

Study Outline of Second Corinthians

- The church in Corinth was established during Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 18:1-17). Written about one year after 1 Corinthians (8:10).
- The first letter was written with "many tears" (2:3-4) because of the division and error that existed.
- After his greeting he begins revealing his purpose for the second letter. He wrote it to defend his authority as an apostle because there were false teachers in Corinth who were challenging it (2:14-17; 3:1-3; 4:1-2).
- These were Jewish false teachers – 2 Corinthians 11:22.
- 1:1-2 – Paul's greeting to the church.
- 1:3-7 – God's comfort for people and, in turn, their comfort for others.
 - Mercies – compassions, pity, emotions.
 - Comfort – a calling near, a summons for help.
 - Tribulation – pressure, straits, oppression.
- 1:8-11 – God's deliverance from suffering.
 - Verse 8 is a reference to Acts 19:21-41.
 - Paul's experiences taught him that God could deliver him from anything – 2 Timothy 4:17-18.
 - Verse 11 – prayer helps! James 5:16-18.
- 1:12-14 – Paul's conduct.
 - One of the charges that were being made against Paul was that he was abusing his authority and taking advantage of churches (11:7-11).
 - Simplicity – mental honesty, free from pretense.
 - Verses 13-14 – suspicions about his honesty were being raised and he reassures that church that what he said in their presence was the same that he said when absent.
- 1:15-20 – Paul's travel plans to see them had changed, but not because he was untrustworthy.
 - Verse 17 – "did I use lightness?" One version reads, "did I use fickleness?"
 - Paul was not vacillating. When he changed his plans it was not because he was not a man of his word (v. 18).
- 1:21-24 – Paul had been anointed by God Himself and was trustworthy.
 - No one today can make the claims of verses 21 and 22 because (1) they have not been anointed by God and (2) they do not have the miraculous gifts that the apostles had.
 - Paul did not want to be domineering to them, but to be helpful.
- 2:1-11 addresses what Paul wrote in connection with 1 Corinthians 5.
 - He did not want to visit them with the same sadness that he had when he wrote the first letter.
 - The implication here is that he would have been grieved had they not repented.
 - Notice the emotion with which he had written – v. 4.

- Verses 5-7 address the events of 1 Corinthians 5. The man who was guilty of fornication was to be “delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh.”
- This is what is called “church discipline.” Faithful Christians are to withdraw their fellowship from those who are living in sin and will not repent (2 The. 3:6, 14-15; Matt. 18:15-17).
- However, when the sinner repents, he is to be forgiven and accepted back into fellowship – Luke 17:3-4. This is seen here in v. 8-11.
- Notice verse 11. How can Satan “take advantage of us” in these situations?
 - Corinth could have ignored Paul’s command from the first letter. Corinth might have addressed the situation, seen him repent, and then refuse to forgive him.
 - Satan has “devices.” They can be subtle or obvious.
- 2:12-17 – Paul’s travel and preaching.
 - Verse 12-13 is a mention of what is read in Acts 19-20.
 - The preaching of the gospel is compared to the aroma of sweet fragrance to all men. It can be refused (v. 16a) or accepted (v. 16b)
 - Who is qualified to do such an important work (v. 16)? Only those who are sincere in their efforts. “Corrupt” (KJV) is “peddle” in the NKJ. Some were preaching the gospel for personal profit. 2 Peter 2:1-3.
- 3:1-5 – The discussion continues into chapter 3. It seems that those who were questioning Paul’s authority were, perhaps, questioning the motives of his letters. He wasn’t writing them for approval.
 - His work among Corinth was evidence of his authority and love for those people.
 - What Paul addresses in the rest of the chapter shows that those who were questioning his apostleship were Jewish teachers.
- 3:6-18 – Paul was a minister of the New Testament that is written on the hearts of men. He was not a minister of the Old that was written on tables of stone.
 - This section is extremely important in understanding the differences between the first covenant and the second.
 - What was “written and engraved on stone” is called: ministration of death, glorious, glory to be done away, ministration of condemnation, done away, abolished, veiled hearts.
 - The “new testament” (v. 6) is called ministration of the Spirit, ministration of righteousness, glory that excels, vail taken away in Christ, liberty.
 - Verses 17-18 – what has been revealed in the New Testament leads us into the image of God.
- The differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament:
 - Deliverer – Exodus 19:3-6; Matthew 17:3-5.
 - Audience – Deuteronomy 5:1-5; Matthew 28:18.
 - Duration – Jeremiah 31:31-34; Galatians 3:19.
 - Purpose – Romans 7:7-12; Romans 8:1-2.
 - Sacrifices – Hebrews 10:1-4; Romans 8:3.
 - Language to describe each, especially in Hebrews – 7:11-14; 8:3-4, 7; 9:11-15.

The “this ministry” of verse 1 is a continuation of the thought from chapter 3. Paul had just written extensively about being a “minister of the new testament” (3:6).

- 4:1-4 – How Paul handled the new testament.
 - Verse 2 is not necessarily a defense of himself, but a charge against those who were troubling Corinth.
 - Dishonesty = shameful, disgraceful; craftiness = trickery, cunning; deceitfully = to mix or adulterate.
 - The “god” of this world (age – NKJ) had blinded some. While Satan is not deity, some have turned him into their god. Some people are lost (v. 3) because their minds have been blinded to the truth through lies.
 - *Hid* is the same Greek word as *veiled* from chapter 3. This again indicates that those who were troubling Corinth were Jewish converts trying to turn people against Paul and back to the Law of Moses. They refused to turn to the light of the gospel (v. 4).
- 4:5-7 – Paul was a messenger of light (the gospel).
 - Verse 5 seems to be another charge against the trouble makers. It appears that they themselves were the subject of their teaching.
 - Paul had no personal gains or profit in mind when he preached.
 - God had shined in his heart with the light of knowledge (v. 6).
 - Paul’s work manifested honesty, unselfishness, and service to others.
 - The treasure he possessed was the gospel (v. 7).
- 4:8-15 – What Paul endured as a preacher and why.
 - “We which live” (v. 11) – Philippians 1:21-24.
 - The persecution and eventual death that Paul suffered led to the spiritual life of Corinth and many others (v. 12).
 - His continual suffering did not cause him to be silent (v. 13). The reason is stated in verse 14.
 - Paul was willing to suffer for the benefit of others (v. 15). Colossians 1:24.
- 4:16-18 – The outward man contrasted with the inward.
- 5:1-8 – Paul’s confidence in what God has prepared.
 - We can have confidence that God has prepared something for us in eternity (1 Jn. 3:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:50-55).
 - The language of verses 2-5 is similar to Romans 8 and 1 Corinthians 15. Notice that this new body is “eternal in the heavens” (v. 1). It is not on earth and it will not be on a renovated earth!
 - Verse 7 is in the context of the confidence that we have in regard to heaven (v. 6, 8).
- 5:9-11 – Please God in all things.
 - It was Paul’s endeavor, in whatever he was doing, to be pleasing to God (v. 9).
 - He understood that he would be judged (v. 10) and his efforts were to persuade men to obey God and states in the end of verse 11 that the Corinthians should have known that too.

- The final judgment is based on what each one has done. Individual responsibility and individual accountability (v. 10).
- *Persuade* = “to persuade, particularly to move or affect by kind words or motives.”
- 5:12-15 – Paul, unlike those causing trouble in Corinth, did not live for himself.
 - He knew it was not necessary to “commend” himself as others were doing (3:1).
 - Those accusing Paul of these things were in reality the ones who were guilty.
 - Paul’s life was to live for the one who died for him (v. 15).
- 5:16-21 – Reconciliation to God was what he was seeking.
 - The Jews were ones who were concerned about holding people in regard according to the flesh. That is why the issue of circumcision was a constant problem in the early church (Acts 15:1-5; Gal. 5:1-6).
 - In Christ all the “old” had been done away (v. 17). This applies to both one’s manner of life and also the Old Law.
 - Reconciliation to God can come only through Christ (v. 18-19). *Reconcile* = to restore or exchange. God restores man’s soul through Christ. A Christian has been “exchanged” from darkness to light (Col. 1:13).
 - *Ambassador* = an official government representative. Paul and we (the other apostles) are the ambassadors of Christ who had been entrusted with “ministry of reconciliation” (v. 18b).
 - Romans 8:3 is a commentary on verse 21. One cannot be righteous apart from the gospel of Christ. Again, this is important contextually because the trouble in Corinth was coming from Jews. Galatians 2:16; 3:11.

The “we” of 6:1 is connected to the “us” from the end of chapter 5. We have been reconciled to God in order to be workers together for Him.

- 6:1-10 – Paul’s work as a minister of reconciliation (5:18) was not done out of a self-seeking mindset.
 - “With him” is not in the Greek text and obscures the meaning of the verse. Paul and the Corinthians had all been reconciled to God by Christ and, as such, were co-workers in the gospel.
 - God’s grace can be received in vain (1 Cor. 15:2). God is willing to save at all times (v. 2 – Isa. 49:8), but the Corinthians were in danger.
 - Verses 3-10 show that “Paul endeavored to live in such a way that nothing in his ministry would prove an obstruction or a snare in the path of anyone seeking God causing him to fall.”
 - The experiences Paul had (v. 4-10) were evidence of Paul’s sincerity in preaching and concern for their souls.
- 6:11-13 – Paul was “an open book” and wanted the Corinthians to be the same toward him. The withholding of love was on Corinth’s part, not Paul’s (v. 12).
- 6:14-18 – Be separate from unbelievers.
 - First, this passage has absolutely nothing to do with marriage!

- Second, Paul addressed the issue of marriage to an unbeliever in 1 Cor. 7:12-14. Peter did the same in 1 Pet. 3:1-6.
- The church was beginning to yoke itself to false apostles and that was what he was trying to prevent. He asked a series of rhetorical questions to make his point (v. 14b-16a).
- 7:1 – The thought is continued into chapter 7. The promises of 6:17-18.
- 7:2-12 – Paul desired that the Corinthians “open up” to him. He was being charged with wrong, corruption, and fraud (v. 2). They should have known better!
 - One way they should have known better was by their relationship with each other and with Titus (v. 5-7).
 - Another way they should have known better was because of the first letter he wrote and his joy over their response to it (v. 8-12).
- 7:13-16 – Paul expresses his joy and confidence in the Corinthians. They were respectful and loving.

Chapters 8-9 discuss an effort that the Corinthians had started “a year ago” (8:10). They had started taking up a collection for needy Christians in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1-3). Romans 15:25-27 mentions the same contribution. We learn a great deal about giving money to the Lord in these two chapters.

- 8:1-9 – Abound in giving.
 - One thing that sticks out in the section is that even though Macedonia was poor, they gave even so.
 - *Liberality* (v. 2) refers to their giving as “uncalculating and free from ulterior motives.”
 - Their willingness and love caused them to exceed what Paul expected.
 - Basically, they asked Paul if they could help in the collection which is called a gift and ministering to the saints.
 - Verse 5 is THE key to giving. There must be first a total commitment to God by the giver. Why are church budgets not met? Why can’t local congregations “afford” to be more involved in the local community, but send money overseas and around the country? Is it possible that congregations are comfortable to let others do the work they are not willing to do?
 - Giving is called a gift, service to saints, grace, and a proof of the sincerity of Christian love. Christ is used as the example of giving (v. 9).
- 8:10-15 – Finish what you started!
 - Generosity and sincerity is tested by willingness, not wealth (v. 12). The poor and the rich can be equally generous, even though one may give more physically.
 - Exodus 16:17-21; 1 Timothy 6:9-11.
- 8:16-24 – The collection delivered in honesty.
 - Traveling with a large sum of money could be cause for some to question Paul’s honesty. There were three men, including Titus, who traveled with the money to avoid what is mentioned in verse 20.
- 9:1-5 – Corinth’s zeal inspired others to help the needy.

- He didn't want Corinth to be unprepared or ashamed when the collection was being taken up by the brethren he sent.
- 9:6-11 – The proper manner of giving.
 - Purposes = a set aside, chosen ahead giving. Not grudgingly = not out of sorrow.
 - Of necessity = out of distress. Cheerful = joyous, merry.
 - Verse 9 is a quote of Psalm 112:9 that speaks of the man who fears God.
- 9:12-15 – The results of the gift.
 - Needs of the saints are met.
 - Thanksgiving to God.
 - “Their action not only rendered service to those in need, but also their contribution was an act of service to God. If one understands this spiritual insight, giving will not be as a burden which is compulsory, but it will be understood as a privilege of grace that enriches the soul of the giver and returns praise to God.”

Chapters 10-13 were written by Paul to defend his apostleship and serve as a warning to the false teachers who were challenging his authority. The tone of the letter changes at this point.

- 10:1-6 – The battle that was/is being fought.
 - Meekness of Christ did not mean an absence of sternness (Matt. 11:28-30; 23).
 - Gentleness of Christ is a reference to His fairness or equity. Paul's accusers were not equitable – v. 10-11.
 - Verse 2 is a warning to the Corinthians about accepting the mindset of his false accusers.
 - Verses 3-5 illustrate the battle that he was fighting. He did not do what he did out of fleshly (carnal) motivations.
 - We are in a fight for the minds (hearts) of men and our weapon is the word of God – Eph. 6:10-18; 1 Thes. 5:8.
 - Think about the spiritual battle we're in: *strongholds* = a fortification, fortress; *imaginings* = reckoning, calculation; *high thing* = elevation, i.e., pride.
 - The goal – *bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*.
 - We have to be able to reason from the Scriptures, not just talk “about” them. This takes a great deal of time and effort on our part.
 - Verse 6 – Paul was willing to give people time to repent, but would deal with situations as needed.
- 10:7-11 – Paul would be consistent in word and action.
 - This section reveals the modus operandi of his opponents (v. 10).
 - They were charging Paul with being a coward in face-to-face dealings.
 - *Casting down* (v. 5) and *destruction* (v. 10) are from the same Greek word. Some things needed to be cast down, but he wanted to edify the faithful.
- 10:12-18 – Paul's concern was being approved by God, not men.
 - This whole section here covers the charges that were being made against him while he wasn't there.
 - The false apostles compared themselves with each other, boasted about things they did not do, and abused their self-given authority.

Chapter 11 is the strongest of Paul's defenses against the "false apostles" who were in the process of deceiving the Corinthians.

- 11:1-6 – Paul's fear for Corinth.
 - One point that becomes clear in this chapter is that the false apostles in Corinth had been slandering Paul. Slander – "oral defamation, in which someone tells one or more persons an untruth about another which will harm the reputation of the one defamed."
 - Proverbs 26:4-5.
 - Paul had a zeal for the church and did not want them to be lost by the subtlety of false teachers. They had been tolerating men who were preaching "another" Jesus.
 - Verse 5 contains sarcasm against the false apostles.
- 11:7-15 – Paul received no compensation from Corinth in order to prevent any misunderstandings.
 - Paul had worked with his own hands to meet his needs (Acts 18:1-3; 2 Thes. 3:8-9).
 - He received financial support from people in the brotherhood (Phil. 4:15-17).
 - "Robbed other churches" is a use of sarcasm.
 - He did these things because he loved them (v. 11). He would keep conducting himself that way in order to show his consistency.
 - Verses 13-15 – it seems that the false apostles were using this topic to say that Paul himself was not a true apostle. Satan deceived Eve (Gen. 3:1-5) through subtlety and false teachers often do the same (Jude 4).
 - Satan is deceptive (Eph. 6:11) and strong (1 Pet. 5:8), but he cannot overpower God's child (Jas. 4:7).
- 11:16-21 – He's going to "boast a little" in order to silence his critics.
 - They boasted according to the flesh and he is getting ready to do the same in order to answer them (Pro. 26:5).
 - False teachers had charged him falsely – 10:10-11. He is getting ready to answer that charge.
- 11:22-28 – His troubles proved that he was anything but weak and cowardly!
 - Verse 22 shows that these trouble makers were Jews. This is nothing new for Paul (Acts 9:23).
 - Forty stripes, minus one – Deut. 25:1-3. 5 times! 195 "stripes."
 - Beaten with rods – Acts 16:22-23.
 - Stoned – Acts 14:19.
 - Shipwreck – Acts 27.
 - Apart from all this his concern was "for all the churches."
- 11:29-33 – None of the false teachers had gone through what Paul had gone through for the benefit of others. Even right after his conversion, he was persecuted (Acts 9:23-25).

Paul's continued defense of his apostleship.

- 12:1-6 – Paul uses a revelation from fourteen years prior as an example of his authority. While it was not expedient to be boastful, the false apostles had put him in such a position as made it necessary.
 - Paul (v. 6-7) had been caught up into the third heaven. We have the sky (Gen. 1:1; 2:1); the realm of the sun, moon, stars (Matt. 24:39); God’s dwelling place (Matt. 6:9).
 - He calls it paradise (Lk. 23:43; Rev. 2:7).
 - “Not lawful for a man to utter” – we’re not told why here. Hebrews 6:19-20 – one day that veil will be removed!
 - His boasting is not about himself (v. 5), but about what God had done for him.
- 12:7-10 – Strength in weakness.
 - False apostles were boasting and they had not received such visions.
 - A “thorn in the flesh” – we are not told what it is, so to guess is simply conjecture.
 - Galatians 4:13-14.
 - Verses 8-9 gives us insight into “unanswered prayers.” Prayer must be asked according to His will (1 Jn. 5:14-15).
 - In our physical weaknesses, our dependence upon God becomes greater. God can use those things to make us stronger spiritually.
- 12:11-13 – Signs of an apostle.
 - He was “compelled” (made necessary, forced) into boasting because of false accusations.
 - “Signs of an apostle” – Mark 16:17-18, 20. Those signs could be passed on only through the laying on of the hands of the apostles (Acts 8:18-19).
 - They were not inferior to any church, but the issue of financially supporting Paul obviously caused some trouble with the false apostles. He asks for the church’s forgiveness.
- 12:14-21 – Paul was ready for a third visit.
 - His concern was for the souls of the people. He loved them as a parent loves and provides for a child.
 - He was charged with being tricky and deceitful (v. 16), but they know that he did not take advantage of them. Neither did Titus (v. 17-18).
 - Everything he did was for the good of the church (v. 19).
 - At the time of writing, he was concerned that they were in sin and, that when he got there, things would not go as he wished they would (v. 20).
 - He would have been humiliated by finding such conditions and he would have been in mourning because they had not repented (v. 21).

Paul’s desire for the church on his third visit. We have record of only his first visit (Acts 18:1-8).

- 13:1-6 – He didn’t want to have to come in power.
 - 12:20-21 were a warning about what might happen if they had not repented by the time he got there.
 - Two or three witnesses – OT – Deut. 19:15. NT – Matt. 18:16.

- If they were seeking proof of Paul's "might" in Christ, he would bring it if necessary! He had worked miracles among them (12:12) and passed on miraculous abilities to them (1 Cor. 12-14).
- The crucifixion of Christ appeared to show Him as a weak and helpless victim.
- John 10:17-18 with Matthew 26:53.
- Paul turns the question on his readers in verses 5-6. Because they had been questioning Paul's authenticity, they needed to check themselves.
- 13:7-10 – Paul prays for Corinth to do what is honorable and that they be fully equipped.
 - Paul's main concern in all of this letter was Corinth's faithfulness to the gospel. He wanted them to do what was right.
 - Verse 8-10 – if the Corinthians were doing everything honestly/honorably, there would be no need for Paul to be strong among them on his third visit.
- 13:11-14 – Paul's closing admonitions.
 - Farewell = be well off, thrive.
 - Perfect = fully equipped, sound, whole.
 - One mind, live in peace = that was not currently the case when Paul wrote. He wants them to be united and peaceful. False teachers will not let that happen.
 - Verse 14 is one of several passages that refer to all three members of the Godhead. Matthew 3:16-17; Hebrews 9:14.