

Outline of 2 Corinthians

Skeletal Outline of II Corinthians:

- I. Paul's purpose for writing 1 and 2 Corinthians:**
 - A. Paul wrote I Corinthians to test the brethren's faith (2 Corinthians 2:9). The scriptures authorize said test in light of the fact that souls are at stake (1 John 3:10; 4:1, 6). Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to restore the brethren's faith in the Lord (2 Corinthians 13:9-10).
 - B. Paul's preaching and writings of admonition were done due to a love for brethren's souls (2 Corinthians 1:6; 2:4; 4:15; 12:14-15).
 - C. Paul's desire for the Corinthians is that they would be made sorrowful unto repentance when reading the first epistle (2 Corinthians 2:2; 7:7ff) and be restored (2 Corinthians 13:9-10).
 - D. The only way said reaction from the gospel was to occur was by authoritative truthful preaching as opposed to "*fleshly wisdom*" (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:12; 2:17; 3:5; 4:2, 7; 5:12). Paul's argument was that his epistles were written by divine authority.
 - E. The motivation for authoritative living is judgment and eternal life (2 Corinthians 2:14; 4:14; 5:10-11, 14-15).
- II. Further problems with the Corinthian brethren:**
 - A. A battle for souls was taking place in Corinth. Factious brethren were attempting to delude the Corinthian brethren's minds into thinking ill of Paul and his preaching companions (2 Corinthians 11:19-20; 13:3).
 - B. Some had charged Paul with being inconsistent and thereby not worthy of listening to (2 Corinthians 1:17).
 - C. Some had charged Paul as one who "*commended*" himself (preaching his own ideas) to brethren (2 Corinthians 3:1; 4:5; 5:12; 10:12; 13:3).
 - D. False teachers were teaching Mosaic Law mingled with the Law of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:7ff; 11:13ff).
 - E. Some had charged Paul and his preaching companions as being "*beside*" themselves (deranged and self deluded in madness) (2 Corinthians 5:13).
 - F. Some had charged Paul with a lack of courage when in person (his letters were weighty and bold; however, when he was present, he was weak) (2 Corinthians 10:1, 10). These brethren confused Paul's tenderness for cowardice.
 - G. These same brethren charged Paul with being "*rude in speech*" (an idiot) (2 Corinthians 11:5).
 - H. They challenged Paul's apostleship because he did not take wages from the brethren as did the other apostles (2 Corinthians 11:7-9; 12:11). From a logic standpoint, Paul's detractors were guilty of '*Argumentum ad hominem*' (an argument directed at the man by attacking the person who made the assertion). They called Paul deranged (2 Corinthians 5:13), cowardly (2 Corinthians 10:10), and an idiot (2 Corinthians 11:6).
 - I. These brethren built themselves up in the minds of the Corinthians and were persuading many of them away from Paul's divine teaching (2 Corinthians 11:19-20). Paul exposed these same type of factious false teachers to the Galatians (see Galatians 4:17; 5:7ff; 6:12).
 - J. Their boasting led Paul to boast of himself; however, Paul's glorying was on behalf of the souls that were saved through all that he suffered. Paul found himself in great danger from every aspect of life - cities, wilderness, sea, from Jew, Gentile, and false brethren. Paul suffered at the hands of all in every place he traveled (2 Corinthians 11:22). Truly Jesus' words were correct when he said that the world would hate the disciples because they would expose the world's evil deeds as did He (John 7:7; 17:14).
 - K. These same detractors accused Paul and Titus of trying to perform a scam on the Corinthian brethren that they may have gain (2 Corinthians 12:16-18).
- III. Paul exposed the doctrine of the devil:**
 - A. Satan has "*devices*" he uses to gain disciples (2 Corinthians 2:11).
 - B. Paul exposed the devices as "*craft and deceit*" (2 Corinthians 4:2).

- C. A battle for souls exists between the God of light and the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).
- D. When godly men expose sin, due to a love for souls, they are hated and persecuted (John 7:7; 2 Corinthians 1:8ff; 4:8-18).
- E. Without fear Paul called the false teachers in Corinth “*ministers of Satan,*” “*false apostles*” and “*deceitful workers*” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).
- F. Paul’s true fear was that the brethren in Corinth would be “*beguiled*” by the ministers of Satan (2 Corinthians 11:1-4; 12:20).

IV. Paul encouraged the Corinthians to have the funds ready for the needy saints in Jerusalem:

- A. Paul encouraged the Corinthians to follow the example of the Macedonians who gave with great liberality to help the needy saints in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8:1ff).
- B. Paul made it clear that this was not a command; however, it was a testament of their love for God and brethren (2 Corinthians 8:8; 9:1ff).
- C. The consequences of such actions is that the name of God is glorified and those who are helped will make supplications on behalf of those who helped (2 Corinthians 9:12-15).

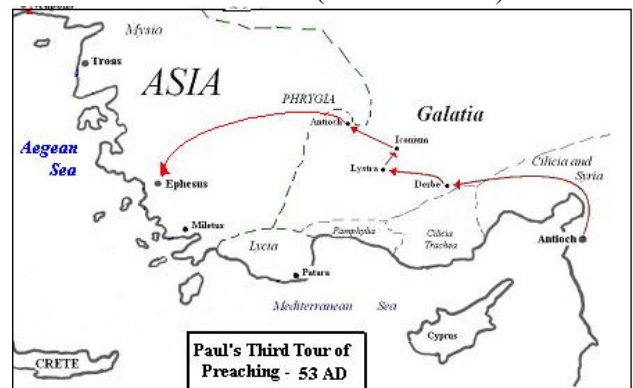
V. Paul addressed the issue of church autonomy:

- A. Individuals in the churches of Paul’s day were communicating with each other (2 Corinthians 1:1; 7:4, 14; 8:18). Said communication was not gossip else the divine record is flawed.
- B. The universal brotherhood was united in truth:
 1. Truth enabled Paul to make a judgment about the fornicator of 1 Corinthians 5 without violating the Corinthians’ autonomy. Paul simply gave the principles of truth, and the brethren were at liberty (autonomy) to make the decision as to when these principles should be applied (1 Corinthians 5 and 2 Corinthians 2:5-8).
 2. The churches were able to agree, by show of hands, over who to send with the party that would carry the monetary aid back to Jerusalem without violating each other’s autonomy (2 Corinthians 8:19). No decision of the amount of money to be sent from the treasury was made by this individual, and he thereby did not violate any one church’s autonomy.

Introduction:

Paul left Antioch of Pisidia during the year 53 AD and headed west to Galatia on what is referred to as the third tour of gospel preaching (Acts 18:23). He then traveled to Ephesus (Acts 19:1). Three months were spent reasoning with the Jews in the synagogue and making disciples (Acts 19:8). Paul spent two additional years “*reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus*” in Ephesus which would bring the date to 55 AD (Acts 19:9-10). At some point during Paul’s stay in Ephesus, he gained intelligence that the brethren in Jerusalem were in financial need. Paul began spreading the word of their needs first to the Galatian brethren (1 Corinthians 16:1), then to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:1ff), and finally to all Macedonia and Achaia (Romans 15:26).

While in Ephesus, Paul received two letters from the Corinthian brethren revealing spiritual troubles and division within the church (1 Corinthians 16:8-9). One letter was from the household of Chloe (1 Corinthians 1:11) and the second letter was from the church in Corinth as a whole (see 1 Corinthians 7:1). These two letters likely came to Paul by the hands of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1 Corinthians 16:17).



Paul, having been in Ephesus 2 1/2 years, sends Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia (Acts 19:22). Timothy and Erastus travel North through Troas, Neapolis, Phillippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Beroea, and then southward to Athens and Corinth. The purpose of Timothy and Erastus’ visit was to “*put you* (the Corinthians) *in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church*” (1 Corinthians 4:17). Secondly, Timothy and Erastus were to deliver instructions to the brethren in Macedonia and Achaia to

lay by in store on the first day of the week for the needy saints in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 9). Paul expected the first epistle to the Corinthians to reach them before the arrival of Timothy and Erastus (see 1 Corinthians 4:17; 16:10). When one reads 1 Corinthians 16:1ff it is obvious that the apostle expected the Corinthians to understand the subject at hand. It is likely that Paul intended for Apollos and "*the brethren*" to hand deliver the first epistle to the Corinthians; however, Apollos was not willed to do so at that time (see 1 Corinthians 16:12). Who "*the brethren*" were that delivered the first epistle to the Corinthians is unknown yet some suspect that Titus may have been among them (2 Corinthians 7:7-15).

Nine months in Ephesus passed with no word from Timothy, Titus, Erastus, or "*the brethren*" regarding the ongoing events in Corinth and Macedonia (if we subtract the total time Paul spent in Ephesus; i.e., 3 years [Acts 20:31], from the 2 years and 3 months mentioned in Acts 19 we get 9 months). Meanwhile, Paul continued to preach and teach the receptive Ephesians in Asia (see 1 Corinthians 16:8-9). Paul had sent Titus to Corinth for a twofold purpose. First, Paul likely sent the first epistle by the hands of Titus to the Corinthians that they may be admonished and repent (2 Corinthians 7:5ff). Secondly, Paul gave instructions to Titus to encourage the Corinthian brethren to fulfill their duty to the needy saints in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:1ff; 2 Corinthians 8:6).

After a total of three years in Ephesus, Paul, being filled with anxiety for the brethren in Corinth, traveled northward to Troas (Acts 20:31). Apparently Paul had communicated with Titus to meet him in Troas with news from the church in Corinth; however, Titus never showed up (2 Corinthians 2:12-13). Paul left Troas traveling across the Aegean Sea and likely landing at Neapolis and then to Philippi. Many believe this second epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi after Paul found Titus. Paul met up with Titus upon entrance in Macedonia (possibly Neapolis or Philippi) and then traveled south through the cities where churches had been established (2 Corinthians 7:5-8). The date of this epistle would fall approximately one plus but less than two years after writing the first epistle (57 AD) (see 1 Corinthians 16:8; 2 Corinthians 8:10; 9:1-2 as compared to the Acts 19 time frame). The fact that Timothy is mentioned at 2 Corinthians 1:1 indicates that he, too, was now with Paul and Titus in Macedonia.

The second epistle to the Corinthians probably reached the brethren only months before Paul himself would arrive. This letter served the purpose of preparing the Corinthians for the apostle's arrival and encouraging them. Secondly, the letter was to motivate the faithful Corinthian Christians to show their love for the universal brotherhood and help the needy saints in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8-9). Paul eventually came to Corinth, remained there for only three months (Acts 20:3), and penned the Roman letter (Romans 15:25; 16:1). Paul's anxiety and love for the brethren are depicted in this second epistle to the Corinthians. He had written a scathing rebuke in the first epistle and now was eagerly desiring to see them (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:21). The two epistles to the Corinthians illustrate a fact about God. First, the Lord does not tolerate sin among the saints. Secondly, the Lord is patient with the saints. The time between the two epistles represents a time of forbearance that the Corinthians might have time to repent of their sin. Paul purposely delayed coming to them that they might have time to repent (see 2 Corinthians 1:23-24).

Overview of 2 Corinthians

Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians sets forth the apostle's great love for the brethren. Everything that Paul did was for the benefit of the Corinthians (see 2 Corinthians 1:6; 2:4; 4:15; 12:14-15, 19). Paul's great desire for these brethren was that their spiritual restoration (see 2 Corinthians 13:9). The Corinthians; however, needed to clear three major hurdles to achieve restoration. First, the Corinthians needed to identify and pray for the forgiveness of their sin of being unwilling to forgive one who seeks forgiveness (see 2 Corinthians 2:5-9). Secondly, the Corinthians needed to clear themselves from sharing unlawful affections with unbelievers such as uncleanness, fornication, and lasciviousness (2 Corinthians 6:11ff; 12:21). Thirdly, the Corinthians needed to be restored for being deceived by factious brethren who were teaching false doctrines and making faulty accusations against Paul (see 2 Corinthians 12:19-20; 13:3).

The beauty of reading 2 Corinthians is that one can clearly see God's expectation for His beloved saints. The saints are those who are obedient in all areas of truth (see 2 Corinthians 2:9). The saint is to be the mirror image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). The saint is to be cleansed from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Corinthians 7:1). The saint is to be presented to God as a pure virgin in respect to sin (2 Corinthians 11:2). The saint of God is to "*do no evil*" (2 Corinthians 13:7). The Christian today is expected to be no less perfect than these early New Testament Christians (see Matthew 5:48). There is no sin that God overlooks or excuses without man seeking justification.

A great "*device*" of Satan is lies (see 2 Corinthians 2:11). There were many ministers of Satan in Corinth who laid claims to being Christian yet their deeds were far from Christ like (see 2 Corinthians 11:13-15). These factious brethren sought to destroy Paul's reputation as an apostle who spoke divine revelation so that the Corinthians would turn away from him. These men accused Paul of being inconsistent (2 Corinthians 1:17), preaching his own ideas (2 Corinthians 3:1; 4:1-6; 5:12; etc.), deluded (2 Corinthians 5:13), a coward (2 Corinthians 10:1, 10), an idiot (2 Corinthians 11:15), not an apostle (2 Corinthians 12:11; 13:3), and that he and Titus were participating in a scam of the brethren (2 Corinthians 12:17-18).

Paul was fearful that the Corinthians would be fully persuaded by these false accusations. Paul wrote, "*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ*" (2 Corinthians 11:3). Again, Paul writes, "*For I fear, lest by any means, when I come, I should find you not such as I would, and should myself be found of you such as ye would not; lest by any means there should be strife, jealousy, wraths, factions, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults;*" (2 Corinthians 12:20). Paul had great anxiety for the brotherhood of saints (see 2 Corinthians 11:28). He would not sit back idly and do nothing while brethren lost their eternal souls.

To combat the false accusations by the factious brethren of Corinth Paul lowers himself to their tactics. Apparently the factious were boasting of their ancestry and the need for the Corinthians to continue in the Mosaic system as well as the teachings of Christ (very similar to the Acts 15 Jerusalem Conference and the book of Galatians) (see 2 Corinthians 3:4-18; 11:22). Paul boast not only of his sufferings but also his experience of being transported to the third heaven (see 2 Corinthians 11:22 - 12:6). Paul was in all since of the word an apostle of Jesus Christ who spoke divine revelation. Paul writes, "*I am become foolish: ye compelled me; for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I am nothing*" (2 Corinthians 12:11).

Having proved his apostleship and the error of the factious there was only one thing left to do. Paul was coming to Corinth and those who would not repent of their sins would not be spared but rather dealt with sharply (see 2 Corinthians 13:1-2, 10). The practical application for the saints today is that we too must "*do no evil*" (2 Corinthians 13:7). Those who will not be restored to the Lord through teaching, patience, and longsuffering must be dealt with. Paul would not sweep men's sins under a rug of apathy and pretend to be in favor with God. One year had passed between the writings of 1 and 2 Corinthians (2 Corinthians 8:10). Now was the time for the brethren to be either restored or exposed as moving from death unto death (see 2 Corinthians 2:16). Paul concludes by saying, "*Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfected; be comforted; be of the same mind; live in peace: and the God of love and peace shall be with you*" (2 Corinthians 13:11).

Outline of 2 Corinthians:

Prelude to Chapter One

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians deals with problems among the brethren. At the writing of 2 Corinthians Paul had not yet been to Corinth after the first epistle; however, it is apparent that he has gained information regarding the Corinthian's response to the first epistle. The apostle begins this second letter by letting the Corinthians know of the great suffering yet comfort he and his fellow laborers in Christ were experiencing in Asia. Paul and the brethren's suffering was not due to teaching the precepts of men but that of God.

I. The God of all comfort (1:1-11):

A. *“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints that are in the whole of Achaia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”* (1:1-2).

1. Some in Corinth had falsely laid claim to the office of apostle (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:13). Paul, however, was a true apostle of Jesus Christ (Acts 9:15-16). He was hand picked *“through the will of God.”*
2. Timothy is mentioned here and thereby apparently present with Paul in Macedonia at the time of this writing. Paul first met Timothy on his second tour of preaching and found him to be a faithful worker in the Kingdom of God (cf. Acts 16:1ff). Paul later referred to Timothy saying, *“as a child serves a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel”* (Philippians 2:22) (for more on Timothy see introduction to this study).
3. Though this letter is addressed to the *“church of God in Corinth,”* Paul included *“all the saints that are in the whole of Achaia”* as those who greet the Corinthians. Once again, this solidifies the idea that the early saints communicated with each other from church to church without violating anyone’s autonomy (cf. Romans 1:8; 16:19; 1 Corinthians 16:19). The saints in Achaia would have included the brethren from Athens (Acts 17:34) and Cenchreae, the home of Phoebe (Romans 16:1).
4. Paul’s salutary remarks typically include the wish for *“grace and peace”* to be with the brethren from *“God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”* One who has God’s grace is one who has been forgiven of sins (Romans 5:1ff; Ephesians 1:7) through the initial act of baptism (Acts 2:38) and thereafter through a process of humbly asking forgiveness (Isaiah 57:15; 66:2; 1 John 1:9, 3:3). The *“peace”* of God is experienced by walking by the authority of Jesus Christ (cf. Philippians 4:9). Clearly, grace and peace belongs to those who truly and humbly love the Lord.

B. *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God”* (1:3-4).

1. The word *“blessed”* (*eulogetos*) is defined as “to bless, ascribe praise and glorification” (Moulton 174). *Eulogetos* is found in other passages of scriptures such as 1 Peter 1:3. The meaning, in this context, is that of giving praise and honor to the name of Jehovah God.
2. The reason Paul gave God praise and honor was that He is merciful to mankind (cf. Jeremiah 9:23-24). Paul later would say to the Romans that the *“wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 6:23). Through Christ we may escape the condemnation of sin, and thereby we see the love and mercy of God (cf. John 3:16; 1 John 3:16; 4:10).
3. Not only is the Lord the God of mercy but also of all *“comfort.”* The word *“comfort”* (*paraklesis*) is “a calling to one’s aid, summons..., a calling upon, appealing... entreaty, deprecation...” (LS 597). Consider the use of *paraklesis* in Romans 15:4; 2 Corinthians 7:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:16 etc. Interestingly, the apostle John used the Greek word *parakletos* being transliterated *“Advocate”* to describe the merciful work of Jesus in the forgiveness of our sins (1 John 2:1).
4. In what way then does the Lord *“comfort us in our affliction”*? The word *“affliction”* (*thlipsis*) is defined as “metaphorically to oppress, afflict, distress” (LS 367); “affliction, distress of mind; distressing circumstances, trial, affliction (“A condition of pain, suffering or distress” {AHD 84}). The saints of God may appeal to Jehovah God for the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and thereby be comforted in the idea that we shall be with the Lord in paradise for ever (see 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Secondly, with such marvelous blessings available to us, we can help others who are distressed to receive the comfort through the blood of Jesus Christ. Thirdly, we may suffer physical afflictions as well, and the God of comfort will help as He wills (cf. James 5:14) (see study # 1; Jesus Comforts the Afflicted). Herein is the two fold

- nature of God exposed and summed up in the word love. God is merciful to those who would live lawfully, and He cares for our sick and distressed physical well being (see 1 John 3:16-17).
- C. *“For as the sufferings of Christ abound unto us, even so our comfort also aboundeth through Christ”* (1:5).
1. There is a connection between the sufferings of Jesus Christ and the comfort (forgiveness of sins) offered by Christ. One will not receive the end of said comfort if one has not suffered with Christ. Therefore, Paul stated, *“the sufferings of Christ abound unto us.”* Peter said, *“For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps”* (1 Peter 2:21).
 2. When we suffer, as did Christ for righteousness, we are assured of His comfort. Again Paul told Timothy, *“Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution”* (2 Timothy 3:12). Again Paul said, *“if we endure, we shall also reign with him: if we shall deny him, he also will deny us:”* (2 Timothy 2:12).
- D. *“But whether we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or whether we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which worketh in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer:”* (1:6).
1. The distress and mental anguish that Paul, Timothy, and the other servants of Christ went through was due to their stand in truth (elaborated in the next few verses).
 2. Truth reveals instructions whereby man may be saved. As the apostles and evangelist such as Timothy, Erastus, and Titus went about preaching the gospel and suffering the consequence was comfort (through the preaching of forgiveness of sins) toward all who heard.
- E. *“and our hope for you is steadfast; knowing that, as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so also are ye of the comfort”* (1:7).
1. Paul, Timothy, and all the faithful of Achaia had a steadfast (steady) hope in the Corinthian brethren due to their being *“partakers”* (sharing in the fellowship of Christ suffering; cf. Philippians 3:10; 1 Peter 4:13).
 2. Those who so suffered would also receive the comfort of knowing that their sins had been forgiven.
- F. *“For we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning our affliction which befell us in Asia, that we were weighted down exceedingly, beyond our power, insomuch that we despaired even of life: yea, we ourselves have had the sentence of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead: who delivered us out of so great a death, and will deliver: on whom we have set our hope that he will also still deliver us;”* (1:8-10).
1. Here is an informative statement. Preaching should inform rather than leave brethren *“ignorant!”* Paul informed the brethren of the *“affliction which befell us in Asia.”*
 2. As we follow our time line of events discussed in the introduction of this study, we find that between the writing of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians Paul suffered at the hands of Demetrius in Asia as recorded at Acts 19:23ff. So intense were the persecutions that the timing of Paul’s stay in Ephesus was most likely cut short, though there were still many doors of opportunity (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:8-9; Acts 20:1ff). This danger was so great that Paul said, *“we despaired even of life.”* Death was certain in times of Paul’s ministering to the saints and the lost. That which kept Paul and others with him pressing forward was their faith in the fact that God would one day raise them from the dead never to die again (see study # 1).
 3. The Lord had delivered Paul from danger in the past, and He would surely continue to be with Paul. Paul put his trust in God rather than the arm of flesh (see study # 2; Trust in God).
- G. *“Ye also helping together on our behalf by your supplication; that, for the gift bestowed upon us by means of many, thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf”* (1:11).
1. Here were brethren in Christ, i.e., Paul, Timothy, Titus and others that preached truth who suffered for the cause of Christ at the hands of wicked men.
 2. Paul now thanked the Corinthians who prayed fervently on behalf of these men and the sufferings that they underwent for the cause of Christ. The Corinthians were informed of the dangers Paul and others in Asia faced due to the apostles statements at 1 Corinthians 16:9. Christians today ought to pray for each other in times of affliction as well.

II. Paul's conscious sincerity (1:12-14):

- A. *"For our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward"* (1:12).
1. The word "*for*" connects this thought with what he has said up to this point, i.e., verses 1-11. Paul had suffered for the cause of Christ even to the point of nearly losing his life that others may hear and share in his comfort (i.e., the comfort offered by God; spiritually first, and physically second). To "*glory*" (Greek - *kauchesis*), translated "*boasting*" (Nestle Marshall page 708), is defined by Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon as "reason to boast" (page 424). There is, therefore, one thing that the Christian may be proud of (boast) and that is in our salvation. Let us brag about our spiritual state and put all else in its proper place.
 2. The apostle Paul could boast or brag boldly and confidently because his conscience had been trained by the word of God. The word of God promised salvation to those who obey (cf. Acts 2:38). Faith in Jehovah God will give one confidence in the promises of God. The premise of this verse is that the conscience is to be trained through God's word as opposed to "*fleshly wisdom*." Said confidence of the conscience is a product of "*holiness and sincerity of God*" in relation to truth. "*Conscience*" is defined as 'with – knowledge.' The conscience is "the faculty of recognizing the distinction between right and wrong in regard to one's conduct coupled with a sense that one should act accordingly" (AHD 312). The apostle Paul once said, "*I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth*" and then went on to enumerate those evil deeds that he thought were right (Acts 26:9ff). Paul's conscience (his distinction between right and wrong) was based on "*I verily thought with myself*" rather than in "*the grace of God*" (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:2).
 3. "*Holiness*" (honest; NCV) (Greek - *haplotes*) = "singleness: simplicity, frankness" (LS 94). "Simplicity, sincerity, purity or probity (upright) of mind, Romans 12:8; 2 Corinthians 1:12; 11:3; Ephesians 6:5; Colossians 3:22" (Moulton 40). 2 Corinthians 11:3 may give us some help here with understanding this word. Paul said, "*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ.*" The same Greek word is translated "*simplicity*" in 2 Corinthians 11:3 and "*holiness*" in 2 Corinthians 1:12. The idea is that the mind of man is to be trained in one (single) divine truth alone as opposed to "*fleshly wisdom*" if the said comfort is to follow.
 4. "*Sincerity*" (Greek - *heilikrineia*) is defined as "unmixed, without alloy, pure, Latin: sincerus... without mixture, of itself, simply, absolutely" (LS 228). Again, Moulton defines the word *heilikrineia* as "sunshine, ... that which being viewed in the sunshine is found clear and pure; met. Spotless, sincere, ingenuous" (117-118). The American Heritage Dictionary defines the word sincere as "not feigned or affected; true: Presenting no false appearance; honest; pure unadulterated" (1142). These two words, honesty and sincerity, represent minds that are confident and genuinely persuaded.
 5. Far too many times we are hearing our own brethren justify their erroneous living by statements such as, 'he is honest and sincere in his beliefs.' My genuine and confident mind will not be the judge of my eternal soul. Just because one's conscience has been misled by another's genuine and confident position does not qualify him for salvation. The word of God clearly reveals the truth of the words honesty and sincerity. One may be honest and sincere in error (i.e., personal convictions or opinions) or honest and sincere in truth. Paul claimed sincerity not in human reasoning but through the "*grace of God*" (2 Corinthians 1:12). Paul later told Titus that "*the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world.*" (Titus 2:11-12).
 6. Sincerity and honesty are therefore states of man's conscience that have been determined by either truth or human reason. Those whose conscience is trained by absolute truth are pure, honest, and sincere in an approved way (cf. Luke 8:15; 1 John 2:4; 3:7-8). When one preaches error, it is a lie no matter what his motive or ignorance of a subject may be (cf. 1 John 2:21).

Said erroneous information, no matter one's state of honesty and sincerity "*leads astray*" (1 John 2:26; 3:7). Note that the word "*sincere*" (Greek - *heilikrineia*) is used only three times in the NT. Once here (2 Corinthians 1:12) and two other times (1 Corinthians 5:8; 2 Corinthians 2:17). All three of these passages connect sincerity with the purity of truth. Therefore, nowhere in the word of God do we find sincerely erroneous teachers that are approved of God. Such does not exist and is a concoction of human reasoning. The truth of the matter is that when one practices error it is termed "*ignorance*" and such "*ignorance*" is to be repented of (Acts 3:15-19). We all understand that one can be honestly or sincerely mistaken (as the word is used in the English language); however, truth and untruths remain what they are. Our honesty and sincerity changes no truth. Brethren, let us be on the side of truth (see study # 4; False Teachers)

7. In light of the above study, we now read the last clause of verse 12, "*we behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.*" How did they "*behave*?" It was in the simplicity of truth that they conducted themselves and taught.
- B. "*For we write no other things unto you, than what ye read or even acknowledge, and I hope ye will acknowledge unto the end: as also ye did acknowledge us in part, that we are your glorying, even as ye also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus*" (1:13-14).
1. Truth alone will see man to his heavenly abode and "*no other thing.*" Paul admonished the Corinthians to therefore cling to this truth and place their hope in it alone.
 2. "*Fleshly wisdom*" will only conclude in defeat and servitude to Satan.

III. Paul prepared the Corinthians for his impending visit (1:15-22):

- A. "*And in this confidence I was minded to come first unto you, that ye might have a second benefit*" (1:15):
1. The "*confidence*" that Paul had was in the faith (gospel truths). Due to Paul's assurance of the resurrection of the dead and eternity with God, he could come to the Corinthians knowing that all the stern words of 1 Corinthians were not empty. Souls were at stake. The only way to receive true comfort was for the Corinthians to repent and ask for forgiveness (see study # 1 and # 2).
 2. The "*second benefit*" can only mean that the Corinthians would receive more teaching in truth and divine revelation. They, therefore, should look forward to his visit.
- B. "*and by you to pass into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come unto you, and of you to be set forward on my journey unto Judea*" (1:16).
1. Verse 15 is now explained geographically. Paul had intended to leave Ephesus and come straight to Corinth (first). 1 Corinthians 16:5 indicates a change in plans. Paul said, "*but I will come unto you, when I shall have passed through Macedonia; for I pass through Macedonia.*"
 2. 2 Corinthians 1:16 gives Paul's original intention; i.e., to go directly to Corinth from Ephesus and then travel north through Macedonia and once again return to Corinth.
- C. "*When I therefore was thus minded, did I show fickleness? Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be the yea yea and the nay nay?*" (1:17).
1. Through some unrecorded correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians, he had apparently told them that he planned on going to Corinth directly from Ephesus. When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, he made the statement about going to Macedonia first instead of Corinth (again, see 1 Corinthians 16:5).
 2. Titus had apparently told Paul that some in Corinth were accusing him of "*fickleness*" due to changing his plans. To be "*fickle*" (*elaphria*) is "lightness: levity" (LS 248); "lightness in weight; hence, lightness of mind, levity" (Moulton 130). The word 'levity' is defined as "A light manner or attitude, esp. when inappropriate; frivolity. Changeableness; inconstancy" (AHD 726). There must have been some disgruntled in Corinth who were saying that the apostle Paul was inconsistent in his words and plans and thereby men should discontinue listening to him.
 3. Again, Paul asked, 'do you believe that I make statements according to fleshly wisdom as does the world so that when I speak no one really knows what I mean? Do I say yes when I really

- mean no?" (paraphrased). Paul answered, "*But as God is faithful, our word toward you is not yea and nay*" at the same time (1:18).
- D. "*For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not yea and nay, but in him is yea. For how many soever be the promises of God, in him is the yea: wherefore also through him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us*" (1:19-20).
1. Here is where the confidence that Paul spoke of in verse 15 lay. The preaching of Jesus Christ, the Son of God is not a matter of confusing language that makes no consistent sense (see 1 Corinthians 14:33). The word of God is perfect, clear, and understandable. Said words will lead souls to heaven and is, therefore, confidently affirmed as "*yea*" alone and not "*yea and nay*" (see study # 2).
 2. God has promised salvation to those who hear His clear truths (Acts 2:38). There was no uncertainty in God's promises nor in Paul's preaching. So certain were God's promises that Paul said "*through him (God) is the Amen.*" The word "*Amen*" is defined as "affirmation, in truth verily, most certainly; so be it" (Moulton 18). There is truth and certainty with God's word as opposed to confusion and uncertainty.
- E. "*Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts*" (1:21-22).
1. How is one "*established in Christ*" through God? To be "*established*" (*bebaioo*) is to "to make firm, confirm, establish, secure, warrant, make good; things warranted by fact; to secure one the possession of a thing" (LS 149). Colossians 2:6-7 uses the same word as follows, "*As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and builded up in him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.*" The context of 2 Corinthians 1 is in agreement with Colossians 2:6-7; that is, it is the word of God that 'makes firm' our confidence in God's promises. One is made to be 'secure' in the promises of God through divine revelation (see study # 2).
 2. Secondly, how has God "*anointed us*?" Clearly the anointing is connected Christians being established (secure in God's promises). This same word (*chrisma*) is used in 1 John 2:20 where John said, "*And ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things*" (2:20).
 - a. The antecedent to the pronoun "*ye*" is the faithful Christians holding and abiding in the teachings of Jesus.
 - b. The faithful have an "*anointing from the Holy One.*" The word "*anointing*" (*chrisma*) means "anything smeared on, esp. a scented unguent, thicker than *muron*... Whitewash, stucco" (LS 895). "Anything which is applied by smearing; ointment, unguent" (Moulton 439). In the OT, Kings (1 Samuel 10:10), priests (Exodus 29:7) and prophets (Isaiah 61:1) were anointed with oil to signify the validity and acceptance of Jehovah God to their office.
 - c. *Chrisma* is a Noun – Accusative, Neuter – Singular (Friberg 723). The *chrisma* is the object not the action.
 - d. Clearly the anointing here is figurative and represents the validity of the disciple as he abides in all truth. The saint that abides in the teachings of Christ has God and continues in God having God's anointing. The words "*anointing from the Holy One*" are used figuratively by metonymy to illustrate the effects of the gospel's call. One who answers the call of the gospel is recognized as a Christian. Like the priest who was anointed by oil into the official office, so the Christian is figuratively anointed with the gospel call to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins and is now a qualified saint (cf. John 6:44-45; Acts 2:38). 1 John 2:27 clearly indicates the fact that the anointing has to do with the gospel (truth or Word of God).
 3. Paul, too, said that God "*sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*"
 - a. How does God "*seal us*" and against what are we sealed? To be "*sealed*" (*sphragizo*) is to "set a seal on, confirm, stamp with approval; to assure of a thing" (LS 786). The same word is found in Ephesians 1:13-14 and appears to be a parallel passage to 2 Corinthians 1:21-22. Paul said, "*in whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of*

*promise, which is an **earnest** of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of his glory.*" When one hears the gospel and complies with the conditions of salvation through baptism (cf. Romans 10:17; Acts 2:38), that person is now assured and confirmed (sealed) as a Christian and all blessings that appertain to the one who would remain faithful. The Christian is to be confident in his salvation and the promises of God (see study # 2).

- b. Secondly, this assured, confident, confirmed Christian has an "*earnest of our inheritance* (of heaven)" by being "*sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.*" The word "*earnest*" (*arrhabon*) is "earnest-money, caution-money, deposited by the purchaser and forfeited if the purchase is not completed" (LS 119); "a pledge" (Moulton 52). God's 'earnest-money' or way of assuring us as Christians that we will receive the promises revealed in the word of God is His word ("*the word of the truth*").
- c. Rather than doubting the validity of Paul's words, the Corinthians needed to look back to the revealed revelation and keep their hope, confidence, and trust there.

IV. A lesson on longsuffering (1:23-24):

A. "*But I call God for a witness upon my soul, that to spare you I forbare to come unto Corinth*" (1:23).

1. The words "*spare*" and "*forbare*" are key to understanding this verse. To "*spare*" (*phaidomai*) is to "spare persons and things in war, i.e. not destroy them... to spare, be merciful..." (LS 856). Secondly, to "*forbare*" (*ouketi*) is to "no more, no longer, no further" (LS 576).
2. We must remember that Paul had written in 1 Corinthians 4:21, "*What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?*" Paul's desire was to "*spare*" the Corinthian brethren of the verbal rod of correction. If he would have come directly to Corinth from Ephesus, he may have had to use said rod (2 Corinthians 1:15) (see study # 5; Patience and Forbearance). This is why his plans changed. He wanted to give them time to repent. Therefore, he "*forbare*" (no longer) planed to come directly to them.
3. This verse indicates the willingness on Paul's part to wage battle with any that they may have the earnest of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, it illustrates that Paul had the betterment of brethren in mind by making these statements. When erring brethren see this attitude in the admonishing saint, they will be left without excuse for saying that the person is arrogant or 'hard.' Sinners must be led to repentance through divine instructions. Divine instructions demand exposure (Ephesians 5:11).

B. "*Not that we have lordship over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for in faith ye stand fast*" (1:24).

1. To have "*lordship*" (*kurieuo*) over one's faith would be to have dominion or authority over. Paul would not claim such a state. Each man gives answer the God only.
2. Rather than dictating one's faith, Paul's desire was to help the Corinthians experience joy through their confidence and assurance of salvation. Said salvation belonged to the "*steadfast in faith.*"

Synopsis of 2 Corinthians Chapter 1:

Confidence, Hope, Trust and Patience

Paul wrote Second Corinthians approximately one year after he wrote the first epistle to the brethren in Corinth. These brethren were guilty of many things, one of which was brought out in 2 Corinthians 1. Some of the Corinthian brethren had apparently demoted Paul from a truthful apostle to one who was guilty of being "*fickle*" (2 Corinthians 1:17). Paul had written in his first epistle that the conduct of the Corinthians would determine whether he came "*unto you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness*" (1 Corinthians 4:21). Here is an example of **patience and longsuffering**. One year had passed from his scorching, yet loving, rebuke to the Corinthians. Paul was not "*fickle*," but he purposefully changed his travel plans to give them an allotted time to repent (1 Corinthians 16:5; 2 Corinthians 1:15-18). As the Lord commands us to be patient and longsuffering

today, let it not be ever-patient and ever-longsuffering (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:14 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6) (see study # 5).

Chapter one of 2 Corinthians set the tone for the letter. We must remember that Paul had given a rebuke of their unlawful practices in the first epistle. One year had past and it was now a matter of days before he would see them to the face. Paul's earnest desire was that the Corinthian brethren understand his true love in faith for them. He began by painting a picture of his and other gospel preacher's work on behalf of the souls of men. These preachers of righteousness suffered much that the gospel message may be heard and learned of the Corinthians and those in Asia (2 Corinthians 1:3-11). The message of comfort was not dreamed up by human reason (fleshly wisdom) but by divine revelation (2 Corinthians 1:12-14). Verses 15-22 reveal the confidence, hope and trust that the Corinthians and all other Christians are to have in Christ Jesus. Our salvation is real! Heaven is real! God's promises are real and true!

Paul concluded by telling the Corinthians that his true desire was that they repent of their errors. He revealed to them the fact that he purposely traveled through Macedonia before coming to them first that they may have time to repent. Said repentance would come of Paul's help (the first epistle and this second) and would give him and the Corinthians much joy.

We learn from this first chapter that there is a time when longsuffering and patience with a sinner must end. We learn that God's promises, revealed in His word, are true and real. We learn confidence and assurance through this chapter. Lastly, we learn that God wants us to be happy in our faith and long for that happiness in others.

Chapter 2

I. Paul expressed his design behind the first epistle (1 Corinthians) to the Corinthians (2:1-11):

- A. *"But I determined this for myself, that I would not come again to you with sorrow"* (2:1).
 1. This verse essentially summarizes chapter one. Paul had purposed to delay his arrival in Corinth that the brethren would have time to repent (2 Corinthians 1:23).
 2. 2:1 exposes the apostle's true desire and hope for the Corinthian Christians. If Paul had to be with them in sorrow, it would be due to their lack of repentance; however, he was confident that they would repent and thus he determinately delayed his travels that they may have the needed time to do so.
- B. *"For if I make you sorry, who then is he that maketh me glad but he that is made sorry by me? And I wrote this very thing, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all"* (2:2-3).
 1. The inferential subject is the first epistle that Paul wrote to the Corinthians due to their sinful practices. If this epistle's contents made some *"sorry,"* the same people would bring joy to the apostle Paul. The word *"sorry"* (*lupeo*) is "to give pain to, to pain, distress, grieve, vex, annoy... to be pained, grieved, distressed... to grieve about a thing" (LS 480).
 2. Paul had literally 'pained, grieved, and caused distress' in the Corinthians due to their sin with his first epistle. These same distressed brethren had a choice to make with relationship to their pain. They were to repent and rejoice or be offended by Paul's letter and grumble.
 3. Paul was confident that the letter would cause joy rather than grumbling.
- C. *"For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be made sorry, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you"* (2:4).
 1. Paul's first epistle was written with his *"own hand"* in great anguish of heart (1 Corinthians 16:21). It caused Paul great pain to write what he did to the Corinthians in the first epistle. The pain was so great that it caused him to cry with *"many tears."* No one wants to think of beloved brethren walking in sin.
 2. Paul was a man who truly *"loved"* brethren. No matter where they worshipped, if he had the opportunity to bring them out of their error we did everything within his power to do so.

Shortly after his three month stay in Corinth he met up with the Ephesian elders. Paul told them, *“Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men”* (Acts 20:26). Because Paul loved, he watched and warned brethren in sin with many tears (see study # 6; The Christian’s Responsibility to Watch and Warn against Sin).

- D. *“But if any hath caused sorrow, he hath caused sorrow, not to me, but in part (that I press not too heavily) to you all. Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the many; so that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you to confirm your love toward him”* (2:5-8).
1. The inferential subject of these verses appears to be the fornicator of I Corinthians 5:1. Apparently the church in Corinth had followed Paul’s admonition by delivering the sinner to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the soul may be saved. This individual had caused sorrow among the brethren by his lawless deeds. Titus has obviously informed Paul of this news when meeting him in Macedonia.
 2. Church *“punishment”* or discipline had its desired effects and the man repented. The church was now instructed to receive the repenting one back into their fellowship. Apparently, at this point, he had not been received back among them. If the Corinthians delayed much longer in their forgiving and accepting the repenting back, such a one would be in danger of consumed with *“overmuch sorrow”* and again fall away. Paul was careful not to stress the man’s guilt nor the congregations sorrow above that which would cause undue pain in the case.
 3. This series of verses teaches us much about church autonomy. Notice that Paul was not dictating or exercising *“lordship”* over the Corinthian church, but rather he was guiding them by divine principles; i.e., he was *“helping”* them (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:24). Paul would have violated the autonomy of the church in Corinth if he would have demanded that they discipline the erring one on said day and accept the erring back at said day (thus dictating every move in matters of judgment). Only the Corinthians knew where the sinner stood among local brethren and God. Paul could only thereby give divine principles to their questions and allow the Corinthians to make the decision as to when the discipline and reinstatement to the church should occur (see study # 7; Church Autonomy).
 4. Notice that Paul tactfully abstained from naming the sinner by name. It was not Paul’s desire to embarrass or shame the man by revealing his name. This should cause us all to raise a brow of inquisitiveness in relation to when one’s name should be put forth. Though Paul had refrained from naming the sinner of 1 Corinthians five, he did not refrain from naming *“Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme”* (1 Timothy 1:20). Both cases (i.e., 1 Corinthians 5 and 1 Timothy 1:20) involved discipline. Why call one by name and not the other? Paul named Hymnaeus, Alexander, and Philetus as a means of warning. Here were men who were teaching false doctrines and seducing the minds of other faithful Christians (cf. 2 Timothy 2:17ff.). The sinner of Corinth was affecting brethren with sorrow of his sin; however, he was not intent upon faction and divisiveness that others would be led away with his teaching. The brethren knew whom Paul spoke of and thereby left it at that.
- E. *“For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye are obedient in all things”* (2:9).
1. Here is the purpose statement of 1 Corinthians. Paul was putting the brethren to the test to see whether they would obey truth or human reasoning. The apostle John spoke of said test (1 John 3:10; 4:1, 6). The Corinthians apparently passed the test and put the guilty fornicator away. Now Paul called upon them to forgive the repenting one.
 2. Being *“obedient in all things”* includes forgiving people for sins they have committed and asked forgiveness of. Some brethren are so bothered by certain sins that they cannot possibly forgive another for their deed. Let us note that sin has no degrees of error in the eyes of God. James said that if we violate one part of the law we violate it all (see James 2:10). The Christian today is to set aside personal prejudice and exercise a consistent view of all sin (see study # 8; The Christian’s View of Sin).

- F. *“But to whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for what I also have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, for your sakes have I forgiven it in the presence of Christ; that no advantage may be gained over us by Satan: for we are not ignorant of his devices:”* (2:10-11).
1. Paul would now forgive those repenting sinners that the Corinthians forgave because they were acting under his inspired directions.
 2. Herein we see an authorized design of the church. The church is to remain pure (Ephesians 5:27). God’s divine principles must be adhered to. One who would sin without repentance must, therefore, be addressed. If tolerance of said sins occurs on the part of the church, then Satan has gained an advantage over us.
 - a. Satan’s advantage is over the un-repenting sinner.
 - b. Satan’s advantage would be over the tolerant church. The apostle John said, *“whosoever goeth onward and abide not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works”* (2 John 9-11). To tolerate sin is to participate in sin and, thereby, the devil has *“advantage”* over the church. With one man’s sins, Satan has conquered the many. Brethren need to be careful with whom they sympathize and whom they fellowship. You may be otherwise doctrinally sound; however, a faulty view of another sinner will cause you to lose your fellowship with God (1 John 1:5-7).
 - c. Thirdly, Satan may gain advantage over us by using our prejudices and deep seeded convictions against us. Those whose sins are grotesque may be more difficult for one to forgive yet God says to forgive else be guilty of sin yourself (see study # 9; Forgiveness).

II. While Paul gave the Corinthians time to repent he busied himself with preaching truth to others (2:12-17):

- A. *“Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ, and when a door was opened unto me in the Lord, I had no relief for my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia”* (2:12-13).
1. Paul’s great *“anguish”* (2:4) would have to continue until he met up with Titus in Macedonia (cf. 2 Corinthians 7:5-6).
 2. Apparently Paul was simply relaying to the Corinthians his true love for their souls to the point of causing him great anxiety over whether they would repent of their sinfulness (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:28). Secondly, he indicated to them that while he delayed coming directly to them, he traveled northward to Troas from Ephesus that he might meet Titus and hear news from the Corinthian church. Titus was not there; however, Paul found opportunity to preach the gospel there and found many *“open doors”* of opportunity. Paul was always looking for opportunities to preach to the lost and God providentially provided those opportunities (see study # 10; Personal Work for the Christian).
- B. *“But thanks be unto God, who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest through us the savor of his knowledge in every place”* (2:14).
1. Victory over the devil and his devices occur through the gospel message (divine revelation and truth) (cf. 1 John 4:4; 5:4) (see study # 11; Victory in Christ).
 2. When a proper perspective of good, evil, heaven, hell, and the resurrection of the just and unjust is delivered to the lost, souls will have the opportunity to be saved. Paul found such an opportunity in Troas.
- C. *“For we are a sweet savor of Christ unto God, in them that are saved, and in them that perish;”* (2:15).
1. Not only is the gospel message a *“savor”* unto the Lord, but the preacher of the gospel message is, too. The word *“savor”* (*euodia*) is “a sweet smell” (LS 336). This word is only used two other times in the NT (i.e., Ephesians 5:2; Philippians 4:18) and indicates those activities that please God. Clearly, one who preaches the true gospel of salvation to the lost is pleasing to the Lord.

2. Secondly, notice carefully that it is not only the lost (those that perish) but them that are saved as well. Here is authority for edification among members of the body of Christ. The “*we*” here would represent not only the apostles, but preachers of the gospel as well (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 1:1) (see study # 12; Edification).
- D. “*to the one a savor from death unto death; to the other a savor from life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?*” (2:16).
1. The “*savor*” of this verse is *osme* in Greek. A different word than used in verse 15; however, it has a similar meaning; i.e., “a smell, scent, odor, good or bad” (LS 573). Whether the odor is sweet (2:15) or sour to the Lord is dependent upon the reaction one has to the gospel message.
 2. The truth serves to push those who would reject the gospel message further from the truth in the hardness of their hearts (cf. Matthew 13:12); i.e., “*death unto death*.” Those who accept truth are saved by that truth and thereby the truth serves as a sweet savor to them leading “*from life unto life*.”
 3. Here is character defined. The one character is hardened by truth, and the other grows stronger and stronger by truth. Even those who have obeyed the gospel can be hardened by the instructions of truth and thereby the truth moves them from death unto death (they are hardened in their sin). Life unto life occurs in the hearts of those who hear truth, obey, and live out its instructions (see study # 13; Reaction to Truth).
 4. “*and who is sufficient for these things?*” The word “*sufficient*” (*hikanos*) = “of persons, sufficient, competent; sufficient to prove a point, adequate” (LS 378). The “*these things*” must be the idea of presenting such a message (truth) that has the power to save some and harden others in sin. Eternity is at stake with mankind and so Paul concluded, ‘who is truly qualified to teach these things?’ Paul did not see his own qualifications; however, he knew that the duty to preach was his and others (cf. Romans 1:14ff). Furthermore, Paul stated that such qualifications come from God and thereby he is qualified (see 2 Corinthians 3:4-5). In fact, as we examine 2 Corinthians 3:4-5, it is apparent that anyone who would study and present divine revelation alone is not only qualified to preach, but obligated to do so (see study # 14; Preachers and Preaching).
- E. “*For we are not as the many, corrupting the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ*” (2:17).
1. “*Many*” false teachers had corrupted the word of God in Corinth and in the world (1 Corinthians 15:12). To “*corrupt*” (*kapeleuo*) is to “to be a retail dealer, drive a trade... Metaphorically (the word is as) playing tricks with life, corrupting it” (LS 400). “To be a retailer, to huckster; to peddle with; to deal paltry with, or, to corrupt, adulterate” (Moulton 212). It seems apparent that some false teachers were ‘peddling’ the word of God in a paltry and unserious way. When the message fit or benefited his life, he used it. When the message condemned a part of his life, he rejected it. The gospel was a mere piece of merchandise that was sold for self profit and benefit. These brethren ‘adulterated’ the word of God! To adulterate is to mix two things together that do not belong (i.e., a married man with another woman other than his wife).
 2. Preachers of truth were rather characterized by preaching in “*sincerity*.” We defined the word “*sincerity*” (*heilikrineia*) at 2 Corinthians 1:12; as “unmixed, without alloy, pure, Latin: *sincerus*... without mixture, of itself, simply, absolutely” (LS 228). Now we have a complete picture of what preaching truth is all about. Preaching is to be done in “*sincerity*” (without mixture; pure) as opposed to adulterating and mixing things in the gospel that do not belong (see study # 14).
 3. God has spoken divine truths (2 Timothy 3:16). Let all be satisfied with these divine truths and never ever place our human reasoning within and thereby adulterate, contaminate, defile, corrupt and make vulgar the word of God (see study # 3).
 4. Truthful preaching is, therefore, to be “*of God, in the sight of God*” as preaching men “*speak in Christ*.” This is authoritative preaching. Peter said, “*if any man speak, let him speak the oracles of God*” (1 Peter 4:11).

5. The phrase “*in Christ*” helps us understand better the instructions regarding the widow mentioned in 1 Corinthians 7:39. She is to marry “*in the Lord*” and so the command is to marry by the authority of Christ.

Synopsis of II Corinthians 2

The consequences of preaching truth in Love:

2 Corinthians 7:7 reveals that Titus had given Paul good news regarding the spiritual state of the Corinthian brethren. Titus also gave Paul the bad news. There were brethren who were charging Paul with inconsistency (fickleness) (2 Corinthians 1:17) and self approval (commendation) (2 Corinthians 3:1). Due to this information, Paul wrote the first epistle (inferential subject of 2 Corinthians 2:1-4). The first two chapters of 2 Corinthians served to give the Corinthian brethren Paul’s mode, method, purpose, and expected product of the first epistle written to them in AD 57. When one examines 2 Corinthians chapters one and two he has a true understanding of what “preaching truth in love” is all about (Ephesians 6:15).

Paul’s MODE behind the writing of I Corinthians:

The mode of 1 Corinthians was love. Paul said, “*for out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be made sorry, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you*” (2 Corinthians 2:4). Love should be the mode for all the Christians actions. We expose sin and care for the physically needy because we love as God loves (1 John 3:16-17; 4:10, 17).

Paul’s METHOD of writing I Corinthians:

The method of writing the epistle of 1 Corinthians was the authority of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 1:12; 2:17). It would only be through truth that the product of salvation would be achieved. Therefore, Paul was sufficient to deliver such a divine message because it was from God and not man (2 Corinthians 2:16-17; 3:4-6).

Paul’s PURPOSE of writing I Corinthians:

Every move on the part of Paul had purpose. Paul revealed the deliberate act of sparing and delaying his coming unto the Corinthian brethren that they may have time to repent (2 Corinthians 1:23). Chapter two reveals another purpose behind the writing of 1 Corinthians. Paul said, “*For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye are obedient in all things*” (2 Corinthians 2:9). Paul was putting the brethren to the test as we are commanded to likewise do (1 John 3:10; 4:1, 6).

Paul’s expected PRODUCT of I Corinthians:

The desired result of the first epistle to the Corinthians was that sorrow leading to repentance would occur (2 Corinthians 2:2). Later Paul would say, “*For though I made you sorry with my epistle, I do not regret it: though I did regret it (for I see that that epistle made you sorry, though but for a season), I now rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly sort, that ye might suffer loss by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which brings no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death*” (2 Corinthians 7:8-10).

Concluding remarks:

It did not bring joy to Paul to write such things as covered in the first epistle; however, it was necessary (2 Corinthians 2:11). Paul eventually met with Titus in Macedonia. Titus relieves Paul’s anxiety by fully informing him of the Corinthian’s response to his first epistle. Apparently, Titus had brought a favorable report to Paul in Macedonia. The Corinthians had exercised the discipline upon the erring of 1 Corinthians five and thereby brought Paul joy (2 Corinthians 2:5ff). Paul now “*beseeches*” the Corinthians to forgive this one as he

had repented (2 Corinthians 2:8ff). Herein is the consequence of preaching truth in love. Souls are saved and brethren edified only when truth, in all of its purity and authority, is preached (2 Corinthians 2:17).

Chapter 3

I. A contrast of the law leading to life and the law leading to death (3:1-11):

A. *“Are we beginning again to commend ourselves? Or need we, as do some, epistles of commendation to you or from you?”* (3:1)

1. The word “*commend*” (*sunistao*) is to “recommend to favorable attention” (Moulton 391). The exact word was used in Romans 16:1 where Paul said, “*I commend unto you Phoebe our sister...*” Paul was recommending or commending Phoebe to the Romans.
2. In what way would Paul and other preachers be commending themselves to the Corinthians “*again?*” The word “*again*” suggests that some self accolades had been attempted beforehand (cf. 2:14-16). It seems apparent that Paul was answering a charge that had been levied against him previously. Not only had some in Corinth charged Paul with “*fickleness*” (2 Corinthians 1:17), but self aggrandizement or self “*commendation*.” This charge was taken serious by Paul (cf. 5:12; 10:12, 18; 12:11; 13:6). Titus may have very well told Paul this when in Macedonia.
3. Letters of “*commendation*” were common in the early church. Paul wrote such of Phoebe (Romans 16:1) as did Pricilla and Aquilla for Apollos (Acts 18:27). Due to false teachers deceiving brethren with their doctrines, such letters were important (cf. Acts 15) (see study # 15; Letters of Commendation).
4. Paul was no stranger to the Corinthians. He was considered their ‘father in the faith’ (1 Corinthians 4:14-15). Such an intimate relationship would not necessitate a letter from them or to them regarding Paul’s faithfulness.
5. Paul used the word “*some*” in the second clause of this verse indicating the necessity for some unknown traveling brethren to have such a letter with them.
6. Whether the visitor has a letter or no letter, all are to be tested (2 Corinthians 2:9; I Jn. 3:10; 4:1, 6)

B. *“Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men; being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh”* (3:2-3).

1. The Corinthians had many miraculous gifts given to them by the apostle Paul (I Cor. 12-13). Corinth was a very large city in this day and one that many traveled to. As the world saw the Corinthians performing their gifts and hearing truth spoke, they were reading a way of commendation for Paul and his companions.
2. Not only were they reading a commendation of Paul, but more importantly to Christ and His soul saving work. Like a book, the world was to read the Corinthians that they, too, might be saved.

C. *“And such confidence have we through Christ to God-ward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God; who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life”* (3:4-6).

1. Paul had received the divine revelation of God’s word from the Lord himself (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:1ff; Gal. 1:11-12). This being so, the apostles and preachers of truth were “*sufficient*” to minister in divine revelation. The word “*sufficient*” (*hikanos*) was discussed in 2:16b where it was defined as “of persons, sufficient, competent; sufficient to prove a point, adequate” (LS 378). There (2:16b) Paul had in mind the source of divine revelation, and here (3:5) he has in mind the deliver (not the source) of divine revelation. The one delivering truth could sufficiently do so, but such revelation would never have its source in man.
2. This divine revelation was entrusted to Paul as a steward, and he in turn ministered to others in this word (1 Corinthians 4:1). Paul was not a preacher of the first covenant (Mosaic Law) but of a new covenant, the Law of Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:2).

3. Paul made clear to the Corinthians that he was unlike the false Judaizing teachers who preached the Mosaic Law with the Law of Christ (cf. Acts 15).
 - a. To preach the Mosaic Law is to preach death (Romans 7:9-11). The Law of Moses identified sin and thereby condemned man with no hope of life (Romans 7:7; Galatians 3:10). The Mosaic Law was written on tables of stone rather than man's heart. They were simple ordinances that could in no way be perfectly kept. The violator was left with no hope of remission.
 - b. To preach the Law of Christ alone is to preach "*life*" (John 6:63). The life that comes of the spirit is spiritual life now (John 1:4) and eternal life later (John 3:16). The Mosaic Law left man desiring the Messiah and forgiveness of sins (Galatians 3:19ff).
- D. "*But if the ministration of death, written, and engraven on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look steadfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face; which glory was passing away: how shall not rather the ministration of the spirit be with glory?*" (3:7-8).
 1. Inferentially we see another problem that had existed in Corinth. It is possible that Titus had brought to Paul's attention the fact that false teachers were spreading Judaism in Corinth as they had in Judea and Galatia (Acts 15).
 2. Moses was the divine law giver who delivered divine revelation to the people. Moses had been on Mount Sinai receiving the law directly from God in Exodus 34:29ff. When he came to the people, his face shined bright due to his being in the presence of God. This fact illustrates the glory of that law and its divine origin.
 3. The glory of the Mosaic Law (first covenant), however, was to "*pass away*" (cf. Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:13).
- E. "*For if the ministration of condemnation hath glory, much rather doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For verily that which hath been made glorious hath not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory that surpasseth. For if that which passeth away was with glory, much more that which remaineth is in glory*" (3:9-11).
 1. Fact: The first covenant (Mosaic Law) had its glory due to being of a divine origin and serving a divine purpose (identify sin) i.e., the "*ministration of condemnation*."
 2. The Law of Christ (second covenant laid upon the hearts of man) exceeds the Mosaic Law in glory due to the fact that it gives provisions for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
 3. *The supremacy of the "ministration of righteousness"* (Law of Christ) over the Law of Moses is further seen in that it is designed to be eternal (2 Samuel 7:12ff; Isa. 51:6; Daniel 2:44ff; Eph. 3:11) (see study # 16; Two Covenants).

II. Knowing the supremacy of the Law of Christ gives the Teacher of said Law Confidence and Hope while Preaching (3:12-18):

- A. "*Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness of speech*" (3:12).
 1. The "*hope*" rests in the supremacy of the law of Christ over the Law of Moses. Both are of divine origin; however, only the Law of Christ offers the remission of sins and life.
 2. With knowledge of said things, the preacher may boldly and confidently preach that others may have "*life*."
- B. "*And are not as Moses, who put a veil upon his face, that the children of Israel should not look steadfastly on the end of that which was passing away*" (3:13).
 1. Who is "*not as Moses*?" Obviously it is the sufficient divinely qualified preachers such as Paul, Timothy, and Titus.
 2. That which was "*passing away*" was the Mosaic Law (the very Law that Moses had received on Mount Sinai).
 3. Apparently the children of Israel hid from the presence of Moses because he represented the very law that condemned them to death (Exodus 34; John 1:17). Shame prevented them from looking upon Moses.
 4. Paul is saying that this is not the method of the apostles, prophets, and preachers of his day. Their purpose was to make known the manifold wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:3ff).
- C. "*But their minds were hardened: for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remaineth, it not being revealed to them that it is done away in Christ*" (3:14).

1. Herein is the nature of the gospel message that endures for ever. To some, it hardens and others it is a savor unto life (see 2 Corinthians 2:15-16).
 2. The subject at hand is the false teachers in Corinth who were preaching Mosaic Law and the Law of Christ together. The veil of ignorance remained upon their hard hearted minds because they rejected the very doctrine that Jesus represented. John recorded, *“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”* (Jn. 1:17).
 3. Though the Mosaic Law’s design was to bring men to Christ, that end was veiled to the hard hearted Judaizing teachers of Paul’s day (cf. Galatians 3:24). So Paul said, *“But unto this day, whensoever Moses is read, a veil lieth upon their heart”* (3:15). Instead of pointing up their sin and driving them to seek forgiveness through Jesus, they placed a voluntary veil of ignorance upon their hearts against Christ. Simply put, they rejected the Lord of glory.
 4. They missed the point and purpose of the Mosaic Law altogether (Galatians 3:19).
- D. *“But whensoever it (or, a man shall turn; ASV footnote) shall turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away”* (3:16).
1. The veil that kept the end or fulfillment of the Mosaic Law known would be removed by those who wanted truth. When man seeks and knocks, he will surely find (Matthew 7:7).
 2. Those who do not want the veil of Moses removed will voluntarily remain ignorant of Jesus and the New Covenant. Jesus quoted from the prophet Isaiah in the parable of the sower saying, *“For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them”* (Matthew 13:15) (see study # 17; How do People Receive the Gospel Message?).
- E. *“Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty”* (3:17).
1. Here is a statement that helps us understand more fully the Godhead. The Father’s work was carried out by Jesus (John 5:30; 13:3), and Jesus’ work was carried out by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; Galatians 4:6) so that all three are one in purpose (John 17:21ff).
 2. Paul asserted the deity of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit reveals truth and is thereby called *“the Lord”* or *“the Spirit of truth”* (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13) (see study # 18; Deity of the Holy Spirit).
 3. Liberty is the result of one accepting the revealed truth. Liberty exists over the bondage of sin and death for the faithful servant of God (John 8:32). Those who would knock and seek after Jesus would remove the veil of confusion.
- F. *“But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit”* (3:18).
1. Those who accept the truth of the gospel and live by divine revelation are *“in”* Christ as Christ is *“in”* the Father (John 14:20-21). Therefore, to see Jesus is to see the Father because the two were *“in”* each other (John 14:7-9).
 2. Likewise, to see the Christian who is living by Christ divine standards (Law of liberty) is to see Christ and the Father. We see Christ in our own lives as though we are looking in a mirror and seeing the Lord. Herein we see the high expectation of Jehovah God for His people. God expects man to be Christ like or as God in this life (see Matthew 5:48; 2 Peter 1:3-4; 1 John 4:10) (see study # 19; God’s High Expectation for Mankind).

Synopsis of chapter 3

The function of 2 Corinthians 3 is to reveal the superiority of the Law of Christ over the Law of Moses. One may ask why Paul inserted this chapter in his epistle to the Corinthians. The answer is obvious; false teachers had trekked over land and sea and spread like a disease throughout the church. They began in Judea (Acts 15:24), moved north toward Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 15:1, 30), and continued west and northwest to Galatia and beyond (Acts 16:4).

Law of Death and Condemnation:

Paul referred to the Mosaic Law as the “*letter that kills*” (3:6), “*ministration of death*” (3:7), and “*ministration of condemnation*” (3:9). The Mosaic Law “kills” because it rewarded death for unlawful living (Romans 6:23). No man could live lawfully perfect and expect to have life through Mosaic Law keeping (Galatians 3:10). Therefore, the Mosaic Law was a “*ministration of death.*” The Law “*condemned*” its adherence and gave them no hope.

There was, however, a “*glory*” of the Mosaic Law (3:9). First, the glory of the Mosaic Law was that it had a divine origin (2 Peter 1:21). Secondly, the “*glory*” of the Mosaic Law was that it was designed by God to lead man to see their need for Jesus (Acts 3:22; Galatians 3:24). The false teachers accepted the first glory; however, they fatally rejected the function of the Mosaic Law as revealed in Galatians 3:24 (a tutor to bring men to Christ). To such men the veil of confusion remained (3:14).

New Covenant, Law of Life, Spirit, Righteousness, and Liberty:

The Mosaic Law was designed to point up man’s sins (Romans 7:7) and motivate the sinner to seek after forgiveness through Jesus (Galatians 3:24). Jesus offers life to those who would seek after Him and His Law (John 1:4; Galatians 6:2). The law of “*life*” (3:6) offers an eternal heavenly existence (John 3:36). The Law through Christ is “*spirit*” rather than physically engraved words (3:6). Those who accept Christ words do so happily with no grumbling or complaining (1 John 5:3). The law of Christ is “*righteous*” (3:9) and filled with eternal “*glory*” (3:11) because it has divine origins as did the Mosaic Law. The Law of Christ is also referred to as the law of “*liberty*” (3:17). The Law of Christ liberates man from the bondage of sin (John 8:32; Galatians 5:1). This is the “*new covenant*” prophesied by the prophets (Jeremiah 31:31ff) and now in effect through the blood of Jesus (3:6).

The Superiority of the Law of Christ:

The Law of Christ is superior to the Law of Moses in that it liberates man from his sins (John 8:32). The Mosaic Law had no provisions for the remission of sins (Hebrews 10:1ff). Secondly, the superiority of the Law of Christ is that is designed to be eternal and the Mosaic Law only “*passed away*” (3:11; Colossians 2:14). Thirdly, the superiority of the Law of Christ is seen in the fact that it was designed to take away the “*veil*” of ignorance (Isaiah 25:6ff and 2 Corinthians 3:16). Mankind is drawn to God’s light through the gospel message (John 6:44-45). The gospel enlightens man that he may know and understand the will of the Lord (Ephesians 5:17).

Chapter 4

I. A distinction between human reasoning and divine revelation:

- A. “*Therefore seeing we have this ministry, even as we obtained mercy, we faint not:*” (4:1):
 - 1. The “*ministry*” or service that Paul, Timothy, Titus, Sosthenes and other preachers of truth had was in the new covenant, the law of life, spirit, righteousness, and liberty (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:6, 17).
 - 2. The very law of liberty that Paul preached poured grace and mercy upon the deliverers of said law. Paul had persecuted the church earlier in his life; however, he now had obtained mercy through Christ (1 Corinthians 15:9).
 - 3. Paul was now a debtor to preach this message of liberty and life (Romans 1:14). Paul was entrusted with the gospel message of liberty and would not “*faint*” or fail in his delivering this message of mercy to mankind (see Acts 26:13-19) (see study # 20; The Apostle Paul). Paul would endure all hardships in life that others may be saved.
- B. “*but we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God*” (4:2).

1. Here is where Paul's teaching separated itself from the doctrines of the false teachers in Corinth. Paul was not "*commending*" himself to the Corinthians with opinions, personal convictions, or human reason to gain a personal following as he was being charged (see 2 Corinthians 3:1; 4:5, 7). The Corinthians obviously had a problem with placing levels of importance upon men and following them; however, Paul never sanctioned such events (see 1 Corinthians 1:10-12; 3:3-7). Paul, Timothy, and Titus were commending themselves to "*every man's conscience*" through **truth**. When talking to people about the gospel message we need to give book, chapter, and verse for all that we teach. We are not teachers of self opinion, personal conviction or reason. We are to represent the name of Christ alone and through Christ alone man will be saved from the consequences of their sins (see Acts 4:11-12).
2. Paul, Timothy, Titus, and Sosthenes had "*renounced the hidden things of shame.*" To "*renounce*" (Greek - *apeipomen*) ("*we have renounced*" {*apeipametha*}; Nestle Marshal page 715) is to "to tell out; to refuse, forbid; to renounce, disclaim" (Moulton 37). "To speak out, tell out, declare; to forbid one to do, tell him not to do... to renounce, disown, give up..." (LS 90). To renounce is "to give up, esp. by formal announcement. To reject; disown" (AHD 1047). Friberg tells us that the Greek word for "renounce" is a verb in the Aorist tense (Friberg page 555). The aorist tense indicates past action without indicating completion, continuation, or repetition of this action. At some point in the past, Paul and his preaching companions ("*we*") had renounced all religious thinking that is not in accordance with "*truth.*" Inferentially, religious reasoning apart from "*truth*" is referred to as the "*hidden things of shame.*" Such reasoning is found shameful when brought out into the open eye of the public. Note that religious ideas that do not have their bases or foundation in truth are shameful no matter how or who delivers it.
3. Paul now enumerated the shameful acts: "*Walking in craftiness*" = Greek - *panourgia*" which is defined as "knavery, roguery, villany" (Liddell and Scott page 591). "Ready to do anything; hence, crafty, cunning, artful, wily" (Moulton page 300). Another shameful act is "*handling the word of God deceitfully.*" To "*handle*" is an interpolated word to help the Greek make English sense. The idea is that some would take the word of God and use it in a "*deceitful*" ("*doloo*") manner ("To beguile, ensnare, take by craft" to disguise" {Liddell and Scott page 208}).
4. The idea of motive comes into the discussion. Many today are claiming that a false teacher is one whose motives are corrupt. They turn to such passages under consideration and say, 'a false teacher is one who purposely deceives through crafty means.' Other passages are held dear to said individuals such as 2 Peter 2:1ff. One must remember; however, that Paul is not discussing motives. Paul never had the motive to deceive by craftiness anyone with his false ways (cf. Acts 26:9), yet here (2 Corinthians 4:2) he used the aorist tense indicating that he and others had renounced craft and deceit! What did Paul and his preaching companions renounce? They renounced human reasoning that was contrary to the doctrine of Christ. Therefore, any human reasoning that does not have Christ's doctrine as its source is deceptive and crafty. It matters not whether one is sincere and honest. Why? Because "*craft*" and "*deceit*" are the doctrines of the devil (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:3). Deception and craft are the "*devices*" of Satan (2 Corinthians 2:11). Thereby Satan deceives many to think that they are preaching truth when in all reality they are doing the crafty and deceitful work of the devil (Matthew 7:15-23). Craft and deceit are the real occurrences when a person teaches error even though he "sincerely and honestly" doesn't know it is error.

5. Most erroneous teachers are no doubt “sincere false teachers;” however, we must define the area of sincerity as was discussed above. One cannot be “good and sincere” in truth while preaching error (Matthew 12:33-36). Truth must be preached and received in all its purity (2 Corinthians 2:17). If error is permitted by God on the bases of sincerity of one's heart then there are people in every denomination saved even though they have not followed God's plan of salvation. God draws the line by telling us that truth is truth and no ignorance of truth can be a viable excuse for not teaching and acting in truth. Consider the Bible in Basic English on Proverbs 30:6, *"Make no addition to his words, or he will make clear your error, and you will be seen to be false."* Solomon writes, *"He that keeps the commandment keeps his soul; But he that is careless of his ways shall die"* (Proverbs 19:16). Isaiah tells us that it is unacceptable, whatever one's motive or conscience, to call *"evil good and good evil"* (Isaiah 5:20). Ignorance of God's laws, "sincere" or blatant, is not a viable excuse (see Matthew 22:29; Acts 3:17-19; 17:23, 30). God expects man to hear, learn, and obey (John 6:44-45; Romans 10:17; Colossians 1:7; 2:7). The standard of truth is a light that removes the darkness of ignorance and confusion (John 3:19-21; 2 Corinthians 4:6). Man's conscience, sincerity, personal opinions, and or personal convictions will not be the standard that judges him in the final judgment (see John 12:48) (see study # 4).
 6. Rather than doing the crafty and deceptive work of Satan by teaching things other than the doctrine of Christ, Paul said that he and his companions made manifest the *"truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."* The jealous seek to stir up a faction against preachers of truth in every generation. Truth must not be mingled with error (2 Corinthians 2:17). Truth will make man's conscience clean in the sight of God, and thereby Paul *"commends"* himself (his truthful teaching of Christ's laws) and his companions to the Corinthians. Those who follow the apostle Paul's teaching are doing so by divine revelation. Those who follow deception and craft follow the devil's doctrines.
 7. Commenting on this verse Lenski said, "Truth needs no aids. Nothing is as strong, as convincing, as sure, as good as the truth, any truth (reality), and thus supremely the saving truth or reality of the Word. If truth itself cannot win a conscience, what can you add to truth to make it win? Some of your craftiness, or some adulteration of the truth? Truth needs no outside argument, its mere presence is greater than all argument" (Lenski page 958). Remember, preaching is not about the preacher. Preaching is about representing absolute truth as it is revealed in God's divinely authorized word.
- C. *"And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them"* (4:3-4):
1. While the Judaizers preached an adulterated mingled message of circumcision and gospel (Acts 15:1ff), Paul preached the true gospel.
 2. Apparently those who would represent the *"unbelieving"* would be the deceived false teachers and those deceived by the false teaching. These *"unbelievers"* will indeed *"perish"* in their sins (cf. John 8:24).
 3. The two fold explanation of the *"unbelievers"* demise is here given:
 - a. When the whole unadulterated truth is not received and practiced by individuals, it is the work of Satan! A *"veil"* exists over the *"minds of the unbelieving"* that *"blinds"* them. If one were to blindfold me, twist me round and round, and then ask me which way North was, I would not be able to tell him. Likewise, the devil works by means of craft and deception to blind the minds of men in spiritual matters that they may lose their souls with him eternally.

- b. Secondly, the gospel is represented by “*light*.” Light makes manifest the things that would otherwise be hidden in darkness. This verse helps us understand that the veil of darkness and ignorance placed upon an individual’s mind is voluntarily accepted. Satan works to that end but does not make anyone evil. Man becomes a servant of the devil by his own lust (James 1:13ff). God is the God of light (1 John 1:5-7). Man can understand truth and live it; however, said actions are purposed in the mind. One who would claim that he does not understand all truth and neither can anyone else has had his mind veiled by Satan to his own perishing. Such teaching is generally at the heart of ecumenical and unity and diversity movements (see study # 22; We Can Know All Truth).
- D. “*For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake*” (4:5).
1. Again, a lesson on authority is given. Paul clearly proclaimed that the message he and his companions preached was not their own. They preached divine revelation as it was revealed to them (see Galatians 1:11).
 2. Paul had earlier said that no man is “*sufficient*” to preach a message of divine origin (2 Corinthians 2:16b). Paul proclaimed his and others’ sufficiency to be only “*from God*” and not their own ideas (2 Corinthians 3:5). So again, Paul proclaimed that his sufficiency came not from his own reasoning but of divine revelation (see study # 3).
 3. Paul was not trying to gain a following by means of deceptive and crafty teachings. Apparently, **some in Corinth were being factious (see study # 23; Faction in the Church)**. They gained a following against Paul and his companions with a host of accusations. Paul was meticulously exposing said individuals to be workers of Satan (see the skeletal outline at the introduction to this study).
- E. “*Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” (4:6).
1. God said in Genesis 1:3, “*let there be light: and there was light.*” Apparently Paul was using Genesis 1:3 by means of metonymy to illustrate the manifesting nature of God.
 2. Darkness represents ignorance and a lack of understanding in the scriptures (cf. Ephesians 4:18). Light represents manifestation of truth. As a dark room holds many secrets, so light exposes all the hidden things in the room. Likewise, a dark creation would hold many secrets; however, the light of God’s gospel message exposed all truth that ignorance and a lack of understanding would be done away with. Satan is the ruler of the world of darkness and thereby seeks to keep it dark. Those who remain in the dark do so with their father the devil (John 8:44).
 3. Since the glorious gospel is light and of divine origin, it is certainly worth dying for!
- F. “*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves*” (4:7).
1. The “*treasure*” is divine revelation (see the context of this chapter). The “*earthen vessels*” are the human frail body.
 2. Paul and his companions possessed the divine message of truth that represented the “*exceeding greatness of the power of God.*” That power had divine origin and was not of any man (Galatians 1:11).
 3. Therefore, when Paul preached the truth, he did not seek to gain a following on his behalf but on behalf of Jehovah God and the souls of men.

II. The Suffering due to Preaching Truth is well Worth the Reward (4:8-18):

- A. “*We are pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body*” (4:8-10).

1. Paul and his preaching companions were “*pressed on every side.*” To be “*pressed*” (*thlibo*) is to “press, squeeze, pinch... metaphorically to oppress, afflict, distress” (LS 367). “To distress, afflict” (Moulton 195). Though Paul and his companions were distressed on every side, they were not “*straitened.*” The word “*straitened*” (*stenochoreo*) is to straiten for room; to be crowded together: metaph. To be straitened (to put or bring into difficulties or distress) (LS 745). So it appears that Paul was saying that though they found themselves in distressful situations, they did not allow themselves to become distressed due to the glorious message they were armed with (see study # 24; Don't Let yourself get Depressed).
 2. Secondly, Paul said that he and his companions were “*perplexed, yet not unto despair.*” The word “*perplexed*” (*aporeo*) is “to be at a loss, be in doubt, be puzzled” (LS 105). It may have been that Paul and his companions found themselves in distressful situations at times and did not know how to handle the situation. These men were never in “*despair*” (without hope) because the hope of the gospel kept them pressing forward.
 3. Paul and his companions were “*pursued*” (*dioko*), that is, “to chase one over or across the plain, to be a follower of a person, attach oneself to him; to pursue an object, seek after... to drive or chase away, banish... of the wind, to drive a ship, of rowers, in impel, speed on her way... as law-term, to prosecute, bring an action against a man...” (LS 207). On more than one occasion was Paul pursued by his enemies as he once pursued Christians yet he was not so pursued that he believed himself “*forsaken.*” God was always with Paul (Acts 27:23-24).
 4. On occasion these men found themselves “*smitten down, yet not destroyed.*” Paul was beat at Lystra to the point of near death yet he was not destroyed (see Acts 14:19).
 5. “*Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body.*”
 - a. Paul would later tell Timothy, “*Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*” (2 Timothy 3:12).
 - b. When Jesus went about compassionately performing miracles (Matthew 14:14), He preached words of repentance (Luke 13:3), exposed man’s sins (Matthew 12:33-35), proclaimed His deity (John 8:58) and was thereby persecuted even to the point of death (John 8:59). The world hated Jesus because he exposed their sinfulness (John 7:7) and the world hates all those who follow Jesus (John 17:14).
 - c. Therefore as we do our duty of love as did Jesus (compassionate and preaching truth), we will be ill treated. This is our fellowship in the sufferings of Christ (Philippians 3:10). We do not despair; however, because there will always be souls that want to hear the purity of the truth (see study # 25; Persecution for Truth).
- B.** “*For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you*” (4:11-12).
1. As Paul and his companions preached, they were persecuted physically and mentally; however, the message was preached.
 2. The message preached was the “*light of the gospel*” (4:4) and this light brings “*life*” to all who obey its words.
- C.** “*But having the same spirit of faith, according to that which is written, I believed, and therefore did I speak; we also believed, and therefore also we speak; knowing that he that raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus, and shall present us with you*” (4:13-14).

1. Paul was reminded of Psalms 116 where the Psalmist praised God for His mercy and kindness during distressful days in his life. The Psalmist proclaimed, “*Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints*” (116:15).
 2. The body man may kill; however, the soul belongs to Jehovah! Though the eye of scorn awaits the child of God who would boldly proclaim the message of the cross, let us speak and hold not our peace (see study # 14).
 3. Paul’s motivation and all of ours is that we will be raised from the dead as was Jesus. Those found faithful will live with the Lord in paradise forever (See study # 26; Motivation to Live by Faith).
- D. “*For all things are for your sakes, that the grace, being multiplied through the many, may cause the thanksgiving to abound unto the glory of God*” (4:15).
1. The distress that Paul and his companions went through was for the sake of the Corinthians and all others who would hear and obey the words of Jesus.
 2. God’s gracious offer of salvation is to be preached to the many and received. Through the work of preachers of truth, the name of Jehovah God will be praised.
- E. “*Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day*” (4:16).
1. Though the outward and inward trials of stress did cause the messenger of the gospel to decay outwardly, as with years of life, so the inward man of faith grew stronger and stronger.
 2. As the years go by we grow feebler outwardly; yet, inwardly we are gaining in strength according to wisdom. The factious and jealous will do their best to tear us down yet let us press onward knowing that there are souls to save and eternity to greet.
- F. “*For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal*” (4:17-8).
1. Though the struggles against Satan’s devices leave us outwardly battle weary, it is not to be compared with the eternal glory we shall have if we continue to give diligence (2 Peter 1:10-11).
 2. Paul and his preaching companions had suffered to the point of death for the sake of the gospel message (2 Corinthians 1:8-9) but he knew that the ultimate victory rested in Jesus (2 Corinthians 2:14).
 3. Paul had his priorities straight as one would say. He viewed the present stress as lasting only momentarily in relationship to eternity. The apostle John would later write, “... *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life*” (Revelation 2:10).

Synopsis of Chapter 4

2 Corinthians 1-3 reveals much about preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in all its purity. When the authoritative gospel (2 Corinthians 2:17) is preached with an attitude of love (2 Corinthians 2:4), individuals will be moved to sorrow and repentance (2 Corinthians 1:23; 2:2) and thereby experience hope in this life (2 Corinthians 1:1ff). Authoritative teaching is designed to test individuals (2 Corinthians 2:9). The gospel has divine origins and is a superior message to that of Mosaic Law and human reason (2 Corinthians 3:9). Chapter 4 of 2 Corinthians continues the distinction between human reason and divine revelation. Also, chapter 4 reveals a struggle between good and evil and the rewards for the faithful who would overcome Satan and his devices.

A Distinction Between Divine Revelation and Human Reason (4:1-7):

Paul established the divine origin of the gospel message and its superiority over the Mosaic Law in chapter 3 (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:9). Paul's approach toward the gospel message in chapter 4 was that it indeed is true and offers real hope. Revelation is a divine message that is certainly pure with absolutely no corruption (2 Corinthians 2:17). One who would therefore preach a message that did not represent the entire purity of the divine gospel message is a representative of Satan. Satan's "*devices*" (2 Corinthians 2:11) are "*craft, and deceit*" (2 Corinthians 4:2). The pure gospel is viewed as "*treasure*" (2 Corinthians 4:7) as opposed to preaching worthless human reasoning (2 Corinthians 4:5). One's true being is revealed in the message he preaches. At one time in the past, Paul preached a message of "*craft*" and "*deceit*," though it was not his intentions to do so (cf. the aorist of the word "*renounced*" at 2 Corinthians 4:2). Having now renounced the "*hidden things of shame*" (2 Corinthians 4:2) he preached the "*light of the gospel*" (2 Corinthians 4:4). Two ways to preach are therefore revealed in these first seven verses. First, one may preach the "*light of the gospel*" in all its purity (2 Corinthians 2:17; 4:4). Second, one may preach a message of "*craft and deceit*" associated with human reason (2 Corinthians 4:2). Nothing is said about "honestly mistaken preaching."

Real Hope Rests in the Pure "*light of the gospel*" (2 Corinthians 4:8-18):

Those who preach the purity of the gospel are armed with the "*exceeding greatness of the power of God*" (2 Corinthians 4:7). This fact being firmly established gives way to Christian confidence that we may endure all of Satan's workings in good faith. Paul and his preaching companions were "*pressed,*" "*perplexed,*" "*pursued,*" "*mitten down,*" and "*always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus*" (2 Corinthians 4:8-10); however, they never gave up the fight. What motivated them to continue and what shall motivate us today? Paul answered, "*knowing that he that raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus...*" (2 Corinthians 4:14). Knowing these things brethren, let us continue to give diligence and never grow weary of our labor in the Lord.

Chapter 5

I. The spiritual body and eternal life to the faithful (5:1-11):

- A. "*For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens*" (5:1).
 3. Chapter four discussed the worth of suffering for the cause of Christ's doctrine. Paul and his preaching companions had feared death in some situations (2 Corinthians 1:8). No matter how dangerous the situation, Paul was determined to preach the truth to others that they may be saved (see 2 Corinthians 4:15). The things which he suffered could in no way compare to the eternal glory that awaited him and all others who take such a stand (see 2 Corinthians 4:16-18).
 4. Paul knew, by faith, that in the resurrection, men would be clothed with an eternal abode for the spirit (Psalms 132:9; 1 Corinthians 15:38).
- B. "*For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked*" (5:2-3).
 1. The "*in this*" is represented in our mortal flesh. We suffer sickness, disease, fatigue, pain, sorrow, anguish, distress (over life, false brethren etc.), hunger in the flesh. Such living causes the faithful to "*long to be clothed*" with the heavenly "*spiritual body*" (see 1 Corinthians 15:44).
 2. The word "*clothed*" is an aorist tense verb (Friberg 557) and indicates the past action of obedience to the gospel without the completion of the rewards that come along with that. Paul had a divine way of saying, 'if we die without proper preparation for our eternal abode it is as being naked because we will not be "*clothed*" with our eternal spiritual body.' Therefore Paul's hope was that no one would die unprepared to meet the judgment of God. If said event happens, we will be "*naked*," that is, without our spiritually clothed body fit for eternal existence with God in heaven.

- C. *“For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life”* (5:4).
1. Again Paul mentioned the current *“groan(ing)”* of our present state in the flesh. This state is a state of *“burden.”* To *“groan”* (*stenazo*) is to “sigh often, sigh deeply, generally, to sigh, groan, moan” (LS 744). We often sigh due to exhaustion, frustration, pain, and mental anguish that accompany earthly life.
 2. The sighing and mental anguish is not directed at the unclothed body (a state not prepared to meet God in judgment), but we sigh deeply due to our earthly pain that looks vigorously at the end when we shall be clothed with a spiritual body.
 3. The immortal state *“swallows”* (consumes {LS 412}) up the body of mortal flesh by the victory offered in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:54). The physical earthly body, that is mortal and subject to death, is consumed and no longer exists in the heavenly realm.
- D. *“Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit”* (5:5).
1. To be *“wrought”* (*katergazomai*) is “to effect by labor, to achieve, accomplish... to earn or gain by labor, to achieve, acquire...” (LS 420). God ‘achieved or accomplished’ our eternal salvation through the work of His Son Jesus (Luke 4:18-22).
 2. This salvation and eternal spiritual body are sure to be accomplished that man may know for sure that God *“gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”*
 - a. The word *“earnest”* (*arrhabon*) is “earnest-money, caution-money, deposited by the purchaser and forfeited if the purchase is not completed” (LS 119). God has promised the faithful a heavenly eternal body and gave as ‘earnest-money’ the Holy Spirit to assure us of His pledge (see comments at 2 Corinthians 1:22 of this outline).
 - b. The work of the Holy Spirit is:
 - 1b. Making known the mind of the Father to man (2 Peter 1:21; John 16:13-14).
 - 2b. Convicting the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8).
 - 3b. Converting souls (Romans 1:16).
 - 4b. Sanctification (1 John 1:1-6).
- E. *“Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight); we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord”* (5:6-8).
1. The faithful Christian is of *“good courage”* because while we live in these earthly bodies that groan in pain we are not without hope. We will be resurrected from the dead one day, stand before the Lord in judgment, and live with the Lord forever if we have lived faithfully.
 2. Such hope motivates us to *“walk by faith, not by sight.”* The word *“sight”* (*eidōs*) is “that which is seen, form, shape, figure” (LS 226). It is used in other passages of the NT. The apostle John said, *“My little children, guard yourselves from idols”* (1 John 5:21).
 - a. The word *“idols”* (*eidolon*) is from the root word *eido* and Latin *Video*. It is defined as “a form, shape, figure; image or statue; hence, an idol, image of a god” (Moulton 117). The word *eido* is used here in 2 Corinthians 5:7, again in 2 Corinthians 6:16, (*“And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols?”*) and again in 1 John 5:21 as an ideology. Liddell and Scott define *eido* as “to see, perceive, behold” (227). The act of worshipping an image based upon human perception is idolatry. The word of God is a system of instructions for Godly living. Those who reject the teachings of Christ and use their own human perception are practicing idolatry. Humanism is therefore idolatry defined. Idolatry comes in a variety of forms other than worshipping false gods. One may exclaim with vigor that he would not participate in idolatry, yet have no problem with worshipping God in unauthorized ways. Consider Isaiah 46:12 in its context of idolatry. Those idolaters of Judah were *“stouthearted, that are far from righteousness.”* I Samuel 15:23 states the nature of idolatry as well. *“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou has rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king.”* The rebellious are stouthearted and stubborn as is

evidenced by their rejection of the authority of God. Saul did what he thought was best rather than what God commanded and so it was with Judah in the days of Isaiah. Many today want to do what they think best rather than following God's divine standard. Children's church, theatrics, food fest, lock-ins, and games to name a few are ways some churches are attempting to raise attendance. All unauthorized practices amount to idolatry (see study # 27; Modern Day Idolatry).

- b. Christians are to therefore "*guard*" ourselves from idols (human reasoning). The word "*guard*" (*phulasso*) = "to keep watch and ward, keep guard... be on one's guard against, shun..." (LS 874-875).
 3. Due to said faith (rather than sight), the faithful Christians are willing to give up their current lives that they may be with the Lord in heaven.
- F. "*Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him. For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad*" (5:9-10).
1. Due to God's promise of eternal salvation and an eternal spiritual body, Paul and his preaching companions (as well as all of us) made it their "*aim*" (*philotimeomai*) in life to live by the divine standard of truth and thereby be well-pleasing to the Father (cf. 2 John 9).
 - a. *Philotimeomai* = "to love or seek after honor, to be ambitious, emulous, jealous... the object of ambition is added with a Prep., qhil... to pride oneself upon it... pursuing some object of ambition... to strive eagerly and emulously to do a thing, endeavor earnestly, aspire" (LS 865).
 - b. This Greek word is used only two other times in the New Testament. Paul used it in Romans 15:20 saying, "*yea, making it my aim so to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation...*" Again, Paul used the word at 1 Thessalonians 4:11 saying, "*and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your hands, even as we charged you;*"
 - c. Liddell and Scott's definition of the word *philotimeomai* uses the word "emulous" for part of its definition. Emulous means "Eager or ambitious to equal or surpass another. Characterized or prompted by a spirit of rivalry" (AHD 450).
 - d. These words indicate a set goal to achieve. Reaching said goal is the aspiration of an individual's life. The life of such a one is filled with ambition to achieve this goal as though one were competing with others to be the victor. Here is a word that indicates an individual eaten up with interest and passion to achieve the goal of life. This word study speaks volumes as to what the Christian's approach to Godly living is all about (see study # 11).
 2. Paul was confident that salvation was real; however, he was also confident that the impending judgment was real. Every man will stand alone at the judgment. Each will give answer for the things he or she did while in this earthly tabernacle (cf. John 12:48; Revelation 20:12-15).
- G. "*Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest unto God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your conscience*" (5:11).
1. The word "*fear*" (*phobos*) is translated "*terror*" in the KJ Bible. Liddell and Scott define the word *phobos* as, "panic fear, such as causes flight, then generally, fear, terror, properly of the outward show of fear, and so distinguished from *deos* (the sensation of fear... to strike terror into one... an object of terror, a terror)" (867-868).
 2. The fear of God is not that He terrifies us as a monster. The fearful thing about God is his absolute control over eternity. He terrifies us through our knowledge of what He is capable of doing to those who disobey him. Jesus said, "*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*" (Matthew 10:28). Such knowledge causes us to "*persuade men*" to repent and be saved (See study # 21). Said fear motivates one to walk by God's divine standards that are revealed by the apostles and prophets.
 3. Once again Paul speaks of being made "*manifest in your conscience*" (see also 2 Corinthians 4:2). Paul's message was of a divine origin. The Corinthian's conscience would be benefited

by the mind of God as these inspired men spoke to them. The word of God dwelling in the minds of the Corinthians would help them achieve their “aim” in life of heaven.

II. Paul Pleads with the Corinthians to be reconciled to God (5:12-21):

- A. *“We are not again commending ourselves unto you, but speak as giving you occasion of glorying on our behalf, that ye may have wherewith to answer them that glory in appearance, and not in heart”* (5:12).
1. Remember that Paul had defended himself and his preaching brethren in chapter 3:1; 4:5, 7 regarding their having “commended” themselves to the brethren. The word “commend” (*sunistao*) is to “recommend to favorable attention” (Moulton 391). Paul had no desire for self attention or glorification through a message he concocted of his own. Paul’s desire was for God to be given all glory for His message of salvation.
 2. To find “glory in appearance” is to walk by sight rather than faith. The Corinthians had been guilty of this yet now were to change (see 1 Corinthians 1:12).
- B. *“For whether we are beside ourselves, it is unto God; or whether we are of sober mind, it is unto you”* (5:13).
1. Apparently some in Corinth (those who sought to discredit Paul and his preaching brethren by accusing them of having personal agendas) were accusing Paul and his preaching brethren of being “beside ourselves” (*existemi*). The Greek word “existemi” means “to put out of its place, to change or alter utterly... metaphorically to drive one out of his senses... to derange... to lose one’s senses... to be out of one’s wits, to be astonished, amazed” (LS 274). We recall that while Paul was giving his defense to Festus the governor replies, *“Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad”* (Acts 26:24).
 2. Paul’s reply to the accusing brethren is that if we have been deranged or lost our senses, it is unto the glory of God. Paul was happy to have his own senses driven out and the knowledge of Christ to replace it. If some wanted to refer to Paul as out of his senses, Paul wanted them to know what senses he had been driven to and by what means.
 3. If the brethren in Corinth so chose to view Paul and his preaching companions as “sober” as opposed to “besides ourselves,” then the same principle applied. Paul’s thinking was dictated by divine revelation. Whether one viewed him as sober or deranged, he would bring glory to God with his preaching.
- C. *“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again”* (5:14-15).
1. To be “constrained” (*sunecho*) is to “hold or keep together... to keep together, keep from dispersing, of soldiers... to keep the state together, keep it from falling to pieces... to keep the rowers together, make them pull in time... to constrain or force one to a thing” (LS 775). Though this current life is filled with burdens the Christian can hold it together by the love of Christ (there are better things awaiting us in eternity). Second Corinthians chapter 4:1, 16-18 indicated that Paul would not give up preaching because *“the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus and shall present us with you”* (2 Corinthians 4:14). The resurrection of the dead to a state of eternal fellowship with the Father is made possible by the “love of Christ” (cf. 1 John 3:16-17; 4:10-17). Jesus was real to Paul, and the Lord’s love would surely keep Paul and others from dispersing and falling to pieces when times of adversity came (see study # 26).
 2. *“Because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all.”* Christ had to die for ALL; therefore, we conclude that **all** had died in sin (Romans 3:23).
 3. The purpose of Christ’s love was to provide spiritual fellowship with the Father (1 John 1:5ff). Those who so chose to have this fellowship are to renounce their former manner of life and reasoning and let Christ’s word dwell in them richly.
 4. *“That they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again.”* That which dictates the life of man is not to be his human reason but divine revelation. Jesus died, arose from the dead, and sent His apostles forth to deliver a

divine message of reconciliation. One who would so desire to be reconciled to God and live eternally with Him must conform to His standards.

- D. *“Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh: even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more”* (5:16).
1. The word *“henceforth”* (*apo*) (from this time on) seems to be connected to Paul’s idea in 2 Corinthians 4:2. Paul had at one time in the past *“renounced the hidden things of shame...”* At one time in Paul’s life he let human reason dictate his thinking on the coming Messiah; however, now he views Christ through divine revelation (Galatians 1:11ff).
 2. *“Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new”* (5:17). Though it hurt Paul deeply to think back on his past dealings with Christians and his sinfulness through human reasoning (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13ff; Philippians 3:6 etc.), he realized that now Christ had forgiven him. To be *“in Christ”* is to be in fellowship with the Lord abiding in His truths (1 John 1:3, 5-6; 2:6, 24; cf. Galatians 3:27). Christians today need not dwell on their past sins. We must realize that the old man of sin is passed away and we are not to let that return.
 3. Baptized Christians are *“new creatures”* as opposed to those *“after the flesh.”*
- E. *“But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation”* (5:18-19).
1. Because Christ died for all, it stands that *“all things are of God”* (all things that lead to eternal life and a resurrected spiritual body).
 2. Through Christ is the blessings of remission of sins (Genesis 22:18; Acts 3:25-26) and thereby reconciliation to God (i.e., fellowship) (cf. Colossians 1:20; 1 John 1:9; 3:3). This message of *“the ministry of reconciliation”* (gospel / truth / word of God; cf. John 17:17 compared to Ephesians 1:13) was entrusted to the apostles and other inspired preachers that all in the world may have the hope of reconciliation and fellowship with God. This is a testimony of Bible unity. To be reconciled to God is to be one with God and one with brethren (John 17:11ff; Ephesians 4:1ff; 1 Corinthians 12:12ff; 1 John 1:5-7) (see study # 28; Bible Unity).
 3. Herein is the love of God made manifest. God gave both His only begotten Son to die for man’s reconciliation and divine instructions for man to hear, learn, study, and apply that all may be reconciled to God. When one is in Christ, his sins are forgiven and God does not *“reckon”* (put to one’s account) sin to that person any longer!
 4. Paul is not preaching any type of self proclaimed message to cause glory to himself. Paul and his preaching brethren preached Christ crucified that the world may be reconciled unto God and have an eternal abode with the Father. Paul’s desire for people was God’s desire; i.e., that no man perish in sin (see 2 Peter 3:9).
- F. *“We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God”* (5:20).
1. The word *“ambassador”* (Greek - *presbeuomen*) is defined by Moulton (page 340) and Liddell and Scott’s (page 668) Analytical Greek Lexicons as, “ambassador - a diplomatic official of the highest rank appointed and accredited as representative in residence by one government to another.”
 2. Who were the ambassadors represented by the plural pronoun “we?” The antecedent to the pronoun “we” is Paul, Timothy, Titus, Apollos, Sosthenes, and Cephas (men who preached the gospel to the Corinthians) (see 1 Corinthians 1:1, 12; 4:7; 2 Corinthians 7:6ff).
 3. *Why did Paul refer to himself and these other men as “ambassadors on behalf of Christ?”* To truthfully answer this question we must examine nothing but the context the statement is made in. Much of 2 Corinthians is Paul’s proof of preaching a divine message with divine origins. Paul was being accused by some brethren of preaching a message that would *“commend”* himself to the brethren so that he could have personal gain (2 Corinthians 3:1). Some went so far as accusing Paul, and his preaching companions, of scamming the brotherhood for money

under the guise of there being a need in Judea for the saints (see 2 Corinthians 12:16-18). Paul, hearing that his motives and message preached was under attack, set out to prove the divine origin of his message.

4. Paul did not preach "*fleshly wisdom*" (2 Corinthians 1:12). Paul, Timothy, Titus, Apollos, Sosthenes, and Cephas were "*sufficient*" or qualified to preach God's divine plan (see 2 Corinthians 2:16; 3:5). These men's sufficiency or qualification rest within the power of God's divine inspiration (see 2 Peter 1:21 for method). Paul wrote, "*For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake*" (2 Corinthians 4:5). He goes on to say, "*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves*" (2 Corinthians 4:7). The work and message of an ambassador does not originate from his own mind but from the mind of the one who sends him. The benefit is not for the ambassador but for those whom he is sent to (see 2 Corinthians 4:15; 5:12).
5. The ambassadors' objective was to reconcile the Corinthians to God (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). These men were divinely armed with revelation to accomplish this task. They had no personal agenda of gaining a following or getting rich. Their work involved the souls of men.
6. We do not have inspired men today to serve as ambassadors of Christ yet we do have the command to use the power of the gospel to save souls. Paul and his preaching companions did not have a monopoly on preaching. The apostle Paul wrote Timothy saying, "*The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also*" (2 Timothy 2:2). God forbid that you or I would ever preach with an agenda to get gain from brethren. Our preaching is to have its origins in divine revelation alone. Our motives are to be love for man's souls alone. When men preach their opinions or personal convictions they have left the one true faith.

Synopsis of Chapter 5

The Christian's Aim:

Paul said, "*wherefore also we make it our aim whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him*" (2 Corinthians 5:9). The word "*aim*" indicates a passionate quest to achieve a set goal. The said goal of every Christian has its roots in the resurrection of the body (2 Corinthians 4:14). Man's eternal body will be "*clothed*" with a heavenly (immortal) existence (2 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Corinthians 15:42). Paul's aim, as ours ought to be, was directed at the eternal spiritual and immortal body that shall rest with Jehovah for eternity.

Paul's Aim was to be the Aim of All

Paul was not only immersed in the idea of personal resurrection and eternal existence with the Lord but in helping others make it to heaven too (see 2 Corinthians 4:15). The reality of hell caused Paul to preach to others that they would escape these eternal torments. Paul said, "*knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men...*" (2 Corinthians 5:11). Even at the end of Paul's life he thought about the souls of others. He said, "*For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought to good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing*" (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

A Spiritual Aim Demands that we Deny Self Reason and Trust Divine Revelation:

The theme of 2 Corinthians is found in this principle. Preachers and members of the body of Christ are to have no personal agendas as their motivation to preach (see 2 Corinthians 1:12; 2:16; 3:1, 5; 4:2-7; 5:11, 18-20). Paul said, "*we walk by faith, not by sight*" (2 Corinthians 5:7). Furthermore, the apostle states that

man's glorying is to be in the truth as opposed to "*appearance*" (2 Corinthians 5:12). So Paul said, "*and he (Jesus) died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again*" (2 Corinthians 5:15).

Such an Aim takes into Consideration Jesus:

Paul's preaching was the "*ministry of reconciliation*" (2 Corinthians 5:18). God's aim has ever been to reconcile mankind to Himself through the blood of His righteous Son (2 Corinthians 5:19; 2 Peter 3:9).

Such an Aim Demands that the Forgiven Sinner Forget his Past and move ever closer to the Goal:

Paul had done many sinful deeds in his past just as you and I have (1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13ff; 1 John 1:8). When he became a Christian, he was redirected in life through repentance and baptism (Acts 22:16). Each individual who now obeys the gospel must redirect their lives as well (Romans 12:1-2). We could dwell on our past mistakes to the point of it causing lethargy, complacency, and pessimism in our service to God; however, this is not what the Lord wants. Paul said, "*Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new*" (2 Corinthians 5:17 see also Philippians 3:13-14). To pine away in sin would be to falter in our aim!

Conclusion:

The resurrection of the body and eternal judgment demands an act in life. Whether we choose to preach and or represent divine revelation alone (2 Corinthians 1:12) or Satan's doctrine (1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Corinthians 2:11) is our choice. Those who make it their aim to serve Jehovah, as did Joshua and a host of Godly men and women in history, will not be disappointed (1 Corinthians 15:58). Those who will not give up their personal agendas of opinions and personal convictions will forever suffer in hell.

Chapter 6

I. Paul and his Preaching Companions Endured much to bring the Truth to the World that Some may be Saved (6:1-10):

- A. "*And working together with him we entreat also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain*" (6:1):
1. This verse indicates that the Corinthians Paul is addressing had received the grace of God (the hope of salvation). Paul's concern for the Corinthians was that they would receive the grace of God in "*vain*" (without profit).
 2. False teachers were teaching a mix of Judaism and Christianity (Law of Christ mingled with Law of Moses (cf. chapter 3). There were, too, some in Corinth who seemed to be bent on exposing Paul and his preaching companions and bringing into disrepute their character.
 3. Paul's writing, in this second epistle, is focused on answering his critics and the false charges made against him (i.e., Paul is inconsistent 1:17; commending himself 3:1; 5:12; and being "*beside*" themselves 5:13).
 - a. Paul had preached the "*ministry of reconciliation*" to the Corinthians (5:18) as an "*ambassador*" of Christ (5:20).

- b. Paul and his companions preached divine revelation alone (2:17). Those Corinthians who would be swayed by another doctrine would only cause the grace of God in their lives to be made “*vain*.”
 - c. Paul’s admonition is to not be fooled by false doctrine or the slander of men.
- B.** “*(For he saith, at an acceptable time I hearkened unto thee, and in a day of salvation did I succor thee: behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation):*” (6:2).
- 1. This parenthetical statement is taken from Isaiah 49:8 and indicates God’s ever ready state to forgive sinners and provide salvation.
 - 2. The gospel age is the “*acceptable time*” and so Paul stated, “*now is the acceptable time and day of salvation*.” It is God’s desire that all men be saved “*now*” (2 Peter 3:9).
- C.** “*Giving no occasion of stumbling in anything, that our ministration be not blamed; but in everything commending ourselves, as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses*” (6:3-4).
- 1. Paul, Timothy, Sosthenes, Apollos, and Titus had preached nothing but divine revelation. It was the aim of said preaching to save souls. If Paul or his companions preached this message yet lived just the opposite, they would have given an occasion of “*stumbling*” and caused the message they preached to be “*blamed*.” Seeing that these men lived what they preached they prove that there is no personal agendas being met (see study # 29; Proof that Paul preached Divine Revelation rather than having a Personal Agenda).
 - 2. This verse speaks volumes as to what our responsibilities are today as ministers of reconciliation. We must all practice what we preach lest we cause others to stumble and blame us and the message we preach. This is the reason many today say, ‘why go to church, they are all a bunch of hypocrites.’ Yes, this person has the same responsibilities as anyone else, but God forbid that I would live in such a way to give credence to that statement.
 - 3. Paul therefore “*commends*” the ministration of reconciliation (gospel) to the Corinthians rather than himself or any other man. Paul had previously said that they had not preached a message that originated from their own mind (2 Corinthians 4:5, 7). Here he said that they do commend “*ourselves*” and then qualified that statement. It was for the sake of divine revelation and men’s souls that Paul and his companions endured much to preach (2 Corinthians 6:4b-10):
 - a. *Patience* (*hupomone*) = “a holding out, patient endurance: the enduring to do” (LS 845). Those these preachers suffered much they “endured”, and held on to the end.
 - b. *Afflictions* (*thlipsis*) = “metaphorically to oppress, afflict, distress” (LS 367); “affliction, distress of mind; distressing circumstances, trial, affliction (“A condition of pain, suffering or distress” {AHD 84}).
 - c. *Necessities* (*anagke*) = “actual force, violence, torture... bodily pain, anguish, distress” (LS 53). When Paul and Barnabas were preaching on the first tour, some Jews from Antioch and Iconium stoned and beat Paul to the point that they thought he was dead due to the message he preached (Acts 14:19).
 - d. *Distresses* (*stenochoria*) = “A narrowness of space: want of room, metaphorically, the difficulty of passing the river” (LS 744). The road to preaching salvation to the Jew and Gentile was not a downhill run for Paul and his companions. The Jewish people generally rejected Paul, and the Gentiles treated the gospel as an intriguing concept of worldly wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:21-24). Paul and his companions found quickly what Jesus meant in John 7:7 and 17:14 (The world hates those who expose their sins).

- e. *Stripes* (*plege*) = “A blow, stroke... the person struck is ; the striker... a stroke by lightning... a blow, stroke of calamity” (LS 646). Looking ahead to 2 Corinthians 11:24, Paul spoke of the five times that he received forty save one strokes from the Jews. Other beatings with rods occurred at the hands of Romans (Acts 16:22-23).
- f. *Imprisonment* (*phulake*) = “a place for keeping others in, a ward, prison” (LS 874) (cf. Acts 16:24).
- g. *Tumults* (*akatastasia*) = “an unsettled state; disorder, commotion, tumult, sedition” (Moulton 12). When Paul was in Ephesus, a great tumult arose being orchestrated by Demetrius the silversmith (Acts 19:28-32).
- h. *Labors* (*kopos*) = “a striking, beating, toil, trouble, suffering, weariness, fatigue” (LS 444).
- i. *Watchings* (*agrupnia*) = “sleeplessness, waking, watching” (LS 9).
- j. *Fastings* (*nesteia*) = “Not eating, fasting, of persons... causing hunger, starving” (LS 532).
- k. *Pureness* (*hagnotes*) = “purity; chastity” (LS 7). “pure, chaste, modest, innocent, blameless. Purity, life of purity... purely, sincerely” (Moulton 4). What Paul preached was from the sincerity and purity of divine revelation and never any of his own ideas (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:17).
- l. *Knowledge* (*gnosis*) = “A knowing, knowledge” (LS 167). This knowledge was of divine origin (II Cor. 3:9).
- m. *Longsuffering* (*makrothumia*) = “longsuffering; forbearance” (LS 485). “Patience; patient enduring of evil, fortitude; slowness of avenging injuries, long-suffering, forbearance, clemency” (Moulton 256). Though Paul and his companions often faced terrible circumstances, they did not lash out at their accusers, but rather bore the afflictions with patience in hope that some may be saved. They used Christ as their example in this area (cf. 1 Peter 2:23).
- n. *Kindness* (*chrestotes*) = “of persons, goodness, honesty, goodness of heart, kindness” (LS 895). Sandwiched between “*pureness, knowledge, longsuffering*”, and “*in the Holy Spirit*” we find “*kindness*” (honesty). The word “*chrestotes*” is found 7 other times in the NT always directly associated with truth.
- o. *In the Holy Spirit* = as one was “*in the Holy Spirit*,” he or she was in Christ and the Father (Cf. Ephesians 5:18-20; Col. 3:16). God dwells in the Christian (1 John 4:12-16). Jesus dwells in the Christian (Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 1:27). The Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian (Romans 8:9-11; 2 Timothy 1:13-14). God dwells in the Christian through faith (Galatians 3:2; Ephesians 3:17).
- p. *In love unfeigned* = Paul commended himself to the Corinthians “*in love unfeigned*.” The word “*unfeigned*” (*anupokritos*) = “without dissimulation (to disguise (one’s intentions, for example) under a feigned appearance... To conceal one’s true feelings or intentions”) (LS 83). Paul’s true feelings for the Corinthians were that they may be saved.
- q. *In the word of truth* because by no other way may men be saved (Acts 4:12).
- r. *In the power of God* = the power of God is found in the gospel message. This was God’s power and not Paul’s nor any other man’s (Romans 1:16).
- s. *By the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left* = As one armed to the teeth for battle, so the Christian is armed with the word of God (cf. Ephesians 6:10-18). Paul later said, “*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds)*” (2 Corinthians 10:3-4).

The devil's doctrines are to be destroyed by divine revelation (cf. 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Corinthians 11:3-4).

- t. *By Glory and dishonor* = whether Paul was accepted or denounced, he preached the same divine message from God.
- u. *By evil or good report* = as some gave Paul honor and glory in some places, they dishonored him in others. Likewise, as some gave a good report of Paul, others slandered him calling him a trouble maker (Acts 18:26).
- v. *As Deceivers, and yet true* = Paul was often charged with preaching his own ideas and seeking to gain a following for himself. By charging him of deception, some sought to discredit Paul (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:1; 5:12).
- w. *As unknown, and yet well known* = whether in places well known or not very well known, Paul preached the truth. He was well known of God.
- x. *As dying, and behold, we live* = When Paul was stoned and dragged out of the city of Lystra, many thought he was dead; however, he survived (Acts 14:19ff).
- y. *As chastened, and not killed:* = the word "*chasten*" (*paideuo*) = "to teach one a thing... to correct, discipline; to chastise, punish" (LS 584). The Lord had brought Paul through many trials in life that he might learn to give God the glory. At Paul's conversion, Ananias was hesitant to baptize Saul knowing the terrible deeds he had done. God said to Ananias regarding Paul, "*I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake*" (Acts 9:16). Though the Lord often chastened Paul, He did not allow Paul to be killed until due time.
- z. *As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing* = Though Paul was a man of sorrows for the things he suffered while preaching the gospel, he had much cause for rejoicing. On one occasion, Paul prayed to God that a thorn in his flesh would be removed. The Lord would not remove the thorn and Paul responded, "*most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me*" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Paul's joy was that of the apostle John's and others. They found joy when they heard of other brethren walking in truth (2 John 4; 3 John 4).
- aa. *As poor, yet making many rich as having nothing, and yet possessing all things* = by the world's standards, Paul and his preaching companions had nothing. Paul said, "*Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place... we are made as the filth of the world, the off scouring of all things, even until now*" (1 Corinthians 4:11-13). Though they were poor by monetary standards, they were rich in relationship to the treasures of the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:7).

II. Paul's love for the Corinthians and further Admonition (6:11-18):

A. "*Our mouth is open unto you, O Corinthians, our heart is enlarged*" (6:11).

1. Firmly established to this point is the idea that Paul and his preaching companions preached nothing but divine revelation.
2. Paul's earnest desire was that the Corinthians would grasp these truths as he taught them that they may be rich and filled with joy. Paul's love for the souls of the Corinthians is seen in the idea that, "*our heart is enlarged*" toward you the Corinthians.

B. "*Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own affections*" (6:12).

1. The word "*straitened*" (*stenochoreo*) = "to straiten for room... to be crowded together" (LS 744). "To crowd together into a narrow place, straiten; to be in straits, to be cooped up, to be cramped from action, to be cramped in feeling" (Moulton 375). This word "*straitened*" is used only one other time in the NT. Paul said in 2 Corinthians

- 4:8, “*we are pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair...*” The word clearly represents restricted, distressful, and painful conditions.
2. Apparently Paul was making it clear to the Corinthians that his message had not caused them any painful conditions. Their pain and agony rested in their “*own affections.*” Possibly many of the Corinthians had moved away from where their consciences had been trained and allowed themselves to be given to old lustful appetites. The pain of their conscience was no fault of Paul’s, but their own evil doings.
- C. “*Now for a recompense in like kind (I speak as unto my children), be ye also enlarged*” (6:13).
1. A “*recompense*” (*antimisthia*) is “a retribution, recompense” (Moulton 33). “a requital, recompense... as a reward” (LS 79).
 2. Paul was simply asking that the Corinthians (as his children in the faith) would return the enlarged heart of love toward him that he has showed to them by preaching the gospel.
- D. “*Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? Or what communion hath light with darkness?*”
1. Some of the Corinthians' affections were obviously founded in what unbelievers were doing around them. Rather than being guided by the principles and ways of the unbelieving Paul admonishes them to break such yokes (i.e., don't do the same sinful things that the world is doing and expect to maintain favor with God) (see study # 31; Worldliness).
 2. Paul set forth a premise (command) in which five illustrations were used to establish his point. The premise: “*Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers.*”
 - a. The phrase “*unequally yoked*” is one word in the Greek (*heterozugeo*) and is found nowhere else in the Bible. The Greek word is defined as “to be yoked in unequal partnership with another” (LS 320). “Yoked with a different yoke; used in Lev. 19:19 of the union of beasts of different kinds, e.g. an ox and an ass), to come under an unequal or different yoke, to be unequally yoked, to have fellowship with one who is not an equal” (Thayer 245). “Draft animals that need different kinds of yokes, because they are of different species [i.e., an ox and a donkey]: Leviticus 19:19” (AG 314).
 - b. The word “*yoke*” (*zugos*) as used in Matthew 11:29-30; Acts 15:10; Galatians 5:1 represents a doctrine. Liddell and Scott define *zugos* as “anything which joins two bodies; used metaph. as the yoke of slavery” (344). The yoke is “something that connects or joins together” (AHD 1402). The two things that are yoked together generally work together for a common goal. Example; two ox yoked together plowing work at the same objective. The OT has some interesting areas where God did not approve of two different things being yoked together that a common goal be achieved:
 - 1b. Cattle were not to be mixed in breeding (Leviticus 19:19).
 - 2b. Two different seeds were not to be sown in the same field (Deuteronomy 22:9).
 - 3b. The ox was not to be yoked to the mule (Deuteronomy 22:10).
 - 4b. Two different fabrics were not to be sewn together (Leviticus 19:19; Deuteronomy 22:11).
 - 5b. Israel was not to mix or marry the idolatrous Canaanites (Leviticus 20:22-23; Deuteronomy 7:3) but rather destroy them (Deuteronomy 7:2, 16). Interestingly, the Law of Moses did not forbid marriage to other foreigners apart from the Canaanites. One such example of this is the fact that Boaz (grandfather to David who is in the lineage of Christ) married a Moabite by the name of Ruth and was

- commended for his choice (Ruth 2:10-11). The stipulations put on Moab were that they were not to be allowed in the congregation of the Lord (Deuteronomy 23:4).
- c. The “*unbeliever*” is out of fellowship with the Lord. It does not matter whether this individual is one who has never obeyed the gospel or one who has obeyed yet walks in sin; each description defines the “*unbeliever*.” Consider who the “believer” is. 1 John 5:1 states, “*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God.*” To “*believe that Jesus is the Christ*” is to be “*begotten of God.*”
 - 1c. The word “*begotten*” (*gennao*) is “to bring forth... produce” (LS 162).
 - 2c. Here are the facts regarding one being “*begotten of God.*”
 - a. The one who does righteous acts is begotten of God (1 John 2:29).
 - b. The one who loves others is begotten of God (1 John 4:7).
 - c. The one who believes that Jesus is the Christ and loves those who so believe is begotten of God (1 John 5:1).
 - d. The one who is begotten of God does not go on sinning in life without repentance and confession (1 John 3:9; 5:18).
 - 3c. Clearly the “*unbeliever*” is the opposite of the “*believer*” that is begotten of God.
 - d. Let us now summarize what Paul has commanded: i.e., “*be not unequally yoked with unbelievers.*” To be yoked is to be joined together to achieve a common purpose. Those who do not believe are those who are not conducting themselves according to the authority of Jesus Christ. Therefore, to be unequally yoked with an unbeliever is to work with them and their false doctrines to achieve the goal of heaven. This cannot and never will work. **Paul commanded the Ephesians to expose sin rather than share in it** (Ephesians 5:11). This is the concept of unity in diversity of doctrinal beliefs. One may have a different “take” on a matter of doctrine; however, those differences are set aside by the two in the name of ‘loving Christian fellowship.’ The ‘setting aside of doctrinal differences for the sake of peace’ mentality is a compromise of truth and therefore sinful. Unity in diversity is defined by Paul as being “unequally yoked” (see study # 30; Unity in Diversity) Such a one has yoked the doctrine of the devil with the doctrine of Christ.
 3. To illustrate the point that two doctrines, directions, or ways of life cannot coexist to achieve the one goal of heaven Paul uses five illustrations. As water does not mix with oil neither does a corrupt style of life exist in peace with the way of righteousness:
 - a. “*What fellowship has righteousness and iniquity?*” Righteousness and iniquity cannot coexist.
 - 1a. The word “*fellowship*” (*metoche*) = “participation, communion” (LS 507). “Sharing, participation” (AG 514). “To share in, partake... a sharing, partaking; communion, fellowship” (Moulton 267). “*Righteousness*” (*dikaiosune*) = “right, lawful, just... real, genuine, true” (LS 202). “*Iniquity*” (*anomia*) = “lawlessness” (LS 74). “Lawlessness... as a frame of mind” (AG 71).
 - 2a. Paul had asked a rhetorical question that he may prove a point. The answer is obvious to all. Right, lawful, just, and true conduct can in no way be “*unequally yoked*” together. Righteousness and unrighteousness cannot work together under the same yoke and achieve a goal together because they have different goals. The point is established: i.e., a believer and unbeliever cannot work together to achieve a common goal. A believer cannot participate in sin and expect to achieve the goal of heaven. Jesus said, “*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye*

- cannot serve God and mammon*” (Matthew 6:24). Righteousness and iniquity cannot coexist in the same yoke.
- b. “*What communion hath light with darkness?*” Light and darkness cannot coexist.
- 1b.** The word “*communion*” (*koinonia*) = “association (A person united with another or others in some action, enterprise, or business; partner; colleague; AHD 135)” (LS 440-441; Thayer 352; Moulton 235; AG 438-439). “*Light*” (*phos*) = “An appellation of God, i.e. spotless, holy” (Thayer 662). “Pure radiance, perfect brightness” (Moulton 432). “Light is continually used as figurative of holiness and purity (Proverbs 6:23; Isaiah 5:20; etc.)” (The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary 777). Light represents holiness, righteousness, justice, a state of having no sin (cf. Jeremiah 9:23-24). This is the “sphere of the divine” (AG 872). “*Darkness*” (*skotos*) = “moral darkness” (Moulton 370). “Everything that is enmity with God (AG 757). “Metaph. used of ignorance of divine things, and is associated with wickedness, and the resultant misery (Thayer 580). “Of spiritual or moral darkness, emblematic of sin, as a condition of moral or spiritual depravity” (Vines 260).
- 2b.** Again, Paul posed a rhetorical question to establish his point that two opposing sides cannot be yoked together to achieve a common goal. The word “*koinonia*” is used to illustrate the yoking together. Light is representative of God’s realm (1 Timothy 6:16), His Word (truth) (Psalms 119:105; Proverbs 6:23; Daniel 5:14; John 1:5; 8:12; 2 Corinthians 4:4), and His people (Matthew 5:14; Luke 11:36; Colossians 1:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:5). Darkness, on the other hand, represents the state of the un-repenting sinner who lacks understanding (Isaiah 13:9-11; Amos 5:18-20; Matthew 6:22-24; Luke 11:34-36; Acts 26:18; Ephesians 5:14; 6:12; Colossians 1:13). Point established! Light and darkness can in no way be yoked together to achieve a common goal. I cannot walk in light at the same time as darkness and believe this yoke is pleasing to God (cf. 1 John 1:5-7).
- c. “*What concord hath Christ with Belial?*”
- 1c.** The word “*concord*” (*sumphonesis*) = “agreeing in sound, in unison, metaph. harmonious, friendly, harmony or agreement with” (LS 765). “Unison, accord; agreement, concord (harmony or agreement of interests or feelings... peaceful relations; AHD 305)” (Moulton 384). “*Christ*” is He who comes to the world to save people from the consequences of sin (Matt. 1:21). “*Belial*” (*Belial*) = “worthlessness” (AG 139). “In Jewish apocalyptic writing (Book of Jubilees, Ascension of Isaiah, Sibylline Oracles) the name was used to describe Satan or the antichrist. Paul used the word in this sense in 2 Corinthians 6:15. The ‘man of lawlessness’ in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 is probably an equivalent of the ‘man of Belial.’” (ISBE V. 1; pg. 454). “Worthlessness, wickedness.” Belial is often used in the KJV as if it were a proper name, but beyond question it should not be regarded in the OT as such, its meaning being ‘worthlessness,’ and hence ‘recklessness, lawlessness.’ The expression ‘son’ or ‘man of Belial’ must be understood as meaning simply a worthless, lawless fellow (Deuteronomy 13:13; KJV; Judges 19:22; 20:13). In the NT the term appears (in the best manuscripts) in the form of Belias, and not Belial, as given in the KJV. The term, as used in 2 Corinthians 6:15, is generally understood as applied to Satan, as the personification of all that is bad” (The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary 154).
- 2c.** Again, the point of Paul’s rhetorical question was to establish that two opposing sides cannot be yoked together to achieve a common goal (to do so would be termed “*unequally yoked*”). Christ and Belial (Satan or everything that opposes truth) cannot have concord (harmony and agreement) with each other that a

common goal be achieved. Likewise a believer and unbeliever cannot be yoked together to achieve a common goal.

d. *“What portion hath a believer with an unbeliever?”*

1d. The word *“portion”* (*meris*) = “a part, portion, share, parcel” (LS 499). “A portion in common, share” (Moulton 264). The point has been established above that the believer is one who respects and lives by the authority of Jesus Christ, and the unbeliever is just the opposite.

2d. Paul’s point is again established. How can one who walks in light ‘share’ in the dark deeds and thoughts of the unbeliever and remain in fellowship with God?

e. *“What agreement hath a temple of God with idols?”*

1e. The word *“agreement”* (*sugkatathesis*) = “to set down together with; to assent, accord; alliance” (Moulton 379).

2e. An alliance cannot be formed with a temple of God and idols. Paul explained what the NT idea of a temple of God is in 2 Corinthians 6:16b as he quoted from Leviticus 26:12; Exodus 29:45; Ezekiel 37:27; Jeremiah 31:1; i.e., *“for we are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”* Believers are a temple of God because God dwells in them. The only way God may dwell in the believer is through a common yoke of truth (1 John 4:12-16). Jesus said, *“if a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him”* (John 14:23). The believer and unbeliever of 2 Corinthians 6:14 are clearly defined here. The believer is a temple of God because God dwells within. The unbeliever is not a temple of God because God does not dwell within (whether that be an erring brother in Christ or an alien sinner).

3e. See discussion on idolatry at chapter 5:7.

E. *“Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty”* (6:17-18).

1. Paul quoted from Isaiah 52:11 and Hosea 1:10 to further establish the point that a believer cannot be yoked to an unbeliever (unequally yoked).

2. God makes His abode with the sanctified (those set apart from the world of sin) (1 John 1:5-7). Such are said to be His children (cf. 1 John 3:1-3).

3. We are not to physically come away from those of the world but spiritually. We do not agree, associate, nor share in their erroneous thinking and practices. Those who would bring the doctrine of “unity in diversity” are to be exposed and never comforted in their error. Though the Christian lives in the world they are not of the world. We do not dress, walk, or talk like the world. To do so would be an *“unequal yoke.”*

F. *“Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God”* (7:1).

1. The *“promise”* Paul spoke of is the indwelling of God, His walking with the Christian, and being known as God’s children (His people) as said in verse 16.

2. *“Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit.”*

a. To *“cleanse”* (aorist = past action; Friberg 560) (*katharizo*) = “to make clean, to cleanse, N.T.: - to be or become clean from disease, and of the disease, to be purged away” (LS 388). That which is being purged from the Christian is *“all defilement of flesh and spirit.”* A *“defilement”* (*molusmos*) = “to stain, sully; to defile, contaminate morally” (Moulton 272). The word *“defilement”* is used in only three other places in the NT (1 Corinthians 8:7, Revelation 3:4; 14:4). As Moses delivered the Law to Israel, he enumerated various practices that were

unacceptable to God in Leviticus 18. Moses said, “*And thou shalt no lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith; neither shall any woman stand before a beast, to lie down thereto: it is confusion*” (Leviticus 18:23). The very next verse he states, “*Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out from before you*” (Leviticus 18:24). The use of the word in the NT indicates the same thing it did in the OT (i.e., sin). When one violates God’s laws, he or she becomes “unclean” and thereby defiled. Sin is viewed as a disease that can only be purged away by the blood of Jesus. For this cause John said, “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” (1 John 1:9).

- b. Sins of the “*flesh and spirit*” would include the whole gamut of lawlessness (see 1 John 3:4). We sin with our minds (“*spirit*”) (Acts 8:22) and with our hands (“*flesh*”) (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Both mind and body is to be clean and pure before Jehovah.
3. “*Perfecting holiness in the fear of God*” (see study # 19)
 - a. To “*perfect*” (*epiteleo*) = “to complete, finish, accomplish; to pay in full... metaph. to have to pay, be subject to, the burdens of old age... to have to pay the debt of death” (LS 304). The present tense of this Greek verb (cf. Friberg 560) indicates an ongoing action. The Christian must continue to accomplish holiness by the blood of Christ and individual diligence.
 - b. The word “*holiness*” (*hagiosune*) = “holiness, sanctity” (LS 5). “To separate, consecrate; cleanse, purify, sanctify; regard or reverence as holy... sanctification, moral purity, sanctity” (Moulton 3).
 - c. The verb tense of *epiteleo* indicates that the work of “*holiness*” is an ongoing process. When we confess our sins to the Lord, He cleanses (makes us holy) from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Because we sin from time to time we must continue to cleanse ourselves (cf. 1 John 3:3).

Synopsis of chapter 6

Paul began chapter six by exhorting the Corinthians to hold on to their faith. Paul and his preaching companions had endured much that the gospel may be preached and accepted by all who would hear (6:1-11). Paul now called upon the Corinthians to show forth their love for him as he had shown to them through his preaching (6:11-13). Lastly, Paul commanded that the Corinthian brethren be not “*unequally yoked with unbelievers*” (6:14). To establish his premise, Paul laid down five illustrations in the form of rhetorical questions to prove that two opposing sides cannot be yoked together to achieve a common goal.

Identification of the ‘yoke’:

A yoke joins two things together to form a union. Different yokes are to accompany specified groups. For example, one could not place an ox and donkey in the same yoke because they are two different animals. The same yoke would not fit both animals. The same yoke that binds two in marriage is not to be shared by one of another marriage. The same yoke that binds two in a labor union is generally not shared with the non-union member. Paul’s admonition in 2 Corinthians 6:14 was that the faithful child of God was not to be yoked with an unbeliever. The picture is that the believer has a different yoke than does the unbeliever. The believer is a different ‘creature’ than the unbeliever and thereby cannot be guided by the same yoke (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17). The yoke under discussion represents a doctrine or way of life. The apostle Paul writes, “*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage*” (Galatians 5:1). Jesus said, “*take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light*” (Matthew 11:29-30).

The Doctrine of Christ's Association to a 'yoke':

Those who abide in the doctrine of Christ are **yoked** together in unity by that **doctrine**. The apostle John said, "*whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son*" (2 John 9). Strict adherence to the teaching of Christ joins one in fellowship with God and others who are abiding in that doctrine (1 John 1:5-7). Those of the world who are guided not by Christ but by the world's standards are yoked together in their direction just as Christians are yoked together by what guides them (see Revelation 17:13).

Jesus spoke of the degree of unity among baptized believers in John 17:20-22. Said believers are to be "**one**, even as we (the Son and Father) are one" (John 17:22b). Christians are, therefore, to be of "**one mouth**" and "*speak the same things*" (Romans 15:5-7 [compared with John 15:7-8]; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 1 Peter 4:11) and to be of **one** purpose (Philippians 1:27). Christians are to be of **one** mind and judgment (1 Corinthians 1:10). Christians comprise **one** body (church) (1 Corinthians 12:12; 27-28). The oneness that exists among baptized believers is due to all being yoked together by the gospel (or truth) (cf. John 17:17).

Five Illustrations to Prove that a Yoke is a Doctrine, Way, or Direction in life (2 Corinthians 6:14-16):

Paul used five illustrations with a common denominator word to indicate that unity in doctrine is the yoke subject at hand in 2 Corinthians 6:14-16; i.e., fellowship, communion, concord, portion, and agreement (1901 ASV). Each of these five words is summed up in 'sharing, association, and agreement' in the Greek. The unbeliever is not guided by the same yoke as the believer. Two individuals exist and are not sharing, in association, and in agreement in doctrine and practices. Again, they are as two different creatures. The command, therefore, that states that the faithful is not to be "*unequally yoked with unbelievers*" is a commandment that demands Christians to stand faithfully in the one true doctrine of Christ and it alone. To stand in any other doctrine would exemplify an "*unequal yoke with unbelievers.*" Paul has effectively accentuated truth and demoted human reason (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:12; 2:17; 3:1- all; 4:2-4; 5:7; 6:14-16).

Practical application and Conclusion:

Interestingly, the English words "*unequally yoked*" are one word in Greek (*heterozugeo*) and are found nowhere else in the Bible. The Greek word is defined as "to be yoked in unequal partnership with another" (LS 320). "Yoked with a different yoke; used in Leviticus 19:19 of the union of beasts of different kinds, e.g. an ox and an ass), to come under an unequal or different yoke, to be unequally yoked, to have fellowship with one who is not an equal" (Thayer 245). "Draft animals that need different kinds of yokes, because they are of different species [i.e., an ox and a donkey]: Lev. 19:19" (AG 314). The context of 2 Corinthians 6:14 indicates that the '**different**' yoke worn by the believer and unbeliever is a doctrine or manner of life. The true child of God abides in the purity of the doctrine of Christ alone while the unbeliever lives by "fleshly wisdom" (2 Corinthians 1:12).

Unbelievers have their one 'yoke' doctrine that joins them together (Revelation 17:13) as does the believer (2 Corinthians 13:11). The unbeliever is anyone (persistent erring brethren or alien sinner) who goes beyond the teaching of Christ (2 Corinthians 6:16b; 2 John 9). The conclusive admonition is that Christians "*come out of*" and be "*separate*" from other doctrines and practices that are contrary to divine revelation (2 Corinthians 6:17). Do not associate, share, or be in agreement with erroneous doctrines and practices of men. To do so is to be defiled and unclean before Jehovah God; i.e., "*unequally yoked*" (2 Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1). Remember, Jesus said, "*No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon*" (Matthew 6:24).

Chapter 7

I. Paul was worried about the brethren in Corinth (7:2-7):

A. *“Open your hearts to us: we wronged no man, we corrupted no man, we took advantage of no man. I say it not to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die together and live together”* (7:2-3).

1. The idea of *“open your hearts to us”* is that Paul desired the Corinthians to accept his instructions as having divine origins (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:11-13). While preaching to the Corinthians, Paul and his preaching companions never wronged, corrupted, or took advantage of anyone. Everything that Paul taught was for the benefit of his audience rather than self (see 2 Corinthians 4:15).
2. Paul was not *“condemning”* the Corinthians. He simply wanted them to have confidence in his words as having divine origins and thereby follow the instructions given. Paul truly loved these brethren.

B. *“Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying on your behalf: I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our affliction”* (7:4).

1. Paul spoke boldly and confidently to the Corinthians because he wanted nothing but the best for their souls. Paul was confident in the Corinthians’ ability to stand in truth, too. He often boasted of their faith to others (glorying on your behalf) (cf. autonomy).
2. Paul’s confidence in the Corinthians brought him comfort and the motivation to endure the heavy duty afflictions suffered for preaching the gospel message (see 2 Corinthians 1:8).

C. *“For even when we were come into Macedonia our flesh had no relief, but we were afflicted on every side; without were fightings, within were fears”* (7:5).

1. Apparently Paul continued his narrative from 2 Corinthians 2:13 at this point. There, Paul had revealed that he left Ephesus and traveled northward to Troas to meet Titus. Titus had gone before Paul to Corinth to assess the results of Paul’s first epistle. When Paul arrived to Troas, Titus was not there and so he traveled on to Macedonia (see introduction and chapter two for more geographical and time discussions).
2. As Paul traveled to northern Macedonia, and no doubt visited the churches that were earlier established, he saw that there was much troubles. These *“fightings (without)”* were likely the external doctrines that the churches were forced to combat (Acts 15). The *“fears (within)”* were Paul’s feelings of anxiety for the churches (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:28). Paul was fearful that the Corinthians would permit the factious group at Corinth pervert their minds.

D. *“Nevertheless he that comforteth the lowly, even God, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but also by the comfort wherewith he was comforted in you, while he told us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced yet more”* (7:6-7).

1. As Paul experienced anxiety for the church as a whole, the Lord comforted him with the report that Titus brought. Titus spent time in Corinth seeing and hearing first hand where the Corinthians were with their faith.
2. Overall, Titus was encouraged with the changes that had been made in Corinth. Brethren had a *“longing, mourning, and zeal”* for Paul as they desired to see him again. Apparently the efforts of the false teachers and accusers of Paul had not polluted all the minds of the Christians as a whole.

II. Paul revealed the desired effect of his first epistle to the Corinthians (7:8-16):

A. *“For though I made you sorry with my epistle, I do not regret it: though I did regret it (for I see that that epistle made you sorry, though but for a season),”* (7:8).

1. Clearly the *“mourning”* of verse 7 was the sorrow produced in the Corinthians by Paul’s first epistle regarding their sinful practices. Paul realized that his teaching caused this sorrow in them; however, he would no way apologize for helping them see their error and regain fellowship with God.
2. At some point in the past Paul, did regret writing to the Corinthians as we all do when admonishing an erring brother. It is difficult to admonish and never easy. Such admonishment

often leaves us questioning ourselves as to what our motives were behind saying what we say. Paul was no different.

3. The other issue was that some were made sorry only for “*a season*.” Many had repented of the sins enumerated in 1 Corinthians; however, it is apparent that some had gone back to their old ways. Paul has revealed two new issues. First, the Corinthians needed to forgive the sinner mentioned at 1 Corinthians 5:1ff - see 2 Corinthians 2:5-8. Secondly, they needed to clear their affections for the sinful things unbelievers loved (see 2 Corinthians 6:11ff).
- B. *“I now rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly sort, that ye might suffer loss by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which brings no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death”* (7:9-10).
1. Paul’s joy and relief is found in the Corinthians repentance. The epistle had its desired effects in many. Divine revelation pointed up their error, and rather than being hard hearted, the Corinthians humbly submitted to Paul’s divine instructions and made the appropriate changes.
 2. Salvation cannot be obtained without repentance and repentance will not occur without godly sorrow and godly sorrow in the heart of man will not occur without the saving truths of the gospel (cf. Rom. 1:16) (see Study # 32; Repentance).
 3. The sequence of repentance is as follows:
 - a. Man reads or hears divine revelation and is convicted of sin (Romans 7:7; Galatians 3:24).
 - b. Man’s faith in God and His promises motivate him to great sorrow over his transgressions (2 Corinthians 7:8-9).
 - c. Man determines to turn away from that sinful conduct due to regret (Acts 2:37-38) and hatred of sin (Romans 12:9) that reconciliation may occur.
- C. *“For behold, this selfsame thing, that ye were made sorry after a godly sort, what earnest care it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what longing, yea what zeal, yea what avenging! In everything ye approved yourselves to be pure in the matter”* (7:11).
1. This is Paul’s analysis, with the Corinthians, of what they did when repentance was made due to their godly sorrow over their sins. **First**, they had an “*earnest care*” for God’s promises, and this moved them to repent. The English words “*earnest care*” is one word in Greek (*spoude*). *Spoude* = “to make haste, to be busy, eager, zealous, earnest to do a thing... to be serious or earnest... with a grave face... to do anything hastily or earnestly... to be zealously pursued; serious” (LS 741). The Greek word *spoude* is translated diligence in passages such as 2 Peter 1:5 and Jude 3. Clearly Paul is saying that his first epistle produced a sense of serious urgency in the hearts of the faithful. They were convicted of their sins and hastened to make it right with God.
 2. **Second**, the first epistle of Paul’s produced a “*clearing*” (*apologia*; a speech in defense {LS 102}) of the Corinthians. Repentance resulted in being cleared from sin. Secondly, the reputation of the Corinthians may have begun to waiver among brethren. Their repentance cleared them as a defense and they regained the respect and joy of brethren all over.
 3. **Third**, the first epistle produced “*indignation*” within the Corinthians. The word “*indignation*” (*aganaktesis*) = “irritation, of the irritation caused by teething.... Metaph. the thing gives ground for annoyance or displeasure.” Matthew 21:25 uses the word; “*And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased.*” The first epistle produced this displeasure; however, the displeasure was not in the epistle but at themselves. They had become known among brethren as those in error and this greatly displeased them to the point of wanting to make things right with God.
 4. The **fourth** thing that the first epistle produced in the Corinthians was “*fear*.” The fear of God is not that He terrifies us as a monster; but, He terrifies us through our knowledge of what He is capable of doing to those who disobey him. Jesus said, “*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*” (Matthew 10:28) (For a further discussion of the use of the word fear see 2 Corinthians 5:11).
5. The **fifth** reaction to the first epistle to the Corinthians was a “*longing*” (*epipithesis*). This word is defined as “earnest desire, strong affection” (Moulton 159). As it was the Corinthians’ “*longing* (earnest desire) to see Paul (2 Corinthians 7:7), even so it was the Corinthians’ earnest desire to be forgiven of their sins that the first epistle pointed up.
 6. The **sixth** reaction the Corinthians had to the first epistle was “*zeal*.” The brethren sought after forgiveness with a since of fervent urgency.
 7. The **seventh** and final reaction the Corinthians had because of Paul’s writing the first epistle was “*avenging*” (*ekdikesis*). *Ekdikesis* = “an avenging” (LS 237); “To take revenge or exact satisfaction for... to take vengeance on behalf of” (AHD). Who was this revenge or vengeance taken out on? Paul had exposed the deeds of false teachers among the Corinthians in the first epistle and thereby the faithful’s vengeance must have been directed at them and Satan (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:13; 15:12). Paul had admonished, “*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong*” (1 Corinthians 16:13). Apparently these brethren took the admonition and dealt quickly with those who opposed truth.
 8. Then Paul stated, “*In everything ye approved yourselves to be pure in the matter.*”
 - a. What “*matter*” Paul was addressing is not said (it may be all the matters discussed in the first epistle). We may scan the chapters of 1 Corinthians and find many issues that were in dire need to be dealt with. The brethren were elevating one preacher above another and causing strife among the brethren (1 Corinthians 1:12-16; 3:3-4; 4:6), being jealous of each other’s spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 3:3; 4:7), tolerating sin in the church (1 Corinthians 5:1ff), defrauding each other in the worldly courts (1 Corinthians 6), trying to justify their fornication (1 Corinthians 6:12-20), women were not being submissive (1 Corinthians 11:1-16), 1 Corinthians 11:17ff exposed their ultra liberal practices upon the first day of the week assembly by perverting the Lord’s Supper. Brethren were having a feast and even getting drunk upon the first day of the week, and 1 Corinthians 11:18 exposed divisions among the members. There was a lack of love for each other in the realm of spiritual gifts. The Corinthians’ first day of the week assemblies were a chaotic mess (i.e., tongue speakers, prophets, and inspired singers were all speaking and singing at the same time. There was no order in the church (1 Corinthians 14:26-32). Women were addressing the assembly of saints in the church (1 Corinthians 14:33b – 36) and there were false teachers telling people that there was not going to be a resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15).
 - b. Apparently the Corinthians had cleared these matters up; however, as the second epistle suggest, there continued to be brethren there who were stirring up trouble in a factious way.
- D. “*So although I wrote unto you, I wrote not for his cause that did the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered the wrong, but that your earnest care for us might be made manifest unto you in the sight of God*” (7:12).
1. Though there were individuals in Corinth who sinned (example 1 Corinthians 5 and the incestuous man) and those who were wronged by brethren (example 1 Corinthians 6 - some brethren were taking other brethren to court and suing them), Paul wrote to benefit all the brethren.
 2. When the sin of one is tolerated by all it is apparent that all stand condemned. Paul had touched on this very idea at 1 Corinthians 12:12; cf. Romans 12:5 and Revelation 2:20.
- E. “*Therefore we have been comforted: and in our comfort we joyed the more exceedingly for the joy of Titus, because his spirit hath been refreshed by you all. For if in anything I have gloried to him on your behalf, I was not put to shame; but as we spake all things to you in truth, so our glorying also which I made before Titus was found to be truth*” (7:13-14).
1. Paul was not only excited about the news regarding the Corinthians, but he was made happy because his beloved brother in Christ (Titus) was made to be filled with joy over the Corinthians.
 2. Titus apparently had the same anxiety over the Corinthians as did Paul. When Paul sent Titus to Corinth to check on their spiritual well being it appears that Titus had his doubts about them.

Paul assured Titus that the Corinthians were worthy of praise and was sure that all would be well. These encouraging words to Titus proved to be true for the most part; however, there continued to be those who stirred up trouble (2 Corinthians 1:17; 3:1; 5:12-13).

- F. *“And his affection is more abundantly toward you, while he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. I rejoice that in everything I am of good courage concerning you”* (7:15-16).
1. Again, by these verses it is apparent that Titus did not expect to be so received by the Corinthian brethren upon his arrival in Corinth. Out of a sense of shame, repentance, and a respect for God’s Word the Corinthians received Titus with *“fear and trembling.”*
 2. The phrase *“good courage”* (*tharrheo*) = “hopeful” (Moulton 191); “courage to do a thing” (LS 359). This word indicates that there was yet more work to be accomplished in Corinth. The encouraging thing was that the brethren were willing to look objectively at truth and change their actions through repentance accordingly.
 3. These series of verses speak volumes regarding the attitude of the Corinthians. The types of people that the Lord seeks to serve him are those who are willing to admit their error and repent with fear and trembling (Isaiah 57:15).

Synopsis of chapter 7

The objective of Paul's second recorded letter to the Corinthians is to prove that he has no personal agenda whatsoever (2 Corinthians 3:1). Paul had suffered at the hands of ungodly men for preaching truth rather than his opinions or personal conviction (2 Corinthians 1:5ff). The content of the message was not based in *“fleshly wisdom”* (2 Corinthians 1:12). Paul has repeatedly stated that the gospel message preached is *“not from ourselves”* (2 Corinthians 4:5, 7; 5:12, 20; 6:4). All the work that Paul and the other inspired men had done in the gospel message was for the sake of the Corinthians (see 2 Corinthians 4:15). Though some had charged Paul of having personal agendas his words proved to be of a divine origin (see 2 Corinthians 6:8).

Though the Corinthians had obviously repented and corrected the problems that were exposed by the first Corinthian letter they needed to continue the process of perfection. Paul and his companions continued to demand reconciliation on the part of the Corinthians with the Lord (see 2 Corinthians 5:20). Paul was putting the Corinthian brethren to the test. Would they be obedient in *“all things”* or just some things (see 2 Corinthians 2:8). The new error was in the area of forgiveness. The Corinthians needed to forgive the sinner of 1 Corinthians 5:1-2 because he had repented (2 Corinthians 2:5-7). Secondly, the Corinthians needed to put away their *“affections”* for the things of this world (2 Corinthians 6:11, 14ff). Paul, as did Jesus, explains to the Corinthians that they cannot possibly serve God and be in agreement with ungodliness of any form (see Matthew 6:24). Paul has displayed confidence in the Corinthian's willingness to be reconciled to God (see 2 Corinthians 2:3). Now was the time to be *“cleansed from the defilement of flesh and spirit”* (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Paul was not trying to scam anyone and neither was he trying to gain a personal following by preaching the gospel. If only the Corinthians could move past such faulty rumors they would see the true love of Paul, and his preaching companions, had toward them (2 Corinthians 7:2). These rumors were the source of brethren stumbling over Paul's words. The apostle had obviously lost his effectiveness among these brethren; however, Paul would not let such rumors move his beloved brethren. Rather than giving up and moving on, like many preachers today, Paul sets out to prove the divine origin of his message (see 2 Corinthians 1:12; 2:16-17; 4:4, 7; 5:12; 6:3-4, 8, 11-12) (see study # 14).

Paul tells the Corinthian brethren that his and Titus' hearts were filled with anxiety over them until he finally meets up with Titus and hears of their good behavior and love for Paul (2 Corinthians 7:7). Paul knew that his first letter was a scathing rebuke; however, it was what a loving friend had to do. The apostle now calls upon the Corinthians to remember the *“earnest care”* that the first epistle produced in them and respond equally now to the new charges against them (see 2 Corinthians 7:11). Apparently Titus had told Paul of the Corinthians humble reaction and obedience in regard to the sins revealed in the first epistle; however, two new issues had come about. Will the Corinthians correct these errors too (see 2 Corinthians 2:8)?

Paul was excited over the fact that the Corinthians had obeyed in all the matters of the first epistle (2 Corinthians 7:15). Such are the people that the Lord seeks to serve him. Isaiah recorded, *“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite”* (Isaiah 57:15). Again, David said, *“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise”* (Psalms 51:17). All of Paul's work of love was done for the Corinthian's benefit (2 Corinthians 4:15). Paul writes, *“Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men...”* (2 Corinthians 5:11).

Chapter 8

- I. Paul exhorted the Corinthians to make their contribution for the needy saints in Jerusalem (8:1-15):**
- A. *“Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia”* (8:1).**
1. The word *“moreover”* expresses additional instructions for the Corinthians. To this point Paul has labored to prove that his message is of a divine origin rather than some personal agenda (see 2 Corinthians 1:12; 2:16-17; 3:1-4; 4:1-7; 5:12; 7:2). Secondly, Paul labors to convict the Corinthians of additional sins so that repentance and cleansing may occur (see 2 Corinthians 7:1). Paul put the brethren to the test to see whether they would be obedient in all areas of life (2 Corinthians 2:8). The two additional sins were first of all their not forgiving the fornicator of 1 Corinthians 5:1 of sin when he had repented and asked for forgiveness (see 2 Corinthians 2:5-11). Secondly, the Corinthians had set their affections in the sinful things of this world (see 2 Corinthians 6:11-18).
 2. Paul now deals with the third major subject matter of this letter. They were needy saints in Jerusalem and Paul had encouraged the Corinthians to be considerate of their brethren's needs and begin collecting funds so that Paul could bring the help back to Jerusalem (see 1 Corinthians 16:1ff). The *“grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia”* is obviously the monies that they had collected to send to the poor in Jerusalem.
 3. When Paul was in Ephesus (third tour of preaching), he gained intelligence that the brethren in Jerusalem were in need. Paul began spreading the word, apparently first to the Galatian brethren (1 Corinthians 16:1). Secondly, Paul received news about the same time that the brethren in Corinth had many spiritual problems. This news likely came to Paul by the hands of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1 Corinthians 16:17). At the end of approximately 2 ½ years in Ephesus, Paul sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia due to the reports that he had received regarding the Corinthians' spiritual problems (Acts 19:22). The purpose of Timothy and Erastus was to *“put you (the Corinthians) in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church”* (1 Corinthians 4:17). Secondly, Timothy and Erastus were to deliver instructions to the brethren in Macedonia and Achaia to lay by in store on the first day of the week for the needy saints in Jerusalem (Romans 15:26; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 9).
- B. *“How that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality”* (8:2).**
1. The subjects under consideration were the churches of Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea). These brethren received the gospel message and kept to it even though they underwent extreme trials. Paul said of the Thessalonians, *“And ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit”* (1 Thessalonians 1:6). Again, Paul said, *“For ye, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judaea in Christ Jesus: for ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen, even as they did of the Jews”* (1 Thessalonians 2:14).

2. Though they suffered, they were filled with joy knowing that their sins had been forgiven. Many were monetarily poverty stricken; however, they gave with liberality in comparison to what they had. Here were Christians who heard of the need of their fellow brethren and did all within their limited means to help.
- C. *“For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord, beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints”* (8:3-4).
1. To give of one’s *“own accord”* (*authairetos*) = “by free choice, of oneself... of things taken upon oneself, self-incurred, voluntary” (LS 132).
 2. To what end were the brethren in Macedonia giving of their means even beyond that which they were able? Clearly the matter at hand was the need of the poor saints in Jerusalem that Paul spoke of in Romans 15:26 and 1 Corinthians 16:1ff.
 3. The Macedonian brethren responded to Paul’s request with amazing liberality even beyond their means. The entire event is termed a *“fellowship”* between the needy saints of Jerusalem and those of Macedonia. Brethren were sharing with each other the blessings that God had given them (see study # 33; Fellowship).
 4. Note also the word *“grace”* as it is used to describe the favor bestowed upon the needy in Jerusalem by the brethren in Macedonia.
- D. *“and this, not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God. Insomuch that we exhorted Titus, that as he had made a beginning before, so he would also complete in you this grace also”* (8:5-6).
1. Before trying to help others in need the Macedonians were commended for first taking care of their spiritual well being.
 2. Titus not only had the objective of visiting the Corinthian Christians to see how they fared spiritually after Paul’s first epistle, he also was to remind the Corinthians of the need in Jerusalem.
 3. The tenses of verse one indicate that the churches in Macedonia had already collected this *“grace”* and were ready to deliver it to Jerusalem.
- E. *“But as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all earnestness, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also”* (8:7).
1. Paul was not turning the need in Jerusalem into some sort of contest between the brethren of Corinth and those of Macedonia; he was simply using Macedonia as an example of giving to meet other’s needs out of a sense of compassion and love.
 2. Paul desired the Corinthians to *“abound”* in faith, utterance (speaking in tongues), knowledge, earnestness (*spoude* = “to make haste, to be busy, eager, zealous, earnest to do a thing... to be serious or earnest... with a grave face... to do anything hastily or earnestly... to be zealously pursued; serious” {LS 741}), and love. Their love toward the physical needs of their needy brethren in Jerusalem was to be exercised with the same liberality and urgency as those in Macedonia.
- F. *“I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love”* (8:8).
1. Paul would not bind upon the Corinthians what the Macedonians gave. Each individual would need to take a look at their own finances and make a judgment as to what they could give for this cause. Paul knew that such a judgment rested with the individual.
 2. Paul was simply informing the Corinthians of the *“earnestness”* (diligence) of the Macedonians in this area and so encouraging them to do the same.
 3. When the Corinthians so responded to the Jerusalem need, all would know the *“sincerity”* of their love for brethren.
 4. As we continue in this chapter we find that even though Paul did not command that the Corinthians give this grace he highly recommends it.
- G. *“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich”* (8:9).

1. The Corinthian brethren had been informed of the grace of Jesus Christ toward them and all man. The grace (or favor) of Jesus was that He gave Himself as a sacrifice for all. Such grace was indeed costly.
 2. Jesus was “*rich*” in that He shared the same glory as the Heavenly Father (cf. John 17:5). The Lord gave up these heavenly riches to become a man and die for the sinners the world over.
 3. The Corinthians, through Jesus becoming man and being crucified on the cross, had the opportunity of receiving the riches Jesus had (glorified in heaven).
 4. If the Lord was willing to make such sacrifices shouldn't we do the same for our brethren?
- H.** *“And herein I give my judgment: for this is expedient for you, who were the first to make a beginning a year ago, not only to do, but also to will. But now complete the doing also; that as there was the readiness to will, so there may be the completion also out of your ability”* (8:10-11).
1. This verse tells us the spacing between the first and second epistle; i.e., one year (see the introduction). One year ago they were told of this need in Jerusalem, they had the will to help, and now Paul prodded them to make an end to their will with a real contribution to the needy saints in Jerusalem. Communication and travel was quite different in these Bible days. No doubt the saints in Jerusalem were in great need; however, relief would not reach them for over a year as far as the Corinthian's aid was concerned. They would need to be patient and strong while awaiting the aid. The main thing is that the aid took planning and coordination between churches. We must note that Paul sets the example as to how churches help the needy in this chapter. First, we note that the aid from the churches of Christ throughout Asia, Galatia, Macedonia, Achai, and Rome would be sent to needy saints alone. Secondly, we shall see in this chapter how that aid was sent. Many churches today make a mistake when they send aid not only to Christians but to the needy of the world. Secondly, they make a mistake in how they send the money (see study # 34; Institutional Churches of Christ).
 2. Though Paul would not command a free will offering upon the Corinthians, he gives his judgment as an apostle and told them that it would be “*expedient*” for them to do so. The word “*expedient*” (sumphero) is “to help, be profitable, be expedient” (Thayer 597). “To confer a benefit, be useful or profitable... expedient” (LS 764). “Appropriateness to the purpose at hand. Something that is a means to an end” (AHD 477). Paul was saying that it was certainly appropriate for the Corinthians to help their brethren in this time of their need.
- I.** *“For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not. For I say not this that others may be eased and ye distressed; but by equality: your abundance being a supply at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want; that there may be equality: as it is written, He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack”* (8:12-15).
1. The amount of money the Corinthians sent was not the issue with Paul; it was their “*readiness*” to give. The brethren in Macedonia were very poor; however, they gave what they could and even beyond. The widow who gave all she had (two mites) did not give much, but she certainly was ready to give (Mark 12:41-44). Whether rich or poor, the saints were to give as they were able (see study # 35; Worship - First Day of the Week Contribution).
 2. Paul did not intend to begin a need in Corinth so that the brethren in Judea would be relieved, this would not be “*equality*” among the brethren. He was simply telling them to be a ready and a willing giver.
 3. Paul quoted from Exodus 16:18 saying, “*He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack.*” God had provided manna for the Israelites while wandering through the wilderness. Each household was to gather a measured amount for each soul in their household. The more in the household the more was gathered. All had an equal amount supplied to them by God. Paul was thereby saying, let us who have more in abundance give to those who have less that there be the equality among brethren that God has ever provided.
- II. Paul commended the “*messengers of the churches*” to the Corinthians (8:16-24):**
- A.** *“But thanks be to God, who putteth the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. For he accepted indeed our exhortation; but being himself very earnest, he went forth unto you of his own accord”* (8:16-17).

1. How did God put an “*earnest care for you* (the Corinthians) *into the heart of Titus?*”
 2. We must first examine the “*exhortation*” of Paul and his preaching companions toward Titus. We have examined the fact that Titus was sent by Paul to Corinth to see how they fared (2 Corinthians 2:12-13). Secondly, 2 Corinthians 8:17 stated that Titus went to Corinth, though exhorted to do so, on his own “*accord*” (of his own will). This passage inferentially reveals that Titus had as much of a desire as Paul to see how the Corinthian brethren were faring after the first epistle.
 3. God did not put into Titus what was already there, i.e., an earnest desire to see how the Corinthians fared. What did God “*put*” into Titus then? God “*put*” into Titus the will to do that which he had the earnest desire to do. Titus was made confident by the Lord in the same way that Paul was made confident to continue onward in difficult situations (cf. Acts 27:23-24).
- B.** “*And we have sent together with him the brother whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches*” (8:18).
1. When Paul and his companions sent Titus to Corinth, he was not sent alone. Titus was to be accompanied by an unnamed brother “*whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches.*”
 2. These statements again help us to see that the churches (plural) were in full communication with each other. These churches knew the faithful and were well acquainted with them (see study # 36; Local Churches Relationship with Each Other).
- C.** “*and not only so, but who was also appointed by the churches to travel with us in the matter of this grace, which is ministered by us to the glory of the Lord and to show our readiness:*” (8:19).
1. We are not told who this brother of great reputation is. He was one, however, that was so well thought of that he was “*appointed by the churches to travel with us in the matter of this grace.*” The grace here spoken of is the same throughout the context of chapter 8; i.e., the collection from the Gentile churches for the needy in Jerusalem.
 2. This verse, upon first reading, would appear to teach that the churches (plural) were involved in making universal decisions. That is, that the churches met together at some point and all the heads (elders) made a decision for the universal church (see study # 37; Diocese). If this is the case, then other passages of scriptures that teach local church autonomy would be violated (cf. 1 Peter 5:1-2; Acts 14:23; 20:28). How then did the “*churches*” make a unified decision without violating each other’s autonomy? The answer is simple. Autonomy means self governing. Each local church governed itself with the truth through qualified elders, deacons, evangelist and members. Each Macedonian church made a decision as to the amount that would be sent to Jerusalem for their aid (no one made that decision for them). When the “*churches*” agreed to let this unnamed faithful brother assist Paul in collecting and distributing the funds for the needy saints, they were in no way making any decisions for each other (financial or any decision that would interfere with any one churches authorized autonomy). There were a multitude of such brethren that accompanied Paul as he carried this bounty of grace to Jerusalem (Acts 20:1-6). The method of sending aid is thereby established. The churches agreed on who would come to their local church and collect the funds that had been prepared for the needy saints and take that money to them (see study # 34).
- D.** “*avoiding this, that any man should blame us in the matter of this bounty which is ministered by us: for we take thought for things honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men*” (8:20-21).
1. To avoid being blamed for thievery or any other mishandling of funds, the “*churches*” deemed it appropriate to send the unnamed faithful brother with Paul and his companions. Paul not only wanted to be accepted by God but by his brethren in this matter as well. Therefore the safeguards were in place. Paul would do only those things which were “*honorable*” in the sight of men and God. It would not be honorable to take these collected funds for himself.
 2. Once again, it appears that some of the Corinthian brethren had suspicions about Paul. Paul has spent a considerable amount of space in this epistle proving that he has no personal agendas (see study # 38; Paul Proves the Origin of his Doctrine and Purpose for Preaching).

- E. *“And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have many times proved earnest in many things, but now much more earnest, by reason of the great confidence which he hath in you”* (8:22).
 1. The antecedent to *“them”* would be Titus and the unnamed faithful brother that all have confidence in. This verse reveals a second unnamed brother that has been many times proved himself honorable and just.
 2. Having heard the same report that Titus gave Paul, this unnamed brother had great confidence in the Corinthians, too.
- F. *“Whether any inquire about Titus, he is my partner and my fellow-worker to you-ward, or our brethren, they are the messengers of the churches, they are the glory of Christ. Show ye therefore unto them in the face of the churches the proof of your love, and of our glorying on your behalf”* (8:23-24).
 1. Paul explained to the Corinthians who this collection of men coming to them was. Titus was Paul’s *“partner and fellow-worker”* to the Corinthians. Clearly, the brethren in Corinth were familiar with Titus. The other *“messengers of the churches”* would be accompanying Titus. These messengers were simply men who were appointed by each church to carry their gifts of grace to the needy saints in Jerusalem.
 2. These brethren that were coming to Corinth had experienced the liberal giving of the churches they had come from and Paul did not want them to experience anything different in the Corinthian church.

Synopsis of chapter 8

The church at work on a universal level

The universal church must rise to the occasion whenever and wherever physical or spiritual needs arise among the saints of God. A case in point is the poor saints in Jerusalem mentioned in Romans 15:26. The apostle Paul had gained intelligence of this fact about the same time he received news that the Corinthian brethren were in grave error. Paul responds to both issues by sending Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia (Acts 19:22) to put the Corinthian brethren *“in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church”* (1 Corinthians 4:17) and to deliver instructions to the brethren in Macedonia and Achaia to lay by in store upon the first day of the week for the needy saints in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:1-3).

Paul had sent Titus on to Macedonia a year after delivering his first epistle to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 8:10, 16-17). Titus’ purpose was twofold. First, Titus was to check the welfare of the Corinthian’s spiritual condition and report back to Paul in Troas (2 Corinthians 7:5-7, 13ff). Secondly, Titus was to remind the Corinthian brethren of their responsibility toward the needy saints in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8:6). 2 Corinthians 8 reveals the liberality in which the churches in Macedonia gave (2 Corinthians 8:2). It was, therefore, Paul’s desire that the Corinthians use the Macedonians as an example and give with the same liberality (2 Corinthians 8:4-5). There are two specific lessons to be learned from 2 Corinthians 8.

First lesson: How to send funds to needy saints in the world

2 Corinthians 8 gives us an example of how funds may be collected and lawfully sent to other needy saints in the world. The faithful *“churches”* of Macedonia selected *“messengers”* to carry their collected funds to the needy (2 Corinthians 8:23). A need was met therefore by the collective action of many churches. The need was on the part of saints (Romans 15:26). The churches announced the need, the brethren gave into the treasury on the first day of the week, and when the time for delivery came the churches selected messengers to deliver the funds (see 1 Corinthians 16:1-2). We can do no more or less.

Second lesson: The churches were very well familiar with each other

Notice that one of the *“messengers”* was *“appointed”* by the *“churches”* for this duty (2 Corinthians 8:19). The word *“appointed”* (*cheirotoneo*) is defined as “to stretch out the hand, for the purpose of voting. To vote for,

elect, properly by show of hands... to be elected" (LS 885). Clearly the "*churches*" were in agreement with who this messenger would be. This would illustrate to us three things. First, the churches were so familiar with each other's faithfulness that they shared common knowledge of faithful men. Secondly, such faithful men were able to do an elected work without violating any one congregation's autonomy. Thirdly, it indicates the inter-communication between faithful churches of Christ. These brethren knew each other, defended each other, worked with each other, helped each other, and loved each other! This text is not an authorized example of a diocese (Bishops being in control of one geographic area rather than one specific church).

Autonomy violated?

It is no less a violation of a church's autonomy to communicate about a specific financial need in one part of the country than to communicate about a brother's false teaching in another congregation (2 Timothy 2:16-18; 3 John 9-10). Truth reveals a command to "*love the brotherhood*" (1 Peter 2:17). That love may come in the form of universal church aid (2 Corinthians 8) or universal church admonition (Acts 15). Though there are no authorized universal organized churches, the churches are universally one in truth and so communicate with each other. We shall therefore love the brotherhood when they are in physical AND spiritual trouble. Let us all stand hand in hand in truth.

Chapter 9

I. Paul reminds the Corinthians of their responsibility toward those in Need (9:1-15):

- A. "*For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: for I know your readiness, of which I glory on your behalf to them of Macedonia, that Achaia hath been prepared for a year past; and your zeal hath stirred up very many of them*" (9:1-2).
1. The "ministering to the saints" is the service of helping the needy saints in Jerusalem. The word "*superfluous*" (*perissos*) = "more than sufficient, redundant, superfluous... to have a surplus... more than sufficient" (LS 632). Paul tells the Corinthians that he realizes it is a redundant thing for him to write; however, he wants to make sure that they are ready with the aid. Paul had knowledge and was confident in the Corinthian's readiness in this matter. Paul was so confident that he "*gloried on your (Corinthians) behalf to them of Macedonia.*"
 2. The "*one year*" gives us an idea as to when 1 Corinthians was written in relation to this epistle (see introduction). Some time less than two years ago Paul had sent the first epistle to the Corinthians. This is important because it helps us understand that God does not tolerate sin. The Corinthians needed to correct their errors and Paul was filled with anxiety while waiting news from Titus regarding their spiritual state. A study of 1 and 2 Thessalonians proves the same message. While Paul commanded the Thessalonians to be patient and admonish the disorderly in the first epistle (see 1 Thessalonians 5:14) we find him commanding the brethren to withdraw themselves from the disorderly at 2 Thessalonians 3:6. There is a time when patience and longsuffering runs out and the soul must be delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (see study # 5).
- B. "*But I have sent the brethren, that our glorying on your behalf may not be made void in this respect; that, even as I said, ye may be prepared: lest by any means, if there come with me any of Macedonia and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be put to shame in this confidence*" (9:3-4).
1. Paul explains to the Corinthians that he has sent Titus and the two unnamed brethren of chapter 8:18-19, 22 back to Corinth to prepare them for the collection for the needy saints.
 2. The Macedonians have given beyond that which they were able (8:1ff). Paul is afraid that as he traveled to Corinth with some of the Macedonians who have given so much that they would be discouraged and think ill of the Corinthian brethren if they did not give to the cause in Jerusalem. The Corinthians would put Paul and his companions who gloried in the Corinthians to shame if they were to not give for this cause. Paul is telling the Corinthians not to embarrass him in this matter.

- C. *“I thought it necessary therefore to entreat the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your aforepromised bounty, that the same might be ready as a matter of bounty, and not of extortion”* (9:5).
1. Paul sends Titus and the two other brethren to Corinth to *“make up beforehand your aforepromised bounty.”* The word *“aforepromised”* (*prokataggello*) = “to announce or declare beforehand” (LS 678). Titus’ objective was therefore to make sure that the monies that the Corinthians had previously promised would be ready for collection and delivery.
 2. What if Paul came to Corinth and found the brethren lethargic in this service. They meant to collect the funds, were willing and ready; however, the matter just simply didn’t get done. Paul would find himself hurriedly politicking for the monies that the Corinthians had promised a year back.
 3. What does this do? When one knows the needs of others, is willing and able to help; however, time slips by and he never does anything due to procrastination. It says to others that you do not set this activity as a priority in your life. It just does not speak well for such a one in the minds of others and so it shouldn’t. Christians should be willing to help and not delay!
 4. Sometimes we know that a shut-in is lonely and starved for attention. We know that we have the ability to stop by and see them, read some scriptures with them, sing a few songs of praise with them or have prayer with them; however, we just get ourselves to busy with our own lives.
 5. Paul did not want to see this kind of behavior on the part of the Corinthians and it should not be our behavior.
- D. *“But this I say, he that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver”* (9:6-7).
1. Paul used an illustration of a farmer who sows a few seeds in the field as opposed to the one who sows many seeds in the field by hard labor. The one who sows a few seeds will only reap a few products. The one who labors with purpose and sows much will have much product. Those who work hard and purposefully in the kingdom of God will reap many rewards. Many needs will be met and souls will come to Christ. The individual who works with little purpose will help few and save few souls. This principle stands true for many areas of life. The hard worker is rewarded with greater outcomes because he is interested, energetic, enthusiastic, and willing to work.
 2. The work that one does to help others is to be done *“cheerfully”* as opposed to *“grudgingly.”* Here we see the difference in the apathetic and lethargic brother who has the means and will to help those in need; however, he has not placed their needs at a high priority in his life and thereby the needy go on in need. Such a one has not *“purposed in his heart”* to meet the needs of the needy by giving in the treasury.
 3. *“God loves a cheerful giver.”* This is the individual who has spiritual vision, one who understands the work of the church and is willing to give for that cause in a timely and cheerful manner. Such a one knows the consequences of such deliberate and purposeful giving. Needs are met! Those needs may be the needy are helped, preachers are supported, and materials for such activity are provided.
 4. Notice that Paul did not impose upon the Corinthians the tithing of the OT. The Jews were required to pay a tenth part or tithing of all their property (grain, vineyards produce, cattle etc) for the support of the system of worship (generally the fund or supplies went to the priest and Levites who ministered the service of the tabernacle; Numbers 18:20-24). When a Jew lived a great distance from Jerusalem, he was permitted to liquidate his product for currency and bring this to Jerusalem at the appointed time (Deuteronomy 14:24-29).
 5. The new covenant in Jesus Christ is one of the heart (Jeremiah 31:31ff). Individuals in the church perform the Lord’s commandments out of an earnest love for the Lord and not because they ‘have to do something’ as was the case under the Mosaic Law. One becomes a Christian voluntarily; we are not born into this relationship. So God desires those who would seek him (Matthew 13), those who have an humble and contrite heart (Isaiah 57:15), those who keep

His commands because they want to not because they have to (1 John 5:3), and those who give into the treasury of the church because they see the need not because it is a tax imposed upon them as saints (2 Corinthians 9:7) (see study # 39; Worship: Giving of our Means). God desires those who desire Him.

6. When a parent has to make a child do his chores (mow the grass, pick up room, clean house, wash the care etc.) even after the child is trained to do so, it grieves the parent (Proverbs 15:20; 17:25). Likewise, those servants of the Lord who must be continuously told what to do are grievous to the Lord and church.
- E. *“And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work: as it is written, He hath scattered abroad, he hath given to the poor (needy; Psalms 112:9); His righteousness abideth for ever”* (9:8-9).
1. The “*grace*” must be the monetary things mentioned in the context of chapters 8-9. Apparently Paul was saying that God will always take care of us as we do our work in His Kingdom.
 2. To prove this providential care, Paul quoted from Psalms 112:9. As God cared for His people in the OT, so He cares for His people now (consider Matthew 6:25-34).
- F. *“And he that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food, shall supply and multiply your seed for sowing, and increase the fruits of your righteousness: ye being enriched in everything unto all liberality, which worketh through us thanksgiving to God”* (9:10-11).
1. This is the nature of God’s universe. The more one sows, the more product is made. The more product one makes through diligence the more seed is made available. God gives the increase to those who labor.
 2. Likewise, when one labors in the vineyards of God’s kingdom by giving liberally of one’s means into the church treasury that the work of the church may be accomplished, God will give the increase. The needy will be helped and lost souls saved (fruit of our labors). When said events occur, the needy will be helped and thereby praise God on our behalf. Again, those who were lost will praise God and give him glory due to our work in the kingdom. We then cause the name of Jehovah God to be praised.
- G. *“For the ministration of this service not only filleth up the measure of the wants of the saints, but aboundeth also through many thanksgivings unto God;”* (9:12).
1. The service of giving as one prospers and purposes in their heart with cheerfulness serves two purposes.
 2. First, the needs of the saints are met and secondly, God's name is glorified and much thanksgiving are given on His behalf.
- H. *“seeing that through the proving of you by this ministration they glorified God for the obedience of your confession unto the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution unto them and unto all; while they themselves also, with supplication on your behalf, long after you by reason of the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift”* (9:13-15).
1. All things are well when we are doing God’s commands by choice. We cause others to give God praise through our obedience and relationship to God and His word.
 2. We cause others to praise God when we give with a spirit of liberality into the treasury.
 3. We cause others to pray for us and love us because of our generosity.
 4. So Paul exclaimed, *“Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.”* The word “*unspeakable*” (*anekdiegetos*) = “ineffable” (“beyond expression; indescribable or unspeakable” {AHD 658}) (LS 67). Words cannot convey the gift God has bestowed upon man; the gift of His Son for the forgiveness of our sins. This being said, we ought to do all within our power to show the Father our sincere gratitude.

Synopsis of chapter 9

Ready and Willing but...

Most of us are ready and willing to help anyone in need especially those of the household of faith. We want nothing but the best for all our brethren. We know the shut-ins are lonely, we know that if the work of the church is to be accomplished we must give liberally of our means, we know that some brethren stand in jeopardy of losing their souls, and we know that brethren the world over are in need. The problem, however, with many of us is that we lack the motivation to meet these needs. Paul knew the Corinthian brethren were ready and willing to help even as far back as a year ago (2 Corinthians 9:2). Paul's concern for the Corinthians was that they would be lax in their promise of helping the needy saints in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 9:3). We can have all the good intentions in the world for those in need; however, until we do something about their need the need remains. James said, "*If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit?*" (James 2:15). The apostle John said, "*But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?*" (1 John 3:17).

Love is to be that motivating factor that moves us to DO! John said, "*My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth*" (1 John 3:18). James said, "*Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself*" (James 2:17). There are great consequences that result when we help those in need. First, God will take care of our needs (2 Corinthians 9:8). Secondly, God will increase the fruit of your labors (i.e., those who are in need will be helped and those who are lost in sin will regain fellowship through our help) (2 Corinthians 9:10). Thirdly, those we help will glorify God and offer up prayers of thanksgiving on our behalf (2 Corinthians 9:14). Summarily, the name of Jehovah God will be glorified.

Are you ready and willing but lack the motivation to help? Why not look at 2 Corinthians 9 and realize that simply thinking good thoughts about others is not going to help them out of their poverty or sin. True Bible love depicts the saint motivated to action by love. What message do we send to God and our fellow man when we know of people's needs and have the means to help yet we do not? Procrastination tells others that aiding the needy is not a priority in our lives. Christians should be willing to help and not delay!

Chapter 10

I. Paul's Defense against the Factious of Corinth who laid Faulty claims against Paul that were Designed to Persuade the Faithful not to have Confidence and Trust in his Words (10:1-17):

A. "*Now I Paul myself entreat you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I who in your presence am lowly among you, but being absent am of good courage toward you.*" (10:1).

1. Notice that instead of using the plural pronoun "*we*" as he has in the previous chapters, he now used the singular pronoun "*I*." This was Paul's personal defense of his apostleship and admonition to factious brethren in Corinth.
2. To "*entreat*" (*parakaleo*) = "exhort (to urge or incite by strong argument, advice, or appeal... to make urgent appeal [AHD 475])" (LS 597). Paul makes an appeal to the Corinthian brethren not to be caught up in the talk of the factious. Paul determined to deal with the factious and those who had heard the lies they were spewing with "*the meekness and gentleness of Christ.*" Here we see what Jesus was all about. Jesus claimed to be meek and lowly (Matthew 11:29-30); however, his speeches were often very bold and abrasive (cf. Matthew 5:20; 7:15ff; 10:34ff; 12:30ff; John 8:44 etc...). Paul was meek and lowly; however, meek and lowly does not mean weak and cowardly, as we shall see in this chapter. The word "*meek*" (*praus*) = "meek, gentle, kind, forgiving" (Moulton 340). "Mild, soft, gentle, meek" (LS 666). "Showing patience and humility; gentle" (AHD 782). The very first beatitude states, "*Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth*" (Matthew 5:5). Paul will begin his defense with a spirit of mildness and gentleness because he understands man's frail state of being.

3. Paul admitted to being “*lowly*” in the presence of the Corinthians; however, his lowliness was not cowardice, as some had charged, but demonstrating the mind of Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:10). Again, Paul was confident in the Corinthian's willingness to hear his arguments or defense and make the proper assessment of the situation under consideration (i.e., the factious charges against him so that the Corinthians would have no trust or confidence in his words) (see study # 40; Paul's Defense against the Factious / see also # 2, # 14, and # 23).
- B.** *"yea, I beseech you, that I may not when present show courage with the confidence wherewith I count to be bold against some, who count of us as if we walked according to the flesh"* (10:2).
1. The word “*some*” is anteceded by the factious brethren in Corinth. Paul was encouraging the faithful brethren to deal with these factious ones before he came to Corinth and had to deal with them himself. Secondly, as stated above, he was giving a defense against their accusations so that the faithful would not be persuaded in error by them.
 2. What were the factious saying? They were discrediting Paul, Titus, Sosthenes and others’ preaching as being that of the “*flesh*.” The idea of flesh is human reasoning (cf. Matthew 16:17; 2 Corinthians 1:12). Much of 2 Corinthians is spent in Paul’s defense of divine revelation being opposed to fleshly wisdom (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:12; 2:17, 4:1ff; 5:7; 6:4ff; 6:14ff).
- C.** *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds), casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ”* (10:3-5).
1. The first accusation dealt with in 2 Corinthians 10 is the charge that Paul, and his preaching companions, “*walk in the flesh*” (i.e., teach by human reason rather than divine revelation). This has been the accusation dealt with throughout this study (see study # 29 and # 40).
 2. Paul and his preaching companions did not walk “*according to the flesh*,” they walked “*in the flesh*.” There is a big difference. All of humanity shares in flesh and blood (cf. Heb. 2:14). Some of humanity is dependent upon human reasoning for their existence and way of life, while others are dependent upon the word of God for their existence and way of life. Paul said that his preaching was of divine revelation alone (see 2 Corinthians 1:12; 3:5; 4:1-7 / see also 1 Corinthians 2:3-4; Galatians 1:11ff).
 3. Paul's words and defense were divine “*weapons of warfare*” against the factious. The “*strongholds*” Paul spoke of are made by Satan. He makes inroads into man’s reasoning by his “*devices*” (2 Corinthians 2:11; James 1:13ff). He captures and enslaves man through “*craft and deceit*” (2 Corinthians 4:2; 11:3). Paul said, “*we are not ignorant of his (Satan's) devices*” (2 Corinthians 2:11).
 4. The word of God is able to “*cast down* (the) *strongholds*” of Satan. This warfare is not a fleshly and physical battle between two governments or kingdoms; it is a spiritual warfare between good and evil. The Christian is thereby called upon to take a stand and arm themselves to the teeth with the gospel of Christ (Ephesians 6:10ff). Paul is essentially and effectively letting the Corinthians know that the factious are doing the work of Satan as they accuse him of speaking after fleshly wisdom rather than divine revelation.
 5. Note that the word of God has the power to “*cast down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God.*”
 - a. “*Imaginations*” (*logismos*) = “a counting, reckoning, calculation, computation... reasoning... an argument, conclusion... reasoning power, reason” (LS 476).
 - b. Any man conceived, dreamed up, plot, contemplation, opinion, or personal reasoning that is opposed to the word of God is “*cast down*” by divine revelation (knowledge of God) (see study # 41; How to Expose Error).
 3. “*bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*” The humble Christian will have his mind and conscience trained by the word of God alone (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:12 / see also Romans 12:1-2).
- D.** *“and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be made full”* (10:6).

1. The word “*avenge*” (*ekdikeo*) = “punish a crime” (LS 237). Paul would come ready to punish the “*disobedient*” with the rod of correction (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:21). This would not be a physical punishment but a spiritual one that the souls of those who were disobedient would be saved (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:1ff; 1 Timothy 5:20; 2 Corinthians 13:3ff).
 2. Before punishment was to commence, Paul would wait the proper time for all to come to repentance. Paul, in the meekness and gentleness of Christ, would be patient and longsuffering to see whether or not the Corinthians would be obedient in all things (see 2 Corinthians 2:9).
- E. “(Do) *Ye look at the things that are before your face. If any man trusteth in himself that he is Christ’s, let him consider this again with himself, that, even as he is Christ’, so also are we*” (10:7).
1. This appears to be a questioning on the part of Paul regarding the false statements made by factious brethren in the church at Corinth (i.e., Paul is inconsistent, preaching his own ideas, beside himself (deluded), and a coward).
 2. Those who would say such things needed to take a look at the spiritual gifts that abounded at Corinth right before their faces. They needed to realize that the church would not be there without the efforts of men such as Paul, Sosthenes, Titus and others.
 3. Paul’s point was that if one claims to belong to Christ, let the same understand that Paul and his preaching companions were no different than Christ when it came to preaching. This was Paul’s point in 10:1. If Christ was not inconsistent, preaching His own ideas, deluded and a coward as one identified as meek and lowly, then neither were Paul and his companions.
- F. “*For though I should glory somewhat abundantly concerning our authority (which the Lord gave for building you up, and not for casting you down), I shall not be put to shame: that I may not seem as if I would terrify you by my letters*” (10:8-9).
1. Paul wrote and spoke the things he did by divine revelation and therefore by the authority of God (see 2 Corinthians 3:5). The purpose of such writings and language used was to build up others in the excellencies of the knowledge of Jesus Christ.
 2. The wording of these two verses appears to say that the false teachers were saying that Paul only made threats and was not willing to carry out his intimidation factors. Nothing could be further from the truth.
- G. “*For, His letters, they say, are weighty and strong; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account. Let such a one reckon this, that, what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such are we also in deed when we are present*” (10:10-11).
1. For the first time in this epistle to the Corinthians, Paul quoted from the false teachers. Paul quoted the false teachers in 1 Corinthians when he said, “*how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?*” (1 Corinthians 15:12). The primary issue to this point has been the factious’ efforts to discredit Paul’s words as being of his own fleshly reasoning. Now, the factious bring a personal attack against Paul.
 2. These false teachers called Paul a weakling that should not be listened to. Some believe that Paul had some serious health issues that caused him to look grotesque in the eyes of others (see 2 Corinthians 12:7-8 and Galatians 4:13-14). Whether this is the case or not, it does not take away from the fact that the false teachers were trying everything to discredit Paul’s preaching.
 3. Paul assured these detractors that he would be just the same in bodily presence as he was in his letters (acting by the authority of Jesus Christ).
- H. “*For we are not bold to number or compare ourselves with certain of them that commend themselves: but they themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding*” (10:12).
1. This idea of “*commending*” one’s self has been dealt with by Paul on a few occasions already in this epistle (cf. 3:1; 5:12). The word study yielded the results of one who would preach or thrust his own ideas upon others rather than using divine revelation. This is the idea of “walking after the flesh” (see 2 Corinthians 1:12; 10:3). This one charge irritated Paul most because he knew what the ramifications would be if the factious succeeded in this area.
 2. Paul put the blame back upon the factious. It was not Paul that was preaching his own ideas and commending himself to the brethren, it was the factious. The very accusations they made were not against Paul but against God. This reminds us of Israel’s problems with Moses.

When Israel rejected the divine direction of Moses they were not rejecting a man but they actually were rejecting God (see Numbers 12:1-8). This reminds us of the zealous spirit of Elijah when contending with Ahab. The king of Israel saw Elijah and ask, *“is it thou, thou troubler of Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of Jehovah, and thou hast followed the Baalim”* (1 Kings 18:17-18). There may be many today who have problems with certain preachers or men who represent truth but in all reality their problem is not with men but with God (see study # 42; Is Your Problem with God or Man?).

3. To *“measure”* oneself is to *“to measure in any way”* (LS 507). The standard by which these teachers were measured was each others’ human reason (the very thing they accused Paul of). Paul would not measure himself by any man’s standards but by the word of God alone. So he said, *“But we will not glory beyond our measure, but according to the measure of the province which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even unto you”* (10:13). Again, Paul boldly proclaims that the origin of his message was divine; i.e., of God.
4. Those who measure each other by human standards in the area of spiritual affairs are *“without understanding.”*
 - I. *“For we stretch not ourselves overmuch, as though we reached not unto you: for we came even as far as unto you in the gospel of Christ: not glorying beyond our measure, that is, in other men’s labors; but having hope that, as your faith growth, we shall be magnified in you according to our province unto further abundance, so as to preach the gospel even unto the parts beyond you, and not to glory in another’s province in regard of things ready to our hand”* (10:14-16).
 1. Paul and his preaching companions came to Corinth on his second tour of preaching. That which was preached was divine revelation. The foundation of the church of Christ that was established in Corinth was Christ preached by Paul.
 2. Paul did not build upon another man’s labors in Corinth (see Romans 15:20). Paul rather came to a city (Corinth) where no church had been established. It was here at Corinth that he began to preach the Word of God in all its purity to these people. The idea may also be that Paul never wanted to build upon what another man taught but rather go to new areas and introduce the purity of God's divine revelation. Those who heard would have no preformed ideas of the gospel message. The most difficult thing to do is undo error that other preachers have taught in the realm of religion (see study # 10 and # 21). The Corinthians were introduced and obeyed that gospel message of divine revelation (1 Corinthians 15:1ff).
 - J. *“But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the lord commendeth”* (10:17-18).
 1. Don’t get excited about preaching your own ideas but rather get excited about divine revelation.
 2. God does not recognize the man who preaches an unauthorized man made gospel. God commends or approves of the man that will preach by divine revelation the authoritative word of God. The standard of truth will expose the teachings of men as being either that of divine revelation or the opinions, personal convictions, or fleshly reasoning of man (see study # 43; Put all Doctrines to the Test).

Synopsis of chapter 10

Dealing with the Factious with a spirit of Meekness and Gentleness

Many of the brethren had repented of their sins which Paul enumerated in 1 Corinthians. The Corinthian's repentance was cause for great joy on the part of Paul and his companions (2 Corinthians 7:5ff). Though many had repented there yet remained factious men who sought to destroy the reputation of Paul. They charged him with being inconsistent (2 Corinthians 1:17), practicing self commendation by preaching his own ideas (2 Corinthians 3:1; 5:12; 10:12), being *“beside himself”* (deluded) (2 Corinthians 5:13), and being one who lacked courage when in person (2 Corinthians 10:1, 10). Paul now answered these dissenters in 2 Corinthians chapter ten, with the spirit of meekness and gentleness like Christ (see 2 Corinthians 10:1).

2 Corinthians chapter ten is an apostolic example of how to handle ourselves when others are making false accusations against us and not handling the word of God in truth. Paul said that he would conduct himself in the spirit of meekness and gentleness that Christ be portrayed in His life (2 Corinthians 10:1). After one reads 2 Corinthians ten there is no doubt that being meek and gentle is not being weak and cowardly. Jesus dealt harshly with his detractors (Matthew 5:20; 7:15ff; 10:34ff; 12:30ff; John 8:44), Paul dealt aggressively with his detractors (2 Corinthians 10:11), and so must we deal with those who would pervert the gospel of Christ today (Philippians 4:9). There is a standard of truth set by Jehovah God and the man approved of God will be measured by it and it alone (see 2 Corinthians 10:17-18).

Once again, the thrust of Paul's argument against the factious brothers of Corinth was the idea of human reason versus divine revelation. Paul denied having preached a message dreamed up by human devices (2 Corinthians 10:2, 12). This has been a major theme in 2 Corinthians (see 2 Corinthians 1:12; 2:16-17; 3:1ff; 4:1-7; 5:12; 6:4; 7:2) (see study # 38). The words Paul and his preaching companions preached was done by the "*authority*" given to him by God Himself (see 2 Corinthians 10:8 compared to 2 Corinthians 3:5).

The standard Paul lived and preached was the Word of God (2 Corinthians 10:13). The Word of God is a powerful weapon in the hand of Christians to "*cast down imaginations (human reason), and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God...*" (2 Corinthians 10:5). The word of God is all one needs to wage effective battle against Satan (2 Corinthians 10:3). Let all those who would claim fellowship with the Lord arm themselves to the teeth with the gospel of Christ and wage war (Ephesians 6:10ff). 2 Corinthians ten is a chapter of such a battle between the apostle Paul and factious trouble makers in the church. We must do the same today and thereby show the world the spirit of meekness and gentleness as did Christ and the apostles (2 Corinthians 10:1; Matthew 11:29-30; Philippians 4:9).

Chapter 11

I. Paul's fear for the Corinthians (11:1-15):

- A. "*Would that ye could bear with me in a little foolishness: but indeed ye do bear with me*" (11:1).
 - 1. To "*bear*" (*anechomai*) with one is to "endure patiently, to suffer, admit, permit" (Moulton 29).
 - 2. The "*little foolishness*" that Paul desired the Corinthians to patiently endure was his necessary defense against the factious false teachers of Corinth. These men had claimed that Paul was inconsistent (2 Corinthians 1:17), preaching his own ideas (2 Corinthians 3:1; 5:12; 10:12); beside himself (deluded) (2 Corinthians 5:13), and one who lacked courage (2 Corinthians 10:10).
- B. "*For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ*" (11:2).
 - 1. To be "*jealous*" (*zeloo*) over another in a godly sort is to "to be impelled by zeal" (LS 344). The word can mean to be envious; however, the Greek word used here indicates the zeal one would have for another. Paul loved the Corinthian brethren with Godly zeal. He could not sit back and be a spectator as the factious ruined his reputation and the souls of these beloved brethren.
 - 2. The Corinthians had obeyed the gospel of Christ and formed a local church in the city. These individuals in the church were "*espoused*" to Christ as a bride. Paul's desire for the Corinthians was that they would represent a pure virgin in relation to sin before Christ (see study # 19).
- C. "*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ*" (11:3).
 - 1. The false teachers in Corinth were teaching that the resurrection had already past (1 Corinthians 15:12) and were mingling the Mosaic Law with the Law of Christ as did those brethren of Acts 15 (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:7ff). Furthermore, they were attacking the person of Paul to discredit his words and work.

2. Notice that Paul's concern was for the Corinthians not because of these men, but because of the work of Satan. It is Satan who beguiles by craft and deceit (2 Corinthians 2:11; 4:2). The devil simply uses foolish men as his servants to carry out his will.
 3. The word "*beguiled*" (*exapatao*) means "to deceive; 'to delude'" (LS 270). Paul reminded the Corinthians of the Devil's ways. He is one of craft and deceit and has been so since the days of Adam and Eve. Though God gave Eve law instructing her not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she ate anyway because the devil deceived her saying, "*ye shall not surely die*" (Genesis 3:4).
 4. The woman's mind was deluded by the devil's false doctrine and so she sinned. Paul's concern for the Corinthians was that their minds would be deluded in a drunken stupor by the statements of the factious and false teachers who were doing the work of the devil.
 5. To have the mind "*corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ*" was to be in a state of "ruin, waste, spoil, destroy; to have suffered loss from shipwreck" (LS 860). So Paul said to Timothy, "*holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith: of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme*" (1 Timothy 1:19-20).
 6. The doctrine of Christ is pure and simple and needs no man-made devil-deluded ideas added to it (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:12; Galatians 1:6ff; Revelation 22:18)!
- D. "*For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or if ye received a different spirit, which ye did not receive, or a different gospel, which ye did not accept, ye do well to bear with him*" (11:4).
1. Clearly there were some in Corinth that had so perverted the gospel of Christ that Paul termed their teachings, "another Jesus of a different spirit, a different gospel."
 2. The wording of this verse has confused many due to the placement of the masculine pronoun "him" at the end of the sentence (which would indicate in the English that the Corinthian brethren should tolerate the false teachers doctrine; a thought most untenable with NT instructions regarding false teachings).
 3. Consider the fact that Paul had requested that the Corinthian brethren to "*bear with him in a little foolishness*" in regards to his defense of the gospel message against the false teachers that bring another doctrine (4:1).
 4. Paul now asks these same brethren to "*do well to bear.*" The question is, what are the Corinthians to "*bear*" [i.e., "endure patiently, to suffer, admit, permit" (Moulton 29)].
 - a. Are the Corinthians to endure the erroneous teachings by admitting and permitting it?
 - b. Friberg's Analytical Greek New Testament places the masculine parsing over the verb "*bear*" (*anechesthe*) and no where else. This structure clearly places the masculine antecedent of "*bear*" upon the Corinthians and not false teachers.
 - c. Paul is then requesting that the Corinthians "*bear*" or 'endure patiently' those false teachers who bring a different gospel (not tolerate it). The idea is that the brethren would not allow their minds to be deluded or seduced by the erroneous teaching, but endure through fighting each step of the way (Ephesians 6:10).
- E. "*For I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. But though I be rude in speech, yet am I not in knowledge; nay, in every way have we made this manifest unto you in all things*" (11:5-6).
1. Here are more charges levied against the apostle Paul. Those who would call him inconsistent, deluded, one who preached his own ideas, and a coward, now called him "*rude in speech.*" The word "*rude*" (*idiots*) = "one who has no professional knowledge, ... a raw hand, an ignorant, ill-informed man" (LS 375). They called Paul an idiot!
 2. Paul stated that he was not behind one of the other apostles in knowledge of God's word and so he preached to the Corinthians. Paul received his teachings by direct revelation, as did all other apostles and was therefore not an idiot in spiritual matters (Galatians 1:12). Interestingly, those who were calling Paul an idiot were in all reality calling God an idiot, since Paul received his knowledge from God.

- F. *“Or did I commit a sin in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I preached to you the gospel of God for nought? I robbed other churches, taking wages of them that I might minister unto you; and when I was present with you and was in want, I was not a burden on any man; for the brethren, when they came from Macedonia, supplied the measure of my want; and in everything I kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this glorying in the regions of Achaia”* (11:7-10).
1. Apparently the difference between Paul and the other apostles was in how they obtained a living. Paul worked with his own hands often making tents to provide for himself (cf. Acts 18:3). Paul reminded the Corinthians that he did not take wages from them, not even once. It seems by the wording of these verses that some of the Corinthians had been swayed by these factious false teachers against Paul. One may have said, ‘if Paul was an apostle, why did he not take wages from us for his labors as do the other apostles?’ Paul sarcastically asked forgiveness from the brethren of Corinth for not taking these wages at 2 Corinthians 12:13.
 2. Not only did Paul make tents, he also received wages from churches in Macedonia that he might preach to the Corinthians. From the Corinthian’s point of view, Paul’s support from another church is seen as *“robbery.”* He took from another congregation to preach to the Corinthians. The brethren of Macedonia had aided Paul in his work while in Thessalonica and most probably were the ones who supported Paul in Corinth (Philippians 4:15-16).
 3. Paul gave no opportunity to his adversaries to charge him with preaching for money in the region of Achaia. Not one time did he take from any church in Achaia funds for support even though he was due them (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:6ff). Paul did not make these statements out of bitterness but rather by way of defense of the charges that were laid against him.
- G. *“Wherefore? Because I love you not? God knoweth. But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them that desire an occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works”* (11:11-15).
1. Did Paul not take wages from the Corinthians because he did not love them? No, he did not do so because he did love them and he wanted them to realize that the gospel he preached was designed to save their souls, and this alone was Paul interested in.
 2. Apparently there were false teachers receiving support from the brethren in Corinth as preachers. These false teachers were not about to cut off their support and do as Paul. Paul, therefore, had an advantage in the minds of the Corinthian brethren, over these false teachers.
 3. There was a battle going on for the souls of the Corinthians. Paul, Sosthenes, and Titus battled with truth against factious false teachers who sought to sway the hearts of the Corinthians away from divine revelation.
 4. Those who would use deceit and craft to move the disciples minds from the one gospel of Christ were truly ministers of Satan veiled as ministers of righteousness. Paul exposed these men for what they are, *“false apostles and deceitful workers.”*
 5. These types of people appeared so loving and true to the untrained ear; however, within they had devilish agendas. Not one of these men would say, ‘I am a minister of Satan who has fashioned himself into an angel of light.’ These brethren were truly deluded by Satan and truly believe that they are doing God’s work when in all reality they are tearing down the body of Christ. By their *“works”* and as Jesus said, their *“fruits”* (Matthew 7:16) we shall know them!
 6. Paul's defense of his qualifications as an apostle of Jesus Christ was thereby designed to *“cut off occasion from them that desire an occasion.”* The factious were looking for any perceived weakness or flaw in Paul so that they could nail him to the wall. Paul would remove any of their hopes before they could be established.

II. Paul’s Justification for bringing himself to the Level of his Detractors in regards to Boasting of Fleshly Things (11:16-33):

- A. *“I say again, Let no man think me foolish; but if ye do, yet as foolish receive me, that I also may glory a little”* (11:16).

1. Paul stated clearly that he was not an idiot but rather one who had received divine revelation from the heavenly Father.
 2. From a logic standpoint, Paul's detractors were guilty of '*Argumentum ad hominem*' (an argument directed at the man by attacking the person who made the assertion). They called Paul a deranged (2 Corinthians 5:13), cowardly (2 Corinthians 10:10) idiot (2 Corinthians 11:6). Though men may say these things, Paul's message stood alone as authoritative revelation. If others deemed him foolish, so what? Let the Corinthians accept this foolish man and his perceived foolish message and let the wicked reject it and perish.
- B. *"That which I speak, I speak not after the Lord, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of glorying. Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also"* (11:17-18).
1. Apparently what Paul was saying was that he would glory by means of necessity to defend the truth and *"not after the Lord."* His meaning is that Jesus never boasted of self and neither is boasting a quality of a Christian.
 2. What had taken place was that the false teachers had so magnified themselves in the eyes of the Corinthians and demoted Paul that the apostle felt it necessary to defend himself thoroughly. There comes a time when we may have to tell people of our education and personal experience. There is no reason to be called an idiot with no experience when quite the opposite is true.
- C. *"For ye bear with the foolish gladly, being wise yourselves. For ye bear with a man, if he bringeth you into bondage, if he devoureth you, if he taketh you captive, if he exalteth himself, if he smiteth you on the face"* (11:19-20).
1. Here is an alarming verse that indicates the state of many of the Corinthians. Though many had repented of their unlawful deeds and Paul rejoiced over that fact (cf. 2 Corinthians 7:7ff), they continued to be misled by false teachers. We have noted the additional sins of the Corinthians brought out in this study:
 - a. The Corinthians needed to forgive the fornicator that had repented and thereby prove their obedience in all areas of faith (see 2 Corinthians 2:5-9).
 - b. The Corinthians had set their affections on the things of this world and thereby fellowshiped sin (see 2 Corinthians 6:11ff).
 - c. Now we find that some of the Corinthians had received the false accusations against Paul and his preaching companions and thereby were lead astray from the faith (2 Corinthians 11:19-20) (good introduction material).
 2. These false teachers were receiving wages from the Corinthians and were leading them into *"bondage"* and *"captivity"* while they *"devoured"* the brethren and figuratively *"smiting them on the face."* These are apparent allusions to the Judaizing False teachers that Paul dealt with in Galatians and Acts 15 who were teaching a different doctrine.
 3. Paul could have noted that the Corinthians had repented of their gross sins and left them alone, even though there were some sketchy characters leading them. Paul; however, loved these brethren too much to leave them to the devices of the false teachers. It was Paul's intention to root out every cause of evil among the brethren!
- D. *"I speak by way of disparagement, as though we had been weak. Yet whereinsoever any is bold (I speak in foolishness), I am bold also"* (11:21).
1. The word *"disparagement"* (*atimia*) = "dishonor, disgrace... dishonor done to one" (LS 129). What may seem to be weakness and dishonor on the part of Paul for participating in the same boasting his detractors have is really a defense.
 2. Paul was bringing himself to the level of his accusers because these men had made great inroads and strongholds in the minds of the brethren at Corinth.
 3. We can feel the frustration of Paul here. He preached nothing but truth; however, such preaching produced detractors who were succeeding in drawing away the minds of the Corinthian Christians from the truth he preached. Truly the words of Jesus in John 7:7 and 17:14 bear testimony to the events transpiring in Corinth. The world hates those who will expose their evil deeds.

III. Paul Boasted of the Flesh (11:22-33):

- A. *“Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I”* (11:22).
- Paul’s detractors apparently boasted to the Corinthians regarding the fact that they were Hebrews, Israelites, and of the seed of Abraham and were thereby magnified in the eyes of the brethren.
 - Paul said, *“so am I”* (cf. Philippians 3:4-7).
 - It is thought that the term *“Hebrews”* depicted the fact that they had retained the original language of God’s people rather than forgetting it.
 - Paul was an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin (Philippians 3:4ff).
 - Paul was of the seed of Abraham as were his detractors.
- B. *“Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labors more abundantly, in prison more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one”* (11:23-24).
- Clearly these false teachers were stating that they were *“ministers of Christ;”* however, Paul has identified them as *“false prophets”* and *“ministers of Satan”* (2 Corinthians 11:13).
 - Paul now began his list of things in which he may boast based on the fact that he was now *“beside himself”* in regard to what these detractors are saying. The phrase *“beside himself”* (*paraphroneo*) = “deranged or mad” (LS 604) (as they spoke so he spoke in what may be perceived as foolishness).
 - Paul *“labored”* at preaching the gospel to the point of it hurting (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:9-10). He traveled the world over that souls may be saved.
 - While laboring so vigorously for the souls of men, he suffered persecution: *“in prison more abundantly.”* When preaching in Philippi, he and Silas were arrested and put into prison (Acts 16:23ff).
 - Paul suffered *“stripes above measure”* from the Gentiles who did not have the restriction of the Jews (i.e., 39 stripes; cf. Deuteronomy 25:3).
 - There were times when Paul preached that he was beaten to the point of being considered dead (Acts 14:19).
 - His own country men scourged him with whips on five different occasions (none of which are recorded in Acts).
- C. *“Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep”* (11:25).
- On three occasions was Paul beaten with rods by the Romans (cf. Acts 16:22-24).
 - On one occasion Paul was stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:19).
 - On three occasions Paul suffered shipwreck while preaching the gospel (none of which are recorded in Acts other than the ship wreck at Malta which happened after the writing of 2 Corinthians).
 - Paul stated, *“a night and a day have I been in the deep”* which indicates floating on a piece of ship wreckage until saved or coming ashore.
- D. *“In journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;”* (11:26).
- Grouped with the others *“perils”* (*kindunos*; “a danger, risk, hazard, venture [LS 433]) Paul faced were the dangerous journeys he took. The dangers he was exposed to were thieves, murderers, and those in each city he traveled who were offended by his message.
 - Paul was in *“perils of rivers.”* As Paul traveled he would have had to traverse treacherous rivers where many men drowned to death.
 - Paul found himself in *“perils of robbers.”* Apparently Paul was robbed from time to time as he traveled about.
 - Paul found himself in *“perils from my countrymen.”* The Jews were the ones to show forth bitter hatred toward Paul as he went about preaching (ex. Acts 13:50 in Antioch of Pisidia).

5. Paul found himself in “*perils from the Gentiles*” which completes the whole human race (i.e., Jews and Gentiles). Paul suffered at the hands of all classes and races of peoples (cf. Acts 19:23ff).
 6. Paul experienced “*perils in the city, wilderness, and sea.*” Not only all classes and races of peoples persecuted Paul, but in every possible location he found himself subject to ill treatment due to his message of repentance from sins.
 7. To complete the picture of a life filled with dangers from people to geography it would seem that at least he would be safe among brethren. Paul, however, found himself in “*perils among false brethren.*” This must have pained Paul more than the other perils he fell in. Brethren who were pseudo (false). Their falsehood may have been the doctrines they followed or their evil agendas. Some who would be termed “*brethren*” would persecute Paul as did those of the world.
 8. Paul fit the admonition he gave young Timothy (2 Timothy 3:12). Why? Because Jesus said that when one exposes another’s dark deeds, they will hate you (John 7:7; 17:14).
- E. “*In labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness*” (11:27).
1. With the sufferings came labor and “*travail*” (*mochthos*) = “toil, hard work, hardship, distress, trouble” (LS 520).
 2. Paul’s hardships would put many of us to shame as he underwent hunger, thirst, fasting, being cold and without proper clothing.
 3. Though the world viewed Paul as “*poor*” (2 Corinthians 6:10), “*foolish, weak, and the filth of the world*” (1 Corinthians 4:9ff) he was indeed rich unto eternal life!
- F. “*Beside those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches*” (11:28).
1. In addition to the above mentioned suffering Paul had to deal with the fact that factious false teachers were devouring the souls of many Christians. His intense love for brethren burned deep within to the point of pain and distress (anxiety).
 2. As we traverse each of Paul’s epistles written to different brethren in various geographic locations, he dealt with each one’s problems and exhorts all to repent that they may obtain the eternal promise of salvation. When false teachers added their own twist to the doctrine of Christ, Paul corrected these things in all the churches. Paul did not have a love for one local church of brethren; he cared for all the “*churches.*”
- G. “*Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is caused to stumble, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my weakness*” (11:29-30).
1. Paul experienced the hardships of all those who suffer in weakness. Paul felt the shame of brethren’s sins and the sins of his own (Romans 7:24). Paul knew what it was like to be human and to suffer the pains of life and the pains of sin.
 2. Such acknowledgement and enlightenment gave Paul great joy as he went about preaching and teaching knowing that the consequence of one individual obeying the gospel would mean another soul saved if they remained faithful to the end.
 3. For this cause Paul could glory in the things he suffered. Through Paul’s hardships came the gospel message to the world. Those false teachers in Corinth who would glory in their heritage yet live like kings could in no way stand in comparison to the love Paul had for the Corinthians souls. No man in his right mind could reject Paul at the derogatory statements of his detractors.
- H. “*The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed for evermore knoweth that I lie not. In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king guarded the city of the Damascenes’ in order to take me: and through a window was I let down in a basket by the wall, and escaped his hands*” (11:31-33).
1. One may be amazed to hear the things Paul has just said, and so Paul exclaimed that God knows that “*I lie not.*”
 2. Paul appears to save the information regarding his suffering in Damascus for last. It is likely that Paul speaks of this now because it was the birth place of all his coming agony for preaching the gospel. Paul was converted in Damascus (Acts 9:10ff). After his conversion, he

immediately preached Jesus. Paul left Damascus traveling into Arabia preaching the gospel for some time (Galatians 1:17ff) and then returned. Paul spent three years in Damascus preaching and teaching the gospel (Galatians 1:18). Apparently at the end of these three years, the events spoken of in Acts 9:10ff occurred. The Jews sought to kill him because of the message he preached. Some of his brethren lowered Paul down the wall of Damascus and Paul escaped to Jerusalem.

3. Paul escaped the king of Damascus and Arabia. This initial persecution was an example of the hardships that he would experience, from this point forward, as he preached the gospel (cf. Acts 9:16).

Synopsis of 2 Corinthians chapter 11

Are you willing to go that far?

Chapter 11 is a continuation of the defense and argument that was between Paul and the factious false teachers in Corinth. These detractors had used the form of argument called “*argumentum ad hominem*” (an argument directed at the man by attacking the person who made the assertion). The assertion Paul made was that the Corinthians were in sin. Paul’s detractors responded by calling him names such as “*idiot*” (2 Corinthians 11:6), “*deranged*” (2 Corinthians 5:13), a ‘coward’ (2 Corinthians 10:10) and one who ‘preached his own ideas’ (2 Corinthians 3:1; 5:12; 10:12). Apparently many Corinthians were buying these false accusations against the apostle Paul. Paul appears to be ramping up his bold speech against the factious. Paul said, “*for ye bear with a man, if he bringeth you into bondage, if he devoureth you, if he taketh you captive, if he exalteth himself, if he smiteth you on the face*” (2 Corinthians 11:20). Truly there was a battle for the Corinthians’ affection. The factious were using base modes to discredit Paul and his teaching. Paul’s only defense was to write these epistles until he could get to Corinth and address the factious brethren face to face (see 2 Corinthians 10:11).

Paul’s great fear for the Corinthians was that these detractors would totally convince the Corinthian brethren of his personal worthlessness and thereby all would lose their souls. Paul clearly identified the work of his detractors as a beguiling work of Satan (2 Corinthians 11:1-4). His detractors were “*messengers of Satan, false apostles, deceitful workers*” (2 Corinthians 11:13). Their method not only included attacks against Paul’s person but self aggrandizement in the form of boasting of their past heritage (2 Corinthians 11:22). It is most probable that the factious and false teachers of Corinth were Jews who held to the Mosaic Law while claiming to be Christians (see 2 Corinthians 3; Acts 18:1-11; and Acts 15). Paul could not sit back and say nothing in this situation. He proved his great love for the Corinthian brethren by reviewing his life of suffering that others, such as the Corinthians, might obtain eternal life (2 Corinthians 11:22ff).

As we explore the life of Paul, we find that in all points of his existence he suffered. Paul suffered in every known geographic location (cities, wilderness, rivers and sea). Paul suffered at the hands of every race of people (Jew and Gentile). Paul often found no solace in brethren for they, too, would persecute him. Paul found himself without proper clothing and shelter. He was often hungry and thirsty. The world looked upon him and his preaching brethren as the “*filth of the world*” (1 Corinthians 4:13). Why would a man undergo such trouble if it were not for love? He received no wages from the Corinthian brethren (2 Corinthians 11:8-9). He simply came and preached the gospel so that they would be saved. Paul’s detractors could in no way make such claims.

What application can we make of 2 Corinthians 11? Clearly we may learn that the devil is busy making disciples through craft and deceit. There are brethren buying his doctrine and devouring it. Brethren are allowing Satan to make strongholds within their minds as they slip further and further from truth. As Paul experienced anxiety for all the churches so must we stand up and speak out against sin and the devil’s evil tactics. Secondly, we can learn that when we do stand up and speak out as did Paul, we will be persecuted as was our Lord and His apostles. Jesus said it would be so (John 7:7; 17:14). This is the life of the true loving Christian (2 Timothy 3:12). God’s people are called upon to fellowship the sufferings of Jesus, are you and I willing to go that far (Philippians 3:10)?

Chapter 12

I. Paul's visions and revelations (12:1-10):

- A. *"I must needs glory, though it is not expedient; but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord"* (12:1).
- Chapter 11:18 exposed Paul's reason for glorying after the flesh. Paul's detractors had literally forced him to bring himself down to their level. These men had persuaded many faithful brethren against Paul and the divine message of revelation (2 Corinthians 11:20). Self glorification is not "*expedient*," however, it was necessary in spiritual matters. The word "*expedient*" means "to confer a benefit, be useful or profitable" (LS 764). Generally, self glorification will not profit or benefit anything but shame upon the individual; however, in this particular case it was necessary that the minds of the Corinthians would be brought back to Paul and divine revelation. This is not a situational ethic but rather an example of boasting about the right things; i.e., spiritual things. I may boast that God is the creator of this universe. I may boast of Christ's glorious sacrifice. I may boast of my salvation. I am a fool if I boast in matters that have nothing to do with God.
 - Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ and worthy of a receptive audience because he delivered divine instructions. Paul said that he would "*come to visions*." "*Visions*" are supernatural visages such as the one that Peter saw (Acts 10:10ff). "*Revelations*" are disclosures of divine information. Those who called Paul names could not boast of the things that Paul is about to because they are not apostles and neither had they been authorized by the Lord to speak the lies they speak.
- B. *"I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up even to the third heaven"* (12:2).
- The man that Paul knew who was "*in Christ*" was himself (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:6-7).
 - The event transpired 14 years ago (current date of 56 AD – 14 = 42 AD).
 - Paul was in a "*trance*" much like Peter (Acts 10:10) in that he was not sure as to whether he was transported bodily or by spirit.
 - The place he was transported to was the "*third heaven*." The word "*heaven*" simply means "the sky" (LS 578). The Jews believed in three heavens (skyward sections). First, they saw the area of the clouds in the sky (Gen. 2:1, 19). Secondly, they saw the area in which the sun, moon, and stars hung as the second heaven (Deut. 18:3; Matt. 24:29). The third heaven was known as the dwelling place of God (Matt. 5:12-48). Apparently, Paul is saying that he was transported to the dwelling place of God (heaven or paradise).
- C. *"And I know such a man (whether in the body, or apart from the body, I know not; God knoweth), how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter"* (12:3-4).
- The word "*paradise*" is used in connection with "*the third heaven*." The word "*Paradise*" is used in Revelation 2:7 where John stated, "... *To him that overcomes, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God*." Paradise is the heavenly realm of Jehovah God.
 - While in Paradise, Paul heard things that were not lawful to utter. There are things that God does not intend for His people to know and those things which He does want us to know (Deuteronomy 29:29). This reminds us of the things the apostle John heard in Revelation and was not permitted to speak the utterances of the seven thunders (see Revelation 10:1-4).
- D. *"On behalf of such a one will I glory: but on mine own behalf I will not glory, save in my weaknesses. For if I should desire to glory, I shall not be foolish; for I shall speak the truth: but I forbear, lest any man should account of me above that which he seeth me to be, or heareth from me"* (12:5-6).
- Paul's glorying occurred only in that the Lord brought him into the heavens to see Paradise and hear wonderful things unlawful to utter. These were facts. Paul would not, however, glory in his self accomplishments in life. Such indeed is foolishness.

2. Paul's glorying would fall into one category; i.e., "*weaknesses*" (this will be explained in verse 9).
 3. If Paul would have boasted in self, some may have thought more highly of him than they should. Such a statement ought to cause each of us to be cautious when talking about ourselves (cf. Romans 12:3). If Paul was concerned about people thinking too highly of him because of his self bragging shouldn't we too (see study # 44; Bragging).
- E. "*And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch*" (12:7).
1. Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ endowed with spiritual gifts, visions, and revelations. Paul saw and heard things of eternity in the third heaven, experienced miraculous powers, and received direct revelation from God. Such events drove him to pursue a life of Godliness and convince others to do so.
 2. The tendency to think too highly of oneself was a temptation for all and especially the apostles. To eliminate this temptation in Paul's life, the Lord allowed Satan to afflict Paul's flesh (i.e., a thorn in the flesh) (cf. Job 2:7; Luke 13:16). We are not told what the "*thorn in the flesh*" was. To the Galatians, Paul wrote, "*Ye know that because of an infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you the first time: and that which was a temptation to you in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but ye received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus*" (Galatians 4:13-14). It is very well possible that the "thorn in the flesh" was an eye malady of some sort (see Galatians 4:15).
- F. "*Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me*" (12:8-9).
1. God heard Paul's prayer all three times. God heard the prayer of Jesus while in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus prayed, "*My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt*" (Matthew 26:39-42). It was not God's will that the cup of death should pass from Jesus, and neither was it God's will that Paul's thorn in the flesh should be removed. God knows all our needs (Matthew 6:32; Romans 8:26ff). He is able to strengthen us through our trials that we may endure them (Philippians 4:12-13).
 2. God's grace (His favor of salvation) is sufficient to strengthen both Paul and all of us today.
 3. How is God's "*power made perfect in weakness*"? Paul's weakness mentioned in verse 5 and here was his "*thorn in the flesh.*" When we call out to the Lord in anguish due to our common affliction, the Lord gives us strength through His word of grace that we might endure. No matter what the affliction suffered, the Christian sees heaven with spiritual eyes and so endures.
 4. Having hope in a heavenly home, Paul was able to "*glory in weakness*" and so can we. It is in our times of weakness that we realize our humble state before Jehovah God. We are not all sufficient and cannot make it through this life without God. Weaknesses help us to realize this and thereby we grow closer to Christ.
- G. "*Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong*" (12:10).
1. Without the context, this verse would seem very strange (like James 1:2).
 2. Paul's point was that if injuries, necessities, persecutions and so forth strengthen him by forcing a dependency of man with Christ, then he stated, "*I take pleasure*" in such events.
 3. Man finds himself most dependant upon Christ during distressful days in life, and thereby he is forced to magnify his faith in Christ's promises (Acts 2:38; 1 John 2:25) (see study # 45; Cause and Effects of Suffering).

II. Paul's Apostolic Credentials (12:11-13):

- A. "*I am become foolish: ye compelled me; for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I am nothing*" (12:11).

1. Paul's foolishness was in having to stoop to the level of his detractors due to the Corinthians' believing and being swayed by their method of self aggrandizement (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:1, 16).
 2. Paul was not of the practice of self boasting; however, due to the Corinthians being swayed toward his detractors, he had no choice but to do so. Note; however, that Paul's boasting was in spiritual matters so that all would know that he is qualified and authorized to speak on behalf of Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:20).
 3. Paul did everything that the other apostles of the Lord did. He seems to be asking, 'how are some among you swayed from the truth I delivered unto you by these detractors?'
 4. Paul considered himself "*nothing*" in comparison to others; however, the fact of the matter was that he was a hard worker and one that was endowed with the same powers and knowledge as the other apostles (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:8-9). One must appreciate Paul's words of boasting which are topped with the phrase, "*I am nothing*." Paul had been humbled by God with a thorn in the flesh. Though he did grand things by the authority of Christ he was nonetheless nothing in comparison to Jehovah God (see study # 46; Humility).
- B. "*Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works*" (12:12).
1. The "*signs of an apostle*" occurred at Corinth so that all should have no doubt in their minds as to whether or not Paul was an apostle that should be trusted in doctrine delivered. Though he suffered much, he endured and did the work of an apostle among them.
 2. The three terms, "*signs, wonders, and mighty works*" occur together in Acts 2:22.
 - a. "*Signs*" (*semeion*) = "in reasoning, a sign or proof" (LS 727). This aspect of miraculous works proved to the world the validity of the apostles message (cf. Mark 16:20).
 - b. "*Wonders*" (*teras*) = "a sign, wonder, marvel" (LS 800). The miracles were proof of the reality of God and his message. These miracles produced amazement by those who witnessed them. Again, such amazement indicated the realness of the event and thereby the validity of the message preached.
 - c. "*Mighty works*" (*dunamis*) = "power, might, strength: then, generally, strength, power, ability to do a thing beyond one's strength..." (LS 213). There was great power displayed in that the apostles did things that they could otherwise (without God) do.
- C. "*For what is there wherein ye were made inferior to the rest of the churches, except it be that I myself was not a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong*" (12:13).
1. Point of reason: if the Corinthians received the same teaching and had the same spiritual gifts, why would some believe that they were inferior to other churches that had the same?
 2. There seems to be a sense of insecurity portrayed by Paul's detractors upon the brethren in Corinth. Since Paul was not one of the original apostles that worked directly with Jesus, some questioned the validity of his work.
 3. The only difference between the other churches and the Corinthian church was that the other churches supported the apostles (and Paul); however, Corinth did not support Paul.
 4. If this matter would cause the Corinthians to lose their faith, Paul proclaimed, "*forgive me this wrong*." Whether this statement is sarcastic it is difficult to say. The more important point is that Paul truly loved and cared for the Corinthians souls and did not want such a thing plaguing their souls.

III. Paul Answered his Detractors' Charge of him trying to take Advantage of the Brethren (12:14-18):

- A. "*Behold, this is the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be a burden to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children*" (12:14).
1. Paul first visited Corinth in 51 AD (Acts 18:1ff). Aside from this first visit, we have no other record of a visit. Clearly, Paul mentions a second visit (cf. 2 Corinthians 13:1-2).
 2. Again, Paul stated that he would not be "*a burden to you: for I seek not yours, but you*." Paul was more interested in the Corinthians' souls than he was their money (see 2 Corinthians 4:15).

Though he had every right to take wages from them, he would continue to choose not to do so (see 2 Corinthians 11:12).

3. As a parent would take care of their children, even so, Paul viewed himself as a parent toward the Corinthians in the faith (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:14ff; 2 Corinthians 6:13). Paul would not take wages from his children but rather provide for them the bread of life.
- B. *“And I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less?”* (12:15).
 1. Paul considered it a light thing to be spent of energy, time, and necessities of life that the Corinthian brethren learn more of how to be pleasing to the Lord.
 2. Why should the Corinthians’ be moved to doubt Paul’s love for them? Clearly when the faithful read these words, they would with zeal reject Paul’s detractors.
 3. The Lord’s church today needs more men who are willing to spend and be spent for the souls of brethren and the world. It takes time to do the work of the Lord. People are generally selfish with their time. They will spend most of their time doing what pleases them most. Juggling family and work time does not leave much time for God if we are not careful. Let us spend and be spent for the brethren (see study # 47; How do you Spend your Time?).
- C. *“But be it so, I did not myself burden you; but, being crafty, I caught you with guile”* (12:16).
 1. Paul did not burden the brethren by asking wages from them even though he had the right.
 2. Apparently Paul’s detractors were charging him with craft and guile. When Paul was working among the Corinthians, he did not take wages. Now he planned to come again to them and collect a huge bounty to take back to Jerusalem for the needy saints. Some may have believed that the whole ordeal was a sham on Paul’s part to take the collected funds for himself.
- D. *“Did I take advantage of you by any one of them whom I have sent unto you? I exhorted Titus, and I sent the brother with him. Did Titus take any advantage of you? Walked we not in the same steps?”* (12:17-18).
 1. Paul asked a simple question to those who would believe the false words of his detractors. *“Did I take advantage of you”* through the men that I sent to you? Paul did not send Titus and the other brother to Corinth to rob them of money and they knew this.
 2. Not one man that Paul sent to the Corinthians received wages from them. They all rather walked in the same steps in that they preached the same message of salvation from sins.

IV. Paul’s Aim was to Edify the Corinthians (12:19-21):

- A. *“Ye think all this time that we are excusing ourselves unto you. In the sight of God speak we in Christ. But all things, beloved, are for your edifying”* (12:19).
 1. To *“excuse ourselves”* (*apologeomai*) = “to speak in defense, defend oneself about a thing... to defend oneself against a thing, explain, excuse... to allege in one’s defense against a charge” (LS 102).
 2. Apparently Paul was correcting a false view by the Corinthians. He was not on trial by them, and the defense he was giving was not to them but on behalf of them. The Corinthians clearly believed the things Paul’s detractors had said and were now sitting back waiting to hear Paul’s defense regarding the matter. Paul was virtually saying, “I am not on trial by you Corinthians. You should know my love for you and the truth and thereby reject these detractors.”
 3. All that Paul spoke was by the authority of Jesus Christ and was for the purpose of building the brethren up in the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Three times now Paul has said that all he does is for their benefit not his (see 2 Corinthians 4:15; 12:14; and here).
- B. *“For I fear, lest by any means, when I come, I should find you not such as I would, and should myself be found of you such as ye would not; lest by any means there should be strife, jealousy, wraths, factions, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults;”* (12:20).
 1. Remember that Paul’s fear was mentioned at 2 Corinthians 11:3 as well. This fear was that the Corinthians would be deluded by the craft of Satan’s devices. Paul now proclaimed his fears once again toward the Corinthians. He was fearful that these detractors that were claiming that Paul was inconsistent (2 Corinthians 1:17), preaching his own ideas (2 Corinthians 3:1; 5:12; etc.), deluded (2 Corinthians 5:13), one who was a coward (2 Corinthians 10:1, 10), an idiot (2 Corinthians 11:15), not an apostle (2 Corinthians 12:11; 13:3), and that he and Titus were

participating in a scam of the brethren (2 Corinthians 12:17-18) would actually make strides in the minds of some brethren (that some would actually believe their reports) (see study # 48; Accusations against Paul).

2. If this was to be the case, Paul would have to come unto them with the rod of correction mentioned in 1 Corinthians 4:21. Paul would not sit back idly while these factious false teachers tore the church apart (see 2 Corinthians 13:2, 10).
3. Paul was hopeful that he would not find the following:
 - a. “*Strife*” (*eris*) = “quarrel, debate, contention” (LS 314). Strife is a symptom of a lack of Biblical unity.
 - b. “*Jealousy*” (envious of others). Jealousy is a symptom of spiritual immaturity.
 - c. “*Wrath*” (great and sinful anger). Wrath is a symptom of a lack of self control.
 - d. “*Factions*” (*eritheia*) = “to serve for hire, to serve a party... the service of a party, party spirit; feud, faction” (Moulton 166). “A group of persons forming a cohesive, usually contentious minority within a larger group. Internal dissension; conflict within an organization or nation” (AHD 485). A faction is a symptom of spiritual discontentment. It generally forms when a group of people do not like the current leadership and decide to take matters into their own hands. These do not share the same views as do the leaders of a congregation. Truth ought to prevail in the minds of every child of God; however, some brethren want to do things as they so desire and cast God’s word away.
 - e. “*Backbitings*” (*katalalia*) = “evil report, slander” (LS 409). False reports are given that another may be brought down from a post.
 - f. “*Whisperings*” (*psithurismos*) = “a calumnious (a false statement maliciously made to injure someone) whispering, detraction (to speak ill of; belittle)” (Moulton 442).
 - g. “*Swellings*” (*phusiosis*) = “a being puffed up, inflation” (LS 876). Here is one who thinks too highly of self (cf. Rom. 12:3).
 - h. “*Tumults*” (*akatastasia*) = “unstable, unsettled” (LS 26).
 - i. The above symptoms indicate an overall dissatisfaction with God’s laws and His ways. Some want everything to go their way, and if it doesn’t, they whisper, backbite, and cause strife because they are jealous, filled with wrath and think too highly of themselves. Here was Paul’s detractors defined. Paul’s fear is that they would make inroads into the minds of those who would otherwise be faithful Christians (see study # 23; The Founding Principles of Faction).
- C. “*Lest again when I come my God should humble me before you, and I should mourn for many of them that have sinned heretofore, and repented not of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they committed*” (12:21).
 1. To be “*humbled*” (*tapeinoo*) by God is to be “brought down, humbled, submissive... of low rank, lowly, small, poor, weak... dejected” (LS 792). If Paul found the Corinthians in a state of factious behavior, it would utterly deject him and cause him to mourn greatly.
 2. The cause of his mourning would be their factious spirit combined with a hard heart that refused to repent of their “*uncleanness, fornication, and lasciviousness.*”

Synopsis of chapter 12

Boasting of one self is not generally practiced by NT Christians. The apostle Paul said, “*For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith*” (Romans 12:3). This fact being established, Paul found himself doing the very thing he condemned here in 2 Corinthians 11-12. There is; however, one area that the Christian is permitted and actually encouraged to boast about. That one area is our salvation (see 2 Corinthians 1:12). Our boasting is in truth that saves!

What caused Paul to do the boasting of 2 Corinthians 11 and 12? Paul had boasted of all the things he had gone through in this life for the sake of the gospel and men's souls. Paul said, “*I am become foolish: ye compelled me; for I ought to have been commended of you.*” (2 Corinthians 12:11). The Corinthians “*compelled*” Paul to

boast due to being persuaded by Paul's detractors (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:20; 12:17, 19). Something had to be done. Apparently Titus had brought the report back that the brethren were doing well; however, there was a factious element in the church that was growing day by day due to their teachings (i.e., that Paul was inconsistent, preaching his own ideas, not an apostle, a coward, idiot, and one who was devising plans to scam the brethren at Corinth).

Paul answered every one of these accusations and then expressed his fear for the Corinthians as he did in 2 Corinthians 11:3. Conclusively, Paul's fear was that more and more brethren would get caught up in the factious party spirit and fall away from the living God (2 Corinthians 12:20). To keep this from happening the apostle Paul boast of his divine authority and past perceived weaknesses which were actually intended to cause him to rejoice in God.

Paul really gets after the Corinthians in these final chapters. Paul was making his way to Corinth for the third time (2 Corinthians 12:14). Paul expresses his deep love and willingness to be physically and emotionally spent for their sakes (2 Corinthians 12:15). Paul asks the fickle minded Corinthian Christians if there was ever one time that he had taken advantage of them by asking for monetary support (2 Corinthians 12:17). The idea that he was trying to scam the brotherhood by asking them to lay by in store on the first day of the week was ridiculously false (see 1 Corinthians 16:1ff).

Apparently not all of Titus' report was comforting (see 2 Corinthians 7:6ff). Though many had obviously repented or were working on repentance the factious of Corinth were causing some to backslide back into their "uncleanness, fornication, and lasciviousness" (2 Corinthians 12:21). Paul did not want to arrive in Corinth and mourn over the brethren's sin. He wanted to see them perfected in Christ with the funds ready to send to Jerusalem.

Chapter 13

I. Paul's Request for the Corinthians Restoration and Perfection (13:1-10):

- A. *"This is the third time I am coming to you. At the mouth of two witnesses or three shall every word be established"* (13:1).
 1. We have no record of the second visit other than what is said here and 2 Corinthians 12:14.
 2. The Mosaic Law authorized punishment of sins based on the testimony of two or three witnesses (see Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15). Jesus and the apostles made this Mosaic principle binding on NT Christians (cf. Matthew 18:16; Hebrews 10:26-31; 1 Timothy 5:19).
 - a. A *"witness"* (*marturon*) = "Used in a legal sense; etymologically one who is mindful, heeds; a witness (one who avers, or can aver, what he himself has seen or heard or knows by any other means)" (Thayer 392). "Witness; used in a legal sense; Acts 7:58; Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1; 1 Timothy 5:19" (AG 494).
 - b. The purpose of witnesses is given in Matthew 18:16; ... *"that every word may be established."* To *"establish"* (*histemi*) a matter is "to bid to stand by, ; in the presence of others: in the midst, to make firm, fix, establish: to cause a person or thing to keep his or its place; to stand, be kept intact to establish a thing, cause it to stand, i.e. to uphold or sustain the authority or force of any thing; to ratify (validate), confirm: (Matthew 18:16)" (Thayer 308).
 3. What connection is there between Paul's coming a third time and having two or three witnesses verify sin?
 - a. Paul's *"fear"* for the Corinthians was that he would arrive and find many in sin (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:20-21).
 - b. Such a state would mean judicial process in the church must proceed. Paul said, *"I have said beforehand, and I do say beforehand (plainly), as when I was present the second time,*

so now, being absent, to them that have sinned heretofore, and to all the rest, that, if I come again, I will not spare" (2 Corinthians 13:2).

1b. Paul had clearly stated that he would not "*spare*" those who had participated in the party spirit and lust of the flesh (2 Corinthians 11:19-20; 12:20-21).

2b. Apparently the meaning is that a judicial process would take place. The time of longsuffering had ended for such ones. Their insubordination to truth was not to be tolerated. Paul would not act as the church in Corinth's judge; however, he would unashamedly and forcefully deliver to them divine principles that they may discipline the factious and lustful members. Paul handled the fornicator of 1 Corinthians 5 (as we compare that verse to 2 Corinthians 2:5ff) in said manner.

3b. The wording of 2 Corinthians 13:2 is strikingly similar to 1 Corinthians 5:3. Paul was not present; however, he judged based on the facts given. These facts would be established by witnesses and the judicial process from that point would proceed. One thing we take careful note of is that Paul would not allow faction nor sin to reign in the church of Jesus Christ and neither should any today. Tolerance of brethren's sins will only cause others to fall into sin (cf. Revelation 2:18ff).

4. What application of these two verses can we make today? One may find himself or herself in a few situations. One may have knowledge of a brother's sin through first hand experience. One may have been sinned against by a brother. Whatever the case may be, if I am charging a brother with sin, out of a spirit of love and concern for that brother's soul (1 John 4:10ff), I must back my accusations up with two or three witnesses. If the witnesses are not in place, no facts are established. God will be the judge of said matters (John 12:48). If I choose to suborn false witnesses to get a brother in trouble with the church, I have caused the Lord's anger to be kindled against me (cf. Proverbs 6:19). Brethren are not mind readers. If a false witness bears false testimony, he shall be punished by the Lord. An innocent one may suffer; however, the guilty will not go unpunished (Proverbs 19:5ff).
 5. Paul is coming to Corinth. He will deal with each brother's sins. The brethren are to get the witnesses together. The apostle Paul is about to clean house (church). The time of longsuffering and teaching had ended for these brethren (see study # 49; Church Discipline).
- B.** "*Seeing that ye seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me; who to you-ward is not weak, but is powerful in you:*" (13:3).
1. The word "*seeing*" (*epei*) = "from the time when, ever since..." (LS 282).
 2. The Corinthians had sought after "*proof*" (signs 12:12) that what Paul was saying was the words of Christ as an apostle 'ever since' the detractors convinced them that Paul was not an apostle (2 Corinthians 11:19-20). These statements help us to determine the level of success the factious false teachers were having among the Corinthians brethren.
 3. Paul said 'look at the power you possess.' The ability to perform miracles was given to the Corinthians by Paul through the Holy Spirit and was not "*weak, but powerful in you.*" The Corinthians, if honest, would have at this point said, 'yes Paul, you're right; we have these powers because of you and we saw these same powers in you. Forgive us of our doubting spirits. You do represent Jesus Christ'
- C.** "*For he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth through the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him through the power of God toward you*" (13:4).
1. The **power** of God rested upon the Corinthians to do mighty works; however, this power came by the "*weakness of Christ.*" How was Christ "*weak?*" Christ was weak in that He took on human flesh and blood (John 1:1, 14; Hebrews 2:17). Jesus was crucified (killed) in this state of flesh and blood (Colossians 1:22). He arose from the tomb of death and thereby gave the most powerful proof that He was the Christ (Matthew 16:21; 26:31-32; 27:62-66; John 2:18-22; 11:25-26).
 2. All Christians today "*shall live with him through the power of God toward you.*" How? By the power of God was Christ raised from the dead, and by the power of God are we justified from our sins (Romans 1:16; 4:25; 8:34; 2 Corinthians 5:15). There is, therefore, great "**power**" in the resurrection of Christ and that power is our salvation. Paul said, "*that I may know him, and*

the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death" (Philippians 3:10).

- D. *"Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith; prove your own selves. Or know ye not as to your selves, that Jesus Christ is in you? Unless indeed ye be reprobate"* (13:5).
1. The Corinthians had tried Paul. Paul reminded them of the signs that they witnessed. The Corinthians were thereby left with no doubt as to Paul's apostleship.
 2. Now Paul put the emphasis where it belongs; i.e., on the Corinthians. They believed that Paul was on trial due to the words of his detractors. Paul effectively turned this around and indicated that it was the Corinthians' faith that was on trial (cf. 12:19ff see also 2 Corinthians 2:9).
 3. Paul's words were the very commandments of God (1 Corinthians 14:37). Paul thereby admonished the Corinthians to administer a test upon themselves to find out whether or not they were *"in the faith."* The phrase *"in the faith"* is found 12 times throughout the NT and is indicative of one who is walking by the direction of divine revelation. If, therefore, Paul's words were the commandments of God and the phrase *"in the faith"* indicated one who conducted himself by the word of God, Paul was commanding the Corinthians to examine themselves alongside the words he preached and see whether or not they measured up. We are reminded of the words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 2:9 when he said, *"For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye are obedient in all things."*
 4. Once the test was administered by individuals, they would know whether Christ was in them. If they examined their lives and found themselves faithful to the words of God, then they would know with confidence that Christ was in them (cf. John 14:23). If the Corinthians examined themselves and found that they were walking contrary to the teachings of Paul (of God), then they would have to conclude that Jesus was not in them and they were *"reprobate."*
 5. The word *"reprobate"* (*adikos*) = "wrong-doing, unrighteous, unjust... wrongly done, wrong, unjust..." (LS 13). Here the matter of right (Paul's words that were the commandments of God) and wrong (man conducting himself by his own standards) is put forth.
- E. *"But I hope that ye shall know that we are not reprobate"* (13:6).
1. Paul's desire and expectation for the Corinthians was that they would recognize Paul's teachings as of divine origin rather than being of his own thinking.
 2. This was the main thrust of Paul's detractors. They claimed that Paul was preaching his own ideas as opposed to divine commandments (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:1; 5:12; 10:12). The way for their confidence in Paul has been laid forth. Divine power has been experienced and witnessed in Paul and among themselves.
- F. *"Now we pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we may appear approved, but that ye may do that which is honorable, though we be as reprobate"* (13:7).
1. It was not Paul's objective to have the Corinthians conduct themselves according to his teaching that he and his preaching companions might *"appear approved"* before men. Remember, Paul said, *"I seek not yours, but you... and I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls..."* (2 Corinthians 12:14-15 see also 2 Corinthians 4:15).
 2. Paul's prayer for the Corinthians was that they would walk by faith that their souls be saved even if he appeared to be a reprobate by his detractors.
 3. Note the important thing that Paul prayed for the Corinthians: Paul prayed that the Corinthians would *"do no evil."* No man may be approved of God while walking in even one sin. This is the focal point of 2 Corinthians. The Corinthian's would only enjoy eternal fellowship with the heavenly Father if they *"do no evil"* (see study # 19).
- G. *"For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth"* (13:8).
1. What benefit would it be to Paul if he should *"come unto the Corinthians with a rod"* of correction (1 Corinthians 4:20)? What benefit would it be to Paul if he should *"mourn"* over the sins of the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 12:21)? What benefit would it be to Paul if he comes to Corinthian and *"spares not"* the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 13:2) and *"deals sharply"* with them (2 Corinthians 13:10)?

2. All things thereby Paul preached and strongly admonished were done in truth for the sake of the Corinthians' souls.

H. *“For we rejoice, when we are weak, and ye are strong: this we also pray for, even your perfecting”* (13:9).

1. Paul was really “*strong*” when “*weak*” with injuries (see 2 Corinthians 12:10). The Corinthians were “*strong*” in faith when the power of Christ's word rested within (cf. 2 Corinthians 13:3-4). Such a state caused Paul and his companions to rejoice.
2. Paul had prayed that the Corinthians would not participate in evil (2 Corinthians 13:7) and now prayed for the Corinthians’ “*perfecting*.”
 - a. The word “*perfecting*” (*katartisis*) = “**restoration**... a training, education, discipline” (LS 414). “A complete adjustment; completeness of character, perfection” (Moulton 220). The word “*perfecting*” is an accusative noun that indicates the object of the verb “*pray*” (present tense – active voice) (Friberg 573). Paul was simply saying that he continued to actively pray that the Corinthians would obtain a state of restoration to God.
 - b. The implication was that at present many were not restored unto the Lord (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:20).

I. *“For this cause I write these things while absent, that I may not when present deal sharply, according to the authority which the Lord gave me for building up, and not for casting down”* (13:10).

1. Paul had given us the reason for writing the first epistle (2 Corinthians 2:9) and now tells us the reason for writing this second epistle. He wrote to “restore” the Corinthians’ faith and cause a “complete adjustment” in their attitude toward truth because his detractors had derailed the faith of many (introduction).
2. If he succeeded, there would be no need to “*deal sharply*” with any. To “*deal sharply*” (*apotomos*) = “cut off, abrupt, precipitous (abrupt and ill considered), ... metaphorically, from one who comes suddenly to the edge of a cliff... severe, relentless” (LS 109). This word indicated the urgency of the matter. One year had passed between the writings of 1 and 2 Corinthians. The time had now come to deal sharply with those who continued in their error lest they lose their souls forever and sway others to lose their souls.
3. To deal so abruptly with the Corinthians was an act of the authority of Jesus Christ for the saving of the soul rather than its destruction. It was not Paul's desire to so deal with people; however, they put themselves in positions where sharpness was the only recourse. No one likes to deal sharply with people but it must be done.

II. **Final Salutation and Benediction (13:11-14):**

A. *“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfected; be comforted; be of the same mind; live in peace: and the God of love and peace shall be with you”* (13:11).

1. It would not be long till Paul saw the brethren in the flesh; however, for now he bid them farewell and gave some final admonition.
 - a. **First**, Paul requested that the brethren be “*perfected*” (restored to the faith; cf. vs. 9).
 - b. **Secondly**, Paul requested that the brethren be “*comforted*.” To be “*comforted*” (*parakaleo*) = “console” (LS 597). Their consolation was to be found in divine revelation as opposed to fleshly wisdom (2 Corinthians 1:17).
 - c. **Thirdly**, Paul exhorted the Corinthians to “*be of the same mind*.” Their restoration and consolation had as its foundation divine revelation. Thereby Paul exhorted the brethren to be united in this one true doctrine (cf. John 17:17; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Romans 15:5; Philippians 1:27).
 - d. **Fourthly**, Paul requested that the brethren “*live in peace*.” To live in peace is to be at peace with God. To be reconciled and comforted by Him through our fellowship with the Father comes through our walking by faith and according to divine authority (cf. Philippians 4:9).
2. Paul gave a **condition** upon the “*God of love and peace*” being with the Corinthians. They needed to be reconciled to God and universally walk by that one divine standard (be of one mind). When the brethren in Corinth would do such, the detractors and false teachers would have no place and they would leave (cf. 1 John 2:19).

B. “*Salute one another with a holy kiss*” (13:12).

1. To “*salute*” (*aspazomai*) = “greetings to or remember me to” (AG 116). Thayer states “to salute one, greet, bid welcome, wish well to” (Thayer 81). “To welcome kindly, bid welcome, greet; as the common form on meeting... of things, to follow eagerly, cleave to” (LS 124).
2. The “*holy kiss*” (*hagios philema*) = “a kiss” (LS 862). What makes the kiss “*holy*” (*hagios*) as opposed to a normal kiss?
3. Consider the following study on the “*holy kiss*.”

NT use of the word kiss (*philema*):

The word “*philema*” is found in Luke 7:45; 22:48; Acts 20:37; Romans 16:16, 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26 and 1 Peter 5:14. Read each of these verses for comparison. The word “*salute*” is synonymous with these verses. To “*salute*” one was to “greet, bid welcome, wish well to” (Thayer 81). Consider 2 John 10. The apostle John commanded that Christians “*give no greeting*” to those who refuse to walk in the teachings of Jesus Christ. The kiss then was a symbol of fellowship commanded by Paul and Peter through the Spirit for Christians. Should you and I therefore kiss each other today as a sign of fellowship and love toward each other?

OT use of the kiss:

- A. Esau kissed Jacob as a sign of forgiveness (Genesis 33:4).
- B. When Joseph made himself known to his brothers in Egypt, he kissed them (Genesis 45:15).
- C. Moses and Aaron kissed in the wilderness (Exodus 4:27).
- D. David kissed his best friend Jonathan when fleeing from Saul (1 Samuel 20:41).
- E. After Samuel anointed Saul as king, he kissed him (1 Samuel 10:1).

By this same kiss, “the early Christians expressed the intimate fellowship of the reconciled community (Bauer, rev., p. 859)... the practice gradually died out in the West after the 13th century” (ISBE, Vol. 3; p. 44).

Consider Galatians 2:9

Paul and Barnabas were given “*the right hands of fellowship*” by James, Cephas and John (Galatians 2:9). Mike Willis quotes from Kittel’s theological dictionary of Galatians 2:9 which states, “shaking hands is an expression of the full fellowship established by common faith in Christ. Paul is in this way acknowledged to be genuine *koinos* of Christ and therefore of the earlier believers represented by the apostles (TDNT 3:808)” (MW on Galatians p. 72).

Conclusion leads us to fellowship:

Fellowship with brethren who held to the truths of Jesus Christ was outwardly expressed either through a handshake (Galatians 2:9) or a kiss (Romans 16:16 etc.). The conclusion is obvious: when I shake my brother’s hand today I am expressing the same outward sign of fellowship as if I were to kiss him with a holy kiss (Romans 16:16) (Cf. the definitions above from the lexicons). Christians, in these United States, are more likely to shake another’s hand rather than kiss them. Whatever the expression, it is a sign of fellowship. The command to greet is an outward expression of one’s fidelity to God whether that is done by kissing or handshaking. God forbid that we would shake hands with or give a holy kiss to one named a brother who will not hold to the teachings of Jesus Christ (cf. Romans 16:17ff and 2 John 9-11).

The handshake and kiss is modified by the word “*holy*.” It is not a breach of God’s laws of fellowship to simply greet one who is not a Christian or one who holds to different doctrines as a matter of courtesy (this, too, is a custom and not a law). The idea is that I am not to give a greeting to one who stands opposed to the doctrine of Christ in a manner that indicates a spiritual approval. There is, it seems, a delicate difference (2 John 9-11). Paul told the Corinthians to give each other a holy kiss after his remarks regarding walking by the same mind. The connection is apparently one of fellowship.

- C. “*All the saints salute you*” (13:13). Clearly all those who walk by the same mind in Christ Jesus while absent from them greet them for the same purpose. A “*holy kiss*” would serve in their presence. Their greetings are given because of their like precious faith in the Lord.
- D. “*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all*” (13:14).
 - 1. It was Paul’s desire that the “*grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.*” God’s grace is His unmerited favor of salvation to the one who is justified by faith in Christ Jesus (cf. Romans 5:1-2). The Corinthians needed restoration and then they would have the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. notes on 13:9).
 - 2. It was Paul’s desire that the “*love of God be with you all.*” God’s love is with us when we keep His commandments (1 John 4:12ff). The Corinthians needed to discard the derogatory statements made by Paul’s detractors, regarding his having preached his own ideas, and accept Paul’s words as divine revelation.
 - 3. It was Paul’s desire that the “*communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*”
 - a. What is the “*communion of the Holy Spirit?*” The word “*communion*” (*koinonia*) was found in 2 Corinthians 6:14 and means “association (A person united with another or others in some action, enterprise, or business; partner; colleague; AHD 135)” (LS 440-441; Thayer 352; Moulton 235; AG 438-439).
 - b. That which joins each Christian with the Holy Spirit is the Word of God (Galatians 3:2). The Holy Spirit dwells within each Christian as does God and Jesus (Romans 8:9-11; 2 Timothy 1:13-14) as we abide in His doctrine.
 - c. Paul’s desire, therefore, was that the Corinthians be joined together in their understanding and life’s application of divine revelation.

Synopsis of chapter 13

Paul’s Attitude toward Factious Brethren, False Teachers, False Witnesses, and Sinful Men

Second Corinthians comes to a close. With the close of the letter Paul delivers the objective for writing. Paul writes, “*For we rejoice, when we are weak, and ye are strong: this we also pray for, even your perfecting. For this cause I write these things while absent, that I may not when present deal sharply, according to the authority which the Lord gave me for building up, and not for casting down*” (2 Corinthians 13:9-10). Paul’s objective was to perfect the saints before he arrived so that they may go on with the work of the Lord in peace.

The word “*perfecting*” is defined by Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon as “restoration” (page 414). The Corinthians needed to be restored to a state of being recognized as sanctified, saints, and unreprouvable (see 1 Corinthians 1:2-8). Paul has clearly set forth God’s expectation of man’s perfection in this second epistle to the Corinthians. The saints are those who are obedient in all areas of truth (see 2 Corinthians 2:9). The saint is to be the mirror image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). The saint is to be cleansed from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Corinthians 7:1). The saint is to be presented to God as a pure virgin in respect to sin (2 Corinthians 11:2). The saint of God is to “*do no evil*” (2 Corinthians 13:7).

Paul has clearly outlined three areas of the Corinthian’s sins that needed correction. First, the Corinthians had not yet forgiven the sinner mentioned at 2 Corinthians 2:5-9 even though he had repented. To be recognized by God as unreprouvable in all areas of life the Corinthians would need to forgive the one who sought forgiveness. Secondly, the Corinthians had apparently gained an affection for the things of this world. Their fellowship with

sin put them in an unequal yoke with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:11ff). These affections included the sins of fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness mentioned at 2 Corinthians 12:20-21. Thirdly, the Corinthians had been swayed by many false doctrines and false accusations against Paul and needed restoration and reconciliation to the Lord (see 2 Corinthians 12:19; 13:3). They had permitted the factious to sway their minds from the simplicity of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul's coming to Corinth was to this end. He admonished them to get the witnesses of the sins committed in place (2 Corinthians 13:1-2). He boldly stated that he would deal "*sharply*" (2 Corinthians 13:10) with the erring and "*will not spare*" them (2 Corinthians 13:2). These were not the words of a coward but the words of one who had a proper attitude toward factious brethren, false teachers, false witnesses, and sinners alike (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:10-11). Paul loved his brethren and was not going to allow them to lose their souls. What is our attitude toward the factious, false teachers, false witnesses, and sinful men?