



The Defense of Paul's Apostleship:  
God's Power and Glory Shine In Our  
Weakness

AN INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORINTHIANS

# The Defense of Paul's Apostleship: God's Power and Glory Shine In Our Weakness

- ▶ Short Theme: The Defense of Paul's Apostleship
- ▶ Longer Theme : Paul's defense of His apostleship shows how God uses the weaknesses and sufferings of Christians to display **His** all-surpassing power and glory at work through Christ for their good and His praise.

# The Defense of Paul's Apostleship: God's Power and Glory Shine In Our Weakness

- 1) Context for 2 Corinthians
  - 1) Understanding Corinth
  - 2) Understanding Paul's Relationship with the Corinthians
- 2) Content of 2 Corinthians
  - 1) Outline of Key Themes/Issues
- 3) Conclusions from 2 Corinthians
  - 1) Applications and Implications

# The Defense of Paul's Apostleship: God's Power and Glory Shine In Our Weakness

## Context: Understanding Corinth

- ▶ The City's Strategic Location

# The Location of Corinth in Modern Greece



# The Location of Corinth in Ancient Greece



# The Defense of Paul's Apostleship: God's Power and Glory Shine In Our Weakness

## Context: Understanding Corinth

- ▶ The City's Strategic Location
- ▶ The City's Commercial Strength

# The Location of Corinth in Ancient Greece





# The Defense of Paul's Apostleship: God's Power and Glory Shine In Our Weakness

## Context: Understanding Corinth

- ▶ The City's Strategic Location
- ▶ The City's Commercial Strength
- ▶ The City's Political Significance

The Romans rebuilt Corinth and designated it the capital city of the province of Achaia



# Corinth: the capital city of Achaia



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## Context: Understanding Corinth

- ▶ The City's Strategic Location
- ▶ The City's Commercial Strength
- ▶ The City's Political Significance
- ▶ The City's Cultural Characteristics

The rock acropolis, site of the temple of Aphrodite, overlooking the city's center



# The Agora - Corinth's Marketplace



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## Context: Understanding Corinth

- ▶ The City's Strategic Location
- ▶ The City's Commercial Strength
- ▶ The City's Political Significance
- ▶ The City's Cultural Characteristics

The city of Corinth was wealthy, materialistic, pagan and grossly immoral!

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## Context: Understanding Paul's Relationship with the Corinthians

- ▶ Paul's 1st Visit - Church's Founding) (Acts 18)
- ▶ Paul's 1st Letter – “The Lost Letter” (1 Cor. 5:9)
- ▶ Paul's 2nd Letter - 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:11; 7:11; 16:17)
- ▶ Paul's 2nd Visit - "Sorrowful" (1 Cor. 16:5, 2 Cor. 1:23; 5:1)
- ▶ Paul's 3rd Letter - "The Sorrowful Letter" (2 Cor. 2:3-4; 7:8)
- ▶ **Paul's 4th Letter - 2 Corinthians (2 Cor. 2:13-14; 7:5)**
- ▶ Paul's 3rd Visit - Last (2 Cor. 12:14, Acts 20:2-3)



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## Outline and Key Themes

- ▶ Section 1 (Exhibit A): The power of God in the Gospel in the Corinthian Christians (1:1-7:16)
  - ▶ Salutation and praising the God of all comfort (1:1-11)
  - ▶ Explanation of Paul's ministry plans for their good (1:12-2:17)
  - ▶ Paul a minister of the new covenant written on their hearts (3:1-18)
  - ▶ Paul's ministry as treasure in a clay jar (4:1-18)
  - ▶ Christians walk by faith and not by sight (5:1-10)
  - ▶ Paul a minister of reconciliation through Christ (5:11-6:10)
  - ▶ Living righteously as the temple of the living God (6:11-7:4)
  - ▶ Paul's joy at the church's repentance (7:5-16)

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## Outline and Key Themes

- ▶ Section 2 (Exhibit B): The Corinthians' changed hearts demonstrated by their their sacrificial care for others (Ch. 8-9)
  - ▶ Exhortation for them to complete their commitment to love sacrificially (8:1-24)
  - ▶ Motivation for them to give generously, reflecting the indescribable generosity of God to them (9:1-15)

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## Outline and Key Themes

- ▶ Section 3 - Exhibit C – The Power of Christ at work in Paul through his weakness (Ch 10-13)
  - ▶ Paul defends his ministry conduct (10:1-18)
  - ▶ Paul compared to the “super” apostles (11:1-15)
  - ▶ Paul “boasts” of his sufferings as an apostle (11:16-33)
  - ▶ God's power perfected in Paul's weakness (12:1-10)
  - ▶ Paul's concern for the Corinthian church (12:11-19)
  - ▶ Final benediction and a call for self-examination (12:20-13:14)

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## ▶ Conclusions from 2 Corinthians

### ▶ Applications and Implications

- a) Know that the message of Jesus and His apostles are not opposed to each other,
- b) Guard against valuing the wrong things in our teachers and ascribing greater weight to the words of teachers who are worldly successful.
- c) Think Biblically about life and ministry as a Christian, with a right view of suffering and God's power and glory
  - a) 2 Cor. 4
  - b) 1 Peter 2
- d) Walk by faith, not by sight
- e) Serve as ambassadors of Christ, in His power for His glory!
  - a) 2 Cor. 5