

Dictionary OF Paul AND HIS Letters

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CONVERTS. See COWORKERS, PAUL AND HIS; SOCIAL SETTING OF MISSION CHURCHES.

CORINTH. See CORINTHIANS, LETTERS TO THE.

CORINTHIANS, LETTERS TO THE

1 and 2 Corinthians represent at least two of the four or more letters that Paul wrote to his church in Corinth together with the churches in the region of Achaia which surrounded this important Roman city (1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1; cf. Rom 16:1). As its founder (cf. 1 Cor 4:14-15; 2 Cor 10:13-14), Paul knew well the church's history, character and problems. 1 Corinthians provides the most detailed example within the Pauline corpus of the way in which Paul applied his theological convictions, especially his christology* and eschatology,* to the practical issues facing the church. In contrast, due to the circumstances which later developed in Corinth with the arrival of Paul's opponents,* 2 Corinthians contains Paul's most sustained apologetic for his apostolic authority* of any of the Pauline letters. In addition, both letters deal with the collection for the saints in Jerusalem, which was so important to Paul (cf. 1 Cor 16:1-9; 2 Cor 8-9; see Collection).

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1. The Contents of 1 Corinthians.

1.1. The Salutation. Paul's salutation in 1 Corinthians 1:1-3 is typical of ancient letters in that it first identifies the sender and then the recipients, after which a greeting is extended. Paul's salutation in 1 Corinthians is distinct, however, in that he expands both the identification of the sender (Paul and Sosthenes) and the recipients (to the church in Corinth, "together with all those who are calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place," 1 Cor 1:2). On the one hand, joint authorship of an ancient letter is rare. We are not sure who Sosthenes was (cf. the same name in Acts 18:17 for the ruler of the synagogue in Corinth), or what contribution he made in writing the letter, for as 1 Corinthians unfolds it becomes clear that Paul alone is speaking. Moreover, Paul's position as "an apostle of Christ Jesus" is clearly distinguished from that of Sosthenes, who is identified merely as "our brother" (1 Cor 1:1). On the other hand, this is the most extensive elaboration of the recipients found among Paul's letters. In it Paul indicates that he views

the church in Corinth to be the center of a cluster of house churches in the surrounding area.

But what is most striking in the salutation are the two supporting clauses which give the general reason both for Paul's writing (i.e., because he has been called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus), and for his writing to the Corinthians (i.e., because they too have been called to be "saints" as those "set apart" or "sanctified in Christ Jesus"). In both cases the focus on Christ* in the salutation points forward to the christological foundation of Paul's arguments in 1 Corinthians. The prayer*/wish in 1 Corinthians 1:3, "grace (*charis*) . . . to you," is a Christianized form and expansion of the typical greeting used in ancient letters: "greetings (*chairein*) to you."

1.2. The Opening Thanksgiving. Again according to his normal custom, Paul follows his salutation with a thanksgiving for his church in 1 Corinthians 1:4-9 (see Benediction). More than merely a spontaneous expression of personal praise, the thanksgiving introduces the central theme of the letter as a whole (see Letters). Despite the Corinthians' current problems, Paul begins by expressing his gratitude to God* for the sufficiency of their spiritual gifts* (i.e., the concrete expression of the "grace"* of God given to them), since Paul is thereby assured that God has irrevocably called the Corinthians and will therefore sustain them faithfully until judgment* day. Hence, the problem in Corinth is not their spiritual gifts *per se*, but their attitude toward and use of them (cf. 1 Cor 12-14). As will become clear, the Corinthians are boasting in the very calling and gifts (= grace) for which God alone is to be thanked (cf. 1 Cor 1:26-31; 4:7).

1.3. Responses to Reports About Corinth. 1 Corinthians 1:10 begins the body of Paul's letter and introduces the first major section, which runs from 1 Corinthians 1:10 to 6:20. This section contains Paul's responses to the issues which he has heard about from "Chloe's people" (1 Cor 1:11, i.e., a certain group, most likely from Ephesus, in contact with the Corinthian situation) and from other oral reports (1 Cor 5:1; cf. 16:15-18). In this first major section Paul also attempts to clear up the Corinthians' misunderstanding of his earlier correspondence (1 Cor 5:9, 11).

In the first unit within this section (1 Cor 1:10-6:20), Paul deals with the causes of and the solution to the dissension and rivalry that has developed between some of the Corinthians based on their loyalty to various Christian leaders, including Paul himself (to posit actual divisions or "parties" within the church is too strong a reading of 1 Cor 1:10-12). The many attempts to ascertain the origin and distinctive theolog-

ical perspective of those who claimed to belong to Paul, Apollos,* Cephas (see Peter) and, more generally, to Christ (1 Cor 1:12) have not been successful. The attempt to read this text as evidence for a pervasive conflict within the early church between Peter, representing the Jewish Christians, and Paul, representing the Gentiles,* as first championed by F. C. Baur, has also failed (see Paul and His Interpreters).

What can be said with confidence is that the root of the problem was the Corinthian addiction to the power, prestige and pride represented in the Hellenistic rhetorical* tradition, with its emphasis on the glory of human wisdom and attainment and its corresponding flagrant and flamboyant lifestyle. It is this Hellenistic "wisdom of the word" (1 Cor 1:17, 20, 26; 2:1; 3:19) that Paul combats by calling attention to the contrary "wisdom"* and "power"* of God as manifested first in the cross* of Christ (1 Cor 1:18-25), then in the calling of the Corinthians themselves (1 Cor 1:26-31), and finally in the intentional nature of Paul's own ministry* and apostolic way of life (1 Cor 2:1-5; 4:1-13).

Yet since "the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing" (1 Cor 1:18; cf. 2:14), only those whose hearts have been transformed by the work of the Spirit will be able to accept the true wisdom and power of God as revealed in the gospel* (1 Cor 1:20-24; 2:6-16). Paul therefore warns the Corinthians that their boasting in themselves and in their various spiritual leaders is a dangerous sign that the Spirit is not prevailing in their lives, since they are acting like those who are still "natural" or "unspiritual" (1 Cor 2:14-3:4). Should such an attitude and its behavior continue, they too will thus find themselves under the judgment of God, who will destroy the wisdom of this world* and all those who work to destroy the church* as the temple* of the Spirit, built on the foundation of the cross of Christ (1 Cor 1:19-20; 3:10-23). The Corinthians must consequently repent of their boasting, recognize that everything they have is a gift, and follow in the pattern of their own apostle, whose life of weakness* and suffering manifests both the power of the kingdom* of God and the reality of the cross (1 Cor 1:31; 2:3-5; 4:6-13, 14-21).

The same arrogance and spiritual competition based on one's spiritual gifts and leaders, which some Corinthians had wed to a boasting in the achievements of Hellenistic wisdom (1 Cor 1:10-4:21), had also manifested itself in flagrant immorality within the church and in lawsuits* between fellow believers (cf. 1 Cor 5:2, 6; 6:9). In 1 Corinthians 5:1-6:20 Paul now addresses these problems and their underlying causes.

In the first case Paul responds by exercising his own

authority. With the cooperation and consent of the Corinthian church, he disciplines* the man who is living with his father's wife with excommunication for the sake of his ultimate restoration (1 Cor 5:3-5). Paul then proceeds to make it clear that one's new position in and worship* of Christ demand a corresponding purity and separation, not from the world, but within the world (1 Cor 5:6-13), since "the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:9). The Corinthians' present status of having been justified* and sanctified (see Holiness) in Christ must work itself out in a corresponding life of growing obedience to the demands of God, for they are the temple of God's own Spirit (1 Cor 6:11, 12-20). Though all things are "lawful" for the believer, the Spirit does not free one from the call to holiness in this age; it frees one for it (1 Cor 6:12).

In the midst of this discussion, Paul addresses the fact that the Corinthians are taking their disputes to the secular courts for arbitration. Here too the Corinthians' spirituality* ought to equip them to express God's wisdom, rather than allowing them to capitulate to the world, especially when they are being equipped as God's people to share in God's ultimate judgment of the world (1 Cor 6:1-6). And in the event that no settlement can be reached, those who are spiritual ought to be willing and able to suffer wrong unjustly for the sake of Christ (1 Cor 6:7-8). As 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 and 1 Corinthians 13 will make clear, this is the true way of Christ-like love* and the true expression of one's spiritual power, maturity and giftedness.

1.4. Responses to the Letter from Corinth. Beginning with 1 Corinthians 7:1, Paul turns his attention to the issues concerning which the Corinthians have recently written to Paul for clarification of his views and their implications. Paul's treatment of these matters constitutes the second major section of the letter, which extends to 1 Corinthians 16:12 (cf. the repeated use of the "concerning" formula in 1 Cor 7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1; 16:12).

In 1 Corinthians 7:1-40 Paul discusses marriage* and celibacy. Here he is mindful of the tensions and anxieties caused by living in an evil age between the first and second comings of Christ (1 Cor 7:25-35), and of the God-given physical and emotional needs and desires of his people (1 Cor 7:1-5, 36-38). The basis of Paul's instruction is once again the determinative role that the calling and gifting of God play in one's life (cf. 1 Cor 7:15, 17-24 with 1:26-31). And here again, though Paul himself prefers being single as the way of life most suited to serving God (cf. 1 Cor 7:8, 32-34, 38), the goal is to live, whether married, widowed or single, in the kind of devotion to the Lord that corres-

ponds to God's work in one's life and reflects God's character (cf. 1 Cor 7:19-20, 35).

In 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 Paul confronts the problems that have arisen due to the fact that the more knowledgeable within the church are eating food* which has been sacrificed in a pagan temple. These individuals have come to understand that idols* do not actually exist (1 Cor 8:4-6). But their behavior has become a stumbling block for those who do not yet share this understanding, defiling their weaker consciences and destroying their faith (1 Cor 8:7, 9, 11-12). Paul considers such disregard for the disposition of others, based on one's own rights and knowledge, to be a sin not only against them but against Christ himself. Those who truly know God and are known by him will employ their freedom* and knowledge* for the sake of building up others in their faith, even when this entails denying one's own legitimate rights as a believer (1 Cor 8:1-3; 13). This is the "love that builds up," rather than knowledge alone, which merely "makes one arrogant" (1 Cor 8:1).

To support his point Paul illustrates this principle of love by pointing to his own decision to support himself financially while in Corinth (1 Cor 9:1-27; *see* Tentmaking). Although the Corinthians accepted Paul as an apostle (1 Cor 9:1-2), others criticized him for not exercising his legitimate apostolic right to financial support (1 Cor 9:3-14; *see* Financial Support) even when this meant much undue hardship and suffering* on Paul's part (cf. 1 Cor 4:11-13). Paul's answer is that he has given up his rights as an apostle for the sake of the progress of the gospel and for the reward God has promised for such acts of love (1 Cor 9:15-18). Paul thus makes himself "a slave to all, that [he] might win the more" (1 Cor 9:19) even though he is free to do as it is appropriate in Christ. This is the training in love that all must engage in, who, like Paul, are called to persevere in self-control in order to pursue the prize of the gospel (1 Cor 9:23-27).

In chapter ten Paul goes on to warn the Corinthians of what will happen if they too fail to persevere in love, and misuse their knowledge and experience as an excuse for continual immorality and evil (cf. 1 Cor 10:11-12). Like Israel in the wilderness, they will be destroyed (1 Cor 10:1-10). Indeed, God has provided a way of escape from overwhelming temptation, so that there is no excuse for not enduring in the love that is produced by genuine faith (1 Cor 10:13). As an example of this Paul gives theological parameters and practical advice for dealing with the temptation to partake of food offered to idols. This temptation was common among the Corinthians in general, for whom it was a common social practice to eat in the precincts

of a pagan temple (*see* Idolatry). But Paul warns of the inherent spiritual dangers, arguing that even if an idol is "nothing," those who partook of food offered to idols were partaking of the table of demons* (1 Cor 10:14-30). Finally, Paul returns once again to his own apostolic lifestyle of not seeking his own advantage but living to please others for Christ's sake (1 Cor 10:31-32). Here too this is an example for the Corinthians themselves, calling them once more to be "imitators" of him, as he is of Christ (1 Cor 11:1; cf. 4:16; *see* Imitation).

In 1 Corinthians 11:2-34 and 1 Corinthians 12-14 Paul turns his attention to three matters concerning Christlike behavior in worship*: (1) the relationship between men and women in worship as expressed in the cultural practice of women wearing veils (1 Cor 11:2-16 [*see* Man and Woman]); unlike his response to the following two problems, Paul here praises the Corinthians and merely writes to give them a theological grounding for their practice), (2) the setting up of class distinctions during the celebration of the Lord's Supper* as an abuse of its very meaning (1 Cor 11:17-34), and (3) the proper use of prophecy* and tongues* in worship (1 Cor 14:1-40) against the backdrop of the significance of spiritual gifts* in general (1 Cor 12:1-31).

In view of Paul's arguments thus far in 1 Corinthians it is not surprising that in each of these cases Paul's approach is to make it clear that true spirituality and giftedness are not compatible with arrogant boasting and competition based on one's place in the body of Christ (*see* Body of Christ) or in society, or with parading one's gifts before others (cf. 1 Cor 11:18-22; 12:14-26; 14:6-12). Genuine spirituality manifests itself in mutual interdependence and complementarity, both among men and women in view of their distinct roles, and among those within the church due to the variety of their spiritual gifts. The same principles are to be manifest in dealing with their cultural diversity and economic distinctions (cf. 1 Cor 11:11, 33-34; 12:4-31; 14:26-40). And in each case this practical spirituality is grounded in theology, whether that be the creative work of God (1 Cor 11:2-16), the redemptive work of Christ (1 Cor 11:17-34), or the gifting of the Spirit (1 Cor 12-14).

Finally, as "the more excellent way" outlined in 1 Corinthians 13 makes evident, the criterion for establishing the appropriate application of this theology is that of "love,"* the character of which is outlined in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (cf. its application in 1 Cor 12:4-11; 14:6-19). Hence, apart from faith in Christ working itself out in love for the body of Christ, participation in the Lord's Supper and apparent possession of spiritual gifts do not ensure one's right stand-

ing before God. In fact, they bring one under the judgment of God (cf. 1 Cor 11:16, 27-32; 14:37-38), since only love, as the outward expression of faith* and hope,* remains forever (1 Cor 13:1-3, 8-13). Paul can thus admonish the Corinthians, who pride themselves on their spiritual gifts and experiences, that "since you are eager for spiritual things and experiences, strive that you may abound in building up the church" (1 Cor 14:12).

Having begun by grounding his opening section in the cross of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 1:18-25), Paul now concludes his application of theological truths to practical problems by dealing in 1 Corinthians 15:1-58 with the surety and nature of the future resurrection* in view of the resurrection of Christ. Paul first calls attention in 1 Corinthians 15:1-5 to the death and resurrection of Christ as the center point of the gospel, which Paul had received as the common tradition* of the church and then passed on to the Corinthians as the basis of their salvation. This is the earliest account we have of the contours of the early Christian message and its historical evidence. Paul then supplements this evidence with the recital of Christ's further resurrection appearances. He concludes with his own experience of the resurrected Christ and its consequences for his life as the "least of the apostles" (1 Cor 15:9-11).

In turning his attention to the Corinthians, Paul draws out a threefold significance from the fact of Christ's resurrection. First, no one can conclude that there is no resurrection from the dead (1 Cor 15:12-19, 29-34). Second, Christ's resurrection is the "first fruits"* of what will happen to all "in Christ"* at his second coming when God's "final enemy," death (see *Life and Death*), is destroyed and all authorities are put back under subjection to the reign of God. Hence, contrary to the Corinthians' belief that they were *already* experiencing the fullness of the resurrection age to come in their own current life of the Spirit (i.e., their "over-realized eschatology"), the final resurrection is by no means merely an experience of spiritual power and gifting in the present (1 Cor 15:20-28). Rather, it is a qualitatively different bodily existence which can only be gained through the granting of a new, resurrected and spiritual body (1 Cor 15:35-56). Third, believers now live "between" the two resurrections, Christ's and their own. They live in the midst of an age which is still evil, but which can be endured and overcome by the sure confidence that Christ's resurrection experience and victory over death as the "last Adam*" will be shared by them because they are "in Christ" (1 Cor 15:42-54). The practical implication of this hope is that the believer is encouraged to "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work

of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Cor 15:58).

As the last of the matters raised by the Corinthians' letter, Paul ends his responses by outlining his instructions concerning the management of the collection being taken for the poor believers in Jerusalem,* noting his future travel plans, providing a recommendation for Timothy (see *Coworkers*), and then giving a brief explanation of Apollos's* reason for not visiting Corinth (1 Cor 16:1-12).

1.5. Concluding Remarks. The letter ends with a final series of admonitions and greetings from Paul and those with Paul in Asia (1 Cor 16:13-24). As a fitting capstone to the letter as a whole, these admonitions center on the need for perseverance in one's faith as it works itself out in love (1 Cor 16:13-14) and the corresponding pronouncement of God's judgment on those who "have no love for the Lord," with Paul himself longing for the return of Christ (1 Cor 16:22).

2. The Contents of 2 Corinthians.

2.1. The Salutation. The salutation in 2 Corinthians 1:1-2 follows the same pattern as 1 Corinthians 1:1-3, though in comparison both the identification of the sender and of the recipients are now abbreviated. Paul's apostolic identity by means of the will of God is again expressed, with Timothy now noted as the letter's cosender. But as in the case of Sosthenes, here too Timothy is identified merely as a "brother," once again clearly highlighting Paul's apostolic office. Though there has been considerable discussion concerning whether the first person plurals in 2 Corinthians 1-7 refer to a wider circle of apostles or coworkers* (cf., e.g., 2 Cor 1:19; 8:16-23), the internal evidence of the letter suggests that Paul alone remains the subject *and* object of the discussion throughout 2 Corinthians, apart from those texts where it is explicitly indicated otherwise (e.g., 2 Cor 3:18; the focus on the Corinthians in 2 Cor 6:14-7:1; 8-9). The recipients of the letter remain the house churches in Corinth and those believers scattered in small groups around this center. The greeting is also the same as in 1 Corinthians.

2.2. The Opening Thanksgiving. But unlike the situation he faced in 1 Corinthians, Paul now finds himself in a new polemical situation in which his own legitimacy as an apostle had been severely called into question at Corinth and still is being doubted by a significant minority within the church (see 4.2 below). This polemical situation and the corresponding apologetic tone which characterizes much of 2 Corinthians are evident from the beginning of the letter. In contrast to Paul's opening thanksgiving in 1 Corin-

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thians 1:4-9, Paul begins 2 Corinthians not by thanking God for God's work of grace among the Corinthians, but by praising God for his work of comfort and deliverance from adversity in his own life (2 Cor 1:3-11). In doing so, Paul uses a formula in 2 Corinthians 1:3 which is typical of Jewish worship ("blessed be God . . .") and which calls attention to blessings in which he himself has participated (see Liturgical Elements). These thanksgivings function in Paul's letters to introduce the main themes of his writing, to express his perspective on them, and to introduce an implicit appeal to his readers in response.

Second Corinthians 1:1-11 thus establishes the apologetic tone and central theme of what is to follow: rather than calling his apostleship into question, Paul's suffering* validates his call.* God has called Paul to suffer in order that through the merciful "comfort" of God's sustaining power and ultimate deliverance, which Paul experiences in his affliction,* he will be able to make God's power and comfort known to others (2 Cor 1:6-7, 10). Paul can thus interpret his own suffering (= "death") in terms of the death of Christ, and his deliverance from this suffering as a type of the resurrection (2 Cor 1:9). As such, these too become a means by which the church is encouraged in its faithfulness in the midst of adversity (2 Cor 1:7). Paul's suffering, being the vehicle through which the comfort God provides is made manifest, is therefore the very mark of his genuine apostolic calling. Paul consequently concludes this section by calling the Corinthians to join him in thanking God for his suffering and deliverance, the very thing his opponents claimed disqualified him as an apostle (2 Cor 1:11).

2.3. Paul's Defense of the Change in His Travel Plans.

In the first major section of Paul's letter, 2 Corinthians 1:12-2:13, Paul explains the theological rationale for the recent unexpected change in his travel plans (2 Cor 1:15-16; see Itineraries, Travel Plans). Paul's purpose is to demonstrate that his behavior has been an expression of the sincerity of motives which only God can discern (2 Cor 1:12). Conversely, Paul's actions have not been the result of "fleshly wisdom" (2 Cor 1:12) and the vacillations of one who makes his plans "according to the flesh.*" This may reflect an allegation, apparently made by his opponents, that Paul was guilty of an elaborate scheme to defraud the Corinthians in connection with the collection for Jerusalem and his own practice of preaching for free (2 Cor 1:17; cf. 2:17; 7:2; 8:20-21; 11:7-11; 12:13-18).

Paul's point in 2 Corinthians 1:15-2:4 is that his earlier decision not to visit Corinth on his way to Jerusalem from Macedonia (cf. 1 Cor 16:5-9), but to come directly to Corinth first (2 Cor 1:15), as well as

his later decision not to return to Corinth a second time (2 Cor 1:23), were all the actions of one who is "sealed by the Spirit" and is therefore acting in a Christ-like manner. As the full realization of the promises of God (2 Cor 1:19-20), Christ makes it clear that God's purpose in acting toward his people is to establish mercy* before judgment. In the same way, Paul's changes in travel plans were all motivated by his desire to extend mercy to the Corinthians in order to effect their restoration, rather than to come in judgment (2 Cor 1:23-24). Paul changed his travel plans in order to give the Corinthians the chance for repentance (2 Cor 7:8-13), deciding not to come back to Corinth after his "painful visit," but writing the "sorrowful letter" instead (2 Cor 2:1-5). Far from being an expression of fleshly behavior, Paul's changes in plans were thus an extension of God's action in Christ.

In 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 Paul turns his attention back to those Corinthians who have already repented of their disloyalty to Paul in response to his previous "sorrowful letter" (cf. 2 Cor 2:5, 8-9; 7:7-16). Paul admonishes them to follow in his footsteps. Just as Paul acted to extend mercy to the Corinthians, they too should extend mercy to the repentant offender who caused Paul so much pain. They must welcome this one back, lest he be "overwhelmed by excessive sorrow" (2 Cor 2:7). Moreover, just as Paul's actions toward the Corinthians demonstrate his genuine apostolic standing, their willingness to extend mercy to this person takes on the character of a test of their faith* (2 Cor 2:9). Those who have experienced God's mercy have no choice but to extend mercy to those who have sinned against them, but have now repented. Paul therefore ends this section by reminding the Corinthians of the ultimate purpose of his admonitions: to prevent Satan* from using this situation against the church (2 Cor 2:11).

Finally Paul provides the transition to the next major section of his letter by calling attention to his most recent change in plans. When Titus failed to arrive as prearranged, Paul could not use opportunities for ministry in Troas but went to meet with Titus in Macedonia (cf. 2 Cor 7:5-7) because of his overwhelming concern for Titus and his earnest desire to hear the news Titus was to bring from Corinth (2 Cor 2:12-13). In view of 2 Corinthians 11:28 this anxiety over his "brother" and the Corinthians was yet another expression of Paul's greatest suffering as an apostle. This apparently insignificant transition thus calls us back to the central theme of the letter.

2.4. Paul's Direct Defense of His Apostolic Authority.

Rather than calling the legitimacy of his apostleship

into question, Paul's suffering as related in 2 Corinthians 2:12-13 leads him once again to praise God in 2 Corinthians 2:14, just as it did in 2 Corinthians 1:3-11. Moreover, here too Paul employs a typical Jewish thanksgiving formula in 2 Corinthians 2:14 ("thanks be to God") in order to signal the introduction of the central theme of the next section, which now runs from 2 Corinthians 2:14 to 7:16: "Thanks be to God who always leads us in a triumphal procession (*thriambeuō*) unto death in Christ, and in so doing manifests the fragrance of the knowledge of him through us in every place" (see Hafemann for a defense of this translation).

Just as in 1 Corinthians 4:9 Paul could picture himself as sentenced to death by God as a spectacle in the Roman arena, and in 2 Corinthians 1:9 as having been given the "sentence of death," Paul now portrays his suffering as an apostle in terms of the Roman triumphal procession in which those taken captive by the victor (like Paul by Christ!) are led like slaves to their death (2 Cor 2:14; see Triumph). Paul thus views his suffering as the divinely orchestrated means by which the knowledge of God is revealed in the world. With this as its introduction, this section sets forth Paul's most detailed defense of his apostolic ministry. Here his defense is aimed at those who called Paul's apostleship into question on account of his suffering (cf. 2 Cor 4:7-15; 6:3-10; 11:23-33), his weak personal appearance (cf. 2 Cor 10:10; 1 Cor 2:1-5) and his commitment to preach the gospel at his own expense. His opponents took these things to be signs of his inferiority as an apostle, of the worthlessness of his message and as part of his scheme to defraud the Corinthians (2 Cor 2:17; 11:7-15; 12:13-19).

At the heart of Paul's self-defense is the twofold argument in 2 Corinthians 2:14-3:6 for his sufficiency and boldness as an apostle.* On the one hand, Paul argues that he is sufficient for the apostolic calling (2 Cor 2:16) precisely because his apostolic life of suffering, as the means of revealing the knowledge of God, brings about the same dual effect in the world that Paul attributed to the word of the cross in 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 (2 Cor 2:15-16). Moreover, unlike his opponents, Paul has willingly taken up this suffering by preaching the gospel free of charge as evidence of his sincerity and divine call (2 Cor 2:17). On the other hand, Paul can point to the Corinthians themselves as additional concrete evidence for his sufficiency, since their own conversion and life in the Spirit, brought about through Paul, testify to the genuine nature of Paul's ministry among them (2 Cor 3:2-3). Paul's ministry of suffering and the Spirit thus combine to support his assertion that his sufficiency is from God and

that God has made him a minister of the "new covenant" of the Spirit in fulfillment of Ezekiel 36 and Jeremiah 31 (2 Cor 3:4-6; see Covenant).

In 2 Corinthians 3:7-18, one of the most complex passages in the Pauline corpus, Paul proceeds to compare his role as an apostle of the "new covenant" established by Christ to that of Moses'* role as mediator of the "old covenant" established at Sinai. Such a comparison is necessitated by the fact that in 2 Corinthians 2:16 and 3:5 Paul's sufficiency as an apostle is based on his call according to the pattern of the call of Moses as portrayed in Exodus 4:10 (LXX, *ouk hikanos eimi*). If Paul has been called like Moses, how then is his ministry different from that of Moses?

Paul answers this question by contrasting the events of Exodus 32-34 and their significance for understanding the nature and purpose of the old covenant to the new covenant in Christ. Paul's main point is that from the very beginning the Law functioned to "kill" Israel* by condemning it for its sinfulness. This was not because the Law itself was somehow deficient, but because the vast majority of Israel was left in a hardened condition so that it was unable to keep the covenant (cf. Ex 32:1-10; 33:3, 5; 34:9). As a result, Israel could not endure the glory of God without being destroyed (cf. Ex 33:3, 5). Moses had to veil himself, therefore, not because the glory* was fading, but so that the effects of God's glory against a stiff-necked people might be brought to an end (*katargeō*; 2 Cor 3:7, 11-12, in view of Ex 34:29-35). This would make it possible for God's presence to continue in Israel's midst in spite of Israel's hardened nature. The veil of Moses thus becomes a metonymy for the hardness of Israel's hearts under the old covenant (2 Cor 3:14-15).

The "letter" (*gramma*) of 2 Corinthians 3:6 is therefore the Law* apart from the power of the Spirit, which by itself can only declare God's will and pronounce judgment for not doing it, but cannot empower one to keep it. Only God's Spirit, which is now being poured out in the new covenant as a result of the work of Christ, can "make one alive" (2 Cor 3:6) and bring about this righteousness* (2 Cor 3:8-9). Hence, believers may now encounter in the Spirit the same glory of God that Moses encountered "with unveiled faces" (2 Cor 3:16-17). As a result, rather than being judged and destroyed by the presence of God, they are transformed by it into the very image* of God himself (2 Cor 3:18). Whereas Moses had to veil himself (2 Cor 3:12-13), as an apostle of the new covenant Paul can be bold in his declaration of the gospel because he is confident that he has been called to a ministry of the Spirit (2 Cor 3:8). Inasmuch as Paul's ministry thus mediates the glory of God to those

whose hearts have been changed and thus need not fear their destruction, his ministry "outshines" that of the old covenant (2 Cor 3:10-11).

In 2 Corinthians 4:1-6 Paul draws the necessary conclusion from his preceding argument. On the one hand Paul's apostleship is legitimate in that it functions, both through his preaching and his way of life, to make known the "light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor 4:4). This was the purpose of Paul's own call, pictured in 2 Corinthians 4:6 in terms of a new creation in which God "shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (see Conversion and Call). On the other hand, this can only mean that those who reject Paul and his message do so because their own minds have been hardened by Satan, the "god of this age" (2 Cor 4:3-4).

In 2 Corinthians 4:7-6:13 Paul returns once again to the theme of his suffering, this time by both introducing and concluding this unit of thought with the second and third of his "catalogues of suffering" (2 Cor 4:7-15 and 6:3-13 respectively; cf. 1 Cor 4:11-13; see Afflictions). Having argued for the legitimacy and function of his suffering thus far, Paul now addresses the question of the actual necessity for his suffering, which he says in 2 Corinthians 4:7 is to demonstrate that the power and glory that is revealed in him is clearly God's and not his own. The way in which this is accomplished is through Paul's repeated experience of suffering (i.e., "carrying around in our body the death of Jesus," 2 Cor 4:10; "being handed over to death for Jesus' sake," 2 Cor 4:11; and having "death at work in us," 2 Cor 4:12) in order that God's power to sustain him might be seen (i.e., "that the life of Jesus might also be manifested in our [mortal] body," 2 Cor 4:10, 11) and experienced by others (2 Cor 4:12). Paul thus follows in the footsteps of the suffering righteous of the OT (cf. the quote from Ps 115:1 LXX in 2 Cor 4:13) and of the suffering Righteous One, Jesus, both in enduring suffering for the sake of others (cf. 2 Cor 4:15) and in his confidence in God's righteous vindication and reward* in the future (2 Cor 4:14, 16-18).

Paul's confidence in his future vindication, when he will be "at home with the Lord" (2 Cor 5:8), is based on the guarantee of his present possession of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 5:5). This confidence causes him not only to long with courage for its reality (2 Cor 5:2-4), but also to endeavor to be pleasing to God, knowing that all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ to be recompensed for their deeds (2 Cor 5:9-10). This healthy fear of God also motivates Paul in his ministry and in his defense of his apostleship (2 Cor

5:11), not for his own sake, but in order that the Corinthians might have just cause to be proud of Paul (2 Cor 5:12-15) and to affirm the truth of his gospel of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:14, 16-21; see Peace, Reconciliation).

The consequence of Paul's ministry is then made clear. Those who have been reconciled to God in Christ are a "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17), which in the context entails not only a new relationship with God but also a new, righteous way of life in which one takes on the very character of God in Christ by living one's life for the sake of others (2 Cor 3:18; 4:5, 14-15; 5:21). Rather than rejecting Christ because of his suffering, as Paul himself formerly did when he regarded Christ from the nonspiritual point of view (i.e., "according to the flesh"), those who have been created anew see both Christ and others in the light of God's purpose of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:16, 19, 21).

Paul concludes this section and at the same time introduces the next by calling those within the Corinthian church who are still rejecting Paul and his message to be reconciled to God and not to presume upon God's grace and mercy. By doing so they will demonstrate that their prior acceptance of God's grace has not been in vain (2 Cor 5:20; 6:1). For as an ambassador for Christ (2 Cor 5:20), Paul, like the servant* in Isaiah 49:8, is called to bring the people back to their God (2 Cor 6:2). The catalog of suffering in 2 Corinthians 6:3-13 functions to support this appeal further by demonstrating again that, rather than calling his legitimacy into question, his opponents should observe that Paul's endurance in the midst of adversity commends him as an apostle. The section therefore ends with yet another appeal to those Corinthians still under the influence of Paul's opponents to be reconciled to Paul (2 Cor 6:11-13).

In view of the fact that the Corinthian church now stands divided over the legitimacy of Paul's apostleship and his understanding of Jesus and the Spirit (cf. 2 Cor 11:4), 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:2 addresses the question of the relationship between believers and unbelievers, the latter of which are now implicitly identified as those who will not repent and be reconciled to Paul as an apostle of the gospel of God. Paul's admonition is straightforward. Based on his understanding of the church as the temple of God (2 Cor 6:16) and the biblical injunction for God's people to separate themselves from idolatry in order to be God's "sons and daughters" (2 Cor 6:17), Paul calls the faithful Corinthians to separate themselves from those among them who continue to reject Paul and his gospel (2 Cor 6:14-15; 7:1).

In 2 Corinthians 7:2-16 Paul resumes his account of

the recent events in Corinth, focusing on the good news he received when he finally did meet Titus. Although Paul initially regretted having sent them such a severe reprimand, Paul is relieved by the fact that his letter of rebuke (2 Cor 7:5-8) brought about among the majority of Corinthian believers the kind of godly sorrow which leads to repentance rather than the "worldly grief" which merely brings death (2 Cor 7:9-13). Paul's defense of his apostleship in 2 Corinthians 2:14-7:16 consequently ends with a great expression of joy,* comfort and confidence in the Corinthians as a whole, since their positive response to Paul's previous warnings and to Titus's mission was a sure sign of the genuine nature of their faith and of the bond between Paul and his church (2 Cor 7:2-5, 11-16).

2.5. The Collection. In 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15 the subject matter changes completely. Paul now takes up the theological foundation and practical administration of the collection* for the believers in Jerusalem* which he had initiated in Corinth, but which due to the problems in the church had not been completed as anticipated (2 Cor 8:6-7, 10-11; 9:2; cf. 1 Cor 16:1-4). The necessity for the collection is based not only on the needs of the church in Jerusalem and the ability of the Corinthians to give (2 Cor 8:14-15) but also on the implications of Christ's own self-giving for those under his lordship (2 Cor 8:8-9). Giving to the needs of others therefore becomes a test of the genuineness of one's faith (2 Cor 8:8, 24; 9:13), with Titus providing an example of just such a genuine faith and the love it produces (2 Cor 8:16-17). Two unnamed, but well-known and respected, brothers will be sent by Paul with Titus to ensure the completion and credibility of the collection to the glory of God (2 Cor 8:18-23; 9:1-5).

In 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 Paul then concludes his discussion of the collection by returning to its theological foundation. The collection is necessary because it expresses the church's trust in God to meet their needs to such a degree that they are willing and able to give cheerfully to others (2 Cor 9:6-9). God is faithful and he will respond to such acts of faith by working to supply the needs of those who give and then by rewarding those who use their resources for the benefit of others (2 Cor 9:8, 10-12). In going forward with the collection the Corinthians will therefore glorify God by affirming with their actions the gospel of Christ (2 Cor 9:13) and causing others to join them in glorifying God (2 Cor 9:12). The collection will also create a unity of prayer* and appreciation between the Corinthians and the church in Jerusalem (2 Cor 9:14), which leads Paul in response to close this section by praising God for his own "inexpressible gift" (2 Cor 9:15).

2.6. Paul's Final Defense and Attack on His Opponents.

In the last major section of 2 Corinthians, 10:1-13:10, the tone, style and subject matter again change dramatically from the pastoral admonitions of 2 Corinthians 7:2-15 and chapters 8-9. Here is an aggressive apologetic and counter-attack against those within the church who still oppose Paul (2 Cor 13:5-10) and against his opponents from outside Corinth who stand in the shadows behind them (2 Cor 10:10; 11:4, 12-15, 21-23). The issues are still Paul's personal weakness and suffering (2 Cor 10:1, 10; 11:23-33), his voluntary self-support (2 Cor 11:7-15; 12:13-17) and his apparent lack of charismatic power (2 Cor 12:12; 13:3). Paul's upcoming visit consequently dominates this section in the hope that it will be a constructive time of healing, rather than a time of judgment for the church (cf. 2 Cor 10:2; 12:14, 20-21; 13:1-4).

2 Corinthians 10:1-6 is Paul's final appeal to the church for reconciliation in order that he might not have to "show boldness" in punishing disobedience when he arrives—although he is ready to do so (2 Cor 10:2, 6). In 2 Corinthians 10:7-11 Paul supports this appeal by reaffirming his legitimacy both as a Christian and as an apostle on the basis of the appropriate nature of his recent conduct, including his forceful boasting in his authority over the Corinthians. The appropriateness of Paul's conduct becomes evident once the right criterion for apostolic legitimacy is applied, namely, the concrete evidence of God's own work through him as seen in Paul's apostolic activity of founding the church in Corinth (2 Cor 10:12-18). When Paul lays claim to his authority he is thus not commending himself (2 Cor 10:12) but boasting "of the Lord," of what God himself has accomplished through Paul as evidence of the fact that he is the one whom the Lord "commends" (2 Cor 10:17-18).

Since God has already commended Paul through his apostolic work, the need to boast in one's own behavior or accomplishments is "foolish" (cf. 2 Cor 11:1, 16-21; 12:11). Yet in 2 Corinthians 11:1-12:10 Paul feels forced to do just that in order to counter the claims of his opponents and to win back those who have fallen under their sway. At the heart of the issue is the opponents' claim that they, not Paul, represent and are equal to the "eminent apostles" in Jerusalem. In this section Paul endeavors to show that he is the one who is a genuine apostle, on a par with the leaders of the mother church (2 Cor 11:5; 12:11), while his opponents, claiming some connection with the Jerusalem leaders, are in fact "false apostles" and "deceitful workers" who disguise themselves as "servants of righteousness" (2 Cor 11:12-15). Thus in 2 Corinthians 11:5 and 12:11 Paul compares himself positively

the recent events in Corinth, focusing on the good news he received when he finally did meet Titus. Although Paul initially regretted having sent them such a severe reprimand, Paul is relieved by the fact that his letter of rebuke (2 Cor 7:5-8) brought about among the majority of Corinthian believers the kind of godly sorrow which leads to repentance rather than the "worldly grief" which merely brings death (2 Cor 7:9-13). Paul's defense of his apostleship in 2 Corinthians 2:14-7:16 consequently ends with a great expression of joy,* comfort and confidence in the Corinthians as a whole, since their positive response to Paul's previous warnings and to Titus's mission was a sure sign of the genuine nature of their faith and of the bond between Paul and his church (2 Cor 7:2-5, 11-16).

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with the "eminent apostles," while in 2 Corinthians 11:12-15 he draws the sharpest possible distinction between himself and his opponents.

In this section Paul therefore "boasts" first in his decision to preach the gospel free of charge in Corinth (2 Cor 11:7-12), and then in his other sufferings (2 Cor 11:23-33), as the true marks of his legitimacy as an apostle, only to boast finally in his own spiritual experiences. In this last case, however, Paul is exceedingly hesitant, knowing that this is the epitome of foolishness and the very thing concerning which God has given him a "thorn in the flesh" to keep him from doing (2 Cor 12:6-10). Furthermore, Paul asserts that the real reason his opponents have criticized him for his preaching free of charge, for his suffering and for his refusal to boast in his spiritual experiences is that his lifestyle and practice call their own legitimacy as apostles into question, based as it is on a demand for payment and their own tales of spiritual experiences (2 Cor 11:12). Paul's point is that neither human distinctives nor religious pedigree make one a servant of Christ (cf. 2 Cor 11:21-23), but weakness, since God has declared that his "power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9).

In 2 Corinthians 12:11-13:10 Paul brings the section to a close by reminding the Corinthians for the last time of his sincerity and apostolic legitimacy, as evidenced in his ministry of the Spirit and his suffering as a result of refusing to burden the Corinthians (2 Cor 12:11-18). Those who are still rejecting Paul must therefore repent in anticipation of his final visit (2 Cor 12:19-13:10). Not to do so will bring them under the judgment of God, since Paul has identified his own person and message with the glory of God in Christ and the true gospel (2 Cor 11:4; 12:21; 13:1-4). The ultimate test of the genuine nature of their faith is thus whether or not they will be reconciled with Paul (2 Cor 13:5-9). Hence, Paul's elaborate self-defense has not been for his own sake, but for the good of the Corinthians (2 Cor 12:19), since Paul is writing "these things while being absent in order that when [he is] present [he] might not have to use his authority severely, which the Lord gave [him] for building up and not tearing down" (2 Cor 13:10).

2.7. Final Greetings. In 2 Corinthians 13:11-13 (14) Paul ends his letter by calling his church to mend its ways, heal its rivalries, and live in unity and peace with one another. This closing appeal is based on the promise that in doing so "the God of love and peace" will be with them.

3. The City and Its Citizens.

More than perhaps any other of the Pauline letters,

the sociological characteristics of Corinth, together with the religious and philosophical milieu of the region, influence one's interpretation of 1 and 2 Corinthians. Corinth was located at the foot of the 1,886-foot-high Acrocorinth, on the southern side of the 4.5-mile isthmus that connected the Peloponnese with the rest of Greece and separated the Saronic and Corinthian gulfs. Its location was strategic both militarily and commercially. Corinth controlled the overland movement between Italy and Asia, as well as the traffic between the two ports of Lechaem, 1.5 miles to the north, and Cenchreae, 5.1 miles to the east. A portage between these two ports, which ran through Corinth, made it possible to avoid sailing the treacherous waters around the Peloponnese. This portage was facilitated by a paved road across the isthmus, which was built in the sixth century B.C. Corinth was thus known as a wealthy city due to its tariffs and commerce, and as a crossroads for the ideas and traffic of the world (cf. Strabo *Geog.* 8.6.20-23). In terms of manufacturing it was especially known for its highly treasured bronze ware, one use of which was as "resonance enhancers" in the theater (cf. 1 Cor 13:1; Murphy-O'Connor, 50, 76).

The history of ancient Corinth is the history of two cities. As a political entity Corinth's history reaches back to the eighth century B.C., and until the mid-second century B.C. it flourished as a Greek city-state. But its status as the leader of the Achaean League led to Corinth's destruction by Rome in 146 B.C. Corinth then lay in ruins until 44 B.C., when it was re-founded by Julius Caesar as a Roman colony, after which it quickly rose to prominence once again (cf. Appian *Rom. Hist.* 8.136). By the first century Corinth had become the foremost commercial center in southern Greece. Beginning in 27 B.C. it was the seat of the region's proconsul and the capital of the senatorial province of Achaia until A.D. 15, when it became an imperial province. It also became famous for its control of the Isthmian games, a biennial athletic competition second only to the Olympian games in importance. This background is reflected in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 in Paul's use of the athletic metaphor and his emphasis on the imperishable crown reserved for believers. This, for the Corinthians, would be recognized as a contrast with the crowns given in the Isthmian games, which were made out of withered celery plants (cf. Murphy-O'Connor, 17).

As a wealthy hub for commerce and seafarers, Greek Corinth was evidently renowned for its vice, especially its sexual corruption, and for its many religious temples and rites. Aristophanes (c. 450-385 B.C.) even coined the term *korinthiazesthai* ("to act like a

Corinthian," i.e., "to commit fornication") in view of the city's reputation. Plato used the term "Corinthian girl" as an euphemism for a prostitute (Murphy-O'Connor, 56). And although its historical accuracy is disputed, Strabo's account of 1,000 prostitutes in the temple of Aphrodite does reflect the city's image, in which the many temples played their own role in the immoral tenor of its life (cf. Strabo *Geog.* 8.6.20, first written in 7 B.C. and revised slightly in A.D. 18).

After Corinth was reestablished in 44 B.C. as a Roman city, it received a rapid influx of people. It soon became the third city of the empire after Rome and Alexandria. In addition to the veterans and the many from the lower classes who moved to Corinth, the city was settled largely by "freedmen" from Rome, whose status as manumitted servants was just above that of a slave. The repopulation of Corinth provided Rome a way to ease her overcrowding and the freedmen a chance to take advantage of the socioeconomic opportunity offered by this new city. Moreover, Corinth also boasted a significant community of Jews, who exercised the right to govern their own internal affairs (cf. Acts 18:8, 17). It is listed by Philo as one of the cities of the Jewish Diaspora (cf. Philo *Leg. Gai.* 281-282), and a lintel inscribed with the words "synagogue of the Hebrews" has been found, though its date cannot be determined with certainty (cf. Murphy-O'Connor, 79). By Paul's day Corinth had thus become a pluralistic melting pot of cultures, philosophies, lifestyles and religions, and had the feel of an economic "boom-town."

Paul's categories of people within the church, listed in 1 Corinthians 12:13 as Jew, Greek, slave* and free, thus reflect the make-up of the city, as do the various Jewish, Roman and Greek names mentioned in the letters (cf. the Jews Aquila, Priscilla, Crispus; the Romans Fortunatus, Quartus, Justus, etc.; the Greeks Stephanus, Achaicus, Erastus). We know from 1 Corinthians 7:20-24 that some of the believers in Corinth were slaves. Furthermore, since no landed aristocracy now existed in Roman Corinth, an "aristocracy of money" soon developed, accompanied by a fiercely independent spirit (so Fee, 2). This class distinction based on wealth is reflected in the tensions and factions that existed during the celebration of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17-34), since most of the church was apparently from the lower or middle socioeconomic class, with only a few wealthy families represented (cf. 1 Cor 1:26-27; see Sociology).

Roman law, culture and religion* were dominant in Corinth, and Latin was the city's official language, but the Greek traditions and philosophies of the area and the mystery cults from Egypt and Asia were also

strongly represented (cf. 1 Cor 1:20-22). Diogenes, the founder of the Cynics, was associated with Corinth and Craneum, a residential area near it. Indeed, it is judged that Corinth was the "most thoroughly Hellenistic city in the NT" (Fee, 4 n.12). The Corinthian theater at the time of Paul held 14,000 people (Murphy-O'Connor, 36) and is reflected in the image behind 1 Corinthians 4:9 and 9:24-25. Moreover, although the accounts which we have of the widespread sexual immorality in Corinth are of Greek Corinth and should not be taken to apply to the Corinth of Paul's day, it is certainly the case that such a problem also came to be prevalent in the new, Roman city due to its character as a crossroads and seaport. 1 Corinthians 5:1-2 and 6:9-20 reflect just such an atmosphere. Finally, in Paul's day Corinth was filled with pagan religious sites (cf. 1 Cor 8:4-6; 10:14, 20-30). Pausanias (d. c. A.D. 180), who gives us our earliest guide book to Corinth in his *Description of Greece*, Book 2, describes at least twenty-six sacred places for the Greco-Roman pantheon and mystery cults. But it must be kept in mind that much of Corinth was destroyed in an earthquake in A.D. 77, after which there was an extensive rebuilding of the city. For the time of Paul, archaeology has thus far attested a temple of Fortune and temples or shrines to Neptune, Apollo, Aphrodite (on the Acrocorinth), Venus, Octavia, Asclepius, Demeter, Core and Poseidon (cf. Murphy-O'Connor and Wiseman).

4. The Church and Its Apostle.

The church in Corinth was largely, though not exclusively, Gentile, as reflected in their former background in pagan idolatry (1 Cor 6:10-11; 8:7; 12:2) and in the issue of partaking in temple feasts (1 Cor 8:1-11:1). It was also normal for Greeks and Romans to go to secular law courts with their disputes, whereas Jews were forbidden to do so, which helps explain this practice in Corinth (cf. 1 Cor 6:1-6). The acceptance of prostitution discussed in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 and the attitudes toward marriage reflected in 1 Corinthians 7 are also more in keeping with a Gentile background.

The church* in Corinth met in various houses, since there was no possibility for a public meeting place, such as a synagogue, for a newly constituted religious movement which still lacked government recognition (cf. Rom 16:23). Based on the excavation of the four houses in Corinth from the Roman period (one from Paul's time) and the listing of the fourteen male members of the church in 1 and 2 Corinthians, Murphy-O'Connor estimates the base figure of the Corinthian church to be fifty members (Murphy-

Corinthian," i.e., "to commit fornication") in view of the city's reputation. Plato used the term "Corinthian girl" as an euphemism for a prostitute (Murphy-O'Connor, 56). And although its historical accuracy is disputed, Strabo's account of 1,000 prostitutes in the temple of Aphrodite does reflect the city's image, in which the many temples played their own role in the immoral tenor of its life (cf. Strabo *Geog.* 8.6.20, first written in 7 B.C. and revised slightly in A.D. 18).

After Corinth was reestablished in 44 B.C. as a Roman city, it received a rapid influx of people. It soon became the third city of the empire after Rome and Alexandria. In addition to the veterans and the many from the lower classes who moved to Corinth, the city was settled largely by "freedmen" from Rome, whose status as manumitted servants was just above that of a slave. The repopulation of Corinth provided Rome a way to ease her overcrowding and the freedmen a chance to take advantage of the socioeconomic opportunity offered by this new city. Moreover, Corinth also boasted a significant community of Jews, who exercised the right to govern their own internal affairs (cf. Acts 18:8, 17). It is listed by Philo as one of the cities of the Jewish Diaspora (cf. Philo *Leg. Gai.* 281-282), and a lintel inscribed with the words "synagogue of the Hebrews" has been found, though its date cannot be determined with certainty (cf. Murphy-O'Connor, 79). By Paul's day Corinth had thus become a pluralistic melting pot of cultures, philosophies, lifestyles and religions, and had the feel of an economic "boom-town."

Paul's categories of people within the church, listed in 1 Corinthians 12:13 as Jew, Greek, slave* and free, thus reflect the make-up of the city, as do the various Jewish, Roman and Greek names mentioned in the letters (cf. the Jews Aquila, Priscilla, Crispus; the Romans Fortunatus, Quartus, Justus, etc.; the Greeks Stephanus, Achaicus, Erastus). We know from 1 Corinthians 7:20-24 that some of the believers in Corinth were slaves. Furthermore, since no landed aristocracy now existed in Roman Corinth, an "aristocracy of money" soon developed, accompanied by a fiercely independent spirit (so Fee, 2). This class distinction based on wealth is reflected in the tensions and factions that existed during the celebration of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17-34), since most of the church was apparently from the lower or middle socioeconomic class, with only a few wealthy families represented (cf. 1 Cor 1:26-27; see Sociology).

Roman law, culture and religion* were dominant in Corinth, and Latin was the city's official language, but the Greek traditions and philosophies of the area and the mystery cults from Egypt and Asia were also

strongly represented (cf. 1 Cor 1:20-22). Diogenes, the founder of the Cynics, was associated with Corinth and Craneum, a residential area near it. Indeed, it is judged that Corinth was the "most thoroughly Hellenistic city in the NT" (Fee, 4 n.12). The Corinthian theater at the time of Paul held 14,000 people (Murphy-O'Connor, 36) and is reflected in the image behind 1 Corinthians 4:9 and 9:24-25. Moreover, although the accounts which we have of the widespread sexual immorality in Corinth are of Greek Corinth and should not be taken to apply to the Corinth of Paul's day, it is certainly the case that such a problem also came to be prevalent in the new, Roman city due to its character as a crossroads and seaport. 1 Corinthians 5:1-2 and 6:9-20 reflect just such an atmosphere. Finally, in Paul's day Corinth was filled with pagan religious sites (cf. 1 Cor 8:4-6; 10:14, 20-30). Pausanias (d. c. A.D. 180), who gives us our earliest guide book to Corinth in his *Description of Greece*, Book 2, describes at least twenty-six sacred places for the Greco-Roman pantheon and mystery cults. But it must be kept in mind that much of Corinth was destroyed in an earthquake in A.D. 77, after which there was an extensive rebuilding of the city. For the time of Paul, archaeology has thus far attested a temple of Fortune and temples or shrines to Neptune, Apollo, Aphrodite (on the Acrocorinth), Venus, Octavia, Asclepius, Demeter, Core and Poseidon (cf. Murphy-O'Connor and Wiseman).

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O'Connor, 158). But such a gathering of the "whole church" was unusual, since the church usually met in smaller groups in various members' homes (cf. 1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:5; Col 4:15; Philem 2).

4.1. The Problems Behind 1 Corinthians. G. D. Fee's commentary on 1 Corinthians represents the most thoroughgoing presentation of the "apologetic" view of the problems behind 1 Corinthians. In this view the historical situation behind 1 Corinthians is fundamentally one of conflict between Paul and the church as a whole, in which the Corinthians' rejection of Paul's authority as the founder of the church is perceived to be at the heart of their troubles. For Fee, therefore, the most serious division in the church is between the majority of the community and Paul himself (Fee, 8). Paul's language throughout the letter is taken to be combative, and his references to his apostleship are read to be apologetic (cf. esp. 1 Cor 4:1-21; 9:1-27; 15:8-11).

But Paul's purpose in writing 1 Corinthians is best seen not to be primarily apologetic but didactic. Nowhere in the letter does Paul argue for his own authority as an apostle *per se*, since he continues to bank on the fact that the Corinthians recognize him as their founder (1 Cor 4:15) and as a legitimate apostle, even though others *outside* the church might not (1 Cor 9:1-2). Rather, Paul writes to "remind" the Corinthians of "his ways in Christ" (1 Cor 4:17) and to call their attention to the fact that as their "father" (1 Cor 4:15) it is his "way," the way of the cross, that is to be imitated (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1). The appropriateness of Paul's suffering is therefore nowhere defended in 1 Corinthians. Instead it functions as the foundational premise for Paul's arguments (cf. esp. 1 Cor 1:10-4:21; 8:1-11:1; 13; 14:18-19), which in turn are based on his parental authority over the Corinthians in Christ (1 Cor 4:14-21). The very fact that Paul can enlist his practice of preaching free of charge to support his hortatory purpose in 1 Corinthians 8-10 indicates that Paul's apostolic lifestyle and authority were still being held in high esteem. If not, Paul's larger argument in 1 Corinthians 8-10, climaxing in his call to imitate him in 1 Corinthians 11:1, would have collapsed. Throughout 1 Corinthians the focus of Paul's arguments is thus on the Corinthians and their behavior, and the mode of Paul's address is not apologetic, but directive. Paul's ability to pronounce authoritative judgments on the Corinthians' behavior throughout the letter is based on his assumption that his apostolic authority is still in place in Corinth. The problems that 1 Corinthians addresses are essentially within the church, and not tensions between the church and its apostle.

4.2. The Problems Behind 2 Corinthians. By the time Paul wrote 2 Corinthians everything had changed. For a while, between the writing of 1 and 2 Corinthians, the church as a whole was in open rebellion against Paul and his gospel due to the influence of Paul's opponents who had recently arrived (cf. 2 Cor 11:4). Since then a significant segment of the church had repented and returned to Paul's side. But Paul's apostolic authority is no longer common ground between Paul and his entire church. There is still a sizeable opposition to Paul among the Corinthians, with Paul's opponents lurking behind them. As a result, the church now stands divided over Paul and his legitimacy as an apostle. This current condition is reflected in the absence of the call to imitate* Paul in 2 Corinthians, in the consistent focus on Paul's own authority as an apostle throughout most of 2 Corinthians, and most clearly in the different ways in which Paul's suffering functions in the two letters. In 1 Corinthians 4:8-13 and 9:1-27 Paul's suffering can be used to support his argument on behalf of the Corinthians, whereas throughout 2 Corinthians Paul must argue for the legitimacy of his suffering itself (cf. 2 Cor 2:17; 11:7-15; 12:13-18). Hence, whereas the problems in 1 Corinthians were within the church, the central problem to be solved in 2 Corinthians is the authority and legitimacy of Paul as an apostle.

4.3. The Source of the Problems in Corinth and Paul's Response. The source of the problems in Corinth, whether in 1 or 2 Corinthians, can be traced back to the Hellenistic culture which so influenced the Corinthians. The key issue was what it meant to be "spiritual" (cf. Paul's use of *pneumatikos* fourteen times in 1 Corinthians alone, over against only four times in the other undisputed Pauline letters). Even as believers, the Corinthians held on to that part of the Hellenistic body/soul or material/immaterial dualism which disdained the physical world for the "higher" knowledge and wisdom of spiritual existence. Although it is anachronistic to speak of gnostics or gnosticism in Corinth, one may thus speak of an "incipient gnosticism" in the theology of the Corinthians (so Martin, following Bruce; see *Gnosis, Gnosticism*). Under its influence the Corinthians were prone to intellectual pride, placing a high value on their "knowledge" and spiritual experiences (cf. 1 Cor 1:5; 8:1, 7, 10, 11; 12:8; 13:2; etc.). The result was an attitude of boasting and competition within the church, which was further fed by their cultural arrogance and admiration of the public power, style and polish of the Sophistic rhetorical tradition. Such a disdain for this world could also lead them to consider participation in its law courts and immorality as of no consequence

on the one hand (cf. 1 Cor 5:1–6:20), and to the practice of an undue asceticism on the other (cf. 1 Cor 7:1–5).

But equally important, this dualism also provided the conceptual support which made the Corinthians so susceptible to an “over-realized eschatology*” that spiritualized the future resurrection* as already having taken place in their own experience (cf. 1 Cor 4:8; 15). One’s present life was therefore viewed as already participating in the fullness of the heavenly reality of the world to come. Such an over-realized eschatology further inflated the Corinthians’ estimation of their spiritual knowledge, gifts and religious experiences, especially that of tongues, which they saw as indicating that they too shared the spiritual existence of the angels* (cf. 1 Cor 13:1; 14:37). This in turn led to more boasting and disunity in the church, as well as to the eventual rejection of Paul’s legitimacy as an apostle and of his gospel.

Paul’s response in 1 Corinthians was decidedly based on the twofold foundation of the OT* and christology* (cf. his OT response to the problem of boasting in wisdom in 1 Cor 1:18–3:23, with direct quotes of the OT in 1 Cor 1:19; 1:31; 2:9; 2:16; 3:19–20). Both make it clear that the power and wisdom of God have now been revealed in Christ and his cross. At the same time Paul’s message of the cross (1 Cor 1:17–19) and his own apostolic experience of suffering (1 Cor 4:8–13) demonstrate that the kingdom of God, though here in power, is not yet present in all of its fullness. Hence if suffering and weakness are the essential characteristics of the apostolic ministry upon which the Corinthians’ lives are based, then as children of their spiritual father the lives of the Corinthians also ought to be characterized by the power of the cross and not by boasting in their own spiritual attainments or leaders. Paul’s most basic advice, therefore, was to “imitate me” (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1).

By the time of 2 Corinthians, however, Paul’s opponents had arrived from outside Corinth and had capitalized on the Corinthians’ over-realized eschatology, preaching a view of Christ and of the Spirit that the Corinthians were open to receiving (2 Cor 11:4). Instead of calling the Corinthians to endure faithfully in the midst of adversity in hope of their future resurrection and vindication, Paul’s opponents promised the Corinthians a life in the Spirit that was characterized by deliverance from suffering and by a steady diet of miraculous experience. They supported their claims to be apostles with letters of recommendation from other churches (cf. 2 Cor 3:1), by their ethnic distinctives as Jews (2 Cor 3:4–18; 11:21–22), and by boasting in their spiritual attainments and supernatural signs,

together with their rhetorical abilities (2 Cor 10:10, 12; 11:12, 18; 12:12). Paul’s apologetic in 2 Corinthians 3 leads one to posit that they also tied their ministry in some way to the ministry of Moses* and the Law,* although unlike Galatians the issues of ritual purity* and circumcision* are not mentioned in 2 Corinthians. Moreover, Paul’s opponents sealed their claims by demanding money from the Corinthians as a sign of the value and legitimacy of their message (2 Cor 2:17). But in order to make these claims and demand this payment they had to attack Paul himself and his apostolic legitimacy, which called both their gospel and their lifestyle into question.

In response, Paul now had to defend his own legitimacy as an apostle in order to establish the veracity of his gospel. Once again he does so by returning to the OT and to christology to demonstrate the necessity and purpose of his suffering in relationship to his ministry of the Spirit under the new covenant.

5. Some Critical Questions.

5.1. Authorship. Both 1 and 2 Corinthians are attributed to Paul in their salutations and show every historical and literary evidence of Pauline authorship. Indeed, the Pauline authorship of 1 Corinthians has never been disputed and the letter is already attested in the 90s by Clement of Rome (cf. *1 Clem.* 37:5; 47:1–3; 49:5) and in the first decade of the second century by Ignatius (cf. Ignatius *Eph.* 16:1; 18:1; *Rom.* 5:1, etc.). Although 2 Corinthians is not clearly documented until Marcion’s canon (A.D. 140), it is undisputed from that point on as part of the Pauline corpus. Even the most critical modern scholarship has consistently accepted these letters as genuine, apart from 1 Corinthians 1:2b and 14:34b–35, which some scholars have argued are non-Pauline interpolations. But the evidence for removing these texts has not convinced the majority of scholars, since no manuscript tradition has ever omitted these verses and both texts can be seen to fit within Paul’s flow of thought. Other scholars have argued that the distinct vocabulary and subject matter of 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1 indicate that Paul adopted this passage from a previous Pauline writing, or from a non-Pauline Jewish source (often associated with the Essene movement or Qumran* documents) or from a Jewish-Christian tradition. But even if this hypothesis stands against the views of those who maintain that its distinct character is due to the OT texts which Paul quotes in this section, the passage has been fully integrated by Paul into his own train of thought in 2 Corinthians.

5.2. Unity and Occasion of 1 and 2 Corinthians. Paul’s founding of the church at Corinth, recorded in Acts

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18, took place in the years AD. 49-51 as part of Paul's second missionary journey. When Paul left Corinth after eighteen months, the new church was flourishing. Sometime later Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthians from Ephesus,* a document which is no longer extant, in order to deal with some specific ethical issues now being faced by the new believers. But the Corinthians had difficulty understanding Paul's admonitions and, in fact, misapplied them to their context (cf. 1 Cor 5:9-13). The church then sent a letter to Paul by the hands of the messengers listed in 1 Corinthians 16:15-17 in order to receive further clarification. In response to this letter Paul wrote canonical 1 Corinthians. Paul's aim was to clarify his positions and to respond to the other reports he had heard about the serious problems which had arisen in Corinth (1 Cor 1:11; 5:1; cf. 16:15-18; see 4.2 above). The somewhat disjointed and topical nature of 1 Corinthians is due to the fact that Paul is responding in turn to the variety of issues and questions brought to him by the church's letter and to the reports he has heard.

At the time he wrote 1 Corinthians, Paul intended to return to Corinth after staying in Ephesus until Pentecost and then visiting Macedonia (cf. 1 Cor 16:5-8). In the meantime he sent Timothy to visit the Corinthians on his behalf (1 Cor 16:10-11; Acts 19:22). Timothy found the tension between Paul and the Christians at Corinth to have escalated, due most probably to the arrival of opponents of Paul from outside Corinth. In response, Paul set out for Corinth immediately for what became a "painful visit," during which Paul's authority and gospel were severely called into question by the church. Paul himself was opposed and offended by one of its leaders (cf. 2 Cor 2:1, 5-8; 7:8-13; 11:4).

Paul left Corinth under attack, determined not to make another such "painful visit" to the Corinthians (2 Cor 2:1-2). Instead he sent Titus to them with a "tearful letter" of rebuke and a warning as an attempt to win them back (cf. 2 Cor 2:3-9; 7:8-12). The fact that Titus was also to organize the collection (cf. 2 Cor 8:6) indicates, however, that Paul still held out hope for the Corinthians and did not consider them beyond repentance. This "tearful letter" is now lost, though some scholars have attempted to identify it with canonical 1 Corinthians or the four chapters of 2 Corinthians 10-13. But 1 Corinthians is neither severe nor painful enough to qualify, nor does its subject matter fit the nature of the description in 2 Corinthians 2:1-4, since in 1 Corinthians there is no consistent treatment of the theme of the Corinthians' rejection of Paul, the influence of Paul's opponents within Co-

rinth, or the offender of 2 Corinthians 2:5-11.

As Paul waited for Titus to return with his report concerning the impact of this letter, his mind could not rest due to his anxiety over the Corinthian situation (2 Cor 2:12-23). So Paul left Troas to find Titus, and when he did, Titus gave Paul the good news that his "tearful letter" had indeed won back the majority of the Corinthians (2 Cor 7:6-13). Moreover, because the church had responded so positively, Paul could now plan to visit them once again (cf. 2 Cor 2:3; 9:5; 12:20-13:1).

In anticipation of this third visit, Paul wrote canonical 2 Corinthians, or at least chapters 1-9 of the document as we now have it. The fact that the majority of the church had repented and returned to Paul, while a significant segment still resisted his authority and gospel, explains the mixed nature of this section. In it Paul both comforts and encourages the majority of the church, while at the same time defending his apostleship in order to strengthen those who have repented and to win back the recalcitrant minority. Moreover, behind the Corinthians lurk Paul's opponents, whom Paul does not address directly, but who are the most direct source of the problem. Paul's goal in writing, therefore, is to prepare for his next visit to the Corinthians in which he will have to judge those who persist in their rejection of him and his gospel. Paul did in fact return to Corinth (cf. Acts 20:2), where less than a year later he wrote his letter to the Romans.*

In view of this scenario the question of the literary unity of 2 Corinthians has been answered in various ways because of the seemingly abrupt transitions and change of subject matter within the letter. The key issues are the apparent breaks in thought between 2 Corinthians 2:13 and 2:14, 7:4 and 5, 6:13 and 14, and 7:1 and 2; the seemingly separate treatments of the collection in chapters 8 and 9; and the distinct unit of 2 Corinthians 10:1-13:14. If each of these transitions marks out a separate document, 2 Corinthians becomes a composite of the following six major fragments, which were then later unified into a single letter: 2 Corinthians 1:1-2:13 and 7:5-16; 2:14-6:13; 6:14-7:1; 8; 9; 10-13.

A minority of scholars still maintain, however, the literary unity of the entire letter. Those who hold this position attempt to explain the integrity of the transitions within the letter at each point. In addition, they view the changes in subject matter throughout 2 Corinthians as the result of the mixed nature of the Corinthian community. Chapters 10-13 are Paul's last direct defense and attack against his opponents, after primarily addressing the reconciled majority of the

church in chapters 1–9, and perhaps after some lapse in time or the arrival of new, menacing information. This is the approach taken in the overview of 2 Corinthians above.

At the other extreme a few scholars have sought to isolate each of these sections as originally part of a separate writing and to assign them to the history of Paul's interaction with the Corinthians outlined above. In this scenario, as we noted, some view 2 Corinthians 10–13 to be part of the "tearful letter;" 2 Corinthians 2:14–6:13 to be part of a lost letter of defense; 2 Corinthians 1:1–2:13 and 7:5–16 to be Paul's letter of reconciliation after Titus' report; 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1 to be part of yet another lost Pauline or non-Pauline writing, part of the "tearful letter," or even part of the "previous letter" of 1 Corinthians 5:9. The growing consensus is that chapters 1–9 are in fact a unified composition written after Paul's encounter with Titus (cf. 2 Cor 7:5–13). Chapters 10–13 are then taken as a subsequent work which was written after a fresh outbreak of trouble in Corinth and appended to the previous section at some time early on in the history of these traditions, since there is no textual-critical evidence that chapters 10–13 ever circulated independently of chapters 1–9 (see, e.g., the commentaries by Martin and Furnish).

5.3. Place and Date. First Corinthians was written from Ephesus between the time Paul left Corinth in A.D. 51–52 and three years later, in the autumn of A.D. 52 to the spring of 55, depending on the following factors: the dating of the edict of Claudius and the term of office of Gallio (cf. Acts 18:2, 12); the time of Paul's departure from Corinth (Acts 18:18); and the subsequent length of his later stay in Ephesus (see Chronology). 2 Corinthians (taken as a whole, or at least chapters 1–9) was completed in the next year or so after 1 Corinthians, and was written from Macedonia.

5.4. Paul's Opponents. The key passages for identifying Paul's opposition in Corinth have traditionally been 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:22; 9:2–5; 2 Corinthians 3:1–18; 11:4 and 11:22–23. From these texts it is clear that Paul's opponents were Jews who were familiar with the Hellenistic world and espoused Sophist values and rhetorical techniques on the one hand, and relied on their own spiritual heritage as Jews on the other (see 4.3 above). But beyond this bare sketch, the more exact identity and theology of the opponents must remain a matter of scholarly reconstruction, since 1 and 2 Corinthians themselves are our only available evidence, though material from Philippians* (when dated in Paul's Ephesian period) has been introduced by some scholars (see commentaries).

Since the seventeenth century scholars have offered three basic theories concerning the identity of Paul's opponents in 2 Corinthians. These hypotheses have been constructed predominantly by reading Paul's arguments as a direct contrast to the positions of his opponents (the so-called mirror technique). The proposals are basically as follows: (1) gnostics; (2) legalistic Judaizers* on a par with those Paul fought elsewhere; or (3) a mixture of legalistic and gnostic and/or enthusiastic or pneumatic elements of various persuasions (see Opponents; Paul and His Interpreters). These basic positions have repeatedly been refined and combined in various ways, so that Machalett could list no less than eleven different positions on 2 Corinthians between 1908–1940. Since then these three basic positions have again been forcefully argued by R. Bultmann and W. Schmithals (the gnostic hypothesis), C. K. Barrett (the Judaizer hypothesis), and Dieter Georgi (Hellenistic Jewish pneumatics and missionaries of Palestinian origin with a "divine man" [*theios anēr*] theology centered on Moses).

The only major study of Paul's opponents in general to appear after these studies, J. J. Gunther's *St. Paul's Opponents and their Background* (1973), offered neither a new methodology nor a clear way out of this scholarly impasse. Gunther's thesis is that the backdrop for Paul's opponents is to be found in the Qumran and Jewish apocryphal writings, so that Paul's opponents were from a mystic, apocalyptic,* ascetic, non-conformist, syncretistic Judaism, more like Essenism than any other group (Gunther, 315). But in his attempt to forge a consensus among the thirteen different views he catalogued, Gunther cast his net so wide that his description becomes nondescript.

Hence, Sumney's recent proposal of a methodology based upon a "minimalist approach" for identifying Paul's opponents is to be welcomed. Sumney's proposal includes: (1) an emphasis on the priority of exegesis in a "text-focused method"; (2) an insistence upon a sound evaluation of proper sources; (3) a "stringently" limited application of the "mirror technique" (i.e., the practice of reading Paul's statements as a direct reflection of his opponents' contrary views); and (4) a rejection of the attempt to approach the text with a previously determined, externally based, reconstruction. But in view of the history of research it is significant that when Sumney applies his method to 2 Corinthians, he offers no new insights into the identity of Paul's opponents. Sumney ends up agreeing basically with the previous proposal of Käsemann that the opponents behind 2 Corinthians 10–13 were pneumatics, rather than Judaizers, gnostics or Georgi's "divine men," and that the short time span between the letter

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fragments of 2 Corinthians 1—9 and 10—13 leads one to "reasonably conclude" that the opponents in both cases are part of the same group (Sumney, 183).

Today, the gnostic hypothesis has died due to a lack of evidence for gnosticism in the pre-Christian or NT era. And Georgi's proposal has met with serious criticism concerning his reconstruction both of early Jewish missionaries and of their understanding of Moses as a "divine man." The way out of the remaining impasse will be to realize that the Judaizers' concern with the Law* was motivated not only by their desire to uphold their tradition, but also by a desire to gain access to a deeper experience of the Spirit (*see* Holy Spirit). The artificial divorce between the Law and the Spirit, which leads scholars to posit two distinct types of opponents, must therefore be overcome. The question raised by Paul's opponents, based on their Jewish heritage, was essentially the same one being raised by the Corinthians, based on their Hellenistic worldview: how does one participate fully in the power of the Spirit? The opponents' answer was based on a theology of "over-realized glory," in which participation in their gospel, with its tie to the old covenant, was said to guarantee freedom from sin* and suffering in this world. At the center of the debate was the relationship between the old and new covenants as this came to expression in the question of the authority and role of Moses and the Law in regard to Paul's role as an apostle of Christ and mediator of the Spirit (cf. 2 Cor 2:16; 3:4-18).

6. Theological Themes of 1 and 2 Corinthians.

It is striking that most of the commands throughout 1 Corinthians center on some aspect of church unity (cf. 1 Cor 1:10; 3:1-3; 4:14, 16; 5:4, 5, 7, 8; 6:1, 4, 6-7, 18, 20; 8:9, 13; 10:14; 11:33-34; 12:14, etc.). Clearly Paul's primary concern is with the true nature and life of the church, making ecclesiology the most important theme of 1 Corinthians. As the "church of God" (1 Cor 1:1), the Corinthians are "the temple of God," due to their reception of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16-17; 14:24-25); and the "body of Christ,"* due to their submission to the lordship of Christ (1 Cor 6:17; 10:17; 11:29; 12:12-16, 27). But in focusing his attention on the Corinthians as the people of God, the eschatological framework of Paul's theology also stands out in this letter. Throughout 1 Corinthians Paul strives to make it clear that although the kingdom of God has already dawned, as evidenced by the resurrection power of Christ and the pouring out of the Spirit in the lives of the Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor 4:20), it is nevertheless not yet here in all of its fullness, a "proviso" seen clearly in Paul's own suffering and the qualita-

tively different nature of the future bodily resurrection and the end of age. At the same time, Paul must also make it clear to the Corinthians that although the kingdom of God is not yet present in all its fullness, one's ethical life (*see* Ethics) as a follower of Christ is still to be controlled by the dawning reality of the age to come in which the power of the Spirit enables one to keep God's commandments (cf. 1 Cor 5:7-8; 6:1-6; 7:29-31; 10:11; etc.). Paul's insistence throughout 1 Corinthians on the inextricable link between faith and obedience is therefore framed theologically by the cross (cf. 1 Cor 1:10—4:21) and the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor 15). In the end, therefore, 1 Corinthians demonstrates that both ecclesiology and eschatology are rooted in one's understanding of Christ "according to the Scriptures" (cf. 1 Cor 15:3-5).

In 2 Corinthians the central theological theme becomes the relationship between suffering and glory as this is determined and illustrated in Paul's apostolic experience. Here too Paul's arguments are grounded throughout in his eschatology and christology, both of which are developed within an OT framework and consistently applied to his own life as an apostle. Paul's point is as simple as it is profound. Rather than calling his legitimacy as an apostle into question, Paul's suffering is the very vehicle which God has ordained to validate his apostleship and to make known the knowledge of his own power and glory, now revealed in the gospel of Christ. Paul's ministry of suffering and of the Spirit does not represent an unresolved tension which calls into question his sufficiency as a true apostle. Indeed *both* the cross and the resurrection power of God are being revealed through Paul's life of divinely ordained suffering. And although there is no *call* for all Christians to suffer in either 1 or 2 Corinthians, nor any sign of a martyrdom theology, Paul affirms that whenever God's people are brought into the same kinds of sufferings to which he was called as an apostle, they too will become vehicles for the manifestation of the power of God in the midst of their adversity (cf. 2 Cor 1:7). In support of this main point and his corresponding apologetic for his apostolic authority, Paul outlines the nature of the new covenant in relationship to the covenant at Sinai (2 Cor 3:6-18), the nature of the new creation in the midst of the old (2 Cor 4:6—5:21) and the christological foundation for living for the sake of others because one now lives for the sake of Christ (2 Cor 5:15; 8:1—9:14).

See also APOSTLE; AUTHORITY; BODY OF CHRIST; COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS; CROSS, THEOLOGY OF THE; ESCHATOLOGY; GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT; GLORY, GLORIFICATION; HOLY SPIRIT; LAW; LORD'S SUPPER; MOSES; OPPONENTS OF

PAUL; POWER; RESURRECTION; RHETORIC; SUFFERING; WISDOM.

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COSMIC POWERS. See ELEMENTS/ELEMENTAL SPIRITS OF THE WORLD; PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS.

COSMOLOGY. See WORLD, COSMOLOGY.

COSMOS. See WORLD, COSMOLOGY.

COVENANT AND NEW COVENANT

In the letters generally accepted as Pauline there are eight occurrences of covenant (*diathēkē*): Romans 9:4; 11:27; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6, 14; Galatians 3:15, 17; 4:24 (cf. also Eph 2:12). Of special note among these are Galatians 4:24 (two covenants), 2 Corinthians 3:6 (the only use in Paul of new covenant, *kainē diathēkē*, apart from the eucharistic passage in 1 Cor 11:25) and 2 Corinthians 3:14 where we find the only reference to old covenant, *palaia diathēkē*.

The above references may indicate that covenant was not a dominant theme in Paul's theology, but there is little agreement on this issue. It may be argued that what is generally presumed need not always be explicitly stated. This would certainly apply to covenant theology in the case of someone like Paul, who had been brought up in a Pharisaic tradition (see Jew, Paul the). Again there may have been good reasons