

STUDY GUIDE



ATLANTA BELVEDERE SDA CHURCH

# 2 CORINTHIANS

*Saying Yes to God Again*

DR. SAMUEL BULGIN

DR. DONNIEVAL WALKER

**PASTORS' BIBLE CLASS**

[belvederesdachurch.org](http://belvederesdachurch.org)



## *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*

---

### Introduction

**S**econd Corinthians presents one of the finest statements regarding the nature of Christian ministry in the New Testament. It is born out of the challenges of Paul's enemies in Corinth who forced him to defend his character and ministry. It is therefore instructive to all who engage in Christian ministry today.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul and Timothy addressed many of the spiritual problems at Corinth (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10).

Paul traveled from Ephesus to Corinth to deal with the problem but failed (2:1; 12:14, 21; 13:1-2). Paul's authority was attacked, possibly by outsiders or some group within the church.

Paul returned to Ephesus and wrote a stern letter (2:3-4; 7:8, 12). The Corinthians finally repented revealing that the intended purpose of the letter was accomplished (7:5-16). The crisis was over, and Paul wrote 2 Corinthians in response with thanksgiving. Paul sent Titus back to Corinth with two associates (8:16-24) to attend to the collection for the church in Jerusalem.

It is not clear who were Paul's enemies at Corinth. However, their purpose was clear. They wanted to discredit Paul as a genuine apostle of Jesus Christ and to advance their own claim to authority over the Corinthian church.

**Among their many claims were:**

Insincerity and inconsistency	1:12ff
Lack of credentials	3:1
Misunderstanding of the gospel	4:3
Emotional instability	5:13
Self-seeking and dishonesty	7:2; 8:20-21; 12:16
Feebleness when present	10:1, 10
Unskilled speaking	11:6
False claims of being an apostle of Jesus Christ	12:12; 13:3
Inferiority to other apostles in the church	11:5; 12:11

**Paul responded sharply:**

They traded on the word of God by accepting financial support	2:17; 11:12, 20
They commended themselves	10:12, 18
Being pretentious with letter of recommendations	3:1
Boasted of knowledge gained through visions and special revelations	12:1, 11; 11:5-6
Their special relationship to Jesus	10:7; 11:23
Pride in their Hebrew heritage	11:22
They preached a different Jesus and gospel from Paul's	11:4
They took credit for work done by others	10:15-16
They were immoral and unrepentant	12:21; 13:2
They are false apostles and servants of Satan	11:13-15

Who were these opposers?

They were probably Gnostics identified in 1 Corinthians as Judaizers who wanted to place the Corinthian believers under law. They could also have been Jewish Christians (11:22) who were hostile to Paul and his mission to the Gentiles. Paul was here facing a coalition mounted by these Christians and the Gnostics.

## PAUL'S AUTHORITY AND MINISTRY

Second Corinthians is entirely different from 1 Corinthians—it is personal. In 1 Corinthians Paul dealt with speculative difficulties, answering inquiries and correcting abuses. Second Corinthians is an impassioned self-defense of a wounded spirit to erring and ungrateful children.

Paul did not like to talk about himself, but he was forced to by his enemies, forced to defend his motives and work. In the course of his defense, he bared his soul in an unrestrained manner. In the process we learn what it cost him to be a faithful minister of Jesus and how he viewed Christian ministry. He discusses Christian ministry from four standpoints.

## FOUR POINTS OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

### **It's Authority (1:21)**

It is God who establishes and commissions us. He qualifies us and commissions us to dispense the gospel (3:5-6).

The New Covenant is different from the Old. The Old consists of written law which condemns and brings us to death (Rom. 7:7-11). The New Covenant is God's law written by the Holy Spirit in our hearts (2 Cor. 3:6 cf. Rom. 2:28-29).

### **The Character of a Christian Minister**

**Sincerity** (1:12; 2:17). Double dealing is unacceptable (1:17-18). So also, is shameful, cunning, underhanded ways (4:2). No duplicity (1:18-20). Humility – not boasting (11:6) of their heredity (11:22); their credentials (3:1); special relation to Christ (10:7); their achievements (11:13). Self-commendation and boasting are incompatible with the spirit of the gospel (10:12, 17-18).

**Forgiveness** (2:5-11). Unflagging courage and hope (4:1, 16, 7-12).

### **The Christian Minister's Message**

We preach Christ as Lord, and we are servants (4:5).

Jesus Christ the Redeemer who reconciled them to God (5:14-21).

They open their hearts to each other (6:11-13; 7:2).

### **The Glory and Terror of the Christian Ministry**

**Triumph and Terror** (2:14-17): In Thessalonians hope is central, in Philippians joy; in Romans faith; in Ephesians heavenly things; but in 2 Corinthians it's affliction. We will triumph over affliction if we follow the word of God.

Second Corinthians does not present a picture of unity. It is by no means as systematic as 1 Corinthians. It has three main parts: Chapters 1-7; 8-9; and 10-13. They are loosely connected and emotional in nature, hence its casual connection. Some believe that it is a collection of several letters written by Paul and possibly one section not written by him (6:14-7:1).

The book was written in part from Ephesus and Macedonia around AD 55 or 56.

## **OUTLINE**

**Theme:** *Paul as a true minister of the New Covenant.*

### **INTRODUCTION (1:1-11)**

A. Greetings (1:1-2).

- B. Thanksgiving for God's comfort in affliction (1:3-11).  
We are comforted to comfort (1:3-7). Driven back on God (1:8-11).

**BODY (1:12-13:10)**

- A. The crisis at Corinth (1:12-7:16).
1. Explanation of his change of travel plans (1:12-2:13)
  2. Paul's true ministry as an apostle (2:14-7:4)
  3. Paul's joy over reconciliation with the Corinthians (7:5-16).
- B. The collection for the Jerusalem church (8-9).
1. The generosity of the Macedonian churches (8).
  2. Reasons why the Corinthians should give generously to meet the need (9).
- C. Paul's defense of his apostolic authority and ministry (10:1-13:10).
1. The charge of weakness and boldness (10:1-11).
  2. Paul answers his critics.
    - a. The gentleness and sweet reasonableness of Christ (10:1-6).
      - i. Paul is charged with not being bold when he is face-to-face with his critics and that operates on human motives. For Paul both his power and conduct comes from God.
      - ii. Paul is equipped to deal with and destroy human wisdom and pride. He brings every intention into captivity to Christ.
    - b. We are a fellowship of forgiven sinners (7:11).

3. The charge that he is overreaching the area of his authority (10:12-18).
  - a. Paul levels a charge at them: they measure themselves by themselves.
  
4. Paul's boasting versus the boasting of the super (but false) apostles (11:1-12:13).
  - a. The peril of seduction (1-6).
    - i. Old Testament picture Isaiah 54:5; 62:5.
  - b. Masquerading as Christians (7-15).

Real Christians:

    - i. Know Jesus as the source of salvation.
    - ii. Grow in the power of the Holy Spirit, prayer, meditation, and knowledge of God.
    - iii. Desire to spread the kingdom of God by example.
    - iv. Work for the salvation of others.
  - c. Apostolic credentials (11:16-33)

- Paul does not wish to do what they want him to do.
- He proceeds to do it because it is for the gospel's sake.
- His opponents are Jewish teachers who claim to have a gospel and authority greater than his.
- They reduce the Corinthians to abject slavery. They devour them.
- They behave arrogantly.
- They struck them on the face (insulting behavior).
- They claim to be Hebrews, to be Israelites (God's chosen people), descendants of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3); claiming that Paul was not. But Paul countered in

Philippians 3:5-6 letting them know they had no claim to superiority.

Paul sets out his credentials as an apostle by cataloguing his sufferings for Christ.

1. Three times I have been beaten with rods.
2. Five times I received forty stripes less one.
3. Dangers in his travels.

In addition to all this his concern for the churches (Acts 9:23-25).

D. The Thorn and the Grace (12:1-13)

1. Thorns – spiritual temptations, opposition and persecution, carnal temptations, Paul’s physical appearance (12:10), epilepsy, severe headaches, eye trouble (12:15; 6:11), malarial fever.

Paul reminds us of the promise of God, “*My grace is sufficient*”. Sufficient for: physical weariness, pain, opposition, slander.

E. Paul’s paternal care for his Corinthian children and the proper preparation for his coming to Corinth (12:14-13:10).

- a. Paul’s defense draws to an end (12:14-18).
  - i. He is as good an apostle as his opponents.
    1. His ministry is effectual.
    2. He took no financial support from them.
- b. The marks of an unchristian church (12:19-21).
  - i. Strife, envy, anger, factions, slanderings and whisperings, conceit, disorder, uncleanness, fornication.
- c. Paul finishes the epistle with a ....



- i. Warning, Wish, Hope, Blessing (2 Cor. 13).
  - 1. The Warning (13:1-6).
  - 2. The Wish (13:7-10).
  - 3. The Hope (13:11-13).
  - 4. The Blessing (13:14).

We make peace with our enemies by praying for them. *“No one can hate a man and pray for him at the same time.”*

The way might be hard, but the final word must be peace.

---

*Notes*

---



- I want to be baptized
- I need more Bible study
- Pray for me
- Please contact me

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial \_\_\_\_\_ Suffix \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Apt# \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**ATLANTA BELVEDERE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH**

3567 Covington Highway, Decatur GA 30032

404.299.1359 | 404.299.1336(fax)

belvederesdachurch.org

belvederesda@gccsda.com

Dr. Samuel Bulgin, Lead Pastor

Dr. Donnieval Walker, Associate Pastor