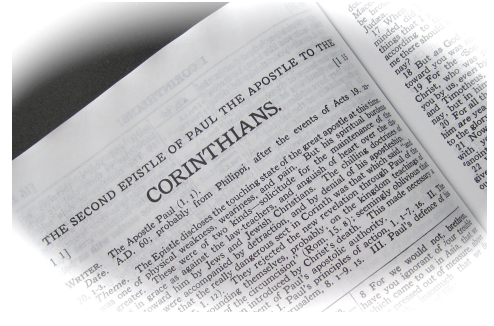


Books of The Bible

A Survey of 2 Corinthians

Introduction

It is a matter of fact that there are some books of the scriptures which are read and studied more than others. Second Corinthians is not one of those books but is one which has been somewhat neglected. First Corinthians is known and studied but second Corinthians does not deal with church truth, the Lord's Supper, the resurrection, and oftentimes we skip from first Corinthians to Galatians, or even Ephesians! When considering this rich book we soon observe that apart from the writings concerning the life of our Lord, this is the greatest unintentional biography in all the Scriptures. Here Paul reveals His deep heart yearnings, his struggles and sorrows, his tears, and experiences of hardship. Only in second Corinthians we learn of his escape from Damascus in a basket (ch. 11:32-33); his revelations and visions (ch. 12:1-4); his thorn in the flesh (ch. 12:7); his five scourgings by the Jews, the two by the Romans; his three shipwrecks and many perils (ch. 11:23-27), his three pleadings to the Lord to remove the thorn in the flesh, and the answer from God, with Paul's response (ch. 12:8-12).



The entire book is “apologetic” in character as Paul responds to (as we shall see) unrecorded attitudes and derogatory innuendos.

- a) From this observation we learn that non responding to accusations is not always the right thing to do. The Lord must keep silence because that was the way to glorify God. Likewise Paul or we must not keep silent against false accusations if the glory of God and Christ is at stake. There is a time “to be silent, and a time to speak” (Ecc. 3:7).

One of the remarkable things about second Corinthians is that there are no references to the cross of the Lord, His Blood, death, incarnation, crucifixion, or coming again, and only one reference to His resurrection (ch. 4:14).

In second Corinthians Paul informs his readers of the forces that drove him to be all he could for God:

- a) “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (ch. 5:11)
- b) “The love of Christ constraineth us” (ch. 5:14)

Just as the key chapter for faith is Hebrews 11 and love is 1 Corinthians 13, so the key chapters on the believer's finance is second Corinthians eight and nine. It is the only book with such a major part devoted to this subject in the scriptures.

The commendations in the book:

- a) Paul and his fellow workers commending themselves to the conscience of the Corinthians. (ch. 3:1)
- b) The commendation, which is the saints at Corinth, which commends Paul. (ch. 3:2-3)
- c) His commending himself and those with him is not a comparison with others. (ch. 10:12-17)
- d) The only commendation of importance is the Lord's. (ch. 10:18)

There can be no doubt but the experiences he endured for the cause of Christ caused much of the physical weakness he speaks about. (ch. 1:8-10; 12:7-9)

Contrasts between first and second Corinthians

1 Corinthians	2 Corinthians
The problems were coming from the behaviors of those in the assembly, schisms, etc.	The problems were coming from those who were inside and associated with the assembly.
Mainly ecclesiastical	Mainly personal
Deals mainly with the Corinthians	Deals mainly with Paul himself
The Spirit is mentioned in 15 verses	The Spirit is mentioned in 7 verses
Lordship is mentioned in 59 verses	Lordship is mentioned in 28 verses
“It is written”, referring to the Old Testament, is mentioned in 15 verses	“It is written”, referring to the Old Testament, is mentioned in 3 verses

The Author

Second Corinthians was one of a number of letters Paul wrote to the Corinthians (ch. 1:1; 10:1). Furthermore, while we know the broad run of Paul’s journey to this time, there are no hints given regarding where he wrote the book. We can make a conjecture but there is no clear scripture indicating where or in what year the book was written. We do know Paul was at Ephesus and there he wrote the first epistle (1 Cor. 16:8). He was at Troas where he hoped to meet Titus (2 Cor. 2:3), but Titus was not there and Paul came to Macedonia.

This was not just a one man letter, for while he was the pen man, there were those who were in fellowship with him. Note the word “us” (ch. 1:4); “we” (1:6; 4:8; 7:5); “in us” (1:5); “our” (1:8; 4:17); “ourselves” (6:4).

1) Paul and the church at Corinth:

- a) While there is uncertainty among expositors regarding the number of times Paul wrote to the Corinthians and visited Corinth, the following is, to my present understanding, a close review.
 - i) Acts 18:2 tells of the decree by the Roman Emperor Claudius to expel all Jews from Rome.
 - ii) At that time Aquila and Priscilla came to Corinth and there they met Paul, Silas, and Timothy. (Acts 18:5)
 - iii) Paul stayed at Corinth for eighteen months (Acts 18:11) and saw the blessing of God and seemingly a church was established.
 - iv) Paul then left and went to Ephesus (Acts 18:18)

2) Paul at Ephesus:

- a) Paul sends a letter (which we do not have) to Corinth. This would have been his first letter. (1 Cor. 5:9)
- b) Paul hears reports from the house of Chloe about schisms in the church (1 Cor. 1:11); a letter asking questions (1 Cor. 7:1), and from an unknown source of the misbehavior at the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:23-34); the association of the table of devils and the Lord’s Table (1 Cor. 10:16-21); the attitude toward the gifts God had given (1 Cor. 12:1-31); the matter of the resurrection (ch. 15:1-50), and the question of those who are alive when the Lord comes (1 Cor. 15:51-58). The letter could have been delivered by Sosthenes or Stephanas (1 Cor. 1:1; 16:15-18), but again that is an assumption.
- c) There is now written that which we have as first Corinthians, but in order it was the second letter. (See note “(a)”.

Books of The Bible
A Survey of 2 Corinthians

- d) Paul purposed a second visit to Corinth en route to Macedonia (Acts 20:1, 3; 1 Cor. 4:19; 16:5; 2 Cor. 1:16).
 - e) Paul writes what we have as second Corinthians and gives the reasons why he did not go as he had planned. (2 Cor. 1:17; 2:1)
 - f) Paul apparently plans to go a third time to Corinth (2 Cor. 13:1). I say, “apparently plans”, for while there is no Biblical history of his being there a third time, and he only says: “I am coming to you”. He was going to come before and it had to be cancelled, this is now the third time he is going to attempt to come.
- 3) The result of his not going as he had planned:
- a) He was accused of being fickle and light. (2 Cor. 1:17)
 - b) He was accused of being a false apostle, which he vindicated by self declaration (ch. 1:1); by the Lord working through him in effective ministry (ch. 2:2; 3:1-4:1); and of the things he suffered for the gospel (ch. 4:9-11; 11:23-30)
- 4) It is always interesting to know why a book was written. John in his gospel tells us why (Jn. 20:30-31); Peter tells us why he wrote his second epistle (2 Pet. 1:13-15). Second Corinthians was written for a number of reasons:
- a) To explain why he had not visited them (ch. 1:23; 2:12)
 - a) To inform them why he wrote the letter to them concerning the fallen one (ch. 2:4)
 - b) To praise them for obeying his “stern” letter (ch. 2:9)
 - c) To warn those who were still rebellious (ch. 12:20-13:2)
 - d) To warn against false teachers (ch. 11:3-4)
 - e) To declare what these men really are (ch. 11:12-20)
 - f) To vindicate his apostleship (ch. 11:12)
 - g) To exhort them to keep their promise to the saints at Jerusalem (chs. 8-9)
 - h) To prove that Christ was speaking in him by having the divine authority in not sparing the evil doers (ch. 13:3)
 - i) To encourage in the comforting and strengthening of God (ch. 1:3-4; 13:11)
 - j) In first Corinthians the saints had been exhorted to “lay aside” of their finances for the work of the Lord. Now questions of what happened to the money? Two things were evident, the saints were not giving as they had and there was the intimation that Paul was lining his own pockets with those gifts for the saints? These had to be addressed, which he does in 2 Corinthians 8-9 and ch. 11:9.

The Recipients

It is important to observe the terms Paul uses. At times he writes concerning “some” and at other times “many” (see the notes under “words repeated in 2 Corinthians”). It is evident that the factions of 1 Corinthians had not been truly healed, but there was a very distinct minority and a majority. The minority are referred to as “they” (ch. 10:10) who were Judaizers and eventually became to some extent the Gnostics, Balaamites, and Nicolaitanes.

- a) The Judaizers
 - i) These were men in sheep’s clothing, “false apostles, deceitful workers” (ch. 11:13) transforming and presenting themselves as apostles and ministers of Christ (ch. 11:13, 23), when in effect they were workers of Satan. Paul informs us that they were Hebrews of the seed of Abraham (ch. 11:22), and who sought to bring the saints into bondage (ch. 11:20). They were wolves devouring the flock and exalting themselves (ch. 11:20). These men had swayed some of the saints so that there was a minority in the church who were causing a split among the saints.
 - ii) The accusations were serious and they not only affected his ministry but also the spiritual stability of the saints in Corinth and other churches in the area. However, Paul did not address all of them for some were undeserving of consideration, but he will explain why he does certain things and what He will do.

Books of The Bible
A Survey of 2 Corinthians

They Accused Him of Being:	References	His Defense:	References
Paul changed his plans, which to their minds, indicated fickleness	Ch. 1:15-16	Was I being light or acting in the flesh, we were genuine but things change in human planning but God's promises are always assured. I had reasons for not coming	Ch. 1:18-22 Ch. 1:23-2:1; 2:12-13
Walking according to the flesh	Ch. 10:2	Our warfare is not carnal but spiritual. We preach with great plainness of speech We do not walk in craftiness nor handling the Word of God deceitfully	Ch. 10:3-7 Ch. 3:12 Ch. 4:2
Only bold at a distance Weak in outward appearance Contemptible in speech	Ch. 10:1:10 11:6	Do not look on things after the outward appearance We live by the power of God	Ch. 10:7 Ch. 13:4
Not taking money from the Corinthians was a covert confession of inferiority	Ch. 12:16-19	He preached the gospel freely, taking money from other churches and the saints in Macedonia, and he kept himself from being burdensome to them He did not seek to make a gain of them, and neither did his associates	Ch. 11:7-9 Ch. 12:17-18

Keys:

- 1) **Key Verses:** Chapters 5:20; 6:1; 14-18
- 2) **Key Words:** "Comfort/eth" (8); "Ministry" (3); "Glory" (19); "Exceeding/ly" (4); "abundant/ly" (8); "boast" and "boasting" (12).
- 3) **Key Concepts:**
 - a) The Lord gave His all therefore, the work of God demands unreserved devotion from me, and complete obedience no matter what demands are made on me. (ch. 11:23-27)

Aspects of Divine Persons:

- 1) **God** (Dealing only with names)
 - a) "God our Father" (ch. 1:2); "God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ch. 1:3); The "Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort" (ch. 1:3); "Lord Almighty" (ch. 6:18); "LORD" (Jehovah ch. 6:17); "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ch. 11:31).
- 2) **The Holy Spirit**
 - a) The "Earnest" (ch. 1:22; 5:5); "The Spirit of the living God" (ch. 3:3); "The Spirit of the Lord" (ch. 3:17-18); "Holy Ghost" (ch. 6:6)

Books of The Bible
A Survey of 2 Corinthians

3) **Christ**

- a) Jesus Christ (ch. 1:1); “Lord Jesus Christ” (ch. 1:2); “Christ” (ch. 1:5); “Day of the Lord Jesus” (ch. 1:14); “Son of God” (ch. 1:19); “The Image of God” (ch. 4:4); “Christ Jesus the Lord” (ch. 4:5); “Lord Jesus” (ch. 4:10); “Unspeakable Gift” (ch. 9:15)

Suggested Structures

As with any structure, this is very very broad and a superficial way of remembering the book.

2 Corinthians			
Chs. 1:1-7:16 The character of Paul Explanation Paul’s accreditation	Chs. 8:1-9:15 The collection for the saints Exhortation Paul’s appeal	Ch. 10:1-13; 14 The credentials of Paul Clarification Paul’s apostleship	
Chs. 1-2 Historical and deals with grief	Chs. 3-6 Doctrinal and deals with rejoicing	Chs. 7-9 Historical and deals with rejoicing	Chs. 10-13 Personal and deals with grief

Words

Words in 2 Corinthians which are only used once in the New Testament

Word	Greek Word	Reference	Word	Greek Word	Reference
Suffer	Pascho	Ch. 1:6	Giver	Dotes	Ch. 9:7
Pressed	Kata	Ch. 1:8	Unspeakable	Anekdiegetos	Ch. 9:15
Sentence	Apokrima	Ch. 1:9	Unprepared	Aparaskeunastos	Ch. 9:4
Helping together	Sunupourgeo	Ch. 1:11	Boasting	Kauchema	Ch. 9:3
Lightness	Elaphria	Ch. 1:17	Make up beforehand	Prokatartizo	Ch. 9:5
Anguish	Sunoche	Ch. 2:4	Cheerful	Hilaros	Ch. 9:7
Punishment	Epitimai	Ch. 2:6	Purposeth	Proaireomai	Ch. 9:7
Corrupt	Kapeleuo	Ch. 2:17	Poor	Penes	Ch. 9:9
Sufficiency	Hikanotes	Ch. 3:5	Strongholds	Ochuroma	Ch. 10:4
Engraven	Entupoo	Ch. 3:7	Terrify	Ekphobeo	Ch. 10:9
Beholding as in a glass	Katoptrizomai	Ch. 3:18	Make ourselves of the number	Egkrino	Ch. 10:12
Renounced	Apeipomen	Ch. 4:2	Stretch. . . Beyond	Huperekteino	Ch. 10:14

Books of The Bible
A Survey of 2 Corinthians

Word	Greek Word	Reference	Word	Greek Word	Reference
Hidden things	Kruptos	Ch. 4:2	Boasting	Kauchaomia	Ch. 10:15
Deceitfully	Doloo	Ch. 4:2	Regions beyond	Huperkeina	Ch. 10:16
Shine	Augazo	Ch. 4:4	Espoused	Harmozo	Ch. 11:2
Persecuted	Dioko	Ch. 4:9	Robbed	Sulao	Ch. 11:8
Cast down	Kataballo	Ch. 4:9	Burdensome	Abares	Ch. 11:9
But for a moment	Parautika	Ch. 4:17	False Apostles	Pseudapostolos	Ch. 11:13
I have heard	Epakono	Ch. 6:2	I speak as a fool	Paraphroneo	Ch. 11:23
Offence	Proskope	Ch. 6:3	Above measure	Huperballontos	Ch. 11:23
Longsuffering	Mskrothumia	Ch. 6:6	Deep	Buthos	Ch. 11:25
Pureness	Hagnotes	Ch. 6:6	A day and a night	Nuchthemeron	Ch. 11:25
Evil report	Dusphemia	Ch. 6:8	Cold	Psuchos	Ch. 11:27
Good report	Euphemia	Ch. 6:8	Nakedness	Gumnotes	Ch. 11:27
Deceivers	Planos	Ch. 6:8	Fastings	Nesteia	Ch. 11:27
Unequally yoked together	Heterozugeo	Ch. 6:14	Thirst	Dipsos	Ch. 11:27
Fellowship	Metochē	Ch. 6:14	Governor	Ethnarches	Ch. 11:32
Belial	Belial	Ch. 6:15	Basket	Sargane	Ch. 11:33
Concord	Sumphonesis	Ch. 6:15	Unspeakable	Arrhetos	Ch. 12:4
Agreement	Sugkaththesis	Ch. 6:16	Thorn	Skolops	Ch. 12:7
Walk in	Emperipateo	Ch. 6:16	May rest	Episkenoo	Ch. 12:9
I will receive	Eisdechomai	Ch. 6:17	Be spent	Ekdapanao	Ch. 12:15
Filthiness	Molusmos	Ch. 7:1	Did not burden	Katabareo	Ch. 12:16
Fightings	Mache	Ch. 7:5	Crafty	Panourgos	Ch. 12:16
Indignation	Aganaktēsis	Ch. 7:11	With him I sent	Sunapostello	Ch. 12:18
Became poor	Ptocheno	Ch. 8:9	Swellings	Phusiosis	Ch. 12:20
Had no lack	Elattonēo	Ch. 8:15	Whisperings	Psithurismos	Ch. 12:20
Abundance	Hadrotes	Ch. 8:20	Perfection	Katartisis	Ch. 13:9

Books of The Bible
A Survey of 2 Corinthians

Repeated Words

Word	Greek Word	Reference In 2 Cor.	Greek word only repeated of times repeated in 2 Cor.
All	Holos	Ch. 1:1	38 occurrences
Comfort	Paraklesis	Ch. 1:3	10 occurrences (translated "consolation" ch. 1:5)
Comforteth	Parakaleo	Ch. 1:4	2 occurrences
Sufferings	Pathema	Ch. 1:5	3 occurrences
Despaired	Exaporeomia	Ch. 1:8	Ch. 4:8 translated "despair"
Many (used of the false teachers and of some in the assembly)	Polus	Ch. 1:11	11 occurrences
Affliction	Thlipsis	Ch. 2:4	3 occurrences (translated "affliction" (ch. 2:4)
Some	Tis	Ch. 3:1	3 occurrences
Commendation	Suatatikos	Ch. 3:1	2 both in the same verse
Done away	Katargeo	Ch. 3:7	4 occurrences
Condemnation	Katakrisis	Ch. 3:9	2 occurrences (ch. 7:3)
Vail	Kaluma	Ch. 3:13	4 occurrences
When	Henika	Ch. 3:15	2 occurrences (ch. 3:16)
Troubled	Thilbo	Ch. 4:8	2 occurrences
Distressed	Stenochoreo	Ch. 4:8	2 occurrences (ch. 6:12 translated "straitened")
Tabernacle	Skenos	Ch. 5:1	2 occurrences (ch. 5:4)
Clothed upon	Ependuomia	Ch. 5:2	2 occurrences (ch. 5:4)
At home	Endemeo	Ch. 5:6	3 occurrences (translated "present" in ch. 5:8, 9)
Absent	Ekdemeo	Ch. 5:6	3, occurrences (ch. 5:8, 9)
Blamed	Momaomai	Ch. 6:3	2 occurrences (ch. 8:20)
Patience	Hupomone	Ch. 6:4	2 occurrences
Necessities	anagke	Ch. 6:4	3 occurrences
Distresses	Stenchoria	Ch. 6:4	2 occurrences
Stripes	Plege	Ch. 6:5	2 occurrences (In ch. 11:2 occurrences it is italicized)

Books of The Bible
A Survey of 2 Corinthians

Word	Greek Word	Reference In 2 Cor.	Greek word only repeated of times repeated in 2 Cor.
Imprisonments	Phulake	Ch. 6:5	2 occurrences (translated “prisons” ch. 11:23)
Tumults	Akatastasia	Ch. 6:5	2 occurrences
Watchings	Agrupnia	Ch. 6:5	2 occurrences
Dishonor	Atamia	Ch. 6:8	2 occurrences (Translated “reproach” ch. 11:21)
Nothing	Medeis	Ch. 6:10	5 occurrences (Translated “thing” (ch. 6:3); “Not a whit” (ch. 1:5); “no” (ch. 13:7)
Sorrowful	Lupeo	Ch. 6:10	7 occurrences (Translated “sorry” (2:2); “grieved” (ch. 2:4); “sorrowed” (ch. 7:9)
Corrupted	Phtheiro	Ch. 7:2	2 occurrences
Fears	Phobos	Ch. 7:5	5 occurrences
Earnest desire	Epipothesis	Ch. 7:7	2 occurrences, translated “vehement desire” in ch. 7:11.
Boasting	Kauchesis	Ch. 7:14	5 occurrences
Abundance	Perisseia	Ch. 8:2	2 occurrences
Willing of themselves	Authairetos	Ch. 8:3	2 occurrences (In ch. 8:17 translated “of his own accord”)
Begin before	Proenarchomai	Ch. 8:6	2 occurrences (translated “having begun before” ch. 8:10)
A year ago	Perusi	Ch. 8:10	2 occurrences (ch. 9:2)
Nothing	Ou	Ch. 8:15	77 occurrences; an adverb translated “not” (ch. 1:8); “nay” (ch. 1:17); “was” (ch. 11:9); “no” (ch. 11:11); “cannot” (ch. 12:3)
More forward	Spoudaioteros	Ch. 8:17	2 occurrences (ch. 8:22)
We have sent	Sumpempo	Ch. 8:18	2 occurrences (ch. 8:22)
Sparingly	Pheidomenos	Ch. 9:6	2 occurrences both is the same verse
Supplieth	Prosanapleroo	Ch. 9:12	2 occurrences (Translated “supplied” ch. 11:9)
Pulling down	Kathairesis	Ch. 10:4	3 (Translated “destruction” ch. 10:8; 13:10)
Measure	Ametros	Ch. 10:13	2 occurrences (ch. 10:15)
Bear	Anechomai	Ch. 11:1	4 occurrences
Chargeable	Katamarkao	Ch. 11:9	3 occurrences (Translated “burdensome” ch. 12:13, 14)

Books of The Bible
A Survey of 2 Corinthians

Word	Greek Word	Reference In 2 Cor.	Greek word only repeated of times repeated in 2 Cor.
Nothing	Oudeis	Ch. 12:11	5 occurrences (Translated “no man” ch. 5:15; 7:2; 11:9; “no” ch. 7:5)
Have already sinned	Proamartano	Ch. 12:21	2 occurrences (Translated “heretofore have sinned” ch. 13:2)

Concluding Thoughts

As we read that which this servant of the Lord suffered in accord with the work of the Lord (Acts 9:16), we are impressed by two matters:

- a) The strengthening of God which can only be known in weakness. (2 Cor. 12:10; 13:7, 9)
- b) The unreserved devotion of the man to the Lord and His work. (2 Cor. 4:1, 16)

No wonder he could say to the saints at Corinth: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). What a blessing life would have been if such was the true eulogy spoken at one’s funeral.

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

Rowan Jennings, Abbotsford, British Columbia