

2 Corinthians Introduction & 1:1-2

Leaders Note: Welcome to 2 Corinthians! As we begin this new series (that will take us through March), we'd like to create a strong foundation of background material about this book for your group. This first set of materials is for a research and "brainstorming" week.

Ask the Group: What, if anything, do we already know about 2 Corinthians?

Optional Transition:

Let's take some time in smaller groups to figure out basic background items. We have information from a few commentaries, but feel free to look at other passages of Scripture and your own Bible notes to find more.

Please have your group split into smaller groups to tackle the following topics (approx. 15-20 min.):

***Author**

- Who is the author? (2 Cor. 1:1-2)
 - o *Paul*
- What do we know about him from the Bible? (See: Acts 7:54-60; Acts 8:1-3; Acts 9; Acts 16:16-40; and many others; wrote many books & letters including Romans, Galatians, etc.)
 - o *Former persecutor of the church, Pharisee, experienced a God encounter while traveling, wrote many NT books, etc.*
- What else can we know about him? (See info. sheets.)
 - o *Roman citizen, may have been a tentmaker to support himself, missionary, etc.*
- When did he write 2 Cor?
 - o *Approx. a year after writing 1 Cor., A.D. 56 (written from Macedonia)*

***What/Audience**

- What type of writing is this? (2 Cor. 1:1-2 may help/info. sheets.)
 - o *Letter/Epistle*
- Who is the audience? (2 Cor. 1:1-2)
 - o *Church at Corinth*
- What do we know about them from the Bible? (See: Acts 18:1-17; 1 Corinthians; etc.)
 - o *Paul planted this church (Acts 18); this is Paul's second letter to them; they struggled with church unity, distorted views of worship, etc.*
- What else can we infer/know about them and their world? (See info. sheets.)

- o *Primarily a Roman city, near two major ports (lots of traders, travelers), obsession with status and self-promotion, wealthy, Hellenized, etc.*

***Why**

- Why did Paul write this letter?
 - o *To address some of the things previously addressed (1 Cor.), but also to deal with some new issues such as unity in ministry (vs. as a body—1 Cor.), suffering, ministry, holy living, etc.*
- What were his main points?
 - o *Theology of Christian suffering.*
 - o *Death and resurrection.*
 - o *Church discipline.*
 - o *The two covenants.*
 - o *Evangelism.*
 - o *Pastoral service.*
- How does this connect with his previous letter to the church at Corinth? (1 Corinthians)
 - o *Follows up on issues of church discipline (new example, but looking back to 1 Cor. 5:1-11), expands ideas of unity (1 Cor.—unity in the body of believers, 2 Cor. unity with Paul in his ministry), expands ideas of new covenant (1 Cor. 11:25 and 2 Cor. 3), etc.*

Please divide up the topics based on your number of small groups. Note that groups do NOT need to read the entire information packets from commentaries (sent as separate pdfs). Feel free to offer them the abbreviated versions based on topics (sent as "Handouts"). You may want to have 1-2 copies of each full commentary available to pass around (if needed) or have it available on a computer.

Passage:

2 Corinthians 1:1-2

New International Version (NIV, 2011)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God in Corinth, together with all his holy people throughout Achaia:

2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

When groups appear to have wrapped up their work, come back to full group for discussion/sharing of findings.

Optional: Create a “cheat sheet” containing some of the key information you’ve learned and post it in your group on The City for newcomers to access/people to refer to later in the series.

Pray for your group as you study 2 Corinthians this fall and winter.

Suggestions: Ask someone in your group to lead prayer, or break into smaller groups again for prayer over this and general prayer requests. Challenge those in your group to read 2 Corinthians in one sitting this week to have a good “overview” of the book for the coming months.