

Book of 2 Corinthians

This is Paul's so called second letter to the Corinthians, which is actually the fourth letter that he had written to Corinth.

A previous epistle was written prior to First and Second Corinthians.

Several features distinguish the second canonical letter.

The first epistle was both practical and instructional, but this one is both intensely personal and is very autobiographical.

Authorship: That the Apostle Paul wrote 2 Corinthians is uncontested; the lack of any motive for a forger to write this highly personal, biographical epistle has led even the most critical scholars to affirm Paul as its author.

Several considerations establish a feasible date for the writing of this letter.

Extrabiblical sources indicated that July, A.D. 51 is the most likely date for the beginning of Gallio's proconsulship (compare Acts 18:12).

Paul's trial before him at Corinth (Acts 18:12-17), probably took place shortly after Gallio assumed office.

Leaving Corinth (probably in A.D. 52), Paul sailed for Palestine (Acts 18:18), thus concluding his second missionary journey.

Returning to Ephesus on his third missionary journey (probably in A.D. 52), Paul ministered there for about 2-1/2 years (Acts 19:8, 10).

The apostle wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus toward the close of that period (1 Cor. 16:8), most likely (in A.D. 55).

Since Paul planned to stay in Ephesus until the following spring (compare the reference to Pentecost in 1 Cor. 16:8), and 2 Corinthians was written after he left Ephesus, the most likely date for 2 Corinthians is late A.D. 55 or very early A.D. 56.

Background: 2 Corinthians is written to the assembly that was founded on Paul's first visit to that city.

Since his departure and subsequent ministry in Ephesus, the apostle has learned a great deal about the serious problems fermenting in this assembly.

Problems with worldliness, internal wrangling's, and doctrinal defections continue to fester in spite of Paul's efforts in the first epistle.

Opposition to Paul's ministry continues to mount, especially coming from the party that associated itself with "Christ" (compare 10:7; 11:13).

The leader of this group seems to have been especially hostile to the apostle (10:7-11).

The charges leveled against the apostle by this group are indicated in a number of passages.

For example, he was accused of fickleness (1:17), authoritarianism (1:24), ministering without proper credentials (3:1), cowardice (10:1, 10), failure to maintain proper clerical dignity (11:7), presumption (10:13-17), and fleshliness (10:2).

Likewise, the apostle has a few things to say about his accusers.

For example, they corrupted the Word (2:17); they were deceptive (3:1); they were Jews masquerading as ministers of Christ (11:23-27); they were domineering (11:20); they were bold (11:21); they lacked the spiritual courage to step out and start their own ministry (11:23-27).

Thus, it was no small wonder that the apostle was seriously concerned about the spiritual well-being of the church at Corinth.

In this letter to the church at Corinth, we will see Paul trying to prove to these people regarding his right of apostleship.

There were some in this church at Corinth who believed Paul did not have this right.

Paul says more about himself and his ministry in this letter, than he does in all of the others, and some people today would call this Paul's testimony.

The main lesson that we can find in this for ourselves is that ministering carries with it a great deal of suffering.

This suffering takes many forms, the greatest of which is not being believed by fellow ministers.

Paul's intentions are questioned, and he answered them.

In this book, we will see a list of many of the things that Paul suffered to be able to minister.

His afflictions were many and not just from the world, but from within the church as well.

In this book, we can see that there were times of joy with Paul, however there were also times of great sorrow.

They were mingled together like seasoning on a food dish, some salt, some pepper.