

Second Corinthians – 13 Chapters

Title:

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians – because it is the second of the two letters written to the church in Corinth included in the New Testament. Corinth was a major trade city.

Author:

Written by Paul the apostle to the Gentiles. Paul was a strict Pharisee in Jerusalem until he had a revelation of Christ on the road to Damascus. Paul spent the rest of his life as a missionary proclaiming Jesus to Gentiles around the Mediterranean. Paul wrote 13 of the Books of the New Testament.

Occasion and Purpose:

Paul founded the church at Corinth, and had a history of visits and correspondence with the church afterward. The church was beset by a number of problems, which Paul addressed in First Corinthians and the “severe” letter (2:3-4, 7:8-12) and in a visit, which he called “painful” (2:1). The church was apparently resisting and rejecting Paul in favor of some outsiders who had taken over the leadership of the church. They promoted themselves as superior to Paul, and the church followed their deceptive leadership. This letter was to prepare the church for Paul’s visit, defend himself and his ministry, and prepare them for the collection. But the primary purpose is to expose and denounce the outsiders, and to win the church back to the truth, and Paul’s leadership.

Themes:

1. **New Covenant Glory** – Paul speaks of the glory of the New Covenant. This is greater than the greatest under the Old Covenant, and it comes with, and because of, Christ. However, this greater glory is not always seen as glorious by outsiders, because it is hidden in jars of clay – that is, it comes by a humble Messiah and His humble ambassadors. Yet it is glorious, and its full glory will be revealed at the revelation of the full glory of Christ.
2. **New Covenant Ministry** – The ministry of the New Covenant takes its character from Christ Himself, and this imitation of Christ distinguishes true ministers from false. New Covenant ministry is completely upright – it does not practice deception or guile. It does not rely on worldly methods, but rather depends on God’s powerful resources. Its ministers boast in God, not in themselves. And it conforms to the Cross of Christ, in that it is willing to endure suffering and rejection for the sake of Christ, and out of love for His people.
3. **Cheerful Giving** – God’s people should be generous. And their generosity should come out of a joyful attitude of wanting to help others and wanting to bring glory to Christ. True Gospel generosity accomplishes both of these goals.
4. **Deception of False Glory** – There is a counterfeit glory, meant to distract from the New Covenant. Its ministry is characterized by boasting in itself, and drawing attention to itself, and spectacular experiences, instead of in Christ. And it does not conform to the Cross of Christ. It is not willing to lose reputation or suffer for the good of others. Rather, it uses others for its own reputation and pleasure.

Summary:

Paul defends his ministry against imposters. First by explaining his itinerary and actions toward the Corinthians. But primarily by describing the glory of the New Covenant, and the characteristics of true New Covenant Ministry. He does this in order to show the falsehood of the imposters, who promoted themselves, and not the Crucified Christ of the New Covenant, no matter how impressive they may have seemed. And he prepared them for his impending visit, including preparation for a charitable collection.

Organization:

1:1-2 Introduction	
	Authors, Recipients & Greeting
1:3-7:15 Paul's defense of his ministry	
	1:3-2:13 Explanation of his itinerary 2:14-7:4 Explanation of his ministry effectiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2:14-3:3 Description of Paul's effectiveness• 3:1-6:2 The Power behind Paul's effectiveness (New Covenant Glory)• 6:3-10 The Manner of Paul's effectiveness• 6:11-13, 7:2-4 Appeal to the Corinthians• 6:14-7:1 Digression on Yoking with Unbelievers 7:5-16 Explanation of his itinerary
8:1-9:15 The collection	
	8:1-15 Giving encouraged 8:16-24 Paul's provision/plan for the collection 9:1-5 Paul's confidence in the Corinthians' generosity 9:6-15 Theological reasons for Giving
10:1-12:13 Confronting & confuting the false apostles	
	10:1-6 Paul's Spiritual strength for warfare 10:7-18 Paul boasts by refusing to boast 11:1-6 Paul worries that they are being deceived 11:7-12 Paul defends his actions 11:13-15 Paul exposes the 'false apostles' 11:16-33 Paul boasts in his weakness 12:1-10 Paul anti-boasts in his supernatural experiences 12:11-13 Paul compares himself to the false apostles
12:14-13:10 Preparation for Paul's visit	
	12:14-18 Paul's appeal to the Corinthians 12:19-21 Paul's apprehension of the Corinthians' response 13:1-4 Warning that Christ's true servant is coming 13:5-10 The final verdict by Gospel standards
13:11-14 Conclusion	
	Final commands, promise, greeting, blessing/benediction

Key Verses:

1:23-2:1; 2:14-17; 3:4-12, 15-18; 4:1-6, 7-12; 4:16-5:1; 5:6-10, 11-21; 7:8-11; 8:7-14; 9:6-8; 11:2-15, 21-30; 13:3-4