2 Cor 11:23-27), extra details of his escape from Damascus (11:32-33), God's revelation of Paradise to him in a vision (12:1-7), and his "thorn in the flesh" (12:7-10).
- B. This is probably the least taught and least preached Pauline epistle today. No doubt this is because pastors and teachers are reluctant to apply its message—that the church owes them respect because of their ministry for Christ full-time!
- C. Second Corinthians is also probably Paul's most unsystematic epistle. The style is unique among Paul's epistles in its many digressions, unusual constructions, mixed metaphors, broken sentences, and sudden shifts in feeling and tone. It has all the signs of being written under extreme anguish of heart. Paul's distress is that his entire eighteen-month work at Corinth might be undermined by false teachers.
- D. This letter expands upon Paul's former command for a contribution (1 Cor 16:1-4) in a passage offering the most extended teaching on giving in the New Testament (2 Cor 8-9).

Argument

Paul penned Second Corinthians to defend his apostolic authority against slanderous false teachers. This is accomplished by communicating the genuineness of his ministry so that the believers can really trust him (2 Cor 1-7) before they finish collecting the offering that they had pledged the year before (2 Cor 8-9), and through a defensive and offensive proclamation of the proofs of his apostleship (2 Cor 10-13). After investing eighteen months at Corinth, three letters, a painful visit and an anticipated visit, he was not about to let fake servants of Christ erode his foundation laid at Corinth. Therefore, this letter contains personal information necessary to uphold his integrity before the church so that it would not be lost to the enemy.

Synthesis**Defense of apostolic authority**

Answers allegations regarding:

1-7

1:1-11
 1:12-2:17
 1:12-24
 2:1-11
 2:12-17
 3:1-6:10
 3
 4:1-6:10
 6:11-7:16

Ministry sincerity

Salutation
 Defends conduct
 Postponed visit
 Disciplining opposer
 Sending of Titus
 Defends ministry
 Superior to Mosaic
 Suffering
 Restore confidence

Motives

8-9

8:1-9
 8:10-15
 8:16-9:5
 9:6-15

Giving

Examples: Macedonians/Christ
 Purpose
 Arrangements
 Benefits

Worth

10-13

10
 11:1-12:18
 11:1-6
 11:7-12:18
 12:19-13:10
 13:11-14

Ministry authority

Defensive
 Offensive
 Motive in making claims
 Proofs of apostleship
 Warning
 Conclusion

Traits

Outline

Summary Statement for the Book

The way the church should respond to God's sincere care is to open their hearts to Paul, to Jerusalem saints, and to God himself.

- I. **The church should respond to God's *sincere* care for them by opening their hearts to Paul (2 Cor 1–7).**
 - A. God comforted Paul while fleeing Asia, so they should support and pray for him (1:1-11).
 - B. God worked in Paul's postponed visit and discipline of their sinning leader (1:12–2:17).
 1. His postponed visit when they doubted his care actually prevented Paul from overly rebuking them for not disciplining their leader who opposed Paul (1:12-24).
 2. The Corinthian discipline of this leader should make Paul's next visit positive so that Satan would not drive a wedge between Paul, this leader, and the church (2:1-11).
 3. Instead of returning, Paul's sending Titus will remind them to spread the sweet aroma of Christ to believers and warn unbelievers of their impending peril (2:12-17).
 - C. Paul's new covenant ministry—not the false teachers—blessed Corinth (3:1–6:10).
 1. His ministry is even greater than Moses's since the glory of the new covenant is greater than that of the Mosaic covenant (2 Cor 3).
 2. He does not lose heart in suffering since he sees his trials from God's perspective (4:1–6:10).
 - a) Paul never gives up when suffering because God's power helps him minister for their benefit (4:1-15).
 - b) Paul retains courage in suffering because his motivation comes from an eternal view and a love that compels him in his ministry of reconciliation (4:16–6:2).
 - c) Paul's evidence of genuine ministry in his suffering does not discredit his ministry but offends those who insist on a comfortable lifestyle (6:3- 10).
 - D. They should open their hearts to him—not to unbelievers—as he did to them (6:11–7:16).
- II. **The church should respond to God's *sincere* care for them by generously giving to the distressed Jerusalem saints (2 Cor 8–9).**
 - A. The Macedonians and Jesus gave selflessly so the richer Corinthians should too (8:1-9).
 - B. Giving helps all churches equally carry on their ministries in their times of need (8:10-15).
 - C. Paul's advance team will help them prove their generosity in giving (8:16–9:5).
 - D. Generosity blesses the givers and causes the recipients to thank God (9:6-15).
- III. **The church should respond to God's *sincere* care for them by submitting to God's authority (2 Cor 10–13).**
 - A. Although some thought Paul was timid, weak, and proud, he was still an apostle (2 Cor 10).
 - B. Paul proved he was an apostle so the church wouldn't be deceived (11:1–12:18).
 1. His motive in making the following apostolic claims is to assure with a godly jealousy that the Corinthians not be deceived (11:1-6).

2. He proves his claim to be a genuine apostle of Christ (11:7–12:18).
 - a) His willingness to minister without pay supports his apostleship (11:7-15).
 - b) His sufferings support his apostleship (11:16-33).
 - c) His visions and revelations, especially his revelation of Paradise that necessitated a thorn in the flesh, support his apostleship (12:1-10).
 - d) His miraculous signs and wonders support his apostleship (12:11-12).
 - e) His paternal love for the church supports his apostleship (12:13-18).
- C. They must repent to show they submit to God's authority (12:19–13:10).
- D. They must love each other to submit to God's authority (13:11-14).

PAUL ON STRESS

Ken Williams, Ph.D.

The apostle Paul was an incredible missionary, but not without his problems. Amazingly, he endured many difficulties and hardships, even though he wasn't particularly strong emotionally. To discover his secret of emotional health under stress, Ken Williams traveled back in time and was able to meet with him in Rome, where he was under guard. Paul happily consented to the interview, and granted permission to Images to share his ideas.

K: Paul, I've studied your letters and Luke's vivid description of your long and fruitful missionary life. You are truly amazing!

P: Why would you say that? I really haven't done anything out of the ordinary.

K: Well, you talked a lot about your weaknesses and struggles. Yet you traveled all over the world as you know it and shared the gospel everywhere. You endured really hard stuff that would have blown me away. But you made it, and you seem to be really healthy emotionally.

P: If you read my letters then you know that I did it in Christ's strength, not my own. That's the key. Remember? His power is made perfect in my weakness. Living in His strength rather than my own made the difference for me.

K: Yeah, but there's got to be more to it than that. In your second letter to the Corinthian Christians you talked about 45 different kinds of terrible hardships you had experienced, but you came through all of them well. Come on, tell me how you did it.

P: You counted all those struggles? I didn't realize I had gone on about them so much. Okay, I'll let you in on a few of my strategies, but you'll have to dig the rest of them out of the Word. The first thing that comes to mind is that I'm very free to feel and express my emotions. I like to call it being "HOT"—honest, open and transparent. I don't apologize or feel guilty about my feelings, and I freely share them with my friends. Being honest with myself, God and others about my feelings is one of my secrets to emotional health.

K: Wow! That's awesome, when I think about how slow a lot of us modern missionaries are to talk about our feelings, especially our painful ones. We're so reluctant that sometimes we even try to tell ourselves we don't feel them. We're afraid we won't be seen as spiritual, I guess. As you can tell, I like to count things. I counted no less than 33 different feelings you mentioned in your letters, and 20 of those were what we call

negative—feelings like fear, anxiety, shame, regret, anguish, humiliation, and a lot more. Is it really okay to have feelings like these, and talk about them?

P: Of course it is. You 20th century missionaries must really be messed up! Don't you know how we Bible characters are so HOT about this? This is being just like God. Doesn't He feel all kinds of feelings and talk about them? Why can't we? In fact, when we do, we take the first step to emotional health. You can't be healthy and lie about how you feel, whether you're talking about physical or emotional health. So tell your missionary friends to be honest and not be ashamed of their feelings. Tell them to encourage each other to be honest, and don't condemn each other for what they feel.

By the way, they need to know that emotional health does *not* mean never feeling bad, or never being hurt emotionally. Remember, physical health doesn't mean we're never sick or wounded, but that we bounce back to health again. In the same way, emotionally healthy people can be wounded, but they bounce back.

K: That's really helpful, Paul. What else has helped you keep healthy emotionally all these years?

P: Well, I've had a lot of help from others. In fact, I couldn't survive without them. I went out of my way to build strong relationships with friends and coworkers. They have ministered to me, not only in practical ways but to my emotional needs too. And I've ministered to them. God never intended for us to serve Him alone. I'll never forget how often Onesiphorus refreshed me when I was in prison in Ephesus. And how God comforted and strengthened me through friends like Timothy, Titus, Phoebe, Silas and even Mark. I wonder how many people God used to help me through hard times?

K: I counted no less than 77 people that you mentioned in your letters as being significant to you in some way.

P: You really do like to count things, don't you. I've heard that some of you modern missionaries try to get along without much help from others.

K: When I became a missionary most missions seemed to want independent people, who could make it on their own. We all thought that needing others was weakness. That didn't work very well, as you can imagine. I've really been challenged to build strong friendships as I've read how God used friends in your life, Paul.

P: Thanks. I hope you'll tell other missionaries to

Paul on Stress (2 of 2)

put high priority on building strong friendships, in which they can minister to others and let themselves be ministered to. That makes for strong emotional stability, especially in hard times. I know what I'm talking about.

K: What have you done to keep yourself whole when the stress has been overwhelming, Paul?

P: One strategy I've used is to do something about the situation if I can't handle it. When I was in Athens one time I couldn't stand the stress of not knowing what had happened to the Thessalonian believers. So Silas and I sent Timothy to check on them. Another time in Troas the Lord opened a door for the gospel, but I didn't find Titus there. I had no peace of mind so I left there and went to Macedonia. The point is, it's better to change the situation or even leave than to damage yourself emotionally.

K: That's very encouraging to hear. As a counselor, I've had to help missionaries who stayed in situations longer than they should have, and suffered severe mental problems. A lot of them aren't even serving God today as a result. We sometimes call it "burnout." We seem to see it as a major failure if we can't handle every situation, but you're giving us permission to get out if we need to. I'll pass that on. Can you share anything else that helps you?

P: I've built a couple of habits over the years that no missionary should be without. First, I've learned to choose an *attitude of gratitude*, no matter how difficult things are. Even when I feel terrible emotionally. Long ago I learned that even when I feel bad, I can choose to be grateful to God. It's still hard to do at times, but God always brings emotional stability when I choose to thank Him and praise Him. As you know, I told the Corinthians about the time I had no peace of mind in Troas and left. Remember what I said next? "But thanks be to God..." Even when I felt I had to miss a great opportunity for the gospel, I still chose an attitude of gratitude.

A second habit I keep working on is to choose joy, especially in hard times. Did you know we have a choice to rejoice, no matter what the circumstances? If only missionaries in your time could build this habit, I'm sure they would have a lot less emotional upheaval. What do you think?

K: I agree. In fact, I try to follow your example of choosing joy, and the Lord really does give joy, even in very difficult times. Did you know that you mentioned

joy 14 times in your letter to the Philippians? And you were in prison at the time! Paul, I want you to know that the Lord has never failed to give me joy when I've chosen gratitude and joy. I'm very grateful to you for showing me the way.

P: It's really the Lord who shows us the way. Remember, for the joy set before Him He endured the cross. Hey, they are going to be changing guards soon. Any other questions?

K: This has been a great help, and I can't wait to share it with other missionaries. Before I go, can you just briefly mention a few other strategies you've used to keep your head on straight all these years? Hopefully my missionary friends can study them in more detail and learn how to apply them.

P: Sure. I'll just run through several, but I won't tell you where they are in the Bible. Missionaries are mature enough to find them without help.

I had to keep working at relying on the Lord, not on myself. Of course I didn't have one of those computers you talked about, so it was easier for me to rely on the Lord than for you.

I refused to compare myself with others. I wish every missionary would learn to do that. Comparing ourselves causes such emotional uproar.

I freely admitted my weaknesses and learned to accept them, yes even delight in them. That brought great peace of mind and joy in the Lord.

I had my share of conflicts with other missionaries, including Barnabas and Peter, but I didn't run away. Dealing openly with conflicts was painful for me, but it sure helped me to stay emotionally healthy.

When things looked impossible, I chose to believe in God. As you must know, Ken, emotional health for us missionaries depends on choosing to believe Him when doubts try to take over our minds and hearts.

Finally, I worked hard at focusing on eternal realities rather than just looking at present circumstances. This helped me not to lose heart when times were tough.

K: Paul, I'll pass these insights on, and hope that many missionaries will work on following your example, as you have followed Christ's example. As they do, I'm sure they will experience your kind of emotional health, even in tough times. Thanks for sharing out of your own life.

Contrasting the Old and New Covenants

2 Corinthians 3–4

initiated by Moses (3:8)	initiated by Christ (3:4)
of the letter (3:6a)	of the Spirit (3:6a, 18b)
kills (3:6b, 7a)	gives life (3:6b)
engraved on stone (3:3b, 7a)	engraved on hearts (3:3b; Jer. 31:33)
glorious (3:7a)	more glorious (3:8, 10)
glory faded (3:7b, 11a, 13b)	glory ever-increases (3:11b, 18)
condemns men (3:9a)	brings righteousness (3:9b)
deception (3:13)	boldness (3:12)
veiled face of Moses (3:13b)	unveiled faces (3:13a, 18a)
veiled minds (3:14a)	unveiled minds (3:14b; 4:3-6)
veiled hearts (3:15)	unveiled hearts (3:16)
dullness (3:14a)	freedom (3:17)
Moses reflected God's glory	all believers reflect Christ's glory (3:17)
non-transforming (3:7)	transforming (3:18)
lack of zeal (3:13)	confidence, steadfastness (3:4-5; 4:1)
deception (3:13)	sincerity (4:2)

Views on the New Covenant

Issue: How can the OT and NT data on the New Covenant be reconciled? Jeremiah 31 declares it is for Israel and Judah but the NT (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb. 8:8; 9:15) apply it to the church. Is there actually *no* New Covenant, is it only for *Israel* or only for the *church*, or are there *two* New Covenants, or does the *church participate* in some of its aspects while awaiting the final fulfillment of the covenant? This study takes the last view, as do most modern premillennialists and other scholars. Note that “OC” and “NC” below relate to the Old Covenant and New Covenant, respectively.

Restated Mosaic	No New Covenant	<u>Critical</u> : –Couturier –Duhm –Schmidt –Potter	1. OC/NC distinctions in text ignored 2. OC=conditional, NC=unconditional 3. OC=temporal, NC=eternal 4. OC=external, NC=internal 5. OC=no enablement, NC=enablement 6. NC=peace, prosperity, sanctuary, Spirit (parallel passages)
Church Alone	No Israel Participation	<u>Amillennial/Postmillennial</u> : –Allis –Cox –Smick –Boettner	1. Ignores OT data by equating Israel & the Church 2. NC introduced ≠ fulfilled to Israel 3. Present need to know YHWH (still need the Great Commission) 4. AD 70 Jerusalem vs. Jer. 31:40
Israel Alone	No Church Participation	<u>Misc/Classical Dispensational</u> : –Darby –Thompson –von Rad	1. Ignores NT data –Christ's Last Supper words –Paul's statements –Hebrews application to Church 2. Ignores present work of Spirit
Two New Covenants	NC for Israel + NC for Church	<u>Early 1900s Dispensational</u> : –Chafer –Walvoord (old) –Ryrie (old)	1. Same terminology for OT & NT NCs 2. Israel/Church distinction too sharp 3. Basis of forgiveness the same 4. If 2 NCs then no OC for Church 5. Church doesn't possess Israel's promises
Church Participation	Primarily for Israel Secondarily for the Church	<u>Misc/Present Dispensational</u> : –Keil –Lemke –Bright –Scofield –Walvoord (DTS) –Ryrie (DTS) –Archer (TEDS) –Kaiser (TEDS)	<u>Support</u> : 1. Primary fulfillment future–Rom 11 2. Deals with both OT & NT data 3. Forgiveness/Spirit= blessings now 4. NC has new law 5. Rebuttals to above views

Signs of the Covenants

God has made several covenants with man throughout the ages. With several of them he has attached a sign or memorial as reminders of his and/or our responsibilities to keep these covenants.

<i>Covenant</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Promise</i>	<i>Fulfillment</i>	<i>Sign</i>
Noahic	Unconditional promise not to flood the earth again	Gen. 9:12-17	No more sea (Rev. 21:1)	Rainbow (Gen. 9:12-17)
Abrahamic	Promise to provide Israel a land, rule, and spiritual blessing	Gen. 12:1-3; 15:13-18	Continues at present (Gal. 3:17) but Israel still has a future (see Rom. 11:25-27)	Circumcision (Gen. 17:11)
Mosaic	Conditional stipulations for blessing on Israel	Exod. 19–31; Deut. 28	Death of Christ (Rom. 7:4-6)	Sabbath (Exod. 31:13)
Land	Promise of <u>physical</u> land from the Wadi of Egypt to the River Euphrates	Deut. 30:1-10	Land blessed (Amos 9:13-15)	No sign (that I know of)
Davidic	Promise of eternal, <u>political</u> rule of a descendant of David	2 Sam. 7:12-17	Rule renewed (Amos 9:11-12)	Christ seated at the Father's right hand (Acts 2:34-36)
New	Promise of <u>spiritual</u> indwelling of the Spirit ("law written on hearts"), forgiveness, and total evangelization of Israel	Jer. 31:31-34	Paul & the Apostles (2 Cor 3–4) All Israel saved (Rom. 11:26-27)	Cup of the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25)