



Session 1

The 2nd letter to the Church at Corinth

2nd Corinthians was written at least several months after 1 **Corinthians**, possibly late in the year A.D. 57. The letter was written right after Titus returned from Corinth, meeting Paul in Macedonia soon after Paul left Ephesus (2 **Corinthians** 2:12, 13; 7:5-7, 13).

Titus brought good news about a change of heart....among at least some of the **Corinthians**.

Paul, at this time, wrote 2 **Corinthians** to prepare for his coming visit (2 **Corinthians** 13:1, 2, 10).

There are three (3) divisions that are distinct and easily discernable in 2 **Corinthians**:

- 1. Chapters 1 – 7 express the apostle's reassurance over their altered behavior (building up...expressing grace and mercy).*
- 2. Chapters 8 and 9 deal with a specific matter—the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem.*
- 3. In Chapters 10-13 Paul fiercely (very adamantly) opposes his lingering enemies at Corinth. Those self-styled “apostles” who were enticing the Corinthians away from the pure gospel he had earlier preached to them.*

Many famous preachers of the New Testament had served the Corinthian congregation.

The list of ministers who served there at one time or another are as follows (Of course there might and probably were many more).

- **Paul, the Founder—the leading apostle to the Gentiles.**

He spent a year and a half with the **Corinthians** and was devoted to “teaching the Word of God among them” (Acts 18:11). Even with **Paul's** full gospel preaching, the Church at Corinth fell into the deep problems we read about in the **Corinthian** letters.

Isn't it true in all our churches?? The gospel is preached, but sin has such a pull on man, that he falls into sin.

Do you know some people in churches that have fallen into sin...even when the gospel is presented and “the wages of sin” is preached?

- **Apollos, the “Waterer”—this special man of God had the ministry of quenching spiritual thirst.**

Perhaps it was through the ministry of Apollos that Paul could say they had “been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Was Apollos qualified? Acts reports of him that he was “an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures....instructed in the way of the Lord....and fervent in the Spirit.” (Acts 18:24, 25). Apollos helped the Corinthians much which had believed through grace” (Acts 18:27).

Are you watering God’s spiritual garden? Are you helping people quench their thirst for something that sustains their soul?

- **Timothy, the Reminder—a young understudy of Paul who had the full confidence of the apostle.**

Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 4:17 that, “he is sending Timotheus, beloved son, faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways.... Timothy was “like-minded who wants to care for others” (Philippians 2:20).

Do you feel that you help remind people of the love of God and truth of His Word?

- **Titus, the Fund Raiser—apparently a stronger personality than Timothy. Titus was received among the Corinthians “with fear and trembling” (2 Corinthians 7:15).**

Titus initiated the collection among the Corinthians for the poor saints in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8:6). Paul recommended Titus to the Church at Corinth as “my partner and fellow helper concerning you” (2 Corinthians 8:23)

- **Silas, the Exhorter—the Word says Silas was of the “chief men among the brethren...a prophet....and one who exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them” (Acts 15:22, 32).**

2 Corinthians confirms that Silas preached in Corinth. Paul and Peter called him Silvanus...and Luke called him Silas.

- **Unnamed brethren—Paul describes one of two men who accompanied Titus in relaying the funds to Jerusalem as being “diligent and trustworthy.”**

Pastors today need to take note...to being diligent and trustworthy.

- **Helpful Laymen—fine servants who gave of their time and finances (Aquila and Priscilla).**
Paul spoke of them as “my helpers in Christ Jesus” (Romans 16:13).
They were also of great use to the mighty Apollos, hosting them in their home.
Stephanas and his house had “placed themselves as hosts to the ministry of the saints.”
Gaius hosted, not only Paul, but the whole church while Paul was in Corinth (Romans 16:23).

So many fine ministers....and yet Corinth had so many problems with sinful pride, lust, etc.
We always have to remember....man chooses to do right or wrong! Ministers can tell them the truth...but people have to accept the Truth and follow the Truth.
And....we must remember....it is God who gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6).

TITLES GIVEN TO MINISTERS IN THE Corinthian letters:

- ✓ **“Ministers of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4:1)....meaning an “assistant” of Christ.**
- ✓ **“Ministers of God.” (2 Corinthians 6:4)....meaning a “servant” or “deacon”**
Ministers then are Christ’s assistants and God’s deacons.
- ✓ **“Stewards of mysteries” (1 Corinthians 4:1)....A steward is a household business manager. Ministers oversee the secrets of God.**
- ✓ **“Laborers together with God” (1 Corinthians 3:9: 2 Corinthians 6:1).**
Ministers are not the source, but the channel, of God’s saving power. They have to learn to cooperate with Him.
- ✓ **“Messengers of the churches” (2 Corinthians 8:23).....same as the word “apostle” which always means one sent on a specific mission.**
- ✓ **“Ambassadors of Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:20).**
.....Ambassadors represent their government to a foreign nation.
Ministers represent God to an alienated world.
- ✓ **“Your Servants” (2 Corinthians 4:5)....alternate translation “slave”...**

A ministry that is not service is not a ministry.

Specific words for ministering:

- ✓ **“Preach”**.....one word for preaching means to present good news (1 Corinthians 1:17). Another means to proclaim widely (2 Corinthians 4:5)
- ✓ **“Speak”**.....(1 Corinthians 2:7)....More restricted speaking, as in counseling....which does much for those that are in need of counsel...and they get it through the direct application of the gospel by the minister.
- ✓ **“Deliver”**.... (1 Corinthians 15:13)..... The minister passes along what he has received from Christ and through the church.
- ✓ **“Intreat”** (1 Corinthians 4:13).... Persuasive pleading has its place in the effort to secure commitment, by whatever means.
- ✓ **“Warn”** (1 Corinthians 4:14)....Some who will not be entreated must be warned.
- ✓ **“Teach”** (Acts 18:11)...Education (revealing the Word of God in Bible Study) as well as evangelism and exhortation, makes up the work of the ministry. “Study to show thyself approved, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.”
- ✓ **“Testify”** (Acts 18:5).....the word signifies testimony given under oath. The minister is a witness first and foremost.
- ✓ **“Reason”** (Acts 18:4)....Ministers present, not some formal, logical “proof” centered in human wisdom, but an intelligent discussion which clears the way for the arrival of faith.