

# JOIN THE JOURNEY™

*A one-year journey with the early church*



## Introduction to Dr. Tom Constable and His Bible Study (Expository) Notes

Dr. Constable is one of the most respected and beloved teachers of God's Word at Dallas Theological Seminary, and he has served as a Bible teacher and elder at Plano Bible Chapel for many years. Learn more about him at: [www.soniclight.com/constable/index.htm](http://www.soniclight.com/constable/index.htm). You can explore the rest of the Sonic Light website by left-clicking in the top lighthouse graphic to return to Sonic Light's homepage, or click on one of the tabs to see other pages:

Sonic Light website:

[www.soniclight.com/](http://www.soniclight.com/) OR [www.soniclight.org/](http://www.soniclight.org/)

Study Notes (Constable's Expository Notes):

[www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm](http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm)

Audio Lessons by Constable, Lewis, Farstad (to sample Bible audio teaching):

[www.soniclight.com/study\\_cd/audio\\_bible\\_study\\_lessons.htm](http://www.soniclight.com/study_cd/audio_bible_study_lessons.htm)

Notes in iSilo (Constable's Expository Notes in iSilo for Palm, Pocket PC):

[www.soniclight.com/constable/handheld3.htm](http://www.soniclight.com/constable/handheld3.htm)

**Copyright Notice:** Unauthorized translation, duplication, or distribution of any portion of this material in any form without the express written consent of Dr. Thomas L. Constable, or his appointed representatives, is strictly forbidden. Sonic Light reserves the exclusive right to make CD copies of our website material. You may use these Bible study notes only for your own personal study and teaching. You may print and/or make paper copies for teaching a class or Bible study group and charge only for the cost of copying. You may NOT make changes and attribute the Notes to Dr. Constable.

NOTES ON

## 2 CORINTHIANS

2007 EDITION

DR. THOMAS L. CONSTABLE

### INTRODUCTION

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

First Corinthians did not dispel the problems in the church at Corinth completely. While it resolved some of these, opposition to the Apostle Paul persisted and Paul's critics continued to speak out against him in the church. One man in particular seems to have been the ringleader of the opposition (10:7). He had rallied the support of a significant minority. The issue was Paul's apostolic authority. His critics were claiming authority equal with Paul's. This was in effect a claim to apostolic authority on their part and or a denial of the full apostolic authority of Paul.

News of continuing problems in Corinth reached Paul in Ephesus during his prolonged stay there during his third missionary journey. He then made a brief visit to Corinth. However his efforts to resolve the conflicts proved unsuccessful (2:1; 12:14; 13:1-2). Paul apparently suffered insult and lost face during that visit (2:5-8; 7:12). Consequently this was a painful visit for Paul. He then returned to Ephesus.

Paul's next step in dealing with the situation in Corinth was

to send a severe letter from Ephesus by the hand of Titus and another unnamed brother (2:3-4; 7:8-12; 12:18). He apparently directed this letter, now lost, at the party opposed to him and particularly its leader. Some commentators believe that 2 Corinthians 10—13 contains part of this letter, but the evidence for this is not convincing.<sup>1</sup>

Paul evidently intended to receive Titus' report concerning the effects of this severe letter in Ephesus. However, persecution there made it expedient for Paul to leave that city earlier than he had anticipated (Acts 20:1). He found an open door for the gospel to the north in Troas. Eager to meet Titus, who was taking the land route from Corinth back to Ephesus, Paul moved west into Macedonia (2:12-13). There Titus met him and gave him an encouraging report (7:6-16). Most of the church had responded to Paul's directives, and the church had disciplined the troublemakers (2:5-11). Unfortunately some in the congregation still refused to acknowledge Paul's authority over them (10:1—13:10).

Paul rejoiced at the repentance of the majority. However his concern for the unrepentant minority and his desire to pick up the money the Corinthians had begun to collect for their poorer brethren in Jerusalem led him to write 2 Corinthians. Along with these primary motives Paul also felt compelled to refute the charge of fickleness leveled at him by his critics. He had changed his travel plans and had not come to see them as he had said he would. The whole situation provided him an opportunity to clarify the nature of Christian ministry.

Paul wrote the Second Epistle to the Corinthians from Macedonia, perhaps Philippi, Thessalonica, or Berea, probably in the fall or winter of A.D. 56. A date a year earlier or later is possible.

Some commentators believe Paul wrote 1 Corinthians after his painful visit and after he wrote the severe letter.<sup>2</sup> I believe it is more probable that he wrote 1 Corinthians before these two events.<sup>3</sup> It is very difficult to reconstruct the details of Paul's activities since the data available to us is incomplete.

"2 Corinthians is very different from the letters between which it was written, 1 Corinthians and Romans. Whereas each of those letters is, in its own way, systematic and orderly, 2 Corinthians is, on the face of it, uneven and digressive. It is no surprise, therefore, that many scholars have suggested that 2 Corinthians is really a collection of letters put together later as a single letter."<sup>4</sup>

"Second Corinthians presents many inspiring texts and

passages to the reader and teacher of God's Word. A quick survey reveals approximately eighty individual verses lending themselves to extended meditation and exposition, apart from the sixty or so constituent paragraphs of the letter. This letter is a rich lode for the edification of God's people."<sup>5</sup>

## OUTLINE

- I. Introduction 1:1-11
  - A. Salutation 1:1-2
  - B. Thanksgiving for comfort in affliction 1:3-11
    - 1. Thanksgiving for comfort 1:3-7
    - 2. Thanksgiving for deliverance 1:8-11
- II. Answers to insinuations about the sincerity of Paul's commitment to the Corinthians and to the ministry 1:12—7:16
  - A. Defense of his conduct with regard to his promised visit and the offender 1:12—2:17
    - 1. The postponement of the intended visit 1:12—2:4
    - 2. The treatment of the offender and the result of the severe letter 2:5-17
  - B. Exposition of Paul's view of the ministry 3:1—6:10
    - 1. The superiority of Christian ministry to Mosaic ministry 3:1-11
    - 2. The great boldness of the new ministers 3:12—4:6
    - 3. The sufferings and supports of a minister of the gospel 4:7—5:10
    - 4. The life of a minister of Christ 5:11—6:10
  - C. Appeal for restoration of the Corinthians' confidence in him 6:11—7:16
    - 1. An appeal for large-heartedness and consistency 6:11—7:4
    - 2. The encouraging response of the Corinthians so far 7:5-16
- III. Instructions concerning the collection for the poor saints in Judea 8:1—9:15
  - A. The example of the Macedonians 8:1-7
  - B. The supreme motive for giving 8:8-15
  - C. The delegates of the churches 8:16-24

PAUL'S CORINTHIAN CONTACTS							
Paul's founding visit	His "former letter"	The Corinthians' letter to him	<b>First Corinthians</b>	Paul's "painful visit"	His "severe letter"	<b>Second Corinthians</b>	Paul's anticipated visit

- D. The anticipated visit of Paul 9:1-5
- E. The benefits of generous giving 9:6-15

IV. Appeals concerning Paul's apostolic authority  
10:1—13:10

- A. Replies to charges made against Paul 10:1-18
  - 1. Reply to the charge of cowardice 10:1-6
  - 2. Reply to the charge of weakness 10:7-11
  - 3. Reply to the charge of intrusion 10:12-18
- B. Claims made by Paul 11:1—12:18
  - 1. Paul's reasons for making these claims 11:1-6
  - 2. Freedom to minister without charge 11:7-15
  - 3. Paul's service and sufferings 11:16-33
  - 4. Special revelations Paul received 12:1-10
  - 5. Paul's supernatural miracles and paternal love 12:11-18
- C. Exhortations in view of Paul's approaching visit 12:19—13:10
  - 1. Paul's concerns 12:19-21
  - 2. Paul's warnings 13:1-10

V. Conclusion 13:11-14

- A. The exhortation 13:11-12
- B. The salutation 13:13
- C. The benediction 13:14

**BROMMALL'S SIMPLE, MEMORABLE  
OUTLINE FOLLOWS.<sup>6</sup>**

- I. The conciliation 1:1—7:16
- II. The collection 8:1—9:15
- III. The credentials 10:1—13:14

---

**FOOTNOTES**

- 1** See Richard Batey, "Paul's Interaction with the Corinthians," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84 (1985):139-43.
- 2** E.g., Alford, Bernard, Denney, Hughes, Lenski, Lightfoot, Sanday, Zahn, et al.
- 3** Allo, Bachmann, Barnett, Barrett, Bruce, Guthrie, Harris, Kent, Lowery, Plummer, Tasker, Windisch, et al., believed this too.
- 4** Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 15. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
- 5** Wick Broomall, "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians," in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, p. 1262-63.
- 6** Wick Broomall, "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians," in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, p. 1262-63.