

Bible Study February 21, 2024

2 Corinthians 1

Greeting and Introduction

This is one of four letters written to the church at Corinth – I Cor.; the letter mentioned in I Cor. 5:9; a tearful letter mentioned in 2 Cor. 2: 3-4; and 2 Cor.

Paul wrote this from Macedonia around AD 55/56, a year after writing I Corinthians and a year before Romans. Paul is addressing the relationship between suffering and the power of the Spirit in Paul's life, ministry, and message. The Corinthian church also questioned Paul's motives in organizing a collection for the Jerusalem church, his personal courage, and his life filled with suffering considering his claim to be an apostle. Paul counters that his suffering reveals God's glory and compares to Christ's suffering for our sins on the cross.

2 Cor. 1:1-11

Greeting and God of All Comfort

Paul is an apostle of Christ Jesus, one is sent by God, commissioned as an authoritative representative to act in the name of the One who sent him. He sees his ministry as one joined with the saints, who with Paul, greet the church in Corinth with grace and peace from God and His Son, Jesus. Paul praises God for the sufferings he has and is enduring, lessons that He hopes the church in Corinth will learn from. Paul identifies the relationship between God and His Son Jesus as like the relationship Jesus has with His church. In our suffering, Paul identifies the comfort we receive from God while trusting in Christ. His opponents state the saved should not suffer. When we suffer for the sake of Christ, as Paul is experiencing, we are strengthened through our suffering, and are comforted as only God can give comfort. Paul has suffered while in Asia, even as one under penalty of death. Just as God raised Jesus from the dead, He gives hope, and we can have confidence in God's promises based on His faithfulness in the past.

2 Cor. 1: 12-24

Paul's Change of Plans

Paul communicates the reasons for his not coming to Corinth as he had planned. He was to come after visiting Macedonia. Then he thought he might visit Corinth first and then Macedonia. Then he decided not to come to Corinth, but to travel to Macedonia by way of Troas. Paul boasts these decisions come only by the grace of God. All promises made by God are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Paul also prays that the Corinthian church will see his intent they be blessed by his not

coming, and that they be fulfilled in Christ. Paul has hope the Corinthian believers will be encouraged by his second visit, will be more encouraged in their faith, and more generous in their giving. Paul's opponents see all of this as him vacillating and being indecisive. Paul gives them positive assurance that he is seeking to assist them and encourage them, just as Christ meets all their needs. He affirms Christ is the fulfillment of OT prophecy, and affirms he too is acting like Christ in his ministry to them.

He also affirms his letters to them, just like his change of plans, was an expression of God's love to them in Christ. He wants to give them time to reflect, repent, and be spared from God's wrath.