

# **Notes on Second Corinthians**

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# Walking Thru The Bible

## 2 CORINTHIANS

### Introduction

**Author:** The Apostle Paul

**Date:** A.D. 57

**Occasion:** After writing 1 Corinthians, Paul found it necessary to make a hurried, painful visit to Corinth, since the problems that occasioned the first letter had not been resolved ([2Co 2:1](#); [2Co 12:14](#); [2Co 13:1-2](#)). Following this visit, he wrote the church a severe and sorrowful letter, to which he refers in [2Co 2:4](#) but which has not been preserved for us by the Holy Spirit. Titus delivered that letter.

Paul was unable to wait for Titus' return and proceeded to Macedonia where Titus met him with the good news that the church had accepted Paul's letter with positive results. From Macedonia Paul wrote 2 Corinthians and followed it up with his final recorded visit to the church ([Act 20:1-4](#)).

**Purpose:** The purpose of this letter was threefold: [1] to express joy at the favorable response of the church to Paul's ministry (ch. 1-7); [2] to remind the disciples of their commitment to make an offering for the Christians in Judea (ch. 8-9); and [3] to defend Paul's apostolic authority (ch. 10-13).

### Basic Message of Paul's "Second Corinthians"

#### 1. **The Ministration of Righteousness vs. Ministration of Death**

In chapter three, Paul set forth a section of teaching which contrasts the ministration of righteousness (the new covenant) with the ministration of death (the old covenant).

#### 2. **Gospel in Earthen Vessels**

In chapter four, Paul set forth the principle which pertains to the means by which the gospel is communicated. He said: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not of ourselves." This is illustrated in [Act 9:11](#) when the Lord sent Ananias to tell Saul what to do to have his sins forgiven rather than the Lord telling Saul Himself.

#### 3. **The Unequal Yoke**

In chapter six, Paul called for the Corinthian Christians to break with heathenism, and he set forth the teaching on being "unequally yoked." He asked: "...What fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols?..."

#### 4. **Things Honest**

In chapter eight, Paul set an example of how every Christian must provide for things honest in the sight of all men.

## 5. The Grace of the Macedonian Churches

In chapters eight and nine, Paul paid tribute to the gracious giving of the churches of Macedonia and shared the great principle of sowing and reaping. Those churches of Macedonia were overwhelmed with afflictions and deep poverty, yet they gave liberally to help their brethren in Judea.

## 6. Observations Relative to Charges Against Paul

Second Corinthians gives more details and greater insight into the personality and integrity of the apostle Paul than is given any other apostle or disciple of the entire New Testament. A person has but to read Second Corinthians to know that Paul traveled more, suffered more, and sacrificed more than any other apostle.

## 7. Conclusion

Second Corinthians has been difficult for many to understand, but the difficulty is removed when we realize that Paul wrote for the benefit of three parties--the loyal party, the license party, and the Judaizing party.

In no place are more church problems raised and settled than are raised and settled in Paul's two epistles to the Corinthians.

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### Charges Against Paul

The opposition parties filed certain charges against Paul:

1. The opposition parties charged Paul with cowardice in not coming to Corinth as he said he would do. Paul answered this charge in [2Co 1:15-17](#).
2. The opposition parties charged that Paul's letters were weighty and terrifying, but that his physical appearance was weak and uninviting. ([2Co 10:10](#)). Paul was prepared to demonstrate his superior power not only by letter, but also in presence as well.
3. The opposition parties charged that Paul had great boldness, but that his speech was rude and simple. ([2Co 11:6](#)). Paul admitted he was not eloquent but emphasized that he was not simple in knowledge.
4. Those in opposition to Paul charged that he was consciously inferior, and for this reason he abstained from taking support from Corinth for his labors. ([2Co 11:7-8](#)). Paul knew by whom he had been called to the apostleship; and he knew why he had abstained from accepting support from the Corinthians.
5. The opposition parties charged that Paul's descent as a true Hebrew was a matter to be questioned. Paul's defense: "Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft" ([2Co 11:22-23](#)). In short, this charge against Paul was ridiculous ([2Co 11:22-23](#)).
6. The opposition parties charged that Paul's alleged escape from Damascus was preposterous. In his defense Paul called upon God as a witness: ([2Co 11:31-33](#)). This charge, too, was ridiculous

## **An Outline of 2 Corinthians**

### **Salutation - 1:1-2**

#### **I. The Personal Concerns of the Apostle - 1:3-2:13**

1. The Purpose of His Suffering in Asia - 1:3-11
2. The Reasons for His Change of Plans - 1:12-2:4
3. The Advice Concerning the Offender - 2:5-11
4. The Apostle's Anxiety about News from Corinth - 2:12, 13

#### **II. The Glory of the Gospel and Its Ministry - 2:14-6:10**

1. The Seal of His Apostleship - 2:14-17
2. Superiority of the New Ministration to the Old - 3:1-11
3. The Consequent Boldness of the New Ministers - 3:12-4:6
4. The Trials and Triumphs of the Apostle - 4:7-5:10
5. The Apostle's Motives, Message & Ministration - 5:11-6:10

#### **III. The Appeal for Separation and Reconciliation - 6:11-7:16**

1. For Separation - 6:11-7:1
2. For Reconciliation - 7:2-4
3. Be Assured of his joy over their repentance? - 7:5-16

#### **IV. The Collection for the Poor Christians at Jerusalem - Ch 8,9**

1. Principles for Giving - 8:1-6
2. Purposes for Giving - 8:7-15
3. Policies in Giving - 8:16-9:5
4. Promises in Giving - 9:6-15

#### **V. The Vindication of Paul's Apostolic Authority 10:1-12:18**

1. Paul's Conduct - 11:1-15
2. Paul's Sufferings - 11:16-33
3. Paul's Vision - 12:1-10
4. Paul's Unselfishness - 12:11-18

#### **VI. Concluding Remarks - 12:19-13:14**

1. Appeal for Repentance - 12:19-21
2. Statement of Plans - 13:1-10
3. Greetings and Benediction - 13:11-14

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 SERMON OUTLINE

**If Any Man Be In Christ**  
2Co 5:17

**I. IN CHRIST We Have Some Initial Blessings--**

1. We have the forgiveness of sins (Eph 1:7)
2. There is sanctification in Christ (1Co 1:2; 2Co 6:17)
3. There is salvation in Christ (2Ti 2:10).
4. There is blessings of being a "new creature" 2Co 5:17.

**II. The Continuous Blessings of Being IN CHRIST--**

1. The cleansing blood of Christ (1Jn 1:7-9)
2. Joy in Christ in midst of suffering (Act 5:42)
3. Consolation in Christ (Php 2:1)
4. Blessing of new home when this one is over (2Co 5:1)

**III. If Any Man Be IN CHRIST,  
 He Has Been Baptized Into Christ--**

1. Gal 3:26-27
2. 1Co 12:13
3. Rom 6:4-6

To turn this around, if we are not baptized into Christ, then we are not in Christ!

**IV. After Being Baptized INTO CHRIST,  
 We Have The Responsibility of Staying In Christ--**

1. The one baptized into Christ Has the responsibility of *abiding* in Christ.  
Joh 15:1, Joh 15:14
2. We have the responsibility of faithfully observing all His commandments  
(Mat 28:20; Jas 1:22).

**CONCLUSION**

1. If any man be in Christ he has the hope of heaven when he dies. (2Co 1:7;  
2Co 3:17; Col 1:5; Col 1:23).
2. Many think they are in Christ when they are not.  
 They have never been "born" into him. (Joh 3:1-7; 1Pe 1:23).
3. Many think they are "still" in Christ, but they're not.  
 They are not abiding faithfully in him (2Jn 1:9).

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**Resources:**

- 1) For a good introduction to *2Corinthians*, see Rex Turner Sr., p. 136, The Living Message of the Books of the New Testament.
- 2) For one lesson see Mears, "What the Bible Is All About."

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**Verse Comments**

**2Co 1:1**

**Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus** - "Apostle" was "one sent" or an ambassador. In this case, Paul is an ambassador (with credentials) or a credential representative for Christ Jesus. (2Co 5:20)

Cf. 2Co 1:21, Paul had been "anointed", (cf. Act 13:1-4) or called to preach the gospel. cf. also 2Co 1:22, God had put His seal on Paul.

**by the will of God** -- It was God Himself that called Paul to be an Apostle. Act 9:15; 1Co 1:1. Paul's apostleship was not by human appointment or authority. Gal 1:11-12; 1Co 9:1-6; 2Co 11:22-33; 2Co 12:1-12.

This speaks to Paul's authority and inspiration.

**and Timothy our brother** -- The name of Timothy is associated with Paul's in the Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians. From the former Epistle to the Corinthians 1Co 16:10, we learn that Paul had sent Timothy to the church at Corinth, or that he expected that he would visit them. Paul had sent him into Macedonia in company with Erastus Act 19:21-22, intending himself to follow them, and expecting that they would visit Achaia.

From the passage before us, it appears that Timothy had returned from this expedition, and was now with Paul.

Timothy is referred to again in 2Co 1:19 as one of three ministers who had preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to them.

**Corinth ... the whole of Achaia** -- Paul wished this letter to be widely read by the saints in the area. cf. Rom 16:1.

Achaia, in the largest sense, included the whole of Greece. Achaia proper, however, was the district or province of which Corinth was the capital. See note on 2Co 9:2.

## ÷2 Corinthians 1:2

2Co 1:2

**Grace to you --** This is Paul's usual salutation; see the [Rom 1:7](#) note; [1Co 1:3](#) note.

**peace from God our Father --** **Grace** refers to the love of God in action with **peace** its result. Some assert that "peace" reflects a Hebrew term "*shalom*". It is possible that Paul knew this combination of terms from the Aaronic blessing of [Num 6:24-26](#).

Note that Paul calls God "**Father**" in successive verses, [2Co 1:2-3](#).

**Grace** is the favor of God, and **peace** the blessing of being restored to God's favor after being opposed to Him.

## ÷2 Corinthians 1:3

2Co 1:3

**Blessed [Praised] --** Paul usually formed a prayer of thanksgiving for the recipients of his letter, but in this letter the prayer ("eulogy" [G2128](#)) is directed to God.

**Blessed -** The Greek word translated "blessed" (*eulogetos*) occurs eight times in the New Testament mostly in Paul's writings. It always occurs with the person of God. It expresses both gratitude and adoration (cf. [Eph 1:3](#); [1Pe 1:3](#)).

**the God --** This prayer of praise, vv. 3–11, describes God in three ways: (1) He is the Father of Jesus; (2) He is the Father of all mercy; and (3) He is the God of all comfort!

**Father of mercies --** Paul's language is similar to the usual Jewish liturgical prayer from the synagogue prayer that called for God to treat the sinful individual with kindness, love, and tenderness ([Rom 12:1](#); cf. [2Sa 24:14](#); [Psa 103:13-14](#); [Mic 7:18-20](#)).

**mercies --** The word *mercies* (*oiktirmon*) means compassion, pity, and mercy. It means looking upon people in need and having compassion and mercy upon them.

Note that God is not just the God of mercies but the **Father** of mercies. His very nature and behavior toward us is that of a Father. He is a Father who is merciful and compassionate, and who showers His mercies and compassions upon us.

Note that the word *mercies* is plural. God does not show mercy just once, nor just here and there. God showers His mercies upon us continuously (see [Rom 12:1](#); [Php 2:1](#); [Col 3:12](#); [Heb 10:28](#)).

**God of all comfort, --** The Greek word Paul uses here, *paraklēsis*, occurs 10 times in [2Co 1:3-7](#). It typically refers to encouragement or consolation given to someone who is suffering or in mourning ([Mat 5:4](#)).

The word **comfort** (*parakleseos*) means to be by the side of another; to relieve and support; to give solace, consolation, and encouragement. But there is always an underlying meaning of strength, an enablement, a confidence.

Paul was saying that God came to him in the middle of his sufferings and troubles to strengthen him and give him courage and boldness ([2Co 1:4-10](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 1:4

### [2Co 1:4](#)

**comforts us --** see previous verse, [2Co 1:3](#). "The present tense of the verb shows that this God of ours comforts us constantly and unfailingly, not spasmodically and intermittently; and He does so in all our affliction, not just in certain kinds of affliction." Hughes, p. 12.

**us --** The "us" implies here, not only Paul and Timothy, but also the Corinthians, who are one with them in a bond of Christian unity.

**afflictions [tribulation; troubles;] --** This term refers to crushing pressure, because in Paul's life and ministry there was always something attempting to weaken him, restrict or confine his ministry, or even crush out his life.

But no matter what confronted him, Paul knew God would sustain and strengthen him ([2Co 12:9-10](#); [Rom 8:31-38](#); cf. [Php 1:6](#)).

**comfort those who are in any affliction, --** Comfort from God is not an end in itself. Its purpose is that believers also might be comforters. God used Paul to return to them with a strengthening message after he himself had received divine strengthening, [2Co 1:6](#); ([2Co 6:1-13](#); [2Co 12:6-11](#); cf. [Luk 22:31-32](#)).

...no gift is bestowed upon any one to keep to himself. If Paul is encouraged by God, it is not only for his own sake, but that he may be able to impart to others the encouragement which he has received. ([1Co 10:23](#), [1Co 14:5](#), [1Co 14:12](#))

## 2 Corinthians 1:5

### [2Co 1:5](#)

**share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, --** Christ suffered persecutions from the religious leaders of His day, ([Luk 19:47](#); [Joh 5:18](#); [Joh 7:19](#))



**the sufferings of Christ --** that is, the very kind of sufferings which Christ Himself bore.

*abound in us*] Rather **super-abound unto us**. The Greek reads, *εις* (into, unto, to, towards, for, among) [G1519](#) [PREP](#) *ημας* [us](#) [G2248](#) [P-1AP](#).

The word translated *abound* means to *exceed, be over and above* ([Mat 5:20](#), [Mat 14:20](#)).

Thus the meaning of the passage is that the sufferings of Christ overflow to us and that thus we are made partakers of them. See [Mat 20:22](#); [Mar 10:38](#); [Gal 2:20](#); [Heb 13:13](#).

For ([2Co 4:11-12](#)) our sufferings for Christ's sake arise from the same cause as His, namely the opposition of darkness to light, of death to the life that is imparted by Him to His members.

Such passages as [2Co 4:10](#); [Col 1:24](#), carry the idea a step further, and represent Christ as suffering *in* His members, by virtue of His union with them. So also [Mat 25:40](#), [Mat 24:45](#); [Act 9:4](#); [Gal 6:17](#); [Php 3:10](#). - CBSC 2Co

## 2 Corinthians 1:6

### [2Co 1:6](#)

**we --** The first person plural pronoun "we" distinguishes Paul and his coworkers from "you," the Corinthian believers.

**afflicted [distressed; troubled; troubles] --**

**your comfort --** [2Co 1:4](#); Paul proposes that his personal affliction has tangible results for the Corinthians and others like them.

Paul also maintains that the comfort he receives from Christ also benefits believers like the Corinthians.

**if we are comforted --** The overflow of Christ's comfort for Paul further overflows into the lives of believers "for your comfort."

**patiently endure --** The doctrine that the patient endurance of affliction tends to promote salvation, is every where taught in the Bible; [Rom 5:3-5](#).

The word translated "which produce" means to effect or make something happen.

## 2 Corinthians 1:7

### [2Co 1:7](#)

**hope ... unshaken** -- We have a confident expectation that you will be enabled to bear your trials and you will be sustained by your Christian hope.

**share in our sufferings**, -- It is evident from this, that the Corinthians had been subjected to trials similar to those which the apostle had endured. It is not known what exactly these afflictions were.

## 2 Corinthians 1:8

### 2Co 1:8

**not have you ignorant** -- similar phrases from Paul, [Rom 1:13](#); [1Co 12:1](#); [2Co 1:8](#); [1Th 4:13](#); Paul wishes them to be fully informed.

**Asia** -- The term "Asia" is often used to denote that part of Asia Minor of which Ephesus was the capital.

**in Asia**, -- Although it is impossible for us to know exactly what it was that befell Paul in Asia, likely it is referring to the riot at Ephesus in [Act 19:30-31](#). But there were other trials Paul suffered as well (cf. [2Co 11:24-27](#)).

The plot of the Jews against him when he was about to go to Macedonia, [Act 20:3](#), however occurred while he was in Greece.

**despaired of life itself**. -- This indicates how desperate Paul thought the situation at Ephesus was, Acts But even then he had hope of the resurrection, [2Co 1:9](#).

## 2 Corinthians 1:9

### 2Co 1:9

**felt we had received the sentence of death**. -- The word for "*sentence*" is a technical term that indicated the passing of an official resolution, in this case the death sentence. Paul was so absolutely sure he was going to die for the gospel - MSB

**rely not on ourselves** -- When one reaches the "bottom" he learns not to rely on self, but on God.

**God who raises the dead**. -- Paul may be thinking of: (1) OT examples of people God brought back to physical life (cf. [1Ki 17:17-22](#); [2Ki 4:32-37](#)); or (2) OT theological statements (cf. [Deu 32:39](#); [1Sa 2:6](#); [2Ki 5:7](#)); or (3) his discussion of resurrection in [1 Cor. 15](#)?

By this reference to *raising the dead*, there is brought into view the passage in [Heb 11:19](#), in which Abraham's offering of Isaac was enabled through his confidence that God was able to raise the dead, giving incidental support to the view that the author of Hebrews and the author of this passage are one and the same person. - Coffman Commentaries

## 2 Corinthians 1:10

2Co 1:10

**delivered** -- Paul credits God for his rescue from the tragic situation at Ephesus ([Act 19:23-31](#)).

**deliver** -- This term is used three times in v. 10. This follows the OT sense of physical, social, emotional, spiritual deliverance. Paul used this term several times (cf. [Rom 7:24](#); [Rom 11:26](#); [Rom 15:31](#); [2Co 1:10](#); [Col 1:13](#); [1Th 1:10](#); [2Th 3:2](#); [2Ti 3:11](#); [2Ti 4:17-18](#)). He really thought that he was going to die at Ephesus (cf. vv. 8–10). (Utley)

**and He will deliver us.** -- Confident that God will deliver again when necessary. When Paul needed deliverance, cf. [2Co 1:8-9](#).

**On him we have set our hope** -- Paul's steadfast hope and assurance was in God, [2Ti 1:12](#).

**he will deliver us again** -- Paul confidently expects God to deliver him from persecution. He recognizes that God's deliverance will not be for his own sake, but for the sake of believers and those who have not yet heard the gospel message (see [Php 1:21-26](#); [2Ti 4:17](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 1:11

2Co 2:11

**help us by prayer** -- Paul often requested the prayers of the recipients of his letters. Paul had a deep conviction of the efficacy of intercessory prayer ([Rom 15:30-31](#); [Php 1:19](#); [Phm 1:22](#)).

Paul wanted the faithful Corinthians to know he needed their prayers then and in the future (cf. [Eph 6:18](#); [Jas 5:16](#)).

**for the blessings [gift] granted us** -- Paul believed the prayers of the saints for him would result in blessings to others for which they would be thankful to God.

Prayer's duty is not to change God's plans, but to glorify Him and give thanks for them.

**given by many persons** [NKJV] -- "*persons*" is literally "face" (*prosōpon*) Paul uses this term often in II Corinthians (cf. [2Co 2:10](#); [2Co 3:7](#) [twice], [2Co 3:13](#), [2Co 3:18](#); [2Co 4:6](#); [2Co 5:12](#); [2Co 8:24](#); [2Co 10:1](#), [2Co 10:7](#); [2Co 11:20](#)). It may be an OT allusion to the standard physical position of prayer with head lifted, which exactly fits this context. - Utley

## 2 Corinthians 1:12

2Co 1:12

**For our boast [glorying]** -- Paul was always true and faithful to his conscience. Paul often used this word (boasting), and it can also be rendered “proud confidence.” Used negatively, it refers to unwarranted bragging about one’s own merits and achievements; but Paul used it positively to denote legitimate confidence in what God had done in his life (cf. [Jer 9:23-24](#); [Rom 15:18](#); [1Co 1:31](#); [1Co 15:9-10](#); [1Ti 1:12-17](#)).

**conscience** - The soul’s warning system, which allows human beings to contemplate their motives and actions and make moral evaluations of what is right and wrong. (cf. [Rom 2:14-15](#))

In order to work as God designed it, the conscience must be informed to the highest moral and spiritual level and best standard, which means submitting it to the Holy Spirit through God’s Word (cf. [Rom 12:1-2](#); [1Ti 1:19](#); [2Ti 2:15](#); [Heb 9:14](#); [Heb 10:22](#)). Paul’s fully enlightened conscience exonerated him completely (cf. [Act 23:1](#); [Act 24:16](#); [1Ti 1:5](#); [1Ti 3:9](#); [2Ti 1:3](#)). But ultimately, only God can accurately judge a man’s motives ([1Co 4:1-5](#)). - MSB

**we have behaved** -- Paul sought to maintain integrity in ministry to prevent the gospel from losing credibility.

He was especially sensitive to the issue of financial support in the regions of Macedonia and Achaia; he did not want others to perceive him as a peddler or ordinary philosopher ([2Co 2:17](#); [1Co 9:1-12](#); [Php 4:14-17](#); [1Th 2:9](#)).

**behaved with simplicity and godly sincerity,** -- Paul preached and acted out of sincere pure motives without deceit, nothing was hidden.

**not by earthly wisdom** -- Wisdom that is based on worldly, human insight (see [Jas 3:15](#)).

This also describes the way Paul preached the gospel, not after the wisdom of men, but in the power of the Spirit.

It may be that Paul is refuting charges against him, probably by the incestuous man, which was the cause of great pain the church at Corinth.

**by the grace of God,** -- God grace (favor) that connected Paul to the Corinthians, brought them both blessings.

**supremely [abundantly] so toward you.** -- The Corinthians brothers should be amply aware of his behavior among them.

This either refers (1) to the special proofs the Apostle had given the Corinthians of his singleness of purpose and avoidance of fleshly wisdom, or (2) to the fact that he had remained longer at Corinth, and so had additional opportunities of displaying those qualities; or it has reference perhaps (3) to his self-abnegation in refusing to receive his maintenance at the hands of his Corinthian converts. (see [1Co 9:8-10](#).) - CBSC

**2 Corinthians 1:13**[2Co 1:13](#)

**anything other than what you have read** -- Nothing has changed. You are fully acquainted with the truth.

Paul's continuing flow of information to the Corinthians was always clear, straightforward and understandable, consistent, and genuine. Paul wanted them to know that he was not holding anything back, nor did he have any secret agenda ([2Co 10:11](#)). He simply wanted them to understand all that he had written and spoken to them. (MSB)

**read and acknowledge** -- It is impossible to give the full sense of this passage in English. In the first place there is the play upon ἀναγινώσκετε and ἐπιγινώσκετε, after a fashion usual with St Paul, and next there is the fact that ἀναγινώσκω has a double meaning, to *recognize, know accurately* (as in Xen. *Anab.* v. viii. 6), and to *read*. The word translated 'acknowledge' signifies to know thoroughly either (1) by examination, comparison, reasoning, or (2) by intuition. Here the former idea is predominant. - CBSC

**and I hope you will full acknowledge** -- Paul connects "the future for which he *hopes*, with the past of which he *knows*." - Meyer.

**end [NKJV]** - Does the term *telous* in this context mean "**complete**" (TEV, NJB, NIV) or "**end**" (NASV, NKJV, NRSV)? Both make sense. If "complete" (completely in contrast to partially) it would link up with the first part of [2Co 1:14](#). If "end" it would parallel "the day of our Lord Jesus" at the last of verse [2Co 1:14](#). - Utley

**2 Corinthians 1:14**

2co 1.14

**partially acknowledge us**, -- how?

**on the day** -- The judgment day that Paul speaks of in [2Co 5:10](#).

**you will boast of us** -- This makes us think that, yes, we will know each other in heaven.

They would rejoice in having Paul as their teacher and guide, and Paul would rejoice that they had been saved by his ministry.

Paul: "it will be an occasion of abundant and eternal thanksgiving to God that you were converted by our labors."

**2 Corinthians 1:15****2Co 1:15**

**And in this confidence** -- Paul planned to visit the Corinthians again and was confident that they would receive him favorably.

**I intended to come to you before [first]** -- Paul seems to refer to the time when he wrote his first epistle as it was his earnest wish, as he stated in that letter, to visit them again, [1Co 16:5](#). In this he seems to have been disappointed and now proceeds to explain the reasons why he had not visited them as first planned.

**have a second benefit [second experience of grace]** -- Paul coming again to them would bring God's favor on them on them again, a second time. As his first visit some miraculous gifts had been bestowed upon them by the laying on of the apostle's hand, perhaps even more miraculous gifts could come from a second visit. ([Act 8:14-15](#); [1Co 12:1](#); [1Co 12:7-8](#); [2Ti 1:6](#); [Heb 6:2](#)).

The word used here *χάρις* *charis* is that which is commonly rendered grace, and means probably favor, kindness, good-will, beneficence; and especially favor to the undeserving. Here it is evidently used in the sense of gratification, or pleasure. And the idea is, that they had been formerly gratified and benefitted by his residence among them; he had been the means of conferring important favors on them, and he was desirous of being again with them, in order to gratify them by his presence, and that he might be the means of imparting to them other favors. - BN

**2 Corinthians 1:16****2Co 1:16**

**to pass by way of you** -- Paul's plan is here expressed. It may not always be what God works out. It seems Paul wanted to come by Corinth on his way to Macedonia, and then come back to them and be helped by them, probably in travel expenses, on his way to Jerusalem, perhaps with a collection for the poor saints there. [1Co 16:1-2](#).

**have you send me** -- With their good will, encouragement, approval, and material support for his journey back to Judea.

**Macedonia** -- The Roman province north of Corinth, also located in modern Greece. Paul founded churches in the Macedonian cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea.

**2 Corinthians 1:17****2Co 1:17**

**when I was planning this --** When Paul had formed his travel plans.

**did I do it lightly? [vacillating] --** Was I not sure, but often changing my mind? Paul's plans were according to the flesh, he was not vacillating on purpose. He did not deceive them, saying one thing to one and then another to someone else at the same time.

The word *εὐλαφρία* *elaphria* G1644 (from *εὐλαφρός* *elaphros* G1645) means properly lightness in weight. Here it is used in reference to the mind, as denoting inconstancy, changeableness, or fickleness. Paul denies this.

This charge had been probably made that he had made the promise without any due consideration, or without any real purpose of performing, it; or that he had made it in a trifling and thoughtless manner. By the interrogative form here, he sharply denies that it was a purpose formed in a light and trifling manner. - BN

## 2 Corinthians 1:18

### 2Co 1:18

**as God is faithful --** Paul's promises were sincerely made, and there was no deception whatever. Just as God keeps his promises, so will Paul. He was not fickle with his word.

Perhaps Paul is here stating that He's sure God will allow Him another visit to them at Corinth.

**our word -** Margin, "preaching" (*ὁ λόγος* *ho logos*). This may refer either to his preaching, to his promises of visiting them, or his declarations to them in general on any subject.

**our word to you --** Paul's word was sincere and not fickle. Paul's preaching of the Gospel did not change. He did not change the message; it was not one message to one, and a different message to another. He did not vacillate.

## 2 Corinthians 1:19

### 2Co 1:19

**we proclaim --** The Gospel "we" preach was always the same, no matter who preached it.

**Silvanus and Timothy and I, --** These were with Paul in the founding of the church at Corinth; and the very fact of their having preached the truth that is in Christ Jesus made it morally impossible for them to have engaged in the kind of petty deceptions alleged against him by his foes. - Coffman Commentaries

**Silvanus** -- This is the same person identified as Silas in [Act 15:32](#), [Act 15:40](#), who was one of the prophets of the early church, and also a companion of Paul on the second missionary tour. He was with Paul in jail at Philippi and throughout that exciting tour.

**not Yes and No**, -- "Yea and nay" continues to be used here as an idiom of fraud and deception. In Christ there is neither fraud nor deception; but in him is yea; and in this context "yea" is an idiom for utmost truth, sincerity and integrity. - Coffman

## 2 Corinthians 1:20

### [2Co 1:20](#)

**the promises** -- All the promises of God are sure and faithful. cf. [2Pe 3:9](#).

**Amen** -- God will not only honor his promises, which are invariably true; but he will sum them up with a heavenly **Amen**. God's word is the last word. God is the **Amen**; but so also is Christ. "These things saith the **Amen**, the faithful and true witness" ([Rev 3:14](#)). - Coffman Commentaries

**Amen** -- We utter "Amen", or Yes, [2Co 1:19](#), to the preaching down to God's glory.

## 2 Corinthians 1:21

### [2Co 1:21](#)

**establishes us with you** -- He who makes us firm (ο' βέβαιον ἡμῶν *ho bebaion ēn he mōn*); that is, he who has confirmed us in the hopes of the gospel, and who gives us grace to be faithful, and firm in our promises. The object of this is to trace all to God, and to prevent the appearance of self-confidence, or of boasting. Paul had dwelt at length on his own fidelity and veracity.

**has anointed us**, -- We need to remember Paul had been called (anointed) to be an apostle, [2Co 1:1](#).

It was customary to anoint kings, prophets, and priests on their entering on their office as a part of the ceremony of inauguration. The word "anoint" is applied to a priest, [Exo 28:41](#); [Exo 40:15](#); to a prophet, [1Ki 19:16](#); [Isa 61:1](#); to a king, [1Sa 10:1](#); [1Sa 15:1](#); [2Sa 2:4](#); [1Ki 1:34](#). It is applied often to the Messiah as being set apart, or consecrated to his office as prophet, priest, and king - that is, as appointed by God to the highest office ever held in the world.

**us** -- 1) Is Paul referring to himself and the preachers with him, or 2) to himself and the Corinthian brethren?

[2Co 1:21-22](#) Three things in these verses - (1) the anointing; (2) the sealing; and (3) the giving of the earnest are all references to one action, that of conversion - by which the believer is united with Christ "in Christ." - Coffman Commentaries



So in [1Jo 2:27](#), "But the anointing which ye have received abideth in you," etc. The anointing which was used in the consecration of prophets, priests, and kings, seems to have been designed to be emblematic of the influences of the Holy Spirit, who is often represented as poured upon those who are under his influence [Pro 1:23](#); [Isa 43:4](#); [Joe 2:28-29](#); [Zec 12:10](#); [Act 10:45](#), in the same way as water or oil is poured out. And as Christians are everywhere represented as being under the influence of the Holy Spirit, as being those on whom the Holy Spirit is poured, they are represented as "anointed." They are in this manner solemnly set apart, and consecrated to the service of God. - BN

## 2 Corinthians 1:22

### [2Co 1:22](#)

**put his seal on us** -- God's seal of the Holy Spirit was in Paul's and his companion's heart, [2Co 1:19](#).

1) The Spirit-led life they lived was evidence; and 2) the gifts of the Holy Spirit that enabled them to heal and do miracles. These were the evidential credentials God gave his apostles, [Mar 16:20](#); [Heb 2:3-4](#). (cf. [Eph 3:17](#).)

The laying on the apostles' hands passed these gifts to others [Act 8:14-19](#); [Rom 1:11](#).

**seal** -- The earnest (or token) of the Holy Spirit is identified with "the Holy Spirit of promise" ([Eph 1:13](#)) and is the invariable inheritance of all who obey the gospel of Christ. - Coffman Commentaries

One bearing the spirit of Christ in their hearts, being Christ-like, and obeying the Father's will, showing the form of God-likeness in their lives has the guarantee itself of God's promises.

The eternal spirit that God has put within us is the guarantee of eternal life. Some will be with God in heaven eternally, and others will be in everlasting hell with the devil and his angels. [Mat 25:41](#); [Mat 25:46](#).

## 2 Corinthians 1:23

### [2Co 1:23](#)

**call God to witness** -- Paul affirms an oath before God assuring them of the reason he had not already come to visit Corinth.

The reason he had not come was to spare them, Paul didn't want another painful meeting with them.

What had been "painful"? [2Co 2:1-5](#) Five times, once in each verse he speaks of the "*pain*."

**2 Corinthians 1:23 (CSBBible)** I call on God as a witness, on my life, that it was to spare you that I did not come to Corinth.

About the same time he sent the First Epistle by the shorter sea route to Corinth, perhaps by the hands of Titus and another of his companions ([2Co 12:18](#)), to whom was also given the duty of

organising the collection ([1Co 16:1-2](#)). - A Commentary on the Holy Bible: The One Volume Bible Commentary.

## 2 Corinthians 1:24

### 2Co 1:24

**Not that we lord it over --** Paul was not a dictator, but labored to give them a joyful, steadfast faith in Christ that would produce a joyful life.

The happy blessed life is that lived according to the direction that God in His Holy Spirit directs us. God provides us the answers to life's great questions. How can I live a happy joyful life that reaps the most life here now has to offer, and that which the future eternal life offers.

**2 Corinthians 2:1****2Co 2:1****Outline of 2Corinthians 2**

2Co 2:1-5. Having shown the reason why he came not to them,  
2Co 2:6-9. he requires them to forgive and to comfort that excommunicated person,  
2Co 2:10-11. even as himself also upon his true repentance had forgiven him;  
2Co 2:12-13. declaring withal why he departed from Troas to Macedonia,  
2Co 2:14-17. and the happy success which God gave to his preaching in all places

**For I made up my mind --** I formed this resolution in regard to my course of action.

Some think the "But" or "For" should be translated "And" because it continues the explanation from 2Co 1:23.

**not come again to you in heaviness [make you sorrowful] --** Paul didn't want to cause them grief again. He had been compelled to resort to acts of discipline.

Paul had not come to them because of fickleness, but from love for them.

**again --** Paul mentions a third visit to Corinth in 2Co 12:14; 2Co 13:1. The book of Acts does not record this second painful visit. His initial stay in Corinth is recorded in Act 18:1-11.

It probably occurred between the writing of I and II Corinthians or during his three-year ministry in Ephesus (Act 19:8-22).

This just cannot apply to Paul's first visit to Corinth, for his first visit did not end in failure and rejection. When Paul first left Corinth, he was filled with joy over the great success God had given.

We may thus paraphrase his words, *I decided that the best course for me to pursue was not to come again to you in heaviness.* - CBSC

**2 Corinthians 2:2****2Co 2:2**

**cause you pain --** The church had a heaviness because apparently on Paul's last visit a man in the church had been confronted by Paul probably by the incestuous man. It seems Paul was deeply grieved over the church's lack of loyalty to him and to the truth.

The NJB (New Jerusalem Bible) translation reads, "for if I cause you distress I am causing distress to my only possible source of joy."

Paul did not enjoy the confrontational aspect of his apostolic responsibility.

**the one whom I have painted? --** The church had to deal with the man in his sin, but it pained them.

The only thing that would bring Paul joy would be repentance from such a one and any who agreed with him.

Evidently if Paul had come to them as originally planned he would have had to rebuke or discipline them for some situation that existed in the church. Instead of doing this and producing sorrow he decided to wait and give them an opportunity to deal with the problem themselves. - Constable

## 2 Corinthians 2:3

### 2Co 2:3

**I wrote this very thing --** This is most suitably understood as a direct reference to [1Co 16:5](#) ff where he told the Corinthians of his revised itinerary." Some have referred these words to the "lost letter"; but such a reference is arbitrary. Besides, the understanding of these words as a reference to First Corinthians "has been the understanding of the church through many centuries." - Coffman Commentaries

**I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice -** Lest the conduct of the church, and the abuses which prevail in it should give me sorrow. I should be grieved with the existence of these evils; and I should be obliged to resort to measures which would be painful to me, and to the whole church. Paul sought to avoid this by persuading them before he came to exercise the discipline themselves, and to put away the evil practices which prevailed among them.

**having confidence in you all --** Paul was persuaded that if he wrote them a letter, they would listen to his injunctions, that thus all that was painful might be avoided when he came among them.

## 2 Corinthians 2:4

### 2Co 2:4

**For ... I wrote unto you --** This continues to be a reference to 1 Corinthians, nor can this be construed as any sort of proof of a second lost letter between the canonical Corinthians.

The notion that 1 Corinthians could not have been written out of "anguish of heart" betrays a total insensitivity to the things which most assuredly can cause anguish of heart to any Christian, especially to the apostle who had converted them and had such love for them.

The conditions at Corinth, described in 1 Corinthians, were exceedingly deplorable. Incest, heartless lawsuits by the members before pagan judges, drunkenness at the Lord's table, arrogant self-seeking among the members, denials of the resurrection, warring, loveless factions, etc., etc. "Any one of these things was sufficient to cause Paul real distress and the severest grief." McGarvey also understood this verse as a reference to 1 Corinthians. -Coffman Commentaries

**2 Corinthians 2:5****2Co 2:5**

**has caused pain --** The traditional interpretation of this makes it a reference to the incestuous person of [1Co 5:1-8](#). McGarvey saw in [2Co 2:3-5](#) above a plain hint of the connection between the two passages, since, he said, "By referring to [1Co 4:21](#); [1Co 5:1](#), it will be seen that the threat of correction at his coming and the case of the incestuous person were twin thoughts in his mind." - Coffman Commentaries

In all history, until very recent times, only one voice was ever raised in denial of the identity of the two offenders as one; and that was that of Tertullian who lived only about a hundred years after the times of Paul. Yet, even in his case, it appears that the universally held conviction of that time was denied by nobody except Tertullian; and he was able to offer no proof whatever to support it.  
Coffman Commentaries

**2 Corinthians 2:6****2Co 2:6**

**this punishment by the majority --** Paul had directed the church to remove the incestuous man from their fellowship ([1Co 5:5](#)) Paul's object here is to have him restored to their fellowship again since he had repented. He says that the punishment which they had meted out was "sufficient."

- 1) It was a sufficient express of the evil the man represented,
- 2) It was sufficient to demonstrate that the church wanted to preserve purity, ([1Co 5:6](#))
- 3) It was sufficient punishment to bring the offender to repentance.

**2 Corinthians 2:7****2Co 2:7**

**forgive and comfort him --** Rather than continue the pain and disgrace of excommunication, it was not time to forgive and restore the offender.

There is every reason to believe that the man had sincerely repented and changed his ways.

**lest he be overwhelmed [swallowed up] by excessive sorrow. --** This is a strong expression, denoting intensity of grief.

We speak of a man's being drowned in sorrow; or overwhelmed with grief; of grief preying upon him. The figure here is probably taken from deep waters, or from a whirlpool which seems to swallow up anything that comes within reach.

Excessive grief or calamity, in the Scriptures, is often compared to such waters; see [Psa 124:2-5](#); [Psa 69:1](#).

**2 Corinthians 2:8****2Co 2:8**

**reaffirm your love --** Perhaps Paul is thinking of some public act of the church by which their excommunication would be removed and the man reassured of their love for him.

The word rendered here as “**confirm**” (κυρωσαι *kuro̅sai*) occurs in the New Testament only here and in [Gal 3:15](#) (confirmed, ratified).

**2 Corinthians 2:9****2Co 2:9**

**this is why I wrote --** Paul doesn't say this was the only purpose of his writing (of his first epistle). Neither does he mean it was an arbitrary manner to test their willingness to obey him.

1) It was meant to define sin; 2) to keep the church pure from defilement; 3) to bring the man to repentance; 4) it revealed the church's to obey and to do the right thing even when it was somewhat painful.

**2 Corinthians 2:10****2Co 2:10**

**whom you forgive, I also forgive --** Paul wanted them to know that their forgiveness toward the penitent man was what he also wanted.

**What I have forgiven, --** Paul express what he would have done if there with the church.

**in the presence of Christ, --** Paul expresses that forgiveness, both Paul's and the church's, would be what Christ would have done if He was literally there with them.

**2 Corinthians 2:11****2Co 2:11**

**not be outwitted by Satan --** If the penitent man was not forgiven and restored, his overwhelming grief may give Satan an opportunity to claim the man again. Paul doesn't want Satan to get an advantage in this situation, as he uses such wiles to reclaim men.

**2 Corinthians 2:12****2Co 2:12**

**When I came to Troas --** Paul had passed through Troas on his second missionary journey ([Act 16:8-9](#)). But this occasion of coming to Troas followed his mission at Corinth in Acts 18 and following his

former epistle to them. Paul had not heard what effect his epistle had on them, and he desperately wanted to know.

**preaching the gospel --** Paul was not idle in waiting to hear regarding the reception the Corinthians gave to his epistle. He had an open door, and opportunity where people were disposed to hear the gospel. ([1Co 16:9](#))

## 2 Corinthians 2:13

### [2Co 2:13](#)

**my spirit was not at rest --** Apparently Paul had planned to meet Titus there at Troas and was eager to learn from him how his letter to the Corinthians has been received, ([2Co 12:18](#)). He was disappointed in not finding Titus there so he left Troas for **Macedonia**.

Paul probably knew the route Titus was to take to come to Paul. It was apparently the over-land route from Corinth up through **Macedonia** rather than by sea to Troas.

**Titus --** Titus' name is mentioned 9 times in 12 verses in this epistle. [2Co 2:13](#); [2Co 7:6](#); [2Co 7:13-14](#); [2Co 8:6](#); [2Co 8:16](#); [2Co 8:23](#); [2Co 12:18](#).

It is surprising that Titus is never mentioned in the book of Acts. He was one of Paul's most trusted and faithful helpers. (See Note at [Tit 1:4](#); and [Tit 1:1](#) introduction to the book of Titus).

Apparently Titus, following Paul's example, also did not receive any money from this church.

## 2 Corinthians 2:14

### [2Co 2:14](#)

**But thanks be to God --** There seem to have been several sources of Paul's joy on this occasion. But in particular he rejoiced;

- (1) Because Titus had come to him there, and had removed his distress; compare [2Co 1:1](#).
- (2) because he learned from him that his efforts in regard to the church at Corinth had been successful, and that they had hearkened to his counsels in his first letter.

**God ... always leads us in triumphal procession --** The picture seems this: As victorious Roman generals would lead a victory procession through the streets of Rome upon their return, just so God leads us in victory over sin and death, etc.

**Triumph in Christ .. (Triumphal procession .. NIV)** The only other place this word occurs is in [Col 2:15](#).

**through us diffuses [spreads] the fragrance --** As in the victorious procession the generals and soldiers would throw out coins to the people, God is spreading the gospel out everywhere. The gospel is likened to sweet smelling perfume spreading out to all those around it.

People seeing and hearing the news of the conversion and the life the Corinthians now lead for Christ would spread out everywhere.

## 2 Corinthians 2:15

### 2Co 2:15

**we are the aroma of Christ to God** -- Incense was burned in the triumphal procession of returning conquerors. Likewise victorious Christians, and especially ministers like Paul, were pleasant aromatic incense before God,

**among ... saved and ... perishing** -- The reference is to those who hear the gospel and obey it being saved. But those who reject it will be lost.

## 2 Corinthians 2:16

### 2Co 2:16

**a fragrance from death to death**, -- To those who are lost the gospel smells of death; they are dead to the message and eternal death that will be theirs.

**to the other a fragrance from life to life**. -- To those believing and obeying the gospel it is the sweet smelling aroma that gives life.

## 2 Corinthians 2:17

### 2Co 2:17

**For we are not, like so many**, -- Doubtlessly this refers to the false teachers at Corinth, and to all who mingle human philosophy or traditions with the pure word of truth.

**peddlers of God's word**, -- Paul equates these false teachers as peddlers out for making money.

**which corrupt the word of God [KJV]**-- Margin, "deal deceitfully with." The word used here (*καπηλεύοντες* *kape leuontes*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and does not occur in the Septuagint. The word is derived from *κάπηλος* *kape los*, which signifies properly a huckster, or a retailer of wine, a man who buys up articles for the purpose of selling them again.

**men of sincerity** -- Paul was preaching the word of God not mixed with anything false.

The word "**sincere**" comes from the Latin "*sincerus*" (*sine*= without; *cera*= wax) meaning "without wax". The word "**sincere**" was stamped by artisans on the bottom of their ceramic works as evidence they were genuine. The artisans would break their works that had flaws or didn't meet



their standards. However, Con-men would often steal the artisans' rejected works and would piece them together with wax and then dupe unsuspecting buying.

**commissioned by God --** Paul again alludes to his authority as an apostle as he had done in the opening verses of his epistle, [2Co 1:1](#); [2Co 1:22](#); (cf. [2Co 5:20](#); [Eph 6:20](#))

**we speak in Christ. --** In the name of, and in the service of Christ as His ministers. Paul has no ulterior motive than preaching simply and faithfully the words of Christ.

**2 Corinthians 3:1****2Co 3:1**

**Do we begin again --** This seems to be raised to meet an objection.

**To commend ourselves? --** To recommend ourselves; do we speak this in our own praise, in order to obtain your favor.

**Or need we, as some others --** Probably some who had brought letters of recommendation to them from Judea. The false teachers at Corinth had been apparently introduced there by commendatory letters from abroad.

Letters of introduction were common among the Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews, as they are now.

**Of commendation from you --** To other congregations. It is implied here by Paul, that he sought no such letter. The news of the congregations he established were by themselves his letters of recommendation ([2Co 3:2](#)), along with his own work ethic and integrity.

Such letters were, however, sometimes given by Christians, and are by no means improper, [Act 18:27](#).

**2 Corinthians 3:2****2Co 3:2**

**You are our epistle --** The conversion of the Corinthians under Paul's labors was a better testimonial of his character and fidelity than any letter could be.

**written in our hearts --** The sense may be that this letter (2Cor.) was, as it were, written on his heart. But most likely it portrays their conversion to Christ as a tender message written on Paul's heart.

A few mss. and versions read thus, "your hearts" but not sufficient for one to alter the majority reading.

**known and read of all men --** Corinth was a large, splendid, and dissipated city. Their conversion, therefore, would be known afar. All people would hear of their conversion under Paul's labor.

**2 Corinthians 3:3****2Co 3:3**

**clearly you are an epistle of Christ, --** Their conversion was as good as any letter of recommendation.

**an epistle of Christ, --** A letter that Christ sent as a testimonial to Paul's character and integrity.

**ministered by us --** The idea here is, that Christ had employed their ministry in accomplishing this. They were Christ's letter, but it had been prepared by the instrumentality of the apostles.

**written not with ink --** Paul continues to use the metaphor of a letter of recommendation. But this letter was not written by a fading ink, in lines that easily fade, or that can be read by only a few, or may be soon destroyed.

**but by the Spirit of the living God, --** In strong contrast with letters written with ink. By the Spirit of God moving on the heart revealing the God's grace in their conversion.

Paul begins to make a strong distinction between the law given through Moses that came to end, and the living gospel of Christ that reigns now.

**not on tablets of stone -** The ten commandments had been written on stone, first by God Himself. It here stands for the entire Law that was given at Mt. Sinai and for all the teaching from Moses and the prophets of the O.T.

The new covenant had been promised by Jeremiah and Ezekiel ([Jer 31:33](#); [Eze 11:20](#)).

**tablets of stone --** A reference to the Ten Commandments (see notes on [Exo 24:12](#); [Exo 25:16](#)). Those who insist on keeping the Sabbath (Saturday) that is a part of the Law of Moses that has been nailed to the cross [Col 2:14](#) are in conflict with Paul's teaching in this chapter. All the ten commandments are taught in the New Covenant, except the "Sabbath" law. (Cf. [Act 20:7](#), [1Co 16:1-2](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 3:4

### [2Co 3:4](#)

**such trust [confidence] --** Paul was confident in his ministry, and that confidence resulted in his ability to stay the course and continue moving toward the goal (cf. [Act 4:13](#), [Act 4:29](#)).

This is another Pauline term used mostly in II Corinthians. It comes from the same Greek root as faith, trust, believe (peitho and pistis, pisteuo). It basically means trust, confidence, or reliance.

**through Christ --** Christ alone can inspire such confidence and power Paul needed.

Paul's confidence before God in claiming that the Corinthians were a letter written by Christ that validated his apostolic credentials came *through Christ*.

**toward God. --** i.e. in relation to God; towards whom all of Paul's service is directed, [Rom 5:1](#).

## 2 Corinthians 3:5

2Co 3:5

**Not ... sufficient of ourselves --** Paul's confidence was not in himself but in Christ.

**to think --** "to consider". This is the term *logizomai*, reflects Paul's logical presentation of truths.

**our adequacy [sufficiency] is from God --** Paul points to God as the source of his confidence (v. 4) which did not come from his own abilities, but from the power of God (1Co 2:1-5).

**2 Corinthians 3:6**2Co 3:6

**made us able [enabled, sufficient, competent, adequate] ministers [servants] --** Paul was called by Christ Himself to be a ministers of the new covenant. 2Co 1:1.

**the new covenant --** The covenant that provides forgiveness of sins through the death of Christ ( Jer 31:31-34; Eze 11:19; Mat 26:28; Heb 8:7-12).

**the letter kills --** This is a reference to the law of Moses (compare Rom 2:27; Rom 7:6). The law does not justify people; it only identifies sin and condemns (see Rom 3:20; Rom 8:2). Instead, people are justified by faith (see Rom 3:28 and note).

**the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. --** The letter kills because it results in spiritual death. Man's inability to truly keep the Mosaic Law sentenced him to an eternal death (without a sacrifice of atonement, see notes on Rom 7:9-11; cf. Rom 5:12; Gal 3:10). Here "spirit" stands for the New Covenant under Christ, and only through Jesus Christ can one have eternal life, and it is through grace. Rom 1:16; 1Co 1:18.

**“not of the letter but of the Spirit”** There is a series of comparisons.

1. stone versus the heart, vv. 2Co 3:3
2. letter versus spirit, v. 2Co 3:6
3. old service versus spiritual service, v. 2Co 3:7
4. ministry of death versus life, 2Co 3:7, 2Co 3:6
5. the service connected with condemnation versus the service connected with right-standing, v. 2Co 3:9
6. what has passed away versus what is permanent, v. 2Co 3:11
7. the veil remains unlifted versus the veil is removed, v. 2Co 3:14

Paul is contrasting the old and new covenants, the contrast of the Law of Moses versus the Gospel of Christ, the "letter" versus the "heart" (cf. Rom 2:29; Rom 7:6), one depending on "legalism" versus "grace".

**Not of the letter, but of the spirit** -- Both in this and in the final clause of this verse, the RSV has perpetrated a gross error in capitalizing "Spirit" in order to make it mean "Holy Spirit" in both clauses, an error slavishly followed in Good News for Modern Man, Phillips New Testament, The New English Bible (1961), and others. While it is true, of course, that the blessings of the new covenant may be enjoyed only by those who have received the blessed Holy Spirit, there is no reference to that here. As Hughes said, "It is unlikely that a direct reference to the Spirit is intended." "The contrast in [2Co 3:6](#) is not between the outward and inward sense of scripture, but between the outward and inward power of the Jewish and Christian dispensations." As Tasker put it, "Paul is distinguishing the new covenant from the old by using the contrasted categories of spirit and letter, life and death." Farrar gave the meaning as "Not of the law, but of the gospel." Paul's usage of this same expression in [Rom 2:28](#) speaks of a true Jew as one who is a Jew in heart, IN THE SPIRIT, NOT IN THE LETTER. There is no need to multiply evidence that Paul used the same expression here exactly as he used it there. - Coffman

## 2 Corinthians 3:7

### [2Co 3:7](#)

**ministry of death** -- Paul contrasts his ministry with the ministry of Moses (the law) which brought only death and condemnation (compare note on [2Co 3:6](#)). In contrast the Gospel of Christ, given by the inspiration of God's Spirit, brought grace, forgiveness and eternal life, ([Rom 1:16](#); [Eph 1:7](#); [Rom 8:3](#); [Gal 3:21](#)).

**engraved on stones** -- Literally the ten commandments, but here it stands for the full Law of Moses.

Again here is the evidence that Sabbath (Saturday) keeping, which was part of the ten commandments, was nailed to the cross, and first day of the week is for special remember's of the Lord's death. ([Act 20:7](#); [1Co 11:23-26](#); [1Co 16:1-2](#)).

**could not look steadily [gaze] at the face of Moses** -- The Israelites could not look intently or stare at Moses' face for too long because the reflective glory of God was too bright for them. It was similar to staring into the sun (see [Exo 34:29-35](#))

Compare the Transfiguration of Jesus in [Mat 17:1-8](#); [2Pe 1:16-18](#).

**face of Moses** -- Even though Moses' ministry of the law was a ministry of death and condemnation, it was still accompanied by the glory of God. While God's glory made Moses' face radiant ([Exo 34:29-35](#)), that glory did not last.

**its glory ... brought to an end,** -- That covenant that came through Moses was brought to an end with the death of Christ on the cross.

However, Paul here laid stress on the diminishing radiance of Moses' face, interpreting the veil as being used to prevent Israel's SEEING THE GLORY FADE AWAY. Thus the veil symbolized the

blindness of Israel, not only in the old covenant, but also in the rejection of Christ the head of the new covenant; and the disappearing glory of Moses' face symbolized the abrogation of the old covenant. - Coffman

The complaint of Foy E. Wallace, Jr., regarding the RSV's rendition of this paragraph is fully justified. He said:

They have omitted "*done away*" ([2Co 3:7](#)), "*abolished*" ([2Co 3:13](#)), and "*is done away in Christ*" ([2Co 3:14](#)) ... This chapter clearly affirms the abolition of the MINISTRATION OF DEATH (the Old Covenant). They have clobbered the entire chapter of [2 Cor. 3](#). - Coffman

## 2 Corinthians 3:8

### [2Co 3:8](#)

**ministry of the Spirit [spirit] --** Both in verse 6 and this verse, the RSV has perpetrated a gross error in capitalizing "Spirit" in order to make it mean "Holy Spirit" in both clauses ... Hughes said, "The contrast in [2Co 3:6](#) is not between the outward and inward sense of scripture, but between the outward and inward power of the Jewish and Christian dispensations." As Tasker put it, "Paul is distinguishing the new covenant from the old by using the contrasted categories of spirit and letter, life and death." Farrar gave the meaning as "Not of the law, but of the gospel." Paul's usage of this same expression in [Rom 2:28](#) ff speaks of a true Jew as one who is a Jew in heart, IN THE SPIRIT, NOT IN THE LETTER. - (Coffman )

**ministry of the Spirit ... exceeds much more in glory. --** The "ministry of the Spirit" is Paul's descriptive term for the New Covenant (see [Jer 31:31-34](#); [Mat 26:28](#); [1Co 11:25](#); [Heb 8:8](#), [Heb 8:13](#); [Heb 9:15](#); [Heb 12:24](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 3:9

### [2Co 3:9](#)

**ministry of condemnation ... righteousness --** The whole relationship of the two covenants was dealt with by the writer of Hebrews. Despite the fact that the total abrogation of the old covenant is stated here, it is incidental to the truth being stressed, that is, that the new covenant is more glorious.

The "*ministry of the Spirit*" is Paul's descriptive term for the New Covenant (see [Jer 31:31-34](#); [Mat 26:28](#); [1Co 11:25](#); [Heb 8:8](#), [Heb 8:13](#); [Heb 9:15](#); [Heb 12:24](#)).

Paul is arguing that if such glory attended the giving of the law under the ministry that brought death, how much more glorious is the New Covenant which brings righteousness. The law pointed to the superior New Covenant and thus a glory that must also be superior.

## 2 Corinthians 3:10

[2Co 3:10](#)

**what once had glory** -- refers to the old covenant.

**has come to have no glory at all**, -- that is, not as glorious as the new covenant.

**because of the glory that surpasses it**. -- means "because of the glory of the new covenant."

**that which passeth away** -- is needlessly softened in this version. As the English Revised Version (1885) margin gives it, the better rendition is "*is being done away*."

Paul's stress in these verses of the fading glory and ultimate abrogation of the law of Moses was directly related to the problems at Corinth. Macknight was almost certainly correct in his view that:

These observations (of Paul) concerning the glory or excellence of the gospel above the law, were made by the apostle to convince the Corinthians how ill-founded was the boasting of the false teacher, who assumed to himself great honor on account of his knowledge of the law of Moses, and who erroneously enjoined obedience to the law, as necessary to salvation. - Coffman

**2 Corinthians 3:11**[2Co 3:11](#)

**brought to an end** -- the old covenant given at Sinai through Moses, [2Co 3:7](#), came to an end with Christ and the Gospel.

**what is permanent** -- the new covenant (the Gospel) given through Christ.

The case is made that the new covenant has permanent to glory in contrast to that given through Moses.

**2 Corinthians 3:12**[2Co 3:12](#)

**we have such a hope** -- Dummelow's paraphrase is: "Since our hopes for the future of the gospel are so great, we speak frankly and boldly. We do not seek to conceal anything as Moses concealed his face with a veil." - Coffman

**such hope** -- The belief that all the promises of the New Covenant are coming to pass in Christ. It is hope in total and complete forgiveness of sins for those who obey the gospel, cf. [Heb 5:9](#); [Rom 8:24-25](#); [Gal 5:5](#); [Eph 1:18](#); [1Pe 1:3](#), [1Pe 1:13](#), [1Pe 1:21](#).

**2 Corinthians 3:13**[2Co 3:13](#)

**Moses ... veil over his face --** [Exo 34:29-35](#);

**might not see [gaze, look steadfastly, look intently]** -- Clines observed that "Concealment was not necessarily Moses' motive for the veil; Paul is probably thinking that it was God's providence that the Israelites never saw that the glory was fading." - Coffman

New Century Version = "We are not like Moses, who put a covering over his face so the Israelites would not see it. The glory was disappearing, and Moses did not want them to see it end."

The Old Covenant was shadowy. It was made up of types, pictures, symbols, and mystery. Moses and the prophets communicated the glory of the Old Covenant with a certain obscurity (cf. [1Pe 1:10-11](#)).

**was passing away [brought to an end; abolished; being done away; fading away]** -- This refers to the passing away of the old covenant given through Moses.

That old covenant was not something that passed away slowly with time. God consciously abrogated it, on the basis that Israel had broken it ([Heb 8:9](#)). But it came to a sudden and complete end with the sacrifice of Christ on the cross ([Col 2:14](#), etc.).

**2 Corinthians 3:14**[2Co 3:14](#)

**their minds were hardened.** -- Paul gets a lot of use out of the "veil" metaphor. In these verses it stands for the hardening of Israel; but the most significant fact is that the veil is removed in Christ.

An immense body of truth is related to CHRIST AND THE VEIL, as the word is used in scripture. The rending of the veil of the temple during our Lord's crucifixion, for example, compels the linking of many of the most significant truths in the Bible under the subject of Christ and the Veil. - Coffman (Matt 23: )

**hardened** -- This Greek term comes from the idea of "thick skinned" or "callousness" (cf. [Mar 6:52](#); [Mar 8:17](#); [Rom 11:7](#); [Rom 11:25](#))

**the same veil remains unlifted** -- Moses used a literal veil; this term is now used to describe the inner blindness of contemporary rabbinical Judaism. Jews are walking in the judgment of [Isa 6:9-10](#) and [Isa 29:10](#).



Paul's point was that just as the Old Covenant was obscure to the people of Moses' day, it was still obscure to those who trusted in it as a means of salvation in Paul's day. The veil of ignorance obscures the meaning of the Old Covenant to the hardened heart (cf. [Joh 5:38](#)). - MSB

**taken away** -- NASB, TEV "**removed**"; NKJV "**taken away**"; NRSV "**set aside**"; NJB "**done away**"

## 2 Corinthians 3:15

### [2Co 3:15](#)

**Yes, to this day** -- Paul wrote this epistle about 30 years after Christ's death but he accurately describes the conduct of most Jews who were still persecuting Christians. Of no other people on earth would such a description still be accurate nineteen hundred years after it was made.

**when Moses is read** -- A portion from five books of Moses and a portion from the prophets were read regularly in their synagogues. (See note on [Luk 4:16](#)).

Without Christ, the Old Testament is an impenetrable mystery. Paul pointed out here that the Jews who did not believe in Jesus were blinded to many of the most significant things in the Old Testament. "Few passages in the New Testament emphasize more strongly that the Old Testament Scriptures are fully intelligible only when Christ is seen to be their fulfillment." - Coffman

**Moses is read** -- Jews typically heard the Law of Moses read every week in the local synagogue (see [Luk 4:16-17](#); [Act 13:27](#); act 15:21; [Act 17:2-3](#)).

**a veil lies over their hearts.** -- Moses covered his face with a veil because of the radiance of God's glory ([Exo 34:33-34](#)). This veil represents the Jews' hardened hearts and their inability to grasp the gospel message and refusal to obey God.

## 2 Corinthians 3:16

### [2Co 3:16](#)

**But [when ever, nevertheless]** -- This conjunction does not always mean "to continue", but introduces a time when a persons comes to understand the scriptures and turns to the Lord in obedience.

**when one turns to the Lord,** -- This refers to conversion by believing and obeying the Gospel. [Mar 4:12](#); [Act 3:19](#); [Act 15:19](#); [1Th 1:9](#).

Believing in Christ one understands how the O.T. was a shadow of things to come, and how He is the fulfillment of its Messianic prophecies and promises.

**one** -- "One" here is speaking univervally of anyone, Jews of Gentile, and not limited to the "Jews" as some try to maintain.

**the veil is removed [taken away]** -- When people come to understand the true meaning of the prophecies and the genuine sense of the word of God, their understanding is like a light shinning upon it.

There may be an allusion in the language here to the declaration in [Isa 25:7](#). - BN

## 2 Corinthians 3:17

### [2Co 3:17](#)

**the Lord** -- The word "Lord" here refers to the Lord Jesus, cf. [2Co 3:16](#).

**the Lord is the Spirit,** -- Paul does not here fuse the persons of the Lord and the Holy Spirit. Here the word "Spirit" should not be capitalized because Paul is continuing is use "spirit" as the contrast of "letter". ([2Co 3:6](#) see note there.)

Paul in making a distinction between the "letter" and the "spirit" makes "Moses" to be representation of the "letter" (the Law) and the "Lord" (Christ) to be the fulfillment of the "spirit" in his contrast of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

**where the Spirit of the Lord is,** -- Here "spirit" stands for the "Gospel", the New Covenant. Christ brought the New Covenant ("spirit") into play and with it came "freedom" from the Law, and freedom from sin. ([Joh 8:32](#));

**there is freedom.** -- In Christ there is **freedom**: (1) from the law ([Rom 8:2](#)); (2) from fear ([Rom 8:13](#)); (3) from the law of sin and death ([Rom 8:2](#)); (4) from sin ([Rom 6:18](#)); and (5) from corruption ([Rom 8:21](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 3:18

### [2Co 3:18](#)

**we all** -- All believers in Christ.

**all with unveiled [open] face** -- All Christians, not just one man, as in the case of Moses, behold the glory of the Lord; and no veil is required.

**beholding** -- The word "beholding" (**G2734**) in classical Greek means "looking at one's self in a mirror"; "But that requires steady looking when mirrors are metal, and so the word came to mean simply, TO GAZE STEADILY."

The word used here [κατοπτρίζομενοι](#) *katoptrizomenoi* has been very variously rendered. Macknight renders it, "we all reflecting as mirrors the glory of the Lord." ([1Co 13:12](#))

**beholding the glory of the Lord, --** [Heb 1:3](#); The splendor, majesty, and holiness of God as manifested in the gospel, or of the Lord as incarnate. The idea is, that God was clearly and distinctly seen in the gospel. There was no obscurity, no veil, as in the case of Moses.

**being transformed [changed into the same image] --** [Rom 12:2](#);

Under the old covenant, only the face of Moses shone; only the high priest went into the Holy of Holies; only the priests might serve at the altar, etc., etc. But in the glorious new covenant, "All who are Christ's, whether great or small, whether known or unknown, have this blessed privilege of beholding and being transformed." - Coffman

**one degree of glory to another. --** Paul suggests that believers will progress through ever-greater degrees of glory (*doxa* in Greek). This may mean that they will learn and grow more in their relationship with Him over time. Alternatively, this progress may culminate in the transformation of the physical body into a glorious one ([1Co 15:50-54](#)).

**"Ever-increasing glory"** literally is "from glory to glory." (cf. [Rom 1:17](#) where the phrase "from faith to faith" must mean from an every increasing faith.)

**the Lord who is the Spirit. --** McGarvey gave the import of this to be, "Now Jesus is that Spirit, or new covenant of which I have been speaking ([2Co 3:3](#), [2Co 3:6](#), [2Co 3:8](#)); and where that new covenant is, there is liberty, especially the liberty of seeing (without a veil)." In this view, spirit would not be capitalized. - Coffman

**2 Corinthians 4:1****2Co 4:1**

Broomall has an interesting outline of this chapter, as follows:

The hidden and the open (2Co 4:1-2).

The blinded and the enlightened (2Co 4:3).

Slaves and Master (2Co 4:5).

Darkness and Light (2Co 4:6).

The frail and the mighty (2Co 4:7).

Trials and triumph (2Co 4:8-10).

Death and life (2Co 4:11-12).

The written and the spoken (2Co 4:13).

The past and the future (2Co 4:14).

Grace and thanksgiving (2Co 4:15).

The outer and inner man (2Co 4:16).

Affliction and glory (2Co 4:17).

The seen and the eternal 2Co 4:18 b)

**Therefore --** Διὰ τοῦτο *Dia touto*. On account of this. That is, because the light of the gospel is so clear and glorious.

**we --** In this chapter "we" refers to Paul, at least mainly, and secondarily to his fellow workers." However, it is especially the apostles who are in view here.

**this ministry --** is a reference to "the new covenant," so much more glorious than that of Moses, 2Co 3:6.

**as we have received mercy --** Paul is affirming that it is because of God's mercy that he is a minister of this new covenant, 1Ti 1:13.

This clause is very significant as showing that the new covenant brought to mankind through the gospel of Christ "is not an achievement of human ability but a consequence of divine mercy. - Coffman

**we do not lose heart [faint not] --** Recognizing God's mercy upon him prompts him to continue steadfastly and faithfully and not become disheartened by difficulties or persecution. Luk 18:1; 2Co 4:16;

The word used here (ἐκκακῶν μὲν *ekkakoumen*) **G1573** means, properly, to turn out a coward; to lose one's courage; then to be fainthearted, to faint, to despond, in view of trial, difficulty, etc. - Robinson.

Ellicott says it means "to retire through fear *out* of it. - CGNT

**we faint not** -- in boldness of speech and action, and patience in suffering ([2Co 4:2](#), [2Co 4:8-16](#)). - JFB

## 2 Corinthians 4:2

### [2Co 4:2](#)

**we have renounced** -- The word ([ἀπειπάμεθα](#) *apeipametha*, from [ἀπό](#) *apo* and [εἶπον](#) *eipon*, [G550](#)) properly means "to speak out". Here it seems to indicate that Paul has spoken out against such teachers that mishandle the word of God.

**disgraceful, underhanded way.** -- The Greek word most commonly means shame, or disgrace. The hidden things of shame here mean disgraceful conduct; clandestine and secret arts, which were in themselves shameful and disgraceful. - BN

**hidden things ... craftiness ... deceitfully** -- .. Rather than viewing this as Paul's defense of himself from criticism imputing such devices to him by his enemies, it is preferable, as Kelcy did, to see this as Paul's allusion "to such underhanded methods of certain false teachers at Corinth." - Coffman

**craftiness** -- refers to tricky and deceitful devices which no faithful preacher of the word of God may use. Paul indicates that the false teachers at Corinth uses such means as he would never use.

**handling the word ... deceitfully** -- No greater sin exists than that of perverting and polluting the word of God, whether by toning down its requirements, or adulterating it with purely secular teachings. Such a corruption of the word of God, according to Lenski, is "the most dastardly of all the dastardly deeds done in the world. - Coffman ([2Co 2:17](#))

**handling . . . deceitfully** -- so "corrupt" or adulterate "the word of God" ([2Co 2:17](#); compare [1Th 2:3-4](#)). - JFB

**by the open statement of truth** -- By clear and exhibition of the truth

**to every man's conscience** -- Conscience is that faculty of the mind which distinguishes for himself what is right and wrong and which prompts one to choose a course. Paul appeals to man's faculty of appreciating and acknowledging truth. [Joh 8:9](#); [Rom 2:15](#); [1Co 10:25](#), [1Co 10:27-29](#)

**in the sight of God** -- As in the immediate presence of God. We act as if we felt that His eye was upon us; and this consideration serves to keep us from the hidden things of dishonesty, and from improper arts in spreading the true religion; see the note on [2Co 2:17](#). - BN

**in the sight of God** -- This seems to be an idiomatic phrase parallel to "God is my witness." Other Pauline texts also use this phrase in a similar way (cf. [Gal 1:20](#); [1Ti 5:21](#); [1Ti 6:13](#); [2Ti 2:14](#); [2Ti 4:1](#)), also notice Paul's oath formula in [2Co 1:23](#); [2Co 11:31](#); and [1Th 2:5](#); [1Th 2:10](#)). - Utley

**2 Corinthians 4:3**2Co 4:3

**But even if --** Paul seems to refer to an objection. Many Jews could not or would not try to understand how the Gospel shed light on the O.T. prophesies and promises, and they drown in unbelief.

**gospel is veiled --** "The veil (that prevents their seeing) is woven by their own prejudices and corrupt affections." As Jesus said it, "Men love darkness rather than the light because their deeds are evil" (Joh 3:19). - Coffman

The problem the Gospel is obscure to some is not in the Gospel itself but in men's hearts.

**them that perish --** The scholars insist that this is a mistranslation and should read, "*in them that are perishing*." Plumptre said, "The force of the present participle, as not excluding the thought of future change, should be noted." Even hardened sinners who will not see the truth still have the option of changing if they will. - Coffman

**2 Corinthians 4:4**2Co 4:4

**the god of this world [age] --** "Satan is not here called the god of the COSMOS, but god of THIS AGE." - Coffman

This passage does not impute deity to Satan. "Satan is not a god properly, but is merely one in reference to those who have sinfully made him such." - McGarvey

In Joh 12:31, he is called "the prince of this world." In Eph 2:2, he is called "the prince of the power of the air." And in Eph 6:12, the same bad influence is referred to under the names of "principalities, and powers," "the rulers of the darkness of this world," and "spiritual wickedness in high places." The name "god" is here given to him, not because he has any divine attributes, but because he actually has the homage of the people of this world as their god, as the being who is really worshipped, or who has the affections of their hearts in the same way as it is given to idols. By "this world" is meant the wicked world; or the mass of people. - BN

**blinded the minds --** This refers to "hardening" as it is called in other places in the New Testament (Rom 1:21; Rom 11:7, Rom 11:25, etc.).

Blinding, darkening and hardening all refer to the same thing. Hardening occurs when the individual rebels against God, who then allows Satan to have his way, with a result of further hardening; and thus, in a sense God hardens people, as in the case of Pharaoh (Rom 9:17-18). Satan was never able to blind any person who had not already rebelled against God. -- Coffman

**light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, --** The gospel of Christ is the source of all spiritual light. It is a gospel of glory, and that glory is of Christ. - Coffman

That the minds of unbelievers are blinded; that they perceive no beauty in the gospel. This is often affirmed of those who reject the gospel, and who live in sin; [Mat 23:16-17](#), [Luk 4:18](#); [Joh 9:39](#); [Joh 12:40](#); [Rom 11:7](#) note. The sense is, that they did not see the spiritual beauty and glory of the plan of redemption. (BN)

**the glory of Christ, --** The Gospel is like a light revealing the glory of Christ.

It is all light, and splendor, and beauty, compared with the dark systems of philosophy and paganism. It is glorious, for it is full of splendor; makes known the glorious God; discloses a glorious plan of salvation; and conducts ignorant, weak, and sinful man to a world of light. No two words in our language are so full of rich and precious meaning, as the phrase "glorious gospel." (BN)

**the image of God. --** Other New Testament passages in which Christ is referred to as God's image are:

"Who is the image of the invisible God" ([Col 1:15](#)).

"The very image of his substance" ([Heb 1:3](#)).

"He that beholdeth me beholdeth him that sent me" ([Joh 12:45](#)).

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" ([Joh 14:9](#)).

Christ is the image of God in two ways:

(1) As a perfect man, he, like Adam, was "in the image of God" ([Gen 1:26](#)). In his moral attributes as Mediator, as showing forth the glory of the Father to people. He "resembles" God, and in him we see the divine glory and perfections embodied, and shine forth.

(2) As God in human form, Jesus accurately mirrored the Father's will for mankind. In respect to his divine nature, his exact resemblance to God in his divine attributes and perfections; see [Col 1:15](#); and [Heb 1:3](#); [Php 2:5-11](#).

## 2 Corinthians 4:5

### [2Co 4:5](#)

**what we proclaim is not ourselves, --** The meaning is that Paul rejected all personal claims to any human authority on his part, preaching only what Christ commanded him to preach. "All is of God; nothing is of self." - Coffman

**but Jesus Christ as Lord, --** The supreme Lordship of Christ was central in all apostolic preaching. This is recognized by every Christian whose very confession, at the time of his conversion, begins with "confessing Jesus as Lord" ([Rom 10:9](#)).

**ourselves as your servants** -- The Greek word here rendered "servants" is *doulos*; and it Paul was a servant of Christ ministering (serving) the gospel to the Corinthians.

**for Jesus' sake.** -- It was for the sake of preaching Jesus' message that he was a "servant/slave" ministering to the Corinthians. [1Co 1:1-2](#). [2Co 1:1-2](#); and notice Paul's introduction to the Romans, [Rom 1:1-2](#); etc. [Phi 1:1-2](#);

## 2 Corinthians 4:6

[2Co 4:6](#)

**God who said,** -- [Gen 1:3](#); [Joh 1:4-5](#); [Joh 1:7-9](#); The design of this verse seems to be, to give a reason why Paul and his fellow-apostles did not preach themselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord, [2Co 4:5](#).

**Let light shine** -- [Gen 1:3](#); [Joh 1:4-5](#); [Joh 1:7-9](#); God caused it to shine by his simple command. He said, "let there be light, and there was light." The fact that it was produced by "his saying so" is referred to here by Paul by his use of the phrase (οἱ εἰπόντες *ho eipo n*) "Who saying," or speaking the light to shine from darkness.

**has shone in our hearts** -- "Light" is every where in the Bible the emblem of knowledge, purity, and truth; as darkness is the emblem of ignorance, error, sin, and wretchedness. See [Joh 1:4-5](#). And the sense here is, that God had removed this ignorance, and poured a flood of light and truth on their minds.

**light of the knowledge of the glory of God** -- This shows the "object," or the "effect" of enlightening the mind. It is that Christians may behold the divine glory. The meaning is, that it is for the purpose of enlightening and instructing them concerning the knowledge of the glory of God

The sense is, that the purpose of his shining into their hearts was to give light (πρός *pros* φωτισμόν *pho tison*) that is, to acquaint them with the knowledge of the divine glory of God.

**the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.** -- The glory of God is seen the person of Jesus Christ. He is the image and glory of God.

## 2 Corinthians 4:7

[2Co 4:7](#)

**this treasure** -- The treasure of the gospel. The word "treasure" is applied to those truths on account of their inestimable worth. Paul in the previous verses had spoken of the gospel, the knowledge of Jesus Christ, as full of glory, and infinitely precious.

In the book of Ephesians one of the key words is "riches."



**in earthen vessels** -- The figure is possibly drawn from the "small pottery lamps, cheap and fragile, that could be bought in the shops of Corinth" - Coffman

**treasure in jars of clay [earthen vessels]** -- The word "vessel" (σκευος *skeuos*) means properly any utensil or instrument; and is applied usually to utensils of household furniture, or hollow vessels for containing things, [Luk 8:16](#); [Joh 19:29](#). It is applied to the human body, as made of clay, and therefore frail and feeble, with reference to its "containing" anything, as, e. g., treasure; compare [Rom 9:22-23](#).

The word rendered "earthen," (οἱ στροκίνοις *ostrakinois*) means that which is made of shells (from οἱ στροκινον *ostrakinon*), and then burnt clay, probably because vessels were at first made of burnt shells. It is suited well to represent the human body; frail, fragile, and easily reduced again to dust.

Paul's point is that the "treasure" of the Gospel is not in gold, silver, or other precious metal vessels, but, essentially, in "dirt" vessels.

**to show that the surpassing power** -- An elegant expressing denoting exceeding great power. The power seen in the apostles, in healing the sick, casting out devils, etc., did not reside in the apostles themselves, but was power belonging to God.

**the power belongs to God** -- [Rom 1:16](#);

**not us.** -- Not us, apostles and preachers, who deliver God's message.

2 Corinthians 4:8

[2Co\\_4:8](#)

See Text C-

xxx illustration about "Ice Bergrs"

**we are perplexed [troubled, afflicted, pressed]** - - (ἀπορούμενοι *aporoumenoi*). [G639](#). This word (from ἀπορος *aporos*, "without resource," which is derived from α *a*, the alpha privative ("not"), and πόρος *poros*, way, or exit) means to be without resource; to know not what to do; to hesitate; to be in doubt and anxiety, as a traveler is, who is ignorant of the way, or who has not the means of prosecuting his journey.

It means here, that they were often brought into circumstances of great embarrassment, where they hardly knew what to do, or what course to take. They were surrounded by foes; they were in want; they were in circumstances which they had not anticipated, and which greatly perplexed them. - BN

**in every way [on every side]** -- In every respect, in every way. We are subjected to all kinds of troubles.

**but not crushed [distressed; constricted; defeated];** -- The Greek word used here (στενοχωρούμενοι *stenochoroumenoi*) [G4729](#) has a relation to the word which is rendered

“troubled.” It properly means “to crowd into a narrow place; to straiten as to room; to be so straitened as not to be able to turn oneself.”

The idea is, that though he was closely pressed by persecutions and trials, yet he was not so hemmed in that he had no way to turn himself; his trials did not wholly prevent motion and action.

**perplexed, but not driven to despair.** -- Not utterly left without resource. The word here is [G1820](#), but Paul used "not" [ουκ G3756](#) in front of the word.

The idea of Paul here is, that they were not left “entirely” without resource. Their needs were provided for; their embarrassments were removed; their grounds of perplexity were taken away; and unexpected strength and resources were imparted to them.

## 2 Corinthians 4:9

[2Co 4:9](#)

**persecuted** -- Often persecuted, persecuted in all places. The Book of Acts shows how true this was.

**but not forsaken** -- Not deserted; nor left by God

**struck [cast, thrown] down,** -- Thrown down by our enemies, perhaps in allusion to the contests of wrestlers, or of gladiators.

**but not destroyed;** -- Not killed. They rose again; recovered their strength. [Act 14:19-20](#).

## 2 Corinthians 4:10

[2Co 4:10](#)

**always carrying in the body the death of Jesus,** -- cf. [Gal 6:17](#). Paul was exposed to many dangers and had on his body the marks and stripes of punishment and persecution. cf. [Act 16:22-23](#); [Act 16:33](#);

**the death of Jesus,** -- The idea is that he (Paul) was always exposed to death like Jesus, and for preaching the message about Jesus.

**the life of Jesus** -- Jesus was described ([Act 1:1-3](#)) going about doing and preaching the good message from God. Jesus' life was a life of self denial and service to others.

**also manifested in our bodies.** -- As Jesus led a peaceable, loving, caring life, so Paul wanted to imitate that in his life.

There might be a hint also of what Paul is going to bring out more clearly in the next verse, that as Jesus' was resurrected to life after death, Paul wants and expects the same for himself.

Also, it should be noted here that Paul viewed both the death of Jesus and the life of Jesus as historical facts. For him there was no such distinction as that alleged by unbelieving critics who speak of "the historical Jesus" and the "risen Jesus." They were both historical! - Coffman Commentaries

## 2 Corinthians 4:11

### 2Co 4:11

**For we who live are always being given over [delivered] to death** -- Some of the Lord's ministers, like Stephen and James, had already been put to death ([Act 7:59-60](#); [Act 12:2](#)). Paul and all the apostles were in the same danger. [1Co 15:31](#).

**delivered to death.** -- Refers to the transferring of a prisoner to the executioner. It was used to refer to Christ's being delivered to those who crucified Him ([Mat 27:2](#)). In this case, it refers to the potential physical death constantly faced by those who represented Christ.

**for Jesus' sake,** -- Their lives were threatened for preaching the gospel, [Act 4:18](#); [Act 17:6](#).

**so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested [revealed] in our mortal flesh.** -- In our body on earth and in our glorified body in heaven.

**mortal body** -- With the addition of "mortal" (*θνητ*, *thnētos*) to "body" (*σὰρκι*, *sarx*), Paul leaves no doubt that what is primarily in his mind is the physical abuse his human body has endured for the sake of the gospel. - College Press

## 2 Corinthians 4:12

### 2Co 4:12

**So then death is at work in us,** -- . This is a strong and emphatic mode of saying that they were always exposed to death. The preaching of the gospel exposes us to trials which may be regarded as death working in us.

Paul is basically saying, "I am always exposed to physical death for your sake (v. 15); you have spiritual life as a result."

**but life is at work in you.** -- You live as the effect of our being constantly exposed to death. You reap the advantage of all our exposure to trials, and of all our sufferings.

Thus understood, this passage means, that the sufferings and self-denials of the apostles were for the good of others, and would result in their benefit and salvation.

**2 Corinthians 4:13****2Co 4:13**

**It is written:** -- This passage is found in [Psa 116:10](#).

**same spirit of faith.** --The attitude of faith, not the Holy Spirit. Paul had the same conviction about the power of the message as did the psalmist .

**"I believed; therefore I have spoken."** -- When the psalmist uttered the words, he was greatly afflicted; see [Psa 116:3](#), [Psa 116:6-8](#). In these circumstances, he prayed to God, and expressed confidence in him, and placed all his reliance on him.

**I believe** -- We believe in the truths of the gospel; we believe in God, in the Saviour, in the atonement, in the resurrection, etc. The sentiment is, that they had a firm confidence in these things, and that, as the result of that confidence they boldly delivered their sentiments.

**with that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak,** -- Paul finds himself often in a similar situation as that of David, and now boldly also speaks of his trust and confidence in God.

**2 Corinthians 4:14****2Co 4:14**

**we know** -- Being fully confident; having the most entire assurance. It was the assured hope of the resurrection which sustained them in all their trials.

**will also raise us** -- In the hope of the resurrection they were ready to meet trials, and even to die. Sustained by this assurance, the apostles went forth amidst persecutions and opposition to preach the Gospel.

**present us with you** -- Will present us before the throne of glory with exceeding joy and honor. They shall not only be raised up from the dead; but they shall be publicly and solemnly presented to God as his.

The Corinthians will be "stars" in the Paul's crown. See [1Th 2:19-20](#).

**2 Corinthians 4:15****2Co 4:15**

**For all things are for your sakes [your benefit]** -- All these things; these glorious hopes, and truths, and prospects; these self-denials of the apostles, and these provisions of the plan of mercy.

**so that the [abundant] grace --** Grace abounding, or overflowing. The rich mercy of God that should be manifested by these means. It is implied here, that grace would abound by means of these labors and self-denials of the apostles.

Most modern translations show grace to abounding more and more, or reaching more and more people.

**that is reaching more and more people --** That many may have occasion of gratitude to God; that by these labors more persons may be led to praise him. It was an object with Paul so to labor that as many as possible might be led to praise God, and have occasion to thank him to all eternity.

**may cause thanksgiving to overflow --** Cause thanksgiving to abound.

**[Redound] to the glory of God. --** That God may have the praise and his glory abound in the salvation of many people. The sentiment of the passage is, that it would be for the glory of God that as many as possible should be brought to give praise and thanksgiving to him;

**Redound --** The word “redound” ([περισσεύη](#), *perisseue*) here means abound, or be abundant; and the sense is, that the overflowing grace thus evinced in the salvation of many would so abound as to promote the glory of God.

## 2 Corinthians 4:16

### 2Co\_4:16

**So we do not lose heart [we faint not] --** We are not exhausted, desponding, or disheartened. We are sustained, encouraged, emboldened by having such an object in view.

**Though our outer nature [outward man] is wasting away, --** Man's physical body that houses his spirit. By using the phrases, “the outward man,” and the “inward man,” he shows that he believed that man was made up of two parts, body and soul.

Sometimes he speaks of the three-fold nature of man, his physical body, his physical breath or life, and his spirit, [1Th 5:23](#).

**outward man is perishing. --** The physical body is in the process of decay and will eventually die. On the surface Paul was referring to the normal aging process, but with the added emphasis that his lifestyle sped up that process.

While not an old man, Paul wore himself out in ministry, both in the effort and pace he maintained, plus the number of beatings and attacks he absorbed from his enemies (cf. [2Co 6:4-10](#); [2Co 11:23-27](#)). - MSB

**out inner nature [inward man]** -- The soul; the undecaying, immortal part of man, the spirit.

**is renewed** -- How renewed? See [Col 3:10](#). Strengthen, invigorated, courage becoming bolder; growing, increasing faith.

Matching the progressive weakening of Paul's physical powers is the daily renewal of his inner person (cf. [Eph 3:16](#)) that is part of the progressive transformation of all believers into the image of Christ ([2Co 3:18](#)), a process resurrection will complete ([2Co 4:14](#)).

**day by day.** -- Constantly, regularly. There was a daily and constant increase of inward confidence or assurance.

## 2 Corinthians 4:17

### [2Co 4:17](#)

**For this slight [light] momentary affliction** -- All the trials Paul endured would seem to be anything but light, yet in the face of the eternal reward he considers them trifling.

The passage abounds with intensive and emphatic expressions, and manifests that the mind of the writer was laboring to convey ideas which language, even after all the energy of expression which he could command, would very imperfectly communicate.

**which is but for a moment [KJV]** -- The Greek word used here ([παρὰντίκα](#) *parautika*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is an adverb, from [αὐτίκα](#) *autika*, [αὐτός](#) *autos*, and means properly, "at this very instant; immediately." Here it seems to qualify the word "light," and to be used in the sense of momentary, transient.

The apostle evidently wished to express two ideas in as emphatic a manner as possible; first, that the affliction was light, and, secondly, that it was transient, momentary, and soon passing away. His object is to contrast this with the glory that awaited him, as being heavy, and as being also eternal.

**is preparing [working] for us** -- [2Co 4:12](#); Will produce, will result in.  
Affliction and trials tend to purify, [Isa 48:10](#).

**an eternal weight of glory** -- Eternal, this stands in contrast with the affliction that is for a moment ([παρὰντίκα](#) *parautika*). The one is momentary, transient; so short, even in the longest life, that it may be said to be an instant; the other has no limits to its duration. It is literally everlasting.

**weight** -- βάρος (*baros*). The Greek word for “weight” refers to a heavy mass

This stands opposed to the (εὐλαφρόν *elaphron*) light affliction. That was so light that it was a trifle, like a feather. It was easily borne. It was like the most light and airy objects, which constitute no burden. It is not even here called a burden, or said to be heavy in any degree.

**of glory**, -- (δόξης *doxe* <sup>s</sup>). It refers here to the splendor, magnificence, honor, and happiness of the eternal world. In this exceedingly interesting passage, which is worthy of the deepest study of Christians, Paul has set in most beautiful and emphatic contrast the trials of this life and the glories of heaven.

**2 Corinthians 4:18**

**2Co\_4:18**

**we look not [not considering; fix our eyes;]** -- Or, rather, since *we look not, do not fix our attention*. We not looking at the things which are seen. The design of this is, to show in what way the afflictions which they endured became in their view light and momentary.

**the things which are seen [troubles, NLT]** -- The things here below; the things of this life - poverty, want, care, persecution, trial, etc.

**the things which are not seen.** -- The glories of heaven, cf [Heb 11:1](#).

The contrast is not exactly between visible and invisible realities, but is between what mortals can now see and what they cannot yet see, between the “already” and the “not yet” (cf. [1Co 13:12](#); [Rom 8:24-25](#)).

**temporal [transient; temporary; will soon be gone; things not lasting]** -- Proves that everything seen will pass away. [Heb 1:11](#); [2Pe 3:9-12](#).

This refers particularly to the things which they suffered. But it is as true of all things here below. Wealth, pleasure, fame, the three idols which the people of this world adore, are all to endure but for a little time. They will all soon vanish away. So it is with pain, and sorrow, and tears. - BN

Paul is certainly not rejecting interest in the visible world. Rather, his affections are set on the realm above ([Col 3:1-2](#)), on lasting realities as yet unseen, on “the hope stored up ... in heaven” ([Col 1:5](#); cf. [1Pe 1:4](#)).

**things that are unseen are eternal [everlasting;]** -- Everything which pertains to that life beyond the grave.

**2 Corinthians 5:1****2Co 5:1**

**For we know --** The expression “*we know*” is the language of strong and unwavering assurance. They had no doubt on the subject.

Paul is giving a reason why he and his fellow-laborers did not become weary and faint in their work. The reason was, that they knew that even if their body should die, they had an inheritance reserved for them in heaven.

**that if our earthly house [home]--** The word “house” here refers doubtless to the body, as the habitation, or the dwelling-place of the mind or soul. The soul dwells in it as we dwell in a house, or tent.

The word “earthly” here (ἐπιγῆιος *epigeios*) stands opposed to “heavenly,” or to the house eternal (ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς *en tois ouranois*) in the heavens.” The word properly means “upon earth, terrestrial, belonging to the earth, or on the earth,” and is applied to bodies [1Co 15:40](#); to earthly things [Joh 3:12](#); to earthly, or worldly wisdom, [Jam 3:15](#).

**of this tabernacle [tent; --** This word means a booth, or tent - a movable dwelling.

The use of the word here is not a mere redundancy, but the idea which Paul designs to convey is, doubtless, that the body - the house of the soul - was not a permanent dwelling-place, but was of the same nature as a booth or tent, that was set up for a temporary purpose, or that was easily taken down in migrating from one place to another.

It refers here to the body as the frail and temporary abode of the soul.

**were dissolved [is destroyed; --** (καταλυθῇ *kataluthe*). This word means properly to disunite the parts of anything; and is applied to the act of throwing down, or destroying a building.

It is applied here to the body, regarded as a temporary dwelling that might be taken down, and it refers, doubtless, to the dissolution of the body in the grave.

**we have a building [an house;] --** Robinson (Lexicon) supposes that it refers to “the future spiritual body as the abode of the soul.”

Paul is looking forward to the resurrected body which will be the home of our spirit after the Lord's second coming [1Th 2:13-16](#); [1Co 15:35-49](#).

**not made with hands, --** Not constructed by man; a habitation not like those which are made by human skill, and which are therefore easily taken down or removed, but one that is made by God himself.

This does not imply that the “earthly house” which is to be superseded by that in heaven is made with hands, but the idea is, that the earthly dwelling has things about it which resemble that which is made by man, or as if it were made with hands; that is it is temporary, frail, easily taken down or removed. But that which is in heaven is permanent, fixed, eternal, as if made by God.



**eternal in the heavens.** -- Immortal; to live forever. The future body shall never be dissolved by death.

## 2 Corinthians 5:2

### 2Co 5:2

**For in this** -- In this tent, or dwelling. In our body here.

**we groan,** -- We are subject to so many trials and afflictions in the present body and subjected to many pains and much suffering, that it makes us earnestly desire to be transformed to that new body which will be free from all suffering.

**longing to put on our heavenly dwelling,** -- Here Paul changes his metaphor. The body here and the spiritual body hereafter is a house or a dwelling. But now he speaks of it as a garment which may be put on and he earnestly desire to put on the immortal clothing which will be ours in heaven.

Both of these figures are common in ancient writings, and a change of metaphors is not unusual.

**our habitation [house] which is from heaven, [NKJV, etc]** -- Paul desires to be invested with that pure, spiritual, and undecaying body which was to be the eternal abode of his soul in heaven. He speaks of it as a house(*oketerion*) a more permanent dwelling than a tent, or tabernacle.

## 2 Corinthians 5:3

### 2Co 5:3

**if indeed by putting it on [being clothed]** -- Our spirits will put on this new clothing (a new spiritual body) at the resurrection when the spirits of the redeemed return with Christ (2Co 5:6-8; 1Th 4:13-16; 1Co 15:51-51);). When we lay down this mortal body, our spirits are body-less and it appears (Rev 6:11; Rev 7:9; Rev 7:13; Rev 7:14) that Christ will give our spirits a white robe to be clothed with until the time of the resurrection of our new bodies.

Those still living when Christ returns will receive that new body in a momentary change, 1Co 15:51-52.

**we may not be found naked** -- Until the new body is attained at the resurrection our spirits would be naked [without a body to clothe it] if not given the white robe. The saints are looking forward with a desired expectation of that new heavenly body.

Christianity, like Judaism, asserts that we (both believers and unbelievers, cf. Dan 12:1-2; Mat 25:46; Joh 5:28-29) will always have a bodily expression. Possibly Paul is again refuting the false teaching (incipient Gnosticism). - Utley

**2 Corinthians 5:4****2Co 5:4**

**while we --** We who are Christians.

**still in this tent [tabernacle] --** In our earthly mortal bodies, 2Co 5:1.

**we groan, --** This implies an ardent and earnest desire to leave a world of toil and pain, and to enter into a world of rest and glory. - BN

**being burdened --** Weighted down by the toils, trials, and calamities of this life, see 2Co 3:7-10.

**not that we would be unclothed, --** Not that we are impatient and longing for death, and the putting off of this mortal nature. It is not our wish to depart and leave our work undone.

Paul seems to be saying, "The reason for the longing of the new body is because of the affliction and trials here, not that we want to get away from you our converts."

**further clothed ... mortal may be swallowed up by life. --** We look forward to the time when our mortal bodies are transformed into that spiritual eternal body and we are ushered into eternal life with God. 1Co 15:53-54.

**2 Corinthians 5:5****2Co 5:5**

**He who --** God.

**has prepared --** God has prepared or made an immortal dwelling for His people.

See Joh 14:1-2. Many think that in Joh 14:2 the "prepared" place Jesus is speaking of is heaven; and they speak of "heaven, as a prepared place for a prepared people."

Others think that Jesus is speaking of making the preparations for the founding of the new kingdom, the church, which will began to be received by obedient believers on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

**God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. --** See 2Co 1:22.

(1) The spirit-filled life of a Christian in imitation of Christ is a guarantee, or a pledge, or assurance of eternal life.

(2) The miraculous witness of the Spirit through the works of the apostles and prophets and those who had the laying on of hands by the apostles was proof, or a guarantee, of the truthfulness of their testimony ([Mar 16:20](#); [Heb 2:3-4](#); [Act 8:14-18](#)).

In thinking of God as a promise-keeping God, Paul gives the assurance that the Spirit-led life is a guarantee or pledge that God will keep his promise of eternal life for such Christians.

**spirit --** Some take "spirit" in almost every mention as being the Holy Spirit, and interpret it in light of a some interpretation they have given it in some other passages without taking into consideration the present context.

The "spirit" here may mean our own spirit; God has made in us an eternal part; the inner part of man God made us to be eternal, this is the guarantee of a life with God eternally.

Perhaps in the beginning at creation even the body (the outer dwelling) was created to last forever when man had the opportunity to eat of the tree of life and live forever, ([Gen 3:22](#)). But the inner part of man, the spirit, is created with eternity in mind and the guarantee that an obedient man will live with God forever.

The spirit is the "earnest of our inheritance, [Eph 1:14](#); [Eph 4:30](#).

The presence of the Spirit in Christians' lives now is the down payment or guarantee that they will receive resurrection bodies when Jesus returns; - ESVSB [This ESVSB note is correct, but "Spirit" should not be capitalized, for it is our own spirit within us that is the guarantee, it is our eternal nature. - wg]

**guarantee --** [α'ρ'ρ'αβών](#) *arrabōn*. **G728**. This rich commercial term has two meanings: (1) a pledge or guarantee that differs in kind from the final payment but makes it obligatory; (2) a first installment of a purchase, a down payment or deposit, that requires further payments. - NIVZSB

## 2 Corinthians 5:6

### 2Co\_5:6

See [Topical References - Gann](#) "**Where Are The Righteous Dead?**" Topical Reference - Gann  
See note on [2Co 5:8](#)

#### (Relevant passages:)

[Luk 16:19-32](#); [2Co 5:6-10](#); [Rev 1:18](#)

[1Co 15:55-56](#); [Eph 4:8-10](#) ??; [Mat 27:51-53](#)

[Php 1:21-24](#); [Heb 2:14](#); [Rev 6:11](#).

**always of good courage [confident] --** The word used here ([θαρ'ρ'ου ντες](#) *tharrountes*) means to be of good cheer. To have good courage, to be full of hope. The idea is, that Paul was not dejected, cast down, disheartened, discouraged. He was cheerful and happy.

**we know** -- see [2Co 5:1](#). This is another instance in which the apostle expresses undoubted assurance.

**while we are at home in the body** -- The word used here ([εἰς τοῦ σώματος οἰκίας](#) *ende tō mountes*) **G1736** means literally to be among one's own people, to be at home; to be present at any place. It is here equivalent to saying, "while we dwell in the body;" see [2Co 5:1](#).

It means here simply to be in the body; to be present in the body; that is, while we are in the body.

**we are absent [away] from the Lord** - The Lord Jesus; see [Phi 1:23](#). Paul is saying that while we are alive in this physical body, we are not in the eternal presence of the Lord, (as we will be in heaven).

### Where Are The Righteous Dead?

Upon Jesus' death His spirit went into Hades [Act 2:27](#), the abode of departed spirits. From Jesus' teaching in [Luk 16:19-31](#) there were two abiding places for such spirits in hades, a place called "Abraham's bosom" [Luk 16:22](#) and "paradise" in [Luk 23:43](#), and separated from this place by a gulf that could not be crossed [Luk 16:26](#) was a place in hades where there was torment [Luk 16:23](#).

But Jesus came to destroy death [Heb 2:14](#) and was victorious over Satan [1Co 15:54](#); [2Ti 1:10](#); [Col 2:15](#) in his resurrection. During the three days between his death and resurrection our Lord had not yet ascended to the Father [Joh 20:17](#) and when he did [Luk 24:49-51](#); [Act 1:9](#); [Mar 16:19](#); he took with him the righteous souls of those in "Abraham's bosom" "paradise" into heaven, into the presence of the Father [Eph 4:8-10](#); [Luk 4:18](#); [Psa 68:18](#); [Col 2:15](#); [2Co 2:14](#); [Heb 2:15](#); [Luk 11:21-22](#); [Isa 53:12](#); [Col 1:13](#).

With Jesus' victory over death and Satan he now had the keys to death and hades [Rev 1:18](#). The consequence of Jesus' victory is that for the saint who dies in the Lord now his spirit goes to be with Christ and await the resurrection of his body [2Co 5:6-8](#); [2Co 5:8](#); [Php 1:23](#). Apparently these bodiless spirits will be given a white robe to cloth them until the time of the resurrection of their bodies [Rev 6:9-11](#); [Rev 7:13](#).

The wonderful signifi- cance for the Christian today there should be no fear of death, for it is to go and be with the Lord [1Co 15:55](#).

The wonderful truth for the Christian today is that because of this victory we will not spend any time in Satan's dominion of that had- ean world, but will die to be in the Lord's presence awaiting the time of the resurrection and judgment. [2Co 5:6-8](#) [2Co 5:8](#), [Php 1:23](#), etc.

Those who hold to the teaching of [Luk 16:19-31](#) as the situation for today are overlook the accomplishment and significance of Jesus' victory over the grave which occurred after this. The passage in Luke then describes the situation up until Jesus' victory and resurrection.

(A mystery is still the understanding of [Mat 27:52-53](#).)

**2 Corinthians 5:7**[2Co 5:7](#)

**for we walk by faith, --** To walk, in the Scriptures often denotes to live, to act, to conduct in a certain way. The sense here is that we are to conduct ourselves while alive in this body with reference to the spiritual things which are not seen; with heaven our goal; and not with reference to the things of this world which are seen.

**not by sight. --** We are not to base our life on the influence of this world, or worldly things which are seen physically. Not to let worldly lusts, and/or pride be our guiding influence for choosing the manner of life we follow.

**by faith, not by sight --** Believers have not seen proof of resurrection and glorification with their own eyes. Paul encourages them to live by faith and to confidently expect God to do what He promised in Christ (compare [1Pe 1:18](#)). See [Heb 11:1](#). - FSB

The Christian can hope for a heaven he has not seen. He does so by believing what Scripture says about it and living by that belief ([Heb 11:1](#); cf. [Joh 20:29](#)). - MSB

**2 Corinthians 5:8**[2Co 5:8](#)

**we are of good courage --** We are cheerful, and courageous, and ready to bear our trials. [2Co 5:6](#). We have hope and expectation, and looking at the long picture.

**rather be away from the body --** If Paul were to choose, he would prefer to be actually in the presence of the Lord where that is a better place than to be in his physical body in a world of sin and trials. [Php 1:23](#);

**at home with the Lord. -** Paul realizes we are aliens in this world and our real home (citizenship) is in heaven, and that is our preferred place to be. [Php 3:20](#); [Eph 2:19](#).

To the Christian who understands and believes this, death has lost its sting! [1Co 15:55](#).

When believers die, they leave the physical body and enter the presence of Christ (compare [Php 1:23](#); [1Th 4:13-18](#)). - FSB

**Where are the dead?**

[Mat 25:21](#), [2Co 5:6](#); [Phi 1:21-24](#); [2Co 5:6-8](#); [Rev 1:18](#); [1Co 15:55-56](#); [Heb 2:14](#);

Cf. [Luk 16:19](#) ff. [Eph 4:8-10](#); ?? [Mat 27:51-53](#).

## ----- Special Study

### Five Minutes After Death (If You Are Saved)

[2Co 4:16](#) – inward man / outward man

[Eph 3:16](#) – inner man

--Triune consideration: [1Th 5:23](#) “may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**Soul** = ψυχή *psucha* - [G5590](#) breath, the soul, ( physical life )

OT – [Gen 2:7](#) man became a living soul –

Used metaphorically for the spirit at times – and/or totality of man - [Act 2:41](#)

#### I. Luke 16 - Parable or True Event ?

1. [Luk 16:19](#) ff. I believe it to be true, but either way "parables" are true-to-live illustrations, and not the same as "fables" where one may have foxes, rabbits, etc. speaking, etc.
2. Will Angels to carry us away ?  
[Luk 16:22](#) – Lazarus died and was carried away by angels to Abraham's bosom.  
 The rich man died – nothing said about angels or demons taking him away, but simply that in hades and in torment.
  - a) Not sure about out-of-body experiences or “near-death” experiences.
  - b) Not sure about the “light” [News article 10/19/2018 about consciousness after declared “dead” physically, then resuscitated and told of what seen and heard.]
  - c) Movie “Ghost” saw demons taking away the spirits of the mean and wicked in the movie. (sparkling lights supposedly took the good away to heaven ??)

#### II. Hell - Hades - Sheol - Paradise - Tartarus

1. The Lord went the Hadean world when he died on the cross.  
[Act 2:27](#); [Act 2:31](#) “hell” = “hades”  
[Luk 16:23](#) hell = hades  
[Joh 20:17](#)  
[Luk 23:43](#) Jesus in "Paradise"
2. [2Pe 2:4](#) wicked angels in hell = "tartarus"

#### III. The Lord's Victory -

[Heb 2:14-16](#) thru death Jesus destroyed the devil's power

[Heb 2.14](#) render Satan powerless in death

[Mat 27:51-53](#) – some "resurrected" also after Jesus' resurrection [?]

#### IV. Passages to Consider

[Act 2:31](#) - Christ didn't remain in hades, nor did his body see corruption

[1Pe 3:22](#) – into Heaven after his ascension

[1Pe 3:18-20](#) - spirits in prison (see Ryrie in NASv, ok)

Noah was a "preacher of righteousness" [2Pe 2:5](#)

[Eph 4:8-10](#) – When Jesus ascended on high; read NASV

Picture of conquering generals/kings leading their plunder (spoils) in triumphant procession.

[Col 2:15](#); by Jesus' public appearances after his resurrection he shamed the evil powers who controlled Hades and proclaim his victory!

[Rev 1:18](#) Jesus now has the "keys" of hell and of death.

Gate of ... [Job 38:17](#); [Psa 9:13](#); [Psa 107:18](#); [Mat 16:18](#)

[Isa 53:12](#) – spoil divided with the strong (Satan)

First, the strong man of the house must be bound, [Mat 12:29](#)

[2Pe 2:4](#) - wicked angels in "Tartarus"

#### V. Christians Die to be with the Lord today

[Act 7:59](#) – Stephen – "Lord Jesus Receive my spirit" [Act 7:56-60](#)

[Php 1:23](#) – to depart and be with Christ

[2Co 5:6](#) – in the body is to be absent from the Lord

[2Co 5:8](#) - for Christians to be absent from the body is to be with the Lord.

[Rev 7:9](#) John saw a great number in heaven, who were they?

[Rev 7:13](#) – who were those arrayed in white robes – and serving in the temple

READ [Rev 7:14-17](#) ( [2Co 5:3](#) spirits naked after death til resurrection, [Rev 6:11](#)]

SOME THINK only those martyred go to be with Christ –

[Rev 6:9](#) – souls of those slain ... BUT “they” were the ones crying for vengeance.

The Islamic faith took that concept for the Jhadg – that those who died for the cause of Allah go directly to be with him. But what Paul and Stephen says is true of all who die in the Lord – that we all go to be with the Lord – [2Co 5:6](#).

[Luk 23:43](#) - Jesus in *Paradise* ("Hades" between death and his resurrection)

[2Co 12:2](#) - “*Heaven*”; [2Co 12:3](#) “*Paradise*” READ [2Co 12:1-5](#)

This is the VICTORY that is ours in Christ today ! The STING taken out of death!

[[1Co 15:55](#) "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" Christians should have NO fear of death, because we know where we are going and who we will be with !]

This blessing changed with the **GOSPEL AGE** – [Rev 14:13](#) ( "*who die in the Lord from now on*"; see [Rev 14:6](#))

Luke 16 – described the way it was until the death & victory of Jesus.

[1Th 4:14](#) — Jesus will bring the spirits back with him at the Second Coming to receive their resurrected bodies. [1Co 15:44](#) & [1Th 4:13-17](#)

[Why the judgment? [Jud 1:15](#); [Mat 7:22-23](#) ]

## 2 Corinthians 5:9

### [2Co 5:9](#)

**So whether [wherefore; therefore] --** ([Διὸ](#) *Dio*). In view of these facts just stated; and since we have the prospect of a resurrection and future glory; since we have the assurance that there is a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; we make it our purpose and goal to live as to be accepted by him.

**whether present or absent -** Whether present with the Lord [2Co 5:8](#), or absent from him [2Co 5:6](#); that is, whether in this world or the next.

**we make it our aim to please him. --** The whole purpose and duty of man is to honor God and keep obey his will for us. [Ecc 12:13](#); [Heb 5:9](#).

**we make it our aim --** Paul was speaking of his ambition in life, but not the kind of proud, selfish desire that “ambition” expresses in English. “*Aim*” is from the Greek word [[φιλοτιμέομαι](#), [G5389](#) ] that means “to love what is honorable.” Paul demonstrated that it is right and noble for the believer to strive for excellence, spiritual goals, and all that is honorable before God (cf. [Rom 15:20](#); [1Ti 3:1](#)). - MSB

**well pleasing to Him.** This was Paul’s highest goal (cf. [1Co 4:1-5](#)), and should be so for every believer (cf. [Rom 12:2](#); [Eph 5:10](#); [Col 1:9](#); [1Th 4:1](#)). The term translated “well pleasing” is the same one used in [Tit 2:9](#) to describe slaves who were passionate to please their masters. - MSB

## 2 Corinthians 5:10

### [2Co 5:10](#)



**For we must all --** "We ... all" makes this a universal statement that applies to all mankind without exception. "**Must**" indicates that this is obligatory on everyone's part, and without any way to avoid this appointment. [Heb 9:27](#). [Rom 14:10](#).

**appear before the judgment seat of Christ, --** A day for rewards and justice for all evils done. [Rom 14:10](#); [Rev 20:12](#).

**judgment seat --** This is the Greek word [βῆμα](#), *bēma* **G968**, which was an elevated platform where victorious athletes (e.g., during the Olympics) went to receive their crowns. The term is also used in the NT to refer to the place of judging, as when Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate ([Mat 27:19](#); [Joh 19:13](#)), but here the reference is definitely from the athletic analogy. Corinth had such a platform [which is still visible today] where both athletic rewards and legal justice were dispensed ([Act 18:12-16](#)), so the Corinthians understood Paul's reference. (MSB)

**JUDGMENT -** [Heb 9:27](#), [Act 17:30-31](#), [Mat 25:31-46](#), [Luk 11:31-32](#), [2Pe 2:9](#), [2Co 5:10-11](#).

For a sermon on the "Judgment" see "**A Day of Surprises**" [Rev 20:10-15](#).

## 2 Corinthians 5:11

[2Co 5:11](#)

**Therefore, knowing --** Paul and the preaching/teaching brethren with him had full assurance of the coming day of judgment and the wrath of God against ungodly men. [Act 17:30-31](#).

**the fear of the Lord, --** It is a fearful thing for sinners to fall into the hands of God. His wrath is something men should not desire. [Heb 10:31](#). [Gal 6:7](#). "Fear of the Lord" involves reverence for Christ.

It is not referring to being afraid, but to Paul's worshipful reverence for God as his essential motivation to live in such a way as to honor his Lord (cf. [2Co 7:1](#); [Pro 9:10](#); [Act 9:31](#)). - MSB

**we persuade others. --** Paul's desire was like that of God ([2Pe 3:9](#)), he didn't want men to be lost eternally. He endeavored to persuade men to flee from the wrath to come, to be prepared to stand before the judgment-seat. ([Luk 3:7](#); [Rom 14:10](#)).

**persuade --** The Greek word for "persuade" [[πείθω](#), *peitho* **G3982**] means to seek someone's favor, as in getting the other person to see you in a certain favorable or desired way (cf. [Gal 1:10](#)). This term can mean gospel preaching ([Act 18:4](#); [Act 28:23](#)), but here Paul was persuading others not about salvation, but about his own integrity. - MSB

**What we are is known to God, --** God could see the sincere and upright aim and purpose of Paul's mission work.

Paul's true spiritual condition of sincerity and integrity was manifest to God ([2Co 1:12](#); cf. [Act 23:1](#); [Act 24:16](#)), and he also wanted the Corinthians to believe the truth about him.

**hope it is known also to you conscience.** -- Paul trusted the Corinthians were convinced of his integrity and the godly aim of his preaching.

## 2 Corinthians 5:12

### [2Co 5:12](#)

**not commending ourselves** -- Here Paul states the reason for his comments in v.11 about his integrity being known to them.

**but giving you cause** -- Paul wanted to furnish the Corinthians with a ready reply when slanderous charges were made against him by those who boasted in their rank, their eloquence, and all their external advantages, while Paul's integrity was seen in his manner of life and his humble submission to God.

**boast about outward appearance** -- Those who have no integrity, such as Paul's opponents at Corinth, have to take pride in externals, which can be any false doctrine accompanied by showy hypocrisy (cf. [Mat 5:20](#); [Mat 6:1](#); [Mar 7:6-7](#)).

Paul's opponents may have boasted in their rhetorical skill (see [2Co 11:6](#) and note) or status as Jews ([2Co 11:22](#)). Paul insists that such boasting is not profitable. He instead boasts in his weakness because that is where Christ's power is displayed more clearly ([2Co 12:9-10](#)). - FSB

**in appearance** - Literally, in **face**, i.e. in that which is visible. See [2Co 10:7](#).

**in the heart** -- But those who would judge of Paul aright must look into his very heart, and not on his face. The heart reality that Paul considered more important was the testimony of his clear conscience before God and people.

## 2 Corinthians 5:13

### [2Co 5:13](#)

**For if we are beside ourselves,** -- This was probably a charge brought against Paul by some of the Judaizing teachers. It may well be some thought he was deranged, see [Act 17:32](#), for his appearance at Mars Hill, and [Act 26:24](#), for his appearance before Festus.

**it is for God;** -- It is in the cause of God, and from our love for Him.

**sound mind** -- The original word [[G4993](#)] meant to be sober minded, and in complete control. Paul also behaved this way among the Corinthians as he defended his integrity and communicated truth to them.

**if we are in our right mind, it is for you.** -- If what we are preaching is true, then it is to your benefit, and you should listen to what we have to say. Paul was seeking their welfare.

**2 Corinthians 5:14**

[2Co\\_5:14](#)

**For the love of Christ** -- Grammatically this is either: "Christ's love for us" (i.e., subjective genitive) or "our love for Christ" (i.e., objective genitive). But with the reference to Christ's death for all in the following clauses, a subjective genitive ("Christ's love for us") is more likely. - NET

**compels us** -- (controls, constrains, urges, overwhelms); Love compels our options and actions. "Love Does"

**compels, controls, constrains** -- ([συνέχει](#) *sunechei*). [G4912](#); Here it means, that the impelling, or exciting motive in the labors and self-denials of Paul, was the love of Christ - the love which he had showed to the children of men. Christ so loved the world as to give himself for it. [Joh 3:16](#).

**love of Christ compels [controls] us** -- means the love which Christ has towards us ([Eph 3:19](#); [Rom 5:5](#); [Rom 5:8](#)). See Cremer, *Lex.* p. 594. Because He loves us so much, we have to restrict our energies to the service of God and of our fellow-men, - CGC

Paul was influence by the love which Christ had shown in dying for all people, and by the argument which was furnished by that death respecting the actual character of the Lord.

**we have concluded** -- Greek, "we judging this." Because of Christ dying for all we can come to this firm conviction.

**one has died for all, therefore all have died;** -- Since Christ took the place of sinners and died in their stead, and endured for all the punishment they were due, then all have vicariously died on that cross.

The phrase "for all," ([ὕπὲρ πάντων](#) *hyper panto n*) obviously means for all mankind; for every man. This is an exceedingly important expression in regard to the extent of the atonement which the Lord Jesus made, and while it proves that his death was vicarious, that is, in the place of others, - BN

**all died.** -- In the death of Christ, all underwent the death deservedly theirs because of sin. The scope of redemption is universal since God's offer of salvation excludes no one, but the application of redemption is limited since not all people appropriate the benefits afforded by this offer and committed themselves to Christ as obedient disciples.

**all died --** If Paul to speaking of the Corinthian Christians, they had all imitated the death and resurrection of Christ is their baptism, [Act 18:8](#); [Rom 6:4](#); [Col 3:1-2](#).

**2 Corinthians 5:15**

**[2Co 5:15](#)**

**And that he died for all --** This verse is designed still further to explain the reasons of the conduct of the apostle. He had not lived for himself. He had not lived to amass wealth, or to enjoy pleasure, or to obtain a reputation.

**that those who live --** Christians are made alive unto God as the result of the dying love of the Redeemer. Sinners are dead in sins. Christians are alive to the worth of the soul, the presence of God, the importance of religion, the solemnities of eternity.

**might live no longer for themselves --** Christians should not seek our own ease and pleasure; should not make it our great object to promote our own interest, but should make it the grand purpose of our lives to promote Christ's honor, and to advance his cause.

**but unto him --** Unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

**who died for their sake and was raised. --** Paul states the grounds for the obligation under which he placed himself: (1) the fact that Christ had died for him, and for all; . It was a purchase; [1Co 6:20](#); [1Co 7:23](#); [1Pe 1:18-19](#). (2) he second is, that he had risen again from the dead. To this fact Paul traced all his hopes of eternal life, and of the resurrection from the dead; see [Rom 4:25](#). [2Ti 1:10](#).

**2 Corinthians 5:16**

**[2Co 5:16](#)**

**From now on, therefore --** In view of the fact that the Lord Jesus died for all people, and rose again.

The word “*henceforth*” (*ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν* *apo tou nun*) means properly from the present time; but there is no impropriety in supposing that Paul refers to the time when he first obtained correct views of Christ Jesus, and that he means from that time.

**we regard no one according to the flesh. --** Paul's estimate of a man was not formed according to the flesh.

The word “know” here (*οἶδμεν* *oidamen*) is used in the sense of, we form our estimate of; we judge; we are influenced by.

**according to the flesh --** Paul's estimate of a man's worth was not based on his birth or country; his rank, wealth, or office; his friends, or anything based on this world.

**once regarded Christ according to the flesh,** -- Paul at one time had a low view of Christ's worldly value. He had viewed him as Christ's enemies in the Gospel accounts viewed him. See [Act 29:9-11](#).

**we regard him thus no longer.** -- Paul's opinion and belief in Jesus Christ changed from being a persecutor, to a preacher of Jesus Christ. cf. Acts 2, Acts 22, Acts 26.

2 Corinthians 5:17

[2Co 5:17](#)

**Therefore,** -- [G5620](#); so then;

**if anyone is in Christ,** -- To be in fellowship with Christ, in a personal relationship. The way one moves from being "out" of Christ and "into" Christ is pictured in [Gal 3:26-27](#); and [Col 2:12](#); [Rom 6:3-6](#);

**he is a new creation [creature]** -- In Christ man finds forgiveness and a new way of living. He turns from a sinful way of living for self, and now lives an obedient life to the glory of Christ.

**new creature,** [G2537](#), new in the sense of freshly made.

**The old has passed away;** -- [G744](#), *archaia*, Paul may be referring to: 1) the old dispensation of the Law of Moses, and the new age of the Messiah and the Gospel for all nations; or 2) the old man of sin has been forgiven and he now lives a new life in Christ.

**behold,** -- [G2400](#),

**the new has come.** -- A new life, a new age.

**become new** -- see [Jas 2:24](#) note "**Being Saved**" about become a new creature in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:18

[2Co\\_5:18](#)

**All this is from God,** -- This refers particularly to the things in question, the renewing of the heart, and the influences by which Paul had been brought to a state of willingness to forsake all, and to devote his life to the self-denying labors involved in the purpose of making the Saviour known. [1Co 3:6-7](#).

**through Christ** -- [Act 20:28](#); The price paid for our redemption, which brought about our reconciliation to God.

**us** -- The word "us" here includes Paul and all who were Christians - whether Jews or Gentiles, or whatever was their rank.

**reconciled** -- Sin is pictured as estrangement, [Rom 5:10](#).

[ # 2 A picture from friendship, [Reconciliation](#), v. 18-19. It never speaks of God being reconciled to us, but always us to God. "Blessed are the Peacemakers" Next see [Freed-man 1Co 6:20](#) ]

**ministry of reconciliation;** -- Paul view reconciling man back to God as the purpose of his ministry. This is the purpose of preaching the gospel, the good news that reconciliation is possible in Christ.

## 2 Corinthians 5:19

### 2Co\_5:19

**that is** -- (Greek, [ὅς οὗτι](#) *Ho s oti*), namely This verse is designed further to state the nature of the plan of reconciliation, and of the message with which they were entrusted.

**God ... through Jesus Christ** -- See note on previous verse, [2Co 5:18](#). That God was by Christ ([ἐν Χριστῷ](#), *en Christo*), by means of Christ; by the agency, or mediatorship of Christ. Christ was the mediator by means of whom God designed to accomplish the great work of reconciliation

**reconciling the world** -- The world here evidently means the human race generally, without distinction of nation, age, or rank.

The whole world was alienated from God, and He sought to have it reconciled. This is one incidental proof that God designed that the plan of salvation should be adapted to all people; [2Co 5:14](#).

It may be observed further, that God sought the reconciliation. Man, the offending party, did not seek it. He had no plan for it, he had no way to effect it. It was the offended party, God, not man that sought to be reconciled; and this shows the strength of His love. It was a love for enemies and alienated beings, and the desire to become friends that reconciliation is offered by God.

**not imputing** -- **G3049, λογίζομαι** *logizomai*; 1) to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over 1a) to take into account, to make an account of;

Not reckoning their transgressions to them; that is, forgiving them, pardoning them. The pictures is from the accountant's office. A picture of a credit or debit balance sheet. [c. [Col 2:14](#), **Blotting out**. Illustration of ancient writing methods. The paper was *papyrus* - and the ink was made out of soot, gum, and water. One could use a sponge to wipe the paper clean. Next see [Gal 4:5](#) ]

Lesson: There was a charge sheet against us, but Jesus, as it were, took a sponge and wiped it clean.

**entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.** -- The task of making known the nature of God's plan, and the conditions on which God was willing to be reconciled to man, has been committed to the ministers of the gospel.

## 2 Corinthians 5:20

2Co 5:20

**Now the,** -- οὖν, Now then, G3767, (conjunction).

**we are ambassadors** -- We are the ambassadors whom Christ has sent forth to negotiate with people in regard to their reconciliation to God.

G4243, πρεσβεύω *presbeuo* ; **Thayer Definition:** 1) to be older, prior by birth or in age; 2) to be an ambassador, act as an ambassador.

\*\*\* Se DSB on Ambassadors, etc. 2Co 5:20 - 2Co 6:1.

**for Christ** -- ὑπερ for G5228 PREP 1) in behalf of, for the sake of; χριστου Christ G5547 N-GSM ; This identical Greek expression occurs twice in this verse.

**as thought God were pleading through us** -- Our message is to be regarded as the message of God. It is God who speaks. What we say to you is said in his name and on his authority, and should be received with the respect which is due to a message directly from God.

**we implore you** -- G3870, admonish, exhort, beg, entreat, encourage, instruct,

**on Christ's behalf** -- See Note above **for Christ** --

**be reconciled to God** -- This is the sum of the message which the ministers of the gospel bear to their fellow-men; see the note on 2Co 5:19. It implies that man has something to do in this work. He is to be reconciled to God. Man, being in the wrong, the offending party, is to submit to God's terms of mercy.

## 2 Corinthians 5:21

2Co 5:21

**For our sake** -- The design of this very important verse is, to urge the strongest possible reason for being reconciled to God. This is implied in the word (γάρ *gar*) "for" "in our behalf". Paul might have urged other arguments, and presented other strong considerations. But he chooses to present this fact, that Christ has been made sin for us,

**he made him to be sin** -- Literally, it is, 'he has made him sin, or a sin-offering' ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν *hamartian epoie* sen G4160, V-AAI-3S

**who knew no sin** -- Christ *knew no sin*, by personal experience, as he was guilty of no sin; *Which of you* (saith he, Joh 8:46) *convinceth me of sin?* 1Pe 2:22, *He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:* but *God made him to be sin for us. He was numbered with the transgressors*, Isa 53:12. Our sins were reckoned to him; so as though personally he was no sinner, yet by imputation he was, and God dealt with him as such; for he was made a sacrifice for our sins, a sin offering; so answering the type in the law, Lev 4:3; Lev 4:25; Lev 4:29; Lev 5:6; Lev 7:2. (-Poole)

**so that in him --** In the relationship of being "in Christ", cf. [Gal 3:26-27](#).

**we might become the righteousness of God --** This is a Hebraism, meaning the same as divinely righteous. It means that we are made righteous in the sight of God; that is, that we are accepted as righteous, and treated as righteous by God on account of what the Lord Jesus has done.

That we might be made righteous with such a righteousness as those souls must have whom God will accept.

As our sin is made over to Him, so His righteousness to us (in His having fulfilled all the righteousness of the law for us all, as our representative, [Jer 23:6](#); [1Co 1:30](#)). The innocent was punished voluntarily as if guilty, that the guilty might be gratuitously rewarded as if innocent ([1Pe 2:24](#)). "Such are we in the sight of God the Father, as is the very Son of God himself" [HOOKER].



**2 Corinthians 6:1****2Co 6:1**

**workers together** -- with God ([Act 15:4](#); [1Co 3:9](#)).

**appeal [beseech, entreat]** -- [2Co 5:20](#); He is describing his ministry, not exhorting directly.

**you also** -- rather, "WE ALSO (as well as God, [2Co 5:20](#)) beseech" or "entreat you": [2Co 6:14-15](#), on to [2Co 7:1](#), is part of this entreaty or exhortation.

**grace** -- The Greek word used here, *charis*, refers in this instance to the unmerited favor God demonstrated in the sacrificial death of Christ (5:14–19). Christ's death is the reason why people can freely enter into a relationship with God. - FSB

**that ye receive not the grace of God in vain** -- i.e. that ye make not His kindness in being reconciled to you through Jesus Christ useless by neglecting to walk according to the new life He hath given you in Him ( [2Co 5:17](#)). CBSC

How could they fail to profit from that grace? By refusing to purify themselves from everything that contaminated body and spirit ([2Co 7:1](#); [2Co 12:20-21](#)), by allowing a chasm to develop between faith and conduct, or by embracing a different gospel (11:4), one based on observing the law as the ground of acceptance before God. EBC

**in vain** -- by making the grace of God a ground for continuance in sin ([2Co 6:3](#)). By a life of sin, showing that the word of reconciliation has been in vain, so far as you are concerned ([Heb 12:15](#); [Jud 1:4](#)). "The grace of God" here, is "the reconciliation" provided by God's love ([2Co 5:18-19](#); compare [Gal 2:2](#)). - JFB

**2 Corinthians 6:2****2Co 6:2**

**he said** -- God the Father saith to God the Son, and so to all believers who are regarded as one with Him.

**day of salvation I helped you** -- Paul quotes [Isa 49:8](#) to appeal to the Corinthians and emphasize God's readiness to receive them when they turn to Him. Just as God restored Israel from exile, He now reconciles people to Himself through Christ (see [2Co 1:3](#)). The day of salvation refers to the present period of time (between Christ's first and second comings) in which reconciliation with God is available to all people. - FSB

**heard you** -- In the eternal purposes of my love I have hearkened to your prayer for the salvation of your people (compare [Joh 17:9](#), [Joh 17:15](#), [Joh 17:20](#), [Joh 17:24](#)).

**now is the day of salvation.** -- Paul applied Isaiah's words to the present situation. There is a time in God's economy when He listens to sinners and responds to those who are repentant—and it was and is that time (cf. [Pro 1:20-23](#); [Isa 55:6](#); [Heb 3:7-8](#); [Heb 4:7](#)). However, there will also be an end to that time (cf. [Gen 6:3](#); [Pro 1:24-33](#); [Joh 9:4](#)), which is why Paul's exhortation was so passionate. - MSB

To emphasize the seriousness and urgency of his appeal and to highlight the privilege of the present and the danger of procrastination, Paul quotes [Isa 49:8](#) and then applies the passage to the age of grace. In its original context this quotation belongs to a section of Isaiah where the Lord directly addresses his Servant who has been “despised and abhorred by the nation” ([Isa 49:7](#)), promising him vindication before people in due time and calling on him to carry out the work of restoration after the return from exile. Paul uses the quotation to establish that the gospel era (“now”) is “the day of salvation,” when God's favor is shown to humankind. How unthinkable that such grace should be received in vain (v.1)! - EBC

**favorable [accepted] time** -- (compare [Psa 69:13](#)). As it is God's time of receiving sinners, *receive ye His grace*: accept ([2Co 6:1](#)) the word of reconciliation in His accepted time.

**in the day of salvation** -- "in a day of salvation" ([Luk 4:18-19](#), [Luk 4:21](#); [Luk 19:42](#); [Heb 3:7](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 6:3

### [2Co 6:3](#)

Since v.2 is grammatically a parenthesis, v.3 is closely connected to v.1 and 5:20 - EBC

**Giving no offence in any thing** -- This verse is closely connected in sense with v, 1. Paul now enters upon a long passage in which he shews how the ‘ministry of reconciliation’ is practically carried on. - CBSC

**We give no offense in anything** -- The faithful ambassador of Christ does nothing to discredit his ministry, but everything he can to protect its integrity, the gospel's integrity, and God's integrity (cf. [Rom 2:24](#); [1Co 9:27](#); [Tit 2:1-10](#)). - MSB

As was fitting for an ambassador for Christ, Paul tried to put “no stumbling block in anyone's path” G4349 lest the ministry should incur discredit. - EBC

**obstacle** -- **ocasion of stumbling; stumbling block;** *to the ground*, and signifies, therefore, anything which causes one to fall. - CBSC

**the ministry** -- i.e. of reconciliation.

## 2 Corinthians 6:4

2Co 6:4

**we commend ourselves as ministers of God.** -- “Commend” means “introduce,” with the connotation of proving oneself (*see note on 3:1*). The most convincing proof is the patient endurance of character reflected in Paul’s hardships (v. 5) and the nature of his ministry (vv. 6, 7). - MSB

**approving** -- The word is the same as is translated ‘commend’ in 2Co 3:1, and there is an obvious reference here to v. 1–3 of that chapter. - CBSC Tyndale renders *let us behave ourselves as the ministers of God*.

**endurance [patience]** -- 2Co 12:12;

**hardships [afflictions]** -- **tribulations**;

**calamities [distresses]** --

The first triplet expresses afflictions generally; the second, (2Co 6:5) those in particular arising from the violence of men; the third, those which he brought on himself directly or indirectly. - JFB

## 2 Corinthians 6:5

2Co 6:5

**beatings [stripes]** -- See Act 16:37; Act 18:17; Act 21:32. Act 16:23; 2Co 11:23-24.

In this expression, he refers to the fact that he and his fellow-laborers were scourged in the synagogues and cities as if they had been the worst of people. In 2Co 11:23-25, Paul says that he had been scourged five times by the Jews, and had been thrice beaten with rods.

**imprisonments** -- See Act 16:23; Act 20:23; Act 24:27.

The Acts of the Apostles, up to this date, records only one such, namely that at Philippi, Act 16:23-40. But the Acts is far from recording all the events of Paul’s life.

After a reference to the “**great endurance**” that marked all his service and suffering (cf. 2Co 12:12), Paul lists nine afflictions, which fall into three groups. (1) General trials: “**troubles**” are oppressive experiences; “**hardships**” refer to unrelieved adverse circumstances; “**distresses**” are frustrating tight corners (cf. 2Co 4:8). (2) Sufferings directly inflicted by others: “**beatings, imprisonments and riots**.” (3) Self-inflicted hardships: “**hard work**” includes the arduous task of incessant preaching and the toil of manual labor (cf. 1Th 2:9; 2Th 3:7-8); “**sleepless nights**” means voluntary abstinence from sleep (cf. Act 20:7-11); “**hunger**” probably refers to voluntary fastings (cf. 2Co 11:27). - EBC

**in tumults [riots; faced angry mobs;]** -- The Greek word (*ἀκαταστασία* *akatastasia* G181) denotes properly “instability,” thence disorder, tumult, commotion. Here it means that in the various tumults and commotions which were produced by the preaching of the gospel, Paul endeavored to act as became a minister of God. Such tumults were excited at Corinth [Act 18:6](#); at Philippi [Act 16:19-20](#); at Lystra and Derbe [Act 14:19](#); at Ephesus Acts 19, and in various other places. cf. [Luk 21:9](#) [1Co 14:33](#).

**in labors [hard work;]** -- Paul worked incessantly in his preaching and teaching; but he probably is referring to his labor to support himself to preach. cf. [Act 18:1-3](#). [Act 20:34](#). [2Co 11:23](#); [Rom 16:12](#)).

**in sleeplessness [watchings; sleepless nights]** -- Lack of sleep. He refers to this again in [2Co 11:27](#).

**in fastings [hunger]** -- He may be referring to voluntary fasts ([1Co 9:27](#)) but the context is referring to his trials ([2Co 11:27](#)) and to the fact that in his travels when abroad and among strangers, he was often destitute of food (compare [1Co 4:11](#); [Phi 4:12](#)).

The usual sense of the Greek is *fasts* in the strict sense, but [Mat 15:32](#); [Mar 8:3](#), and the context here favors more the sense of "*hunger*".

## 2 Corinthians 6:6

### [2Co 6:6](#)

[2Co 6:6-7](#) From mention of outward circumstances (vv.4b–5) Paul moves on to specify the inward qualities he sought to display (v.6) and the spiritual equipment he relied on (v.7) while discharging his apostolic commission.

“*Purity*” refers to both moral uprightness and singleness of purpose. “*Understanding*” is not simply pastoral insight but also knowledge of the Christian faith and sensitivity to God’s will (cf. 1Pe 3:7). By “*patience*” Paul means the endurance of insult or injury without anger or retaliation. “*Kindness*” is the generous and sympathetic disposition that acts in love. Paul’s reference to the person of the Holy Spirit here emphasizes the Spirit as the source of all spiritual graces. That is, “*the Holy Spirit*” probably denotes the gifts or graces of the Holy Spirit.

**purity [pureness]** -- Paul in the previous verses grouped together some of the sufferings which he endured and he proceeds here to group together certain reactions of his heart to these physical sufferings.

He begins by stating that it was by *pureness*, by integrity, a holy and pure life that he faced all these trials. Paul understood that his preaching, and all his labor would have been in vain without this; Paul well knew that if he succeeded in the ministry, he must be a good man

**knowledge [understanding]** -- Commentators differ in their interpretation of this.

Some suggest it refers to Paul's habit of continual study and his ever increasing knowledge of the Law. cf. [2Ti 4:13](#).

Some see Paul stressing the fact that in his ministry he was communicating true knowledge. He proclaimed that which was true, and which was real knowledge, in opposition to the false science of the Greeks, and in opposition to those who would substitute declamation for argument, and the mere ornaments of rhetoric for truth.

It is obvious that Paul believed the minister should not be ignorant, but be well informed, and a man of good sense. He felt that if he was to be useful it was by being prepared to impart to others truth that would be useful. [Mal 2:7](#).

**patience** -- By being long-suffering or patient in the trials he faced Paul endeavored to keep control over his passions, [1Co 13:4](#).

**kindness** -- Often associated with "charity" or "love" [1Co 13:4](#), as here. A gentleness of manner, of temper, and of spirit would be in harmony with the message and spirit of Christ.

**by the Holy Spirit.** Paul lived and walked by the power of the Spirit (*see note on* [Gal 5:16](#)). It was the central reason that all the other positive elements of his endurance were a reality. - MSB

Paul is referring to the Spirit which he and his fellow-ministers manifested, and means here that they displayed such feelings, emotions, and conduct as following the guidance of the Holy Spirit would produced in the hearts of the children of God.

**unfeigned [genuine; sincere]** -- Love might easily enough be feigned for selfish purposes. St Paul could appeal to his own career to shew that his love was as real as its expression was ardent. Cf. [2Co 6:11](#) and also [Rom 12:9](#), where the Greek is the same as here. - CBSC

Paul is speaking of true, sincere, ardent love to all. He had a genuine affection for the souls of all.

## 2 Corinthians 6:7

### [2Co 6:7](#)

**by the word of truth** -- i.e. the Gospel of reconciliation, with which he was entrusted. Cf. [Gal 2:5](#); [Eph 1:13](#), [Eph 4:21](#); [Col 1:5](#); [2Ti 2:15](#); [Jas 1:18](#). - CBSC

**by the word of truth [by truthful speech]** -- By making known the truth of the gospel. Paul did not corrupt the gospel by false mixtures of philosophy and human wisdom, but communicated it as it had been revealed to him.

**by the power of God** -- By the divine power of God which attended the preaching of the gospel by Christ's apostles. [Mat 10:1](#); [Joh 16:13](#); [Act 1:8](#); [Act 4:33](#) [Act 6:8](#); [2Pe 1:21](#);

Usually in a context like this it refers to miracles accompanying the preaching, cf. [Mar 16:20](#); [Heb 2:4](#).

After a reference to his proclamation of the truth “**in the power of God**” (cf. [1Co 2:1-5](#)), Paul introduces a military metaphor that he had used earlier ([1Th 5:8](#)) and would develop later ([Rom 6:13](#); [Eph 6:11-17](#)). “**Weapons of righteousness**” means either weapons supplied by God ([Eph 6:10-11](#)) as a result of justification or weapons that consist of personal integrity. Weapons “**in the right hand and in the left**” may allude to “the sword of the Spirit” and “the shield of faith” that form part of the Christian’s armor ([Eph 6:16-17](#)). - EBC

**weapons of righteousness** -- Refers to weapons that equip believers to live righteously and resist the work of evil forces. Compare [Rom 6:13](#); [2Co 10:4](#); [Eph 6:10-20](#); [1Th 5:8](#). - FSB

**on the right hand and the left**, -- It refers to the manner in which the ancient soldiers were armed. They bore a spear in their right hand, and a shield in the left. With the former they attacked their foes, with the later they made defense.

Some have supposed that it refers to the fact that they were taught to use the sword with the left hand as well as with the right. The simple idea is, that they were completely armed.

## 2 Corinthians 6:8

### [2Co 6:8](#)

**by honor and dishonor** -- The apostle is still illustrating the proposition that he and his fellow-laborers endeavored to give no offence [2Co 6:3](#), and to commend themselves as the ministers of God, [2Co 6:4](#).

He here [2Co 6:8-10](#) introduces another group of particulars in which it was done. The main idea is, that they endeavored to act in a manner so as to commend the ministry and the gospel they preached.

by honor and dishonor -- Whether they were held in esteem or not they preached the truth. They were not everywhere honored, or treated with respect. Yet sometimes the people who accepted the truth did honor and respect them. [Act 28:7](#).

**by evil report [slander]** -- The word used here ([δυσφημία](#) *dusphēmía* [G1426](#)), means, properly, ill-omened language, malediction, reproach, contumely. It refers to the fact that they were often slandered and their motives called in question.

**and good report [praise]** -- Sometimes they were commended, praised or honored. To honor the gospel is to commend their ministry. This would be done by those accepting the gospel.

On at least one occasion Paul and Barnabas were honored by the people at Lystra as being gods come down to them in human form, [Act 14:11-15](#). This kind of honor was not accepted nor appreciated by them.

**treated as impostors [deceivers]** -- They was the way the Jewish religious leaders and pagan philosophers looked at them and slandered them to the people.

Perhaps this was exactly how some such enemies at Corinth as portrayed Paul.

**and yet true** -- Paul and the ministers with him might be regarded as deceivers or impostors, yet they showed themselves to be truth and faithful ministers of Christ.

## 2 Corinthians 6:9

### [2Co 6:9](#)

**as unknown** -- As those who are deemed to be of an obscure and ignoble rank in life, unknown to the great, unknown to fame. The idea, I think, is, that they went as strangers, as persons unknown.

He was unknown from the standpoint of worldly fame, yet was well known to God and many faithful disciples. - Zerr

**and yet well known** -- Our sentiments and our principles are well known. We have no concealments to make. We practice no disguise. We attempt to impose on no one.

Possibly meaning they were unknown, or strangers, to the locals there at Corinth when they first arrived, but well known to God.

**as dying**, -- As condemned often to death; exposed to death; in the midst of trials that expose us to death, and that are ordinarily followed by death; see the note on [1Co 15:31](#), on the phrase, "I die daily." They passed through so many trials that it might he said that they were constantly dying.

**and behold, we live** -- Strange as it may seem, we still survive. Through all our trials we are preserved, and though often exposed to death, yet we still live.

The idea here is, that in all these trials, and in these exposures to death, they bore their trials with patience; submitted to these exposures without a complaint; and ascribed their preservation to the interposition of God. (BN)

**as chastened [scourged; flogged; punished; beatened]** -- The word "chastened" ([παιδευόμενοι](#) *paideuomenoi*, [G3811](#) cf [G3816](#)) this couplet seems to be taken from [Psa 118:18](#); means corrected, "chastised" The correction that might be given to children. It is applied to the chastening which God causes by afflictions and calamities; [1Co 11:32](#); [Rev 3:19](#); [Heb 12:6](#). (see [Psa 118:18](#); [2Co 7:4](#))

The question here is does it refer to "chastening" done by God, or by others. It seems to be in the context of the scourgings inflicted as punishment by enemies.

However, Barnes says, "It refers here, not to the scourgings to which they were subjected in the synagogues and elsewhere, but to the chastisements which God inflicted; the trials to which he

subjected them. And the idea is, that in the midst of these trials, they endeavored to act as became the ministers of God. They bore them with patience. They submitted to them as coming from his hand. They felt that they were right; and they submitted without a complaint." BN

**and yet not killed** -- Though severely chastened, yet Paul and company were not put to death. They survived them by the intervention of God.

Paul was beaten at Lystra to the point he was thought dead, [Act 14:19-20](#).

## 2 Corinthians 6:10

### [2Co 6:10](#)

**as sorrowful**, -- ([λυπούμενοι](#) *lupoumenoi* [G3076](#)). Grieving, afflicted, troubled, sad. Under these sufferings we seem always to be cast down and sad.

**yet always rejoicing** -- While having occasion for grief Paul was rejoicing and calling others to also, [Php 2:18](#); [Php 3:1](#); [Php 4:4](#); [Col 1:24](#). (Paul uses the word in his writing about 29 times. G5463)

**as poor** -- Paul was a **poor** man as far as this world's goods are concerned. We do not read of him having property and wealth. We read often of circumstances and situations that indicate his poverty.

**yet making many rich** -- While the apostle and his fellow-laborers were poor themselves they were the instruments of bestowing true riches upon others. They helped others to find treasure where moth nor rust did corrupt, nor thieves could steal it away.

**as having nothing** -- Being utterly destitute. Having no property. This was doubtlessly true in a literal sense. cf. Jesus in [Mat 8:20](#).

**yet possessing everything** -- Though he possessed **nothing**, yet in a sense he had **all things** that really counted. Paul had learned the blessing of contentment, [Php 4:11](#); [1Ti 6:8](#); [Heb 13:5](#).

"In these climacteric sentences," writes A. T. Robertson, "Paul lets his imagination loose and it plays like lightning on the clouds."

## 2 Corinthians 6:11

### [2Co 6:11](#)

**We have spoken freely to you** -- Literally, (NKJV) "our mouth is open unto you". An idiom for openness in communication (NET). We speak freely, and fully.



**Corinthians --** Paul call his correspondents by name; here it emphasises the affectionate nature of his appeal, and it singles out the Corinthians from the wider circle to whom the letter was addressed ([2Co 1:1](#)). - Exp-Gk

**"O Corinthians"** This is one of only three places in Paul's writings that he personally addresses the particular church he is writing (cf. [Gal 3:1](#); [Php 4:15](#)). All of these passages show the intensity of the Apostle's heart. - Utley

**our heart is wide open --** Our heart is filled with affection for you. That is, ready to receive you in love.

**wide --** (πεπλ τυνται *peplatuntai*, [G4115](#)). Perfect passive indicative of old verb *platuno* ᾱ, to broaden, from *platus*, broad. In N T. only here and [Mat 23:5](#) (cf. phylacteries). Hence his freedom of speech for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" ([Mat 12:34](#)).

**2 Corinthians 6:12**

[2Co 6:12](#)

**You are not restricted [straitened; constricted] by us --** That is, you do not possess a narrow or contracted place in our affections. We love you fully, ardently, and are ready to do all that can be done for your welfare. There is no lack of room in our affections toward you. It is not narrow, confined, pent up. It is ample and free.

See note on [2Co 4:8](#) for *stenochō* ᾱ*reo* ᾱ. There is no restraint in me (my heart). My adversaries may have caused some of you to tighten up your affections (*splangchna* for affection as in [Jam 5:11](#); [1Pe 3:8](#)).

**restricted by your own affections [bowels] --** [G4698](#); The word used here (σπλάγχνα *splangchna*) commonly means in the Bible the tender affections. The Greek word properly denotes the upper viscera; the heart, the lungs, the liver. It is applied by Greek writers to denote those parts of victims which were eaten during or after the sacrifice - Robinson (Lexicon). Hence, it is applied to the heart, as the seat of the emotions and passions; and especially the gentler emotions, the tender affections, compassion, pity, love, etc. - BN

**bowels --** "the bowels were regarded as the seat of the more violent passions, such as anger and love; but by the Hebrews as the seat of the tenderer affections, especially kindness, benevolence, compassion; hence our heart (tender mercies, affections, etc.) - Thayer

**2 Corinthians 6:13**

[2Co 6:13](#)

**Now for a recompense in the same,** -- "By way of recompense, open your hearts in the same manner toward me as I have done toward you. I do not ask silver or gold, or any earthly possessions. I ask only a return of love.

**(I speak as unto my children)** -- I speak as a parent addressing his children. I sustain toward you the relation of a spiritual father, and I should expect a return of affection.

**you also be open** -- Don't restrain your affections, love me as I love you.  
ESV, NASB "*In return ... widen your hearts also.*"

2 Corinthians 6:14

**2Co\_6:14**

**Be ye not ..** EGT "do not become" The present here marks the beginning of a state. (Expositor's Greek Testament)

**Be Not ..** *Ma ginesthe* .. "*ginomai*" Present, middle indicative, 2person plural. Robertson big grammar, p. 330, says it is periphrastic form of the imperative.

**Unequally yoked ..** The picture would be like a weak donkey and a strong oxen yoked in work together.

**Unequally yoked ..** Guy N. Woods: The marriage relationship is not under discussion here. It is not a reference to marriage, but in general. [If it is just a reference to "general" relationships, what relationship is more important than marriage? WG]

This meant that no Christian had any business making alliances of any kind with pagans; and yes, that certainly includes marriage. Why should any Christian wife accept a pagan for a husband? Paul was not here discussing the situation where one of a pagan couple had obeyed the gospel and the other had not; he had already dealt with that. Here he was laying down a rule that forbade such alliances in the first place. Furthermore, there is nothing here that limits the application to marriage. Any close alliance with a pagan partner in business, recreation, marriage, or any other kind of union can mean nothing but disaster for the Christian. - Coffman

**Unequally yoked ..** Literally in the Greek. *heterozugeo*, Compound word, [to be yoked to a different kind, WG] [Lev 19:19](#); [Deu 22:10](#); Yoke used figuratively [1Ti 6:1](#); [Gal 5:1](#); [Act 15:10](#); [Mat 11:29](#);

**"Quit being mismated"** .. Idea would be opposite of the instructions in [1Co 7:12](#) if about marriage. The obligation here is to sever such a relationship.

CBSC = "Incongruously yoked"

v. 14 = **fellowship** is under discussion. Partnership, participation. The word occurs nowhere else in the Greek N.T.

v. 14 & 15 .. Barnes: Not to be united with unbelievers in any way where it would seem they were partakers with them in their evil ways. **Barnes**, p. 154.

#### **NOTE:**

1) There are circumstances where a Christian may be found himself joined in marriage to a non-Christian, 1Co 7:12-14. One of them becomes a Christian after marriage and the mate is not a believer. In such cases they were to remain married if the unbeliever was content to dwell with the believer. [If the unbeliever left, the believer was not under any obligation (bondage) to give up his/her faith in order to maintain the partnership. Divorce was not proscribed. WG]

2) Notice the different society from today: then the "unbelievers" were pagans, and idolaters. [Hence, a preacher today ought not to marry a believer to an "unbeliever" or a pagan, like a Moslem or Hindu, or someone who believed in a "god" other than the Living God. WG]

3) Why should widows be more restricted than maidens in marriage (1Co 7:39) if the meaning of "in the Lord" is meaning that the widow can only marry a Christian. Shouldn't a young maiden, who has less experience in dealing with volatile relationships marry only one who is a Christian? WG.

#### **2 Corinthians 6:15**

##### **2Co 6:15**

**what concord [accord] --** (συμφώνησις *sumphōnēsis*). Sympathy, unison. This word refers properly to the unison or harmony produced by musical instruments, where there is a chord. What concordance, what unison is there; what strings are there which being struck will produce a chord or harmony? The idea is, then, there is as much that is discordant between Christ and Belial as there is between instruments of music that produce only discordant and jarring sounds.

**Christ with Belial --** What is there in common between Christ and Belial, implying that Christians are governed by the principles, and that they follow the example of Christ.

**Belial ..** Greek = *Belial*. Bel-ee'-al. Belíal; masc. noun transliterated from the Hebrew, (H1100) meaning wickedness (1Sa 25:25). **Belial**, a word applied by the sacred writers to such lewd, profligate, and vile persons as seem to regard neither God nor man (Deu 13:13; Jdg 19:22; 1Sa 2:12). Used as an appellation of Satan by the Apostle Paul in 2Co 6:15

**Or what portion [part]** -- (μερίς *meris*). Portion, share, participation, fellowship. This word refers usually to a division of an estate; [Luk 10:42](#); [Act 8:21](#); [Col 1:12](#). There is no participation; nothing in common.

**a believer** -- a Christian, one who believes in God and Jesus Christ.

**Unbeliever [infidel]** .. **G571**; Gk, *apistos*, The "a" (alpha) which negates, in front of *pistos*, believe.

2 Corinthians 6:16

**2Co\_6:16**

See **Eph\_3:17** note on "Indwelling"

**what agreement** -- (συγκατάθεσις *sugkatathesis*). Assent, accord, agreement. what putting or laying down together is there? What is there in one that resembles the other?

**the temple of God** -- What has a temple of God to do with idol worship? It is erected for a different purpose, and the worship of idols in it would not be tolerated. It is implied here that Christians are themselves the temple of God. [2Co 6:14](#).

**with idols** -- Those objects which God hates, and on which he cannot look but with abhorrence. The sense is, that for Christians to mingle with the sinful world; to partake of their pleasures, pursuits, and follies, is detestable and hateful in the sight of God

**For you [we] are the temple of the living God** -- The [υμεις **G5210**; **you**, P-2NP γαρ, *gar*, **G1063**, for (Majority Text) [ἡμε ς γὰρ, *we NA26*] The idea is, that as God dwells with his people, they ought to be separated from a sinful and polluted world.

The argument is drawn from what the apostle had before asserted, [1Co 3:16](#); [1Co 6:19](#),

Paul's emphasis on calling God "living" ([Rom 9:26](#); [2Co 3:3](#); [1Th 1:9](#); [1Ti 3:15](#); [1Ti 4:10](#)) derives from the OT habit ([Deu 5:26](#); [Jos 3:10](#); [1Sa 17:26](#); [Psa 42:2](#)) which expresses the dynamic reality of the true God who covenanted with Israel as opposed to all other claims of deity.  
- CPNT

**As God has said** -- The words here quoted are taken substantially from [Exo 29:45](#); [Lev 26:11-12](#); [Eze 37:27](#). They are not literally quoted, but Paul has thrown together the substance of what occurs in several places.

"**God said**" This is a loose combination of [Lev 26:11-12](#) and [Eze 37:27](#) from the Septuagint. In this context Paul is applying these promises originally to covenant Israel to the church who is spiritual Israel (cf. [Rom 9:6](#); [Gal 6:16](#)). - Utley

**I will make my dwelling among them** -- [Lev 26:11-12](#):

[Exo 29:45](#); [Lev 26:12](#); [Psa 90:1](#); [Eze 43:7](#), [Eze 43:9](#); [Zec 2:10-11](#); [Joh 6:56](#); [Rom 8:9](#),  
[Rom 8:11](#); [Eph 3:17](#); [2Ti 1:14](#); [1Jo 4:12](#), [1Jo 4:15](#); [Rev 21:3](#)

**and walk among them** -- That is, I will walk among them. I will be one of their number.

**I will be their God** -- Not only the God whom they worship, but the God who will protect and bless them. [Gen 17:7-8](#); [Jer 24:7](#), [Jer 31:33](#), [Jer 32:38](#); [Eze 11:20](#), [Eze 36:28](#), [Eze 37:26-27](#); [Hos 2:23](#); [Zec 8:8](#), [Zec 13:9](#); [Rom 9:26](#); [Heb 8:10](#); [Rev 21:7](#)

**they shall be my people** -- rather, "they shall be to me a people."

2 Corinthians 6:17

**2Co\_6:17**

A very strong verse! !!!

**Therefore [Wherefore]** -- Since you are a special people. Since God, the holy and blessed God, dwells with you and among you.

**come out from among them** -- That is, from among idolaters and unbelievers; from a frivolous and vicious world.

These words are probably taken from [Isa 52:11](#). They are there applied to the Jews in exile, and are a solemn call which God makes on them to come out from among the idolaters of the land. [Num 16:21](#), [Num 16:26](#), [Num 16:45](#); [Ezr 6:21](#), [Ezr 10:11](#); [Isa 52:11](#); [Jer 51:6](#); [Rev 18:4](#).

**"come out. . . be separate"** These are both aorist imperatives. These are allusions to [Isa 52:11](#) in the Septuagint. God's people are to disassociate themselves from sinners and unbelievers lest they be caught up in their judgment (cf. [Rev 18:4](#)). - Utley

**and be separate from them** -- Separate from the world, and all its corrupting influences.

**touch no unclean thing** -- In Isaiah, "touch no unclean thing;" that is, they were to be pure, and to have no connection with idolatry in any of its forms. So Christians were to avoid all unholy contact with a vain and polluted world. The sense is, "Have no close connection with an idolater, or an unholy person."

**then I will welcome [receive] you** -- The fact of their being received by God, and recognized as his children, depended on their coming out from the world.

2 Corinthians 6:18

**2Co 6:18**

**And will be a Father unto you --** A father is the protector, counselor, and guide of his children. He instructs them, provides for them, and counsels them in time of perplexity.

**be sons and daughters to me --** cf. 2Co 6:16; This citation conflates 2Sa 7:14, “I will be his father and he will be my son,” the messianic promise to David, and Isa 43:6 (probably also Isa 49:22 and Isa 60:4), “Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth.”  
(1Ch 28:6; Isa 43:6; Rev 21:3, Rev 21:7; Jer 31:1, Jer 31:9).

The inclusion of “**daughters**” may come from the importance of stressing the egalitarian nature of the new covenant, as in Gal 3:28. It may indicate that women, maybe more than men, have been attracted to Paul's opponents in Corinth. It could also have no ulterior significance, and simply be in the Isaiah passage Paul has in mind. - CP

**the Lord Almighty --** The word used here (παντοκράτωρ *pantokrato* ᾱ̄) occurs nowhere except in this place and in the book of Revelation; Rev 1:8; Rev 4:8; Rev 11:17; Rev 15:3; Rev 16:7, Rev 16:14; Rev 19:6, Rev 19:16; Rev 21:22. It means one who has all power; and is applied to God in contradistinction from idols that are weak and powerless.

**2 Corinthians 7:1****2Co 7:1**

**Having therefore these promises --** The promises referred to in [2Co 6:17-18](#); the promise that God would dwell among us, that he would be our God and that he would be to us a Father.

**let us cleanse ourselves --** Let us purify ourselves. Paul was not afraid to bring into view the truth that Christians themselves have a part in the work of salvation.

**from all filthiness [defilement] of the flesh- -** The noun used here ([μολυσμός](#) *molusmos*) occurs only here in the New Testament. The verb occurs in [1Co 8:7](#); [Rev 3:4](#); [Rev 14:4](#), and means to stain, defile, pollute, as a garment; and the word used here means a soiling, hence, defilement, pollution, and refers to the defiling and corrupting influence of fleshly desires and carnal appetites.

**and spirit --** By “filthiness of the spirit,” the apostle probably means all the thoughts or mental associations that defile the man. Jesus in [Mat 15:19](#) speaks of evil thoughts, etc. that proceed out of the heart, and that pollute the man.

**bringing holiness to completion --** This word ([ἐπιτελου ντες](#) *epitelountes*, [G2005](#)) means properly to bring to an end, to finish, complete. The idea here is, that of carrying it out to the completion. Holiness had been commenced in the heart, and the exhortation of the apostle is, that they should make every effort that it might be complete in all its parts

**in the fear of God --** Out of fear and reverence of God. From a regard to his commands, and a reverence for his name. The idea seems to be, that we are always in the presence of God and we should be awed and restrained by a sense of his presence.

**2 Corinthians 7:2****2Co 7:2**

**Make room [receive] in your heart for us --** The word used here ([χωρήσατε](#) *cho re sate*, [G5562](#)) means properly, give space, place, or room; and it means here evidently, make place or room for us in your affections; that is, admit or receive us as your friends.

Tyndale renders this: “understand us.”

**we have wronged no man- -** We have done injustice to no man. This is given as a reason why they should admit him to their full confidence and affection. It may be that he had been charged with injuring the incestuous person by the severe discipline which he had found necessary to inflict on him; note, [1Co 5:5](#).

Paul could not have made this solemn declaration unless he was certain he had lived a very blameless life; compare [Act 20:33](#).

**we have corrupted no man** -- This means that he had corrupted no man in his morals, either by his precept or his example. The word ([φθείρω](#) *phtheiro* <sup>⁂</sup>, [G5351](#)) means in general to bring into a worse state or condition, and is very often applied to morals.

**we have defrauded no man** -- We have taken no man's property by cunning, by trick, or by deception. The word [πλεονεκτέω](#) *pleonekteo* <sup>⁂</sup>, [G4122](#), means literally to have more than another, and then to take advantage, to seek unlawful gain, to circumvent, defraud, deceive. The idea is, that Paul had taken advantage of no circumstances to extort money from them, to overreach them, or to cheat them.

## 2 Corinthians 7:3

### 2Co 7:3

**I do not say this to condemn you,** -- I do not speak this with any desire to reproach you. I do not complain of you for the purpose of condemning, or because I have a desire to find fault, though I am compelled to speak in some respect of your lack of affection and liberality toward me.

**for I said before** -- In his first letter, [2Co 7:11-12](#);

**that you are in our hearts,** -- We are so much attached to you; you have a place in our affections.

**to die together and to live together.** -- If it were the will of God, we would be glad to spend our lives among you, and to die with you; an expression denoting most tender attachment.

This was an affirmation of Paul's love in the idiom known to all times and peoples. Ruth the Moabitess spoke her love to her mother-in-law, "Where thou lodgest, I will lodge .... Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried" ([Ruth 1:16,17](#)). - Coffman

A similar well-known expression occurs in Horace:

Tecum vivere amem. tecum obeam libens.

*Odes*, B. III. IX. 24.

With the world I live, with the world I die.

## 2 Corinthians 7:4

### 2Co 7:4

**I am acting with great boldness toward you;** -- This verse seems designed to soften the apparent harshness of what he had said [2Co 6:12](#), as well as to refer to the plainness which he had used all along in his letters to them. He says, therefore, that he speaks freely; he speaks as a friend; he speaks with the utmost openness and frankness; he conceals nothing from them.



**I have great pride in you; --** I have great occasion to commend and praise you, and I do it freely. He refers here to the fact that he had boasted of their liberality in regard to the proposed collection for the poor saints of Judea [2Co 9:4](#).

**I am filled with comfort. --** By the good news brought by Titus, and learning to be content in all his situations. ([2Co 7:6-7](#), [2Co 7:9](#), [2Co 7:13](#); [2Co 1:4](#)).

**In all our affliction, --** Tribulations, [2Co 1:4](#).

**I am overflowing with joy. --** The word used here occurs nowhere else in the New Testament except in [Rom 5:20](#). It is a word which Paul evidently compounded (from *ὑπὲρ* *huper* and *περισσεύω* *perisseuo*), and means to superabound over, to superabound greatly, or exceedingly. (G5248)

It is a word which would be used only when the heart was full, and when it would be difficult to find words to express its conceptions. Paul's heart was full of joy; and he pours forth his feelings in the most fervid and glowing language. I have joy which cannot be expressed.

## 2 Corinthians 7:5

### [2Co 7:5](#)

**For when we were come into Macedonia --** For the reasons which induced Paul to go into Macedonia; see the notes on [2Co 1:16](#); compare the notes, [2Co 2:12-13](#).

**our bodies had no rest --** We were exceedingly distressed and agitated. We had no rest. Paul next states the causes. He was worried sick over this church (cf. [2Co 2:12-13](#)).

**we were afflicted [troubled] at every turn --** This verse is a brief summary of the problems Paul mentions in [2Co 1:4-10](#); [2Co 4:7-12](#); and [2Co 6:3-10](#).

**fighting without --** Probably he here refers to fierce opposition, which he met there from Pagans, Jews, and false brethren.

**and fear within. --** Titus had not come to him as he had expected, at Troas [2Co 2:13](#), and he felt the deepest anxiety in regard to him and to the success of his letter to the Corinthians.

## 2 Corinthians 7:6

### [2Co 7:6](#)

**But God, who comforts the depressed [the cast down], comforted us --** What a wonderful title for God-" the One who continually comforts" (present active participle). See full note on comfort at [2Co 1:4-11](#).

**the coming of Titus** -- Paul rejoiced in Titus' arrival in Macedonia; in seeing him and his report of the successful reception of Paul's letter, and Titus' own state of mind.

Titus' name is mentioned 9 times in this epistle. [2Co 2:13](#); [2Co 7:6](#); [2Co 7:13-14](#); [2Co 8:6](#); [2Co 8:16](#); [2Co 8:23](#); [2Co 12:18](#).

## 2 Corinthians 7:7

### [2Co 7:7](#)

**and not by his coming only** -- Paul was delighted to see Titus and have his anxieties relieved, but even more comforted with the good news he brought.

**but also by the comfort [consolation] wherewith he was comforted in you** -- Titus had been kindly treated, and he had seen the effect produced by the letter which Paul had desired. Titus had been much comforted by his visit to Corinth, and this was a source of additional joy to Paul.

**as he told us of your longing [earnest desire]** -- Either to rectify what was miss, or to see Paul himself. Their desire may be to comply with Paul's commands.

**your mourning** -- Probably produced by Paul's letter. Their deep repentance over the sins which had prevailed in the congregation.

**your zeal [fervent mind] for me** -- This signified their great attachment to Paul/

**so that I rejoiced still more.** -- Paul not only rejoiced at Titus' coming but from the account he conveyed to Paul.

## 2 Corinthians 7:8

### [2Co 7:8](#)

**For even if I made you grieve with my letter,** -- In the first epistle Paul had reproved them for their divisions and sin being tolerated in the church. That epistle produced pain as reproof generally does.

**I do not regret it** -- While the letter was painful for Paul to write, it had produced a good effect on the church at Corinth, thus Paul was happy about that.

**though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you,** -- The letter grieved Paul to write it knowing it would cause grief on their part. The idea of "repentance" here is not in the sense that the word is usually understood in connection with sin. Here the idea is that while Paul regretted the grief the letter would cause he did not regret sending it. It is not to be understood that Paul thought he had done anything wrong.

The word ([μεταμέλομαι](#) *metamelomai*) denotes properly to change one's purpose or mind after having done anything (Robinson); or an uneasy feeling of regret for what has been done without regard either to duration or effects - Campbell.

**though only for a while.** -- Paul was afraid the first letter would cause overwhelming sorrow instead of a true healthy repentance that would result in a restored fellowship.

Utley says "**sorrow. . .regret. . .repentance**" are three very significant Greek terms used in verses [2Co 7:8-11](#), to describe *grief, sorrow and repentance*. He goes on in this passage to give the distinctive meaning of these words. (See Utle's commentary.)

**2 Corinthians 7:9**

[2Co 7:9](#)

**Now, I rejoice, not because you were grieved [made sorry] ,** -- I have no pleasure in giving pain to anyone, or in witnessing the distress of any.

**but because you were grieved [sorrow led to] into repenting.** -- It was not a sorrow which led you to be angry at him who had reproofed you for your errors - as is sometimes the case with the sorrow that is produced by reproof; but it was a sorrow that led to a change and reformation.

It was sorrow that was followed by a putting away of the wrong which had been the occasion for Paul's reproof. The word rendered here as "repentance" ([μετάνοιαν](#) *metanoian*) is a different word from that which, in [2Co 7:8](#). The word used here is strongly theological and not only involves a change of attitude, but a change of action (cf. [Mar 1:15](#); [Act 3:19](#); [Act 20:21](#)).

**For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.** -- Paul wanted to be a blessing to this church and not a hindrance in any way. However, the church must receive Paul's reproof, and they had.

Their sorrow had worked its course properly, it had not caused damage, but worked for their good.

**2 Corinthians 7:10**

[2Co 7:10](#)

**For godly sorrow [grief]** -- "Sorrow according to God" ([Ἡ γὰρ κατὰ Θεὸν λύπη](#) *He gar kata Theon lupe*). That is, such sorrow as has respect to God, or is according to his will, or as leads the soul to him.

For a sorrow that doesn't lead one back to God, but led in the wrong direction, see Judas in [Mat 27:3-5](#).

**produces repentance** -- Produces a change that leads to a reformation of life.

**that leads to salvation** -- Repentance that produces a change of direction for one's life and now turn to obey Christ and the gospel and follow God's plan for the way to walk in life that honors and brings praise to God. [Act 2:38](#); [2Pe 3:9](#); [Luk 3:8](#);

**"leading to salvation"** Repentance is one of the necessary elements of salvation. Repentance was mentioned as a requirement by John the Baptist (cf. [Mat 3:2](#)), Jesus (cf. [Mat 4:17](#)), Peter (cf. [Act 2:38](#)), and Paul (cf. [Act 26:20](#)). Repentance is turning from sin and faith is turning to Christ; both are required (cf. [Mar 1:15](#); [Act 3:16](#); [Act 3:19](#); [Act 20:21](#)). I have come to believe there are several normative requirements for a mature salvation: repentance, faith, baptism, obedience, service, and perseverance. - Utley

**without regret [not to be repented of]** -- There is no occasion to mourn over such repentance and change of life. There will be no reason for regretting it, and it will never be regretted.

**whereas worldly grief [sorrow] produces death.** -- This is a sorry, not producing a change, but a sorry about the consequences of not changing. Consider the rich young ruler's sorrow in [Mat 19:22](#); [Mar 10:22](#).

Many think this is speaking for a despair, that produces death of the body. Either through misery and deadly sickness, or suicide. Cf. [Mat 27:3-5](#).

Antithesis with *the sorrow which is according to God* (A.V., *godly sorrow*). Sorrow which is characteristic of the world; grief for *the consequences* rather than for *the sin* as sin. - VWS

## 2 Corinthians 7:11

### [2Co 7:11](#)

**For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, [ESV]** -- NIV: "See what this godly sorrow has produced in you:" For see in your own case the happy effects of godly sorrow. See the effects which it produced;

**what earnestness, -- "carefulness"** ([σπουδήν](#) *spoude n*, [G4710](#)). This word properly denotes "speed, haste;" then diligence, earnest effort, forwardness. Here it is evidently used to denote the diligence and the great anxiety which they manifested to remove the evils which existed among them.

**what eagerness to clear yourselves, --** ([ἀπολογία](#) *apologian*, [G627](#)). Apology, defence. This word properly means a plea or defense before a tribunal, a group, or someone; [Act 22:1](#); [2Ti 4:16](#).

The word here properly means "apology, or defense," for what had been done; and it probably refers here to the effort which was made by the godly part of the church to clear themselves from blame in what had occurred.

Tyndale renders it, "Yea, it caused you to clear yourselves."

**what indignation, --** [G24](#); Indignation against the sin, and perhaps against the persons who had drawn down the censure of the apostle.

**what fear, [alarm; reverent; afraid;]** -- [G5401](#); Fear lest the thing should be repeated. Fear lest it should not be entirely removed. Or it may possibly refers to the anxiety that the evil matter be corrected, and to the dread of having any vestige of the evil remaining among them.

"**Fear**" usually means showing reverence toward God, who is the One most offended by sin. Repentance leads to a healthy fear of the One who chastens and judges sin. (MSB)

**what longing, [vehement desire]** -- This may mean their fervent desire to do the right thing, or their anxious desire to see Paul again. It is used in this latter sense in [2Co 7:7](#).

It seems more probable that Paul refers to their anxious wish to remove the sin, since this is the topic under consideration. The point of his remarks in this verse is their indignation against the sin, and their deep grief that sin had existed and had been tolerated among them.

**what concern, [zeal]** -- They were zealous to remove the sin, (or some think zealous to show their attachment to Paul). They set about the work of reformation in great earnest.

**what readiness to see justice done. [ punishment; revenge]** -- The idea is, that they immediately set about the work of inflicting punishment [justice) on the offender. The word used here ([ε'κδίκησις](#) *ekdike̐sis*, [G1557](#)) probably denotes "maintenance of right, protection;" then it is used in the sense of avengement, or vengeance; and then of penal retribution or punishment; see [Luk 21:22](#); [2Th 1:8](#); [1Pe 2:14](#).

Tyndale renders this: "it caused punishment."

**"what avenging of wrong"** The literal term is "vengeance," but it is used in the sense of meting out justice. There has been some divergence of opinion among scholars as to what exactly this verse is referring. Some assert that (1) it refers to [1Co 5:5](#), while others believe (2) it refers to the factions or false teachers (cf. [2Co 7:12](#)). - Utley

**At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. --** The sense of this is, "You have entirely acquitted yourselves of blame in this business."

The apostle does not mean that none of them had been to blame, or that the church had been free from fault, for a large part of his first epistle was occupied in reproving them for their faults in this business ([1Co 5:1-7](#)). But he means that by their zeal and their readiness to deal with the problem when pointed out, they had removed all further blame, and had pursued an appropriate course.

**So although I wrote to you ...** -- In this verse Paul states the main reason why he had written to them on the subject. It was not principally on account of the man who had done the wrong, or for the one who had been injured; but it was from tender anxiety for the whole church,

Paul **wrote** that he was **not** concerned about disciplining the offending brother and ameliorating the situation of **the injured party**. But this was apparently a Semitic way of saying that they were not his *primary* concern ([Luk 14:26](#) gives another example of exclusivism as a way of stating priorities).

**one who did the wrong** -- Some think this refers to the leader of the mutiny in the Corinthian church (see note on [2Co 12:7](#)). (MSB)

May refer to the person who opposed Paul and questioned his apostolic authority (see [2Co 2:5-8](#)). (FSB)

It is doubtful that "the injured party" refers to the incident in [1Co 5:1](#) because no offended party was mentioned there. Possibly Paul was the injured party (cf. [2Co 2:5](#)), but if so it was a curiously oblique self-designation (cf. [Mar 14:51](#); [Joh 13:23](#)).

**one who suffered the wrong** -- May refer to Paul himself if the wrong doer was one of the false teachers.

**but in order that your earnestness for us might be revealed ...** -- Paul wrote mainly to show his deep interest which he had in the church at large, and that his anxiety for them would not suffer by the misconduct of some of its members.

[2Co 7:12](#) seems to be a Hebrew idiom of comparison, not a negative statement (cf. *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 283).

**before God** -- "in the sight of God." ESV. All of the Corinthians' actions are done before an all-seeing God, before whom Paul also carries out his ministry ([2Co 2:17](#); [2Co 4:2](#); [2Co 12:19](#)). (ESVSB)

## 2 Corinthians 7:13

### [2Co 7:13](#)

**We are comforted** -- The word "comfort" in this passages means "happy" or to be made glad, or consoled. Paul was happy that they treated Titus in a good way.

The NKJV translates it that Paul was happy because they were made happy with Titus's visit.

Most modern editors punctuate as follows: 'Therefore we were comforted. And in addition to (or in consequence of) our comfort we rejoiced a very great deal more at the joy of Titus,' 'our' being read for the 'your' of the A. V. - CBSC

**Titus** -- Titus' name is mentioned 9 times in about 8 verses in this epistle. [2Co 2:13](#); [2Co 7:6](#); [2Co 7:13-14](#); [2Co 8:6](#); [2Co 8:16](#); [2Co 8:23](#); [2Co 12:18](#).

**we rejoiced still more** -- Titus had been kindly received, and hospitably entertained, and had become much attached to the saints at Corinth. This was to Paul an additional occasion of joy; see [2Co 7:7](#).

**we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus because his spirit has been refreshed by you all** -  
- The church treated Titus well (i.e., he was refreshed, perfect passive indicative). Apparently Paul was worried about this because of the treatment that Timothy had received earlier.

Notice Paul is using "*spirit*" as a synonym of the person of Titus, not just an aspect (i.e., body, soul, spirit, cf. Elwell's *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, pp. 676-680).

**by you all** -- Paul's words here signal a victory in Corinth.

"By you all" (in this [2Co 7:13](#)), combined with "everything" ([2Co 7:14](#)), "all" ([2Co 7:15](#)), and "in all things" ([2Co 7:16](#)), indicates that the entire church responded to Titus' appeal and is now loyal to Paul. -- Floyd V. Filson, *The Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953), Vol. X, p. 362.

These expressions by Paul, however, are hyperbole. As will be seen in [2 Cor. 10](#), there were still pockets of resistance and much wrong-doing still remaining at Corinth. - Coffman

## 2 Corinthians 7:14

### [2Co 7:14](#)

**boasts I made to him** -- Apparently Paul had spoken favorably to Titus about the Corinthians. He probably expressed his belief that he would be kindly received.

**I was not put to shame** -- Because the Corinthians has lived up to the high expectation Paul had of them and about which he had boasted to Titus. A part of Paul's boasting may have been about their generosity; Paul now leads into the matter of a collection which he was about to make for the poor saints in Jerusalem.

**everything we said was true** -- Paul practiced no disguise, all that he said to them turned out to be true.

**even so our boasting before Titus has proved true** -- Everything Paul has said to Titus about the Corinthians turned out to be true. Paul's commendation to Titus of the Corinthians had been right on the mark.

**2 Corinthians 7:15****2Co 7:15**

**And his affection for you --** Titus had become deeply and tenderly attached to the Corinthians. His affection for them had been increased by his visit.

**affection** -- "inward affection" (*σπλάγχνα* *splangchia*, Margin, bowels) see the note on [2Co 6:12](#). It denotes here: deep, tender attachment, or love.

**as he remembers --** Titus' reflection on the Corinthians' obedience to God and to Paul's teaching enhanced his opinion of them.

**how you received them --** While Titus may have been skeptical of how he would be received, the warm and hospitable reception they gave him was very favorable.

**fear and trembling --** Titus saw what a fear there was doing wrong and the reverence they had toward God. Theirs was a healthy fear of judgment (See [2Co 7:15](#); [Eph 6:5](#); [Php 2:12](#); for Paul's use of this phrase). [Mark in [Mar 5:33](#)]

**2 Corinthians 7:16****2Co 7:16**

**I rejoice ... --** The address of this part of the Epistle, says Doddridge, is wonderful. It is designed, evidently, not merely to commend them for what they had done, and to show them the deep attachment which he had for them, but in a special manner to prepare them for what he was about to say in the following chapter, respecting the collection which he had so much at heart for the poor saints at Jerusalem.



**2 Corinthians 8:1****2Co 8:1**

**Moreover, brethren, we make known to you --** We want to inform you. The purpose for which Paul informed them of the liberality of the churches of Macedonia was to excite them to similar liberality.

**the grace of God --** The generosity of the churches of Macedonia was motivated by God's grace. Paul did not merely commend those churches for a noble human work, but instead gave the credit to God for what He did through them. - MSB

**grace --** The word "grace" (*charis*) is used over ten times in chapters 8 and 9. It is used in the sense of (1) God's undeserved, unmerited love in Christ, [2Co 8:1](#), [2Co 8:9](#); [2Co 9:8](#), [2Co 9:14](#); (2) favor/privilege, [2Co 8:4](#); (3) the offering to Jerusalem, [2Co 8:1](#), [2Co 8:6-7](#), [2Co 8:19](#); or (4) thanks, [2Co 8:16](#); [2Co 9:15](#). Notice that grace is understood as referring to God's undeserved, unmerited love in Christ or as a way of referring to the contribution from Paul's Gentile churches to the mother church in Jerusalem. The Greek term has a wide semantical field. - Uteley

**of the grace of God ... --** The favor which God had shown them in exciting a spirit of liberality, and in enabling them to contribute to the fund for supplying the needs of the poor saints at Jerusalem.

The word "grace" (*χάρις charis*) is sometimes used in the sense of gift, and the phrase "gift of God".

**the churches of Macedonia --** Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea. For an account of Macedonia, see [Act 16:9](#); [Rom 15:26](#).

Of these churches, that at Philippi seems to have been most distinguished for liberality [Phi 4:10](#), [Phi 4:15-16](#), [Phi 4:18](#), though it is probable that other churches contributed according to their ability, as they are commended (compare [2Co 9:2](#)) without distinction.

**2 Corinthians 8:2****2Co 8.2**

**that in a great trial of affliction --** When it might be supposed they were unable to give; when many would suppose they needed the aid of others.

The trial to which the apostle here refers was doubtless some persecution against them, probably instigated by the Jews; see [Act 16:20](#); [Act 17:5](#)

**the abundance of their joy --** Despite persecution, their great joy could not be repressed and they cheerfully contributed to help the poor saints in Jerusalem (Judea). "Abundance" here means "surplus."

**and their deep poverty --** They were poor. Their poverty may be a result of their persecution. But the gospel encouraged their spirit of generosity and it gave them joy.

The term, "poverty" (i.e., *ptôchos*) is a very strong Greek term used of (1) extreme poverty in the Septuagint of [Deu 8:9](#); [Jdg 6:6](#); [Jdg 14:15](#) (2) beggars (cf. [2Co 6:10](#); [Rom 15:26](#); [Rev 2:9](#); [Rev 3:17](#)).

“The condition of Greece in the time of Augustus was one of great desolation and distress ... It had suffered severely by being the seat of the successive civil wars between Caesar and Pompey, between the triumvirs and Brutus and Cassius, and lastly, between Augustus and Antonius ... The provinces of Macedonia and Achaia petitioned in the reign of Tiberius for a diminution of their burdens, and were considered deserving of compassion.” Arnold’s *Roman Commonwealth*.

**abounded** -- Or overflowed. Their joy manifested itself in a liberal donation.

**in the riches of their liberality.** -- Their poverty had the effect, not of producing stinted gifts, The phrase “riches of liberality,” is a Hebraism, meaning rich, or abundant liberality. The sense is, their liberality was much greater than could be expected from persons so poor.

**overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. [ESV]** -- They did not give out of excess. They trusted God to provide their needs (cf. [Mar 12:42](#); [Luk 21:2](#)). In this context "their deep poverty" seems related to their being persecuted for the gospel (cf. [2Co 8:13-18](#)). - Utley

## 2 Corinthians 8:3

### [2Co 8:3](#)

**For they gave according to their means,** -- To their utmost ability.

**as I can testify,** -- Paul had founded those churches and had spent much time with them. He was therefore well qualified to bear testimony in regard to their condition.

**and beyond their means** -- The sense is, they were willing to give more than they were well able. It shows the strong desire which they had to relieve the needs of others.

**of their own free will** -- Acting voluntarily, of their own accord. They did not wait to be urged and pressed to do it. They rejoiced in the opportunity of doing it.

Three things the apostle commended about the giving of the churches of Macedonia.

- 1) They have proportionately - "according to their ability."
- 2) The quantity- "beyond what they were able."
- 3) They did it of themselves freely and cheerfully.

**free will [own accord]** -- This term is from *autos* and *haireomai*, which means self choices. It is used in both [2Co 8:3](#) and [2Co 8:17](#). The root term has the added connotation of choosing with delight or love (cf. [Mat 12:18](#), which is a quote from the Servant Song of [Isa 42:1-3](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 8:4

### [2Co 8:4](#)

**begging of us earnestly** -- intreaty, exhortation, praying.

This verse can almost certainly be an explanatory gloss to show that the entreaty came from them and not from Paul.

**the gift and the fellowship** -- “Gift” means “grace.” The Macedonian Christians implored Paul for the special grace of being able to have fellowship and be partners in supporting the poor saints in Jerusalem. They viewed giving as a privilege, not an obligation (cf. [2Co 9:7](#)). - MSB

**fellowship** -- Paul uses the term “participation” (*koinōnia*) often in his Corinthian letters in several related senses.

**gift and fellowship** - we may take this as a Hebraism, meaning ‘the favour of the fellowship’), i.e. that the Apostle would allow them to take part in the good work. - CBSC

**grace** - for the various ways "*grace*" is used in [2Cor 8-9](#) see [2Co 8:1](#).

**saints** -- Refers to the poor Jewish believers in the church at Jerusalem. Paul is gathering financial relief from the various Gentile churches for the Jewish Christians as a gesture of solidarity. - FSB

## 2 Corinthians 8:5

### [2Co\\_8:5](#)

**not as we expected** -- The implication is that the Macedonians went far beyond what was expected of them.

Knowing their poverty only a small sum was expected from them.

Lesson: first [they] gave their own selves to the Lord.

**but they gave themselves first to the Lord** -- They kept back nothing. They deeply devoted themselves first to God. Doing that, they had no difficulty in sharing what they had with this contribution for the saints in Jerusalem.

**and unto us by the will of God** -- That is, they gave themselves to us to be directed in regard to the contribution to be made. They complied with our wishes and followed our directions.

The phrase “by the will of God,” means they followed God's will, or direction, in doing what they did.

## 2 Corinthians 8:6

### [2Co 8:6](#)

**Accordingly [Insomuch; so]** -- It seems that the generous contribution of the Macedonians had a "causal" influence in encouraging Titus to go back to the Corinthians and finish the collection which they had proposed and had begun to do also.

**Titus** -- Titus' name is mentioned 9 times in 12 verses in this epistle. [2Co 2:13](#); [2Co 7:6](#); [2Co 7:13-14](#); [2Co 8:6](#); [2Co 8:16](#); [2Co 8:23](#); [2Co 12:18](#).

**as he had started --** Paul direction was given in the first epistle, [1Co 16:1-2](#), which probably had been delivered by Titus, and who had started the collection.

**that he should complete --** The collection.

**this act of grace --** It was a "gracious" act on the part of the Corinthians to give to the needs of the poor saints in Jerusalem.

## 2 Corinthians 8:7

### [2Co 8:7](#)

**But as you excel [abound] in everything --** Paul commends and exhorts them for their growth in certain areas.

**abound --** Grow; See **G4052** Thayer for the wide use of this word.

It seems that Paul is appealing to their spiritual maturity, and through tongue-in-cheek praise, he wants them to excel in this matter of being charitable to the poor saints of Jerusalem.

The word usually refers to having more than enough of something and is usually translated "abound" or "overflow."

1) Have I Grown Spiritually?

Must grow in the graces of [2Pe 1:5-8](#)

But also to grow in this Grace also!

**in faith --** (*pistis*); **in speech --** (*logos*); and **in knowledge --** (*gnosis*) ; These three ([1Co 1:5](#)) are qualities the Corinthians have been "enriched" by the Lord in the way of spiritual gifts, [1Co 12:4-11](#).

**in faith --** an enriched devotion to God ; **in speech --** the in the ability to instruct others; perhaps referring to their power of speaking foreign languages; 1 Cor. 14. **in knowledge --** in understanding the truth of the gospel;

**in all earnestness [diligence] --** readiness in the discharge of every duty.

**in our love for you [in your love for us; ] --** How to understand and translate this phrase is hotly debated. The understanding and translation of the NASB seems more correct in this context, **in the love we inspire in you, NASB**

**see that you excel in this act of grace also. --** Paul encourages them to "excel" likewise in being charitable in their giving.

## 2 Corinthians 8:8

### [2Co 8:8](#)

**I speak not by commandment** - This does not mean that he had no express command of God in the case, but that he did not mean to command them; he did not speak authoritatively; he did not intend to prescribe what they should give. - BN

...rather, God hath nowhere given an express command as to the quantum of what you should give; - Poole

There is a command to give ([1Co 16:1-2](#)), but not a command "what" or "how much" to give ([2Co 9:6-7](#)). WG

**8:8** Paul is not commanding this in a harsh, legalistic manner. Rather, he would like to put the **sincerity of their love** to the test, and especially so in the light of the eagerness or earnestness of the Macedonian Christians in this matter. When Paul states that he did **not** say this **by commandment**, he does not mean that it is not inspired. He simply means that the giving should come from a willing heart, because "God loves a cheerful giver." - BBC

Paul, ever sensitive to the charge that he dominated the churches he founded (cf. [2Co 1:24](#)), preferred that their motivation not stem from external commands (e.g., [2Co 8:7](#)). He wanted them to be motivated by their internal devotion (**the sincerity of your love**) - BKC

## 2 Corinthians 8:9

### [2Co 8:9](#)

**For you know** -- Paul follows his custom of illustrating by referencing the life and sufferings of Christ.

**the grace** -- the kindness, mercy, goodness. The Lord's coming in this manner was the highest proof of his mercy and grace to all.

**though he was rich** -- The glories of heaven stand opposed to the poverty Christ assumed when he came to dwell among people.

It implies: 1) His pre-existence; 2) He was rich as the Lord and proprietor of all things. He was the Creator of all [Joh 1:3](#); [Col 1:16](#),

**yet for you sake** -- To become our redeemer and saviour.

**he became poor** - He chose a condition of poverty, became a servant; Phi 2.7.

**that ye ... might be rich** -- That men might have durable and eternal riches flowing from God's everlasting favor. Men become heirs of God's goodness, and a family.

## 2 Corinthians 8:10

### [2Co 8:10](#)

**And in this matter I give my judgment: --** Not proesccribing how much they should give. Advice goes much further than commands on the matter of charities.

**this benefits you, --** (συνφέρει *sumpherei*) This will be of advantage to you, profitable, becoming. It became themk it was proper, for them to perform what they had purposed. They were bound by a regard to do what they had started.

**who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. --** They had became the college a year before, see 2Co. 8.6. Probably the intention had been interrupted by the dissensions which arose in the church there.

**desire to do it. --** "willing" (τὸ θέλειν *to thelein*) They were voluntary in this matter, and they set about it with vigorous and determined zeal and courage. There was a resolute determination in it. Consistency and their own reputation now demanded they should complete what they had begun.

2 Corinthians 8:11

**2Co\_8:11**

### Perfect Performance

1) Readiness or willing mind 2Co 9:7

2) Purposeth

3) Cheerfully

Negatively:

1) Not grudgingly

2) Of necessity

3) Not of covetousness, 2Co 9:5

**So now finish doing it as well,** so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it -- They were now to accomplish this matter and not just be satisfied with having begun it. We are not to suppose that an "intention" is sufficient.

A year had elapsed and the necessity of helping the poor had not ceased.

**out of what you have. --** They has been blessed to have some ability, 2Co 8:12, and their giving should be in proportion to their means.

2 Corinthians 8:12

**2Co 8:12**

**For if the readiness [willing mind] is there, --** If there is a "readiness" (προθυμία *prothumia*), a disposition to give; if the heart is in it, then the offering will be acceptable to God, whether you be able to give much or little.

A willing mind is the first and main thing. it is that which God chiefly desires, and that without which everything else will be offensive, hypocritical, and vain; see the note, 2Co 9:7.

**it is acceptable** -- Some apply this to the person and render it, "he is accepted." Other think it is a more natural interpretation to apply it to the gift, "it is accepted, God will approve of it and receive it favorably."

**according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.** -- He is not expected to give what he does not have. [Mar 12:42-44](#); [Luk 21:1-4](#).

## 2 Corinthians 8:13

### [2Co 8:13](#)

**others .. eased and you burdened,** -- Literally, "Not that there should be rest ([ἀνέσις](#) *anesis*, a letting loose; remission, relaxation) to others, but affliction ([θλίψις](#) *thlipsis*) to you."

Probably the Corinthians were able to contribute more than many other churches, certainly more than the churches of Macedonia [2Co 8:2](#), and Paul therefore presses upon them the duty of giving according to their means, yet he by no means intended that the entire burden should come on them.

## 2 Corinthians 8:14

### [2Co 8:14](#)

**a matter of fairness [equality]** -- (Stated twice, [2Co 8:13](#) b, and [2Co 8:14](#) b.) The same principle that Jesus stated in the golden rule, [Mat 7:12](#); [Luk 6:31](#).

**may be fairness.** -- That no unjust burden should be placed on anyone, but let each give as he has been prospered, Every Christians should bear his due porportion as he has prospered. See [Gal 6:2-5](#). [1Co 16:2](#).

## 2 Corinthians 8:15

### [2Co 8:15](#)

**As it is written** -- Paul quotes [Exo 16:18](#), a verse showing how God sufficiently supplied the needs of the Israelites in the wilderness by providing manna (bread) and quail ([Exo 16:1-36](#)).

God meant everyone to have just what they needed, no more and no less ([Exo 16:18](#)). IVPBBCNT

The collecting of the manna by the Israelites in the wilderness was an appropriate illustration of sharing of resources. Some were able to gather more than others, and apparently shared it so that no one lacked what they needed. - MSB

## 2 Corinthians 8:16

### [2Co 8:16](#)

**Titus** -- Titus' name is mentioned 9 times in 12 verses in this epistle. [2Co 2:13](#); [2Co 7:6](#); [2Co 7:13-14](#); [2Co 8:6](#); [2Co 8:16](#); [2Co 8:23](#); [2Co 12:18](#).

Paul includes a brief aside to give a letter of recommendation for Titus and two other unnamed men who will deliver his letter to the Corinthian church. Paul describes Titus as a coworker who shares his concerns and values ([2Co 8:16-17](#)). He describes the first “brother” as someone with a good reputation who was chosen by the churches to be Paul’s travel companion ([2Co 8:18-19](#)). Paul describes the second “brother” as someone who has been tested and proven diligent ([2Co 8:22](#)). He encourages the Corinthians to show these three men proof of their love and thereby validate Paul’s boasts ([2Co 8:24](#)). - MSB

**2 Corinthians 8:17**

**2co 8.17**

Continuing to speak of **Titus**, [2Co 8:16](#)

**2 Corinthians 8:18**

**2Co\_8:18**

**the brother** -- This man is unnamed because he was so well known, prominent and unimpeachable. He was a distinguished preacher, and he was able to add credibility to the enterprise of taking the collection to Jerusalem.

He may have been Apollos ([Act 18:24-28](#)), Timothy (a co-sender of 2 Corinthians; [2Co 1:1](#)), or one of Paul’s Macedonian traveling companions listed in [Act 19:29](#). The fact that Paul does not mention his name probably indicates that the church already knew him. - FSB

See the wording of the RSV here. "**With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel.**" Some think this brother with Paul, who is famous for his preaching of the gospel, could be Luke.

Church tradition has asserted that this could be Paul’s co-worker, Luke. Luke is not included in the list of Paul’s traveling companions recorded in [Act 20:4](#), but the “we” section in [Act 20:5-6](#), which implies Luke’s presence, occurs at this point in the context (cf. Origen recorded in Eusebius’ *Hist. Eccl.* 6:25:6; A. T. Robertson’ *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, p. 245). M. R. Vincent’s *Word Studies* mentions another theory.

**2 Corinthians 8:19**

**2Co\_8:19**

**chosen by the churches** -- To protect Paul and Titus from false accusations regarding the mishandling of the money, the churches picked the unbiased brother (v. 18) as their representative to lend accountability to the enterprise. - MSB

None from Corinth are listed in [Act 20:4](#), where the representatives to Jerusalem with this offering are mentioned. Some have asserted that it was possible that Titus, who went earlier, was their representative, but there is no mention of him in Acts. cf. [1Co 16:3-4](#); [2Co 8:19-20](#).



**chosen of the churches ..** [Act 20:4](#), [Act 21:29](#) an Asian co-worker apparently of Ephesus.

**Trophimus** was one of eight friends who accompanied Paul at the end of the 3rd missionary journey.[ see [1Co 16:3-4](#); [2Co 8:19-20](#) ] [2Ti 4:20](#) He was the innocent cause of the riot in the Jewish Temple that almost cost Paul his life.

Just as synagogues throughout the Mediterranean would send their annual tribute to the Jerusalem temple via local representatives of high reputation, this offering is also to be administered in an irreproachable manner: envoys would be “appointed by the churches.” The term for “appoint” could indicate election by a show of hands or (more loosely) a casting of ballots, as was common in Greek administration. - IVPBBCNT

**this offering [gift, act of grace]** -- τ χριτι τα τη τ [G5485](#), Refers to the collection of financial relief for the saints in Jerusalem ([2Co 8:4](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 8:20

### [2Co 8:20](#)

**take this course [taking precaution; avoiding this]** -- The phrase “taking precaution” (“avoiding,” a PRESENT MIDDLE PARTICIPLE used only here and in [2Th 3:6](#)) was a nautical metaphor for the extra care in handling the sails when approaching a dock (cf. Moulton and Milligan, p. 587 from *Homer*).

**that no one should blame us [should find fault with us]** -- Paul planned to have several men accompany him to deliver the financial relief collection to Jerusalem ([1Co 16:3-4](#)). These men ensured that all the money arrived safely and allowed Paul to avoid any accusations that he mishandled the money.

This is the Greek term *mumos*, which basically means blame, ridicule, disgrace, or strain (cf. [2Pe 2:13](#)). The verb here (AORIST MIDDLE [deponent] SUBJUNCTIVE) implies “to find fault,” “to censure,” or “to blame” (cf. [2Co 6:3](#); [2Co 8:20](#)).

**generous gift** -- [G100](#), The word, which occurs here only, means literally “succulence.” It assumes that the Corinthians will give abundantly. It here implies that the sum which had been collected by Paul’s exertion was a large one. The word in [2Co 9:5](#) is different.

## 2 Corinthians 8:21

### [2Co 8:21](#)

**what is honorable** -- A better rendering is “have regard for what is honorable,” or “take into consideration what is honorable.” Paul cared greatly about what people thought of his actions, especially considering how large the gift was. (cf. [Mat 10:16](#); [Rom 12:17](#); [1Th 5:22](#)).

**in the sight of man [before the people]** -- Paul echoes [Pro 3:4](#) [LXX] to explain the motivation for having a team accompany him and the collection to Jerusalem; he wants handling of this gift to be above criticism. (cf. [Rom 14:18](#); [Php 4:8](#); [1Ti 3:7](#); [1Pe 2:12](#)).

As explained in v. 20, this refers to the delivery of the money and arranging in advance for a delegation so that even in the sight of men no question could be raised as to Paul's appropriating special credit to himself.

## 2 Corinthians 8:22

### [2Co 8:22](#)

**our brother** -- A third member of the delegations sent to deliver the gift, also unnamed.

Paul expresses confidence in the integrity of this "brother." He hopes that his boasting about this "brother" and Titus will cause the Corinthians to treat them with respect and honor. See note on [2Co 8:18](#).

As distinguished from "the brother" referred to in [2Co 8:18](#), means that this is one of Paul's associates while the other man is not. The use of "our brother" shows that those are mistaken who in v. 18 translate τὸν ἀδελφόν "*his* brother," namely a physical brother of Titus'.

We know that this is not a man who was elected as a delegate for the journey to Jerusalem as the other is (v. 19). This is a man who was tested out often and in many things in the past and was always found "earnest." **B.-D.** 416 makes ὄντα complementary to the verb; **R.** 1123 has it predicative to the adjective. "Being earnest" states the result of past tests: "that he is (indeed) earnest." Let us note that "earnestness" (σπουδή) occurs in [2Co 8:8](#) and [2Co 8:16](#); then the comparative adjective "more earnest" in regard to Titus in [2Co 8:17](#), and now both the positive and the comparative in regard to this third brother.

**B.-D.** Friedrich Blass' ; **R.** A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research, by A. T. Robertson, 4th ed.

**great confidence in you.** -- This is another Pauline term used mostly in II Corinthians. It comes from the same Greek root as *faith*, *trust*, *believe* (*peithō* and *pistis*, *pisteuō*). It basically means trust, confidence, or reliance.

## 2 Corinthians 8:23

### [2Co 8:23](#)

**Titus** -- Titus' name is mentioned 9 times in 12 verses in this epistle. [2Co 2:13](#); [2Co 7:6](#); [2Co 7:13-14](#); [2Co 8:6](#); [2Co 8:16](#); [2Co 8:23](#); [2Co 12:18](#).

Note how he is described here.

**messengers** -- The Greek word used here, *apostoloi*, often translated as "messengers," literally means "apostles" (see note on [1Co 12:28](#)). Paul concludes by endorsing all three men as representatives of the churches who are working for the glory of Christ ([2Co 4:4-6](#)). [[Act 14:14](#), Barnabas was an "apostle" or "messenger" of the church at Antioch being "sent out" by them. [Act 13:1-3](#)]

It is hardly right to translate the word for 'apostle' by 'messenger' or 'delegate' either here or [Php 2:25](#). - Plummer, CBSC

The two men who went with Titus were apostles in the sense of being commissioned and sent by the churches. They were not apostles of Christ ([2Co 11:13](#); [1Th 2:6](#)), because they were not eyewitnesses of the resurrected Lord or commissioned directly by Him (*see note on [Rom 1:1](#)*). - MSB

Note: In the restoration era in this country in the 1800's delegates to the various "Baptist" and other church conventions or councils, were referred to "messengers." - WG

## 2 Corinthians 8:24

### [2Co 8:24](#)

**Proof of your love** -- In the first century, hospitality was the practical demonstration of love for visitors ([Joh 13:20](#); [Heb 13:2](#)). Paul encourages the Corinthian believers to receive these three men with love and validate his boasting about them (see [2Co 7:16](#) and note).

Question: How much do I love God? [In the Roebuck Parkway church bulletin, the heading over the "contribution" listing each week was labeled: "Proof of Our Love". WG]

**Wherefore [therefore, So]** -- The point of the 'therefore' is, that these brethren are delegates of Churches; *therefore* respect shown to them is respect shown to the Churches, and will be reported to the Churches. - CBSC

**show [give, treat, manifest]** -- **G1731**, The rendering, 'shew ... the *proof* of your love' (A.V., R.V.) once more obliterates a characteristic repetition. In [Rom 3:26](#) the R.V. has 'shewing' for this same substantive; in [Php 1:28](#) it has 'manifest token'; 'show the *showing*' might do here. In Biblical Greek the word is peculiar to S. Paul. - CBSC

**show them** -- By a liberal contribution in the cause in which you are engaged. Furnish evidence that you love me and the brethren, and that I have not boasted of you in vain. (BN)

**them** -- The exegetical question is to whom does "them" refer? (1) It could refer to the poor in the church in Jerusalem. The Corinthian church demonstrated their love by their gift for the mother church. Their generosity showed the other Gentile churches that they were co-operating and following Paul's lead. (2) It could refer to the other churches themselves. The best option contextually and grammatically is #2. - Uteley

**2 Corinthians 9:1****2Co\_9:1**

**9:1–15** Having endorsed Titus and two other men ([2Co 8:16-24](#)), Paul returns to the subject of the collection for the church in Jerusalem. Paul explains that he is sending Titus and the others so that the Corinthians' contribution can be ready when he visits. He points out that he has boasted about their willingness to help, and that he, along with the Corinthians themselves, would be embarrassed if he arrived with the Macedonians and found them unprepared ([2Co 9:1-5](#)).

**superfluous** -- Because the subject had been already fully brought to their notice by himself and by Titus.

**it is superfluous** -- The term **G4053** *perissos*, is used here in the sense of “over and above.” It and its related forms are used often in II Corinthians. Paul uses emotional, over-the-top language. Cf. note at [2Co 2:7](#).

**ministry to the saints** -- Refers to the collection of financial relief Paul is gathering for the poor believers in Jerusalem. Since the Corinthians already knew about this project ([1Co 16:1-4](#)), Paul did not need to explain it to them again. See note on [2Co 8:4](#).

**2 Corinthians 9:2****2Co\_9:2**

**your readines** -- Paul was simply calling the Corinthians back to their original eagerness and readiness to participate in the offering project.

This shows that he is still in Macedonia. - CBSC

**readiness** -- As in [2Co 8:11](#); [2Co 8:12](#); [2Co 8:19](#).

**Macedonia** - The churches in the province of Macedonia, which was the northern part of Greece. For full identification see note at [2Co 8:1](#).

In [2Co 8:1-5](#) Paul uses the Macedonians to encourage the Corinthians; now, in chapter 9, Paul states that he has used the Achaians to encourage the Macedonians.

**Achaia** -- A province in southern Greece, where Corinth was located. (This province would include the church at Cencherea, [Rom 16:1](#), and possibly Athens.)

This is in agreement with [2Co 1:1](#), where the letter is written for all of God's people in Achaia.

That shows that the letter was read in several churches of the area or that the church in Corinth, the capital of the province, had a wide geographical influence.

**ready to help since last year** -- Paul advised the Corinthians to set aside money for this collection last year ([1Co 16:1-3](#)). Their enthusiasm for this project inspired other churches to participate, even though the Corinthians had not yet contributed. - FSB

**last year** -- In [2Co 8:10](#) (cf. [2Co 8:6](#)) Paul dated the beginning of the collection at Corinth as “last year.” ([1Co 16:1-2](#))

... we must draw a careful distinction between the Corinthians’ **ready desire** to give and the actual fact of having completed the collection. - EBCNT

## 2 Corinthians 9:3

### [2Co 9:3](#)

**sending the brothers** -- The brethren referred to in [2Co 8:18](#), [2Co 8:22-23](#). The team that would collect the offering the Corinthian Christians would set aside for this project ([1Co 16:1-3](#); [2Co 8:16-24](#)).

**our boasting about you** -- That you were disposed to contribute, and that you were already prepared, and that the contribution was ready.

**not prove vain** -- Lest anything should have occurred to prevent the collection. I have sent them that they may facilitate it, and that it may be secure and certain.

**in this matter** -- In this respect. That is, lest our boasting of you, in regard to your readiness to contribute to relieve the needs of others, should be found to have been ill-grounded.

**you you may be ready [prepared]** -- The tense and voice match v. 2, but the SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD shows there is an element of contingency based on the Corinthians believers’ volition related to the collection (lit. “this matter”). - Utley

## 2 Corinthians 9:4

### [2Co 9:4](#)

[2Co 9:3-4](#) Paul was sending a personal reminder in the form of the “brothers” (cf. [2Co 8:16-24](#)). Paul wanted to avoid two situations.

(1) One was that his repeated and confident boast to the Macedonians about the Corinthians’ “eagerness” and readiness (v.2) would turn out to be without foundation upon his arrival.

(2) The other was that when delegates from the Macedonian churches arrived at Corinth with Paul on his forthcoming visit ( [2Co 13:1-2](#)), the Corinthians would be still unprepared and this would lead to his (and their own) embarrassment. - EBC-NT

**would be humiliated** -- Paul risked his reputation by commending the Corinthians’ eagerness and generosity to the Macedonians. He presents their example as motivation to have their gift ready when Titus and the others arrive.

None from Corinth are list in [Act 20:4](#), where the representatives to Jerusalem with this offering are mentioned. Some have asserted that it was possible that Titus, who went earlier, was their representative, but there is no mention of him in Acts. [**Titus** is not mentioned anywhere in Acts,

prompting some to think that since he was an important worker with Paul, that Luke omits his name because he was related; either a physical brother of Luke, or even Luke's son. - WG]

[Did the church at Corinth get their collection made in time for it to be sent to Jerusalem with the other offerings? It makes one to wonder! - WG]

## 2 Corinthians 9:5

### 2Co 9:5

**9:5** There are three words in this verse which begin with *pro* (before).

1. Paul sent the church representatives in advance (*proerchomai*, cf. [Act 20:5](#), 13)
2. Paul wanted them to prepare in advance (*prokatartizō*, cf. Acts [Act 3:18](#), [Act 3:24](#); [Act 7:52](#))
3. Paul wanted them to fulfill their previous promise (*proepēngellomai*, cf. [Rom 1:2](#))

**generous gift** -- In the first century, the city of Corinth was renowned for its prosperity. Although some believers were not wealthy ([1Co 1:26-29](#)), the church as a whole possessed more than other churches. Paul wants to ensure that they give their generous gift with the right attitude and motivation; he sends some believers to help organize the gift to remove any sense of compulsion.

On first hearing of the need, the Corinthians had undoubtedly promised Paul that they would raise a large amount.

**willing gift, not exaction [bounty - covetousness; bounty - extortion; genroug gift-grudging obligation;]** -- Literally “thus as a blessing and not as greediness.”

**bountiful gift** -- This is literally *eulogia* (blessing). This term is also used in [2Co 9:6](#) in the sense of “bountiful” or “abundant.”

**grudging obligation** -- More clearly translated “covetousness,” or “greed,” it denotes a grasping to get more and keep it at the expense of others. This attitude emphasizes selfishness and pride, which can have a very detrimental effect on giving, and is natural for unbelievers but should not be for professed believers (cf. [Psa 10:3](#); [Ecc 5:10](#); [Mic 2:2](#); [Mar 7:22](#); [Rom 1:29](#); [1Co 5:11](#); [1Co 6:9](#), 10; [Eph 5:3-5](#); [1Ti 6:10](#); [2Pe 2:14](#)). - MSB

## 2 Corinthians 9:6

### 2cor 9.6

Paul encourages the Corinthians to give generously by arguing that God loves a cheerful giver ([2Co 9:6-11](#)).

**He who sows sparingly** -- This expression seems to be proverbial. Probably an allusion to [Pro 11:24-25](#); [Pro 19:17](#); [Pro 22:9](#). Paul compares giving to agriculture.

The agricultural metaphor of sowing is often used in the Bible, sometimes in an eschatological, judicial sense (cf. [Gal 6:7](#)), but also as a way of referring to supernatural actions like the resurrection (cf. [1Co 15:35-37](#)). In this context it speaks of one seed producing many seeds as a way of referring to abundance. - Utley

**will also reap sparingly, --** The farmer reaps in proportion to what he sows. Everyone knows this is true in regard to grain that is sowed.

To emphasize the rewards of generous giving (v.5), Paul cites what appears to be a proverb (v.6): “scanty sowing, scanty harvest; plentiful sowing, plentiful harvest.” = EBCNT

bountifully -- This is derived from the Gr. word which gives us the word “eulogy” (“blessing”). When a generous believer gives by faith and trust in God, with a desire to produce the greatest possible blessing, that person will receive that kind of a harvest of blessing (cf. [Pro 3:9-10](#); [Pro 28:27](#); [Mal 3:10](#)). God gives a return on the amount one invests with Him. Invest a little, receive a little, and vice versa (cf. [Luk 6:38](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 9:7

### 2Co\_9:7

- 1) Readiness .. Willing mind, [2Co\\_8:11-12](#).
- 2) As Purposeth
- 3) Cheerfully

Once the amount to be given has been determined, says Paul, the gift should be given cheerfully, since a cheerful giver always receives God’s approval (cf. [Pro 22:8-9](#) in LXX).

**as he purposes --** The term translated “purposes” occurs only here in the NT and indicates a premeditated, predetermined plan of action that is done from the heart voluntarily, but not impulsively. This is an age-old biblical principle of giving (cf [2Co 8:3](#); cf. [Exo 25:2](#)).

The word, as used in Aristotle, denotes *deliberate choice*, without any constraint of any kind, as well as free from the impulse of the passions

**grudgingly --** .Literally, **from sorrow**, i.e. out of a sorrowful or unwilling heart. Cf. [Exo 25:2](#); [Deu 15:10](#). CBSC

**grudgingly --** Literally “with grief,” “sorrow,” or “sadness,” which indicates an attitude of depression, regret, and reluctance that accompanies something done strictly out of a sense of duty and obligation, but not joy. - MSB

**of necessity --** Or “compulsion.” This refers to external pressure and coercion, quite possibly accompanied by legalism. Believers are not to give based on the demands of others, or according to any arbitrary standards or set amounts.



**cheerful giver** -- Paul echoes [Pro 22:9](#) and other OT passages to emphasize God's delight in those who give with the right attitude (compare [Exo 25:2](#); [Exo 35:5](#); [Deu 15:10](#); [Rom 12:8](#)).

Proverbs encourages generous giving several times ([Pro 11:24](#); [Pro 22:9](#); [Pro 28:27](#)) and equates generosity to the poor with generosity to God ([Pro 19:17](#)). It does this because the impoverished—like the rich—are likewise created by God ([Pro 22:2](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 9:8

### [2Co 9:8](#)

**God is able** -- The Corinthians may have felt concerned about giving money because of the uncertainty of life. Paul does not want this to be reason for them to withhold their generosity. Paul affirms that God can provide everything they need, just as He is doing for the church in Jerusalem.

**God is able** -- cf. [Rom 16:25](#); [Eph 3:20](#); [Jud 1:24](#)

**make all grace** -- The meaning here is 'God is able to make every gift of His loving-kindness to abound to you, that you, being thus enriched, may impart of His bounty to others.' -CBSC

Here "**grace**" does not refer to spiritual graces, but to money and material needs. When the believer generously—and wisely—gives of his material resources, God graciously replenishes them so he always has plenty and will not be in need (cf. [2Ch 31:10](#)). - MSB

**abound** -- God gives back lavishly to generous, cheerful givers, not so they may satisfy selfish, nonessential desires, but so they may meet the variety of needs others have (cf. [Deu 15:10-11](#)).

**all sufficiency** -- In secular Greek philosophy, this was the proud contentment of self-sufficiency that supposedly led to true happiness. Paul sanctifies the secular term and says that God, not man, will supply everything needed for real happiness and contentment (cf. [Php 4:19](#)). - MSB

**all sufficiency** -- The term "**sufficiency**" comes from two Greek terms, "self" and "contentment" (cf. [1Ti 6:6-10](#); [Php 4:11-12](#), 19; [Heb 13:15](#)). A. T. Robertson's *Word Pictures In The New Testament*, vol. 4, p. 248 and M. R. Vincent's *Word Studies*, p. 831, both claim that the use of this term shows Paul was familiar with Stoic thought and terms. But he redefines them in light of the gospel. - Uteley

**all sufficiency** -- What is God's "all-sufficient" power? [Rom 1:16](#)

## 2 Corinthians 9:9

### [2Co 9:9](#)

**As it is written** -- Paul marshals OT support ([Psa 112:9](#)) [LXX] for what he has been saying about the divine principles of giving. God replenishes and rewards the righteous giver both in time and eternity.

**poor** -- There are two words for 'poor' in the N.T.; one is very common and is the stronger of the two, signifying *abject* poverty ([2Co 6:10](#); [Rom 15:16](#); [Gal 2:10](#), [Gal 4:9](#), &c.); the other occurs



here only, in a quotation from the Septuagint ([Psa 111:9 LXX](#) [[Psa 112:9](#) ]), where it is very common. Both words are found [Psa 40:17](#), [Psa 41:1](#), [Psa 70:5](#), [Psa 72:13](#), [Psa 74:21](#), [Psa 86:1](#), [Psa 109:22](#); [Eze 16:49](#), [Eze 18:12](#), [Eze 22:29](#). No English Version makes any distinction here, although ‘poor and needy’ is so familiar from the Psalms.

**his righteousness remains forever** -- Paul quotes [Psa 112:9](#) to suggest that giving alms and being generous are expressions of God’s righteousness.

[Psa 112:9](#) Is speaking man's righteousness. (cf. [Psa 112:3](#), but Paul here clearly is speaking of God's righteousness, or benevolence to mankind.

The righteousness which manifests itself in beneficence, in works of love. It is not clear what is meant by the righteousness of the benevolent man abiding for ever. Ps. 112, from which the words come, should be studied as a whole. There it is twice said (vv. 3 and 9) of the good man that ‘his righteousness standeth fast for ever.’ It may mean that his good deeds ‘shall be in everlasting remembrance’ (v. 6). In Ps. 111 the same is said of God: ‘His righteousness standeth fast for ever. He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered’ (vv. 3, 4); - CBSC

**forever more** -- the Hebrew language has by no means the precision of the Greek. It probably means no more than this; that a good and charitable deed remains such for evermore. -

this God-fearing person freely distributes gifts to the poor ([Psa 112:9 a](#)). As a result, such benevolent acts of piety will never be forgotten but rather will have permanent beneficial effects in this life and will gain one an eternal reward ([Psa 112:9 b](#)). - EBC NT

## 2 Corinthians 9:10

### [2Co 9:10](#)

The first part of this verse seems to be a quote from [Isa 55:10](#), and the second part seems to be quoted from [Hos 10:12](#).

**He who** -- The same God who is faithful to supply all His creatures’ physical needs and is kind to all men, is uniquely gracious to His children. He always fulfills His promise to replenish their generosity.

**supplies seed** -- Paul alludes to [Isa 55:10](#)—a song of joy celebrating Israel’s promised restoration (see note on [2Co 1:3](#))—as further support that God provides for His creation. For this reason, the Corinthian believers should feel free to give generously to the collection, without fear that their own needs will go unmet. - FSB

**supplies [ministers, provides]** -- The verb used is a compound word, *epichorēgein*, [G2023](#), (*epi - chorego*) furnish abundantly.

At Athens a *choragus* was one who furnished a chorus, and as this was a *leitourgia* (or “public service”), involving great expense, and often discharged with extreme munificence, the verb came to imply “provide abundantly.” St. Paul may (so to speak) have “picked up the word” at Athens. - PC

**supply** {second appearance of the word} -- must see [G5524](#), [χορηγέω](#), *chore ḡéo* ; from *chore ḡós* (n.f.), the leader of the ancient chorus who supplied the chorus at his own expense, which is from

*chorós* ([G5525](#)), the chorus, and *hē géomai* ([G2233](#)), to lead. In the NT in general it means to furnish generously, lavishly ([2Co 9:10](#); [1Pe 4:11](#)). - cf. WordStudy, Thayer, CBSC

**fruits [harvest] of your righteousness.** -- God's temporal and eternal blessings to the cheerful giver (cf. [Hos 10:12](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 9:11

### [2Co 9:11](#)

**enriched in every way** -- Literally "in everything" is put in the front for emphasis. From [2Co 8:7-9](#), it is obvious that this does not refer to material blessings only, but also spiritual blessings (cf. [2Co 6:10](#); [1Co 1:5](#)).

**generosity** -- Paul wants the Corinthians to understand that their abundance exists for the sake of generosity and thanksgiving. See [2Co 8:14-15](#).

**through us will produce thanksgiving** -- This could mean that:

- (1) Paul and his company would be thankful to God when they saw the Corinthian brethren showing absence of selfishness and alleviating the disresses of others and prospering materially but especially spiritually. Or ...
- (2) This probably means that the Jerusalem saints would be grateful recipients of this liberal gift they would be receiving from the Macedonian and Achian churches.

## 2 Corinthians 9:12

### [2Co 9:12](#)

Their generosity would not only supply the needs of those in Jerusalem, it would also serve as an expression of thanksgiving to God and unite Jewish and Gentile believers ([2Co 9:12-15](#)).

**administration [service]** -- Administration," which may also be translated "service," is a priestly word from which we get "liturgy." Paul viewed the entire collection project as a spiritual, worshipful enterprise that was primarily being offered to God to glorify Him.

**service of this ministry** -- Paul points out that the Corinthians' generosity would not only benefit the church in Jerusalem, it would also be a gift of thanksgiving to God.

**supplying** -- The Greek word for "supplies" is a doubly intense term that could be rendered "really, fully supplying." This indicates the Jerusalem church had an extremely great need.

**needs of the saints** -- Some of the Jewish member at Corinth had probably gone to Jerusalem as pilgrims to celebrate the feast of Pentecost (see [Act 2:1](#), [Act 2:5-11](#)), had been converted through Peter's message, and had then remained in the city without adequate financial support and had seen how the new Christians helped one another.

Many residents of Jerusalem had undoubtedly lost their jobs in the waves of persecution that came after the martyrdom of Stephen ([Act 8:1](#)). However, the Corinthians were wealthy enough (they

had not yet suffered persecution and deprivation like the Macedonians; [2Co 8:1-4](#)) to help meet the huge need with a generous monetary gift (*see note on [2Co 9:5](#)*).

thanksgivings -- The saints at Jerusalem, as well as other Christians who heard of the collection, would praise God because this act of Christian service had proved the reality and vigor of the Corinthians' faith (v.13a). Praise is offered less for the gift itself than for the spiritual virtues of the donors expressed in the gift.

## 2 Corinthians 9:13

### [2Co\\_9:13](#)

**approval [test. proving, proof]** -- [G1382](#), This is the word for "test" (*dokimē*) used in [2Co 2:9](#); [2co 8:2](#); [2Co 13:3](#).

**this ministry [service. ministration,]** -- This refers to the contribution of Paul's Gentile churches to the mother church in Jerusalem.

**their approval of this service** -- See note on [2Co 9:12](#). The collection also provided an important opportunity for the Corinthians to test the genuineness of their faith (cf [Jas 1:22](#); [1Jn 2:3-4](#)). The Jewish believers, who already doubted the validity of Gentile salvation, were especially skeptical of the Corinthians since their church had so many problems. The Corinthians' involvement in the collection would help to put those doubts to rest. - MSB

**confession of the gospel of Christ** -- Confession means "to agree with" (cf. [1Ti 6:12-13](#); [1Jn 1:9](#)). In this context their metaphorical confession is their liberal contribution, which confirmed their relationship with the other Gentile churches and with Christ.

**obedience of your confession** -- Obedient submission to God's Word is always evidence of a true confession of Christ as Lord and Savior ([Eph 2:10](#); [Jas 2:14-20](#); cf. [Rom 10:9-10](#)). If the Corinthians had a proper response to and participation in Paul's collection ministry, the Jewish believers would know the Gentile conversions had been real.

**your confession** -- , or **profession**, i.e. of Christianity. See [1Ti 6:12-13](#) (margin); [Heb 3:1](#), [Heb 4:14](#), [Heb 10:23](#).

**contribution** -- The word here rendered *distribution* in the A. V. is that usually rendered by *communion*, or *fellowship*. Here it clearly has the active sense of *communication*. - CBSC

**for them and for all others,** -- See 88-Ch-Saints folder. "saints and all men"; "all men"  
[1Th 3:12](#)

and to all [for all others] -- For if the Corinthians behaved with such brotherly kindness to the once-despised Jews, who were now their Christian brethren, they would be not likely to refuse fellowship with any others. - PC

This is a difficult phrase to interpret. It must somehow refer to the Corinthian influence in encouraging other Gentile churches to participate in the collection (cf. [2Co 9:2](#)). - Utley

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There seems to be several things expressed here:

- (1) the *occasion* of the recipients' thankfulness,
- (2) the tested genuineness of the help given;
- (3) and the two *reasons* for their thankfulness, viz.
  - (a) Corinthian loyalty as regards the Gospel, and
  - (b) Corinthian generosity in giving so liberally.
- (4) As regards the Palestinian Christians had had misgivings:
  - (a) it had looked as if Gentile converts were advocates for extreme license.
  - (b) Now they would see the loyalty manifested in Corinthian adhesion to the Gospel. (CBSC)

## 2 Corinthians 9:14

### [2Co 9:14](#)

**they long for you [with deep affection]** -- The construction is not easy; but apparently the thought is that while the Corinthians exhibit their goodwill by their bounty, the recipients exhibit theirs by affectionate intercession for the Corinthians.

Another benefit of this gift that Paul foresaw was that those who received it and heard about it would reciprocate by interceding for the Corinthians. Moreover they would long to see and be with the Corinthians because of the grace that God had given them/ - Constable

**they ... pray for you** -- This verse illustrates the truth that mutual prayer is at the heart of authentic Christian unity. When the Jerusalem believers recognized God was at work in the Corinthian church as a result of its outreach through the collection (*see notes on v. 13*), they would have become friends in Christ and prayed for the Corinthians, thanking God for their loving generosity. - MSB

**grace of God** -- Paul's use of *charis* refers to the kindness expressed in generosity, but it may also include knowledge of God for salvation (also see note on [2Co 8:1](#)).

**surpassing grace [exceeding grace; overflowing]** -- Referring to the liberality with which God had blessed the Corinthians.

Some understand *this surpassing grace God has given you* to refer to the fact that God had included the Corinthians (gentiles) to share in the blessings of the Gospel, the blessings found in Christ. And thus (v.15) Christ is the *indescribable gift*. [see EBSNT, NIVBTSB] While I lean toward taking v. 14 and 15 in the context of the entire chapter. - WG [See notes on [2Co 9:15](#)].

## 2 Corinthians 9:15

### [2Co 9:15](#)

**His inexpressible [unspeakable; too wonderful; indescribable;]** -- While we may be prone to think of "Christ" as God's greatest and most wonderful gift to man (which is true), yet the context seems to be saying that God's great liberal material blessings upon the Corinthians enabling them to most liberally share God's grace on them, is a gift for which the Jewish Christians are exceedingly thankful.  
- WG

Jewish people believed that God heard the cries of the poor ([Deu 15:9-10](#)); Paul's readers would understand his point that their aid to the poor brought direct glory to God in praise ([2Co 9:11-12](#); cf. [2Co 1:11](#)) and would also benefit the Corinthians through the prayers of the poor in Jerusalem ([2Co 9:14](#)). (God's "gift"—v. 15—may thus be his strategic provision to the Corinthians by which they can benefit the poor of Jerusalem.) - IVPBBCNT

**indescribable gift** -- This may refer to "the surpassing grace" (v. 14) that God imparts, but the primary reference is to the Father's gift (Greek *charis*) of his Son (cf. [Rom 8:32](#)). -- NIVBTSB

**indescribable [ unspeakable]** -- Since the gift here is said to be given by God and is beyond adequate human description, it can hardly refer to the Corinthian contribution or even the boon of Jewish-Gentile reconciliation in Christ alluded to in v.14a; rather, it must refer to the surpassing grace that God imparts (v.14b), especially the Father's gift of the Son (cf. [Rom 8:32](#)). - EBCNT

**His unspeakable gift** -- The word used here [ἀνεκδιγῆτο](#), *anekdie ge to* means, what cannot be related, unutterable. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The idea is, that no words can properly express the greatness of the gift thus bestowed on man. It is higher than the mind can conceive; higher than language can express. On this verse we may observe:

1) That the Saviour is a gift to mankind. So he is uniformly represented; see [Joh 3:16](#); [Gal 1:4](#); [Gal 2:20](#); [1Ti 2:6](#); [Tit 2:14](#).

2) This is a gift unspeakably great, whose value no language can express, no heart fully conceive.

3) Thanks should be rendered to God for this. We owe him our highest praises for this. (BN)

**2 Corinthians 10:1****2Co 10:1**

**10:1–18** Paul changes topics here to address his opponents in Corinth (chs. 10–13), offering an impassioned defense of his apostleship.

He begins by stating that God gave him his authority (v. 8). He encourages the Corinthians not to consider appearances (v. 7) and points out that he does not compare himself with others (v. 12). Paul then contrasts himself with those who commend themselves, pointing out that he only boasts in the Lord (vv. 12–18) - FSB

**I, Paul, myself entreat you, --**

**by the meekness** -- The humble and gentle attitude that expresses itself in patient endurance of unfair treatment. A meek person is not bitter or angry, and he does not seek revenge when wronged. *See note on Mat 5:5.*

Greek culture did not usually regard meekness as a virtue (cf. the modern colloquial expression “wimp”). - IVPBBCNT

Greek thinkers (Socrates, Aristotle, Stoics) did not see **meekness** as a virtue. This reflects one of their criticisms of Paul. M. R. Vincent’s *Word Studies*, vol. 2, asserts that in the Septuagint that “**meekness**” (*praus*, 2Co 10:1), “**meek**” (*tameinos*, v. 1), and “**poor**” (*penēs*, 2Co 9:9) are used to translate the same Hebrew words. They contrast the rich and powerful vs. the lowly and down-trodden (p. 832).

‘**Meekness**’ is quiet submissiveness to God or man in circumstances likely to provoke indignation. Its opposite is ‘harshness,’ ‘the rod,’ as in 1Co 4:21. ‘**Gentleness**’ or ‘sweet reasonableness’ (Matthew Arnold) is the spirit of fairness, which makes allowances, and does not exact that *summum jus* which is often *summa injuria*. Trench, *Synonyms*, § xliii. - CBSC

**and gentleness of Christ--** This is similar in meaning to meekness. When applied to someone in a position of authority it refers to leniency. Gentle people refuse to retaliate, even when it is in their power to do so (Php 4:5).

**gentleness of Christ --** While Paul seeks to defend himself, he does not want to do so in an angry or indignant manner; rather, he seeks to emulate the humility and gentleness shown by Christ (2Co 8:9; Mat 11:29; Luk 18:14; see Gal 6:1)

**I who am humble when face to face with you, --** Paul sarcastically repeated another feature of the Corinthians’ accusation against him; sadly, they had mistaken his gentleness and meekness toward them for weakness. Further, they accused him of cowardice, of being bold only when writing to them from a safe distance (cf. v. 10). - MSB

**but bold toward you when I am away! --** Of good courage, 2Co 7:16.

Paul wished to avoid a display of boldness on his forthcoming visit. Yet he was totally ready to exercise his apostolic authority, whatever the outcome, if the Corinthians did not reject his opponents and mend their ways (cf. [2Co 12:20-21](#); [2Co 13:11](#); [1Co 4:21](#)). - EBCNT

## 2 Corinthians 10:2

### [2Co\\_10:2](#)

**I beg of you [I ask]** -- The Greek term means to ask with urgency or to plead. Paul used a synonym **entreat** in v. 1. (cf. [2Co 2:8](#); [2Co 5:20](#); [2Co 6:1](#); [2Co 8:6](#); [2Co 9:5](#); [2Co 12:8](#), [2Co 12:18](#); [2Co 13:11](#)). He is urgently pleading with these believers to reevaluate what they have heard from the false teachers.

**when I am present** -- Paul was quite capable of bold, fearless confrontation (cf. [Gal 2:11](#)). But seeking to spare the Corinthians (cf. [2Co 1:23](#)), the apostle begged the rebellious minority not to force him to display his boldness by confronting them—something he would do, he warned, if necessary.

**walked .. according to the flesh ..** The element that causes trouble in the church. Probably an accusation of Paul's enemies.

## 2 Corinthians 10:3

### [2Co\\_10:3](#)

**walk in the flesh** -- Quiet a different turn from "*walking according to the flesh*" used in the previous verse.

Paul's opponents at Corinth had wrongly accused him of *walking in the flesh* in a moral sense (cf. [Rom 8:4](#)). Playing off that, Paul affirmed that he did *walk in the flesh* in a physical sense; though possessing the power and authority of an apostle of Jesus Christ, he was a real human being (cf. [2Co 4:7](#), [2Co 4:16](#); [2Co 5:1](#)) - MSB

**do not wage war according to the flesh** -- Paul uses spiritual weapons—such as the gospel, faith, truth, and prayer—to wage battle against his opposition (compare [2Co 6:6-7](#); [Eph 6:10-17](#)).

Paul did not fight the spiritual battle for men's souls using human ingenuity, worldly wisdom, or clever methodologies (cf. [1Co 1:17-25](#); [1Co 2:1-4](#)). Such impotent weapons are powerless to free souls from the forces of darkness and bring them to maturity in Christ. They cannot successfully oppose satanic assaults on the gospel, such as those made by the false apostles at Corinth.

## 2 Corinthians 10:4

### [2Co\\_10:4](#)

**our warfare** -- Paul has alluded to this spiritual warfare earlier in [2Co 6:7](#). The book of Romans was written from Corinth about this same time. He also mentions this warfare in [Rom 6:13](#); [Rom 13:12](#).



Peter uses the verb form in [1Pe 4:1](#), where he encourages believers to arm themselves in their fleshly struggles. - Utley

**our warfare** -- The motif of the Christian life as warfare is a common one in the NT (cf. [2Co 6:7](#); [Eph 6:10-18](#); [1Ti 1:18](#); [2Ti 2:3-4](#); [2Ti 4:7](#)).

**flesh [carnal]** -- Human. *See note on [2Co 10:3](#).*

**"for the destruction of fortresses"** -- This may be an allusion to [Pro 21:22](#) (larger context [2Co 10:13-18](#)). There has been much discussion about the meaning of this phrase among commentators, but it is obvious that [2Co 10:5](#) is a description of what spiritual fortresses Paul is referring to. It appears he is addressing the false theology of the false teachers. - Utley

**strongholds** -- The metaphor would have been readily understandable to the Corinthians since Corinth, like most ancient cities, had a fortress (on top of a hill south of the city) in which its residents could take refuge.

The formidable spiritual strongholds manned by the forces of hell can be demolished only by spiritual weapons wielded by godly believers—singularly the “sword of the Spirit” ([Eph 6:17](#)) = MSB

## 2 Corinthians 10:5

### [2Co 10:5](#)

**arguments** -- Thoughts, ideas, speculations, reasonings, philosophies, and false religions are the ideological forts in which men barricade themselves against God and the gospel (cf. [1Co 3:20](#)). - MSB

“Arguments” (NIV, NRSV, TEV) or “speculations” (NASB) [“pretension”, “imaginaions” ASV] is a technical term for rhetorical or philosophical reasonings; the prisoners of war in this extended metaphor are human thoughts. Cf. [Pro 21:22](#). - EBCNT

**raised [that exalts itself] against the knowledge of God**, -- True knowledge makes men humble. Where there is exaltation of self, there knowledge of God is wanting [BENGEL].

Everything which exalts itself is opposed to the knowledge of God, that which makes people think they do not need the provisions of the gospel and are not willing to submit to God's plan for them.

**bringing into captivity** -- Free from dominion of the body. The mind under the influence of the gospel is to control the body.

**every thought** -- ([πᾶν](#) A-ASN, [G3956](#), every; [νοῦμα](#) N-ASN, [G3540](#), thought)

*The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised*, Harold K. Moulton, ed., lists several connotations (p. 280).

1. the mind, the understanding, intellect - [2Co 3:14](#); [2Co 4:4](#)
2. the heart, soul, affections, feelings, disposition - [2Co 11:3](#)
3. a conception of the mind, thought, purpose, device - [2Co 2:11](#); [2Co 10:5](#)

The word “**thought**” (*novhma*, *νοῦμα*) is only used six times in the NT, once in [Php 4:7](#), and four other times in 2 Corinthians ([2Co 2:11](#); [2Co 3:14](#); [2Co 4:4](#); [2Co 11:3](#)). In every other case, it is



translated "**mind**" by the NIV, except when referring to the "schemes" of Satan in [2Co 2:11](#). Outside the NT, it can mean "design" or "purpose." So, we should not think that Paul means that Christ will overcome every random thought we have. Rather, he has in mind thoughts directed toward a purpose, a philosophy. Also, ultimately it is not just philosophies that become captive to Christ but the people attached to them. "Obedient to Christ" means to accept the gospel of Christ as true and to honor Christ as Lord. - CPNTNIV

1) Even our "thoughts" should be only of being obedient to the will of God.

2) "Thoughts" here are not our own, but of others, and used as referring to their "causes, philosophies, religions, conduct, etc." as being won over to that in harmony with with will of God. ([2Co 2:11](#), used of the schemes, devices, "ways", strategy, plans of Satan.) - WG

Every power of thought in the pagan world; all the systems of philosophy and all forms of opinion among people; all the purposes of the soul; all the powers of reason, memory, judgment, fancy in an individual, were all to come under the laws of Christ, All doctrines were to be in accordance with his will; - BN,

...the weapons of our warfare are able to cast all that to the ground, and bring every thought ('every conception'<sup>[1]</sup>), like a captive, into absolute obedience to what Christ demands in thought and action; - Schaff

**bring into captivity** -- Another military metaphor.

**captive** -- The verb is a compound of "spear" and "to capture in battle." All things "false" is captured by the "truth."

## 2 Corinthians 10:6

### [2Co 10:6](#)

**punish [avenge; revenge;]** -- In the sense of "discipline". Paul would discipline (ex-communicate) the false teachers at Corinth when the church was strong enough to observe the process.

(CEV) "And when you completely obey him, we will punish anyone who refuses to obey."

(NLT) "And after you have become fully obedient, we will punish everyone who remains disobedient."

As a soldier of Christ, the apostle was also **ready to punish all disobedience, when** the Corinthians had shown their **obedience** first of all. He was not going to act against the false teachers at Corinth until he was, first, sure of the **obedience** of the believers in all things. - BBC

Paul is warning this church to deal with its problems before he arrives or else he will deal with them (cf. [1Co 5:3-5](#)). - Utley

## 2 Corinthians 10:7

### [2Co 10:7](#)

**You are looking --** The NKJV and ASV translate it as a question. The NASB, NRSV, NJB translate this as an imperative; the TEV, NIV, translate it as an indicative.

The church at Corinth was analyzing and criticizing on a fleshly/worldly/physical level instead of a gospel level. (Utley)

**look ... outward appearance --** The Greek verb “look” is better translated as an imperative, or command: “Look at what is obvious, face the facts, consider the evidence.” - MSB

Paul casts doubt on the criteria the Corinthians were using for judging him. They were impressed by externals (cf. [2Co 5:12](#)), with “the surface of things”—the confident claim of being an authorized apostle, commendatory letters ([2Co 3:1](#)), an authoritarian manner (2co 11:20), spectacular visions (cf. [2Co 12:1-7](#)), rhetorical skills ([2Co 11:6](#)), and “pure” Jewishness ([2Co 11:22](#)). Paul argues that the right to make a subjective claim based on personal conviction cannot fairly be granted his opponents and yet denied him. (EBCNT)

**according to appearance --** Some Corinthians continued to judge Paul and his ministry according to the standards of the time; they evaluated him according to his rhetoric, logic, and manner of reception by various communities.

**If anyone is convinced ... that he is Christ's --** The false apostles' claim to belong to Christ can be understood in 4 ways:

- 1) that they were Christians;
- 2) that they had known Jesus during His earthly life;
- 3) that they had an apostolic commission from Him; or
- 4) that they had an elevated, secret knowledge of Him.

Their claim that some or all of those things were true about themselves implies that they denied all of them to be true of Paul.

**that just as he is Christ's so also are we --** The false teachers were claiming spiritual authority and standing, but were denying Paul's.

**we are Christ's --** For the sake of argument, Paul did not at this point deny the false apostles' claims (as he did later in [2Co 11:13-15](#)). He merely pointed out that he, too, can and does claim to belong to Christ.

## 2 Corinthians 10:8

### [2Co 10:8](#)

**about our authority, which the Lord gave --** This refers to Paul's Damascus Road experience (cf. [Act 9:15-16](#); [Rom 1:5](#); [Gal 2:9](#)). Paul emphasizes that his authority comes from God.

**building you up** Some Corinthians may have perceived that Paul used his authority to oppress or take advantage of them ([2Co 12:17](#)). Paul identifies the true purpose of his authority: to strengthen the faith of believers so they grow in maturity.

**I will not be put to shame --** He defends himself to defend (1) the authority he had been given and (2) the gospel he preached.

**I should not be ashamed --** Literally, **I shall not be ashamed**, or perhaps **shamed**, i.e. brought to shame. “Shall not be pointed out as a liar or a vain boaster.” - CBSC

## 2 Corinthians 10:9

### 2Co 10:9

**I do not want to appear --** Paul’s wording here suggests that his opponents were accusing him of trying to frighten or intimidate the Corinthian believers with his letters.

**terrify you by letters --** Paul’s enemies had accused him of being an abusive leader, of trying to intimidate the Corinthians in his letters (calling it a “severe letter,”).

Paul’s goal, however, was not to terrify the Corinthians, but to bring them to repentance (cf. 2Co 7:8-10), because he loved them (cf. 2Co 2:4; 2Co 7:2-3; 2Co 11:11; 2Co 12:15).

**letters --** Some think Paul wrote other letters to the Corinthians in addition to 1 and 2nd Corinthians.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul refers to a previous letter where he instructed the Corinthians to not associate with immoral people (see 1Co 5:9 and note). In 2 Corinthians, he refers to another letter which he wrote out of distress and anguish (see 2Co 2:3).

## 2 Corinthians 10:10

### 2Co 10:10

**For some say --** “*They say*” follows MSS B, called Vaticanus, the Latin Vulgate and the Peshitta (Syriac translation). Most other Greek manuscripts have “*he*,” which may refer to a ringleader of the false teachers (cf. 2Co 10:7, 2Co 10:11; 2Co 11:4).

**For some say ... --** In their continuing attempt to discredit Paul, the false apostles claimed that in contrast to his bold, forceful letters, in person he lacked the presence, charisma, and personality of a truly great leader.

And in a culture that highly valued skillful rhetoric and eloquent oration, Paul’s “contemptible” speech was also taken as evidence that he was a weak, ineffective person.

**in person he is unimpressive --** A second century tradition of Paul’s physical description comes from Thessalonica in a book called *Paul and Thekla*. It depicts him as “a man of small height, almost bald, with crooked legs, but with a good body and eyebrows meeting. His nose was hooked, full of grace, for sometimes he appeared like a man and sometimes had the face of an angel.”

Paul was not a physically attractive man (cf. Gal 4:14). Some of these physical characteristics may be related to his thorn in the flesh (cf. 2Co 12:7), which I think was eye problems.

**his speech is of no account --** According to the Corinthians’ standard, Paul was not an impressive orator. Paul may not have used any rhetorical techniques when he presented the gospel to the Corinthians; God’s power, not Paul’s speech, gave the message credibility.

Paul's speech reflects insufficient rhetorical training to impress the powerful people of society. His (literally) "bodily presence" (KJV, NRSV) was also unimpressive, perhaps meaning that he did not dress as a good philosopher would, or (more likely) that he was awkward in gestures, an important element of delivery in public speaking that rhetoricians stressed. - IVPBBCNT

**and his speech contemptible** -- This is a strong Greek term (cf. [1Co 1:28](#); [1Co 6:4](#); [1Co 16:11](#); [Rom 14:3](#), [Rom 14:10](#)). Paul was *not* a polished public speaker (Greek rhetorical style, cf. [1Co 1:17](#); [1Co 2:3-4](#); [2Co 11:6](#)).

Apollos ([Act 18:24](#)) was the eloquent, rhetorically trained preacher from Alexandria. However, Paul claims that though he was unskilled in rhetorical style (cf. [2Co 11:6](#)), his message and authority were from Christ.

## 2 Corinthians 10:11

### [2Co 10:11](#)

**Such people should realize** -- Paul affirms his integrity. What he was in his letters he was to be when present with them.

The false teacher(s) have accused Paul of having strong letters, but weak presentation. Paul asserts that the strength which they affirmed in his letters would be equaled by the strength of his personal presence if he had to come personally and set things straight himself!

**our actions when we are present** -- Not only did they ridicule his appearance, but they even charged him with cowardice, uttering loud threats when at a distance, but silent and meek when confronted.

Philosophers and Jewish teachers often contrasted words and deeds; deeds weighed more heavily. Even if Paul was an inferior speaker, his life backed up everything he said. - IVPBBCNT

## 2 Corinthians 10:12

### [2Co 10:12](#)

**classify or to compare** -- The opponents in Corinth compared their skill and gifts to Paul's but he asserts that such comparisons merely derive from people's perspectives and are useless; his apostolic authority comes from God ([Act 9:15](#); [2Co 10:18](#)).

**commend themselves** -- The Greek word [G4921](#) here used has in the N.T. the sense of *praise*; but probably here the leading idea as in [2Co 3:1](#) is of *recommending* themselves.

**but they measuring themselves** -- The idea is that these men's motives are centred in themselves. They judge themselves by their own standard and take advantage of other men's labours.

Paul seems to hint ([2Co 10:16](#)), that they even boast of other men's labours as their own, and give other men no credit for what they have done.

**comparing themselves among themselves** -- Paul pointed out the folly of the false apostles' boasting. They invented false standards that they could meet, then proclaimed themselves superior for meeting them.

**2 Corinthians 10:13**2Co 10:13**area of influence --** Gal 2:7-8;

**God has assigned** --Paul considered the Corinthian church to be a part of his God-given ministry assignment him, 2Co 10:14. (Rom 1:5; Rom 11:13; 1Ti 2:7; 2Ti 1:11). He did not get involved in churches that other missionaries had planted (e.g., Rom 15:18-20).

**God assigned to us --** cf. Act 9:15; Act 22:21; Act 26:17-21; : Act 21:19, Act 22:21, Act 26:17-20; Rom 1:5, Rom 1:13-15, Rom 11:13, Rom 15:15-21; 1Co 15:10; Gal 2:7-8; Eph 3:7-8; Col 1:25-29; 1Ti 2:7; - TSK

Teachers of rhetoric and philosophy in cities throughout the Mediterranean competed for students and their fees. One means of self-advertisement was to compare oneself favorably to rival teachers; Paul uses the ancient literary device of irony and turns his opponents' advertising on its head, refuting them while satirizing their very form of boasting. The language of a "sphere" (NASB) or "proper limits" (NIV) was sometimes applied to the extent of a public servant's service in a district or region; Paul could also mean it in terms of the language of Roman imperial conquest (cf. 2Co 10:3-6). - IVPBBCNT = **THE IVP BIBLE BACKGROUND COMMENTARY NEW TESTAMENT**, ed by Craig S. Keener

**2 Corinthians 10:14**2Co 10:14

**For we stretch not] [not overextending]** -- The meaning is, For we are not straining ourselves beyond our due limits in claiming you as our charge, for it is an undeniable fact that we came (the tense is the simple past in the original and the word has the sense of *anticipating others* in coming) as far as you in our work of preaching the Gospel. Corinth was the farthest point the Apostle had yet reached. - CBSC

**as far as you with the gospel** -- Paul ministered in Corinth and established the church there during his second missionary journey (see Acts 18:1–16).

**we were the first** -- To Paul belonged the undisputed fact of having first introduced the gospel into the regions of Macedonia and Achaia.

**we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ** -- It was Paul who established the Corinthian church, yet the false teachers were trying to take credit (cf. 2Co 10:17).

**the gospel** -- The gospel (*euangelion*) refers to the new covenant brought about in Christ (2Co 3:6; 2Co 4:4-6; see note on 2Co 3:3), which Paul defined in his previous letter in terms of Christ's death and resurrection (1Co 15:1-4). His opponents were teaching a "different gospel" that distorted God's Word (2Co 4:2; see 2Co 11:4 and note).

**2 Corinthians 10:15****2Co 10:15**

**not boasting beyond *our* measure ... in other men's labors** -- The false teachers were taking credit for the Corinthian church, which Paul established.

The Apostle now repeats what he has before said in v. 13, but directs his remarks more pointedly against the false teachers by adding '*in other men's labours.*'

**as your faith increases** -- *increases*, or *grows*. Is Paul delicately implying that their lack of faith prevents the extension of his labours? He could not leave in his rear a fortress of false teachers opposing the gospel. The spread of the gospel *depends on them*.

**to be enlarged greatly by you** -- Since Paul viewed the Corinthian church as his letter of recommendation (see 2Co 3:1 and note, and 2Co 3:2), he hoped their growth would result in more opportunities for his ministry.

As their spiritual father (1Co 4:15), he hoped that the growth of their faith would result in the enlargement of his influence among them and the improvement of their estimation of him. Then and only then could he contemplate fulfilling his eager desire to visit the Christians at Rome (Act 19:21; Rom 1:11; Rom 15:24) and to advance westward to Spain (Rom 15:24, Rom 15:28). EBCNT

**2 Corinthians 10:16****2Co 10:16**

**beyond you** -- When the crisis in Corinth had been resolved and the Corinthians' faith strengthened, Paul would, with their help, expand his ministry into new areas.

Areas such as Rome (Act 19:21) and Spain (Rom 15:24, Rom 15:28).

**the regions that lie beyond you** -- Paul hopes his ministry in Corinth will result in opportunities to preach the gospel further west. He wanted to visit Rome and Spain after traveling to Jerusalem to deliver the collection for the church there (8:1–9:15; see Rom 15:25-29).

**2 Corinthians 10:17****2Co 10:17**

**boasts** -- The thought of self-glory was repugnant to Paul; he boasted only in the Lord (cf. Jer 9:23-24; 1Co 1:31; see note on 2Co 10:13).

**let him boast in the Lord** A quotation of Jer 9:24 (LXX) (quoted also in 1Co 1:31).

Jeremiah, in [Jer 9:23-24](#) contrasts improper boasting (boasting of one's own wisdom, strength, and riches) and proper boasting (boasting about understanding and knowing the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice, and righteousness on earth). For Christians, only boasting "in the Lord" is legitimate—boasting about who Jesus Christ is and what he has done for them ([Gal 6:14](#)) or through them ([Rom 15:18](#); cf. [Act 14:27](#)). (NIVBTSB)

## 2 Corinthians 10:18

### [2Co 10:18](#)

**whom the Lord commends.** -- The real question that matters, is which faction, teacher, or theology does Jesus approve (cf. [1Co 4:1-5](#)).

Applying [Jer 9:24](#), Paul notes that self-commendation is obviously out of place.

**commends** -- [G4921](#)

**approved** -- [G1384](#)

**2 Corinthians 11:1****2Co 11:1**

**11:1–15** In this section, Paul defends himself against his opponents, whom he sarcastically calls super-apostles (see v. 5 and note). He compares them to the serpent that deceived Eve (v. 3), calling them false apostles and deceitful workers (v. 13). Paul defends his ministry by pointing out that he did not accept payment while in Corinth (vv. 7–9); his motive for ministry is the expansion of Christ's kingdom, not payment or respect (see 12:14). - FSB

**in a little foolishness --** Paul has previously stated that physical comparison is foolishness, but the false teachers had used him as the object of ridicule. Therefore, he uses the Sophists' rhetorical style (boasting) against them (a sarcastic parody). He had to defend himself before this church for their own good. He felt silly in having to do this, as verses [2Co 11:17](#) and [2Co 11:21](#) affirm.

Paul takes on an ironic tone in saying, ***I hope you will put up with a little more of my foolishness.*** He again asks with irony, ***Please bear with me*** (or *But indeed you are putting up with me*, a translation that makes the irony even more pointed).

... likely, he is simply implying that, while he assumes the guise of a madman for rhetorical purposes (being able to assume various styles was part of rhetorical training), it is his opponents who generally boast and hence are truly mad. - IVPBBCNT

**bear with me --** There are three reasons stated in vv. [2Co 11:2](#); [2Co 11:4](#); [2Co 11:5](#) why they should listen. Each of these reasons is introduced in English by the word “for” (*gar*).

His antagonists were indulging in self-praise ([2Co 5:12](#); [2Co 10:7](#), [2Co 10:12-18](#)) and the Corinthians were evidently sympathetic to that. Consequently his hand was forced ([2Co 12:11](#)); he must indulge in foolish boasting in order to win the Corinthians' attention and gain a fair hearing.

Reluctantly, he decides to employ his opponents' methods; but unlike theirs, his motive is not personal gain but the Corinthians' welfare (v.2). He goes on to supply three grounds for his appeal to the Corinthians to bear with him:

- (1) his divine jealousy for them especially when they were endangered (vv.2–3);
- (2) their willingness to put up with rivals who presented an adulterated message (v.4); and
- (3) his claim not to be in the least inferior to the “super-apostles” (v.5). - EBCNT

**2 Corinthians 11:2****2Co\_11:2 Espoused to Christ**

**bethrothed you --** When using the metaphor of marriage to describe the relation between believer and Christ, the metaphor holds that while here on earth He was the bridegroom (see [John 3:29](#)) and the metaphor continues in the parables when the Lord's return is pictured as a bridegroom coming for his bride for the consummation of the marriage (see [Mat 22:2](#); [Mat 25:1-13](#)).

Paul continues to use this same metaphor relationship in [2Co 11:2](#) (see also [Eph 5:26-27](#)) when he pictures the Christian as bethrothed to Christ.



In the Revelation the same metaphor is used when John pictures in heaven at the Lord's return after the judgment the marriage of the bride and the Lamb taking place [Rev 19:7](#); [Rev 21:9](#).

Windell Gann

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When are we espoused? When we are saved, at conversion.

When is the marriage? After the Lord returns for his bride, in heaven!

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### **Peoples's New Testament** - BW Johnson

**For I am jealous over you.** His course was induced because of his jealousy for them, not in behalf of himself, but of Christ. He had espoused them to Christ, the Bridegroom of whom the church is the bride ([Rev 21:2](#)). He has a fear lest this bride may be led astray.

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**The MacArthur Study Bible** has this note: on [2Co 11:2](#)

**I have betrothed you to one husband.** As their spiritual father ([2Co 12:14](#); [1Co 4:15](#); cf. [2Co 9:1-2](#)), Paul portrayed the Corinthians like a daughter, whom he betrothed to Jesus Christ (at their conversion). ... Having betrothed or pledged the Corinthians to Christ, Paul wanted them to be pure until the marriage day finally arrived (cf. [Rev 19:7](#)).

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**The Evangelical Commentary on the Bible:** on [2Co 11:2](#)

But because of his jealous love for the Corinthians, and his desire as their “father” to present the church to Christ, as a “pure virgin” bride, untainted by the errors of others, Paul is willing to make his appeal on any terms ([11:2](#)).

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See also the **Pulpit Commentary** on this passage.

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### **The IVP Background Commentary**

**11:2.** Being jealous over God's people with God's jealousy (cf. [Exo 20:5](#)) would have been viewed as pious (cf. [Num 25:11](#)). Fathers normally pledged their daughters in marriage, and Paul compares the Corinthian church with a daughter ([1Co 4:14-15](#)) whom he has pledged in marriage to Christ (cf. Jewish depictions of God marrying his son Israel to the law). (Other commentators see Paul as presenting the bride, as the best man would, rather than as a father betrothing her.)

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**The Jerome Bible Commentary** on [2Co 11:2](#)

*I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ:* The one husband and Christ are the same person. The relationship of the Jewish people and Yahweh in the OT is now predicated of the NT faithful and Christ. The love that existed between the Israelites and God is presented under the figure of an engagement or marriage in [Hos 2:21](#); [Isa 54:5-6](#); [Isa 62:5](#); [Jer 3:1](#); [Eze 16:6-43](#). Christ is called the bridegroom of the Church in [Eph 5:27-32](#); [Ap 21:9](#); [22:17](#). His bride, the Church, should be without stain ([Eph 5:27](#)). As betrothal to Christ means that the Church's relation to him is exclusive, so should the relation of its members be. That Paul was father of the Corinthian church is seen in his betrothing it to Christ; in that epoch a father arranged the marriage of his daughter.

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**The New Bible Commentary** says in [2Co 11:2](#).

Using the imagery of betrothal and marriage, he sees himself as the agent of God through whom his converts were betrothed to Christ, and he feels under obligation to ensure that they are presented as a pure virgin to him, *i.e.* to ensure that they remain truly devoted to Christ until he comes again.

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**Tim Constable Expository Notes on the Bible**, [2Co 11:2](#)

Paul pictured himself as the father of a virgin bride (cf. [1Co 4:15](#); [2Co 12:14](#)). His desire was to keep his daughter, the Corinthian church, pure until she would consummate her marriage to Christ (cf. [2Co 4:14](#); [Eph 5:27](#); [1Jn 3:2-3](#)). This will take place at the Rapture. [Note: he says at the "rapture" when truly it is after the Lord's Second Coming, [Rev 19:7](#); [Rev 21:9](#). WG]

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**The Believer's Study Bible** is very interesting in this passage:

More specifically, in this text, Paul views himself as a father who lovingly and caringly seeks to nurture and mature his virgin daughter (the Corinthians) so as to someday present her, pure and undefiled, to a husband (Christ). By implication, as one reads between the lines, Paul views the false teachers as deceptive suitors who would violate his daughter and rob her of her precious virginity and purity through their proclamations of "another Jesus," a "different spirit," and a "different gospel." Doctrinal purity and discernment is deemed crucial. Paul's image is a powerful statement of his great love and concern for the Corinthian church.

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**The Bible Knowledge Commentary** in [2Co 11:2](#)

In Paul's metaphor the church was a **virgin** betrothed to **Christ** at conversion. As the servant of God's grace he acted as their spiritual father ([1Co 4:15](#)). Until the marriage was consummated at Christ's coming, exclusive **devotion to Christ** should prevail (cf. [Eph 5:25-27](#)).

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 Passages to consider: (linked to e-Sword) [2Co 11:2](#); [Eph 5:26-27](#); [Eph 5:23-33](#); [Rev 19:7](#); [Rev 21:9](#).

[Mat 22:2](#); [Mat 25:1-13](#);

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**2 Corinthians 11:3**

[2Co 11:3](#)

**But --** The 'But' marks a contrast to 'present a pure virgin': he is quite sure that they will be loyal to Christ; *but still* he is very uneasy.

**deceived Eve by his cunning --** He feared the Corinthians, like Eve, would fall prey to satanic lies and have their minds corrupted. The tragic result would be the abandonment of their simple devotion to Christ in favor of the sophisticated error of the false apostles

**cunning --** craftiness. ([1Co 3:19](#); [Eph 4:14](#); [Luk 20:23](#)) By extension of his analogy, this refers to the deceitfulness of Paul's opponents in Corinth. These people cast doubt on God's promises and Paul's apostolic authority

**a sincere and pure devotion** -- "Simple" or "sincere," according to Paul's usage, means unmixed or unadulterated (Robertson). The meaning therefore is 'your single-minded devotion to Christ.'

## 2 Corinthians 11:4

### 2Co\_11:4

**if someone comes ..** The false teachers came into the Corinthian church from somewhere else. Likely they were Palestinian Jews (cf. [2Co 11:22](#); [Act 6:1](#))

The false Judaizing teachers at Corinth apparently did not practice a rigid legalism (like the Judaizers in Galatians); in fact, they apparently encouraged licentiousness (cf. [2Co 12:21](#)). Their fascination with rhetoric and oratory (cf. [2Co 10:10](#)) suggests they had been influenced by Greek culture and philosophy. They claimed (falsely, cf. [Act 15:24](#)) to represent the Jerusalem church, even possessing letters of commendation (*see note on* [2Co 3:1](#)).

**whom we have not proclaimed** -- Paul's opponents may have downplayed the importance of Jesus' crucifixion, since Greeks considered crucifixion to be a sign of weakness (see [1Co 1:18](#)). By contrast, Paul presented the crucifixion of Christ as the heart of his gospel ([1Co 2:2](#); [2Co 13:4](#); [Gal 3:1](#)).

**another Jesus** -- Cf the Greek in [Gal 1:6-7](#). These false teachers didn't preach the same "Jesus" that Paul did.

**a different spirit** -- The false teachers apparently either proclaimed that Christ was not crucified or that His crucifixion degraded Him as Savior. In doing so, they preached the opposite message of Paul, who only wanted to proclaim Christ crucified ([2Co 13:4](#); [1Co 1:18](#)).

**another [a different] gospel** -- [Gal 1:6-7](#).

## 2 Corinthians 11:5

### 2Co 11:5

**I consider** -- The third justification for the request of v.1 now appears (see comment). Still engaging in his "senseless" but pardonable self-praise, Paul maintains that he is in no way inferior to the "super-apostles."

**not in the least inferior** -- Paul claims to be in no respect inferior to the original apostles (see [1Co 9:1](#); [1Co 15:5-8](#), [1Co 15:10](#)) with whom he was being unfavorably compared and whose authority his adversaries illegitimately invoked in support of their Judaizing program at Corinth.

The verb tense indicates that at no time, past or present, did Paul think of himself as less than these supposedly authoritative representatives from Jerusalem (cf. [2Co 12:11](#)).

**chiefest apostles [super-apostles, ESV; most eminent, NASB];** -- This expression is either the description of the Twelve used by Paul's opponents and here (as in [2Co 12:11](#)) quoted by Paul, but most likely this is the apostle's ironical description of the exalted view these "false apostles" had of themselves, (cf. [2Co 11:13-15](#)). -- wg

This descriptive phrase is rare; Paul uses it only here and in [2Co 12:11](#). Verse 5 is contextually and grammatically linked to v. 4, which obviously refers to the false teachers (cf. [2Co 11:13-15](#)). Paul is using the term “apostles” sarcastically in its two senses: (1) the Twelve and (2) messengers sent from churches (cf. v. 13). Apparently these false teachers had some connection with the church in Jerusalem (cf. v. 22 shows by inference that they claimed a Jewish background; [2Co 12:1](#) shows that they claimed charismatic experiences). - Utley

The false teachers claiming to be from the "Jerusalem church" may have held those who were preaching to the Jews were more eminent.

It seems most probably however that these "false teachers" were claiming to be "apostles" themselves, and bragging about their skills and Paul in sarcasm refers to them as "super-apostles."

**apostles** -- The fact that the early Christians used the word “*apostle*” in a general sense (e.g., [2Co 8:23](#); [Act 14:4](#), [Act 14:14](#); et al.) and in a technical sense (e.g., [2Co 1:1](#); et al.) probably created some confusion. In what sense was Paul an apostle? He claimed to be an apostle on a level equal with the Twelve. Yet the word in the general sense means anyone sent out on the Christian mission, and in this sense the teachers in Corinth who were criticizing Paul may have called themselves apostles.

## 2 Corinthians 11:6

### [2Co 11:6](#)

**unskilled in speech** -- Paul’s speaking abilities did not meet the standards of some in Corinth. Many people in the region were trained in professional rhetoric, which was highly valued in Greek culture. - FSB

Paul acknowledged his lack of training in the rhetorical skills so prized in Greek culture (*see note on [2Co 10:10](#)*; cf. [Act 18:24](#)); he was a preacher of the gospel, not a professional orator. - MSB

Paul’s statement that he is “unskilled in speech” (NASB) need not mean that he is a terrible speaker; even the best speakers played down their oratorical skills to lower audience expectations. He seems to have been accused of inadequate rhetorical skill by others, however; his writings attest a higher level of rhetorical sophistication than possessed by most people of his day. -- IVPBBCNT

**not so in knowledge** -- Paul was not deficient in terms of knowledge. Paul did not refer here to his rabbinic training under Gamaliel ([Act 22:3](#)), but to his knowledge of the gospel (cf. [1Co 2:6-11](#); [Eph 3:1-5](#)), which he had received directly from God ([Gal 1:12](#)). (MSB)

**in every way we have made this plain [made manifest; made perfectly clear; made evident] --**  
This would be an appeal to the transparent openness and sincerity of all his dealings, as in [2Co 5:20](#) and [2Co 12:12](#).

## 2 Corinthians 11:7

### [2Co 11:7](#)

**did I commit a sin --** With biting irony Paul asked his accusers how foregoing his right to support could possibly be a sin.

Greek culture measured the importance of a teacher by the fee he could command. The false apostles therefore accused Paul of being a counterfeit, since he refused to charge for his services (cf. [1Co 9:1-15](#)). - MSB

**preached ... free of charge --** Paul had resort to manual labor to support himself at Corinth (Acts 18:1-3).

The false teachers' claim that Paul was motivated by self-interest is absurd. His was motivated only to bring them to Christ and further Jesus' work in the world (see [1Co 9:15](#); [1Co 9:18](#)).

Paul didn't preach for money, note his comment to the elders of Ephesus in [Act 20:33-34](#).

Paul preached the gospel without demanding or expecting payment from the people whom he sought to reach with the gospel.

## 2 Corinthians 11:8

### [2Co 11:8](#)

**I robbed --** "Robbed" is a very strong word, used in extrabiblical Gr. to refer to pillaging. Paul, of course, did not take money from churches without their consent; his point is that the churches who supported him while he ministered in Corinth received no direct benefit from the support they gave him. - MSB

**I robbed --** "An hyperbolic expression" (Meyer).

**accepting support [taking wages] --** The Philippian Church was at least one ([Php 4:15-16](#)) of the churches referred to.

**to serve you --** Paul had received support from the impoverished Macedonian churches so he could minister in Corinth (see [2Co 8:2](#); [Php 4:15](#)), and now (in this letter) requests that Corinth provide relief for saints with less wealth than themselves (see [2Co 8:4-6](#) and note).

## 2 Corinthians 11:9

### [2Co 11:9](#)

**was in need --** When Paul first came to Corinth and didn't have any support yet, he labored with with hands with Aquila and Priscilla who were tradesmen in leather goods. ([Act 18:1-3](#)).

**not burden anyone --** While in Corinth, Paul provided for his own needs through manual labor and support from other churches (compare [2Co 11:7](#)).

**brethren who came** -- Silas and Timothy ([Act 18:5](#)), bringing money from Philippi ([Php 4:15](#)) and, possibly, Thessalonica (cf. [1Th 3:6](#)). The Macedonians' generous financial support allowed Paul to devote himself full time to preaching the gospel.

Providentially the gift arrived just when his resources had failed and he had begun to feel need. Even in this extremity he had not been a burden to anyone in Corinth. Financial independence would continue to be his policy.

**Macedonia** -- (see note on [2Co 1:16](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 11:10

### [2Co 11:10](#)

**As the truth of Christ is in me** -- This is an idiomatic way of asserting truthfulness or Paul's sense of inspiration (cf. [Rom 9:1](#)).

**truth** -- Paul uses the term as a way of referring to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. [Rom 1:18, 25; 2:8, 20; 3:7; 15:8](#)
2. [1Co 13:6](#)
3. [2Co 4:2; 6:7; 11:10; 13:8](#)
4. [Gal 2:5, 14; 5:7](#)
5. [Eph 1:13; 6:14](#)
6. [Col 1:5, 6](#)
7. [2Th 2:10, 12, 13](#)
8. [1Ti 2:4; 3:15; 4:3; 6:5](#)
9. [2Ti 2:15, 18, 25; 3:7, 8; 4:4](#)
10. [Tit 1:1, Tit 1:14](#)

**this boasting** -- About his ministering free of charge. Paul takes satisfaction in preaching the gospel message without any payment. Doing so allows him to maintain the integrity of his ministry ([1Co 9:18; 2Co 2:17](#)).

**not be silenced** -- not be stopped; This is a strong Greek term which is used in the Septuagint for the damming of a river.

**Achaia** -- The Roman province of which Corinth was the capital and leading city (see [2Co 9:2](#)). The false apostles apparently were affecting more than just the city of Corinth.

## 2 Corinthians 11:11

### [2Co 11:11](#)

**And why? [Wherefore?]** -- Paul continues to use the same ironical tone as previously.

**I do not love you? --** Paul dismisses any charge that he lacks affection for the church in Corinth and affirms again his love for them. ([2Co 7:2](#); [2Co 12:15](#)).

**Because I do not love you --** The so-called super-apostles may have suggested that Paul did not have genuine affection for the Corinthians since he did not allow them to share in his ministry financially (compare note on v. 5). Paul dismisses any charge that he lacks affection for the church in Corinth. - FSB

## 2 Corinthians 11:12

### [2Co 11:12](#)

**continue to do --** That Paul refused to accept financial support from the Corinthians was a source of embarrassment to the false apostles, who eagerly sought money for their services. Paul intended to keep his ministry free of charge and thereby undermine the false apostles' claims that they operated on the same basis as he did. - MSB

By giving up his right to preach the gospel without cost Paul would have been descending to their level. He also would have enabled his critics to compare themselves with him favorably. - Constable

Those superlative apostles receive pay for their work, and would like for this difference between them and Paul to be eliminated by Paul's behaving as they do, so that they may be on an equality with him. -- R. V. G. Tasker

**of those who want an opportunity --** Paul did not want to accept any payment from the Corinthians, which distinguished him from the super-apostles who maligned him (v. 13; see note on [2Co 2:17](#)). Compare note on v. 4, and note on v. 5. - FSB

Paul knew his opponents. He tried to remove every opportunity for their attacks. He limited his freedom and rights to protect and expand the gospel (cf. Rom. 14:1–15:13). - Utley

Paul followed this policy because he loved the church. The truth was not what the critics and false teachers were saying: that he did not care enough for the church to allow them to be a part of his ministry. Contrariwise, he practiced the policy of self-support because he did love them. If he took money from them, his critics would charge him with ministering for the sake of money. Such criticism would only disturb the church. Therefore, his policy was the proof that he loved the church (vv. 11–12). -- POSB

## 2 Corinthians 11:13

### [2Co 11:13](#)



**False apostles .. FALSE TEACHERS** - [2Co 11:13-15](#), [2Ti 4:2-4](#), [1Ti 4:1-3](#), [Mat 24:24](#), [Act 20:28-30](#), [Gal 1:7-9](#), [Deu 18:21-22](#).

To Support false teachers is Sinful- [2Jn 1:10-11](#).

**false apostles** -- Refers to those who exploited the Corinthian church for self-gain (compare note on 10:13). This group is likely synonymous with, or at least similar to, those Paul sarcastically refers to as super-apostles (see note on [2Co 11:5](#)).

Paul bluntly and directly exposed the false apostles for what they were—emissaries of Satan. Not only was their claim to apostleship false, so also was their doctrine (*see note on v. 4*). As satanic purveyors of false teaching, they were under the curse of [Gal 1:8-9](#). Paul's forceful language may seem harsh, but it expressed the godly jealousy he felt for the Corinthians (*see note on v. 2*). Paul was unwilling to sacrifice truth for the sake of unity. Cf. [1Ti 4:12](#); [2Pe 2:1-17](#); [Jud 1:8-13](#). -- MSB

## 2 Corinthians 11:14

[2Co 11:14](#)

**angel of light** -- Satan's major trick is masquerading as truth (cf. Gen. 3). Evil always tries to mimic or counterfeit the good. False teachers always come from inside the church (cf. [2Pe 2:1](#); [1Jn 2:18-19](#)).

**angel of light** -- May refer to the kind of angel who ministers to believers ([Heb 1:14](#)) or simply to a good spiritual being aligned with God's purposes (compare note on [Joh 1:4](#)). This comparison suggests that the false apostles came across as genuine while inwardly desiring to destroy the Church for their own benefit (see [2Co 10:8](#); [2Co 12:19](#); [2Co 13:10](#); compare note on v. 13; note on v. 5). The idea of Satan disguising himself as an angel of light recalls similar descriptions of Satan's activity in various ancient Jewish writings, though Paul does not seem directly dependent on them (e.g., Life of Adam and Eve 9:1; Apocalypse of Moses 17:1; Testament of [Job 6:4](#); 17:2; 23:1). - FSB

Just as Satan changed himself into *an angel of light* to deceive Eve (as described in the Jewish apocryphal book *The Life of Adam and Eve*), so *his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness*. Satan's servants claim to be God's servants, but their *deeds* are *wicked*, and their *punishment* is sure ([2Co 5:10](#)). - NLT SB

**angel of light** -- Since the Prince of Darkness (cf. [Luk 22:53](#); [Act 26:18](#); [Eph 6:12](#); [Col 1:13](#)) masquerades as an angel of light—that is, deceptively, disguised as a messenger of truth—it is not surprising that his emissaries do as well. Satan deceived Eve (*see notes on v. 3*; [Gen 3:1-7](#)) and holds unbelievers captive (4:4; cf. [Eph 2:1-3](#)); his emissaries were attempting to deceive and enslave the Corinthians. The terrifying “end” these self-styled “ministers of righteousness” will face is God's judgment—the fate of all false teachers ([Rom 3:8](#); [1Co 3:17](#); [Php 3:19](#); [2Th 2:8](#); [2Pe 2:1](#), 3, 17; [Jud 1:4](#), 13). - MSB

## 2 Corinthians 11:15

[2Co 11:15](#)



See notes on previous verse - [2Co 11:14](#)

**his servants** -- Suggests these servants, who may be the false apostles, actually serve Satan and stand as a threat to the Church (compare [2Co 11:13](#)).

**servants (ministers)** -- *diakonos* [G1249](#)

**2 Corinthians 11:16**

[2Co 11:16](#)

**foolish** -- The false apostles probably claimed that Paul's hardships invalidated his apostleship and made him look foolish (compare [2Co 12:13](#)).

Paul turns their accusations against them: He assumes the role of a fool to make them look foolish. His discussion of his hardships exposes the false apostles as people who are self-centered; they could never demonstrate Paul and his companions' endurance for the sake of bringing people to Christ and leading a church in Jesus' way and teachings.

To support this claim, Paul outlines how poorly these "strong apostles" have treated the Corinthians ([2Co 12:20-21](#)). Paul has done the opposite for the Corinthians, even though he has been called weak ([2Co 10:10](#)).

**so that I also may boast a little** -- Paul was not comfortable with personal boasting (cf. vv. 1, 17). The false teachers had forced him to use their methods (the style of chapters 10–13 reflects the characteristics of Hellenistic rhetorical forms). - Utley

**fool** -- In his arrogance the **fool** boasts in himself, not in the Lord (see [2Co 10:17-18](#)), for which he is condemned (see, e.g., [Psa 14:1](#); [Psa 53:1-2](#); [Pro 9:13-18](#)). Almost like a fool, Paul is about to **boast a little** in his own identity to make his point (see [2Co 11:21-23](#)). - ESVSB

**2 Corinthians 11:17**

[2Co 11:17](#)

**what I am saying** -- Paul acknowledged that boasting is "not according to the Lord" (cf. [2Co 10:1](#)), but the desperate situation in Corinth where the false apostles made their "boast according to the flesh" forced him to boast, not for self-glorification ([Gal 6:14](#)), but in what the Lord had accomplished and was accomplishing through him.

**not with the Lord's authority** -- That is, "*boasting*" is not something the Lords wants from us, He doesn't approve of selfish boasting. But Paul's "*boasting*" is in what the Lord has done ([2Co 11:21](#) -ff through [2Co 12:1-21](#))

**not with the Lord's authority** -- Paul alluded to Jesus' life and attitude in [2Co 10:1](#), (by "the meekness and gentleness of Christ") and when it came to boasting or human comparisons, Paul must admit there is no precedent, or example, in Christ for him to boast like this.

Paul is NOT saying here, that this is written without inspiration from the Holy Spirit, [2Pe 1:21](#), [2Ti 3:16-17](#), [2Pe 3:15-16](#).

**2 Corinthians 11:18**[2Co 11:18](#)

**Since may boast --** The false apostles boasted in fleshly, selfish way, but Paul will boast (glory) in the Lord and what God has done in the Corinthian church.

**flesh --** Paul means after the manner of those who judge only by what is outward and visible, or perhaps he may mean boasting of things, such as “high birth, wealth, wisdom, of being circumcised, of Hebrew ancestry, of popular renown” (Chrysostom), on which fleshly men set high value. - CBSC

**I too will boast --** "It is remarkable that St Paul does not glory in what he has *done*, but what he has *borne*." --Robertson.

**2 Corinthians 11:19**

2cor 11.19

**because you are wise --** Paul sarcastically points out how foolish the Corinthians were to believe the false apostles (v. 13; compare v. 5). This is made more ironic by the fact that the Corinthians considered themselves to be wise (cf note on [1Co 1:20](#)). - FSB

The Corinthians, wrote Paul sarcastically, should have no trouble bearing with a “fool” like him, since they themselves were so wise (cf. [1Co 4:10](#))! - MSB

**being wise yourselves --** The apostle was most ironical in these verses.

The Corinthians considered themselves unusually wise, but they were being unusually foolish by not only humoring the fools in their midst but doing so gladly. They were absurdly tolerant. They submitted to the teaching of the false apostles even though it resulted in their own enslavement.

Probably this teaching involved the Judaizing error (i.e., submission to the Mosaic Law is necessary for justification and or sanctification, cf. Gal. 2:4; 5:1).

The false teachers had evidently devoured the Corinthians’ financial contributions. - Constable

**2 Corinthians 11:20**[2Co 11:20](#)

**brings you into bondage --** The Gr. verb translated by this phrase appears elsewhere in the NT only in [Gal 2:4](#), where it speaks of the Galatians’ enslavement by the Judaizers. The false apostles had robbed the Corinthians of their freedom in Christ (cf. [Gal 5:1](#)). - MSB

**devours you --** Or “preys upon you.” This probably refers to the false teachers’ demands for financial support (the same verb appears in [Luk 20:47](#) where Jesus denounces the Pharisees for devouring widows’ houses). - MSB

**strikes you on the face --** To strike someone on the face was a sign of disrespect and contempt (cf. [1Ki 22:24](#); [Luk 22:64](#); [Act 23:2](#)).

The false apostles may have physically abused the Corinthians, but the phrase is more likely used in a metaphorical sense (cf. [1Co 9:27](#)) to speak of the false teachers' humiliation of the Corinthians.

**someone strikes you in the face --** Paul uses this metaphor to express his disbelief that the Corinthian believers cannot recognize the falsity of the super-apostles' teaching and work (see note on v. 4; compare note on v. 5). - FSB

**hits you in the face --** Paul's words drip with sarcasm (cf. v. 21). He was so gentle and meek (cf. 10:1) with them, but they reject him; the false teachers were so selfish and manipulative, yet the church loves and accepts them. - Utley

They put up not only with the speech of fools but also with the despotism of tyrants. The intruding aliens had reduced them to slavery by robbing the Corinthians of their liberty in Christ and by seeking to reimpose the Mosaic law (cf. [Gal 2:4](#); [Gal 5:1](#)). They had exploited them by greedily devouring any and all maintenance offered them (cf. [Mar 12:40](#)). They had entrapped them with tantalizing bait (cf. [Luk 5:5](#)); they had put on airs of superiority and had gravely insulted and humiliated them. - EBCNT

## 2 Corinthians 11:21

### [2Co 11:21](#)

**too weak for that --** Paul's sarcasm reached its peak as he noted that he was "too weak" to abuse the Corinthians as the false apostles had done (see note [2Co 11:20](#)).

**I also dare to boast --** [2Co 11:22](#) ff After repeated warnings that he was going to boast ([2Co 10:8](#); [2Co 11:1](#), [2Co 11:16](#)), Paul now finally began. At first he matched each of his critic's claims: "So am I."

**boast --** Paul finally and reluctantly boasts in his identity. In stark contrast to his opponents, however, Paul boasts at great length in his weakness as the appropriate way to glorify God's grace and power in one's life (v. 30; see [2Co 2:14-16](#) a; [2Co 4:7-12](#); [2Co 6:3-10](#); [2Co 12:5-10](#)). - ESVSB

**boast --** Paul is ready to fight fire with fire. If they want to compare credentials, so be it! -

## 2 Corinthians 11:22

### [2Co 11:22](#)

The *false teachers* troubling the church were Judaizing teachers.

**Hebrews --** A reference to Jewish ethnicity, a Hebrew of Hebrew parentage ([Php 3:5](#)) Paul was a Jew by descent, whose native tongue was Aramaic or Hebrew and whose intellectual and cultural heritage

was within Judaism (trained in Jerusalem at the feet of the most prominent Jewish rabbi of the time, Gamaliel, [Act 5:34](#), [Act 22:3](#)).

**Israelites** -- As an "Israelite" he was a member of God's people Israel. Apparently the false teachers were bragging they were part of the OT covenant people of God. [Php 3:5](#).

**offspring (seed) of Abraham** -- As a descendant of Abraham who had been "circumcised on the eighth day" ([Php 3:5](#)), Paul was an heir to the covenants based on God's promise ([Eph 2:12](#)). All in all, with regard to descent, citizenship, and heritage, he was the equal of his rivals.

A reference to being part of the new covenant people of God as well as being a true descendant of Abraham (see [Rom 9:6-9](#); [Rom 11:1-6](#); [Gal 3:8](#), [Gal 3:16](#), [Gal 3:29](#)).

[See Gal. 3, where this is one of their arguments.]

Paul is not suggesting that being Jewish is a necessary qualification of ministers, but that it provides the benefit of knowing the OT and being raised in the same tradition as Jesus.

We may take the words **Hebrew**, **Israelite**, **seed of Abraham**, as referring respectively to the *nationality*, *theocratic condition*, and *Messianic rights* of the Jewish people. Thus the *Hebrew* would not only be one who was of pure descent, but whose attachment to Jewish nationality caused him to cling to the Jewish language (see [Act 6:1](#), [Act 21:40](#), [Act 22:2](#); and [Php 3:5](#)). - CBSC

**So am I** -- The two key expressions are (1) "**I also**" or "**So am I**" pointing to Paul's equality with his rivals in certain limited respects (bold boasting, v. 21b; lineage, citizenship, and heritage, v. 22), and (2) "**I am more**" (v. 23), pointing to Paul's vast superiority in service and suffering ([2Co 11:23-29](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 11:23

### [2Co\\_11:23](#)

**Are they servants (ministers) of Christ** -- [διακονοι](#) G1249. Paul had already emphatically denied that they were ([2Co 11:13](#)); however, some of the Corinthians still believed they were. Paul used their view for the sake of argument, then went on to show that his ministry was in every way superior to the false apostles' so-called "ministry."

**I am a better on** -- Even based on their own fleshly boasting, Paul could "out-boast" them!

**I am talking ...** -- Paul asks, "Are they? I speak as a fool", the answer is, "NO! They are not!"

**"I more so"** Paul had a series of comparisons with *en*.

1. in far more labors, v. 23
2. in far more imprisonments, v. 23
3. in stripes above measure, v. 23
4. in danger of death often, v. 23
  - a. beaten with thirty nine lashes (5 times), v. 24
  - b. beaten with rods (3 times), v. 25
  - c. stoned (once), v. 25

d. shipwrecked (3 times), v. 25

Some of these are recorded in Acts, but not all of them.

We know so little of the first century church. Paul had paid the price to speak the gospel! - (Uteley)

**in labors ... in deaths often** -- A general summation of Paul's sufferings for the gospel; he does not attempt to give a full account, but in the next few verses give examples, many of which are not found in Acts. Paul was often in danger of death ([Act 9:23](#), [Act 9:29](#); [Act 14:5](#), [Act 14:19](#), [Act 14:20](#); [Act 17:5](#); [Act 21:30-32](#)). - (MSB)

compare [2Co 1:8](#); [2Co 6:5](#);

**far greater labors** -- [1Co 15:10](#);

**far more imprisonments** -- [Act 16:23](#); [2Co 6:5](#);

**countless beating** -- [Act 16:23](#), etc.

**often near death** -- [2Co 1:9-10](#), [2Co 4:11](#); ([1Co 15:31](#)).  
([Rom 16:4](#));

[In almost every stop on Paul's missionary journeys recorded in Acts he came into mistreatment and danger, Asia, Philippi, Corinth, Ephesus, Jerusalem, etc.]

## 2 Corinthians 11:24

### [2Co 11:24](#)

**forty stripes minus one** -- [Deu 25:1-3](#) set 40 as the maximum number that could legally be administered; in Paul's day the Jews reduced that number by one to avoid accidentally going over the maximum. Jesus warned that His followers would receive such beatings ([Mat 10:17](#)).

This refers to punishment administered by Synagogue courts (cf. [Deu 25:1-3](#)). The strokes were probably given with a rod (cf. [Exo 21:20](#); [Pro 10:13](#); [Pro 19:29](#); [Pro 26:3](#)) and given in public. This type of punishment was practiced in Assyria and Egypt, as well as in Israel (cf. [Isa 50:6](#); [Jer 20:2](#); [Jer 37:15](#)).

The rabbis later codified that it had to be one less the forty strokes (the maximum number, cf. Josephus, *Antiq.* 4:8:21, 23). They specified that so many hits be done on the back and on the front, left and right shoulders (cf. *Maccoth* 3:10ff). - Uteley

## 2 Corinthians 11:25

### [2Co 11:25](#)

**Three times** -- Refers to Roman beatings with flexible sticks tied together (cf. [Act 16:22-23](#)).

**once I was stoned** -- At Lystra ([Act 14:19-20](#)). Clement of Rome, St Paul's companion and friend ([Php 4:3](#)), says in a somewhat obscure passage (*Epistle of Clement 1:5*) that St Paul was "seven times imprisoned, put to flight and stoned."

**three times I was shipwrecked** -- These would not including the shipwreck on his journey as a prisoner to Rome ([Acts 27](#)) which had not yet taken place at the time of writing this letter.

Paul had been on several sea voyages up to this time (cf. [Act 9:30](#); [Act 11:25-26](#); [Act 13:4](#), act 13.13; [Act 14:25-26](#); [Act 16:11](#); [Act 17:14-15](#); [Act 18:18](#), [Act 18:21](#)), and he must have also had many other sea travel experiences, giving ample opportunity for the 3 shipwrecks to have occurred. The shipwreck related in [Act 27:13-44](#) was a trifling one.

**a night and a day** -- At least one of the shipwrecks was so severe that Paul spent an entire day floating on the wreckage, waiting to be rescued. See note at [Gen 1:5](#).

The narrative of Acts is clearly selective.

## 2 Corinthians 11:26

[2Co 11:26](#)

**frequent journeys** --

**waters [rivers]** --

**robbers** -- Though the presence of Roman soldiers cut down on crime, robbers still posed a serious danger to travelers in the ancient world.

Paul's journey from Perga to Pisidian Antioch ([Act 13:14](#)), for example, required him to travel through the robber-infested Taurus Mountains, and to cross two dangerous, flood-prone rivers.

**in perils [danger]** -- The connected with his frequent travels.

**my own people** -- Paul was frequently in danger from his "own countrymen" ([Act 9:23](#), [Act 9:29](#); [Act 13:45](#); [Act 14:2](#), [Act 14:19](#); [Act 17:5](#); [Act 18:6](#), [Act 18:12-16](#); [Act 20:3](#), [Act 20:19](#); [Act 21:27-32](#))

**from Gentiles [heathen]**-- ([Act 16:16-40](#); [Act 19:23](#) to [Act 20:1](#)).

**in the wilderness** -- Translated *desert* in [Act 8:26](#). Cf. [Mat 14:13-15](#). It means any place void of inhabitants.

**danger at sea** -- If any one should object that the Apostle thus repeats himself, it may be observed that the expressions here used are arranged in pairs, and are intended to shew that wherever he was, and whatever he did, the Apostle was in danger. - CBSC

**false brethren** -- Those who appeared to be Christians, but were not, such as the false apostles ([2Co 11:13](#)) and the Judaizers ([Gal 2:4](#)).

There is no VERB, PARTICIPLE, or INFINITIVE in vv. 26, 27, 28) of what has happened to Paul in his service for Christ.

1. dangers from rivers
2. dangers from robbers
3. dangers from his countrymen (as he was in Corinth)
4. dangers from Gentiles
5. dangers in the city
6. dangers in the wilderness
7. dangers at sea
8. dangers among false brethren (as he was in Corinth)

## 2 Corinthians 11:27

[2Co 11:27](#)

**“I have been”** Paul starts another list using the DATIVE/LOCATIVE *εν* (*en*).

1. in labor
2. in hardship
3. in sleepless nights
4. in hunger
5. in thirst
6. in fastings many times
7. in cold
8. in nakedness

All of us who claim to be servants of the gospel should quit whining!

cf. [2Th 3:8](#);

**in watchings** -- Literally, **in sleeplessnesses**, i.e. in repeated nights of sleeplessness, whether from anxiety or other causes.

**in hunger** -- And Paul may have suffered such because of his determination not to accept support from the Corinthians ([1Co 9:12](#), [1Co 9:15](#), [1Co 9:18](#); [2Co 11:7-12](#)).

**without food** -- “Amid fastings” has nothing to do with ascetic fasting. That was a discipline which Paul certainly seldom needed. Such fastings would be ridiculous in this catalog. These are fastings that were caused by the fact that one had no food at all or had food but could not or dared not eat it. - Lenski

**nakedness [exposure]** -- One traveling to the interior of Asia Minor would face “cold”; coupled with “nakedness” (sometimes used, as here, to mean inadequate clothing), this was a serious hardship.

## 2 Corinthians 11:28

[2Co 11:28](#)

**Apart from such external things** -- From the *external* trials Paul has been speaking about he now turns to the *inward* anxieties.

**daily pressure** -- Far worse than the occasional physical suffering Paul endured was the constant, daily burden of concern for the churches that he felt. Those who were “weak” (cf. [Rom. 14](#); [1 Cor. 8](#)) in faith, or were “made to stumble” into sin caused him intense emotional pain. Cf. [1Th 5:14](#). - MSB

Another thing which caused daily pain for Paul was the psychological/spiritual worry for the health and effectiveness of the churches—possibly this was the worst pain of all! - Utley

**anxiety about all the churches** -- False doctrine and division threatened the churches that Paul planted ([Act 20:30](#)). He also wrote letters to several of these churches to combat the negative influence of other teachers ([Gal 1:6-8](#); [Eph 4:14](#); [Php 3:1-2](#); [1Ti 1:6-7](#)). The pressure Paul faced as a minister to these churches caused him to worry constantly about their well-being. - FSB

This total identification of shepherd with sheep, or of a spiritual father with his children in the faith, is illustrated in [v.29](#). Paul was at one with all his converts (cf. [1Co 12:26](#)), sympathizing with their weakness in faith, conduct, or conscience (cf. [1Co 8:7-13](#); [1Co 9:22](#)). - EBCNT

## 2 Corinthians 11:29

### [2Co 11:29](#)

Verse 29 has two rhetorical questions. When Paul sees churches and believers hurting, it hurts him and makes him furious at those who would cause little ones to stumble (cf. Matt. 18).

**weak** -- If he hears of some Christian who **is weak**, he feels that weakness himself. He endures the sufferings of others sympathetically. If he learns that some brother in Christ has been offended, he burns **with indignation**. - BBC

**weak** - Paul felt for those who were “**weak**” (cf. Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8) in faith, or were “**made to stumble**” into sin caused him intense emotional pain. Cf. [1Th 5:14](#).

**fall [stumble; "led into sin"]** -- This is the Greek term *skandalon*, [G4624](#), which literally referred to a baited trap-stick (cf. [Rom 11:9](#)). It is used in the sense of moral failure (here and [1Co 8:13](#)) or possibly to be seduced by the false theology of the “super apostles” (cf. [1Co 1:23](#); [Gal 5:11](#)).

The verb *σκανδαλίζω* means to catch in a deathtrap, and the passive means to be so caught. The noun *σκάνδαλον* denotes the crooked stick to which the bait is affixed so that to touch the bait is to spring this trap that kills the victim. - Lenski

**indignant [I inwardly burn]** -- The view that best suits the context is that he felt so ablaze with compassion for a person who was “led into sin” that he shared that person’s deep remorse. - EBSNT

Is anyone weak, and do I not in sympathy share his weakness? R., W. P., gives the second question the sense: “When a brother stumbles, Paul is set on fire with grief.” The sympathy, the grief are introduced by the commentators. - (Lenski, Robertson's Word Pictures)



**indignant** - [G4448](#), Possibly Paul meant it was indignant (burning with rage) against the one who had "baited the trap."

## 2 Corinthians 11:30

[2Co 11:30](#)

**I will boast ... my infirmity** -- To do so magnified God's power at work in him (cf. [2Co 4:7](#); [Col 1:29](#); [2Ti 2:20-21](#)). - MSB

**my weakness** -- Refers to the hardships Paul suffered for the sake of believers ([2Co 11:23-29](#)). - FSB

**my weakness** -- Paul's trials and criticisms had caused him to realize that his strengths were from God and his weaknesses were an opportunity for God to receive the glory (cf. [2Co 12:1-10](#)). - Utley

Rather than boasting about his strengths, as his critics did, Paul boasted in his weaknesses, humiliations, and sufferings. These would not initially impress others with his qualifications as an apostle, but these afflictions had come upon him as he had served others and Christ faithfully. They were evidences that God had supernaturally sustained His servant through countless discouraging circumstances. They were, therefore, the greatest possible proof that Paul was an apostle (cf. [2Co 1:8-10](#); [2Co 3:5](#); [2Co 4:7](#), [2Co 4:10-11](#); [2Co 12:5](#), [2Co 12:9-10](#)). - Constable

Not his successes, not his gifts or abilities, but his weaknesses, his reproaches, the indignities he endured— these form the subject of his boasting. These are not the things that men usually boast about, or that make them famous. - BBC

## 2 Corinthians 11:31

[2Co 11:31](#)

**God and Father** -- Paul called God as his witness that his claims, which probably seemed incredible to those who did not know him well, were true.

**God knows** -- Paul uses the same assurance which he voiced in [2Co 11:11](#) where he stated it in briefest form: "God knows"; here he expands the subject and merely adds the object. "God knows" is *not* an oath in v. 11 or here in v. 31 although it is called an oath by some commentators. There is neither the form of an oath nor the necessity for one. Paul is no profuse swearer. "God knows" states an assured fact, one that helps to assure others. - Lenski

**I am not lying** -- Realizing how incredible the list of his sufferings must have seemed, Paul called on God to witness that he was telling the truth (cf. [2Co 11:10](#); [2Co 1:23](#); [Rom 1:9](#); [Rom 9:1](#); [Gal 1:20](#); [1Th 2:5](#), [1Th 2:10](#); [1Ti 2:7](#))— that these things really happened. - MSB

**I am not lying** -- Recalling what he had just written, the list seemed almost unbelievable, even to Paul; and the sheer size and significance of it led him to affirm in these most solemn words the absolute truth

of every syllable of it. This verse, like the one before it, "must be understood as applicable to all that Paul had said or was about to say."<sup>[53]</sup>

<sup>[53]</sup> J. W. McGarvey, op. cit., p. 234.

## 2 Corinthians 11:32

### 2Co 11:32

**At Damascus --** This circumstance is evidently mentioned as an instance of peril which had escaped his recollection in the rapid account of his dangers enumerated in the previous verses. It is designed to show what imminent danger he was in, and how narrowly he escaped with his life.

**Damascus** was located 60 miles northeast of Galilee. Paul was on his way to Damascus to round up renegade Jews called Christians, as described in Acts 9:1-4, that he met Jesus Christ and became a disciple of Christ himself.

The trouble Paul describes here in 2 Corinthians is also described in [Act 9:19-25](#). There, it melds together Paul's experiences in Damascus.

[Gal 1:17](#) suggests that Paul spent three years in Arabia and then returned to Damascus. The problem recorded here likely occurred after his second visit to Damascus. Paul may even have created a reputation for being a troublemaker there because of his success in preaching Christ. At any rate, his successful debates with the Jews in the synagogues "proving that Jesus is the Christ" ([Act 9:22](#)) apparently caused a great stir. They set a watch at the gates day and night, **desiring to arrest** him.

But why does Paul mention this particular incident? J. B. Watson suggests:

He takes hold of what men made an occasion of shame and ridicule and sets it in the light of being another proof that the paramount interest in his life was to serve the Lord Christ, for whose sake he was prepared to sacrifice his personal pride and appear as a coward in the eyes of men. - BBC

**the governor --** Literally, the **Ethnarch** (ruler of the nation— the title of an Oriental provincial governor. See [1Ma 14:47](#); [1Ma 15:1](#), &c.). - CBSC

### **under King Aretas --**

Aretas (see Josephus' *Antiquities*, xviii.) was the king of Arabia Petraea. His daughter had been divorced by Herod Antipas in order that he might marry Herodias, 'his brother Philip's wife' (see [Mat 14:3-5](#)). This and some disputes about the frontier led to war being proclaimed, and a battle was fought (a. d. 36) in which Herod's army was entirely destroyed. It is thought by some that Aretas profited by this circumstance to seize on Damascus, and that it was just at this juncture (a. d. 37) that St Paul returned to Damascus from his stay in Arabia. Others, however, place this event about the year 39, after Herod Antipas had been banished to Gaul, and think that Aretas, taken into favour by Caligula, had obtained Damascus, among the various changes which the new Emperor made in the arrangements of his eastern provinces. Aretas seems to have been a common name

among the Arabs, like Ptolemy in Egypt, or Seleucus and Antiochus in Syria. Josephus mentions more than one. Cf. also [2Ma 5:8](#). - BN

## 2 Corinthians 11:33

[2Co 11:33](#)

**through a window** -- [Act 9:25](#) does not say Paul escaped through a “window” but rather “through an opening,” that is, through a little door or aperture in the wall.

However, similarities in this account, including the window, are striking with regard to Rahab's allowing the two Hebrew spies to escape Jericho ([Jos 2:15](#)) and even Michal's helping David escape Saul ([1Sa 19:11-12](#)). - CPNT

**in a basket** -- The word for “basket” ([σαργάνη](#) *sargane* ᾤ) is unique in the NT. It was perhaps more like a large bag made of braided rope. Such flexible “baskets” could be used for carrying fish but also large amounts of hay, straw, or wool. [Act 9:25](#) uses a different Greek word for basket ([σπυρίς](#) *spuris*), the same word used in the account of the feeding of the four thousand ([Mat 15:37](#); [Mat 16:10](#); [Mar 8:8](#), [Mar 8:20](#)). - CPNT

**and escaped** -- The question is whether this escape was the occasion of Paul going into Arabia, [Gal 1:17](#), and receiving revelation from Christ and then returning to Damascus a second time; Or if this is three years after his conversion and trip into Arabia, and on this escape he returns to Jerusalem.

**2 Corinthians 12:1**2Co 12:1

**boasting** -- Paul continued, reluctantly, with his boasting (*see* [2Co 11:1](#)). Though it was “not profitable,” since it could tempt his own flesh to be proud, the Corinthians’ fascination with the alleged visions and revelations of the false apostles left him little choice ([2Co 12:11](#)).

**visions and revelations** -- Via a vision (optasia in Greek)

Six of Paul’s visions are recorded in Acts ([Act 9:12](#); [Act 16:9-10](#); [Act 18:9](#); [Act 22:17-18](#); [Act 23:11](#); [Act 27:23-24](#)), and his letters speak of revelations he had received (cf. [Gal 1:12](#); [Gal 2:2](#); [Eph 3:3](#)). - MSB

**revelations** -- The Greek word used here, *apokalypsis*, refers to God’s unveiling information that was often previously unknown or concealed. In this instance, *apokalypsis* refers to God supplying Paul with information about his particular calling. At other times, it is used more broadly (*see* [1Co 14:6](#); [Gal 2:2](#)).

**2 Corinthians 12:2**2Co 12:2

**I know a man** -- The question is whether this "man" is Paul himself? From [2Co 12:6-7](#), with the linkage of it to the thorn in the flesh make it indisputable that this occurred to himself.

1. The reason why Paul did not speak of this directly as a vision which he had himself seen was probably that he was accused of boasting.

It is not uncommon, moreover, for a man to speak of himself in the third person. Thus, Caesar in his Commentaries uniformly speaks of himself. And so John in his Gospel speaks of himself, [Joh 13:23-24](#); [Joh 19:26](#); [Joh 21:20](#). Paul may have abstained from referring to this occurrence elsewhere, because it might sound like pride.

2. His argument required that he should mention something that had occurred to himself. Anything that had occurred to another would not have been pertinent.

**in Christ** -- The phrase “in Christ” meaning nothing more than that he was united to Christ or was a Christian; *see* [Rom 16:7](#).

**fourteen years ago** -- If this Epistle was written, as is commonly supposed, about the year 56 AD, then this occurrence must have happened about the year 42 AD. This would be within the 11-14 year period of Paul's life following his conversion. [Act 9:30](#); [Act 11:25](#)

While we don't know the precise time or occasion many have offered their conjectures. 1) To contend this occurred on the Damascus road is too early, for the man was "in Christ" when this happened. 2) In [Act 22:17-18](#) Paul refers to a “trance” he fell into after his conversion while praying at the Jerusalem temple in which Christ warned him to leave Jerusalem. But again this seems early. 3) Some have suggested that in [Act 14:19-20](#), Paul was stoned at Lystra (and some think he was dead at this point and revived) could have been the occasion. 4) Safest to say, we just don't know when this occurred and the timing or occasion is not that important or we would have been informed.

**caught up to** -- The word which is used here ([αῤπαῖζω](#) *harpazo* – [G726](#)) means, to seize upon, to snatch away, to carry off, sometimes even by force.

Since this is the same word used in [1Th 4:17](#) of the saints being caught up to meet the Lord at his coming some who teach a false doctrine about the "rapture" like to speak of this as Paul being "Raptured" up temporarily.

**third heaven** -- There are numerous uses of the word heaven in the scriptures. Among the Hebrews it was used chiefly in three senses. First, the aerial heavens where the winds blow and the rains form and the birds fly; second, the firmament where the stars as pendant jewels adorn the sky, and where all the constellations and planets are in orbit; third, the highest heaven, the third heaven, the residence of God and Christ, the dwelling of angels and mansions of the blessed. There are scriptures that use the word *heaven* in all of these senses. - Wallace

It is the place called "paradise" in the next verse, yet now, after Christ's victory over the Hadean world it is located in the third heaven.

**whether in the body or out** -- His meaning is that he was conscious of being caught up: *that* much he *knows*: his being transferred to heaven was a *fact*. But where his body was at the time, whether in heaven or on earth, that he does not know: his consciousness with regard to that is a blank.

Paul does not try to explain how it was brought about. He didn't know if the body was caught up to heaven, or whether the soul was for a time separated from the body, or whether the incident was presented as a vision.

**or out of the body** --

**I do not know, God knows.** -- God knows whatever the mode was and Paul did not attempt to explain it.

No one can doubt that God had power if he chose to transport the body to heaven; or that he had power for a time to separate the soul from the body; or that he had power to represent to the mind so clearly the view of the heavenly world that he would appear to see it; see [Act 7:56](#).

**2 Corinthians 12:3**

[2Co 12:3](#)

**in the body or apart from the body** -- Paul expresses uncertainty about whether the man was in his physical body during this experience. The man, very apparently Paul, may have been literally taken into heaven and then returned to earth, or he may have simply undergone a spiritual experience, a revelation or vision. (FSB)

**whether in ... or ... out of the body** -- Paul was so overwhelmed by his heavenly vision that he did not know the precise details. However, whether he was caught up bodily into heaven (like Enoch, [Gen 5:24](#) and Elijah, [2Ki 2:11](#)), or his spirit was temporarily separated from his body, was not important. - MSB

**2 Corinthians 12:4**2Co 12:4

**he was caught up** -- This is typical prophetic language for the work of the Holy Spirit temporarily taking over someone's life to give him or her a vision or revelation. The prophet Ezekiel used similar language (Eze 2:2; Eze 3:14; Eze 8:3). See 1Th 4:17

**caught up to the third heaven ... caught up into Paradise** -- Paul was not describing two separate visions; "the third heaven" and "Paradise" are the same place (cf. Rev 2:7, which says the tree of life is in Paradise, with Rev 22:14, which says it is in heaven). The first heaven is the earth's atmosphere (Gen 8:2; Deu 11:11; 1Ki 8:35); the second is interplanetary and interstellar space (Gen 15:5; Psa 8:3; Isa 13:10); and the third the abode of God (1Ki 8:30; 2Ch 30:27; Psa 123:1).

**inexpressible words ... not lawful ... to utter** -- Because the words were for him alone, Paul was forbidden to repeat them, even if he could have expressed them coherently.

**"Paradise"** -- This is a Persian loan word in the Hebrew OT for "a nobleman's walled garden." The Greek word is used in the Septuagint for "the Garden of Eden" (cf. Gen 2:8; Gen 3:1; Eze 28:13; Eze 31:18). The term is used in Luk 23:43 for the righteous part of Hades or Sheol. In the extra-canonical book *The Secrets of Enoch*, or *II Enoch* chapter 8, it is used for the third heaven or God's presence. The third heaven and Paradise are both ways of referring to intimacy with God.

**2 Corinthians 12:5**2Co 12:5

**this man** -- Paul is not boasting in personal accomplishments (see full note at 2Co 1:12), but in God's revelation of Himself through both personal experiences and the truth of the gospel. It is Paul's inadequacies that allow God to be glorified in him (compare Joh 15:5 with Php 4:13).

**boasting** -- Paul here switches back to the first person; in doing so, he emphasizes that his authority came from God, not from his own decisions or persuasiveness. Paul can boast on behalf of what God did for him in Christ, not in who he is.

**not boast** -- Paul could *boast* about his *experience* (12:2–4), but he never makes mystical experience a proof of his apostolic authority—his *life* and his *message* must be the proof. He instead boasts about his *weaknesses* (2Co 11:23–33).

**my weaknesses** -- Refers to Paul's hardships in ministry (2Co 11:23–29) and his forthcoming reference in 2Co 12:7

**2 Corinthians 12:6**[2Co 12:6](#)

**if I should wish to boast --** If Paul wished to boast about his unique experience (vv. 1–4) he would not be a fool, because it really happened. He refrained from boasting about it, however, because he wanted the Corinthians to judge him based on their observations of his ministry, not on his visions.

**hears anything from me --** If the events described in 2 Cor 12:1–5 happened to Paul, then here he reveals his motivation for not speaking about this experience directly in the first person: He does not want others to view him as special or elite.

**sees *in* me or hears from me --** This is dripping with sarcasm. These false teachers flaunted many past experiences and credentials, which the Corinthians only heard about. Paul says, “do not credit me with what I have not shown you, but with what I have done while among you. Look at my record!” - Uteley

**2 Corinthians 12:7**[2Co 12:7](#)

**to keep me from exalting myself --** This same word is used in [2Th 2:4](#) to describe the prideful boasting of the “Man of Sin” or Antichrist. Paul is again contrasting himself with the false teachers. They did flaunt themselves by means of their Sophistic rhetorical style (which Paul is mimicking in chapters 10–13). - Uteley

**extraordinary degree of the revelations --** Probably refers to the exceptional number or quality of revelations that caused Paul to become prideful.

**a thorn in the flesh ... a messenger of Satan.** -- This was sent to him by God, to keep him humble. As with Job, Satan was the immediate cause, but God was the ultimate cause. Paul’s use of the word “messenger” (Greek, *angellos*, or angel) from Satan suggests the “thorn in the flesh” (lit. “a stake for the flesh”) was a demon person, not a physical illness. - MSB [cf. [2Co 7:12](#)]

**a thorn** -- May refer to Paul’s inner emotional turmoil about the churches (2:4), an ongoing sin, his opponents (like the so-called super-apostles; 11:1–5), a physical ailment (such as poor eyesight), his speaking ability (10:10), or demonic opposition (both in general or specific to him, as in 1 Thess 2:18). All of these options seem possible considering circumstances in Paul’s life. - FSB

**“thorn in the flesh”** The term “thorn” can mean “stake” (literally “to be pointed”). In Classical Greek it is used in the sense of a sharpened stake, while in the Septuagint it is used for thorn (cf. [Num 33:55](#); [Eze 28:24](#); [Hos 2:6](#)). There are several theories regarding Paul’s thorn in the flesh: (1) the early Church Fathers, Luther, and Calvin, say it was spiritual problems with his fallen nature (“in the flesh”); (2) Chrysostom says it was a problem with persons (cf. [Num 33:55](#); [Jdg 2:3](#)); (3) some say it was epilepsy;

- (4) Sir William Ramsay says it was malaria; or
- (5) I think it was ophthalmia, a common eye problem (compare [Gal 4:13-15](#) and [Gal 6:11](#)) exacerbated or caused by the blindness on the Damascus road (cf. [Acts 9](#))
- (5) possibly an OT allusion in [Jos 23:13](#). (Utley)

**was given --** The use of the passive verb indicates that Paul considered God to be responsible for the thorn because it was ultimately used for good.

## 2 Corinthians 12:8

### [2Co 12:8](#)

**I pleaded ... three times --** Paul, longing for relief from this painful hindrance to his ministry, went to his Lord, begging Him (the use of the definite article with “Lord” shows Paul’s prayer was directed to Jesus) to remove it...The 3-fold repetition of Paul’s request parallels that of Jesus in Gethsemane ([Mar 14:32-41](#)). Both Paul and Jesus had their requests denied, but were granted grace to endure their ordeals. - MSB

**three times --** ” Jesus repeated His prayer in Gethsemane three times (cf. [Mat 26:42](#); [Mar 14:39-41](#)). Three-fold repetition denotes emphasis.

**with the Lord --** In the NT, formal or liturgical prayer is usually offered through Christ to the Father in the power of the Spirit ([Eph 2:18](#)), but on occasion to the Lord Jesus ([Act 7:59-60](#); [Act 9:10-17](#); [Act 22:16](#), [Act 22:19](#)) cf. ([1Co 1:2](#); [1Co 16:22](#); [Act 1:24](#); [Act 9:21](#); [Rev 22:20](#))

## 2 Corinthians 12:9

### [2Co 12:9](#)

**grace --** In this context, the Greek word used here, *charis*, refers to Christ’s power to help Paul endure hardship, be strengthened when struggling (physically, mentally, or spiritually), or experience forgiveness. - FSB

**sufficient --** The present tense of the verb translated “is sufficient” reveals the constant availability of divine grace. God would not remove the thorn, as Paul had requested, but would continually supply him with grace to endure it (cf. [1Co 15:10](#); [Php 4:13](#); [Col 1:29](#)).

**My strength is made perfect in weakness --** Cf. [2Co 4:7-11](#). The weaker the human instrument, the more clearly God’s grace shines forth.

**power of Christ --** This phrase may have reminded Paul of [1Co 2:5](#); [2Co 4:7](#) and is simply unrelated to the false teachers’ emphasis on human performance or merit.

## 2 Corinthians 12:10



2Co 12:10

**I am content --** The thorn remained, but so too does Paul's recollection of the divine reply. Both weakness and power existed simultaneously in Paul's life (vv. 9b, 10b; cf. 4:10–11),

In the remainder of the verse Paul gives a brief summary of his ministry trials, which he has mentioned before in 2Co 4:7-11; 2Co 6:3-10; 2Co 11:24-28. Paul knew fully the meaning of Jesus' words in Mat 5:10-12!

**when I am weak, then I am strong --** When we realize our own weakness, we can be made strong by resting upon the goodness and grace of the Lord.

**2 Corinthians 12:11**2Co 12:11

**12:11–21** Paul concludes his defense against the so-called super-apostles. He asserts that he has performed the signs of an apostle and reiterates that he was not a burden to the Corinthian church (vv. 12–13). He continues to emphasize that he will not receive payment from them as he prepares to visit them a third time (vv. 14–16). He claims that neither he nor his companions took advantage of them but preached Christ in order to build up the believers at Corinth (vv. 17–19). - FSB

**a fool --** See note on 2Co 11:1, Paul said "I have become foolish" using the "compare me" mode to defend himself. Paul had to defend himself. He did this in several ways.

1. compared his life with theirs
2. used their style of rhetoric, but with humility
3. used sarcasm to make his points

**“I” --** The emphatic “I” (*egō*) is used in vv. 11, 13, 15, and 16.

commended -- They had had abundant evidences of his true Apostleship, and yet they needed that he should himself recal them to their minds.

**in no respect was I inferior --** This must refer to 2Co 11:5.

**You forced [compelled] me --** see 2cor

**preeminent [super] apostles --** See note on 2Co 11:5.

**I am a nobody [nothing]- --** Paul was the “least of the apostles,” having persecuted the church (1Co 15:8-9), and he owes everything to the grace and call of God in his life (1Co 15:10; 2Co 3:4-6). - ESVSB

Paul knew and understood his position in grace alone (cf. 1Co 15:9; Eph 3:8; 1Ti 1:15). He also knew his position as a called, gifted Apostle (cf. Acts 8, 22, 26)! - Utley

“Even though I am nothing” is either an ironical citation of his opponents’ opinion of him or a serious disavowal of any personal merit that could have made him worthy of apostleship (cf. [1Co 15:8-10](#)). - EBCNT

## 2 Corinthians 12:12

[2Co 12:12](#)

**signs --** These signs affirm Paul’s identity in contrast with the false apostles who are causing problems at Corinth ([2Co 11:13](#)).

Paul’s ministry was evidenced by the *power of God* (cf. [1Co 2:4](#); [1Co 4:20](#); [Rom 15:19](#)).

However, it was not just in miracles, but in his attitude and actions toward this church which proved he was from God.

The reason for the signs. [1Co 1:8](#); [Heb 2:3-4](#); [Joh 3:2](#); [Joh 5:36](#); [Joh 14:10-11](#); [Exo 4:1-9](#);

**Signs of an apostles --** There were proofs the apostles could do to show they were apostles.

[Cornelius did not have such, though he spoke in a foreign language.] The apostles could work signs and wonders, and impart a supernatural working of the Holy Spirit to others [Act 8:14-15](#). See [Mar 16:20](#); [Heb 2:3-4](#).

**utmost patience --** Refers to the ability to endure hardships and persecutions in ministry (see [2Co 6:4](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 12:13

[2Co 12:13](#)

**less favored --** Paul had not slighted the Corinthians except by refusing to be a burden (*see note on [2Co 11:7](#)*). With a touch of irony, he begged their forgiveness for that “wrong.”

**not a burden to you --** See note on [2Co 11:9](#).

Paul would not allow this factious church to help him. He did let the churches at Philippi ([Php 4:15](#)) and Thessalonica ([1Th 3:6](#)), but only after he had left the cities. It hurt the church at Corinth’s feelings (cf. v. 13a), but Paul would not budge because of the accusations of the false teachers (cf. [2Co 11:8-20](#)). However, Paul did support the church’s financial assistance for ministers (cf. [1Co 9:3-18](#)). - Utley

**Forgive me this wrong --** Paul is either being sarcastic or merely asking for forgiveness for the sake of making peace. He did not wrong the Corinthians; he founded the church, and taught them the gospel as Jesus taught it.- FSB

## 2 Corinthians 12:14

[2Co 12:14](#)

**the third time** -- The first was the visit recorded in [Acts 18](#); He refers to a second visit there as a painful visit ([2Co 2:1](#))

**Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you** - That is, this is the third time that I have purposed to come and see you, and have made preparation for it. He does not say that he had been twice with them and was now coming the third time, but that he had twice before intended to go and had been disappointed; see [1Co 16:5](#); [2Co 1:15-16](#).

His purpose had been to visit them on his way to Macedonia and again on his return from Macedonia. He had now formed a third resolution, which he had a prospect of carrying into execution.

**I will not be a burden** -- On his upcoming visit, Paul wished to continue his practice of refusing to accept support from the Corinthians.

This refers to financial compensation (cf. [2Co 11:9](#); [2Co 12:13](#); [1Co 9:12](#), [1Co 9:18](#)). Paul affirmed the right of ministers to receive compensation, but personally rejected it because (1) he was attacked over this issue by the false teachers (cf. v. 14b) or (2) his own background as a rabbi excluded this.

**I am not seeking your possessions** -- The wealthy believers in Corinth wanted to become Paul's patrons—supplying financial support to him (see v. 13). See note on [2Co 1:12](#); compare [1Co 4:15](#), where Paul reminds them that their relationship to him is like children to their father—the father provides for them, not the opposite. - FSB

**children ... parents** -- To reinforce his point, Paul cited the axiomatic truth that parents are financially responsible for their children, not children (when they are young, cf. [1Ti 5:4](#)) for their parents.

He considered himself their spiritual father (cf. [1Co 4:14-15](#); [Gal 4:19](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 12:15

### [2Co 12:15](#)

**spend** -- Far from seeking to take from the Corinthians, Paul sought to give. The verb translated “spend” refers to spending money, and probably describes Paul's willingness to work to support himself while in Corinth ([Act 18:3](#)).

**be spent** -- “Be spent” describes Paul's willingness to give of himself— even to the point of sacrificing his life.

**for your souls** -- (*Souls*, *psychē*) is used in the sense of *persons* in Paul's writings, as is “*spirit*” (cf. *pneuma*, cf. [Php 1:27](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 12:16

### [2Co 12:16](#)

**crafty** -- Paul sarcastically addresses their concern to provide for him ([2Co 12:14](#)). Paul treats that idea as absurd and insists he would not take advantage of them. See note on [2Co 11:17](#).

**12:16–18** Although it was obvious to all that Paul had not personally taken advantage of the Corinthians, his opponents circulated an even more vicious rumor—that he was using craftiness and cunning to deceive the Corinthians (cf. [2Co 4:2](#)). Specifically, the false apostles accused Paul of sending his assistants to collect the Jerusalem offering from the Corinthians while intending to keep some of it for himself. Thus, according to his opponents, Paul was both a deceitful hypocrite (because he really did take money from the Corinthians after all, despite his words in vv. [2Co 12:14-15](#)) and a thief. This charge was all the more painful to Paul because it impugned the character of his friends. Outraged that the Corinthians could believe such ridiculous lies, Paul pointed out that his associates did not take advantage of the Corinthians during their earlier visits regarding the collection ([2Co 8:6](#), [2Co 8:16-22](#)). The simple truth was that neither Paul nor his representatives had in any way defrauded the Corinthians. - MSB

**I took you in by deceit** -- This may relate to the contribution for the Jerusalem church in chapters 8–9. The false teachers possibly accused him of sending others to collect money for himself (cf. vv. 17–18). Paul's comment here is biting sarcasm!

Paul made sure the funds collected for Jerusalem saints was safely escorted by a selection of men from the various churches who made the contribution. This was done to assure there was no embezzlement and to keep it safe from robbers. Cf the entourage that accompanied Paul on his journey to Jerusalem, [Act 20:4](#) and cf. [1Co 16:3-4](#); [2Co 8:19-20](#).

## 2 Corinthians 12:17

[2Co 12:17](#)

See note on [2Co 12:16](#) -18

**have not taken advantage** -- Paul stands in contrast to the “false apostle” ([2Co 11:20](#)).

**any .. whom I sent** -- See next verse, Titus and one other.

They may have been maintained at the expense of the Churches, but they certainly made no attempt to enrich St Paul by their mission.

## 2 Corinthians 12:18

[2Co 12:18](#)

**Titus** -- It is surprising that Titus is never mentioned in the book of Acts. He was one of Paul's most trusted and faithful helpers. (See Note at [Tit 1:4](#); and [Tit 1:1](#) introduction to the book of Titus). Apparently Titus, following Paul's example, also did not receive any money from this church. -

**Titus** -- Titus' name is mentioned 9 times in 12 verses in this epistle. [2Co 2:13](#); [2Co 7:6](#); [2Co 7:13-14](#); [2Co 8:6](#); [2Co 8:16](#); [2Co 8:23](#); [2Co 12:18](#).

**the brother** -- This is probably the same one as in [2Co 8:18](#). Some think it was Luke (Origen). This taking along the representatives from the churches was Paul's way to de-arm the accusations related to this contribution to the Jerusalem Church. (See [Act 20:4](#) and note there.)

It was the method of Jesus to send men out two-by-two ([Mar 6:7](#); [Luk 10:1](#)) and seems to have been the early church's practice, [Act 13:1-2](#), [Act 15:39-40](#).

## 2 Corinthians 12:19

### [2Co 12:19](#)

**Have you** -- The first part of this verse may have been a statement or a question. The meaning is the same in either case. Paul said what he did, especially in [2co 10:1–12:18](#), primarily to build up the Corinthian believers in their faith. His self-defense was only a means to that end. It was for that worthy goal that he was willing to speak “foolishly.” He recognized that he as a man in Christ was ultimately responsible to God, not to his critics (cf. [2Co 2:17](#); [2Co 5:11](#)). - Constable

**all along** -- Paul is referring to his current letter (2Corinthians).

### **defending ourselves** --

This seems to be a sarcastic remark. Paul knew this church well. They had an inflated estimation of their own worth.

**you upbuilding [edification]** -- Unlike the false apostles who mistreated the Corinthian believers ([2Co 11:13-15](#)), Paul and his associates strengthen their faith and endure hardship for their sake. See note on [2Co 10:8](#).

**in the sight of God** -- Lest the Corinthians view themselves as judges before whom Paul was on trial, the apostle quickly set them straight: only God was his judge (cf. [2Co 5:10](#); [1Co 4:3-5](#)). Paul sought to edify the Corinthians, not exonerate himself.

**beloved** -- Paul addresses this church with forthrightness, yet great love. This was a term of endearment (cf. [1Co 10:14](#); [1Co 15:58](#); [2Co 7:1](#); [2Co 12:19](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 12:20

### [2Co 12:20](#)

**For I fear** -- Paul feared encountering renewed rebellion and resistance during his upcoming visit, with the Corinthians relapsed into their old ways.

**not as I wish** -- Paul wished to find them loving in unity and truth and growing.

**not as you wish** -- [*and you won't like my response*: NLT] If Paul had to, he would deal sternly with flagrant sinners (cp. [2Co 1:23](#) – [2co 2:24](#); [1Co 4:21](#)).

**there may be ...** -- The sins Paul lists echo the works of the flesh he listed in [Gal 5:19-21](#). Such vices are sins against the community and create division among believers.

**“strife”** -- [G2054](#) contention, wrangling.  
This term and the next are SINGULAR (cf. MSS P<sup>46</sup>,  $\aleph$ , A), but the other terms in the list are PLURAL.

**“jealousy”** -- [G2205](#) In this context it refers to a party or factious spirit (cf. [1Co 3:3](#)). See [2Co 9:2](#).

**“angry tempers”** -- [G2372](#) This refers to an outburst of rage (cf. [Gal 5:20](#); [Eph 4:31](#); [Col 3:8](#)).

**“disputes”** -- [G2052](#) The term *eritheia* originally meant “to spin for hire.” It came to be used for an aristocratic arrogance against those who had to work for a living. This attitude fits the factional rivalry of I Corinthians, especially chapter 11. Paul used this term often (cf. [Rom 2:8](#); [Gal 5:20](#); [Php 1:17](#); [Php 2:3](#); and also see [Jas 3:14-16](#)).

**“slanders”** -- [G2636](#) This refers to speaking evil of another person, to defame them (cf. [Rom 1:30](#); [2Co 12:20](#); [Jas 4:11](#); [1Pe 2:1](#), [1Pe 2:12](#); [1Pe 3:16](#)). This activity is used to describe the activity of Satan.

**“gossip”** -- [G5587](#) This is the term “whisper,” which refers to tale-bearing behind someone’s back in private.

**“arrogance”** -- [G5450](#) The Greek term *phusioō* originally meant to inflate or puff up something (Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, p. 105 and Vincent, *Word Studies*, p. 766, from *phusa*—bellows).

It came to be used in Christian literature (possibly coined by Paul) metaphorically for pride or arrogance. This was a major spiritual problem for the church at Corinth. Paul uses this word in [1Co 4:6](#), [1Co 4:18-19](#); [1Co 5:2](#); [1Co 8:1](#); [1Co 13:4](#); and in a list of sins in [2Co 12:20](#). It is only used outside the Corinthian letters in the NT in [Col 2:18](#), where it refers to gnostic visions of special knowledge. (Uteley)

## 2 Corinthians 12:21

### [2Co 12:21](#)

**I fear** -- Paul did not want to find the Corinthians in the same sorry spiritual condition as on his last visit (the “painful visit,” [2Co 2:1](#);

**God may humble** -- Paul may have to mourn over their rebelliousness.

**I may have to mourn** -- Paul worried that if this church did not repent he would be forced to exercise his Apostolic authority and discipline when he came back (cf. [2Co 13:2](#)). These factions (1 Cor.) and false teachers (2 Cor.) were apparently leading godless lives of self indulgence.

**those .. not repented** -- To find the Corinthians still living in unrepentant sin would both humiliate and sadden Paul. This warning (and the one in [2Co 13:2](#)) was designed to prevent that from happening.

**2 Corinthians 13:1**2Co 13:1

**This is the third time --** (see the note on 2Co 12:14.) For the Greek present in the sense of an *intention* see 1Co 16:5. CBSC

Either Paul is anticipating his third visit to Corinth, OR it was the third time that he had taken up thoughts of traveling and was now preparing for such a journey. (Poole, etc.)

Paul's first visit to Corinth was the founding visit recorded in Act 18:1-18. His second visit was the Painful visit noted in 2Co 1:23 - 2Co 2:1. The third visit will be the one coming up, which is accounted for in Act 20:2-3. That Paul considers three to be significant is made clearer in the citation of Deu 19:15 which follows.- CPNT

**Every charge will be established --** That is, he will hold a formal enquiry in the strict legal way (see reff.) when he arrives. No evasions will be possible. - Exp-GR

**two or three witnesses --** The warning is made by quoting Deu 19:15.

But in regard to its application here, commentators are not agreed. Some suppose that Paul refers to his own epistles which he had sent to them as the two or three witnesses by which his promise to them would be made certain; that he had purposed it and promised it two or three times, and that as this was all that was required by the Law. BN

Lightfoot supposes that he refers to Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, who would be witnesses to them of his purpose; see 1Co 16:17.

But the more probable opinion, it seems to me, is that of Doddridge, Macknight, and others, that he anticipated that there would be necessity for the administration of discipline there, but that he would feel himself under obligation in administering it to adhere to the reasonable maxim of the Jewish Law. No one should be condemned or punished [ex-communicated] where there was not at least two or three witnesses to prove the offence. But where there were, discipline would be administered according to the nature of the crime. - BN

**2 Corinthians 13:2**2Co 13:2

**I warned --** G4280, V-Perfect Active, -1st person, singular, to say before.

**who sinned before and all the others --** This seems to relate to two groups. The first “*who have sinned in the past*”, must refer to those believers at Corinth who heard Paul twice, but still rebelled against his leadership. This would be the factious groups of 1 Cor. 1–4 or an immoral group (cf. 2Co 12:20-21; 1 Cor. 5).

The phrase “*and all the rest*” seems to relate to those who were *not* present both times, possibly the false apostles from Jerusalem and their supporters, who are the focus of chapters 10–13. However, both

groups/all groups are put on notice that Paul wants them to deal with the problems; if they do not, he will!

**warn them now** -- G4280; V, Present, AI-1S

**as I did when present on my second visit** -- "as if I were present the second time" Some, supposing that St Paul had already visited Corinth twice, would render '*when* present the second time.' But the rendering in the text is more literal. - CBSC

Some believe Paul is referring to his three comings to Corinth (two actual, one promised) as three separate witnesses at whose testimony justice would certainly fall on the dissidents at Corinth. Another possible view sees a reference to the threefold warning that Paul would not spare the Corinthians: the first was either 1Co 4:21 or the warning given on the "painful visit"; the second is the warning given here; and the final one is the proposed third visit. In any case, the general import is clear: "Sufficient warning has been given; punishment is imminent." EBCNT

**I will not spare them** -- Paul uses this term in a positive sense in [1Co 7:23](#) and [2Co 1:23](#), but in a judicial sense both here and in [2Co 12:6](#) (cf. [2Co 10:11](#)).

He did not specify what form the discipline would take, and perhaps he himself did not know exactly, but it certainly would not be pleasant (cf. [Act 5:1-11](#); [2Co 13:8-11](#); [1Co 5:4-5](#)). ESVSB

## 2 Corinthians 13:3

### [2Co 13:3](#)

**since you seek** -- They had demanded a proof of his power, and he would not fail to give it.

**proof** -- This concept of testing is recurrent in this context. There is a sustained wordplay between the connotations of two Greek terms, *dokimazō* and *peirazō*.

**proof that Christ is speaking** -- Those Corinthians still seeking proof that Paul was a genuine apostle would have it when he arrived. They may have gotten more than they bargained for, however, for Paul was going to use his apostolic authority and power to deal with any sin and rebellion he found there (v. 2; *see note on 12:21*). - MSB

**Christ is speaking in me** -- In the OT, a prophet functioned as a messenger for God. Paul describes himself as one through whom Christ speaks.

**He is no weak** -- Christ's power was to be revealed through Paul against the sinning Corinthians (cf. [1Co 11:30-32](#)). By rebelling against Christ's chosen apostle ([2Co 1:1](#)), they were rebelling against Him. - MSB

## 2 Corinthians 13:4

### [2Co 13:4](#)



**crucified** -- Paul uses several terms to describe Jesus' death: (1) death (cf. [Rom 5:6](#) ff; [Rom 8:34](#); [Rom 14:15](#); [1Co 8:11](#); [1Co 15:3](#); [2Co 5:15](#); [Gal 2:21](#); [1Th 4:14](#); [1Th 5:10](#)); (2) blood (cf. [Rom 3:25](#); [Rom 5:9](#); [Eph 1:7](#); [Eph 2:13](#); [Col 1:20](#)); (3) cross (cf. [1Co 1:17-18](#); [Gal 5:11](#); [Gal 6:12](#); [Gal 6:14](#); [Eph 2:16](#); [Php 2:8](#); [Col 1:20](#); [Col 2:14](#)); and (4) crucifixion (cf. [1Co 1:23](#); [1Co 2:2](#); [2Co 13:14](#); [Gal 3:1](#)).

**crucified in weakness** -- The cross exhibited weakness, in the Greek and Roman mind, in His humanity, revealing the idea that He was susceptible to death (because He didn't defend himself against His enemies.).

**lives by the power of God** -- The resurrection indicts the power of God in giving life back to His Son.

1. Usually the terminology of this verse is used to affirm that God the Father, as an act of approval, raised the Son (cf. [Act 2:24](#); [Act 3:15](#); [Act 4:10](#); [Act 5:30](#); [Act 10:40](#); [Act 13:30](#), [Act 13:33](#), [Act 13:34](#), [Act 13:37](#); [Act 17:31](#); [Rom 1:4](#); [Rom 6:4](#), [Rom 6:9](#); [Rom 8:11](#); [Rom 10:9](#); [1Co 6:14](#); [2Co 4:14](#); [Gal 1:1](#); [Eph 1:20](#); [Col 2:12](#); [1Th 1:10](#)). However, there are other inspired texts that affirm that (1) the Spirit raised the Son (cf. Rom. 8:11) or (2) the Son raised Himself (cf. [Joh 2:19-22](#); [Joh 10:17-18](#)). - Utley

**we also are weak** -- Paul acknowledges the Corinthians' perception that he is weak, stating that he patterns his life after Christ. Just as Christ was weak (by people's standards), so Paul is willing to be weak ([1Co 2:3](#)); just as Christ is strong (by God's standards), so Paul is strong.

## 2 Corinthians 13:5

### [2Co 13:5](#)

**Examine yourselves** -- The Greek grammar here places great emphasis on the pronouns "yourselves" and "you."

Paul turned the tables on his accusers; instead of presuming to evaluate his apostleship, they needed to test the genuineness of their faith (cf. [Jas 2:14-26](#)). He pointed out the incongruity of the Corinthians' believing (as they did) that their faith was genuine and his apostleship false. Paul was their spiritual father ([1Co 4:15](#)); if his apostleship was counterfeit, so was their faith. The genuineness of their salvation was proof of the genuineness of his apostleship. - MSB

This is a PRESENT ACTIVE IMPERATIVE. This is the word *peirazō*, G3985, which means "to test with a view toward destruction." [See Utley's note at [1Co 3:13](#).] They had tested Paul; now they must be tested themselves!

**whether [if]** -- This is a FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL sentence which is assumed to be true. Paul is not doubting their faith, but challenging them to wake up!

**the faith** -- The Greek term "*faith*" (*pistis*) is translated into English by three terms: faith, believe, or trust. Faith is used in three senses in the NT: (1) as personal acceptance of Jesus as the Christ of God;

(2) as faithfully living for Him; and (3) as a body of truths about Him (cf. [2Co 13:3](#); [Gal 1:23](#); [Gal 3:23-25](#)). Mature Christianity involves all three senses. - Utley

**Test [examine, prove] yourselves** -- Paul repeats his command (another PRESENT ACTIVE IMPERATIVE), but uses the other term (*dokimazō*) for testing, which implies to test with a view toward approval. [G1381](#)

**realize [recognize, know]** -- This is the Greek term *epignōskō* ([G1921](#) P,A,I), which usually denotes experiential full knowledge.

**Jesus Christ is in you** -- When the spirit of Christ, his teachings, disposition, and godliness, is manifested within a person, Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit are said to be "in" that person. (cf. [Eph 3:16-17](#); [Col 1:27](#); [Rom 8:10](#); [1Jn 5:12](#); [Gal 4:19](#) [Joh 14:23](#) See note at [Eph 3:17](#)).

**failed the test [disqualified, not approved, reprobates]** -- [G96](#), Here it referred to the absence of genuine faith.

## 2 Corinthians 13:6

[2Co 13:6](#)

**But I trust that you will know** -- Paul wanted the Corinthians to know that Christ was manifested in him and those ("we") he sent to them, [2Co 12:18](#). The absolute proof were the signs, wonders, and mighty deeds the power of God enabled him to do, [2Co 12:12](#).

**we have not failed** -- [G96](#), Paul is asserting that he and his helpers have passed the test (not counterfeits, *adokimos*, cf. v. 7), especially in relation to the church at Corinth.

## 2 Corinthians 13:7

[2Co 13:7](#)

**not do wrong [evil]** -- Refers to the refusal to repent from sin, especially the rejection of Paul's authority ([2Co 12:20-21](#)); it may also refer to the refusal to show respect and hospitality to believers involved in the collection project (see note on [2Co 8:4](#)). - FSB

**do what is right [honorable, honest]** -- Paul's deepest longing was for his spiritual children to lead godly lives (cf. [2Co 7:1](#))—even if they persisted in doubting him. Paul was even willing to appear "disqualified," as long as the Corinthians turned from their sin (cf. [Rom 9:3](#)). - MSB

*honest* --Rather, what is **noble, right**.

**approved ... unapproved** -- Paul continues this word play on *dokimos* and *adokimos*. **Approved**, the opposite of *reprobate*, or *rejected* (See [2Co 10:18](#)).

Paul's motivation in ministry is to be faithful, not to appear successful ([1Co 4:2](#)). He patterned his service on Jesus Christ himself ([2Co 13:4](#)), who was outwardly weak and an apparent failure in dying on the cross, but who is now victorious as he lives by the mighty power of God. - NLTSB

## 2 Corinthians 13:8

### [2Co 13:8](#)

**truth** -- The Greek word used here, *alētheias*, likely refers to the gospel message. Earlier, Paul affirmed that he openly proclaimed the truth ([2Co 4:2](#)). This is in contrast to Paul's opponents, who distorted God's Word and proclaimed a different gospel (see [2Co 11:4](#)) - FSB

Paul hastened to add that he had not violated "the truth" of the gospel. The apostle may also have meant that he needed to take no action against the Corinthians if he found them living according to "the truth." - MSB

## 2 Corinthians 13:9

### [2Co 13:9](#)

**we are weak, but you are strong** -- Paul reminds the Corinthians about the paradoxical nature of his ministry: His vocation as an apostle requires that he endure hardship for the sake of other believers and so that more people can come to Christ ([Act 9:15-16](#); [2Co 11:23-29](#)). - FSB

**weak** -- In that case, Paul would rejoice in his "weakness" (that is, his lack of opportunity to exercise his apostolic power), because that would mean that the Corinthians were spiritually "strong." - MSB

**complete** -- The NOUN form of this term is found only here in the NT. The VERB means "to knit together." Paul used the VERB form in 1 Cor. 1:10, which calls on the Corinthian church to end its factious divisions. Now at the end of II Corinthians he returns to this mandate (unity which will result in spiritual adequacies). - Utley

**complete** -- Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, vol. 1, p. 680, assert that *artios* (complete, adequate, fully equipped for the assigned task), with all its different prepositional compounds (*epi* and *kata*), are all synonyms (cf. [Luk 6:40](#); [2Co 13:9](#), [2Co 13:11](#); [Eph 4:12](#); [2Ti 3:17](#)).

**strong [maturity, complete]** -- Paul wishes the Corinthians would have the same perspective as him—that they would understand his ministry, his authority, and the nature of the church (all of which find their source in Christ). Believers must evaluate others from God's point of view (see [2Co 5:16](#)).

## 2 Corinthians 13:10

### [2Co 13:10](#)

**For this reason** -- A one-sentence summary of Paul's purpose in writing this letter.

**while I am away** -- Paul did not want to make another painful visit to Corinth (cf. [2Co 2:3-4](#)). He did not want to come wrapped in his apostolic authority, but in parental love. However, the response of the church determined how he must act.

**with the authority which the Lord gave me** -- This exact phrase appears in [2Co 10:8](#). This apostolic authority, whether in personal presence or from afar (cf. [1Co 5:4](#)), has Christ's authority (cf. [2Co 12:19](#); [2Co 13:3](#)). This authority was given to Paul in the Damascus road encounter (cf. [Acts 9, 22, 26](#)).

**the Lord has given me** -- Paul did not appoint himself as an apostle; Jesus Christ gave him authority and called him to apostleship.

**building up [edification]** -- To strengthen people in their faith so that they grow in maturity in Christ. [2Co 12:19](#); [2Co 10:8](#).

## 2 Corinthians 13:11

[2Co 13:11](#)

**13:11–13** As he closes his letter, Paul expresses his desire for the Corinthian believers to be united. He encourages them to seek restoration, comfort one another, and live in peace. He concludes with a benediction. - FSB

**Finally** -- Literally this is “for the rest” (cf. [Gal 6:17](#)). This is a characteristic concluding phrase for Paul (cf. [Eph 6:10](#); [Php 3:1](#); [Php 4:8](#); [2Th 3:1](#)). It usually marks a transition to a closing point.

**brethren** -- What a beautiful and comforting way to close this difficult letter to a problem church. It also functions as a literary device to signal the transition to a new subject.

**be in agreement** -- Paul urges the believers to have the same mindset and purpose. This does not mean that they will agree on everything, but they must live in harmony with each other (see [1Co 1:10](#); [Php 4:2](#)). - FSB

**be at peace** -- To live in harmonious relationship with one another.

**the God of love and peace will be with you.** -- An encouragement to the Corinthians to carry out the exhortations in the first part of the verse. Only here in the NT is God called “the God of love” (cf. [1Jn 4:8](#)). - MSB

## 2 Corinthians 13:12

[2Co 12:13](#)

**a holy kiss** -- Paul often concludes his letters with this greeting ([Rom 16:16](#); [1Co 16:20](#)).

A **kiss** was a common greeting in the ancient world. A kiss exchanged upon greeting could also symbolize reconciliation ([Gen 45:15](#); [Luk 15:20](#)). In the Christian context, it expresses unity ([Rom 16:16](#); [2Co 13:12](#); [1Th 5:26](#)).

**2 Corinthians 13:13**

[2Co 13:13](#)

**All** -- Paul seems to especially include those in his company in the greeting to the Corinthians and the whole of Achaia ([2Co 1:1](#)), but perhaps also the saints at the church location from which he was writing, some place in Macedonia ( [2Co 1:16](#); [2Co 2:13](#); [2Co 7:5](#); [2Co 8:1](#); [2Co 9:2](#); [2Co 11:9](#)).

**2 Corinthians 13:14**

[2Co 13:14](#)

Paul concludes with a benediction that mentions the three members of the Trinity. The terms Paul uses—“**grace**,” “**love**,” and “**fellowship**”—emphasize his concern for reconciliation with God ([2Co 5:20](#)) and unity among believers.

Paul also refers to the Trinity when he discusses spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians (see [1Co 12:4-11](#)).

The benediction reminded the Corinthians of the blessings they had received:

“**grace**” from the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. [2Co 8:9](#)),

“**love**” from God the Father (cf. [2Co 13:11](#)), and “**communion**” with God and each other through the Holy Spirit (cf. [2Co 1:22](#); [2Co 5:5](#)).

See note on [Joh 16:7](#) for a note of the “*Work of the Trinity*” from the ESV Study Bible.

#### **Abbreviations:**

**CBSC** -- The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges , General Editor:-J. J. S. PEROWNE, D.D.

**EBCNT** -- THE EXPOSITOR’S BIBLE COMMENTARY, Abridged Edition, *New Testament*, Kenneth L. Barker, John R. Kohlenberger III

**FSB** -- Faithlife Study Bible, John D. Barry. General Editor

**IVPBBCNT** -- THE IVP BIBLE BACKGROUND COMMENTARY NEW TESTAMENT, ed by Craig S. Keener

**MSB** -- The MacArthur Study Bible, John F. MacArthur, Jr., General Editor

**NIVBTSB** -- NIV BIBLICAL THEOLOGY STUDY BIBLE, D. A. CARSON, general editor

**Utle** -- Paul’s Letters to a Troubled Church:I and II Corinthians, Bob Utley

