

2 Corinthians

- 1. Who was the writer? What was his current situation?** The writer is the apostle Paul as referenced in the first verse of this book. On Paul's third missionary journey, while in Macedonia, he met back up with Titus who gave a good report to Paul concerning the congregation at Corinth – 2 Corinthians 5:5-7. However, there were still some unresolved issues, so Paul chose to write another letter to precede his planned visit to Corinth – 2 Corinthians 13:1.
- 2. Some in Corinth were attacking Paul. What were they trying to say about him?** There will always be those who are jealous of great men and women of faith. Some of the false teachers who were connected to the Corinthian congregation were attempting to dishonor Paul's reputation. Here were some of their claims:
 - They implied that you couldn't trust his word, because he had a change of plans for visiting them -- 1:15-19
 - They were questioning his credentials -- 3:1
 - These slanderers would have liked to discredit his administration of the money for the saints of Judea -- 8:20-21
 - It was purported that Paul was bold when absent, but weak when face to face -- 10:1, 10:10-12
 - They challenged Paul's apostleship -- 11:5, 12:11-12
 - It was implied that Paul was taking advantage of them -- 12:14-17
- 3. What contrast is made between the Old and New Testaments?** The book of Hebrews is clear that the Old Testament is that which was given by God through Moses and angels, while the New Covenant is that given directly through Jesus Christ. There is a sharp contrast made in 2 Corinthians 3 between the Old and New Testaments.

Old Testament

Of the letter

Ministry of death

Ministry of condemnation

Came with glory

Fades away

New Testament

Of the Spirit

Ministry of the Spirit

Ministry of righteousness

Abounds in glory

Remains

- 4. What factors are involved with the transformation of Christians?** 2 Corinthians 3:18 really is a powerful verse in the Scriptures in reference to our transformation. There are 4 key factors of our transformation listed here:
 - We must look
 - The mirror -- the completed New Testament
 - The glory of the Lord
 - The Spirit

5. What does this book tell us about a person who is "in Christ"? 2 Corinthians 5:17 is one of my favorite verses in the Bible. It is self-explanatory as it says, "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

6. What does this letter tell us about the contrast between believers and unbelievers? The sixth chapter of 2 Corinthians warns against believers being bound together with unbelievers. This is something to consider in reference to marriage, business partnerships, as well as friendships in general. Paul drives this point home by asking a series of questions:

- What partnership have righteousness and lawlessness?
- What fellowship has light with darkness?
- What harmony has Christ with Belial?
- What has a believer in common with an unbeliever?
- What agreement has the temple of God with idols?

Of course the answer to all of these questions is "None!" The conclusion is for Christians to "come out from their midst and be separate" from the world.

7. What do we learn about financial giving in 2 Corinthians? The eighth and ninth chapters of this book deal with the collection being raised for the saints at Jerusalem -- see Romans 15:26. Paul's encouragement and warnings in reference to this truly apply across the board when it comes to Christian giving. Here are some of the key points brought out:

- The gifts really should be given to the Lord -- 8:5
- We should follow through on our commitments, and not be affected by covetousness -- 8:10-11, 9:5
- Our giving is acceptable according to what we have -- 8:12
- Our handling of the gifts needs to be open and honorable -- 8:20-21
- He who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly -- 9:6
- He who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully -- 9:6
- We should do as we have purposed in our hearts -- 9:7
- Our giving shouldn't be grudgingly or under compulsion -- 9:7
- We should give cheerfully -- 9:7
- God is able to supply for us to be able to give and multiply what we do give -- 9:10
- Those who receive will glorify God because of our obedience to Christ -- 9:13

8. What made Paul afraid? There are three times in this letter that Paul says was afraid.

- "But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ" -- 11:3

- "For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there may be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances" -- 12:20
- "I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced" -- 12:21

9. What is the "third heaven"? The third heaven is mentioned in 2 Corinthians 12:2. A little comparison with 2 Corinthians 12:4 establishes that the third heaven is synonymous with Paradise. Paradise is a name given to the resting place of the dead who are in Christ -- cf. Luke 23:43, 2 Corinthians 12:4, Revelation 2:7.

10. How is power perfected? The Scriptural answer to this question is completely opposite to the worldly response. The worldly response would say that power is perfected when we show absolute strength. However, 2 Corinthians 12:9 quotes Jesus telling Paul that "power is perfected in weakness." The real issue here is that our power will always be lacking; only God's power is perfect. When we cease trusting in our strength and choose to rely fully upon the Lord, then we are strong.

11. How did Paul use his authority? The apostle Paul was a great example of the way that authority should be used. He was careful to use it "for building up and not for tearing down" -- see 2 Corinthians 10:8, 12:19, 13:10. We each should use what we have for the edification of the body of Christ.