

**A PASSAGE THROUGH  
THE NEW TESTAMENT**

*Part Six*  
*“Second Corinthians”*



*by J.S. Smith*



# Second Corinthians

Author: Paul • 57 A.D.

The book is addressed to the church in Corinth. Because of Venus's supposed presence, the city was given to sexual immorality. Her temple boasted a hundred priestesses dedicated to harlotry. Even the most immoral cities and people of the world looked down on Corinth for her vice.

The author is the apostle Paul who spent three months there before Timothy and Silas joined him. The godly men were fortunate, though, to find Priscilla and Aquila and the group proved a source of mutual support and strength. Paul taught in the Jewish synagogue until Timothy and Silas arrived. At this point, the Jews' hostility toward Christ and His evangelists drove them out of the synagogue and into the house of Justus. Later, Paul's preaching landed him before the judgment of Gallio.

The purpose of the first epistle is to express Paul's reactions to the report from Titus on the state of affairs in Corinth. A majority of the church there was accepting Paul's first epistle. Still, a small but dangerous group continued to oppose the apostle and accuse him of fraud. This second letter answers their accusations.

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# Lesson 1: Integrity

Second Corinthians 1:1-24

1. (1:1-2) This opening passage seems to have written by a single-minded apostle. Is he an authority on suffering and tribulation (cf. 2 Cor. 11:23-29 and 2 Tim. 3:12).
2. This passage probably had a special importance to the faithful group in Corinth that eschewed the factions and doubters of Paul's authenticity. What suffering might they have experienced because of their tenacity toward the factious?
3. How is the term "saint" used in scripture—to refer to a select group of meritoriously better Christians, or all genuine disciples of Christ?
4. (1:3-7) What word or idea is repeated continuously in this passage? How is it to be obtained?
5. (1:8-11) How did the Corinthians help Paul when he was in grave danger?

6. (1:8-11) Paul speaks of affliction in Asia. Some surmise that he speaks of one event in particular. Refer to Acts 19:23-20:1 and describe briefly what happened.

7. (1:12-14) The meaning of verse 13 is that Paul is not writing to them anything which they will be unable to understand. What significance has this in our age? Compare to Ephesians 3:4.

8. In what did Paul boast?

9. (1:15-22) What were Paul's plans concerning a visit to Corinth (cf. 1 Cor. 16:5-7). This passage implies that he had not made it there yet. What opportunity do you think this gave his detractors in Corinth?

10. What was given to these men as an earnest, or guarantee, of salvation?

11. (1:23-24) How was Paul sparing them by avoiding another visit to Corinth?

## Lesson 2: Forgiveness

Second Corinthians 2:1-17

1. (2:1-4) Was the corrective nature of the first epistle an easy thing for Paul to do? Why do you think he did it anyway?
2. (2:5-11) Who is the one likely spoken of in verses 5-11 (cf. 1 Cor. 5)? Describe his case.
3. Is it sufficiently apparent that the man in question had repented? What did Paul instruct the church to do with him now?
4. It seems that Paul's difficult instruction to withdraw had been a test of sorts to see if the Corinthians would be obedient. What might this tell us about the importance of exercising church discipline?
5. What are some of Satan's devices?

6. (2:12-17) What is the smell of Christians carrying God's word to a lost world?

7. Paul wrote the first epistle to the Corinthians from Ephesus. Describe his subsequent travels as detailed here. How does Paul compare himself to the self-interested teachers (verse 17)?

8. How are some guilty of peddling the gospel today?



# Lesson 3: Ministry of the Spirit

Second Corinthians 3:1-18

1. (3:1-3) Paul takes up the issue of letters of commendation. His opponents boast that they had them while Paul, for some reason, was unable to produce any like them from other apostles or churches. How does Paul answer this request here and in 1 Corinthians 9:1-2?
2. What famous code of law was written on tablets of stone?
3. (3:4-6) From where does sufficiency come?
4. What does Paul mean when he says “the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life”?
5. (3:7-11) What was it about the glory reflected on Moses’s face that caused him to veil it?

6. How does Paul describe the law of Moses, under which he had spent most of his life?

a. verse 7:

b. verse 9:

c. verse 11:

7. (3:12-13) According to verse 13, what was Moses concealing when he veiled his face from the children of Israel?

8. How is it evident that non-Christian Jews were reading the Old Testament with a veiled heart?

9. What is found where the Lord is? What does this mean (cf. Rom. 6:15-20)?

# Lesson 4: Earthen Vessels

Second Corinthians 4:1-18

1. (4:1-6) Whom does Paul call the god of this world?
2. What is he busy doing according to verse 4? What light does he wish to prevent from shining?
3. What methods had Paul and the other saints renounced?
4. What method had they adopted?
5. (4:7-12) Explain what is meant by the phrase “treasure in earthen vessels”?
6. What did they manifest in their own bodies? How can we do this today?

7. (4:13-15) Paul's life as a Christian was a perilous one and yet he persevered. He relates the source of his confidence in verse 14—what is it? Compare to 2 Timothy 1:12.

8. (4:16-18) With what attitude did Paul view his afflictions?

9. How can we renew our inward selves day by day?

10. What is 20/20 Christian vision like?

# Lesson 5: Reconciliation

Second Corinthians 5:1-21

1. (5:1-5) Paul did not particularly worry about dying for he trusted in a what reward?
2. Can we share his hope of a heavenly home, eternal above?
3. (5:6-8) What does it mean to walk by faith, not by sight?
4. For how long will we be present with the Lord when this life is over?
5. (5:9-11) In a way, he issues a challenge to his detractors in Corinth to test themselves. What is the goal of a Christian (verse 9)?
6. What will be judged in the last day?

7. How is the terror of the Lord a persuasive message?

8. (5:12-15) What compelled Paul to do what he did?

9. (5:16-19) Paul says that he is not trying to glorify himself, but rather to offer the saints an answer to his enemies who glory in appearance and not in heart. Consider Colossians 3:1-3, 9-10: where should a Christian's mind be set?

10. What must become of the old man and his deeds?

11. Paul now speaks of his ministry as reconciliation. What two parties are to be reconciled, according to verse 19? By whom?

# Lesson 6: Unequally Yoked

Second Corinthians 6:1-18

1. (6:1-2) What are the implications of verse 2?
2. (6:3-10) Was it possible for someone to blame his lack of faith on Paul's habits?
3. Briefly summarize the report Paul gave on his own ministry here.
4. (6:11-13) What did Paul ask of the Corinthians as they read this letter?
5. (6:14-18) What is Paul's command in verse 14? What is his initial reasoning?
6. What is meant by the term "Belial"?
7. What is the temple of the living God?
8. What is Paul's command to those who are in unequal yokes?

**9. Why are unbelievers so threatening to Christians (1 Cor. 15:33)?**



# Lesson 7: Repentance

Second Corinthians 7:1-16

1. (7:1) How do we cleanse ourselves from filthiness (1 John 1:9, 1 Peter 3:20-21)?
  
2. (7:2-4) What three accusations does Paul deny in verse 2?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  
3. How had Paul's boldness of speech been revealed in these two letters?
  
4. (7:5-7) What brought comfort to Paul when he was in Macedonia?
  
5. Why was this a source of comfort?
  
6. (7:8-12) Did Paul regret making the Corinthians feel bad with his first letter? Why or why not?

7. Why is it sometimes beneficial to feel badly (cf. Matt. 5:3, James 4:8-10)?

8. What does godly sorrow produce?

9. What does worldly sorrow produce?

10. What was Paul's main concern in writing his first, stern letter?

11. (7:13-16) How had the Corinthians received Titus? Why?

## Lesson 8: Collection For Needy Saints

Second Corinthians 8:1-24

1. (8:1-7) We often study passages on the collection in general. Where had Paul brought up the collection for the needy saints in Judea before?
2. According to verse 3, what had been the attitude of the Macedonians in their giving?
3. Define the word *fellowship* as it is used in the Bible. Then define the word as it is commonly used in the world today. Which practice should the Lord's church employ and uphold?
4. Why did Paul then send Titus to Corinth?
5. (8:8-9) Paul gives another example of free giving in verse 9—what is it? Refer to Philippians 2:5-8—what is the admonition and example there?

6. (8:10-15) Paul applauds the fact that the Corinthians had begun this work nearly a year ago, but now advises them to “complete the doing of it” (verse 11). Did Paul teach that good intentions are good enough?

7. He sets forth a policy from the Old Testament that should ensure that some Christians do not die from poverty while others bask in luxury. Explain this policy.

8. (8:16-21) Who traveled with Titus?

9. (8:22-24) Why was trust so important?

# Lesson 9: Generosity

Second Corinthians 9:1-15

1. (9:1-5) Paul says that he has boasted of the Corinthians and used them as an example of giving to the Macedonians, too. Why has he sent the brethren ahead now to Corinth?

2. What can the zeal of one person do?

3. What would make Paul ashamed?

4. What would cause people to give as a grudging obligation?

5. (9:6-9) From what does Paul draw an illustration for monetary contributions?

6. Verse seven contains two positive and two negative aspects of giving. List the positive ones first:

- a.
- b.

7. List the negative aspects:

- a.
- b.

8. (9:10-14) What was to be their reward?

9. Look back to 8:4 and 9:1, 12—for whom was this gift? Is there any indication this collection was for non-saints?

# Lesson 10: Spiritual Warfare

Second Corinthians 10:1-18

1. (10:1-6) Paul begins his defense by calling on his readers to think spiritually and beyond outward appearances. Did he wage warfare physically?

2. How did he war?

3. What does Paul mean by “bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ”?

4. (10:7-11) What did some people say about Paul’s letters and appearance?

4. What did Paul say about the contrast between his letters and his appearance?

5. (10:12-18) Paul sets up a model of contrast between himself and the false teachers who opposed him. How did the false measure themselves?

6. How did Paul measure himself?

7. What is the measure of genuine commendation?



# Lesson 11: Deception

Second Corinthians 11:1-33

1. (11:1-4) What is godly jealousy?
  
2. What happened to Eve and can also happen to us?
  
3. Should they have put up with those teaching another gospel or another Christ (cf. Gal. 1:6-9)?
  
4. (11:5-6) Paul confesses that what criticism is accurate?
  
5. (11:7-11) The apostle brings up the argument that he had accepted no payment for preaching because his conscience would not allow him to accept an apostle's reward. How was Paul's livelihood provided for when he preached in Corinth?
  
6. (11:12-15) Fed up with such a foolish attack, he goes on the offensive, calling the heretics in Corinth false teachers, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. What three fraudulent claims does Paul accuse such men of committing?
  - a. false apostles
  - b. deceitful workers
  - c. transforming themselves into apostles of Christ
  
7. How do the works and temptations of Satan appear harmless today?

8. (11:16-21) Paul endeavors to turn the tables once more on the boastful teachers. He judges their submission to false teaching in verses 19-21. Does he feel that they should sit meekly at their feet and continue to work with them?

9. (11:22-29) In this passage, does Paul boast of the usual points of pride (number of baptisms, revered writings, successful debates, marvelous miracles)?

10. (11:30-33) According to verse 30, of what does he boast?

# Lesson 12: Grace

Second Corinthians 12:1-21

1. (12:1-6) What vision did he receive?

2. (12:7-10) It is nearly universally held that Paul speaks of himself here but declines to name himself in humility. Because of the greatness of the experience, he was given a messenger from Satan. What was its purpose?

3. Why did God refuse Paul's request to have it removed?

4. How is God's strength made perfect in weakness?

5. How did this truth cause Paul to view his infirmities?

6. (12:11-13) How is Paul's gift for biting sarcasm displayed here?

7. (12:14-21) What did Paul seek in Corinth? What did he not seek?

8. In what ways did Paul act as a father to them in this letter?

9. How did some accuse Paul of catching them—getting their money?

# Lesson 13: Examination

Second Corinthians 13:1-14

1. (13:1-4) What witnesses had Paul called?
2. Paul's hope through these letters has been that his impending visit could be pleasant and without the need for his discipline. How much patience does he apparently still have?
3. What would Paul do with those who remained in sin when he arrived?
4. (13:5-6) They had spent so much time trying him that Paul now tells them to do what instead?
5. Is it possible to think you are in the faith and actually be out of it?
6. What is the implication of disqualification?
7. (13:7-10) Was Paul's boldness and sharpness authorized? By whom?
8. Can gospel preachers who are not apostles also be sharp in their rebukes when required (Titus 1:13)?
9. (13:11-14) Paul concludes the epistle with a prayer for peace and unity. After studying these two epistles, do you think Paul desired them to believe and teach different things and follow after the teachings of various men?
10. Do people still obey the command to greet one another with a holy kiss?





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J.S. Smith  
Fort Worth, Texas  
Electronic Mail: [jeffssmith@mac.com](mailto:jeffssmith@mac.com)  
Internet: [www.electronicgospel.org](http://www.electronicgospel.org)  
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