

## 2 Corinthians Chapter 1

Second Corinthians is written to the assembly that was founded on Paul's first visit to that city. Since his departure and subsequent ministry in Ephesus, the apostle has learned a great deal about the serious problems fermenting in this assembly. Problems with worldliness, internal wrangling and doctrinal defections continue to fester despite Paul's efforts in the first epistle.

In this letter to the church at Corinth, we will see Paul trying to prove to these people his right of apostleship. There were some in this church at Corinth who believed Paul did not have this right. Paul says more about himself and his ministry in this letter, than he does in all of the others. Some people today would call this Paul's testimony.

**2 Corinthians 1:1 "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy [our] brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:"**

Even in this very first verse of the letter, Paul says it was "the will of God", for him to be an apostle. Paul in a real sense, is saying, I did not choose to be an apostle, God chose me. The Christians at this time, were called saints, or brothers.

It is not clear whether this letter was written from Cenchrea or not, but it was in Achaia. An ancient province and a present prefecture of Greece, on the northern coast of the Peloponnese. In Ancient Roman times the name of the province of Achaia was given to the whole of Greece. This would be somewhere in the southern part of Greece.

Paul immediately states that he is an apostle. He does not say; I think I am an apostle. He boldly states that he is. The word "apostle" means delegate, or ambassador of the gospel. In the official sense, it means commissioner of Christ, this meaning includes (with miraculous powers). It can also mean messenger, or he that is sent. Paul was all of these things.

We must notice in this that Paul always has someone to minister with him. In this particular instance, he has Timothy. He knows that Timothy is loyal to him. Timothy is Paul's student and would not differ with Paul at all. There are times when this type of loyalty is very important. Timothy is not the only one with Paul, but is the closest to Paul in this instance. One of the reasons it is important to have the second minister that agrees with you, is for the prayer of agreement. Paul wants this church to know that his ministry is actually a revelation of Jesus Christ through Paul.

**2 Corinthians 1:2 "Grace [be] to you and peace from God our Father, and [from] the Lord Jesus Christ."**

This is a greeting that Paul used many times and is more evidence that this letter was Paul's. It is a prayer of Paul's for them. He wished that God would give them this grace (unmerited favor). He is explaining also, that this is not just from Jesus as Savior, but from the Father as well.

**2 Corinthians 1:3 "Blessed [be] God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;"**

Paul never once, stopped speaking of the blessedness of God. "Father of mercies", just means that God is full of mercy for everyone who believes.

There is no other comfort compared to the peace that God brings. The Holy Spirit is sent by the Lord Jesus Christ to comfort. He is even spoken of as the Comforter.

**2 Corinthians 1:4 "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."**

Tribulation comes to the Christian, as well as to those of the world. This "comfort in tribulation", speaks of us having a peace in the midst of the tribulation. There is a rest for the Christian in Christ. The world may be falling apart around us, but we can have perfect peace within.

God's comfort is not an end in itself. Its purpose is that believers also might be comforters. Having humiliated and convicted the Corinthians, God used Paul to return to them with a strengthening message after he himself had received divine strengthening.

The only way to truly sympathize with someone else is to have had the same problem yourself.

**2 Corinthians 1:5 "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."**

When we receive Christ in us, we are partakers in His suffering as well.

Romans 8:17 "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together."

Here is a favorite Scripture that explains this very well.

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

God's comfort to believers extends to the boundaries of their suffering for Christ. The more they endure righteous suffering, the greater will be their comfort and reward.

**2 Corinthians 1:6 "And whether we be afflicted, [it is] for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, [it is] for your consolation and salvation."**

Paul is saying to them, that his suffering and tribulations were endured by him without complaining, so that he could bring the gospel to them. Paul was willing to go through almost any hardship, if he thought in so doing, he could win some to Christ.

Here Paul is referring to the body of Christ's partnership of suffering, which mutually builds godly patience and endurance. All believers need to realize this process, avoid any sense of self-pity when suffering for Him. And share in each other's lives, the encouragement of divine comfort they receive from their experiences.

**2 Corinthians 1:7 "And our hope of you [is] steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so [shall ye be] also of the consolation."**

Paul is saying that he will not give up on them. He also says to them, if they are to minister for Christ there will be sufferings that they will have to endure as well. Paul says if you allow yourself to die to this world in Christ, you will share in His resurrection.

Many in the church of Corinth were suffering for righteousness as Paul was. Although that church had caused him much pain and concern, Paul saw its members as partners to be helped because of their faithfulness in mutual suffering.

**2 Corinthians 1:8 "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:"**

The persecution that Paul endured was so great, that he would have welcomed death. We are not told just exactly which act of violence came to Paul while he was in Asia. We are told that it was almost more than he could bear.

Paul faced something that was beyond human survival and was extremely discouraging because he believed it threatened to end his ministry prematurely. The Corinthians' were aware of what had happened to Paul, but did not realize the utter severity of it, or what God was doing through those circumstances.

The one thing Paul wants them to learn from this is that they also might be called upon to suffer. The Lord Jesus Christ did not deceive Paul. He told Paul that He would show him what he must suffer.

Acts 9:16 "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

This is the Words of the Lord. They are printed in red in the Bible.

**2 Corinthians 1:9 "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:"**

Paul knew that his life was in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was not fearful of physical death. He knew that there were many Jews who would like him killed. He also knew, that he could do

nothing about this. His trust was in the Lord. He also knew, if they killed his body, he would live on through Jesus Christ.

Paul was so absolutely sure he was going to die for the gospel that he had pronounced the sentence upon himself. This was God's ultimate purpose for Paul's horrible extremity. The Lord took him to the point at which he could not fall back on any intellectual, physical or emotional human resource.

Paul placed his trust in Jesus the same as we must do. We should all heed this Scripture in Hebrews.

Hebrews 13:6 states "So that we may boldly say, The Lord [is] my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

**2 Corinthians 1:10 "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver [us];"**

Before we receive the Lord Jesus as our Savior, we are living unto death. We have no hope for the future. When we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, we receive everlasting life.

Matthew 10:28 "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Again, these are the Words of Jesus as shown by the red print.

**2 Corinthians 1:11 "Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift [bestowed] upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf."**

Paul was thanking them for praying for him. Every church that I know of, is as strong as the prayers that go up for it. Every minister needs the prayers of the congregation. Some people think that they cannot help the ministry, because they are not the minister. The job of intercessory prayer is just as important, and I would say more important than the actual ministry.

Intercessory prayer is crucial to the expression of God's power and sovereign purpose. In this regard, Paul wanted the faithful Corinthians to know he needed their prayers then and in the future.

Prayer's duty is not to change God's plans, but to glorify Him and give thanks for them. Paul was confident that God's sovereign purpose would be accomplished, balanced by the prayerful participation of believers.

The prayer then, causes the Spirit to call to the person. No one will come to the Lord, unless the Spirit woos him. You see, prayer is the number 1 reason for people being saved. Someone must care enough to pray for you.

**2 Corinthians 1:12 "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward."**

Paul is just saying that he has a clear conscience.

The conscience is the soul's warning system which allows human beings to contemplate their motives and actions and then make a moral evaluation of what is right and wrong.

Paul has not tried to show how smart he is, but has tried to bring the good news of the gospel as simply as he could, so that all could understand. Paul has spoken the words that the Lord has given him for these people. He will not apologize for the message God has given him. The gospel is not complicated, but simple, so that all might receive it with joy in their heart. This is still the way the Lord expects His salvation message to go out. He wants it simple, so that all may understand.

Using big words, elevate the person that is using them, but do nothing for the uneducated person who is trying to understand. Ministers are to keep it simple for all to understand. Ministry is not to make the minister feel important, but to cause people to come to Christ. The more who understand, the more who believe and come to Christ.

Fleshly wisdom is the wisdom that is based on worldly, human insight (see James 3:15).

## **2 Corinthians Chapter 1 Questions**

1. Who wrote 2 Corinthians?
2. Who was it written to?
3. What was Paul trying to prove in this letter?
4. Some people today would call this Paul's \_\_\_\_\_.
5. What is the main lesson that we can take from the letter?
6. Who were most of Paul's afflictions from?
7. What does the author compare the joy and sorrow of Paul to?
8. Was it Paul's will to be an apostle? Explain.
9. What were the Christians called at the time Paul wrote this letter?
10. Where was Achaia?

11. What does Paul proclaim himself as in verse 1?
12. What does "apostle" mean?
13. Why does Paul have another minister working with him?
14. Why did Paul need Timothy at this time?
15. What is the benediction on the people, spoken in verse 2?
16. What is "grace"?
17. What does "Father of mercies" mean?
18. Who is the Comforter?
19. What does the "comfort in tribulation" speak of?
20. Did Paul complain about his suffering?
21. Who did Paul's suffering benefit?
22. How badly had Paul suffered in Asia?
23. Why was Paul not fearful of death?
24. What is a very important job in the church, besides being the minister?
25. How had Paul ministered to them?