

2 Corinthians

Paul's Apostolic Ministry

and

Defense of the Truth

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Character of 2 Corinthians

- Challenging to analyze:
 - Least systematic of Paul's writings
 - Digressions
 - Difficult to be definite at many points
- Intensely emotional and very personal
 - We learn more about Paul's character and life than from any other source

Background and Occasion

- When Paul wrote the first letter he planned to stay at Ephesus until Pentecost (a matter of weeks) then go through Macedonia during the summer and autumn, then arrive in Corinth, possibly to stay the winter, ~AD 55-56 (1 Cor. 16:5-9)
- Paul had to change his original plan and decided to visit Corinth two times—on his way to Macedonia and again on his return from Macedonia (1:15-16)

Background and Occasion

- Paul hoped by the time of his second visit the collection of the gift for the saints in Jerusalem would be complete (1:16; 1 Cor. 16:1-4)
- Paul's original plan of one extended visit to Corinth seems to have been altered due to:
 - (1) The deadly trouble in Asia (1:8-10)
 - If we knew more details, Paul's change of plans would probably be clearer
 - (2) The news of further trouble in Corinth, making an urgent visit necessary

Background and Occasion

- The second visit (13:2) was a painful visit (2:1, lit. “come to you in sorrow/grief”)
- Paul tells the Corinthians “out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears” (2:4)
 - The exact identification of this tearful letter is unknown but appears to have been sent with Titus—a letter Paul initially regretted having sent until Titus returned with the good news of their repentance (7:6-11, 13-16)

Background and Occasion

- Paul sent another letter (our 2 Corinthians) again apparently by Titus (8:6, 17—can be translated “he is going to you”; 12:14, 18)
- Paul had previously written to test whether they would be obedient in all things concerning a previous wrongdoer who is now penitent (2:5-11; 7:12)
 - 2:9—Paul refers either to our 1 Corinthians letter or to the tearful letter (2:4)

Background and Occasion

- Paul's joy upon hearing the good news from Titus of the Corinthians' repentance (7:6-16) motivates him to expand on the glories and trials of his apostolic ministry (chs. 8-13)
 - He now follows up the previous instructions (1 Cor. 16:1-4) concerning the collection for the saints in Jerusalem (chs. 8-9)
 - He uses the Macedonian's extreme example of giving to encourage the Corinthians to give bountifully (8:1-5)

Background and Occasion

- Paul's impending third visit
 - 12:14; 13:1-2
 - 13:2—“when present”

Dates

- AD 49—Priscilla and Aquila were among the Jews expelled from Rome by Claudius' edict
- AD 50—Paul left Athens and went to Corinth where he first met Priscilla and Aquila
- AD 51—Paul before Gallio (Acts 18:12)
 - Due to Gallio's ruling (Acts 18:14-16), Paul continued teaching the gospel with the protection of Roman law at Corinth a total of “a year and six months” (Acts 18:11) and in other parts of the Roman world for the next 10 years

Dates

- AD 52—Paul left Corinth (Acts 18:18) and arrived in Ephesus (Acts 18:19)
- Stayed in Ephesus for about three years
- AD 55—1 Corinthians was written while Paul was at Ephesus where he stayed “until Pentecost” (16:8)
 - Apparently Paul's last year in Ephesus since about a year later (2 Cor. 8:10; 9:2) he was in Macedonia (2 Cor. 2:12-13; 7:5)

Dates

- If 1 Corinthians was sent between Passover and Pentecost of AD 55, 2 Corinthians was sent early AD 56
 - If 2 Corinthians was sent in two dispatches as some suppose, then 2 Cor. 1-9 was sent first and 2 Cor. 10-13 was sent a few weeks later

Key Words & Phrases

- **Lord** (30 times)
 - 1:2-3, 14; 2:12; 3:16-18
- **Comfort** (19 times)
 - 1:3-7; 2:7; 7:4, 6-7, 13; 13:11
- **Glory/glorious** (19 times)
 - 1:20; 3:7, 8-11, 18; 4:4, 6, 15, 17; 6:8; 8:19, 23
- **Ministry** (10 times)
 - 3:7-9; 4:1; 5:18; 6:3; 9:1, 12-13

Verses to Remember

- 1:3-5, 24
- 2:7-8, 11, 14, 17
- 3:2, 5, 17
- 4:3-4, 13, 16-18
- 5:1, 7-11, 14-15, 17, 21
 - 5:17—Mk. 16:15; Rom. 8:20; Col. 1:23
- 6:2, 14
- 7:1, 10

Verses to Remember

- 8:3, 5, 9, 12
- 9:6*-7*, 8 (1 Pet. 5:10), 10 (Is. 55:10), 15
 - Prov. 11:25, LXX: “Every generous soul receives a blessing”
 - “Grudgingly”—lit. “out of pain”
 - “Necessity/compulsion”—might be felt if the collection was not ready when Paul arrived
 - Prov. 22:9, LXX: “God loves a cheerful man and a giver”
 - 1 Chron. 29:13-14, 17

Verses to Remember

- 10:3-5*, 12
 - Prov. 21:22
- 11:3*, 24*-28, 32-33 (Acts 9:20-25)
 - Gen. 3:13; 1 Tim. 2:13-15; Rom. 7:11
 - v. 24: Deut. 25:3; v. 25: Acts 16:22-23; 14:19
- 12:7-10, 14-15
- 13:5, 8, 11 (Phil. 4:9)

Memory Verse Review (Luke—1 Corinthians)

- Lk. 2:52
- Jn. 20:30-31—“And truly...”
- Acts 4:12
- Rom. 11:33
- 1 Cor. 1:10

Memory Verse for 2 Corinthians

8:9

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich”
(NKJV)