

Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians

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Chapter 1 2 Corinthians 1

Introduction:

- A. The church at Corinth was established during Paul's second missionary journey, Acts 18:1-18.
- B. The first letter was written from Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:8), about 56 A.D.
- C. The second letter was written from Macedonia (2 Corinthians 7:5; 8:1; 9:2-4), probably late 56 A.D.
- D. Occasion of the letter: Paul was concerned about the reaction to the first letter. He learned that most had accepted the teaching, but some were accusing him of fickleness (1:15-20), self-laudation (3:1; 5:12; 10:8), presumptuously claiming equality with other apostles (12:11, 12), lack of eloquence (11:6), and insignificant appearance, 10:10. The epistle was mainly to answer the false charges against Paul and is the most personal of all his epistles.
- E. Brief outline:
 - 1. Paul explains his work, 1-7.
 - 2. He encourages their generosity, 8, 9.
 - 3. He defends his authority, 10-13.

Chapter 1:

- A. The salutation, 1:1, 2.
 - 1. He was an apostle of Christ, by the will of God, verse 1; 1 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; 1 Timothy 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1.
 - 2. Addressed to the church in Corinth and other saints in Achaia. "Achaia was the Roman province of which Corinth was the capital. It consisted of all the territory south of Macedonia...How many Achaian churches existed at this time is not known, but we do know of a church at Cenchrea (Romans 16:1) as well as at Corinth, and of Christians at Athens, Acts 17:34" (**A Heart Opened Wide**, by Homer Kent, p. 29).
- B. God's comfort in sufferings, 1:3-7.
 - 1. The letter is from one who knows trouble to those who were in it. (Comfort or consolation is repeated ten times in these verses.)
 - 2. Paul regarded affliction as a school through which he passed in

...and defense of himself

order to dispense comfort to others.

3. God permits the tribulations or afflictions, but does not send them, 2 Corinthians 12:7.

C. Paul's problem in Asia, 1:8-11.

1. The trouble evidently refers to that in Ephesus, Acts 19:23-20:1.
2. God does not always deliver us immediately, nor in the same way. The same chapter that tells of James' beheading tells of Peter's release from prison, Acts 12. Sometimes God delivers us from trials, sometimes in our trials.
3. The prayers of the Corinthians had contributed to his deliverance, verse 11; Philippians 1:19.

D. Defense of his change in plans, 1:12-24.

1. His original plans had been changed (1 Corinthians 16:2-8), but his good conscience caused him to continue to live in view of the coming of Christ.
2. The "second benefit" may have been the benefit of his presence (in addition to his teaching), or to miraculous gifts, Acts 8:18; Romans 1:11.
3. His good conscience caused him to be serious about God's will, verses 17-18.
4. His good conscience caused him to glorify God, verses 19, 20. You cannot glorify God and practice deception at the same time.
5. The seal of the Holy Spirit was evidence, through Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, that God would fulfill His promises, verses 19-22; Acts 11:17; 15:8, 9. It seems to be miraculous power of the Spirit which was proof of God's approval.
6. His change in plans spared them, verses 23, 24; 1 Corinthians 4:21.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. To whom was this letter sent?

2. What were the main purposes of the letter?

Paul's follow-up letter...

3. Why had Paul undergone tribulation and affliction?

4. What had caused his trouble in Asia?

5. How had the Corinthians helped him in that?

6. What was Paul's evidence that he had conducted himself properly?

7. What did he desire to give them?

8. What accusation was being made against Paul because of his change in plans?

9. Who is the "us" in verses 21, 22?

10. How had God sealed them?