

SECOND CORINTHIANS

Situation¹ (Why?)

Paul was in the process of taking the collection for the saints at Jerusalem. However, some were claiming that they, not Paul, are superior teachers with respect to knowledge. They further attack Paul for financial greediness and vacillation in his ministry since he did not come to them as previously he indicated. Thus Paul first defends his decision not to come to them as planned, then he asks for the money for the saints at Jerusalem, being careful to show that it is being handled, not by himself, but by principled men, and finally he defends himself as an apostle, preaching the word and not himself, against the attacks of the false teachers.

History²

<u>WHERE</u>	<u>WHO/WHAT</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE</u>
Corinth	Paul teaches for 1-1/2 years	Acts 18:11ff.
	Apollos continues on after Paul's departure for Ephesus	Acts 18:27ff.
Ephesus	Paul leaves Corinth with Priscilla and Aquilla and settles in Ephesus	Acts 18:18-19

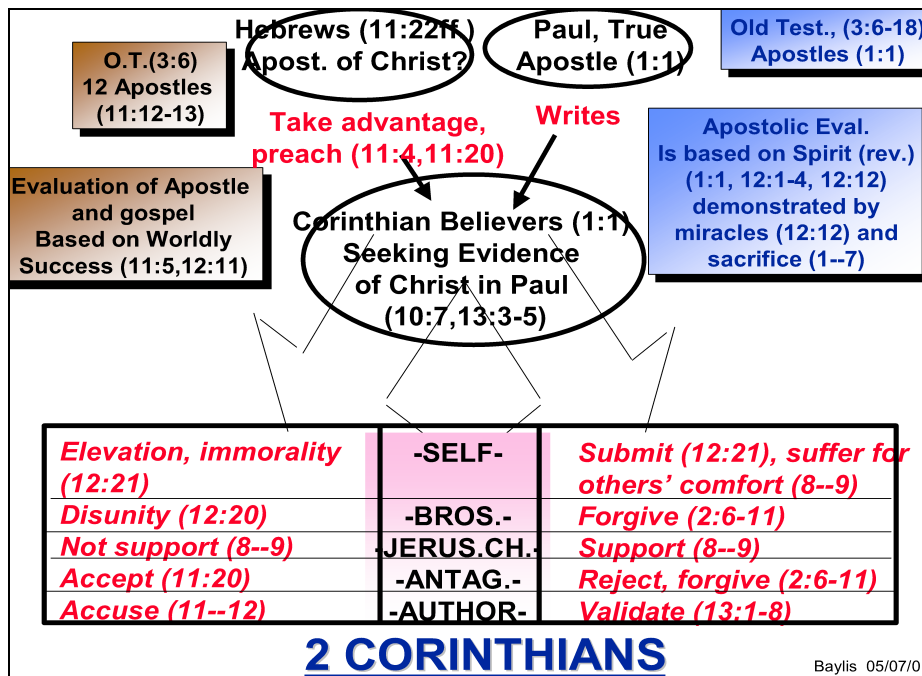
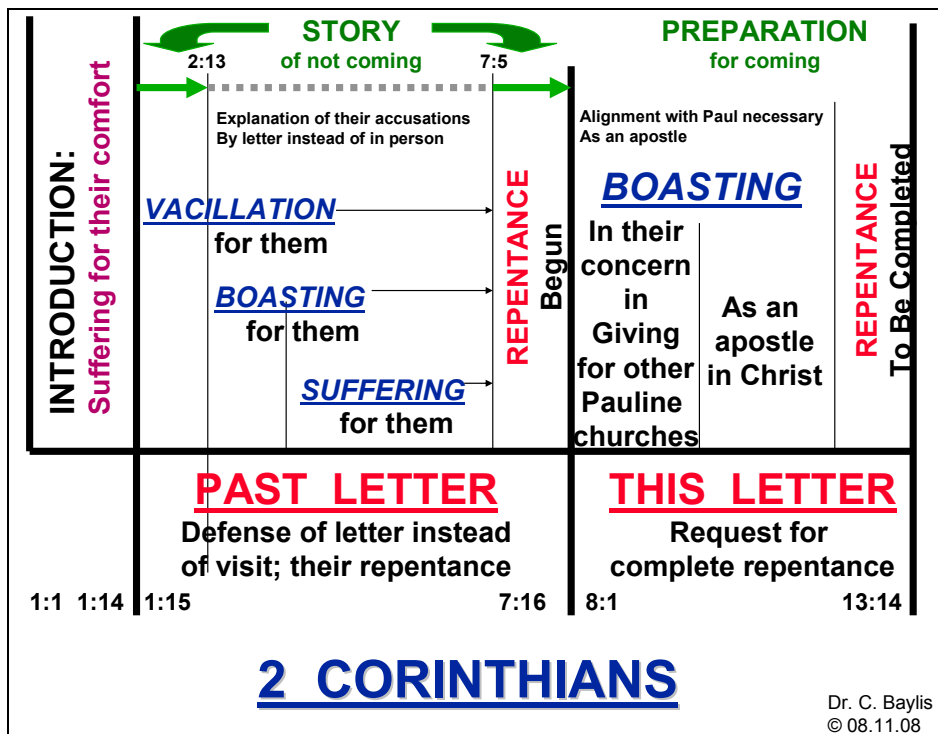
¹ From other sources than the book the following background appears to be the best historical scenario.

Paul had founded the church likely in A.D. 51 on his second missionary journey. He stayed there (Acts 18) for one and one-half years. In A.D. 53 Paul went to Ephesus on his third missionary journey and stayed there for two and one-half years (A.D. 53-56). From here he likely wrote his first letter (referred to in 1 Cor. 5:9). Paul's second letter to the church (1 Cor.) was then written after the Chloe delegation came to him. Paul then may have visited the church after bad news came to him, especially regarding some false teacher's accusation of Paul (the 'painful' visit of 2 Cor. 2:1). Paul may have then written a harsh letter (2 Cor. 2:3-4, 7:8-9). Paul left Ephesus in A.D. 56 and headed for Macedonia, hoping to meet Titus in Troas, where he would hear concerning the Corinthian situation. Titus did not show up, and Paul fearfully went on to Macedonia where he met Titus. Titus had brought good news concerning the treatment of the offender. However Paul continued to have to defend himself against accusations of false teachers, and thus wrote 2 Corinthians. (Source: See the chart following and the footnote designating contributions to this scenario).

² This historical chronology is from Dr. Stanley Toussaint, Notes from 2 Corinthians. He references Plummer as his source for these. These have been modified in part by this professor.

	Apollos rejoins Paul at Ephesus	1 Cor. 16:12
	Paul sends letter to Corinth condemning fornicators within the church, Announces plans to visit Corinth Begins collection for poor.	1Cor 5:9 2Cor. 1:5,16
	Bad news brought to Paul from Corinth by members of Chloe's household	1Cor. 1:11
	Timothy started from Ephesus for Corinth and reached Macedonia	1Cor. 4:17 1Cor. 16:10 Acts 19:22 1Cor.1
	Letter from Corinthians brought to Paul by Fortunatus, Stephanus and Achnicus.	1Cor. 7:1 1Cor. 16:17
	Paul wrote 1 Corinthians sent by Titus. Collection for poor now organized. Titus returned to Ephesus	1Cor. 16:1 2Cor. 8:6,12:1
	(Timothy arrived at Corinth). Difficulties arose in the Corinthian Church. Paul's apostolic authority questioned and Paul was defied by some. (Timothy left, being unable to deal with crisis)	2Cor. 10:7,10 11:23, 12:16-17
Corinth	Paul heard of situation (from Timothy) and paid a short visit to Corinth, during which time some in the church grossly insulted him.	2Cor.2:1,12:1 4:13:1 2Cor 2:5-8, 7:12
Ephesus	Paul sent a letter to Corinth by Titus	2 Cor. 2:3,9
Corinth	Titus instructed them (urging the collection for Jerusalem) and returned to Paul through Macedonia on way to Troas	2Cor. 2:12-13 7:5-6
Troas, Macedonia	Paul left Ephesus for Troas, then went to Macedonia since he was anxious to get the report from Titus sooner	2Cor. 2:12-13
	Paul met Titus in Macedonia and received an encouraging report as to the outcome in Corinth	2Cor. 7:5-16
	Wrote 2 Corinthians and sent it from Macedonia by Titus and two brethren	2Cor.7:16-24
Corinth	Paul went to Corinth and spent 3 months there and wrote Romans	Acts 19-20

Literary Argument



Literary Organization of the Book

The book is wrapped around Paul's coming (past and future). Paul had failed to come to them when indicated and had sent a letter instead to obtain their repentance. Now that they had repented, he urges them to further prepare to follow him as he finally arrives.

Paul sent a letter instead of coming. His avoidance of coming is described in 1:15 – 2:13 (as he wonders if they have repented at his letter) and then continues in 7:5-7:16 when he hears they have repented at his letter. This literary “bookends” sandwiches the defense against their accusations which was what caused him not to come.

Having then received their repentance, He prepares them for his actual coming. In this case they will need to embrace Paul as an apostle by contributing to one of his apostolic churches (8—9) and submitting to him as an apostle of the church (10—12). Should they not act accordingly he will use his apostolic authority to chastise them when he comes (13).

Problem

The Judaizers (“salvation and deliverance through the works of the Law, manifested in physical success”) are teaching that Paul is not an apostle, nor is his message truthful, since he is physically unsuccessful.

Solution

Paul (“deliverance through the revelation of Christ”) writes the Corinthians to defend his gospel and apostleship so that they might be forgiving of those who oppose him, accept him and his gospel, and share in the support of the Jerusalem church.

Theology

Apostleship (and the gospel) are not to be measured by physical observations of success, but on the revelation and its validation.

Main Issue

Is Paul an apostle (and his word true) if he is so physically unrewarded in this life?

I. Paul tells the Corinthian believers that he suffers on their behalf and is delivered by God. They are to evaluate him not on the basis of human wisdom but on the revelation of God (1:1-14).

A. Author/Address: Paul addresses the Corinthian believers (1:1-2).

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. Issue: Paul suffers (is afflicted) for them but is comforted by God (1:3-7).

1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; ⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵ For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. ⁶ But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; ⁷ and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are *sharers* of our comfort.

C. Example: Paul was close to death for them, but was delivered by God through their prayers (1:8-11).

⁸ For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came *to us* in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; ⁹ indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; ¹⁰ who delivered us from so great a *peril of death*, and will deliver *us*, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, ¹¹ you also joining in helping us through your prayers, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed upon us through *the prayers of many*.

D. Exhortation: Evaluate Paul based on the revelation of God and not in fleshly wisdom (1:12-14).

¹² For our proud confidence is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you. ¹³ For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand, and I hope you will understand until the end; ¹⁴ just as you also partially did understand us, that we are your reason to be proud as you also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.

VACILLATION

II. Paul defends himself (“vacillating”) for not coming to them as he declared and sending a letter instead so that they might repent on their own, which they did (1:15--7:16).

A. Problem: Paul accused of vacillation since he intended to come to them on his way to Macedonia and on the return, but failed to do either. (1:15-22).

1:15 And in this confidence I intended at first to come to you, that you might twice receive a blessing; ¹⁶ that is, to pass your way into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you, and by you to be helped on my journey to Judea. ¹⁷ Therefore, I was not vacillating when I intended to do this, was I? Or that which I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yes, yes and no, no *at the same time*? ¹⁸ But as God is faithful, our word to you is not yes and no. ¹⁹ For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us-- by me and Silvanus and Timothy-- was not yes and no, but is yes in Him. ²⁰ For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes; wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. ²¹ Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, ²² who also sealed us and gave *us* the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge. ²³ But I call God as witness to my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. ²⁴ Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith you are standing firm..

B. Answer: Paul did not come for he did not want to sorrow over them, but wrote to them instead that they might repent in his absence. (2:1-4).

2:1 But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come to you in sorrow again. ² For if I cause you sorrow, who then makes me glad but the one whom I made sorrowful? ³ And this is the very thing I wrote you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from those who ought to make me rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy would be *the joy* of you all. ⁴ For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not that you should be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.

C. Result: The offending one repented, yet the Corinthians to forgive offender (2:5-11).

⁵ But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree-- in order not to say too much-- to all of you. ⁶ Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was *inflicted by* the majority, ⁷ so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort *him*, lest somehow such a one be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸ Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm *your* love for him. ⁹ For to this end also I wrote that I might put you to the test,

whether you are obedient in all things. ¹⁰ But whom you forgive anything, I *forgive* also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *I did it* for your sakes in the presence of Christ, ¹¹ in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes

BOASTING

- D. Explanation: Paul waited for Titus to find out if they had repented over the letter, but went to Macedonia where Titus told him of their repentance. (2:12--7:16).
1. Paul went to Troas, but left for Macedonia not finding Titus in Troas. (2:12-13).
 2. Paul defends the accusation that he is boastful regarding himself (2:14--7:4).
 - a. Paul as a speaker of the gospel is a fragrant aroma to God. (2:14-17).
 - b. Boldness is appropriate for the gospel of the New Covenant (3:1-18)
 - 1) Paul emphasizes that the believers of Corinth are a testimony to his success as a minister of the New Covenant which has more glory than the Old Covenant. (3:1-11).
 - 2) The believer has his veil removed by the Spirit. (3:12-18).

SUFFERING

- c. Paul does not preach himself but Christ, and himself as servant, for which reason he suffers in this life, but has hope for the resurrection, and thus teaches the gospel of reconciliation. (4:1--6:10).

Not preaching self

- 1) Paul preaches the truth of the gospel, and not himself. (4:1-6).

Afflicted

- 2) Paul suffers affliction knowing that he has life in Jesus, and that he will be raised with Jesus to present them with Him. (4:7-15).

Does not Lose heart

- 3) Paul does not lose heart in suffering since he has hope, not in this visible body, but in the invisible eternal state. (4:16-18).

Body passing away

- 4) Paul knows that this earthly body will pass away and holds as his desire to be pleasing to Christ at the judgment seat. (5:1-10).

Crazy

- 5) Though men might think him crazy, it is only that he is following the love of Christ. He does not judge men according to his view of them in their flesh but according to Christ. (5:11-19).

Persuade men to reconcile

- 6) The ambassadorship for Christ requires that their message be reconciliation. (5:20-21).

Suffering

- 7) Therefore Paul boasts only in the greatness of the opportunity to serve God in suffering and in everything (6:1-10).

d. Exhortation: Reject the false teachers, accept Paul (6:11--7:4).

- 1) Paul has been open with the Corinthians and asks that they be open with him and accept him. (6:11-13).
- 2) They should not to be bound together with unbelievers since the church is the temple of God. (6:14-7:1).
- 3) Plea: Corinthians to hold Paul dear to themselves. (7:2-4).

3. Paul's avoidance of coming (his 'vacillation'), his boasting in them and suffering for them was worth it as he was Titus told him of their repentance. (7:5-16)

II. **This letter:** To urge them to fulfill his boasting of them by finishing their promise to give to the Jerusalem church, complete their repentance, and support him as an apostle boasting of Christ.

A. Exhortation to fulfill boast and complete offering to the church at Jerusalem, based on their suffering for others' comfort (like him) (8:1-9:15).

1. Boasting in the Corinthian church for the comfort that they give to the suffering Jerusalem church (8:1--9:15).
2. Boasting in the Macedonian church: The Macedonian church gave to the church in Jerusalem from their poverty (8:1-6).
3. The Corinthians need to complete what they finished, give the gift based on the sacrifice of Christ for them (8:7-15).
4. Titus will come and receive their offering so that Paul might not be discredited³ and boast in the Corinthian church (8:16-24).

18 And we have sent along with him the brother whose fame in *the things of the gospel has spread* through all the churches; 19 and not only *this*, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and *to show* our readiness, 20 taking precaution that no one should discredit us in our administration of this generous gift; 21 for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. 22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, but now even more diligent, because of *his* great confidence in you.

5. So that Paul might not be embarrassed over his boasting, he urges that they be prepared to give the gift when he comes (9:1-5)
6. Giving theology: Investment in righteousness increases righteousness (9:6-15).

9:6 Now this *I say*, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. 7 Let each one *do* just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a

³ This process bears a similarity to Ezra's process of transferring the gifts that were given for the building of the temple to Jerusalem in Ezra 8:24-34.

cheerful giver⁴. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; 9 as it is written, "HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ABIDES FOREVER." 10 Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; 11 you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. 12 For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. 13 Because of the proof given by this ministry they will glorify God for *your* obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, 14 while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. 15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

- B. Paul's defense of boasting as an apostle is based on miraculous verification and obedience to the revelation not on worldly wisdom (10:1--12:18).
1. Meekness when present and boldness when absent: Continue to obey so that Paul might exercise boldness against any who have not repented (10:1-7)
 2. Boasting: Paul boasts in the Lord, They boast in themselves (10:8--12:10).
 - a. Paul's boasting is not like theirs. His is in the Lord (10:8-18).
 - b. Paul explains his weakness vs. the opposers strength (11:1--12:10).
 - c. Paul vs. opposers: He seems weak and they strong (11:1-33).
 - d. Strengths: Miraculous affirmation: Paul taken up to heaven, but still weak on earth (12:1-10.)
 - e. Paul has the signs of a true apostle, like the original twelve (12:11-12)

⁴ Paul may be referencing the O.T. passage in Prov. 22:9 where ἡλαρόν καὶ δότην is used regarding a "generous" man who gives some of his food to the poor. He Paul uses the words "ἡλαρόν" and "δότην" to designate a "cheerful giver".

- f. Paul did not treat them as inferior to other churches, he did not allow them to support him (12:13-18).
- C. Exhortation: Paul calls on them to insure complete repentance of all before he comes (12:19-13:14).
- 1. Paul will be humiliated if they have not repented when he comes (12:19-21)
 - 2. Paul will come in strength against the unrepentant (13:1-4)
 - 3. Exhortation: Repent and respond appropriately to Paul and his message (13:5-14).

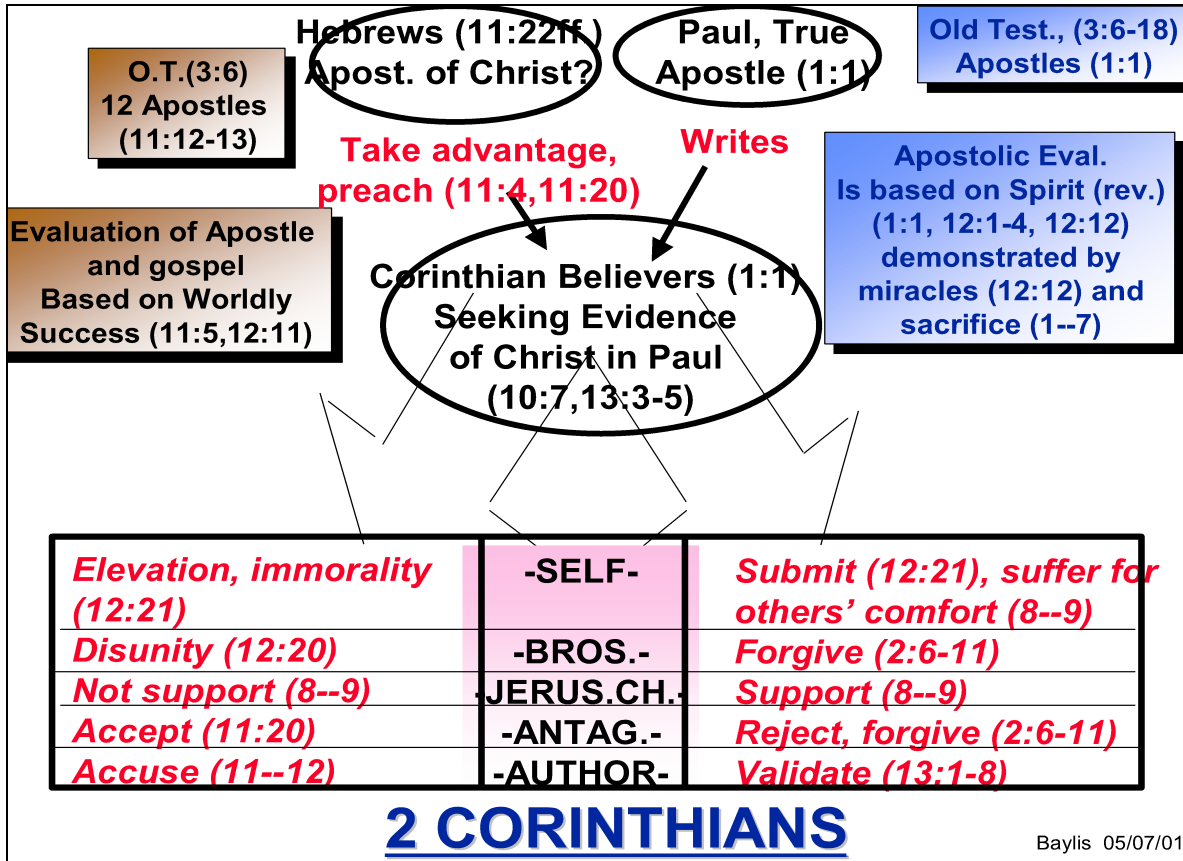
Historical Application

- 1. **Support Paul and the Gospel:** Paul is to be supported as well as his gospel against all heresies

Preaching Application

- 1. **Teach the gospel:** The Pauline gospel of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the Law must be supported as well as the innerancy of the Pauline texts.
- 2. **Support the Gospel:** Financially and prayerfully support those who minister the truth of the gospel. Based on the clarity of the gospel doctrine, the church must identify and support those ministries that teach the absolute and pure apostolic doctrine and behavior.

Identification and Interpretation



Characters (Who?)

Antagonist(s)

Physical Traits: Hebrews

11:22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I.

Theology:

Beliefs: Unbelievers⁵ teaching the Law

⁵ The preponderance of evidence, listed here, is that they seem to claim some relationship to Christ, but the language used by Paul also seems to claim their lack of faith in Him. It must be stated that they seem to give some credence to the original 12 apostles, and of course, claim some relationship to Christ. Although in light of the overwhelming negatives it would seem that there is little evidence to claim them as ever being saved (similar to Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc., who claim a relationship to

Paul uses the term “unbelievers” for them in 6:14, relates them to the serpent in the garden (who rejected God’s revelation), and then in 11:13,15 pours all kinds of negative adjectives regarding their relationship to the true revelation.

- 6:14 Do not be bound together with **unbelievers**; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?
- 11:3 But I am afraid, **lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness**, your minds should be led astray from the 4 For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.
- 11:13 For **such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ**.
- 11:15 Therefore it is not surprising **if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness**; whose end shall be according to their deeds.

Paul claims that these men are teaching “another Jesus” (11:4). From Paul’s defense in 3:3-18 regarding the Spirit versus the Law it would appear that he is defending his gospel against Judaizers who teach the works of the Law.⁶

- 3:3 being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, **written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts**.
- 3:6 who also made us adequate as servants of a **new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life**.

a different Christ (cf. 11:4)). In addition the references in chapter 3 indicate that the opposing ‘gospel’ would be that of the Law and a rejection of the Spirit (New Covenant). The reference to the test (13:5-6) indicates that there might be some in the assembly who follow the beliefs of the antagonists (as opposed to Paul) and thus would be unbelievers.

⁶ It may be that Paul’s reference to their judgment according to their deeds (works: 11:5) is a reference to the results of their living under the Law.

11:4 For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.

Positions: Teachers with claims of apostolic authority (11:12-13, 11:18ff.).

They not only claim that they are apostles they demean Paul as not being one of the original 12, thus claiming he is not who he says he is.

10:12 For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.

11:5 For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles.

11:12 But what I am doing, I will continue to do, that I may cut off opportunity from those **who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are** in the matter about which they are boasting.

11:13 **For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.**

11:18 **Since many boast according to the flesh,** I will boast also.

11:22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I.

12:11 I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody.

Reader(s)

Physical Traits: Corinthians

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, **to the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia:**

Theology:

Beliefs: Believers in Paul's gospel (1:1, 8:7, 11:2). Although Paul's allusion to the test in 13:5 indicates that there may be unbelievers among them (those who oppose Paul's gospel and follow the antagonists) (13:5).

Paul calls them saints (1:1)

- 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth with all the **saints** who are throughout Achaia:
- 8:7 But just as you abound in everything, **in faith** and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and **in the love we inspired in you**, see that you abound in this gracious work also.
- 11:2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; **for I betrothed you to one husband**, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.
- 13:5 **Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test?**

Author(s)

Physical Traits: Paul is identified as the author (1:1).

- 1:1 **Paul**, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia:

Repulsive physically;

Afflicted (1:6), bold (3:12), poor in appearance (5:12), boasting (6:4), unknown (6:9), sorrowful (6:10), poor (6:10), weak (12:10), letters unimpressive and speech contemptible (10:10).⁷

⁷ The list in 2 Corinthians of Paul's physical accusations is long: Accusations of Paul are the following.

- 1:6 But if we are **afflicted**, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer;
- 3:12 Having therefore such a hope, we use great **boldness** in our speech,
- 5:12 We are not again **commending ourselves to you** but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, that you may have an answer for those who take pride in appearance, and not in heart.
- 6:4 but in everything **commending ourselves** as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses,
- 6:9 as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death,
- 6:10 as **sorrowful** yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.
- 12:10 Therefore I am well content with **weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties**, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.
- 10:10 For they say, "**His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive, and his speech contemptible.**"

1:6: Afflicted, 1:17; vacillating (“yes, yes, no, no”); 2:4: wrote them to make them sorrowful; 2:17: peddling the word of God; 3:1: commend themselves; 3:12: boldness in speech; 4:1: lose heart; 4:2: Crafty, adulterating the word of God; commending self; 4:3: gospel veiled; 4:5: preaching ourselves; 4:8: afflicted; 4:16: lose heart; 5:12: commending ourselves; 5:13: beside ourselves; 6:4: commending ourselves; 6:8: evil report, deceivers; 6:9: unknown, dying, disciplined; 6:10: sorrowful, poor, having nothing; 7:2: wronged one, corrupted one, took advantage; 7:8: the letter caused sorrow; 7:14: boasted; 8:20: discredit in administration of gift; 10:1: lowly when present, bold when absent; 10:8: boasting about his authority; 10:9: terrifies by letter; 10:10: letters weighty and strong, personal presence unimpressive, speech is contemptible 10;12: bold; 10:13 boasting; 10:14: overextending; 10:15: boasting; 10:16-18: boasting; 11:2: jealous; 11:5: inferior to the 12; 11:6: unskilled ins speech; 11:7: humble; 11:8: robber; 11:16-17: foolish, boasting; 11:18: boasting; 11:19: foolish; 11:21: weak, bold; 11:29: weak; 11:30 : boasting; 11:31: liar; 12:1: boast; 12:5,6: boasting, weakness; 11:2:9,10: boast weakness; 12:11: foolish, inferior to 12 apostles; 12:13; 14:16: burden: 12:17: took advantage; 12:19: defends self to you; 12:21: humiliated; 13:3: seeking proof of Christ who speaks in him; 13:4: weak; 13:6: fail the test; 13:7: appear unapproved; 13::9; weak.

Theology:

Beliefs: Paul is a believer (1:1) in the New Covenant of salvation through Jesus Christ.

- 4 **And such confidence we have through Christ toward God**
- 6 who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, **not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.** 7 But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, 8 **how shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?** 9 For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does **the ministry of righteousness** abound in glory.
- 12 **Having therefore such a hope,** we use great boldness in our speech,
- 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory,** just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Positions: Paul is an apostle⁸ (1:1) of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

He identifies himself as an apostle (1:1). However the whole epistle is an apostolic defense. He has suffered for their sakes (1—7). He was caught up to heaven (12:1-4). He has verified his apostleship through signs and miracles (12:12).

- 1:1 Paul, **an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,** and Timothy our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia:

⁸ An apostle's function was to reveal Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament requirement of righteousness. This was accomplished through direct revelation from Jesus Christ (cf. John 14--16, 1 Thess. 1:13).

- 12:1 Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago-- whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows-- such a man was **caught up to the third heaven**. 3 And I know how such a man-- whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows-- 4 was **caught up into Paradise**, and **heard inexpressible words**, which a man is not permitted to speak.
- 12:12 **The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.**

Problem (What?)

Problem Physical Activities

Antagonist Action Toward Reader

Desire to take over the Corinthians as teachers, taking advantage of them (11:20).

11:20 For you bear with anyone if he enslaves you, if he devours you, if he takes advantage of you, if he exalts himself, if he hits you in the face.

Reader's Actions resulting from errant theology (and Affected)

Antagonist: Accept antagonists as honored teachers of the Law (11:20), even apostles of Christ.

11:20 or you bear with anyone if he enslaves you, if he devours you, if he takes advantage of you, if he exalts himself, if he hits you in the face.

Problem Theology

Source of Antagonist's Theology

Old Testament: The Old Testament is the basis of their theology (3:1-18), as is some claim to be revealers of Christ (11:13).

From the extended discussion in chapter 3 where Paul compares his theology of the New Covenant against that of the Law, it should be concluded that this is the theology of the antagonists. In addition the whole issue of Paul's physical problems fits well with Judaistic thinking derived improperly from Deut. 28.

- 3:7 But if the ministry of death, in **letters engraved on stones**, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was,
- 11:13 For such men are false **apostles**, deceitful workers, **disguising themselves as apostles of Christ**.

Content of Antagonist's Theology

Apostolic verification based on physical success through the keeping of the Law

The whole discussion bears on the marks of apostolic verification. The antagonists are setting themselves up as directly opposed to Paul. Paul is physically oppressed, while they are well off. The exposition on the benefits of Paul's gospel of the New Covenant versus those of the Law in chapter 3 indicates that they were expounding the Law and using it as a basis for their own elevation and Paul's denunciation.

- 3:7 But if the ministry of death, in **letters engraved on stones**, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was,
- 11:5 For I consider myself not in the least **inferior to the most eminent apostles**.
- 12:11 I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I **inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody**.

Application of Antagonist's Theology

Self-Elevation

Self-righteousness leads to self-elevation. The fact that someone feels that they have earned their standing before God based on self, results in a false elevation of themselves.

Greediness, lack of mercy toward brothers

From this comes greediness, lack of mercy toward brothers (since they themselves have not needed mercy), and division in the church with those who would hold for imputed righteousness (sanctificational). This division is easily perceived since each side would consider the other unclean; the believers for not keeping the works of the Law, and the unbelievers for not receiving imputed purity through Christ.

Riches, food, pleasure now

This self-righteousness makes the doer feel that he deserves blessing such as riches, food, pleasure, as opposed to suffering. From a reading of the Old Covenant (particularly Deut. 28) the Judaizer assumes that since he is prospering he is blessed. Suffering would thus indicate being under the wrath of God for disobedience (as Paul in prison).

Legalistic Teaching and Opposition to Grace Revelation

Self-righteousness belief results in self-righteous teachings, particularly those that focus on one's own successes or deeds. Thus the Law is taught as being a means to righteous elevation. One would therefore oppose any gracious means of sanctification.

Problem Summary Statement

Unbelieving Jewish legalists are disparaging Paul as an apostolic revealer based on apostolic validation is based on physical success based on the keeping the Law which has caused (and may continue to cause) the Corinthians to reject Paul (and his gospel) as an apostle and accept the antagonists (and their Law-keeping theology)

Solution (What?)

Physical Activities

Author's Action Toward Reader

Writing to explain his reasons why he is physically negative.

13:10 For this reason I am writing these things while absent, in order that when present I may not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me, for building up and not for tearing down.

Reader's Actions resulting from author's theology (and Affected)

Self:

Church: Unify with others in the church based on message of Paul as an apostle.

Particularly they are to give to the Jerusalem church as evidence of their care for others under the apostolic gospel of Paul.

Forgive the brother who opposed Paul and is now repentant.

Author: Accept Paul as an apostle and thus his message of the gospel.

Antagonists: Reject the antagonists as servants of Satan

Theology

Source of Author's Theology

Apostolic⁹

⁹ An apostle is one who receives revelation from God, through the Holy Spirit, which reveals the words and works of Jesus Christ (imputed righteousness through the atonement) as the fullness of the Law and the Prophets. This understanding of Jesus Christ comes only through the apostolic revelation.

Paul establishes himself as an apostle immediately (1:1). He bases this apostolic revelation on the Old Testament (3:6), and manifested to him personally in the presence of God and of Christ in heaven (12:1-4). He reaffirms his equality with the 12 apostles (11:5, 12:11). And he has performed the necessary signs and wonders (12:12) which must accompany an apostle.

- 1:1 Paul, **an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God**, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia:
- 3:6 **who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant**, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
- 11:5 For I consider **myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles**.
- 12:1 Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; **but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord**. 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago-- whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows-- such a man was caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I know how such a man-- whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows-- **4 was caught up into Paradise, and heard inexpressible words**, which a man is not permitted to speak.
- 12:11 I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, **for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles**, even though I am a nobody.
- 12:12 **The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles**.

Content of Author's Theology

The proofs of a true apostle are to be evaluated based on God revealed evaluations (as opposed to physical successes) and the verification through signs and wonders and demonstrated in suffering for the cause of others.

Application of Author's Theology

Clearly if one accepts the doctrine of imputed righteousness,

1. he will be humbled before God and others (having no value of apart from Christ),

2. he will therefore aid his brother (as God aided him),
3. he will support Paul and his gospel (since this is exactly what he teaches against the opposition),
4. He will have appropriate behavior, not to establish his righteousness, but because Christ saved us to be a representative of Him.

Solution Summary Statement

Paul, the apostle is writing to defend his apostleship (and his gospel) regarding Godly evaluation of apostleship based on revelation, not on physical successes which will cause the Corinthians to

- Accept Paul and his gospel
- Unify with the church based on Paul's gospel, forgiving the brother who opposed Paul, and give to the Jerusalem church.
- and reject the antagonistic unbelieving teachers of the Law