

1 Corinthians



2 Corinthians

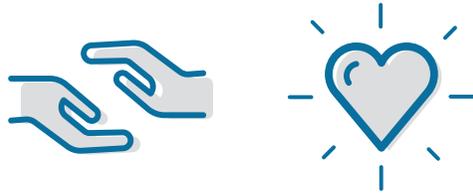


THRUtheBIBLE

NOTES & OUTLINES WITH

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EPISTLES



1 & 2 Corinthians

WRITER: Paul

DATE: A.D. 55-57 (more likely 57)

PLACE: Ephesus

SUBJECT: The Lordship of Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:2, 3, 7-10)

BACKGROUND: Carnal Corinth was the sin center of the Roman Empire in Paul's day. It was labeled "Vanity Fair." Its location was about 40 miles west of Athens on a narrow isthmus between Peloponnesus and the mainland. It was the great commercial center of the Roman Empire with three harbors, of which two were important—Lechaeum, about one and a half miles to the west, and Cenchreae, about eight and a half miles to the east.

196 B.C.

Rome declared it a free city.

146 B.C.

It rebelled and was totally destroyed by Mummius, the consul.

46 B.C.

Julius Caesar rebuilt the city in great elegance, restoring it to its former prominence.

However, even its ruins were lost to history for many years, and a fishing village was built over them. In 1928, an earthquake uncovered them, and now much of the city has been excavated.

The temple of Aphrodite, built on the Acrocorinthus, was attended by 1,000 priestesses of vice, actually nothing more than prostitutes. The city was given over to licentiousness and pleasure. The Isthmian games were conducted here.

Against this corrupt background, Paul preached the gospel in Corinth, founded the church, and wrote two epistles to the church at Corinth: 1 and 2 Corinthians. (Read Acts 18:1-18 for the account of Paul's visit to Corinth.)

1 CORINTHIANS

OUTLINE:

- I. Salutation and thanksgiving, Chapter 1:1-9**
- II. Concerning conditions in the Corinthian church, Chapters 1:10–16:9**
 - A. Concerning DIVISIONS and party spirit, Chapters 1:10–4:21**
 - 1. Centrality of Christ crucified corrects divisions, 1:10-31
 - 2. Clarity of Holy Spirit corrects human wisdom, 2
 - 3. Correct conception of God clarifies Christian service, 3
 - 4. Conditions of Christ's servants constrain Christian conduct, 4
 - B. Concerning SCANDALS in the Corinthian church, Chapters 5, 6**
 - 1. Impurity, 5
 - 2. Lawsuits among members, 6
 - C. Concerning MARRIAGE, Chapter 7**
 - D. Concerning CHRISTIAN LIBERTY, Chapters 8:1 –11:1**
 - 1. Liberty of the minister, 9
 - 2. Liberty is not license, 10:1–11:1
 - E. Concerning WOMAN'S DRESS, Chapter 11:2-16**
 - F. Concerning the LORD'S TABLE, Chapter 11:17-34**

G. Concerning SPIRITUAL GIFTS, Chapters 12–14

1. Endowment of gifts, 12
 - a. Gifts are given to maintain unity in diversity, vv. 1-11
 - b. Members of human body compared to gifts of Holy Spirit, vv. 12-31
2. Energy of gifts—Love, 13
3. Exercise of gifts, 14
 - a. Gift of prophecy is superior to gift of tongues, vv. 1-22
 - b. Order in local church for exercise of any gift, vv. 23-40

H. Concerning the GOSPEL, Chapter 15

1. Prominence of resurrection in the gospel, vv. 1-4
2. Proofs of resurrection, vv. 5-19
3. Parade of resurrection, vv. 20-28
 - a. Christ, the firstfruits
 - b. Those who are Christ's (the church)
 - c. Old Testament saints, Tribulation saints
 - d. Kingdom set up, Christ reigning
 - e. Death destroyed
 - f. Christ returns to His place in the Trinity
4. Program and pattern of resurrection, vv. 29-50
5. Power of resurrection, vv. 51-58
- I. Concerning COLLECTIONS, Chapter 16:1-9

III. Closing exhortations and benediction, Chapter 16:10-24

COMMENT: First Corinthians is obviously Paul’s answer to a previous letter that he had written to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 5:9). They sent a delegation with a letter (1 Corinthians 7:1; 16:17) and 1 Corinthians is Paul’s reply concerning the conditions in the Corinthian church. It is a letter of correction of errors and confirmation of truth.

I. Salutation and thanksgiving, Chapter 1:1-9

In these first nine verses of the introduction, the Lord Jesus Christ is mentioned six times. This is a Christ-centered epistle of which v. 9 is the very heart:

- “God is faithful”—although men, including believers, are not.
- “Ye were called” is the “high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14).
- “Fellowship” (*koinonian*) is one of the most important and versatile words of Christian faith. It means anything that believers share together concerning the things of Christ.

<i>Koinonia</i> is	fellowship—Acts 2:42-44
	contribution—Romans 15:26
	communion (Lord’s Supper)—1 Corinthians 10:16
	partnership—1 Corinthians 1:9

- “His Son”—He is God the Son; here it is His relationship to the Father.
- “Jesus”—His human name.
- “Christ”—His title (Messiah, Anointed).
- “Our Lord”—He is our Lord; this is our relationship to Him.
- “Fellowship”—“Fellowship” (*koinonia*) can also mean “partnership,” which is how I believe it is used here. There is partnership in business, in love, and in marriage. This is a combination of:

- 1 - Mutual concern—Christ is interested in us; we are interested in Him.
- 2 - Mutual commitment—His resources are ours. We are committed to Him; He to us.

3 - Mutual compassion—He accommodates Himself to our weakness. His power is ours.
(This is reflected in Isaiah 63:9, a verse that I believe has been mistranslated. It should be: “In all their affliction He was *not* afflicted.”)

When I am weak and weary, He waits.

When I stumble and fall, He picks me up.

In view of this, all the rest of 1 Corinthians is a parenthesis until we come to 15:58:

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

II. Concerning conditions in the Corinthian church, Chapters 1:10–16:9

A. Concerning DIVISIONS and party spirit, Chapters 1:10–4:21

1. Centrality of Christ crucified corrects divisions, 1:10-31

Divisions were being caused by believers following different leaders of the church. They formed cliques around certain men:

Paul—Proud pupils

Cephas—Chummy cult

Apollos—Adoring admirers

They were exalting the wisdom of the world, which is contrary to the wisdom of God. The gospel of the cross is the wisdom of God. (See author’s booklet, “The Cross Divides Men.”)

“Them who are called” (v. 24) are those Jews who do not find the cross a stumbling block and those Gentiles who do not find it foolishness but see in it the power and wisdom of God. They are “the called” for they hear and respond to the gospel.

Christ is the wisdom of the believer as well as his righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (v. 30).

1 - Positional sanctification (in Christ), vv. 2, 30 (the Corinthians were sanctified)

2 - Practical sanctification (by the Holy Spirit), 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Romans 15:16

3 - Permanent (eternal) sanctification, 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 10:10, 14

2. Clarity of Holy Spirit corrects human wisdom, 2

W. 1-5—Paul’s approach to sophisticated and sinful Corinth is not by the wisdom of the world, but is the unvarnished declaration of Jesus Christ (His person) and Him crucified (His work). See 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. Paul personally is weak and afraid (v. 3). The faith of the Corinthian Christians stands in the power of God (v. 5).

W. 6-8—Paul’s message is the wisdom of God, not the wisdom of the world.

V. 9—Wisdom of the world comes through the eye gate, the ear gate, and through human reasoning (see Isaiah 64:4).

V. 10—The wisdom of God comes through the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

V. 11—No man can understand the things of God until the Holy Spirit teaches him.

V. 12—The believer has the Holy Spirit of God to teach him.

W. 13, 14—The unbeliever is unprepared to receive the things of God, for he does not have the Holy Spirit to teach him. Therefore, his conclusion is that the wisdom of God is foolishness.

V. 15—The spiritual man is in contrast to the natural man. He understands divine truth but is misunderstood by the natural man.

3. Correct conception of God clarifies Christian service, 3

W. 1-10—Carnality of the Corinthian Christians is evident by the divisions among them. Proof of their carnality is “envying, strife and divisions.” Paul designates the human family thus:

1 - Natural man	2 - Believer (“called one”; Christian)
A - Jew	A - Carnal
B - Gentile	B - Spiritual

Paul and Apollos were not divided.

W. 11-23—Conditions on which rewards are given.

V. 11—Salvation is the foundation that is already put down. Therefore, no man can work for salvation.

V. 12—The believer can work for a reward. There are six materials with which he can build on the foundation.

V. 13—Fire tests every man’s work. Gold, silver, and precious stones are purified by fire. Wood, hay, and stubble are consumed by fire.

V. 14—When works survive the fire, rewards are given.

V. 15—When works are consumed by fire, the believer is saved, but he receives no reward.

V. 16-20—The believer’s body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

W. 21-23—All things and all believers are the possession of every other believer. We rob ourselves when we limit ourselves to one individual or a narrow circle.

4. Conditions of Christ’s servants constrain Christian conduct, 4

W. 1-5—Faithfulness is the supreme virtue of a servant. All believers are judged in three courts:

1 - Others (lower court)—my paraphrase of v. 3 is: “But, as a matter of fact, it matters very little to me what you, or any man, thinks of me.”

2 - One’s conscience (higher court)—Paul did not even judge himself, but that did not justify him before God.

3 - One and only Master (supreme court)—see 2 Corinthians 5:10 and Romans 14:12. Believers, as stewards, are judged for faithfulness. Christ will find something to praise in each believer.

W. 6-21—Suffering of apostles is a spectacle to the world and angels, also an incentive to other believers.

Note (v. 17) the personal esteem Paul had for Timothy.

B. Concerning SCANDALS in the Corinthian church, Chapters 5, 6

1. Impurity, 5

V. 1—“Commonly” means “actually; factually” and not a matter of gossip. It was a sordid story of a man who took his father’s wife, his stepmother. The church in Corinth had ignored it and were “puffed up” (v. 2). Paul commands them to do two things:

1 - Deliver the guilty party unto Satan (v. 5). (Job and Peter were delivered over to Satan for different reasons. See also 1 Timothy 1:20.)

2 - Refuse fellowship with the guilty (vv. 11, 13). For the result, see 2 Corinthians 2:4-11; 7:12.

2. Lawsuits among members, 6

V.1–Differences between believers should be settled by other believers. The basis for this is three-fold:

1 - Saints will judge the world (v. 2)

2 - Saints will judge angels (v. 3)

3 - Unrighteousness is not in the kingdom (v. 9)

W. 19, 20–The human body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

C. Concerning MARRIAGE, Chapter 7

V.1–They had written to Paul concerning this problem.

V.2–6–Paul is not commending the single above the married state. In the Roman world, a wife was a chattel, a workhorse. Generally, a man had several wives—one had charge of the kitchen, another of the living area, and perhaps another was in charge of the clothing. The man went to the temple of Aphrodite for sex. Paul says that a man must have one wife whom he loves. Paul lifts the slave state of womanhood to that of a partner with man in love.

V.7–We assume Paul was unmarried.

V.8–However, Paul was not a bachelor; he was a widower. We know that he had been a member of the Sanhedrin (Acts 26:10) and that all members were required to be married. F. W. Farrar writes in his *Life and Work of St. Paul*:

The other question which arises is, Was Saul married? Had he the support of some loving heart during the fiery struggles of his youth? Amid the to-and-fro contentions of spirit which resulted from an imperfect and unsatisfying creed, was there in the troubled sea of his life one little island home where he could find refuge from incessant thoughts? Little as we know of his domestic relations, little as he cared to mingle mere private interests with the great spiritual truths which occupy his soul, it seems to me that we must answer this question in the affirmative.

“A Jew, who has no wife is not a man” (Genesis 5:2, *Yebhamoth*, f. 63, 1).

W.8,9–There is no reason why the unmarried and widowers should not marry. Paul was a widower who had not married again.

W. 10-40—Paul discusses husband-wife relationships. If a husband has an unbelieving wife, or vice versa, and the unbeliever departs, the believer is not bound. Some interpret this as grounds for divorce. It at least is the grounds for a legal separation (v. 15). The ideal and practical is for them to continue living together as man and wife.

W. 20-24—A person is to begin a new life with God the day he is born again. The mistakes and sins of the past are forgiven. If he is divorced, he is the same as an unmarried person. It is best to remain single if the person can be happy in that state.

D. Concerning CHRISTIAN LIBERTY, Chapters 8:1 –11:1

The Bible condemns certain practices as wrong—Proverbs 6:16-19; Galatians 5:19-21. The Bible commends certain practices as right—prayer, teaching, doing good, etc. There is a thin grey line concerning doubtful and questionable practices about which the Bible has nothing to say either way.

CHAPTER 8—The eating of meat was a questionable practice.

V. 1

Knowledge—blows up

Love—builds up

V. 4—Meat offered to idols was repugnant and wrong to a Jew. Meat offered to idols was later placed for sale in heathen temples. In fact, the best meat could be bought there. The Gentile was not offended in eating this meat; the Jew was. Should the Gentile believer serve meat offered to idols to his Jewish guest? The answer is no (v. 13), although there is nothing wrong with meat (vv. 4, 8). The reason: a Christian is motivated by love (vv. 9, 11, 12).

1. Liberty of the minister, 9

W. 1-6—Liberty in personal matters.

W. 7-18—Liberty in public ministry. (Live by the gospel, v. 14.)

W. 19-22—Liberty to become a servant of all. (Relationship to others for the gospel's sake, vv. 20-23.)

W. 23-27—Liberty to strive for a reward. (Running and boxing to receive a crown.)

2. Liberty is not license, 10:1—11:1

W. 1-15—A warning: Israel delivered from bondage (vv. 1-5); Israel abused their liberty (vv. 6-10); Israel is an example for us (vv. 11-15); Israel was redeemed by power at the Red Sea and preserved in the wilderness by miracle, yet they sinned and were destroyed. “Baptized unto Moses” (v. 2) means *identified with Moses*.

W. 16-22—A lesson: The Lord’s table requires strict separation.

W. 23-33—An example: A believer is to be guided in his conduct by the effect it has upon others (cf. 6:12). He is to be guided by three considerations:

1 - His actions should glorify God (v. 31)

2 - His actions should not offend others (v. 32)

3 - His actions should follow Christ (11:1)

E. Concerning WOMAN’S DRESS, Chapter 11:2-16

V. 2—Notice the new approach of Paul—he has had no praise for the Corinthians until this verse, but here it is: “I praise you.”

V. 3—Principle stated: Authority for the sake of order. To eliminate confusion there are three headships:

1 - Head of every man is Christ—normal. Until a man is mastered by Christ, he is not a man.

2 - Head of woman is man. It is normal for woman to respond to man. A woman should not marry a man unless she can look up to him.

3 - Head of Christ is God. Jesus said, “I and the Father are one”—yet in His work of redemption He took a lower place (see Philippians 2:5-8).

W. 4-6—Application of the principle to Corinth. An unveiled woman in Corinth was a prostitute. Your town may be different from Corinth.

W. 7-16—Interpretation of the principle concerning woman’s dress for public ministry. She should never use sex appeal in approaching God (v. 13). Note that it mentions not only woman’s wear, but men’s hair (vv. 7, 14).

F. Concerning the LORD'S TABLE, Chapter 11:17-34

The Lord's Supper is the highest expression and holiest exercise of Christian worship. All four Gospels record in detail the institution of the Lord's Supper.

W. 17-22—The early church enjoyed a meal together before celebrating the Lord's Supper. The meal was called an *agape*, a love feast. Disorders had arisen and now Paul commands that the *agape* be discontinued.

W. 23-26—Paul, not present in the Upper Room, was given these instructions directly. Here is the simplicity, sublimity, and sanity of the Lord's Supper.

W. 27-34—A believer can judge himself in respect to his sins. Failure to do so brings judgment and chastening from the Lord.

G. Concerning SPIRITUAL GIFTS, Chapters 12–14

Problem in Corinth—divisions

Solution—the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:3)

1. Endowment of gifts, 12

a. Gifts are given to maintain unity in diversity, vv. 1-11

V. 1—"Spiritual gifts" is *pneumatikos*, spirituals. The word occurs 26 times in the New Testament; translated "gifts" three times (Romans 1:11; 1 Corinthians 14:1). He turns from carnalities in the first section to spiritualities. Gifts are one of the spiritualities.

V. 3—The lordship of Jesus is the central truth of the Christian life (sovereignty of Jesus Christ—Acts 2:36).

W. 4-6—"Diversities" (*diairesis*) is difference in unity. "Gifts" is a capacity for service; function.

Holy Spirit bestows gifts

Jesus Christ administers gifts (directs)

God the Father supplies power (energizes)

V. 8—"Wisdom" is insight into truth. "Knowledge" is investigation of truth.

V. 9—"Faith" is the "substance of things hoped for" (Hebrews 11:1). "Healing," not by laying on of hands—none of this "if you have faith" business.

V. 10—"Working of miracles" is to do supernatural things. "Prophecy" is declaring the will of Christ. "Discerning of spirits" is distinguishing between false and true. "Tongues" is not unknown tongues (see chapter 14; also author's message, "Talking in Tongues").

b. Members of human body compared to gifts of Holy Spirit, w. 12-31

All function in one body.

V. 12—The church is the body of Christ.

V. 13—The baptism of the Holy Spirit places each believer into the body of Christ to function in a particular fashion.

W. 14-31—There is one body but many members. Members of the body of Christ function in the body of Christ.

2. Energy of gifts—Love, 13

W. 1-3—Preeminence of love—value. All gifts are a string of zeros. Love placed before them is a figure that gives value.

Eloquence	-0	1,000,000
Prophecy	-0	
Knowledge	-0	
Faith	-0	
Sacrifice	-0	
Martyrdom	-0	
Love	-1	

W. 4-7—Prerogative of love—virtue. "Love" is an abstract noun. It must be translated into life and action. Love expresses itself in patience, kindness, absence of envy or boastfulness, etc.

W. 8-13—Permanence of love—victory.

"Love never faileth" (v. 8), negative

"Love abideth" (v. 13), positive

"Prophecies" will be fulfilled; "tongues" will end; "knowledge" progresses (the science of ten years ago is outmoded). "Faith, hope, and love" are the high words of the Christian vocabulary. Love is dominant. Love is superior to all gifts, and all gifts are valueless without love.

This chapter is a biography of Christ.

3. Exercise of gifts, 14

a. Gift of prophecy is superior to gift of tongues, vv. 1-22

V. 1—All gifts are to be exercised in love. The believer should desire spiritual gifts, but especially the gift of prophecy (v. 39; 12:31).

V. 2—Notice that “unknown” is italicized in many Bibles, which means it was not in the original text. There is no such thing as an *unknown* tongue. “Tongues” are existing languages, but unknown to the speaker. The ability to speak in another tongue not previously learned was a phenomenon of the apostolic church.

“This whole passage is very obscure; but the obscurity arises from our ignorance of the facts described, which, though familiar to those to whom the apostle wrote, have ceased to occur.”

—Chrysostom

“Tongues seem to have ceased first of all gifts.”

—Robertson

Jesus never spoke in tongues; the apostles after Pentecost did not speak in tongues. There is no record of Paul speaking in tongues publicly, although he had the gift of tongues (v. 18). Paul, caught up to the third heaven, “heard unspeakable words.”

ONLY THREE GIFTS ARE MENTIONED IN THIS CHAPTER:

1 - prophecy

2 - tongues

3 - interpretation of tongues

Compare 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.

Besides chapters 12—14, there are only four other references to tongues in the Scriptures: Mark 16:17; Acts 2; Acts 10; Acts 19.

V. 5—Paul is attempting to get the Corinthians off “the kick” of speaking in tongues (v. 9). Obviously, he is discouraging the use of tongues. (See author’s message, “Talking in Tongues.”)

b. Order in local church for exercise of any gift, vv. 23-40

Note vv. 26, 33, 40. Women are forbidden to speak in tongues in the local church (v. 34).

H. Concerning the GOSPEL, Chapter 15

1. Prominence of resurrection in the gospel, vv. 1-4

It is part of the *gospel*—in fact, there is no gospel without the resurrection (v. 4). The gospel is not the Sermon on the Mount or the Ten Commandments.

Machen said, “Christianity does not rest on a set of ideas or creeds, but on facts.”

“Ye are saved” (v. 2)—the church is the evidence of the resurrection.

“According to the scriptures” (v. 4)—the resurrection fulfilled Scripture; it was the expectation of the Old Testament.

2. Proofs of resurrection, vv. 5-19

There are witnesses (vv. 5-11): Cephas, the Twelve, over 500, James, all the apostles, Paul.

If Christ were not raised from the dead, certain things would be true which are not true.

3. Parade of resurrection, vv. 20-28

- a. Christ, the firstfruits
- b. Those who are Christ's (the church)
- c. Old Testament saints, Tribulation saints
- d. Kingdom set up, Christ reigning
- e. Death destroyed
- f. Christ returns to His place in the Trinity

4. Program and pattern of resurrection, vv. 29-50

“Baptized” (v. 29) means *identified*. Paul took the place of a dead man in relationship to the world (see Galatians 6:14).

Resurrection refers only to the body (v. 44). In Greek, it is *anastasis nekron*, standing up of the body. The soul cannot stand up.

It is sown a natural [psuchikon] body [soma]; it is raised a spiritual [pneumatikon] body [soma].

It is the body that is carried over in resurrection.

The first heresy in the church was the denial of bodily resurrection. In Paul's day, there were three philosophies:

Stoicism—soul merged into Deity at death; destruction of personality.

Epicureanism—no existence beyond death; materialistic.

Platonism—immortality of the soul; denied bodily resurrection.

5. Power of resurrection, vv. 51-58

V. 51—Not all believers will die.

V. 52—All believers will be changed in less than a moment of time at the Rapture of the church.

W. 53, 54—Believers will receive a new body, not subject to corruption.

V. 55—Death and the grave will no longer triumph over man. Man is the victor, not the victim.

V. 57—Victory comes through Christ.

V. 58—See 1 Corinthians 1:9.

I. Concerning COLLECTIONS, Chapter 16:1-9

V. 2—Collections are to be taken on the first day of the week—"Every first day." How much? "As God hath prospered him."

W. 6, 7—Personal.

W. 8, 9—A great door is open in Ephesus, but there are great adversaries—opportunities and opposition.

III. Closing exhortations and benediction, Chapter 16:10-24

Sundry matters regarding personalities:

W. 10, 11—Receive Timothy.

V. 12—Apollos will come later.

V. 13—Watch and pray.

V. 14—Christian action motivated by love.

W. 21-24—Benediction. "Anathema" is *accursed*. "Maranatha" is *our Lord cometh*.

2 CORINTHIANS

OUTLINE:

I. **COMFORT of God, Chapters 1–7**

(Christian living)

- A. Introduction, Chapter 1:1, 2
- B. God's comfort for life's plans, Chapter 1:3-24
- C. God's comfort in restoring a sinning saint, Chapter 2
- D. God's comfort in the glorious ministry of Christ, Chapter 3
- E. God's comfort in the ministry of suffering for Christ, Chapter 4
- F. God's comfort in the ministry of martyrdom for Christ, Chapter 5
- G. God's comfort in all circumstances of the ministry of Christ, Chapter 6
- H. God's comfort in the heart of Paul, Chapter 7

II. **COLLECTION for poor saints at Jerusalem, Chapters 8, 9**

(Christian giving)

- A. Example of Christian giving, Chapter 8:1-6
- B. Exhortation to Christian giving, Chapter 8:7-15
- C. Explanation of Christian giving, Chapters 8:16–9:5
- D. Encouragement to Christian giving, Chapter 9:6-15

III. **CALLING of the apostle Paul, Chapters 10–13**

(Christian guarding)

- A. Authentication of Paul's apostleship, Chapter 10
- B. Vindication of Paul's apostleship, Chapter 11
- C. Revelation of Paul's apostleship, Chapter 12
- D. Execution of Paul's apostleship, Chapter 13:1-10
- E. Conclusion of Paul's apostleship, Chapter 13:11-14

COMMENT: Shortly after Paul had written 1 Corinthians from Ephesus, where he was in grave danger (2 Corinthians 1:8), he wrote 2 Corinthians from Philippi. Paul was in Ephesus approximately three years. He had sent Titus to Corinth because he could not personally go there at that time. Timothy was with Paul in Ephesus, and these two proceeded to Troas to wait for Titus to bring word from Corinth (2 Corinthians 2:12, 13). When Titus did not come, Paul and Timothy went on to Philippi where Titus brought good news from Corinth (2 Corinthians 7:5-11). Any breach between Paul and the Corinthian church was healed.

This epistle is difficult to outline, as it is less organized than any of Paul's other letters—but it contains more personal details. In each chapter there is always a minor theme developed (which sometimes seems to take the place of the major theme) and generally expressed in some striking verse. This may explain the seeming difficulty in outlining and organizing this epistle. We will note this as we consider each chapter.

First Corinthians deals with conditions and *corrections* in the church. Second Corinthians deals with conditions of the *ministry* within the church.

I. COMFORT of God, Chapters 1–7 *(Christian living)*

A. Introduction, Chapter 1:1, 2

B. God's comfort for life's plans, Chapter 1:3-24

W. 3-7—"Comfort" and "consolation" are used nine times in five verses. Comfort does not imply the sentimental, but rather sustains and helps. It is the same word used for the Holy Spirit—the Comforter. He comes to the side of a child of God to dispel darkness and relieve loneliness.

W. 8-14—Paul had experienced the comfort of God through some crisis in Ephesus—probably sickness unto death (v. 9). God comforted Paul so that he could comfort others. This is a great Christian principle.

W. 15-20—Paul reveals his desire and plan to come to Corinth, and then his change of plan.

W.21-24—This is the second theme introduced. Paul equates the Holy Spirit with God (v. 21). The Holy Spirit anoints the believer to understand divine truth (1 Corinthians 2:9, 10; 1 John 2:27):

God the Father is true (v. 18)

God the Son is absolute and positive (v. 19)

God the Holy Spirit is dwelling within (v. 22)

1 – The Holy Spirit *confirms* (“establisheth”) the believer (v. 21)

2 – The Holy Spirit *anoints* the believer (v. 21)

3 – The Holy Spirit *seals* the believer (v. 22; Ephesians 4:30)

4 – The Holy Spirit is the earnest—the pledge that there is more to come (v. 22)

C. God’s comfort in restoring a sinning saint, Chapter 2

V.4—Paul’s motive and method in writing.

W.5-13—This is a reference to the sinning saint (1 Corinthians 5) for whom Paul had commanded immediate discipline. The believer had repented, and now Paul urges the church to restore him to fellowship. Refusal to restore the believer would give Satan an advantage (v. 11). Are we ignorant of his devices?

V.12—This is the only report Paul ever made of his ministry in Troas (Acts 20:6-12).

W.14-17— Again Paul introduces a second theme, which is very important. How does God always cause us to triumph (v. 14) when so often we feel defeated? The believer is a “sweet savor” (v. 15) to both lost and saved. Our business is to declare the gospel. The responsibility then rests on the hearer. Our responsibility is to give the gospel, not get results. Our care is that we are faithful in declaring the gospel accurately.

D. God’s comfort in the ministry of suffering for Christ, Chapter 4

W.1-3—Those who accept the gospel and are converted become, in turn, the gospel to the unsaved.

The gospel is written a chapter a day
By deeds that you do and words that you say.
Men read what you say, whether faithless or true.
Say, what is the gospel according to you?

—*Author unknown*

W. 6-17—The ministry of the gospel is more glorious than the ministry of Moses, for the glory of Christ does not pass away. Moses placed a veil over his face because the glory was passing away (v. 13). The veil now is over the hearts of those who follow the Law (vv. 14, 15). “It” (v. 16) means *heart* (see v. 15). Those who are led by the Spirit are not under the Law (v. 17).

V. 18—Here is another great theme. Only the Spirit of God can develop Christian character. It is something solid that must be developed, like the putting down of a sturdy and stable foundation of a building and the growing of a great tree like an oak or redwood. The word for “changed” is from the Greek *metamorphosis*, which is the same word used in speaking of the transfiguration of Christ. The ultimate goal of humanity is seen in the transfiguration of Christ.

E. God’s comfort in the ministry of suffering for Christ, Chapter 4

W. 1, 2—Suffering tests the genuineness of the ministry. Paul presents a series of contrasts to show that the suffering of the ministry is not the defeat of the ministry.

W. 3, 4—There are two secondary themes in this chapter. Satan is the god of this world who tries to blind men at only one point—the gospel. The lost world is like a prison house of sin. There is only one way out. Christ is the way (John 14:6). At this point Satan blinds men.

V. 7—“Earthen vessels” is the Greek word *ostrakinos*—“clay pitchers,” reminding us of Gideon’s 300 (Judges 7). The vessels must be broken for the light to shine out.

V. 8—“Troubled” is *pressed for room*. “Not distressed” is *still having room*. “Perplexed” is *unable to find a way out*.

V. 9—“Persecuted” is *pursued by an enemy*. “Not forsaken” is *not overpowered by the enemy*.

W. 17, 18—Suffering in this life is light in weight compared to the eternal weight of glory. Unseen things are real, for they are eternal. Things that are seen are temporary.

F. God's comfort in the ministry of martyrdom for Christ, Chapter 5

V. 1–Physical death means the departure from the body, labeled a tent (“tabernacle”) by Paul.

W. 2-5—These bodies are suffering bodies and temporary.

W. 6-8—Death means to leave these fragile bodies and go home to be with the Lord.

W. 9-13—Believers appear before the judgment seat (*bema*) of Christ to see if they receive a reward or not. The works of believers are judged.

W. 14-21—The secondary subject seems to be the major subject in this chapter. The theme is reconciliation. Believers are joined to the glorified Christ at God's right hand (vv. 14-17). They are there because of Christ's work of reconciliation. God is reconciled by what Christ has done. We can do nothing to reconcile God, for He is already reconciled to us in Christ. The message of the gospel is not asking us to do something to reconcile God, but to accept God's message and method of reconciliation (vv. 20, 21).

G. God's comfort in all circumstances of the ministry of Christ, Chapter 6

W. 4-7—Paul lists 19 trying experiences of the ministry.

W. 8-10—He lists nine contrasts which cover the total life.

W. 11-18—The minor theme here is a personal appeal of Paul. He calls upon the Corinthian Christians to make a clean break with idolatry.

H. God's comfort in the heart of Paul, Chapter 7

Paul refers to his personal relationship to the Corinthian Christians. He refers to the comfort of God again (vv. 4, 6, 7, 13).

V. 10—This is God's definition of repentance. It means a change of mind. In turning to Christ by faith, sinners turn from their sin. This is repentance for salvation (the secondary theme).

II. **COLLECTION for poor saints at Jerusalem, Chapters 8, 9** (*Christian giving*)

A. Example of Christian giving, Chapter 8:1-6

Giving is a grace. God wants the person before He asks for his gift. The Macedonian Christians first gave themselves (v. 5).

B. Exhortation to Christian giving, Chapter 8:7-15

These are *principles* for Christian giving—not rules. The tithe is not demanded. Giving is a grace (vv. 7, 8). Christ gave all—not a tenth (v. 9).

C. Explanation of Christian giving, Chapters 8:16–9:5

1 – They were to give to a specific cause—poor saints in Jerusalem

2 – They were to give to reputable messengers—Titus and those with him

3 – They were to give in reality and not merely promise

D. Encouragement to Christian giving, Chapter 9:6-15

V. 6—Give generously.

V. 7—Do not give grudgingly; give hilariously!

V. 8—God gives the grace to give.

W. 9-11—Give bountifully, probably more than a tithe.

W. 12-14—Give according to the need.

V. 15—We can never out-give God.

III. CALLING of the apostle Paul, Chapters 10–13

(Christian guarding)

A. Authentication of Paul's apostleship, Chapter 10

V. 3—Our warfare is spiritual. We don't measure success by numbers, money, or outward growth.

V. 4—Our weapons are secret, so secret that they are not mentioned here. They are mighty. The Word of God is the hush-hush weapon. The Holy Spirit is the General. Prayer is the ammunition.

V. 5—The warriors are successful, not victorious. The victory is Christ's, and we enter into it (2:14).

B. Vindication of Paul's apostleship, Chapter 11

(Very personal)

V. 9—Paul pays his own way.

W. 13-15—This is the secondary subject. Ministers of Satan are attractive and winsome. They teach false doctrine for material benefit.

W. 16-33—Paul's life vindicates his ministry.

C. Revelation of Paul's apostleship, Chapter 12

W. 1-3—This is Paul's experience (see v. 7). He was stoned to death at Lystra (see Acts 14:19). Paul was caught up into the presence of God.

First heaven—where are the “birds of heaven”

Second heaven—where are the “stars of heaven”

Third heaven—where is the abode of God

V. 7—God put a zipper on the mouth of Paul. He was given a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble.

V. 10—The man who went to heaven and returned is going to Corinth for the third time in weakness—also in dread (v. 20). This is the subsidiary subject.

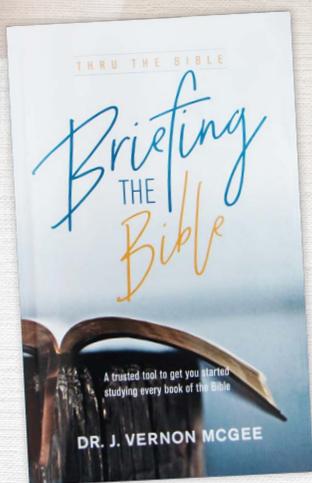
D. Execution of Paul's apostleship, Chapter 13:1-10

Paul is going to Corinth for the third time to exercise his office as an apostle. They will see the proof of his apostleship through the power of Christ working in Paul's weakness (vv. 3, 4). Believers should take a regular inventory to see if they are in the faith (v. 5). We should declare the Word of God, not defend it (v. 8—this is a great verse for today).

E. Conclusion of Paul's apostleship, Chapter 13:11-14

Paul returns where he began—to the comfort of God.

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