

# Intro to 2 Cor and 1:1-2:4

## Corinthians, Session Eleven

### Overview

Paul writes 1 Cor in 56 from Ephesus. Paul writes 2 Cor in 57 from Macedonia (2:12) on his way to Corinth for the third time (12:14; 13:1-2) in this 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (54-58 AD)

1<sup>st</sup> Visit = 18 months (52-54) Acts 18:8; establishes church in Corinth, 2<sup>nd</sup> MJ (50-54)

2<sup>nd</sup> Visit = “painful visit” (2:1); probably direct sail from Ephesus

3<sup>rd</sup> Visit = stays for 3 winter months (57-58)

The proconsul of Achaia, Gallio (51-52), ruled that Christianity was a sect of Judaism. Therefore, Christianity was permissible as Judaism was. Therefore, Corinth (in the region of Achaia) is one of the few places Paul was able to leave voluntarily, rather than by force.

“In a real sense this letter is Paul’s \_\_\_\_\_. It is more intimate, less reserved, and more revealing of Paul’s own feelings than anything else in the NT. But theology wrapped in autobiography is often difficult to understand and relate to our lives today” (Chafin, 197).

T / F 1 and 2 Corinthians is really 2 and 4 Corinthians (meaning, we have lost 1 and 3 Corinthians).

T / F The city of Corinth contained at least twelve heathen temples.

T / F At the time of Paul, the city of Corinth was the 4<sup>th</sup> largest city in the Roman empire (about ¼ million).

T / F If a Corinthian was included in a Greek play, he or she was depicted as a drunk or as a prostitute.

2 Cor 7:5-7 refers to Paul meeting \_\_\_\_\_ in Macedonia who gives Paul an update on the situation in Corinth, which has improved. Paul then writes 2 Cor in response. It is probably sent with Titus to prepare for Paul’s arrival.

2 Cor 7:8-9 refers to what is called “the severe letter”. This is \_\_\_\_ Cor. There are some scholars who believe it was appended and actually what we have as 2 Cor 10-13. (I don’t buy this “cut and paste” argument. There are other reasons the tone changes.)

Interesting structure:	1:12-7:16	A look to the past
	8:1-9:15	A look to the present
	10:1-13:10	A look to the future

Who is Paul’s co-sender (not so much a coauthor)? \_\_\_\_\_ The word “we” is used here twice as often as in the longest Pauline letters (108 times in 2 Cor; 59 times in Romans and 54 times in 1 Cor). It may interest you to know that Timothy is also mentioned in 1 Thess, 2 Thess, Col, Philemon, Phil.

Why write this letter?

1. To defend his change in itinerary—why not come straight away?
2. To urge them to complete the offering for the church in Jerusalem
3. To deal with pockets of opposition and defend his apostleship

“One has only to observe that different kinds of pretentious prophets and preachers, coming from outside, have always raised and still raise difficulties in Christian communities. A substantial and positive value of 2 Cor, however, is found in the practical suggestions it offers regarding a pastor’s care for his parish and the meaning of his ministry” (Reicke, 62).

### **The Fellowship of Suffering (1:1-11)**

Belonging to Christ invites \_\_\_\_\_ and ensures \_\_\_\_\_. Whatever the suffering, the comfort and strength Christ gave always more than matches it.

“Whether Paul was distressed or comforted, the outcome was always the same: It was for the Corinthian’s benefit, for their comfort” (Valleskey, 16). How does that work exactly?

The move of v. 9 is significant. Paul had come to end of himself. This a very holy moment actually. He could no longer rely on himself because the self was exhausted, depleted. He had to rely on God who is both Comforter and Deliverer.

Prayer is not a filler or polite but a real way to partner and join the cause.

### **Making Clear Where You Stand (1:12-24)**

Does the objection to the change in itinerary strike you as a petty thing? Why do you think the Corinthians were upset? Lastly, what does this kind of behavior indicate?

Paul doesn’t claim perfection, but he does say his conscience is clear and that he has sincerely acted in good faith. He has not vacillated or contradicted himself, but he’s “let his yes be yes and his no be no” (Mt 5:37). Why is it hard, sometimes, to give a singularly clear answer?

Why is clarity and articulation of the faith so important for any believer, but especially an apostle?

How does v. 13 indicate that Paul is teaching on their level and not too lofty?

### **When Things Go from Bad to Worse (2:1-4)**

2:1 is almost like the proverbial parental threat, “Don’t make me come back there,” but “another painful visit” indicates Paul has been there before to address conflict.

A spiritual parent speaks and behaves this way. Paul is not bound by their approval. He is not trying to be the “cool dad”. His motivation is love that is sometimes expressed in affliction, anguish and tears.

“The fact that Paul had problems to deal with ought to keep the rest of us from thinking we’re the only ones whose leadership has been ignored” (Chafin, 213).