

## 16. The Bond with Paul Renewed and Again Challenged (2 Corinthians 1:1–13:13)

*“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.” (2 Cor 5:17–19)*

### “Thy Servants Are Prepared” (hymn no. 261)

“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4:5-6, <https://www.lds.org/music/library/hymns/thy-servants-are-prepared?lang=eng>)

1. Thy servants are prepared  
To teach thy word abroad,  
To gather in thy sheep  
To thee, O Lamb of God.

2. Let these, thy servants, speak  
With heart and voice of youth,  
And fill the world’s dark lamps  
With light, the flame of truth.

3. In all of Zion’s stakes  
Thy love shall conquer night,  
While darkness draws away  
From thy revealing light.

Text: Marilyn McMeen Brown, b. 1938. (c) 1985  
IRI

Music: Willy Reske, 1897-1991. (c) 1985 IRI

# Occasional Situation of 2 Corinthians

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## Occasion of 2 Corinthians

Review Presentation 13 slide 4 (Paul's Visits and Letters to Corinth)

- **Shortly after Paul sent 1 Corinthians (Letter B), he sent Timothy to Corinth**
  - A group of missionaries, perhaps Jewish-Christians, arrived and began to criticize Paul
  - Timothy traveled to Ephesus and informed Paul
- **Paul sailed to Corinth for the "Painful" Visit** (c. A.D. 57; see 2 Cor 2:1)
  - Some individual wronged Paul and the church as a whole rejected his authority
  - Paul wrote the "letter of tears" (Letter C, 2 Cor 2:3-4; 7:8-9) and sent it with Titus
- **Titus returned with an optimistic report that the Corinthian saints had repented and regretted the pain that they had caused Paul**
  - Paul wrote Letter D (either all of 2 Corinthians or just chs. 1-9)
- New opponents, the "super-apostles" (2 Cor 11:5, 11:13, and 12:11) arrived and once again alienated many of the Corinthians from Paul
  - Letter E (2 Corinthians 10-13), written as an addendum (postscript) or sequel to Letter D

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## Paul's Opponents in 2 Corinthians

- **The individual who wronged him** by publicly undermining his authority (2:5-11; 7:12)
- The **"super-apostles"** (KJV, "very chiefest apostles"; 11:5, 11:13, and 12:11)
  - Perhaps the "leading apostles," such as Peter
  - Probably here "apostle" in the non-technical sense of "missionaries"
  - Explicitly described as being "false apostles"
- **The Corinthian saints themselves**, who were easily alienated from Paul

## Overview of 2 Corinthians (Letter D, maybe also Letter E)

- Date: Late summer/early autumn A.D. 57 from Macedonia
- Audience: **Church in Corinth addressed in 1 Cor**
- Authenticity: not generally disputed but **accepted as Pauline**
- Unity: **Possible that more than one letter have been combined** (some scholars assert anywhere from 2 to 5)
  - The tone changes markedly from 2 Cor 1-9 to 2 Cor 10-13
    - Paul had been enthusiastic and optimistic in chs. 8-9, **Paul suddenly turns pessimistic and launches into the most powerful defense of his apostolic authority anywhere in his letters**
    - Some scholars suggest that 2 Cor 10-13 thus represents **Letter E, written after he hears that the Corinthians have lapsed again into rebellion**
  - Supporting unity is the fact that there is only one opening and concluding formula
    - **The final section could as likely have been an addendum written when news came to him before the letter was sent**
- Integrity: **Some think that 6:14-7:1 on being "unequally yoked" is an interpolation** (a copyist or editor has added some non-Pauline material)
  - Interrupts Paul's appeal of 6:11-1, **employs markedly different diction (vocabulary) than Paul's writing, and is even more emotional than the rest of the letter**
  - Paul might be quoting someone else here, or it could be a Pauline fragment that got out of place

## Literary Questions about 2 Corinthians

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WHAT KIND OF LETTER IS IT? WHAT KIND OF WRITING AND  
RHETORIC DOES PAUL USE IN IT? HOW IS THE LETTER  
STRUCTURED?

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## Letter Type and Style

- A real letter addressing a specific audience in response to particular circumstances
- ***A seemingly disjointed letter***, exhibiting **a mix of styles and appeals**
  - Sometimes angry and **defensive**, employing **forensic oratory** and **personal apologetics** like Galatians
  - Often **deliberative**, exhorting and dissuading like 1 Corinthians
- Perhaps the most difficult of Paul's letters to interpret
- Nevertheless also has some of the most rhetorically powerful passages (4:7-15; 6:3-10; 11:21-29; 12:5-10; 13:3-4), **powerfully painting the image of a suffering and rejected apostle**

## Structure and Subjects of 2 Corinthians

- **Opening Formula** (1:1–2, beginning of **Letter D**)
- **Thanksgiving** (1:3–11)
  - “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; **who comforteth us in all our tribulation** . . . *For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.*” (2 Cor 1:3–5)
- **Body** (1:12–13:10)
  - Paul’s Relations with the Corinthian Christians (1:12–7:16)
    - Reason for His Change in Travel Plans (1:12–2:13)
    - **The Apostolic Ministry** (2:14–6:10)—*esp. treasure in clay jars and the ministry of reconciliation*
    - Bond Between Paul and the Corinthian Church Renewed (6:11–7:16)
  - The Collection for the Jerusalem Poor (8:1–9:15)
  - **Paul’s Defense of His Apostolic Authority** (10:1–13:10, perhaps **Letter E**)
    - **Paul’s Visions and Revelations** (12:1–10)
- **Concluding Formula** (13:11–13)

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## Paul’s Relations with the Corinthian Christians (1:12–7:16)

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*“Indeed, this is our boast, the testimony of our conscience: we have behaved in the world with frankness and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God—and all the more toward you.” (1:12 NRSV)*

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## Paul's Relations with the Corinthian Christians (1:12–7:16)

- **Reason for His Change in Travel Plans (1:12–2:13)**
  - Integrity of Paul's Conduct (1:12–14)
  - Postponement of His Visit (1:15–22)
  - **Desire to Avoid Another Painful Visit (1:23–2:4)**
  - Paul Forgives the Disciplined Offender (2:5–11)
  - Paul Crossed from Troas to Macedonia to Find Titus (2:12–13)
- **The Apostolic Ministry (2:14–6:10)**
  - God Has Used Paul (2:14–17)
  - The Corinthians Are Paul's Recommendation (3:1–3)
  - **Ministers of the New Covenant (3:4–18)**
  - Light of the Gospel versus Darkness (4:1–6)
  - **Treasure in Clay Jars: God Sustains His Ministers (4:7–18)**
  - **Hope of an Eternal Home (5:1–10)**
  - **Ministry of Reconciliation (5:11–6:10)**

## Reason for His Change in Travel Plans (1:12–2:13)

- **Postponement of His Visit (1:15–22)**
- **Desire to Avoid Another Painful Visit (1:23–2:4)**
  - “So I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit” (2:1 NRSV)
  - “For I wrote you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain, but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.” (2:4 NRSV)
- **Paul Forgives the Disciplined Offender (2:5–11)**
  - “If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.” (2:10–11 NIV)
- **Paul Crossed from Troas to Macedonia to Find Titus (2:12–13)**

## The Apostolic Ministry (2:14–6:10)

- **God Has Used Paul (2:14–17)**
  - “Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God.” (2:17 NIV)
- **The Corinthians Are Paul’s Recommendation (3:1–3)**
  - “Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Surely we do not need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you, do we? *You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all . . .*” (3:1–2 NIV)
  - Cf. Greco-Roman letters of introduction and recommendation
- **Ministers of the New Covenant (3:4–18)**
  - “Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; *our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant . . .*” (3:4–6 NRSV)
  - “*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 spirit of the Lord].*” (3:18 NAU)
- **Light of the Gospel Versus Darkness (4:1–6)**
  - “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*” (4:3–4)

## More on the Apostolic Ministry (2:14–6:10, cont.)

- **Treasure in Clay Jars: God Sustains His Ministers (4:7–18)**
  - “But *we have this treasure in earthen vessels*, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*” (4:7–10)
    - Paul and other church leaders are mortals—fallible and with other weaknesses—but God sustains them as witnesses of Christ
- **Hope of an Eternal Home (5:1–10)**
  - “*For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.” (5:1–4)
  - “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*” (5:10)
    - Cf. Alma 41:13–15 and the “doctrine of restoration”
    - We are resurrected not just to return spirit to body, but to return us to the presence of God to be judged for the things done *in* this body

## Ministry of Reconciliation (5:11–6:10)

- “Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences.” (5:11 NRSV)
- “Therefore *if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.* Now all these things are from **God, who reconciled (*katalaxantos*) us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation (*katallagēs*), namely, that God was in Christ reconciling (*katalassōn*) the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation (*katallagēs*). . . . *we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled (*katallagēte*) to God.*” (5:17–20 NAU)
 
  - The words *katallagō* and *katallagē* have to do **with reconciling and reconciliation**
  - **This is translated “atonement” at Romans 5:11—Paul’s major emphasis regarding the atonement is its role in reconciling us to God**
  - *Tynadle translated “ministry of reconciliation” as “the office to preach the atonement”***
- “Therefore, **we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.**” (5:20)

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## Bond Between Paul and the Corinthian Church Renewed (6:11–7:16)

- **Appeal for Love Between Ministers and People (6:11–7:4)**
- **The Temple of a the Living God (6:14–1, perhaps an interpolation)**
  - “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness. . . . And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for **ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.**” (6:14–16)
    - **Interrupts Paul’s thought with different diction and a different outlook.** Is this section a separate letter fragment, is Paul quoting someone else, a later interpolation?
    - “Temple of the living God” does sound Pauline, however; note it is **group = temple**
- **Appeal resumed (7:2–4)**
- **Paul’s Joy at the Corinthians’ Repentance (7:5–16)**
  - “Now I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because **your grief led to repentance; for you felt a godly grief, so that you were not harmed in any way by us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death.**” (7:9–10)
    - Mormon 2:13

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## The Collection for the Jerusalem Poor (8:1–9:15)

- **Macedonian Generosity Should Inspire the Corinthians (8:1–6)**
- **Christ's Example Teaches Generosity (8:7–15)**
  - “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, *though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*” (8:9)
- **Commendation of Titus (8:16–24)**
- **Appeal to Finish the Collection Before Paul Arrives (9:1–5)**
- **God Blesses the Cheerful [Liberal] Giver (9:6–15)**
  - “Remember this: *Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.* Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, *for God loves a cheerful giver.*” (9:6–7 NIV)

## Paul's Defense of His Apostolic Authority (10:1–13:10)

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POSSIBLY A POSTSCRIPT OR ANOTHER LETTER (PERHAPS LETTER E?) THAT WAS COPIED AND TRANSMITTED WITH OUR 2 CORINTHIANS, THIS SECTION SIGNALS A RETURN TO PAUL'S SOMETIMES ANGRY AND OFTEN WORRIED TONE.

## Paul Responds Angrily to a New or Renewed Challenge

- After the mood of reconciliation exhibited earlier in the letter, **Paul returns to an angry defense of his authority, suggesting that he was again challenged by someone in the Corinthian congregation**
  - Is this part of another letter, **the postulated Letter E**, that was preserved with 2 Corinthians, or **did news come to Paul of further rebellion before he finished and sent Letter D?**
- **Rebuke of Slander and False Apostles (10:1–11:15)**
  - “For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, **you put up with it easily enough. *But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those ‘super-apostles’ (hyperlian apostolōn). I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have knowledge.*** We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way.” (11:4–6, NIV)
  - “super-apostles” (*hyperlian apostolōn*) sometimes translated “very chiefest” (KJV) or “most eminent” (NKJV), this may have referred to **senior apostles such as Peter** or, more likely, **false teachers who claimed special authority above that of the legitimate apostles**

## Paul Sufferings as an Apostle (11:16–33)

- “Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; **in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.** Of the Jews five times received I **forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;** In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. **Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.**” (11:22–28)

## Paul's Visions and Revelations (12:1–10)

- It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. **I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.** I knew **a man in Christ** above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) **such an one caught up to the third heaven.** And I knew such a man . . . **How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.**" (12:1–4)
- **Four known visions of Christ given to Paul**
  - Road to Damascus (Acts 9:1–9; cf. Acts 22 and 25)
  - Temple vision three years after conversion (related in Acts 22:17–21)
  - Vision at Corinth directing him to stay there longer (Acts 18:9–10)
  - In prison at Jerusalem telling him he will testify in Rome (Acts 23:11)
- **If this "man in Christ" was Paul, it is a fifth,** but the details "were not lawful" to relate
  - **Perhaps the most sacred experience of Paul's life**
  - **His detractors, "super apostles" could not name an experience that matched it**
  - Paul frequently refers to "heavens" in the plural (although frequently translated in the singular)
  - This suggests three and is doctrinally close to D&C 76

## Paul's "Thorn in the Flesh" Checks Pride (12:7–10)

- "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, **there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.** For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.**" (12:7–10)
  - **thorn in the flesh:** suggestions have included **a physical ailment** (such as an eye problem), an emotional or personal struggle, a personal adversary, **or direct spiritual attacks by Satan**
  - **"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness"** –see Jacob 4:7 and Ether 12:27

## Final Defenses

- **Signs of a True Apostle (12:11–13)**
  - “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.” (12:12)
  - “*All the marks characteristic of a true apostle have been at work among you: complete perseverance, signs, marvels, demonstrations of power.*” (12:12 NJB)
- **Paul’s Concern for the Corinthian Church (12:14–18)**
- **Appeal to Repent Before Paul Comes (12:19–13:10)**
  - “Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

## Paul’s Final Words to the Corinthians

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*FINALLY, BRETHREN, FAREWELL. BE PERFECT, BE OF GOOD COMFORT, BE OF ONE MIND, LIVE IN PEACE; AND THE GOD OF LOVE AND PEACE SHALL BE WITH YOU. GREET ONE ANOTHER WITH AN HOLY KISS. ALL THE SAINTS SALUTE YOU. THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THE LOVE OF GOD, AND THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY GHOST, BE WITH YOU ALL. AMEN.*

(13:11–14 )