



---

## 2 CORINTHIANS 7–13

REPENTANCE, WELFARE CONTRIBUTIONS, DEFENDING  
AUTHORITY. CA. A.D. 55–57.

---

### INTRODUCTION

---

The second half of this letter treats three main subjects: the need for repentance, the welfare contributions, and his defense of his authority. With only knowing one side of their communication, we assume that Corinth harbored enemies who attacked Paul's position, hence his need to defend his calling. Not until the last third of this letter, does Paul call a few rebellious to repentance. He closes by asking them to prepare an offering for the poor that he will collect and transport to Jerusalem.

## Outline

2 Corinthians 7:1–3 Continuation of Paul’s Warning—Saints’ need to Repent

7:4–16 Paul Joys over Titus’ News of the Saints’ Repentance

7:8–16 Godly Sorrow Motivates Positive Change

8:1–9 Offerings for Poor—Be Generous

8:10–15 Guidance on Giving

8:16–9:5 Paul’s Commendation of His Delegates to the Corinthians

9:6–15 Blessings Come from Giving

2 Corinthians 10–12 Repent of Evil Speaking Against the Lord’s Servants

10:1–11 Paul’s Reply to Accusations of Weakness and Overbearing Nature

10:12–18 Paul’s Reply to Complaints Against His Aversion to Ambition

11:1–15 Paul Defends Himself through “A Fool’s Speech”

11:16–33 Paul’s List of Sufferings as an Apostle

12:1–10 Vision of the Third Heaven

12:11–21 Paul’s Concern for the Corinthians Church

2 Corinthians 13:1–10 Concluding Admonition

13:11–14 Final Exhortation, Greeting and Benediction

---

# 2 CORINTHIANS 7

---

## Continuation of Paul’s Warning Against Idolatry and the Need to be Cleansed

*2 Corinthians 7:1–3*

**2 Corinthians 7:1** “since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God” (NIV) This verse actually belongs with the last few verses of chapter six, following three Old Testament citations where the Lord promised if His people stayed away from idols, He would:

1. Receive the saints,
2. Become as a Father to them,
3. Believers will become His sons and daughters.

These promises also extend into our dispensation. We must constantly repent by cleansing our thoughts, words, and actions from everything unholy. As the Spirit cannot dwell in unholy places, we must quickly repent in order to receive the companionship of the Spirit. In the KJV footnote, “filthiness” may relate to “fellowship,” but actu-

ally, the Greek word “*molusmos*” means: “staining, defilement, pollution.” In the last phrase, “perfecting/*epiteleo*” meant “to bring to an end, accomplish, perfect, execute, complete.”

### **2 Corinthians 7:2–3 “Receive us; we have wronged no man . . . ye are in our hearts to die and live with you”**

Paul defends himself against any misrepresentations. Repeatedly he defends his apostolic authority, and continues for the next six chapters. Yet following his correction, he reassured his audience of his love for them. The Lord taught this pattern to the prophet Joseph as well, “reproving betimes with sharpness when one may correct or reproving with sharpness when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy” (D&C 121:43). Paul may have also reworked the famous Odes by Horace from a century earlier, “with thee I’d love to live, with thee I’d gladly die.”

## Paul Joys over Titus’ News of the Saints’ Repentance

*2 Corinthians 7:4–16*

**2 Corinthians 7:4 “Great is my confidence in you; great is my pride in you; I am filled with encouragement; in all our troubles my joy overflows”** (BSB) Paul now transitions to a new theme of the joy of repentance. Just as in 2 Corinthians 1:14; 5:12; and 6:11; Paul cannot say enough about his joy with the Corinthians’ repentance.

**2 Corinthians 7:5–6a “When we were come . . . we were troubled on every side . . . Nevertheless, God, that comforteth those that are cast down”** Paul retells them that he was so worried about them (probably how they would receive his scolding letter, wondering if they would repent), in addition to the troubles associated with traveling from Ephesus through Macedonia (northern Greece).

**2 Corinthians 7:6b–7 “And not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him . . . your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever”** (NIV) The Lord comforted Paul by sending a fellow human. The Spirit often prompts disciples to help each other in answer to prayers. Paul was overjoyed to hear Titus’ news of the Corinthians’ soft hearts and willingness to accept their correction (also see Alma 42:29–30).

## Godly Sorrow Motivates Repentance

*2 Corinthians 7:8–16*

**2 Corinthians 7:8–9 “I rejoice, not because you were made sorrowful, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you felt the sorrow that God had intended”** (BSB) Paul’s scolding letter to the Corinthians (as there were others written, we can only assume this is what we call, 1 Corinthians) was not written to inflict pain, but to motivate repentance. It caused both Paul and the saints’ a period of grief but only temporarily. The positive outcome was worth the temporary remorse. Spencer W. Kimball explained that “godly sorrow” does not tear one

down, but motivates change to build one up. “Repentance of the godly type means that one comes to recognize the sin, and voluntarily, and without pressure from outside sources begins his transformation. If one is sorry only because someone found out about his sin, his repentance is not complete. Godly sorrow causes one to want to repent.”<sup>1</sup> Repentance is the change of heart and mind and action that brings one closer to God. It transforms sinners into a better people, and good people into better people.

The subject of repentance is discussed nearly four times as often in the Book of Mormon.

SCRIPTURE	TOTAL WORDS	REPENT, REPENTS, REPENTETH, REPENTED, REPENTANCE	WORD RATIO
The Book of Mormon	266,944	359	0.134 %
New Testament (KJV)	180,565	65	0.035 %



Repentance of St. Peter by Gerard Seghers, ca. 1629. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

**2 Corinthians 7:10** “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret” (NIV) Christ’s teachings of repentance are not to produce guilt, but teach us how to convert that regret or shame through repentance into hope in Christ and joy in God’s plan of redemption. Russel M. Nelson, spoke on the repentance as a process that we all need. He asked,

‘Does *everyone* need to repent?’ The answer is yes. Too many people consider repentance as punishment—something to be avoided except in the most serious circumstances. But this feeling of being penalized is engendered by Satan. He tries to block us from looking to Jesus Christ, who stands with open arms, hoping and willing to heal, forgive, cleanse, strengthen, purify, and sanctify us.<sup>2</sup>

He explained that daily repentance allows the Savior to transform us to the best version of ourselves as we battle sin. With this outcome, repentance is the highest form of self-love.

**2 Corinthians 7:11** “See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter” (NIV) The Corinthian saints internalized Paul’s apostolic call for repentance to heart and changed. After it produced a spectrum of emotions,



they were cleansed. The KJV word “revenge” is also translated, “punishment” (ESV), or “vindication” (BLB), but as Paul praises them, I do not think an apostle would encourage revenge, but rather to, “see justice done” (NIV).

**2 Corinthians 7:12** “I also wrote to you . . . for our diligence in your behalf being manifested unto you before God” (YLT) Paul wrote from the depths of his love for the saints to encourage them to repentance. In other translations, this verse can also communicate that Paul saw their willingness to follow his direction, as an expression of cooperation with him, which God will record (BSB).

**2 Corinthians 7:13** “we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you” (NIV) Paul’s comfort was enhanced by their happiness now, and the delight of Titus, too.

**2 Corinthians 7:14–15** “I was not embarrassed by anything I had boasted to him about you. But just as everything we said to you was true. And his affection for you is even greater . . . as you welcomed him with fear and trembling” (BSB) All the good things Paul had told Titus about the Corinthians, he saw firsthand. Titus was especially impressed by the Corinthians’ humility and willingness to obey. The phrase: “fear and trembling” is repeated three times in the Old Testament, once in Mark 5:33, and five times in the Pauline Epistles (here, and 1 Corinthians 2:13; Ephesians 6:5; Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 12:2).

**2 Corinthians 7:16** “I am glad I can have complete confidence in you” (NIV). Paul opens and closes this section by expressing his confidence (2 Corinthians 7:4). Now that the Corinthians have repented, he is confident that they will continue to choose the right.

---

## 2 CORINTHIANS 8

---

### The Collection of Financial Offerings

Several months before, in his previous letter, Paul asked the wealthy Corinthians to gather offerings for the poor (1 Corinthians 16:1–4). He returns to this subject with delicacy and tact. This topic appears to be the major purpose of his letter. He wanted their contributions to be generous, but completely voluntary.

### Be Generous in Offerings for the Poor

#### *2 Corinthians 8:1–9*

**2 Corinthians 8:1** “And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches” (NIV) I chose the NIV here, because it clarifies when both genders are addressed—which was especially important for this new topic. Paul changes subjects with one of his favorite transition

words, “Now/dē” (BSB), or “Moreover” (KJV). Their “grace /charis” or “a gift” (RSV) came from their altruism. It reflected God’s divine grace that they received. Once he has expressed his appreciation of the Corinthians’ repentance and improved relations between them, he returns to the old matter of business, the collection of offerings for the poor and Jerusalem church. He deliberately refers to their neighboring churches in Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea) where he was then serving.



Roman denarius of Nero, ca. A.D. 63–68. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

**2 Corinthians 8:2 “In the midst of a very severe trial . . . their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity”** (NIV) Paul praises the Macedonian saints for their generosity in spite of their poverty. He mentions their needy situation and contrasts it with the wealth enjoyed by the Corinthians saints in hopes of encouraging more liberal offerings.

**2 Corinthians 8:3–4 “I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own”** (NIV) The key here is that the offerings must be voluntary, “willing of themselves” (KJV). Even in a time of want, these benevolent saints saw it an honor to give and they sacrificed to help others in need. The principle was restored in Kirtland, Ohio, as the law of consecration (D&C 42). We also saw this in Acts 2:44; 4:32; and after Jesus’ visit to the Nephites “they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift” (4 Nephi 1:3).

The Lord’s law of Zion, or the celestial law, was to share their means so that there “was no poor among them” (Moses 7:18). The best place to find it described is in the Doctrine and Covenants (42:30–36, 39, 53–55; 51:1–6;

55:4; 59:5; 70:4; 78:22; 82:19; 104:11–15, 17–18). The law was based on three points—voluntary agency, a sense of stewardship, and accountability to God—the first of which is included in this verse. When saints are “empowered with correct knowledge of the law, we are free agents—accountable stewards of the Lord’s possessions, including ourselves. . . . Consecration is more than the act of giving. It is the sanctification that comes of giving willingly, for the right reasons.”<sup>3</sup>

**2 Corinthians 8:5 “they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us”** (NIV) Their generosity stemmed from their theology. First the poor saints gave their hearts to the Lord, and then they opened their coin pouches and donated their money.

**2 Corinthians 8:6 “So we urged Titus to help complete your act of grace, just as he had started it”** (BSB) Previously Paul had called Titus to collect a financial donation from Corinthian saints for the poor of the Jerusalem church (as Paul did in Macedonia). Paul emphasizes the liberality of the northern saints as an example for the Corinthians to follow (who were not in the same state). The word “grace/*charis*” most often referred to the “gift or blessing brought to man by Jesus Christ,” and also is translated as “a favor, gratitude, thanks, kindness.”<sup>4</sup>

**2 Corinthians 8:7–8 “I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others”** (NIV) Just as the Corinthian saints were known for their gifts of faith, speech, knowledge – and even their love for Paul—he now asks them to live up to their reputation by donating substantial offerings.

**2 Corinthians 8:9 “Jesus Christ . . . became poor, so that you through *His* poverty might be enriched”** (BSB) The doctrine of sacrifice underlined the Lord’s law of giving voluntary offerings. Paul reminded his audience of Jesus’ premortal example when He left His divine position to become a lowly builder in order to build the Kingdom of God on earth. Jesus gave of “His spiritual riches to raise mankind of his spiritual poverty.”<sup>5</sup>

## Guidelines on Giving

### *2 Corinthians 8:10–15*

**2 Corinthians 8:10–11 “Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work . . . according to your means”** (NIV) Six to nine months ago, Paul first asked them to gather monies for a generous offering for the poor (1 Corinthians 16:1–4).

**2 Corinthians 8:12 “if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has”** (BSB) This is the same principle that Jesus highlighted in the example of the widow’s mite. We must first give willingly, not necessarily according to our funds at the time or how rich we feel. The principle of sharing with the poor was repeated in the Old Testament regularly (Psalms 41:1–3; Proverbs 11:24–25; 19:17; 22:9; etc.).



**2 Corinthians 8:13** “Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality” (NIV) It sounds as though Paul heard them criticizing the law of consecration, “why are we burdened so that someone else can have it easy?” The plan of the Lord’s Law of Consecration in its various levels of implementation is in part to learn to sacrifice, to help take care of the financial inequality that exists in the world, and to value things of God above things of the world.

**2 Corinthians 8:14–15** “your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality” (NIV) The Corinthians may have questioned if the Jerusalem saints would repay the other churches. Repayment was not Paul’s focus, but the blessings from giving a real sacrifice. As an example, Paul quotes Exodus 16:18 and relates the current church gathering to the ancient children of Israel gathering manna, “each according to his need.”



Image by Photos\_Marta via Pixabay.

## Paul’s Commendation of His Delegates to the Corinthians

### *2 Corinthians 8:16–9:5*

**2 Corinthians 8:16–18** “Thanks *be* to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus. For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord” Titus, and an unnamed brother from Macedonia, volunteered to go back to Corinth to collect the donations for the poor in Jerusalem, before Paul would arrive.



**2 Corinthians 8:20–21** “We hope to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this generous gift. For we are taking great care to do what is right . . .” (BSB) Paul wanted nothing suspicious about this collection. Honesty was practiced in the Lord’s sight, and in the sight of men.

**2 Corinthians 8:22** “In addition, we are sending with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous . . . they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ” (NIV) Another unnamed “brother” must be known by the Corinthians, as Paul had great trust in him, and assumed the Corinthians did, too. The trio of men were in charge of collecting the offerings for the poor before Paul would arrive.

**2 Corinthians 8:24** “So show them your love, and prove to all the churches that our boasting about you is justified” (NIV) Paul asks the Corinthians one more time to donate their money generously as proof that they are true saints and are filled with the Love of Christ, especially to prove to these Macedonians that they are as generous as Paul had boasted.

---

## 2 CORINTHIANS 9

---

**2 Corinthians 9:1–5** “I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness” Paul returns to the principles of the Law of Consecration. He asks the saints to give an accounting of their commitment to voluntarily share from their stewardship of early goods. Paying one’s tithes and offerings is not about money, but about our faith. It is a principle of obedience not finance.

### Blessings Come from Giving

*2 Corinthians 9:6–15*

**2 Corinthians 9:6** “He who sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully” (KJV 2000) Paul uses agricultural images and the Law of the Harvest to encourage a bountiful harvest of offerings. He hopes they learn that the law of the harvest works for more than just agriculture. When we give away all that we have to build the Lord’s kingdom, then God will bless us with more.

**2 Corinthians 9:7** “for God loveth a cheerful giver” Paul coins a unique phrase, yet the idea stemmed from several Old Testament passages (i.e. Deuteronomy 15:10; Psalms 100:2; Proverbs 11:25; etc.). God’s request for voluntary offerings goes beyond money and includes one’s attitude and love. It is better not to give than have a bad attitude. The Lord built on these ideas in D&C 58:26, “It is not meet that I should command in all things; or he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.” God will reward those who have pure desires as Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7).



The Deeds of Christian Charity by Pieter Aertsen, 1575. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

**2 Corinthians 9:8–10** “God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work” (NIV) We can trust that God will provide for his servants’ needs. As further evidence, Paul cites Psalm 112:9.

We read a similar message by King Benjamin who taught, “If ye do keep his commandments he doth bless you and prosper you” (Mosiah 2:22).

**2 Corinthians 9:10–12** “He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your store of seed and will increase the harvest of your righteousness” (BSB) Just as the monetary collection was to supply those in need, our Divine Gardener will bless those who generously give. Those gifts may be spiritual fruits—which are of greater value than monetary gifts. As Christians, we must see to the needs of our fellowmen physically and spiritually. Paul looks forward to the abundance of spiritual gifts that will be poured out on the saints who donate generously to the poor.



**2 Corinthians 9:13–15** “Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!” (NIV) All the gifts mortals can give pale in comparison with our Savior’s great gift of immortality and Eternal Life., and pondering on this motivate more generosity.

---

## 2 CORINTHIANS 10

---

### Repent of Evil Speaking Against the Lord’s Servants

Chapter ten changes tone drastically (some scholars even speculate that it was a different letter).<sup>6</sup> Paul calls on the saints for obedience and scolds some of them for speaking evil of their leaders (particularly him). By reading in between the lines, it appears that in this chapter Paul replies to accusations made against him. In the first half against his weakness and overbearing, and later against his supposed aversion to ambition. To address these problems, he returns to defending his apostolic authority.

### Paul’s Reply to Accusations of Weakness and Overbearing

#### *2 Corinthians 10:1–11*

**2 Corinthians 10:1–2** “By the humility and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am ‘timid when face to face with you, but ‘bold’ toward you when away!” (NIV) He opens by asserting that he follows the “humble and gentle” example of Jesus (CEV). This is used as evidence to support his authority as an apostle, and to speak for, and witness of the Lord. It is also a good example for all disciples to begin each precarious discussion with “the meekness and gentleness of Christ” (KJV). As an aside, in Jewish Wisdom literature, “the truly wise man is always ‘gentle.’”<sup>7</sup> The NIV translation added quotation marks, to suggest that Paul cites the negative feedback he received from some church members in Corinth against him. In verse 2, Paul also threatens to become bold in person if they do not make the necessary changes.

**2 Corinthians 10:3–5** “though we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh . . . Instead, they have divine power to demolish strongholds . . . and every presumption set up against the knowledge of God” (BSB) In verses 3 through 5, Paul detours to make an apologetic defense on the subject of the worldliness. Paul alludes to the “flesh” or “world” in vs. 2 that “some people . . . think that we live by the standards of this world” (NIV). He has before stated that Saints who live in the world do not live by the world’s standards (Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 7:31; etc.). The battle Christians fight against Satan—sin and the ways of the world—is empowered by divine gifts. Paul presents himself as fighting for Christ’s battle against darkness.

**2 Corinthians 10:6** “we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, as soon as your obedience is complete” (BSB) Paul repeats his call for obedience. Carrying through with himself as a military commander, he wants to cut down those disobedient saints. This may have been addressed to a particular person or group of

offenders that he addressed earlier. Titus passed on the news that many saints repented, but it appears there was still room for others to align themselves with the apostle's corrections (1 Corinthians 12:21; 13:2; etc.).

**2 Corinthians 10:7–11** “**You are looking at outward appearances . . . even if I boast somewhat excessively about the authority the Lord gave us . . . I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you by my letters . . .**” (BSB) Paul backs up his call for obedience with another appeal to his apostolic authority (also in 1 Corinthians 9:1–2; 2 Corinthians 3:1–13; etc.). He wrote boldly and threatened to use the same tactic when he came in person if they did not repent.

## Paul's Reply to Complaints Against his Aversion to Ambition

*2 Corinthians 10:12–18*

**2 Corinthians 10:12–13** “**We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves**” Paul uses irony to contrast himself with those acting pridefully, “they measure themselves by themselves.” We can guess that some members denounced him and felt they were more qualified for the position. The Greco-Roman world was a competitive network. Teachers and statesmen vied for status. Paul refuses to play that game and denounces his rivals who do.

**2 Corinthians 10:14–16** “**we are not overstepping our bounds . . . Neither do we boast beyond our limits in the labors of others**” (BSB) Related to apostolic authority, Paul moves onto a problem with “apostolic jurisdiction.”<sup>8</sup> Only having one side of the conversation, we must assume that Paul passionately addresses his love and responsibility over the Corinthian saints because some were contentious about who should be their leader. Paul opened the area as a missionary four or five years ago and claims fatherhood of that area.

**2 Corinthians 10:17–19** Rather, “**Let him who boasts boast in the Lord. For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends**” (BSB) Rather than arguing with his opponents about who was the rightful heir of the region of Achaia, Paul cites Jeremiah 9:24. The Lord chooses mere mortals—but when He combines their weaknesses and strengths with His divine mantle, the Lord's leaders can accomplish His work. This great missionary knows that the work is run by the Lord.

Paul sounds like another great missionary in the Book of Mormon, Ammon:

I do not boast in my own strength, nor in my own wisdom . . . my joy is carried away, even unto boasting in my God; for he has all power, all wisdom, and . . . he is a merciful Being, even unto salvation, to those who will repent and believe on his name. Now if this is boasting, even so will I boast (Alma 25:35–36).



---

# 2 CORINTHIANS 11

---

## Paul Defends Himself through “A Fool’s Speech”

For the first half of this chapter, Paul introduced his foolish argument—a very long prologue. Shortly after he denounced the boasting of his enemies, he adopted his critics’ tactic and called his defense “a fool’s speech” (2 Corinthians 11:1; 12:13). He listed his credentials and then explained his rationale behind not accepting financial support as a church leader (2 Corinthians 11:5–15). He continued to defend himself by enumerating the sacrifices he has endured as a missionary (2 Corinthians 11:16–33). Although he is self-conscious about “boasting,” he answers his enemies’ concerns in the same way they attacked. The Prologue is divided into three sections from 2 Corinthians 11:1–21.

## Paul Identifies the Saints as Betrothed to Christ

### *2 Corinthians 11:1–4*

**2 Corinthians 11:1 “I hope you will put up with me in a little foolishness”** (NIV) Paul asks his readers to indulge him in a little “foolishness” or “folly” (KJV), because he is going to brag. He calls it foolishness, because he has just denounced it and it is the same tactic his enemies used against him. They undermined Paul by parading their credentials and by faultfinding. Now Paul admits that he, by necessity, must do the same and parade his credentials as an apostle in order to silence them. This lasts for 21 verses.

**2 Corinthians 11:2 “I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ”** Throughout the Bible, marriage is often used to symbolize God’s covenant with his people (Isaiah 50:1; 54:5–7; 62:5; Ezekiel 16:8; Hosea 2:19–20; etc.). A betrothal was the first step of a Jewish marriage. It was far more binding than a modern engagement, and occurred far younger.<sup>9</sup> The young couple were married in a legal sense, but were not to share bed and board until after the final ceremony a year or so later. At the time of the New Testament, marriages were arranged by the father or guardian. Paul portrays himself as the matchmaker. In the New Testament, the bride represents the church and the groom, the Lord (Ephesians 5:27; Revelation 19:7; 22:17; etc.).

**2 Corinthians 11:3 “Just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ”** (NIV) Paul does not want his young converts to be deceived as Eve was by the cunning of Satan or his pawns.



Fragment from the front of a sarcophagus; relief showing a Roman marriage ceremony. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

**2 Corinthians 11:4** “if someone comes and proclaims a Jesus other than the One we proclaimed . . . you put up with it way too easily” (BSB). It sounds as if an unnamed false teacher came to the region and taught a different gospel. The usurper or counterfeit had a different “spirit” that was not from God. Paul refers to the Apostolic dispensation as the “dispensation of the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:8; AMPC, NCB). The Holy Spirit is a major theme of Paul’s. Paul ironically asks, “If you can put up with a fake teacher, why can’t you put up with the apostle who taught you in the first place where you felt the Spirit of God witness of its truth?”

## Paul asks Readers to Indulge His Foolish Boasting

### *2 Corinthians 11:5-15*

**2 Corinthians 11:5** “I do not think I am in the least inferior to those ‘super-apostles’”(NIV) He asks the saints to bear with him as he is as much an apostle as the others who knew Jesus personally, or perhaps he is referring specifically to Peter and John as “the very chiefest apostles” (KJV). In his Epistle to the Galatians, Paul refers to Peter, James II (the brother of the Lord), and John as the “pillars” (Gal 1:12) or “chiefest.” In turn, he calls himself the “least” of the apostles (12:11). Least or greatest, all apostles were special witnesses. Paul received his commission from Christ just as the other apostles had.

**2 Corinthians 11:6** “Although I am not a polished speaker, I am certainly not lacking in knowledge. We have made this clear to you in every way possible” (BSB) By knowing the prominence of his hometown, Tarsus, as an intellectual center (Acts 21:39), by reading his letters (especially the chiasmic poetry of Philemon), by understanding his education (under Gamaliel, Acts 22:3), and by hearing of his speaking circuit (Mars Hill, Acts 17:19–22), I do not think Paul was an uneducated mediocre speaker. The Greek word does not mean “rude,” but translates as “an amateur” (AB, GNT), “unpolished” (BLB), or “unskilled” (NCB, NET)—in contrast to elegant orators of philosophy from the day. The Socratic and Sophist traditions raised up the greatest speakers in the history of the world. Paul never pretended to be on par with them in his second or third tongue.<sup>10</sup> Yet, from the evidence in the New Testament, we see that he was a powerful public speaker. Although, Paul admits that in “knowledge,” he was skilled and taught them truth.

**2 Corinthians 11:7–8** “Was it a sin for me . . . by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge?” (NIV) Paul returns to the fact that he did not receive any wages from the Corinthians for preaching. Yet, some of the other churches in Macedonia (vs. 9) contributed to his living expenses or “support” (NCB)—which made some of the Corinthians upset (jealous).

**2 Corinthians 11:9–10** “I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so” (NIV) In addition to the funds from the Macedonians, this verse also seems to refer to Paul’s profession as a leather worker, or tent maker. The Book of Acts mentioned that he supported himself financially this way while in Corinth (Acts 18:3). Paul established a protocol for church leaders to support themselves the best they could,

and at times to receive voluntary aid. Paul was proud of the fact that he was not paid for preaching and even boasts of the fact.

**2 Corinthians 11:11 “Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!”** (NIV) The underlying motivation for Paul’s missionary work was his love for them. Even though he has been misunderstood by his enemies, he knew that God knew his heart.

**2 Corinthians 11:12–15 “I will keep on doing what I am doing, in order to undercut . . . false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And . . . Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light”** (BSB) These wicked teachers have “disguised” (RSV, JB) themselves to appear as good, just as Satan can appear as an angel of light. These false apostles were following Satan’s example. We assume this idea was well known as the pseudepigraphic book from the first century, *Life of Adam and Eve*, has Satan appearing to Eve “wearing the form of brightness of an angel.”<sup>11</sup>

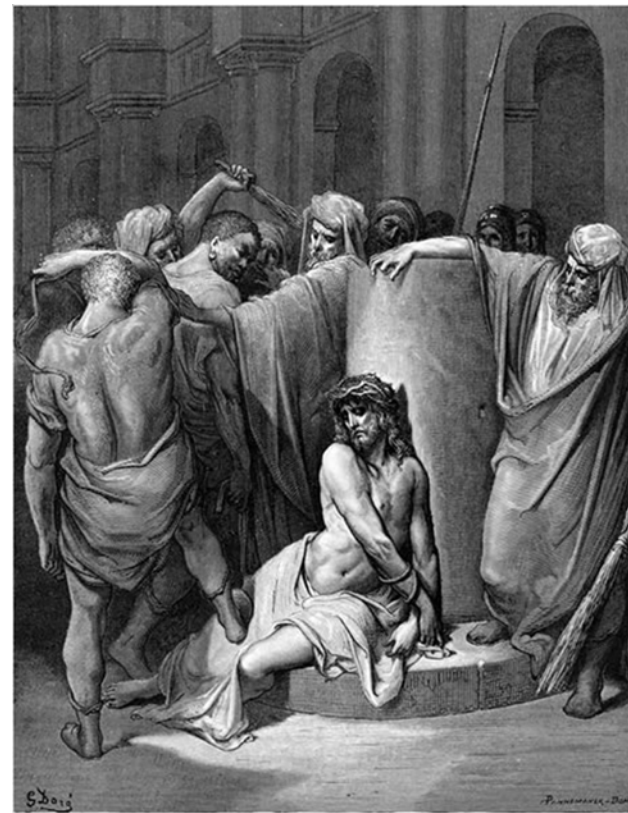
## Paul’s List of Sufferings as an Apostle

### *2 Corinthians 11:16–33*

**2 Corinthians 11:16–17 “I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then tolerate me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting”** (NIV) Paul summarizes the purpose of his prologue in this section. He only boasts “as a fool” to confront his critics. He’s trying to say that boasting is never a godly habit, but always foolishness.

**2 Corinthians 11:18–20 “In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or exalts himself”** It sounds as if the Corinthian saints received intruding men as their leaders who put on airs, bad mouthed Paul, and lived off the saints’ donations. Paul asked this group of murderers if they want him to glory in his accomplishment, too, in order to be believed?

**2 Corinthians 11:21–23 “I can match what anyone else dares to boast about . . . Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I . . . are they servants of Christ? I am speaking like I am out of my mind, but I am so much more: in harder labor, in more imprisonments”** (BSB) Paul addresses the attacks made



Jesus is Scourged by Gustave Dore, ca. 1870. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

against him, one at a time, with his own version of boasting. It seems likely that Paul's rival made a claim about his enduring hardships. This type of a record was known at the time from Cynic and Stoic authors as well.

**2 Corinthians 11:24** “Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one” Paul enumerates the abuse he had recently endured while serving as a witness of the Christ. He mentions being whipped five times. In Deuteronomy 25:1–3, Moses set a limit on how many whippings a guilty man could receive: “no more than forty lashes.” Jewish rabbis reduced that number to 39, just in case there was a miscount. They flogged or whipped an offender thirteen times on the chest, thirteen times on the right shoulder and the same on the left shoulder. During a Jewish scourging, it was common for someone to read Deuteronomy 28:58, 59; 24:9 and Psalms 78:38–39.<sup>12</sup> As a Roman citizen, could Paul could have refused to undergo this whipping? He was protected from Roman torture without being proven guilty, but in the Jewish setting, had he refused, he may have been excommunicated and not been allowed into the synagogue where he often taught.



Ships Wrecked on a Rocky Shore by Hendrick Staets. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

**2 Corinthians 11:25–28** “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” It was common to describe a 24-hour period as “a night and a day.” Paul’s autobiographical list of horrors has been repeated elsewhere, but is the most inclusive here. Many, but not all, were discussed in Luke’s account of Paul’s journeys in the Acts. The amount of his physical suffering is overwhelming. The Lord did not shield this apostle from trials. The omniscient Lord prophesied at the time of Paul’s conversion: “I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name” (Acts 9:16).

Other apostles also suffered, and their attitude was equally willing and humble: “they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name” (Acts 5:41), and “rejoice in the degree that you have shared in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice and be glad” (1 Peter 4:13). Sacrifice and suffering can produce sanctification if they are approached meekly and endured. We can all learn what the Lord taught the Prophet Joseph Smith, “All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good” (D&C 122:7). If our Savior was made “perfect through sufferings,” then I assume we, His servants are, too (Hebrews 2:10).



**1 CORINTHIANS 4:9–13**

God hath set forth us the apostles last  
 God hath set forth us the apostles last  
 a spectacle unto the world . . .  
 We *are* fools for Christ’s sake . . .  
 we *are* weak . . .  
 we *are* despised . . .  
 we both hunger, and thirst,  
 and are naked, and are buffeted,  
 and have no certain dwellingplace;  
 labour, working with our own hands:  
 being reviled . . .  
 being persecuted, we suffer it  
 Being defamed, we intreat:  
 we are made as the filth of the world,  
 and are the offscouring of all things.

**2 CORINTHIANS 6:4C–5**

in afflictions  
 in necessities  
 in distresses  
 in stripes  
 in imprisonments  
 in tumults  
 in labours  
 in watchings  
 in fastings [hunger]

**2 CORINTHIANS 11:23–28**

in labours more abundant  
 in stripes above measure  
 in prisons more frequent  
 in deaths oft  
 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 fastings often

**2 Corinthians 11:28–29** “Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?” (NIV) Paul’s outward struggles pale to his inward concerns about the saints. We saw his sympathy in Romans 14:1, “Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling,” as he or she was most vulnerable to falling away.

**2 Corinthians 11:30–31** “If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities” Paul claims his list of persecutions is accurate, with God as his witness. Even though enumerating his perils and privations as part of his apostolic service sounds boastful, Paul feels he must enumerate these things to convince them of his commitment to the work.

## A Humiliating Memory

*2 Corinthians 11:30–33*

**2 Corinthians 11:32** In Damascus, the governor under King Aretas secured the city of the Damascenes in order to arrest me” (BSB) Luke recorded the same story in Acts 9. There is some debate, but it appears that Aretas IV was the governor the Nabataean Arabs from 9 BC to AD 40 (which included Petra). His daughter was married to (and divorced from), Herod Antipas. Other sources question whether Paul meant the Nabataen King himself, or an official in control of Damascus.<sup>13</sup> Luke recorded that the Jews laid wait to kill Paul, but Paul claims the King’s forces were involved as well. Both parties were probably against Paul.

**2 Corinthians 11:33** “I was lowered in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his grasp” (BSB) In Acts 9:25, Luke described the disciples lowering Paul in basket (probably a large woven flexible woven container used for bales of hay or wool). The window in the house was presumably built onto the wall away from the city gates.

---

# 2 CORINTHIANS 12

---

## Visions and Revelations

From reciting the hardships he had endured for the cause; Paul moves onto sharing one very special vision of the degrees of glory. Although he continues to apologize for this type of boasting, he goes ahead in order to provide evidence to silence his critics in a way they could understand. Even though he repeatedly denounces bragging and claims it was unprofitable, he felt compelled to continue to answer his critics in a way they understood. He uses “visions and revelations” as either witnesses of his apostolic calling, or possibly his critics also had boasted of the same.

## Vision of the Third Heaven

*2 Corinthians 12:1–6*

**2 Corinthians 12:1** “Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord” (NASB) Although Paul only refers to one here, we know there were others as recorded in the rest of the New Testament (Acts 9:1–8; 16:9; 18:9; 22:17–21; 27:23; 1 Corinthians 15:8; Galatians 1:12). As he recaptures this vision, he approaches it indirectly, “I knew a man” (12:2).

**2 Corinthians 12:2–4** “I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago . . . caught up to the third heaven” Although the text of these few verses does not identify Paul as the visionary, when the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote on these verses, he identified the “man” as Paul:

Paul ascended into the third heavens, and he could understand the three principal rounds of Jacob's ladder—the telestial, the terrestrial, and the celestial glories or kingdoms, where Paul saw and heard things which were not lawful for him to utter. I could explain a hundred-fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them.<sup>14</sup>

Joseph also taught that “Paul . . . knew . . . all the ordinances, and blessings were in the Church” and wrote from that perspective.<sup>15</sup> This vision sounds as if it were received in conjunction with things taught in the temple, “and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (2 Corinthians 12:4).

Paul may have referenced this vision earlier in this letter when he wrote, “we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another” (1 Corinthians 3:18, NET). Those who enter into the presence of the Lord will do it with their faces unveiled.

**2 Corinthians 12:5–6** “if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say” (NIV) Paul refuses to boast or elaborate any more on this sacred vision—only to mention it. His goal was not to brag about himself—as a fool would—but to speak the truth in order to set his story straight.

## Paul's Thorn and God's Grace

*2 Corinthians 12:7–10*

**2 Corinthians 12:7** “in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh” (NIV) Paul felt that in order for the Lord to keep him humble, He gave him a “thorn in the flesh” or “splinter.” We do not know what Paul's thorn was, but he says it was Satan's way of buffeting him. Some suggest a physical ailment, others emotional or spiritual.



Rosa Celeste: The Highest Heaven of Dante's Divine Comedy by Gustave Dore. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

**2 Corinthians 12:8–9** “Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness’” (BSB) Whatever the challenge Paul endured, after fervently praying, he understood that he needed to learn meekness and a reliance on God in this area. Rather than a divine healing, the Lord strengthened Paul to carry out his calling with his weakness. The Lord uses our weaknesses to perfect us. Our weaknesses take us to God, where He can strength us. This answer comforted Paul and helped him understand that his problem allowed him to feel God’s power resting upon him. The Lord did not answer Paul’s prayer, nor all of our prayers in the way we first ask, because He has a much larger vision of what is best for us. We are assured that He acts in love for our good (Romans 8:33–38; Moses 1:39; etc.), which fortunately means, He does not answer every prayer as we wish in our myopic perspective.

We learn more about the value of weaknesses in the Book of Mormon:

- “. . . the Lord God showeth us our weakness that we may know that it is by his grace . . . that we have power to do these things” (Jacob 4:7)
- “. . . out of weaknesses he [we] shall be made strong” (2 Nephi 3:13)
- “If men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them” (Ether 12:27; also see 2 Nephi 33:4; Alma 58:37; D&C 35:17; 62:1; etc.).

Similarly, the scriptures also tell of people’s weaknesses taking them further from God through pride. If we bring our weaknesses to the Lord, He can use them as a tool to draw us closer to Him (unlike Satan who uses them to separate us further from God). If we approach our weaknesses with meekness by asking the Lord, “What do I need to learn?” He can teach us through the Spirit how to use them as doorways, not barriers to the Spirit.<sup>16</sup> Weaknesses can become our strengths in at least two ways: 1) they bring us closer to God as we humbly ask for help, and 2) we have to work hard to tenaciously overcome them, which becomes strength.

**2 Corinthians 12:10** “I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (NIV) Paul grew to appreciate his challenges as they drew him closer to the Lord. The Prophet John Taylor similarly taught,

It is necessary that we pass through certain ordeals in order that we may be purified . . . We have learned many things through suffering. We call it suffering. I call it a school of experience. I never did bother my head much about these things. I do not today. What are these things for? Why is it that good men should be tried? Why is it, in fact, that we should have a devil? Why did not the Lord kill him long ago? Because he could not do without him. He needed the devil and a great many of those who do his bidding



just to keep men straight, that we may learn to place our dependence upon God, and trust in him, and to observe his laws, and keep his commandments.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike his natural abilities that tended to breed self-reliance or boasting, both Pres. Taylor and Paul learned to appreciate weaknesses as the means to draw closer to God.

## Paul's Concern for the Corinthian Church and Signs of an Apostle

### *2 Corinthians 12:11-21*

**2 Corinthians 12:11** “I have become a fool, but you drove me to it. In fact, you should have commended me, since I am in no way inferior to those ‘super-apostles,’ even though I am nothing” (BSB) With a sarcastic joke, and probably a smile on his face, Paul finishes recording his “foolish” boasting (that he felt forced to do to prove the falseness of his critics, see 2 Corinthians 5:12).

**2 Corinthians 12:12** “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds” Paul appeals to the Corinthians’ own experience of his apostolic authority. They saw him perform “signs and wonders” through the gifts of the Spirit as a true disciple. The account in Acts 18:1–18, touched on Paul’s eighteen months in Corinth including his powerful testimony, a vision, faith, hope, leadership, and endurance. Paul’s Epistles speak of his love or charity for the saints there.



St. Paul by Jan Lievens, ca. 1629. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

**2 Corinthians 12:13** “in what were you less favored than the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!” (ESV) The Corinthian saints may have felt “inferior” (NIV, NAS) to the other congregations—or at least the critics may have claimed that. Paul’s sarcasm returned with a joke about covering his own cost of living, and begged their pardon (see Acts 18:3).

## Paul's Motivation for Another Visit

### *2 Corinthians 12:14–19*

**2 Corinthians 12:14–15 “for this third time I am ready to come to you”** (NASB) Paul first opened the mission in Corinth on his second Apostolic mission (Acts 18:1; 1 Corinthians 2:1). But, no other trip is mentioned. This raises the question, did Paul make an extra trip to Corinth other than what is mentioned in the book of Acts? That is not very likely, nor is the third visit only Paul's presence via his Epistle. More likely, Paul had prepared to go three times. The Greek grammar connects the “three” with “to come.” So, it can read, “I am ready to come to you for the third time.”<sup>18</sup>

**“and I will not be a burden to you; for I do not seek what is yours, but you . . . I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?”** (NASB) He planned on coming without accepting of their financial support for his needs. What he wanted was their hearts to turn toward God. The Corinthian saints had been his spiritual children and he hoped to spend his spiritual resources to win them back.

**2 Corinthians 12:16 “I have not been a burden to you. Yet, crafty fellow that I am, I caught you”** (NIV) Underlying Paul's defensive approach, we can guess that the real issue was that Paul had been accused of craftily exploiting the saints. Piecing these points together, we surmise that his critics claimed that his missionary efforts were motivated by money. He has tried to express that he “caught” them, only to bless them; he certainly gained none of their money.

**2 Corinthians 12:17–18 “Did I exploit you through any of the men I sent to you? . . . Titus did not exploit you, did he?”** (NIV) Paul's companion, Titus, traveled with at least two others (2 Corinthians 8:17–18). He asks them to find evidence of their unity in the continuity of the Spirit of the Lord, “walked we not in the same spirit?”

**2 Corinthians 12:19 “we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying”** Without any jesting, Paul reiterates that he worked for the Corinthian saints' edification alone—unlike other “false apostles” who deceived them for their own gains.

**2 Corinthians 12:20–21 “I am afraid that when I come . . . there may be quarreling, jealousy, rage, rivalry, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder . . . many . . . have not repented”** (BSB). Paul worried about finding the saints still plagued with contention, divisions, selfishness, arrogance (NEB), unrepentant hearts, and indulging in sexual sins that plagued the city of Corinth (see introduction 1 Corinthians 1:1).

---

## 2 CORINTHIANS 13

---

### Concluding Admonition

*2 Corinthians 13:1-10*

**2 Corinthians 13:1** “I am on my way to visit you for the third time” (CEV). Similar to 2 Corinthians 12:14, we assume Paul had tried to begin his journey three times, but we do not know for sure. Paul seems to suggest that this visit will be one application of the Law of Witnesses. They will have two or three opportunities to hear his testimony. Jews and Christians should be familiar with the Old Testament legal ruling that warned when God sends two or three testimonies through His witnesses, the truth will be established and punishment administered (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15, Numbers 35:30; and reconfirmed by Jesus in Matthew 18:16; John 8:17).

**2 Corinthians 13:2** “I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time . . . I will not spare” Paul forewarns (RSV) those who need to repent of their sins, that when he comes he will require a church cleansing.

**2 Corinthians 13:3** “This should prove to you that I am speaking for Christ. When he corrects you, he won’t be weak. He will be powerful!” (CEV) Paul again addresses those who doubted if he were a “full apostle.” In response, Paul warns those who had not repented that he would offer proof that Christ worked and spoke through him. I like this interpretation of this verse, “You shall have the proof you desire. I may be weak in my dealings with you, compared to my critics, but Christ is not weak in dealing with you, and when I come I shall be the vehicle of his power among you.”

**2 Corinthians 13:4** “He was indeed crucified in weakness, yet He lives by God’s power. And though we are weak in Him, yet by God’s power we will live with Him to serve you” (BSB) Jesus came to earth as a baby and was crucified like a common robber. By worldly standards, His mortal experience appeared weak, though in reality His birth, life, and death worked through “the power of God.” Although Paul is also a weak human, he hoped to manifest God’s power as his special witness.

**2 Corinthians 13:5-6** “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves” (NIV) Paul challenged his audience to examine themselves—just as he had before they partook of the sacrament (1 Corinthians 11:28)—and asked if their faith were genuine.

**2 Corinthians 13:7-9** “Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong . . . our prayer is for your perfection” (BSB) This is a powerful idea. We cannot fight against truth; it will always conquer. We can only fight for the truth!

**2 Corinthians 13:10** “This is why I write these things while absent, so that when I am present I will . . . build you up” (BSB) Paul calls them to repentance one last time: “Mend your ways” (NCB). Paul does not want to use his authority to tear down the opposition.

## Final Exhortation, Greeting and Benediction

*2 Corinthians 13:11-14*

**2 Corinthians 13:11** “Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you” Paul pled with the saints to comfort one another and exhort one another (or it could be read, comfort *by exhorting*—knowing the truth is comforting!), so that the love and peace of God will be with them.

**2 Corinthians 13:13** “Greet one another with a holy kiss” The saints who “greeted” the Corinthians were probably from Macedonia, though we don’t know for sure.

**2 Corinthians 13:14** “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” This is Paul’s characteristic benediction at the end of each letter. The grace of our Lord is amplified here by the love of God and fellowship of the Spirit.

*Header Image: Roman Coins by Helen in Wales. Image via Flickr.*



---

## ENDNOTES

---

1. Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 153.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “We can Do Better Be Better,” *General Conference* April 2019.
3. Andrew H. Hedges, J. Spencer Fluhman, and Alonzo L. Gaskill *The Doctrine and Covenants: Revelations in Context*, ed. (Provo and SLC, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, and Deseret Book, 2008), 212–228. In Steve Harper’s article, “All Things Are the Lord’s”: The Law of Consecration in the Doctrine and Covenants,” he described: “The law of consecration found in the Doctrine and Covenants can be envisioned as a three-legged stool, where the legs are agency, stewardship, and accountability. Agency is the power we have to act independently on the law, regardless of what anyone else thinks, says, or does. . . . A steward is a free agent empowered to act independently but accountable to the actual owner for all actions. For this reason, the law is often and accurately referred to as both consecration and stewardship. . . . The Lord is adamant about the connections between agency, stewardship, and accountability. Because He has empowered us to act independently with His property, we will be held accountable.”
4. Strong’s Concordance of the Bible, <https://biblehub.com/greek/5485.htm> (accessed 9-3-19)
5. Richard Anderson, *Understanding Paul*, 140. Anderson called 2 Corinthians, “an intense letter of relationships, a letter standing above all others in revealing Paul’s feelings about the gospel and his converts” (ibid, 132).
6. Victor Paul Furnish, *The Anchor Bible: II Corinthians* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 35–48; 459.
7. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 460.
8. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 480.
9. Lynne Hilton Wilson, *Christ’s Emancipation of Women in the New Testament* (Palo Alto, CA: GP, 2015), chapter 5. “The ideal healthy Jewish young man married at eighteen (*Mishnah, Avoth*, 5:21; *Kiddushin*, 29b. Glover, *Jewish Laws and Customs*, 231; Campbell, *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World*, 186, footnote 20. Neusner, ed, *Judaism in the Biblical Period*, 224). . . . The ideal Jewish girl married a little younger—usually between the ages of twelve to fifteen. The day after a girl’s twelfth birthday, she was no longer a minor “young girl/*na’rah*,” and the day after she turned twelve and a half she could legally be married (*Mishnah, Kiddushin*, 2.1). Given the young ages of their marriages, their culture of gender segregation, and their inexperience socially, it is not surprising that arranged marriages seemed the best cultural option (Ben Sira, *Ecclesiasticus*, 26:10–11; 22:3).”
10. Paul probably spoke Aramaic at home, Hebrew in the synagogue and religious education, and was also educated in Greek.
11. R.H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913); <https://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/apo/slanev.htm> (accessed 9-4-19).
12. Deuteronomy 28:58–59, “If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.” Deuteronomy 24:9, “Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out

of Egypt.” Psalms 78:38–39, “But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath. For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.”

13. Justin Taylor, “The Ethnarch of King Aretas at Damascus: A Note On 2 Corinthians 11, 32–33” *Revue Biblique*, Vol. 99, No. 4 (OCTOBRE 1992), 719–728. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/44089131?sid=jstor%3Ajstor&genre=article&title=Revue+Biblique+%281946%29&atitle=THE+ETHNARCH+OF+KING+ARETAS+AT+DAMASCUS%3A+A+NOTE+ON+2+COR+11%2C+32-33&issn=00350907&eissn=24668583&volume=99&issue=4&spage=719&epage=728&pages=719-728&date=1992-10-01&seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/44089131?sid=jstor%3Ajstor&genre=article&title=Revue+Biblique+%281946%29&atitle=THE+ETHNARCH+OF+KING+ARETAS+AT+DAMASCUS%3A+A+NOTE+ON+2+COR+11%2C+32-33&issn=00350907&eissn=24668583&volume=99&issue=4&spage=719&epage=728&pages=719-728&date=1992-10-01&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents) (accessed 9-5-19).
14. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:402, or Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 304.
15. Andrew Ehat and Lindon Cook: *Words of Joseph Smith*, 10; also 9, 42, 110, 210, 327–331.
16. Lynne Hilton Wilson, *Learning the Language of the Lord* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 2018), chapter 6.
17. John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses*, 23:334.
18. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 557.