

A STUDY OF

SECOND CORINTHIANS

Prepared by

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LESSON #1: PAUL'S CHANGE OF PLANS

Second Corinthians is a letter written to the church in Corinth by Paul not long after his writing First Corinthians. The letter was written from Macedonia during Paul's third journey. Titus had just arrived giving Paul a report concerning the Corinthians' response to his first letter. The response was generally good, according to Titus, but he also reported that there were false teachers in Corinth who were trying to discredit Paul. The reader should be aware of this and observe that throughout the letter he defends his apostleship and faithful ministry in the Lord's service. More concerning the letter will unfold as we discuss the letter itself.

Answer the following questions from 2 Corinthians, chapter 1

1. Consider verses 3-5. What expression is used to describe God in verse 3?

What should we be able to do as a result of what God does for us, according to verse 4?

2. Whether Paul is afflicted or comforted, what is his primary concern, according to verse 6?

3. How does Paul describe the troubles he endured in Asia, according to verses 8 and 9?

What does he say of them in 1 Cor. 15:32?

4. What good can come from such troubles, according to verse 9?

5. Consider verse 12. What was the testimony of Paul's conscience?

6. What were Paul's original travel plans, according to verses 15-16?

7. Why did he change plans, according to verse 23? Consider also 2:1-2.

8. Read verses 17-20. **Think!** Remember, there were men in Corinth who were trying to discredit Paul. What accusation grew out of Paul's change of plans?

LESSON #2: FORGIVE THIS BROTHER

Answer the following questions from 2 Corinthians, chapter 2

1. Describe Paul's emotions at the time he wrote the previous letter to the Corinthians.
2. Why was he telling them of his emotions as he wrote the letter?
3. What actions were needed toward the brother who had repented, according to verses 6 and 7?
Why?
4. **Review Question:** What sin had this brother been guilty of, according to 1 Corinthians, chapter 5?
What actions were to be taken at that time?
5. How would Satan use any failure to forgive, according to 2 Cor. 2:10-11?
6. Why had Paul passed up a door of opportunity opened to him in Troas, according to verses 12-13?
7. Read verses 14-16. The preaching of the gospel gives forth two different aromas or fragrances. What are these two aromas?
8. If you have commentaries or other helps, give the background for the imagery used by Paul in his discussion of the two aromas.
9. Contrast Paul's handling of God's word with that of others as stated in verse 17.
10. List practical lessons that can be learned from chapter 2.

LESSON #3: THE MORE GLORIOUS COVENANT

Answer the following questions from 2 Corinthians 3:1 - 4:7

1. What had Paul said of himself in 2:17?

Should the Corinthians have needed such commendation of Paul, according to verse 1?

2. Who served as Paul's letter of commendation, according to verse 2?

Thought Question: How was this true?

3. Consider verses 3-5. In truth, the Corinthians were not so much Paul's epistle, but rather the epistle of _____. From whom did Paul find his sufficiency in all his work?

4. Consider verses 7-11. Find three terms in these verses that refer to what was glorious.

Find three terms that refer to what was more glorious.

5. According to verse 7, what happened to the face of Moses when the "ministry of death" was given?
6. Who alone can take away the veil that blinds the eyes when one reads the Old Testament (covenant), according to verses 14-16?
7. **Research Question:** These verses are teaching us that we are not under the Law of Moses, but are now subject to the gospel of Christ. Can you find other scriptures that teach that we are not subject to the Law of Moses?
8. What transformation takes place when one gazes into the glory of the Lord, according to verse 18?

Think! Does this transformation take place all at once or over a period of time?

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9. What ministry is referred to in 4:1? For the answer go back to chapter 3.

10. Paul mentions four things he would not do in 4:1, 2, 5, List them.

11. Who is responsible if the gospel is veiled, blinding the eyes of the hearers, according to 4:3-4?

Does this mean that the hearer has no responsibility for this occurring?

12. Read verses 4-6. From whom does the light of the gospel originate?

How is the light defined in verse 6?

13. In what kind of vessels was the revelation of the gospel placed, according to verse 7?

Why?

14. List practical lessons one can learn from this study.

LESSON #4: SEEING WHAT CANNOT BE SEEN

Answer the following questions from 2 Corinthians 4:8 - 5:11

1. After reading 4:8-12, give a one sentence summary of the state of Paul and the other apostles, along with their response.
2. What motivated these men to continue speaking, according to verses 13 and 14?
3. In 2 Corinthians 4:14 - 5:11 the Holy Spirit through Paul speaks of four things we can know, using the word “know” or “knowing” in speaking of all four things. List them.
4. What was happening to the “outward man”?
To the “inward man” of those who suffered?
Is this true of all faithful Christians?
5. What are the Christian’s afflictions “working” for him, according to verse 17?
How are the afflictions compared to the glory?
6. On what must the Christian focus, according to verse 18?
7. Consider 5:1-4. To what is Paul referring when he speaks of “this earthly tent (tabernacle)”?
What was he earnestly desiring?
8. What was Paul’s preference as stated in verses 6-8?

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9. Consider verses 9-10. What was always his aim or goal?

Why?

10. What was the terror (fear) of the Lord motivating Paul to do?

11. Write a brief statement as to what this section of scripture (4:8 - 5:11) means to you.

LESSON #5: BE RECONCILED TO GOD

Answer the following questions from 2 Corinthians 5:12 - 6:10

1. Why was it important for the Corinthians to recognize the genuineness of Paul and others like him, according to 5:12?

2. For whom are Christians not to live?

For whom are they to live, according to 5:14-15?

3. Read verse 16. **Thought Question:** What would it mean to regard someone “according to the flesh”?

How would this statement have application to the Corinthians?

4. What happens when one comes into Christ, according to verse 17?

Consider Galatians 3:27. When does one come into Christ?

5. Read 2 Cor. 5:18-19. What does the word “reconcile” mean?

Who is reconciling the world to Himself?

Through whom?

6. Who are those who have been given the “ministry of reconciliation” (verse 18) and are “ambassadors” (official spokesmen) for Christ?

What was their great message, according to verse 20?

7. What have we become in Jesus Christ, according to verse 21?

Compare this term with that of Romans 1:16-17.

8. What was Paul’s plea in 2 Corinthians 6:1-2?

LESSON #6: GODLY SORROW LEADS TO REPENTANCE

Answer the following questions from 2 Corinthians 6:11 - 7:16

1. Consider 6:11-13. With what kind of spirit was Paul dealing with the Corinthians?

What did he want from them in return?

2. What is commanded in verse 14?

Summarizing verses 14-16, state in a brief sentence why this command.

3. What is essential if we are to have a close relationship with God, according to verses 16-18?

4. What are the promises of which Paul speaks in 7:1?

What must we do if we are to receive the promises?

5. How does Paul express his feelings for the Corinthians in 7:3?

6. How are Paul's emotions described in 7:5 at the time he arrived in Macedonia?

7. Why was Titus' coming so comforting to Paul, according to 7:6-7?

8. What had brought the Corinthians to repentance, according to 7:8-10?

9. What do **you** think is the meaning of the expression, found in verse 10, "the sorrow of the world"?

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10. What was the fruit of their repentance as pictured in verse 11?

Consider also verses 13-16.

11. True repentance involves three things: (1) godly sorrow, (2) change of heart, and (3) change of life or fruits of repentance. Be prepared to discuss these three elements of repentance as seen in this passage.

12. What other person had found joy in his relationship with the Corinthians?

Think! On what basis could Paul have boasted of the Corinthians when so many bad things had been reported concerning them? Verses 13-16

13. List practical lessons that can be learned from this study.

LESSON #7: GIVE FOR THE POOR SAINTS - PART 1

Paul had encouraged the Corinthian Christians to give for the poor saints in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1-2), and the Corinthians had agreed to do so. However they were apparently neglectful in doing what they had promised to do, so Paul is exhorting them to give and is sending Titus and the messengers who would be taking the funds to further exhort them.

Answer the following questions from 2 Corinthians, chapter 8

1. What is said of the Macedonians' giving in verses 1-4?
2. What brought them to be so generous, according to verse 5?
3. Consider verse 9. What had Jesus done for the Corinthians?

Thought Question: How does this statement of Jesus' actions fit into Paul's exhortation to give?

4. In verses 10-12, Paul discusses the fact that the Corinthians had expressed a desire to give for the poor saints, but were failing to carry through on their commitment. Can we be guilty of making a commitment, then failing to carry it out?

State some areas where this might be a danger.

5. What was not Paul's purpose in encouraging this contribution?

What was his purpose?

6. Describe "the brother" who was coming with Titus.

For what was he chosen? Verses 16-19

7. Why did Paul not just take the money himself, according to verses 20-21?

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8. How is “our brother” of verse 22 described?

Was only one chosen to carry the funds to Jerusalem?

9. **Review Question:** Consider 1 Cor. 16:1-4. What choice did the Corinthians have as to who would carry their gift?

10. List practical lessons that can be learned from Second Corinthians, chapter 8.

LESSON #8: GIVE FOR THE POOR SAINTS - PART 2

Answer the following questions from 2 Corinthians, chapter 9

1. What had Paul told the Macedonians about Achaia (Corinth), according to verse 2?

With what result?

2. Why was Paul sending the brethren to them, according to verses 3-5?

3. What is said of sowing and reaping in verse 6?

4. From verses 6-7, state three things God wants to see in our giving.

5. Read verses 10-11. What was Paul praying for the Corinthians?

Look back at verse 8. Was Paul praying this just so the Corinthians would see an increase in their “bank accounts”?

Explain.

6. What two things would result from their contribution in addition to supplying the needs of the saints, according to verses 12-13?

7. Consider verse 14. What was Paul anticipating on the part of the needy saints in Jerusalem as a result of this contribution?

8. For what did Paul give thanks in verse 15?

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9. Read Acts 21:15-20. This passage tells us of the arrival of Paul, “the brethren,” and others in Jerusalem after the gathering of funds for the Jerusalem saints. With whom did Paul and his company meet the next day?

What did Paul tell them?

Think! What major project had been undertaken among the Gentiles, according to these last two lessons?

What was the response, according to the first sentence of Acts 21:20?

LESSON #9: ATTEMPTS TO DESTROY CONFIDENCE IN PAUL

The following four chapters deal with attempts by false teachers (probably Judaizers) to discredit Paul and exalt themselves. This they must do to advance their false teaching. Paul exposes them and reluctantly “boasts” of his own work and sacrifices.

Answer the following questions from 2 Corinthians, chapter 10

1. Consider verses 1-2. What were the false teachers apparently saying about Paul?

What did Paul not desire when he was present among them?

2. **Review Question:** Why had Paul changed his travel plans, according to 2 Cor. 1:23 - 2:2?
3. What kind of weapons did Paul not use in spiritual warfare, according to 2 Cor. 10:3-4?
4. What is said of the strength of the weapons he did use in 10:4-5?
5. What mistake could cause the Corinthians to be more impressed with the false teachers than with Paul, according to verse 7?
6. Read verses 8-11. What were false teachers saying about Paul according to verse 10?

How does Paul answer them?

7. What mistake were the false teachers making according to verse 12?
8. Read verses 13-17. Paul in these verses is obviously comparing his actions with those of the false teachers. What were they doing in an effort to promote themselves?

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9. Even when we have truly accomplished some good work in the Lord's service, to whom should the glory go, according to verse 17?

Think! Why should this be true?

10. What is really important according to verse 18?

11. List practical lessons that can be learned from this chapter.

LESSON #10: “SUCH ARE FALSE APOSTLES”

Answer the following questions from 2 Corinthians 11:1-21

1. On what basis did Paul express godly jealousy toward the Corinthians, according to verse 2?
2. What was Paul’s fear concerning them, according to verse 3?
3. What mistake had they made according to verse 4?
4. Consider verses 6-7. What two criticisms had the false teachers used in an effort to discredit Paul?
5. From whom had Paul received financial help while preaching in Corinth, according to verses 8-12?

Read Acts 18:5. What two men had apparently brought this money to Paul?

With what result (Compare translations)?

6. Why had Paul not received financial help from the Corinthians, according to 2 Cor. 11:12?

Thought Question: What criticism might some have made against Paul if he had received their financial help?

7. How does Paul describe the false teachers in verse 13?
8. Why is it not surprising that false teachers “transform themselves into ministers of righteousness”?

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9. What kind of treatment were the Corinthians tolerating, according to verses 18-21?

From whom would they have been receiving such treatment?

What was the boasting of the false teachers forcing Paul to do?

LESSON #11: PAUL DEFENDS HIS APOSTLESHIP

Answer the following questions from 2 Corinthians 11:22 - 12:13

1. Of what does Paul “boast” in 11:22-28?
2. What is his great concern according to verse 28?
3. What specific persecution does he mention in 11:32-33?
4. What evidence is given of Paul’s apostleship in 12:1-5?

It is obvious from verse 7 that Paul in verses 1-5 is speaking of himself. Why would he speak as though it were someone else?

5. Why does Paul “refrain” in his boasting? Verse 6
6. Why was a “thorn in the flesh” given to Paul, according to verse 7?

What does Paul call his thorn in the flesh?

7. Consider verses 8-10. What had been Paul’s request concerning his thorn in the flesh?

Summarize the Lord’s answer and Paul’s response.

8. What evidence of Paul’s apostleship is given in verse 12?
9. **Thought Question:** What powers did the apostles have that none other has had?
10. Many practical lessons grow out of this study. List a few.

LESSON #12: MAKE CORRECTIONS BEFORE I COME

Answer the following questions from 2 Corinthians 12:14 - 13:14

1. Read 12:14-15. What was Paul not seeking from the Corinthians?

What was he seeking?

2. What was the Corinthians' response to Paul's unselfish service, according to verse 15?

How do you explain this?

3. What was true of both Paul and Titus, according to verses 17-18?

4. What did Paul not want to take place when he arrived in Corinth, according to verses 20-21?

What could the Corinthians do to avoid this?

5. What warning did Paul give them in 13:1-4?

Where would the power come from if he had to take action?

6. Consider verse 5. **Think!** What was Paul's purpose in challenging the Corinthians to examine themselves?

What type of response was he expecting: Negative? Doubting? Positive?

7. What was Paul's prayer for the Corinthians in verse 7?

What was he truly concerned about?

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8. What made Paul glad according to verse 9?

9. **Review Question:** Paul in chapters 10 - 14 has dealt with false teachers among the Corinthians. Make a list of tactics used by them?

Describe Paul's response to them.