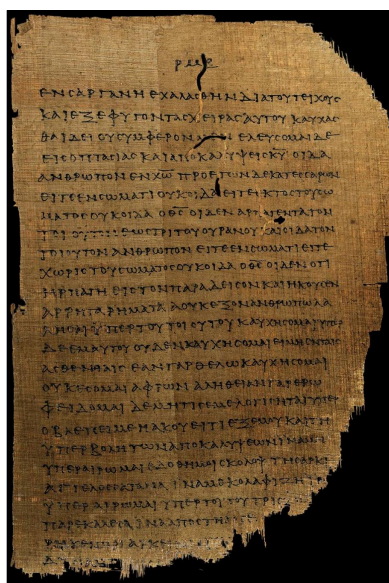


2 CORINTHIANS

Dear Messy Church, Part 2

AUTHOR	Paul, with Timothy, 1:1. This is Paul's most personal letter. He opens his heart about his fears, his tears and his weakness.
WRITTEN FROM	Macedonia in northern Greece, maybe Philippi, after Titus met Paul there with good news, 7:5 to 7.
DATE WRITTEN	About AD 55 to 57, a year or so after 1 Corinthians.
WRITTEN TO	The church in Corinth and all the believers in the province of Achaia, southern Greece, 1:1.
WHY HE WROTE	To say thank you for turning around, to finish an offering for poor believers in Jerusalem, and to warn against fake super apostles, 11:5.
KEY VERSE	2 Corinthians 12:9. My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness.



THE OLDEST COPY OF 2 CORINTHIANS

This is a page of Papyrus 46, a book of Paul's letters copied in Egypt about AD 200. This page is at the University of Michigan. It holds 2 Corinthians 11:33 to 12:9. The first line tells how Paul was let down in a basket through the wall. Further down you can read to the third heaven, 12:2, and into paradise, 12:4. Near the bottom it says a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, 12:7.

THE BOOK IT COMES FROM. The whole book once had about 104 sheets, each written on both sides, and 86 survive, split between Dublin, Ireland, and Michigan. See the 1 Corinthians title page, p. -, for how it was found.

WHY IT MATTERS. This copy was made only about 150 years after Paul wrote. Apart from small spelling and word order differences, it says what our Bibles say today.

Historical Setting

After 1 Corinthians, things got worse before they got better. Paul made a quick painful visit to Corinth, 2:1, and someone there insulted him. He went back to Ephesus and wrote a letter through many tears, 2:4, and sent Titus to deliver it. Then Paul waited and worried. He left Ephesus after a riot, Acts 19 to 20, crossed to Macedonia, and finally Titus arrived with good news. Most of the church had turned around. But a new group of traveling preachers had shown up, calling themselves super apostles and making fun of Paul.

What Was Going Wrong

FAKE SUPER APOSTLES. Smooth talking teachers preached a different Jesus and charged for it, 11:4 to 5 and 11:20.

DOUBTING PAUL. Some said his letters were strong but he was weak in person, 10:10.

SLOW TO FORGIVE. The man they disciplined had repented, but they had not welcomed him back, 2:6 to 8.

AN UNFINISHED OFFERING. They promised to give to the poor in Jerusalem a year ago and never finished, 8:10 to 11.

SIN NOT DEALT WITH. Some had still not turned from sexual sin, 12:21.

The Idiot Proof Summary

2 Corinthians is Paul letting you see his heart. He has been insulted, doubted and nearly killed, but he still loves this church. He shows that real ministry looks less like a celebrity and more like a cracked clay pot with a light inside. God's comfort is real, His promises are yes, and His power shows up best when we are weak. If you have ever felt like a failure in God's work, this letter is for you.

2 Corinthians at a Glance

CH 1 to 7	PAUL OPENS HIS HEART Comfort, the tearful letter, jars of clay and a new creation.
CH 8 to 9	THE OFFERING Give generously and cheerfully, like Jesus gave.
CH 10 to 13	PAUL DEFENDS HIMSELF Fake apostles, his real resume and strength in weakness.

Where Jesus Shows Up

2 CORINTHIANS 1:20 All of God's promises are Yes in Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:6 God made His light shine in our hearts to show the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf. Fulfills Isaiah 53:5.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:9 Though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

What to Watch for in 2 Corinthians

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES	5:18-21, 6:2, 6:16
END TIMES PROPHECIES	5:10
THE HEART	3:3, 4:6, 9:7

MIRACLES	12:1-4, 12:12
DEMONIC	4:4, 11:14, 12:7
NOTABLE	1:21-22, 3:17, 4:16-18, 5:8, 5:17, 11:23-28, 12:9-10 and 1 more
JESUS SPEAKING	Words in red are Jesus speaking, or God the Father speaking from heaven.

Cool Stuff Most People Miss

THE BASKET ESCAPE

Paul's greatest brag is not a miracle. It is being let down in a basket through a window in the Damascus wall to escape a king's governor, 11:32 to 33.

WHAT DID PAUL LOOK LIKE?

Paul admits people said he was unimpressive in person, 10:10. A story written about AD 170, the Acts of Paul and Thecla, describes him as short and bald with bowed legs, eye-brows that met and a hooked nose, but full of grace. It is a legend, not Scripture, but it fits.

A HILARIOUS GIVER

God loves a cheerful giver, 9:7. The Greek word for cheerful is hilaros, where we get the word hilarious.

FOUR LETTERS, TWO SURVIVE

Paul wrote at least four letters to Corinth: a first one that is lost, 1 Corinthians 5:9, then 1 Corinthians, then the tearful letter, 2:4, then this one. Unless the tearful letter is hiding inside chapters 10 to 13, two of them are gone.

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

An ambassador lives in a foreign country but speaks for his own king. Paul says that is every believer, 5:20: God making His appeal through us.

THE TRINITY BLESSING

The last verse, 13:14, names the Lord Jesus Christ, God and the Holy Spirit together. Churches still close services with it today.

Did Anybody Listen?

Yes. Paul came to Corinth for his third visit and stayed about three months, Acts 20:2 to 3. While he was there he wrote Romans, and in it he says the believers of Achaia were pleased to give to the poor in Jerusalem, Romans 15:26. The offering got finished. The church that fought Paul ended up funding his mission and sending the letter that changed the world.

NOTABLE

1

CHAPTER 1 IN 30 SECONDS

Paul opens with comfort. The God of all comfort comforts us so we can comfort others. In Asia, Paul was under so much pressure he thought he would die. Some in Corinth called him unreliable for changing his travel plans. Paul says God's promises are always yes in Christ.

PAUL GREETES THE CORINTHIANS // ACTS 18:1-11; 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-3

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God in Corinth, together with all the saints throughout Achaia:

²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. ⁵For just as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.

⁶If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which accomplishes in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we experience. ⁷And our hope for you is sure, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you will share in our comfort.

⁸We do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the hardships we encountered in the province of Asia. We were under a burden far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹Indeed, we felt we were under the sentence of death, in order that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God, who raises the dead.

¹⁰He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and He will deliver us. In Him we have placed our hope that He will yet again deliver us, ¹¹as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on

our behalf for the favor shown us in answer to their prayers.

PAUL'S CHANGE OF PLANS

¹²For this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in relation to you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God—not in worldly wisdom, but in the grace of God. ¹³For we do not write you anything that is beyond your ability to read and understand. And I hope that you will understand us completely, ¹⁴as you have already understood us in part, that you may boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of our Lord Jesus.

¹⁵Confident of this, I planned to visit you first, so that you might receive a double blessing. ¹⁶I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to return to you from Macedonia, and then to have you help me on my way to Judea.

¹⁷When I planned this, did I do it carelessly? Or do I make my plans by human standards, so as to say "Yes, yes" and also "No, no"? ¹⁸But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." ¹⁹For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was proclaimed among you by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in Him it has always been "Yes." ²⁰For all the promises of God are "Yes" in Christ. And so through Him, our "Amen" is spoken to the glory of God.

²¹Now it is God who establishes both us and you in Christ. He anointed us, ²²placed His seal on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a pledge of what is to come.

²³I call God as my witness that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth. ²⁴Not that we lord it over your faith, but we are fellow workers with you for your joy, because it is by faith that you stand firm.

■ 2CO 1:21 [NOTABLE] God's threefold action on believers: established, anointed, sealed — the Spirit as guarantee

2

CHAPTER 2 IN 30 SECONDS

Paul skipped a visit to spare them another painful one and wrote a letter through many tears instead. The man the church disciplined has turned around, so forgive him and love him again. Do not let Satan outsmart you. Paul says God leads us in Christ's victory parade.

REAFFIRM YOUR LOVE

¹So I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you. ²For if I grieve you, who is left to cheer me but those whom I have grieved? ³I wrote as I did so that on my arrival I would not be grieved by those who ought to make me rejoice. I had confidence in all of you, that you would share my joy. ⁴For through many tears I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart, not to grieve you but to let you know how much I love you.

⁵Now if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me but all of you—to some degree, not to overstate it. ⁶The punishment imposed on him by the majority is sufficient for him. ⁷So instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.

⁹My purpose in writing you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. ¹⁰If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And if I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven it in the presence of Christ for your sake, ¹¹in order that Satan should not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

TRIUMPH IN CHRIST

¹²Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and a door stood open for me in the Lord, ¹³I had no peace in my spirit, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said goodbye to them and went on to Macedonia.

¹⁴But thanks be to God, who always leads us triumphantly as captives in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him. ¹⁵For we are to God the sweet aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. ¹⁶To the one we are an odor that brings death, to the other a fragrance that brings life. And who is qualified for such a task?

FIELD NOTES · ARCHAEOLOGY · CONFIDENCE: HIGH

A ROMAN TRIUMPH

2 CORINTHIANS 2:14 TO 16



Titus rides in his triumph chariot while a winged Victory crowns him. Relief inside the Arch of Titus, Rome.

WHAT IT IS

A marble carving inside the Arch of Titus in Rome. It shows the general Titus riding in a four horse chariot in his triumph, the biggest victory parade Rome could give. A winged figure of Victory holds a crown over his head.

HOW OLD IT IS

The arch was built about AD 81, after Titus died. It honors the triumph he and his father held in AD 71 after destroying Jerusalem. That is about 15 years after Paul wrote, but triumphs had looked like this for centuries.

WHAT A TRIUMPH WAS

When a Roman general won a great war, he paraded through Rome. Soldiers marched, the treasures of the beaten nation were carried along, and prisoners walked in chains. Incense burned all along the route. At the end, some of the captives were put to death.

PAUL'S PICTURE

Thanks be to God, who always leads us

■ **2CO 2:5 [NOTE]** Many believe this is the man from 1 Corinthians 5:1 to 5, put out of the church, now sorry and ready to come home. See the note on 1 Corinthians 5:5, p. —. Others think it is someone who insulted Paul on his painful visit. Either way, church discipline was meant to bring him back, and Paul says forgive him now.

■ **2CO 2:14 [FIELD NOTES]** See A Roman Triumph Field Notes page.

THE HEART | NOTABLE

triumphantly as captives in Christ, 2:14. Jesus is the winning King, and Paul pictures himself as a captive happily marching in His parade. The incense smell meant celebration to the winners and death to the captives. Paul says we are the smell of life to some and death to others, 2:15 to 16.

WHERE IT IS TODAY

At the east end of the Roman Forum in Rome, Italy. The other side of the arch shows soldiers carrying the golden lampstand from the temple in Jerusalem.

WHAT IT CONFIRMS

Paul's readers lived in a Roman colony. They knew exactly what a triumph looked and smelled like.

WHAT IT DOES NOT PROVE

This arch is later than Paul's letter. It shows the kind of parade he meant, not one he saw.

¹⁷ For we are not like so many others, who peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as men sent from God.

3

CHAPTER 3 IN 30 SECONDS

Paul does not need letters of recommendation. The Corinthians are his letter, written on hearts by the Spirit. The old covenant came with a glory so bright Moses wore a veil. The new one is even brighter. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

MINISTERS OF A NEW COVENANT

¹ Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? ² You yourselves are our letter, inscribed on our hearts, known and read by everyone. ³ It is clear that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

⁴ Such confidence before God is ours through Christ. ⁵ Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim that anything

comes from us, but our competence comes from God. ⁶ And He has qualified us as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

THE GLORY OF THE NEW COVENANT // EXODUS 34:10-35

⁷ Now if the ministry of death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at the face of Moses because of its fleeting glory, ⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? ⁹ For if the ministry of condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry of righteousness! ¹⁰ Indeed, what was once glorious has no glory now in comparison to the glory that surpasses it. ¹¹ For if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which endures!

¹² Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. ¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at the end of what was fading away.

¹⁴ But their minds were closed. For to this day the same veil remains at the reading of the old covenant. It has not been lifted, because only in Christ can it be removed.

¹⁵ And even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into His image with intensifying glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

■ 2CO 3:16 [ALLUDES TO] Refers to ← EX 34:34 p.~

■ 2CO 3:17 [NOTABLE] Freedom here is not doing whatever you want. It is freedom from the veil, 3:16, from fear and from trying to earn God's love by keeping rules. When the Spirit is in charge, you are free to see Jesus clearly and become more like Him, 3:18.

■ 2CO 3:3 [HEART] You are a letter from Christ, written on hearts of flesh, not stone.

THE HEART DEMONIC OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW NOTABLE

4

CHAPTER 4 IN 30 SECONDS

Satan has blinded people to the gospel, but God makes His light shine in our hearts. We carry this treasure in jars of clay. Pressed on every side but not crushed. Struck down but not destroyed. Our outer self is wasting away, but our inner self is renewed every day.

THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL

¹Therefore, since God in His mercy has given us this ministry, we do not lose heart. ²Instead, we have renounced secret and shameful ways. We do not practice deceit, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by open proclamation of the truth, we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. ³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

⁴The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For we do not proclaim ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

TREASURE IN JARS OF CLAY // ROMANS 6:1-14

⁷Now we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this surpassingly great power is from God and not from us. ⁸We are hard pressed on all sides, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.

¹⁰We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹For we who are alive are always consigned to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our mortal

body. ¹²So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

¹³And in keeping with what is written, "I believed, therefore I have spoken," we who have the same spirit of faith also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴knowing that the One who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in His presence. ¹⁵All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is extending to more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow, to the glory of God.

¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, yet our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory that is far beyond comparison. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

5

CHAPTER 5 IN 30 SECONDS

Our bodies are like tents. Someday God will give us a building that lasts forever. To be away from the body is to be at home with the Lord. Anyone in Christ is a new creation. God made Jesus, who knew no sin, to be sin for us. We are ambassadors for Christ.

OUR ETERNAL DWELLING // ROMANS 8:18-27

¹For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is dismantled, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. ²For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, ³because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. ⁴For while we are in this tent, we groan under our burdens, because we do not wish to be unclothed but clothed, so that our mortality may be swallowed up by life. ⁵And it is God who has prepared us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a pledge of what is to come.

■ 2CO 4:4 [DEMONIC] The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers

■ 2CO 4:6 [HEART] God made His light shine in our hearts to show the glory of Christ.

■ 2CO 4:6 [ALLUDES TO] Refers to ← GEN 1:3 p.--

■ 2CO 4:7 [FIELD NOTES] See the Jars of Clay Field Notes page.

■ 2CO 4:13 [QUOTES] Direct ← PS 116:10 p.--

■ 2CO 4:16 [NOTABLE] Paul was beaten, hungry and getting older, and he called it light and momentary. He was not pretending the pain was small. He was comparing it to forever. What you see is temporary. What you cannot see yet lasts.

END TIMES PROPHECIES | NOTABLE

FIELD NOTES · ARCHAEOLOGY · CONFIDENCE: HIGH FOR THE LAMP · THE LINK IS A WORD PICTURE

JARS OF CLAY

2 CORINTHIANS 4:6 TO 7



A clay oil lamp with two fish on top, in the museum at Ancient Corinth. Photo Zde, CC BY SA 4.0.

WHAT IT IS

A small oil lamp made of baked clay, found at Corinth. You filled it with olive oil, put a wick in the hole at the front, and it gave light. Corinth made huge numbers of cheap clay lamps and pots.

HOW OLD IT IS

It was probably made in Roman times, in the first centuries AD. The museum does not give an exact date.

WHY CLAY

Clay was cheap and broke easily. A cracked pot was thrown away. Yet people often hid their most valuable things in plain clay jars. Jeremiah put a land deed in a clay jar so it would last, Jeremiah 32:14, and the Dead Sea Scrolls survived 2,000 years in clay jars.

PAUL'S PICTURE

The treasure is the light of the gospel that God made shine in our hearts, 4:6. We are the cheap clay jars, so everyone can see the power comes from God and not from us, 4:7. Many preachers also think of Gideon's men, who hid torches in clay jars and broke them so the light blazed out, Judges 7:19 to 20.

WHAT IT CONFIRMS

Clay lamps and jars were everywhere in Paul's Corinth, the cheapest things in the house.

WHAT IT DOES NOT PROVE

Fish later became a Christian symbol, but this lamp is not Christian. Fish were a common decoration.

⁶ Therefore we are always confident, although we know that while we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord. ⁷ For we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸ **We are confident, then, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.** ⁹ So we aspire to please Him, whether we are at home in this body or away from it. ¹⁰ **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive his due for the things done in the body, whether good or bad.**

■ **2CO 5:8 [NOTABLE]** For a believer, death is not the end of the story. To be away from the body is to be at home with the Lord. Paul says the same in Philippians 1:23: to depart and be with Christ is far better.

■ **2CO 5:10 [PROPHECY]** We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

¹¹ Therefore, since we know what it means to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is clear to God, and I hope it is clear to your conscience as well. ¹² We are not commending ourselves to you again. Instead, we are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you can answer those who take pride in appearances rather than in the heart.

¹³ If we are out of our mind, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. ¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are

things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad → STILL TO COME

■ **2CO 5:10 [FIELD NOTES]** The judgment seat is the Greek word bema, the same raised platform in the forum of Corinth where Paul stood before Gallio, Acts 18:12. Every Corinthian had seen it. See the Gallio Field Notes page in Acts, p. 3.

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW

NOTABLE

convinced that One died for all, therefore all died. ¹⁵ And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and was raised again.

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one according to the flesh. Although we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come!

¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's trespasses against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

²⁰ Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

6

CHAPTER 6 IN 30 SECONDS

Now is the day of salvation. Paul lists everything he went through to serve them: beatings, prison, sleepless nights and hunger. He opened his heart wide and asks them to do the same. Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. You are the temple of the living God.

PAUL'S HARDSHIPS AND GOD'S GRACE

¹ As God's fellow workers, then, we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. ² For He says:

"In the time of favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you."

Behold, now is the time of favor; now is the day of salvation!

³ We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no one can discredit our ministry.

⁴ Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships, and calamities; ⁵ in beatings, imprisonments, and riots; in labor, sleepless nights, and hunger; ⁶ in purity, knowledge, patience, and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; ⁷ in truthful speech and in the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; ⁸ through glory and dishonor, slander and praise; viewed as imposters, yet genuine; ⁹ unknown, yet well-known; dying, and yet we live on; punished, yet not killed; ¹⁰ sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

¹¹ We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians. Our hearts are open wide. ¹² It is not our affection, but yours, that is restrained.

¹³ As a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also.

DO NOT BE UNEQUALLY YOKED

¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership can righteousness have with wickedness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?

¹⁵ What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ What agreement can exist between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

"I will dwell with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people."

■ 2CO 5:17 [NOTABLE] Not a cleaned up version of the old you. A brand new creation. The old has passed away, so your past does not get the final word.

■ 2CO 5:18 [FULFILLS] To make reconciliation for iniquity ← DAN 9:24b p.~

■ 2CO 5:21 [FULFILLS] Wounded for our transgressions and 2 more ← IS 53:5a; JER 23:5-6; ZECH 3:4 p.~

■ 2CO 5:21 [NOTE] THE GREAT EXCHANGE. Jesus took our sin, and we get His righteousness. Martin Luther called this the happy exchange: Christ takes on everything bad that belongs to us, and we receive everything good that belongs to Him. It is the whole gospel in one verse.

■ 2CO 6:2 [FULFILLS] God would help His Servant in the day of salvation ← IS 49:8 · MEDIUM p.~

■ 2CO 6:14 [NOTE] UNEQUALLY YOKED. A yoke joins two animals to pull together. The law said not to plow with an ox and a donkey together, Deuteronomy 22:10, because they pull differently. Most churches apply this first to marriage: a believer should marry a believer. But Paul's own examples are idols and partnerships of every kind, 6:15 to 16. It does not mean cut off unbelievers. Paul says the opposite in 1 Corinthians 5:10.

■ 2CO 6:16 [DEMONIC] The temple of God has no agreement with idols

OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW

¹⁷ “Therefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord.

Touch no unclean thing,
and I will receive you.”

¹⁸ And:

“I will be a Father to you,
and you will be My sons and daughters,
says the Lord Almighty.”

7

CHAPTER 7 IN 30 SECONDS

Paul was worried sick in Macedonia until Titus showed up with good news. The tearful letter worked. The church was sorry and made things right. Paul says godly sorrow leads to real change, but worldly sorrow only leads to death. He is proud of them again.

PAUL'S JOY IN THE CORINTHIANS

¹ Therefore, beloved, since we have these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that defiles body and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

² Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. ³ I do not say this to condemn you. I have said before that you so occupy our hearts that we live and die together with you. ⁴ Great is my confidence in you; great is my pride in you; I am filled with encouragement; in all our troubles my joy overflows.

⁵ For when we arrived in Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were pressed from every direction—conflicts on the outside, fears within. ⁶ But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the arrival of Titus, ⁷ and not only by his arrival, but also by the comfort he had received from you. He told us about your longing, your mourning, and your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced all the more.

⁸ Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Although I did regret it—for I see that my letter caused you sorrow, but only for a short time—⁹ yet now I

■ 2CO 6:16 [FULFILLS] God would walk among His people and be their God ← LEV 26:12 p.-

■ 2CO 6:16 [FULFILLS] My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God and they My people ← EZK 37:27 · MEDIUM p.-

■ 2CO 6:17 [QUOTES] Direct ← IS 52:11 p.-

■ 2CO 6:18 [QUOTES] Direct ← 2SA 7:14; IS 43:6 p.-

rejoice, not because you were made sorrowful, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you felt the sorrow that God had intended, and so were not harmed in any way by us. ¹⁰ Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

¹¹ Consider what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what zeal, what vindication! In every way you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. ¹² So even though I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did wrong or the one who was harmed, but rather that your earnestness on our behalf would be made clear to you in the sight of God. ¹³ On account of this, we are encouraged.

In addition to our own encouragement, we were even more delighted by the joy of Titus. For his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. ¹⁴ Indeed, I was not embarrassed by anything I had boasted to him about you. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting to Titus has proved to be true as well. ¹⁵ And his affection for you is even greater when he remembers that you were all obedient as you welcomed him with fear and trembling. ¹⁶ I rejoice that I can have complete confidence in you.

8

CHAPTER 8 IN 30 SECONDS

The churches of Macedonia were poor and suffering, yet they begged to give to the poor believers in Jerusalem. Paul asks Corinth to finish the offering they started a year ago. Jesus was rich but became poor for us. Titus and two trusted brothers will handle the money honestly.

GENEROSITY COMMENDED // PHILIPPIANS 4:10-20

¹ Now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the churches of Macedonia. ² In the terrible

■ 2CO 8:1 [NOTE] GIVING. Paul never mentions a tithe in these two chapters. He points to Jesus, who became poor for us, 8:9. New Testament giving is cheerful, by choice, from the heart and aimed at real needs, 9:7. Many

OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW

ordeal they suffered, their abundant joy and deep poverty overflowed into rich generosity. ³For I testify that they gave according to their ability and even beyond it. Of their own accord, ⁴they earnestly pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. ⁵And not only did they do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us, through the will of God.

⁶So we urged Titus to help complete your act of grace, just as he had started it. ⁷But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness, and in the love we inspired in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. ⁸I am not giving a command, but I am testing the sincerity of your love through the earnestness of others.

⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich. ¹⁰And this is my opinion about what is helpful for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give, but even to have such a desire. ¹¹Now finish the work, so that you may complete it with the same eager desire, according to your means. ¹²For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

¹³It is not our intention that others may be relieved while you are burdened, but that there may be equality. ¹⁴At the present time, your surplus will meet their need, so that in turn their surplus will meet your need. This way there will be equality. ¹⁵As it is written:

*“He who gathered much had no excess,
and he who gathered little had no shortfall.”*

TITUS COMMENDED // TITUS 1:1–4

¹⁶But thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same devotion I have for you. ¹⁷For not only did he welcome our

appeal, but he is eagerly coming to you of his own volition.

¹⁸Along with Titus we are sending the brother who is praised by all the churches for his work in the gospel. ¹⁹More than that, this brother was chosen by the churches to accompany us with the gracious offering we administer to honor the Lord Himself and to show our eagerness to help.

²⁰We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this generous gift. ²¹*For we are taking great care to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord, but also in the eyes of men.*

²²And we are sending along with them our brother who has proven his earnestness to us many times and in many ways, and now even more so by his great confidence in you. ²³As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you. As for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. ²⁴In full view of the churches, then, show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our boasting about you.

9

CHAPTER 9 IN 30 SECONDS

Paul does not want to be embarrassed when he brings friends from Macedonia, so have the gift ready. Whoever sows little reaps little. Whoever sows generously reaps generously. Give what you decided in your heart, because God loves a cheerful giver. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.

GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER // 1 CORINTHIANS 16:1–4

¹Now about the service to the saints, there is no need for me to write to you. ²For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting to the Macedonians that since last year you in Achaia were prepared to give. And your zeal has stirred most of them to do likewise.

³But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove empty, but that you will be prepared, just as I said. ⁴Otherwise, if

churches still teach the tithe from Malachi 3:10 as a good place to start.

■ 2CO 8:15 [QUOTES] Direct ← EX 16:18 p.~

■ 2CO 8:21 [QUOTES] Quotes ← PROV 3:4 p.~

THE HEART OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW

any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—to say nothing of you—would be ashamed of having been so confident. ⁵ So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you beforehand and make arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. This way, your gift will be prepared generously and not be grudgingly.

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not out of regret or compulsion. For God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written:

*“He has scattered abroad His gifts to the poor;
His righteousness endures forever.”*

¹⁰ Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your store of seed and will increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way to be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will produce thanksgiving to God. ¹² For this ministry of service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanksgiving to God.

¹³ Because of the proof this ministry provides, the saints will glorify God for your obedient confession of the gospel of Christ, and for the generosity of your contribution to them and to all the others. ¹⁴ And their prayers for you will express their affection for you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

10

CHAPTER 10 IN 30 SECONDS

Now the tone changes. Some say Paul is bold in his letters but weak in person. Paul says our weapons are not worldly. They tear down strongholds and take every thought captive to obey Christ. He will not compare himself with people who measure themselves by themselves.

PAUL'S APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

¹ Now by the mildness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am humble when face to face with you, but bold when away. ² I beg you that when I come I may not need to be as bold as I expect toward those who presume that we live according to the flesh.

³ For though we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh. ⁴ The weapons of our warfare are not the weapons of the flesh. Instead, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every presumption set up against the knowledge of God; and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. ⁶ And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, as soon as your obedience is complete.

⁷ You are looking at outward appearances. If anyone is confident that he belongs to Christ, he should remind himself that we belong to Christ just as much as he does.

⁸ For even if I boast somewhat excessively about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than tearing you down, I will not be ashamed.

⁹ I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you by my letters. ¹⁰ For some say, “His letters are weighty and forceful, but his physical presence is unimpressive, and his speaking is of no account.” ¹¹ Such people should consider that what we are in our letters when absent, we will be in our actions when present.

■ 2CO 9:7 [HEART] Give what you decided in your heart, not by pressure. God loves a cheerful giver.

■ 2CO 9:7 [NOTE] The Greek word for cheerful is *hilaros*, where we get the word *hilarious*.

■ 2CO 9:9 [QUOTES] Direct ← PS 112:9 p.–

■ 2CO 10:1 [TEXT] The tone changes sharply here. Every old copy has 2 Corinthians as one letter, and many read it that way: Paul finished thanking the church and then turned to the troublemakers. Many scholars think chapters 10 to 13 were a separate letter, maybe the tearful letter of 2:4, joined to the others later.

DEMONIC OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW

¹² We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they show their ignorance. ¹³ We, however, will not boast beyond our limits, but only within the field of influence that God has assigned to us—a field that reaches even to you. ¹⁴ We are not overstepping our bounds, as if we had not come to you. Indeed, we were the first to reach you with the gospel of Christ.

¹⁵ Neither do we boast beyond our limits in the labors of others. But we hope that as your faith increases, our area of influence among you will greatly increase as well, ¹⁶ so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. Then we will not be boasting in the work already done in another man's territory.

¹⁷ Rather, *"Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."* ¹⁸ For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

11

CHAPTER 11 IN 30 SECONDS

Paul is jealous for them with a godly jealousy. Fake super apostles are preaching a different Jesus. Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. So Paul plays the fool and brags about his real resume: beatings, shipwrecks, hunger, cold, and once escaping Damascus in a basket.

PAUL AND THE FALSE APOSTLES

¹ I hope you will put up with a little of my foolishness, but you are already doing that. ² I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. For I promised you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

³ I am afraid, however, that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may be led astray from your simple and pure devotion to Christ. ⁴ For if someone comes and proclaims a Jesus other than the One we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit than the One you received, or a different gospel than the

one you accepted, you put up with it very easily.

⁵ I consider myself in no way inferior to those "super-apostles." ⁶ Although I am not a polished speaker, I am certainly not lacking in knowledge. We have made this clear to you in every way possible.

⁷ Was it a sin for me to humble myself in order to exalt you, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? ⁸ I robbed other churches by accepting their support in order to serve you. ⁹ And when I was with you and in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my needs. I have refrained from being a burden to you in any way, and I will continue to do so. ¹⁰ As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. ¹¹ Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

¹² But I will keep on doing what I am doing, in order to undercut those who want an opportunity to be regarded as our equals in the things of which they boast. ¹³ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. ¹⁵ It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their actions.

■ 2CO 11:4 [NOTE] A different Jesus. Not every preacher who says Jesus means the Jesus of the Bible. Keep this verse in mind for 11:14.

■ 2CO 11:14 [DEMONIC] Satan disguises himself as an angel of light

■ 2CO 11:14 [THE BIG QUESTION] See the Angel of Light page.

NOTABLE

THE BIG QUESTION

ANGEL OF LIGHT?

2 CORINTHIANS 11:4 · 11:13 TO 15 · GALATIANS 1:8 · 1

JOHN 4:1 TO 3

WHAT PAUL MEANT

The fake apostles in Corinth looked impressive and sounded spiritual. Paul says that should not surprise anyone, because Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light, 11:14. The enemy rarely shows up with horns. He shows up looking bright, kind and holy, with a message that sounds almost right but brings a different Jesus, 11:4.

TEST THE MESSAGE, NOT THE GLOW

Paul wrote: even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be under a curse, Galatians 1:8. John gave the test: do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 1 John 4:1 to 3. The question is never how bright the messenger looks. The question is what it says about Jesus.

THE CAVE OF HIRA

Islamic tradition says that in AD 610, Muhammad, a merchant from Mecca about 40 years old, went to pray alone in a cave on Mount Hira. A being appeared, later identified as the angel Gabriel, squeezed him tightly and commanded, Recite! The words he received became the start of the Quran. Over the next 23 years Muhammad said he received the rest the same way. Today almost two billion Muslims believe it was the true Gabriel.

HIS OWN FIRST REACTION

Islam's own early writings say Muhammad ran home shaking and said, Cover me! He was afraid something was wrong with him. One early biography says he feared he had been possessed. His wife Khadijah comforted him, and her Christian cousin Waraqa said it was the same messenger who came to Moses. Muslims see this fear as the humble reaction of a true prophet.

WHAT THE MESSAGE SAYS ABOUT JESUS

The Quran honors Jesus. It calls Him the Messiah, says He was born of the virgin

Mary, did miracles and will come back. Mary is named more times in the Quran than in the whole New Testament. But the Quran also says Jesus is not God's Son and that He was not killed on a cross, Quran 4:157 and 4:171. The Bible says the cross and the empty tomb are the gospel itself, 1 Corinthians 15:3 to 4. By the test of Galatians 1:8 and 1 John 4, that is why Christians cannot accept the message from the cave as coming from the God of the Bible, however bright the messenger seemed.

ABOUT OUR MUSLIM NEIGHBORS

This is about a message, not about people. Most Muslims are sincere people who pray, fast, give to the poor and love God as they know Him. Many have more discipline in prayer than many Christians. Love them, be a good friend and talk about Jesus with respect. Many former Muslims say they came to faith after Jesus appeared to them in a dream.

THE SAME TEST FOR EVERYONE

This test is not only for other religions. It applies to every vision, angel visit, prophecy and preacher, including Christians today. If a message points away from the Jesus who died for our sins and rose again, the glow does not matter.

PAUL'S SUFFERING AND SERVICE // COLOSSIANS 1:24-29

¹⁶ I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then receive me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little. ¹⁷ In this confident boasting of mine, I am not speaking as the Lord would, but as a fool. ¹⁸ Since many are boasting according to the flesh, I too will boast. ¹⁹ For you gladly put up with fools, since you are so wise. ²⁰ In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or exalts himself or strikes you in the face. ²¹ To my shame I concede that we were too weak for that! Speaking as a fool, however, I can match what anyone else dares to boast about. ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of

NOTABLE

Christ? (I am speaking as if I were out of my mind.) I am so much more: in harder labor, in more imprisonments, in worse beatings, in frequent danger of death. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked. I spent a night and a day in the open sea.

²⁶ In my frequent journeys, I have been in danger from rivers and from bandits, in danger from my countrymen and from the Gentiles, in danger in the city and in the country, in danger on the sea and among false brothers, ²⁷ in labor and toil and often without sleep, in hunger and thirst and often without food, in cold and exposure.

²⁸ Apart from these external trials, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not burn with grief?

³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. ³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is forever worthy of praise, knows that I am not lying. ³² In Damascus, the governor under King Aretas secured the city of the Damascus in order to arrest me. ³³ But I was lowered in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his grasp.

■ **2CO 11:23 [NOTABLE]** The fake super apostles bragged about their credentials, so Paul lists his: forty lashes minus one five times, beaten with rods three times, stoned once, shipwrecked three times, a night and a day in the open sea. Forty minus one was a Jewish rule to make sure a whipping never went past the limit in Deuteronomy 25:3. Then the hardest part of all: daily worry for all the churches.

■ **2CO 11:32 [FIELD NOTES]** See the King Aretas IV Field Notes page.

DEBATED FIELD NOTES · ARCHAEOLOGY · CONFIDENCE: HIGH FOR THE KING · DEBATED FOR DAMASCUS

KING ARETAS IV

2 CORINTHIANS 11:32 TO 33 · ACTS 9:23 TO 25



A silver coin of King Aretas IV of the Nabateans, AD 21, front and back. The back honors his queen Shagilat. Photo Classical Numismatic Group, CC BY SA 3.0.

WHAT IT IS

A silver coin of Aretas IV, king of the Nabateans, the Arab kingdom whose capital was Petra, the famous city carved in rock in Jordan. Thousands of his coins have been found.

HOW OLD IT IS

This coin was made in AD 21. Aretas ruled from about 9 BC to AD 40, so he was king during the whole life of Jesus and the first years of the church.

THE STORY

Paul says the governor under King Aretas guarded Damascus to arrest him, and he escaped when friends lowered him in a basket through a window in the wall, 11:32 to 33. Acts 9:23 to 25 tells the same escape. Since Aretas died about AD 40, it happened before then.

JOHN THE BAPTIST'S STORY TOO

Herod Antipas married Aretas's daughter, then divorced her to marry Herodias. John the Baptist said that marriage was wrong and was killed for it, Mark 6:17 to 18. About AD 36, Aretas beat Herod's army in battle. The Jewish historian Josephus says many Jews saw it as God punishing Herod for killing John.

THE PUZZLE

Damascus was a Roman city, so why did an Arab king's governor guard it? Some think Rome let Aretas control it for a few years. Coins of Damascus with Roman emperors stop from about AD 34 to 62. Others think the governor led the Nabatean community and watched the city from outside.

MIRACLES | DEMONIC | NOTABLE | JESUS SPEAKING

WHERE IT IS TODAY

Coins of Aretas IV are in museums and collections around the world. Petra is in southern Jordan.

WHAT IT CONFIRMS

Aretas IV was a real king with power around Damascus in Paul's time, just as Paul says.

12

CHAPTER 12 IN 30 SECONDS

Paul knows a man who was caught up to the third heaven. Then he was given a thorn in the flesh. He begged three times to have it taken away, but the Lord said, My grace is sufficient for you. When I am weak, then I am strong. Paul is coming a third time.

PAUL'S REVELATION

¹I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to gain, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. ²I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of it I do not know, but God knows. ³And I know that this man—whether in the body or out of it I do not know, but God knows—⁴was caught up to Paradise. The things he heard were inexpressible, things that man is not permitted to tell.

PAUL'S THORN AND GOD'S GRACE

⁵I will boast about such a man, but I will not boast about myself, except in my weaknesses. ⁶Even if I wanted to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will credit me with more than he sees in me or hears from me, ⁷or because of these surpassingly great revelations.

So to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸Three times

■ 2CO 12:1 [MIRACLE] Paul caught up to the third heaven; heard inexpressible words

■ 2CO 12:2 [NOTE] THE THIRD HEAVEN. Most agree the man is Paul himself, talking humbly. The first heaven is the sky and the second is the stars. The third heaven is where God lives, which Paul also calls paradise, 12:4, the word Jesus used to the thief on the cross, Luke 23:43. Paul heard things he was not allowed to tell, and he waited fourteen years to mention it.

■ 2CO 12:7 [DEMONIC] A thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan

I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest on me. ¹⁰That is why, for the sake of Christ, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

PAUL'S CONCERN FOR THE CORINTHIANS

¹¹I have become a fool, but you drove me to it. In fact, you should have commended me, since I am in no way inferior to those "super-apostles," even though I am nothing. ¹²The marks of a true apostle—signs, wonders, and miracles—were performed among you with great perseverance. ¹³In what way were you inferior to the other churches, except that I was not a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong!

¹⁴See, I am ready to come to you a third time, and I will not be a burden, because I am not seeking your possessions, but you. For children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. ¹⁵And for the sake of your souls, I will most gladly spend my money and myself. If I love you more, will you love me less?

¹⁶Be that as it may, I was not a burden to you; but crafty as I am, I caught you by trickery. ¹⁷Did I exploit you by anyone I sent you? ¹⁸I urged Titus to visit you, and I sent our brother with him. Did Titus exploit

■ 2CO 12:7 [NOTE] THE THORN. Paul never says what it was. Some think it was an eye problem, because he wrote with large letters and said the Galatians would have given him their eyes, Galatians 4:15 and 6:11. Some think it was another sickness or the people who attacked him everywhere he went. Others take messenger of Satan literally, a demon harassing him. The point is 12:9: God's grace was enough.

■ 2CO 12:9 [NOTABLE] STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS. Paul is not saying weakness is good. He begged God three times to take the thorn away, 12:8. He is saying God's power shows up best right where ours runs out, so Christ gets the credit. The fake super apostles bragged about their strengths. Paul bragged about his weaknesses, and that left them nothing to attack. Think of the last rap battle in the movie 8 Mile. B-Rabbit, Eminem's character, says every embarrassing thing about himself before his opponent can, and the other guy has nothing left to say. Pride can't do that. Only a humble person can admit weakness out loud, and that is when the power of Christ rests on him.

■ 2CO 12:12 [MIRACLE] The marks of an apostle: signs, wonders and miracles

OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW **NOTABLE**

you in any way? Did we not walk in the same Spirit and follow in the same footsteps?

¹⁹ Have you been thinking all along that we were making a defense to you? We speak before God in Christ, and all of this, beloved, is to build you up. ²⁰ For I am afraid that when I come, I may not find you as I wish, and you may not find me as you wish. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, rage, rivalry, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder. ²¹ I am afraid that when I come again, my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of their acts of impurity, sexual immorality, and debauchery.

13

CHAPTER 13 IN 30 SECONDS

Paul warns he will not go easy when he comes. Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith. He would rather be weak than have them fail. Aim for restoration, comfort each other and live in peace. He closes with a blessing from the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

EXAMINE YOURSELVES

¹ This is the third time I am coming to you. *“Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”*

² I already warned you the second time I was with you. So now in my absence I warn those who sinned earlier and everyone else: If I return, I will not spare anyone, ³ since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak in dealing with you but is powerful among you. ⁴ For He was indeed crucified in weakness, yet He lives by God's power. For we are also weak in Him, yet by God's power we will live with Him concerning you.

⁵ Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you—unless you fail the test? ⁶ And I hope you will realize that we have not failed the test.

⁷ Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong—not that we will appear

to have stood the test, but that you will do what is right, even if we appear to have failed. ⁸ For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. ⁹ In fact, we rejoice when we are weak but you are strong, and our prayer is for your perfection.

¹⁰ This is why I write these things while absent, so that when I am present I will not need to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.

BENEDICTION AND FAREWELL

¹¹ Finally, brothers, rejoice! Aim for perfect harmony, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

¹² Greet one another with a holy kiss.

¹³ All the saints send you greetings.

¹⁴ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

■ **2CO 13:14 [NOTABLE]** One sentence, three Persons: Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit. The word Trinity is not in the Bible, but verses like this one are why the church believes it. Many churches still end their services with these words.

Corinth: The Whole Story

AD 50 TO 52

Paul arrives, makes tents with Priscilla and Aquila, and plants the church in a year and a half, Acts 18.

ABOUT AD 51

Paul is dragged before the judge Gallio, who throws the case out, Acts 18:12 to 17.

AFTER PAUL LEAVES

He writes a first letter, now lost, 1 Corinthians 5:9.

ABOUT AD 53 TO 55

1 Corinthians, from Ephesus, answering bad reports and their questions.

ABOUT AD 55

A painful visit, then a letter written through many tears, 2 Corinthians 2:1 to 4.

ABOUT AD 55 TO 57

2 Corinthians, from Macedonia, after Titus brings good news.

ABOUT AD 57

Paul's third visit, three months long. He writes Romans from Corinth, Acts 20:2 to 3.

ABOUT AD 96

Clement of Rome writes to Corinth because they are fighting again, and tells them to reread Paul's letter.

What Corinth Teaches Us

GOD USES MESSY CHURCHES. If God did not give up on Corinth, He will not give up on yours.

GIFTS WITHOUT LOVE ARE NOISE. 1 Corinthians 13:1.

DISCIPLINE IS MEANT TO BRING PEOPLE HOME. 1 Corinthians 5:5 and 2 Corinthians 2:7.

GIVE CHEERFULLY. 2 Corinthians 9:7.

GOD'S STRENGTH SHOWS UP IN WEAKNESS. 2 Corinthians 12:9.

IT ALL STANDS ON THE EMPTY TOMB. Christ has indeed been raised, 1 Corinthians 15:20.