

2 Corinthians 1

Day 1

Greetings and Background. Read 2 Corinthians 1:1-2

1. Who were the senders and recipients of this letter? 1:1,2

FYI: "Few cities in the ancient world were blessed with as favorable a geographic location as Corinth was ...Corinth controlled the trade route between the northern and southern parts of Greece. In addition, travelers going to and from Italy from northern Greece and Asia Minor embarked and disembarked from Corinth's port towns... Corinth in Paul's day was a large and prosperous commercial city, one of the leading cities in Greece. It owed its prosperity not only to the trade that flowed through it, but to several other factors as well. Corinth hosted the biennial Isthmian Games, which drew large crowds to the city. It also had the coveted status of a Roman colony and was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia...But Corinth also had its dark side... Corinth was such an immoral city that its name became a byword for sexual vice; the verb "to Corinthianize" meant to commit sexual immorality, and "Corinthian girl" became a slang term for a prostitute."
- John MacArthur (2,3)

"In the first century AD, when Paul wrote his letter, Corinth was known for its banking industry and incredible wealth. Shrines to deities of Greek, Roman and even Egyptian gods have been discovered, and cult prostitution was common."
- NIV Faithlife Illustrated Study Bible (1875)

"Corinth was a city of wealth and culture, seated at the crossroads of the Roman Empire. The city was the hub of trade and commerce in the first-century world. It was a resort city, located in a lush and desirable region. It was also a city of moral depravity - a place where prostitution and other forms of sexual immorality were rampant. People chased money, success, and status. They worshiped Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of sex...The Temple of Aphrodite was on a hill behind the city. Every evening the priest and priestesses - male and female prostitutes, would come down from the temple into the streets to ply their trade. History records that there were as many as a thousand temple prostitutes employed at the temple of Aphrodite at one time."
- Ray Stedman (10)

"**Achaia** was the ancient name for Greece. All of the Greek mainland, the southern peninsula known as the Peloponnesus, and the Greek isles were part of Achaia. So this letter was addressed to all the churches in Greece."
- Ray Stedman (271)

2. How did Paul describe his apostleship? 1:1 What does this say about his calling and authority? (Compare Galatians 1:1,12)

- What other designation did Paul use for himself? 4:5

3. Besides being a "*brother*" (1:2), underline how Paul described Timothy in:

- 1 Corinthians 4:17 For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord.
- 1 Corinthians 16:10 If Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am.
- Philippians 2:19-22 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 20 I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. 21 For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.
- 2 Timothy 1:5 I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

4. What words describe the Corinthian believers in 1:1? (How did they become “saints?” 1 Corinthians 6:11)

Compare the tone of other greetings.
Romans 1:8;
Philippians 1:2-5;
1 Thessalonians 1:2,3.

5. What did Paul wish for his readers? 1:2

- What insights does 2 Corinthians 12:15 give into Paul’s relationship with the Corinthian church?

“Grace and peace to you” “Paul’s typical greeting throughout his letters (compare Gal. 1:3; Romans 1:7; Eph. 1:2; Philippians 1:2). It summarized his gospel message: God’s work through Christ (grace) brings people into a harmonious relationship with God and one another (peace).” - NIV Faithlife Illustrated Study Bible (1843)

“This is no empty salutation. Grace is a word that sums up all that God is ready to do for us and give to us. All of His supply comes to us by grace.” - Ray Stedman (271)

6. From Acts 18:1-18, list things that happened during Paul’s first missionary trip to Corinth.

<i>Personal details</i>	<i>His ministry</i>	<i>Opposition</i>

7. List issues that Paul addressed in his first letter after visiting Corinth.

- 1 Corinthians 1:11,12; 3:3
- 1 Corinthians 6:1,6,7
- 1 Corinthians 5:1,2
- 1 Corinthians 15:12,13

8. When Paul wrote his second letter to the Corinthians, what were some of his main concerns?

- 2 Corinthians 11:2-4
- 2 Corinthians 12:20,21

FYI: [Some think] "Paul wrote at least four letters to Corinth: an **initial letter that is lost** (1 Cor. 5:9); the letter we know as **1 Corinthians**; **another lost letter**, described as Paul's *severe* letter to Corinth (2 Cor. 2:3-4,9...); and the letter we know as **2 Corinthians**." - NIV Faithlife Illustrated Study Bible (1900)

Suggested Timeline for Paul and the Corinthian Church

- Paul established church in Corinth on his second missionary journey (Acts 18- This was his 1st visit.)
- Wrote a corrective letter (referred to in 1 Cor. 5:9) This **1st letter** was lost.
- In response to a letter they wrote back, Paul wrote a **2nd letter**, 1 Corinthians, and Timothy was sent to deal with problems (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10)
- Apparently the Corinthians did not respond well to these instructions so Paul made a "painful visit" (2 Cor. 2:1 - This was his 2nd visit. Not recorded in Acts.)
- After Paul returned to Ephesus he wrote a **3rd letter**, called the "severe" letter (2 Cor. 2:3-4). It was apparently carried there by Titus (7:6-9) The identity of this letter is debated, but most assume it was lost.
- After Titus gave Paul an encouraging report about the Corinthians response, Paul responded with a **4th letter**, 2 Corinthians.
- Sometime later, Paul possibly made a third visit to Corinth (Acts 20:1-3)

Applying the Word: *What things from your background have presented the biggest hurdles in knowing and growing in the Lord? Where have you seen yourself desensitized by the culture to things about which you should have been more discerning?*

Day 2

Comfort in Trouble. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

9. Fill in the titles/descriptions Paul gives to God in 1:3.

God and Father of _____

The Father of _____ (See Ephesians 2:4,5)

The God of _____

FYI: Father (Greek) *pater* Strong's NT:3962, from a root signifying "a nourisher, protector, upholder"
- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"Metaphorically...the author, source, beginner of something" - The Complete Word Study Dictionary NT

Compassion/mercy Strong's NT:3628 "the viscera, the inward parts, as the seat of emotion, the "heart,"
- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

The Father "is the very source and origin of all compassion. He is compassion's first and only fountain - the Father from whom all compassion flows...The Lord feels for you."
- Kelly Minter (19)

10. What assurance do we have in our troubles/afflictions? What blessings does God bring out of troubles? 1:4

Digging Deeper

How is God's comfort described in:
2 Thessalonians 2:16

Lamentations 3:22,23

11. Underline ways that the Lord provides for our comfort.

- John 14:16-17 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever- the Spirit of truth. NIV
- Romans 8:34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died-more than that, who was raised to life-is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?
- Hebrews 4:15-16 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are- yet was without sin. 16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. NIV

Comforts Strong's NT:3870 (Greek) *parakaleo*; to call near, i.e. invite, invoke

"The idea behind this word for **comfort** in the New Testament is always more than soothing sympathy. It has the idea of strengthening, of helping, of making strong." - David Guzik

Trouble/tribulation/afflictions Strong's NT:2347 (Greek) *thlipsis*; pressure (literally or figuratively)

"When we suffer, we discover God's resources for our trials... ...The more mature we grow as Christians, the more clearly we see this principle." - Ray Stedman (272-273)

12. What are two truths for a believer in this life? 1:5 (See John 16:33)

13. What significance did Paul give to his trials? 1:6

- What hope did Paul express for the Corinthians? 1:7

Digging Deeper

Amazingly, what did Paul say even about his imprisonment? Philippians 1:12-14, 18

FYI: Salvation Strong's NT:4991 (Greek) *soteria*; rescue or safety: deliverance, preservation, safety,

"Certain opponents in Corinth may have assumed that Paul's sufferings delegitimized his apostleship, as they regarded suffering as a sign of weakness. Paul reminds the believers that his sufferings brought about the spread of the gospel by displaying God's power." - NIV Faithlife Illustrated Bible (1903)

"Paul's suffering of affliction and endurance of trial ultimately benefited the Corinthians in that he was thereby equipped to administer divine encouragement to them when they were afflicted and to ensure their preservation when they underwent trial." - The Expositor's Bible Commentary

14. Underline how Paul expressed his willingness to sacrifice for others and why.

- 2 Timothy 2:10 For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory. NAS
- Philippians 2:16-17 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. NAS
- Ephesians 3:13 Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory. NAS

Applying the Word: *What trial would you point to in your life as having a profound and positive influence on your relationship with the Lord?*

Day 3

Paul's Personal Comfort in Trouble. Read 2 Corinthians 1:8-11

15. List the phrases that Paul used to describe the effects of his hardships/afflictions/trouble in Asia. 1:8,9a

- *we were*
- *beyond*
- *so that we*
- *indeed we had*

beyond measure Strong's NT:5236 (Greek) *hyperbole* "to throw beyond, surpass...exceedingly, in the highest possible degree."
- The Complete Word Dictionary (1414)

Despair Strong's NT:1820 (Greek) *exaporeomai*; to be utterly at a loss
"to be utterly without a way" (*ek*, "out of," *poros*, "a way through") without resource, in despair."- Vine's Dictionary
"To be at a loss psychologically, be in great difficulty, doubt, embarrassment," [\[BDAG 345\]](#) - Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

16. Look up the following verses and list some of the things that Paul endured in ministry.
(For Paul's summary see 2 Corinthians 11:23-25)

- Acts 9:23,24,29
- Acts 13:50
- Acts 14:5,6; 19
- Acts 16:22,23

17. What else did Paul learn through his sufferings? 1:9b (Cross reference 4:7)

- What perspective and force does the phrase "*who raises the dead*" give? (Compare Ephesians 1:19,20)

18. What hope did these experiences give Paul about the future? 1:10

- What understanding did Paul have about the end of his life? 2 Timothy 4:6-8,18

19. How did the Corinthians have a part in his deliverance? 1:11a

- What blessings would this bring to others? 1:11b

Digging Deeper

For other examples of how Paul valued the prayers of others see Philippians 1:19; Ephesians 6:18,19.

FYI: "Paul's opponents may have assumed that Paul's sufferings delegitimized his apostleship, as they regarded suffering as a sign of weakness. Paul reminds the believers that his sufferings brought about the spread of the gospel by displaying God's power." - NIV Faithlife Illustrated Study Bible (1901)

20. Summarize the ways that God can turn suffering into blessings:

- 1:4,5 - *we receive God's comfort, able to comfort others*
- 1:9
- 1:11

Applying the Word: *When have you faced a situation that forced you to rely totally on the Lord? Explain.*

Day 4

Paul's Defense. Read 2 Corinthians 1:12-23

"Second Corinthians is the most autobiographical of Paul's letters and probably the most difficult letter that Paul had to write...Some false teachers in the congregation were antagonized by Paul's rebuke and rejected his warnings. As a result, in this letter Paul was forced to defend his character and more importantly his apostolic authority, in the face of slanderous accusations. His defense reveals the trials and tribulations, the problems and the pressures of his itinerant ministry...Yet like the rest of Paul's letters, Second Corinthians points past Paul's sweat and tears to the power that lay behind his actions and words: the Lord Jesus Christ"

- The Nelson Study Bible (1942)

21. As Paul began a defense of his ministry, what claims did he make about his conduct? 1:12
See also 1 Corinthians 15:10 (How long had he been a witness to them? Acts 18:11)

FYI: Holiness/simplicity Strong's NT:572 (Greek) *haplotes*; singleness, sincerity (without dissimulation or self-seeking)"not having an ulterior or double motive...purity, sincerity...In 2 Cor. 11:3, 'the simplicity that is in Christ; means frankness, integrity, fidelity.'" - The Complete Word Study Dictionary (214)

Sincerity Strong's NT:1505 *eilikrineia*; clearness, i.e. (by implication) purity "without hidden motives or pretense

"Clearly, Paul has examined himself. He has done something or said something, and the Corinthians feel offended because of it. So Paul has examined his conscience and concluded that he has done nothing wrong. ...Paul wants the Corinthians to know that he is not merely being defensive and self-justifying but that he stands innocent before God." - Ray Stedman (276)

"These baseless charges Paul answers in the only way possible for him--by appealing to the testimony of his own

22. How did Paul show this in his writings? 1:13

FYI: "It would appear that some were accusing him of insincerity in his letters, writing one thing and meaning something else. But Paul wrote nothing but what the Corinthians could read and understand. There were no double meanings." - Stuart Allen (202)

23. What kind of relationship was Paul seeking with the Corinthians? 1:14

Paul Defends his Decisions

24. How had Paul's plans about visiting the Corinthians changed? 1:15,16 (Compare his plans in 1 Cor. 16:5-7.)

25. Because of this change of plans, what were some apparently saying about Paul? 1:17

26. Before giving reasons for his change in plans, what did Paul maintain about his message? 1:18,19,20a (See Matthew 5:37) (What does using two oaths (1:18a,23a) in his defense indicate about the intensity of Paul's statements and feelings?)

FYI: "'Yes' and 'No' describe contradictory messages. Paul affirms that his message was consistent with the teaching of Christ...'Yes' in Christ indicates that God's promises are true, trustworthy and fulfilled in Christ." - NIV Faithlife Illustrated Bible (1905)

"While Jesus said we should live our lives in such a way so that **oaths** are not necessary (Matthew 5:33-37), it does not mean that oaths are prohibited. On occasion, even God swears an oath (Hebrews 6:13)." - David Guzik

Amen "to be firm, steady, truth worthy...verily, it is so" - The Complete Word Study Dictionary (134)

"The message originally proclaimed at Corinth (Acts 18:5) by ...Paul, Silvanus, (= Silas) and Timothy centered in none other than God's Son in whom inconsistency and indecision had no place. The Corinthians' "Amen" to the gospel declaration itself validated [their] preaching...With his consistency confirmed here, was it likely that Paul would act in a worldly manner in relatively trivial affairs? How could they distrust the apostle who himself had taught them to affirm ("Amen") the trustworthiness of God?" - Expositor's Bible Commentary

27. List the ways that God had confirmed Paul, his fellow workers, and the Corinthians.
1:21,22 (See 1 Corinthians 1:4-7)

Sealed us. In the ancient world, a seal was used to *identify* and to *protect*. If something was **sealed**, everyone knew who it belonged to...and the seal prevented anyone else from tampering with the item." - David Guzik

Deposit/guarantee/pledge Strong's NT:728 (Greek) *arrhabon*; a pledge, i.e. part of the purchase-money or property given in advance as security for the rest

"Used in the NT only in a figurative sense and spoken of the Holy Spirit which God has given to believers in this present life to assure them of their future and eternal inheritance." - The Complete Word Study Dictionary (257)

"All of God's promises deal with blessing, healing, and salvation, never with hurting or condemnation. Jesus did not come to hurt us or condemn us but to revive us and save us. - Ray Stedman (279)

28. Summarize the things has Paul pointed to as evidence of the integrity and reliability of their message and themselves as messengers?

- 1:12 - a godly testimony
- 1:13
- 1:18-20
- 1:21,22

29. What reason did Paul finally give for changing his plans and not making another visit (on his way back from Macedonia)? 1:23

30. What wasn't Paul trying to do? 1:24a What does the phrase "Lord it over" indicate that Paul's critics might have been saying about him?

- What motivated Paul? 1:24b (See Romans 1:12)

Spare Strong's NT:5339 *pheidomai*; "to spare, treat with tenderness." - The Complete Word Dictionary (1438)

"Paul wanted to spare them from being intimidated and manipulated by the force of his personality...Paul says, in effect, ...If I had come to Corinth the way I had originally planned, after having already paid you a painful visit, my powerful personality and strong will, coupled with my authority as an apostle, would have put a lot of pressure on you to obey me - not out of conviction from God but out of intimidation by me. So I decided not to return in order to preserve your freedom and to make sure I didn't lord it over you. I'm your fellow worker, your partner, not your boss. I work with you for the sake of your joy." - Ray Stedman (280)

"In the earlier Epistle (1 Cor. 16:5), the plan was: Ephesus-Macedonia-Corinth.... But in 2 Corinthians 1:16, the route is: Ephesus-Corinth-Macedonia-Corinth... Paul had planned to visit Corinth twice--before and after his activity in Macedonia (1:16)" - Expositor's Bible Commentary

Applying the Word: *What do the efforts that Paul took in order to clear up misunderstandings and deal with animosity say about his concern and love for the Corinthians? What from his example helps you in dealing with a misunderstanding or unfair criticism?*

Memory Verse:

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. NIV

