

## ACTS 18:1-17 (Part 2) – Corinth: Strength in Weakness and 2 Corinthians

### *The Summary of Paul’s Faithful Labors and Final Letter to Corinth*

**18** After these things **Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth.** <sup>2</sup> And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. <sup>3</sup> So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. <sup>4</sup> And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

<sup>5</sup> When **Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia**, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus is the Christ.* <sup>6</sup> But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook *his* garments and said to them, “Your blood *be* upon your *own* heads; I *am* clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” <sup>7</sup> And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named [Titius] Justus,<sup>[a]</sup> one who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. <sup>8</sup> Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

<sup>9</sup> Now the **Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision**, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; <sup>10</sup> for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.” <sup>11</sup> And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

<sup>12</sup> When **Gallio was proconsul of Achaia**, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, <sup>13</sup> saying, “This *fellow* persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.”

<sup>14</sup> And when Paul was about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. <sup>15</sup> But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look *to it* yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such *matters.*” <sup>16</sup> And he drove them from the judgment seat. <sup>17</sup> Then all the Greeks [they all?]<sup>[b]</sup> took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things.

#### **Paul Returns to Antioch**

<sup>18</sup> **So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him.** He had *his* hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow. <sup>19</sup> And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. <sup>20</sup> When they asked *him* to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, <sup>21</sup> but took leave of them, saying, “I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem;<sup>[c]</sup> but I will return again to you, God willing.” And he sailed from Ephesus.

<sup>22</sup> And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch. <sup>23</sup> After he had spent some time *there*, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

#### **Ministry of Apollos**

<sup>24</sup> Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. <sup>25</sup> This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. <sup>26</sup> So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. <sup>27</sup> And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; <sup>28</sup> for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

## INTRODUCTION:

### Last week we looked at the Gospel taken to Corinth in Acts 18

#### A. City of Corinth was a major and important city at the time.

**Commercial**—uniquely located near connecting isthmus for trade/travel in all directions.

Trade/travel by land and by sea, important hub for all Mediterranean area.

**Cosmopolitan**—mixture of different people, races, classes, religion

Great mixture of people, as seaport and commercial center, attract fr/all over

**Corruption**—like a mega truck stop on steroids, comes immorality. “corinthianize”

Plus the center of cult of love goddess Aphrodite. Sexual immorality and idolatry.

*As result, Paul would have to deal with division and disunity because of differences*

*As result, Paul would have to deal with immorality and idolatry both in and out of church*

And since Corinthian society surprisingly like our own society

*--much to learn from Paul’s ministry to and writings to Corinthian church.*

#### B. DisCouragement of Paul was likely.

**Lack Fruit**—came from Athens where opportunity to preach to intellectuals fizzled

First opportunities in Corinth did not seem fruitful, either. Declares “going to Gentiles”

**Lack of Funds**—out of touch with brethren, lacking financial help, so tentmaker.

**Lack of Fellowship**—*was* alone in Athens, *now* alone in Corinth.

*But God graciously provides EnCouragement for Paul*

**Fellowship**—Aquila & Priscilla for ministry and secular co-workers

—Timothy & Silas return with good report fr/Macedonia (Ph, Th) churches

**Funds**—Timothy & Silas also return with financial helps fr/Macedonia

**Fruit**—Spiritual fruit salvation (even 2 leaders of synagogue!), physical fruit of protection

God saves, speaks (many people in this city), shields (Gallio protects fr/Sosthenes)!

#### C. 1 Corinthians

Division, Disunity, Discipline (immorality and idolatry in and out of church)

Key to unity & sanctification is Christ—and letter begins & ends w/centrality of Christ

--salvation in Him, sanctification in Him, resurrection and glorification in Him

### Today, try to piece together and summarize Paul’s complete ministry to Corinth

--including the difficulty of understanding his three visits and four letters to the church in Corinth—

### So we can better understand how God’s encouragement in midst of Paul’s discouragement

Strengthened Paul to continue through further affliction and frustration

*in loving/ministering to the brethren in Corinth for the sake of Christ*

And acted like a seed that germinates into a greater theme of 2 Corinthians

*of God’s strength being displayed through human weakness.*

#### I. Summary of Paul’s Faithful Labors to Corinth

#### II. Summary of Paul’s Final Letter to Corinth

### I. Summary of Paul’s Faithful Labors to Corinth.....in table of next page....

Possible Order of Visits and Letters from Paul's Ministry to Corinth		
Dates (approximate)	Visits to Corinth	Letters to Corinth
A.D. 49-52: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Journey A.D. 51-52: 1.5 yr in Corinth	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Visit.</b> Paul plants church and stays in Corinth for 18 mo. (Acts 18:1-18). Leaves Corinth for Antioch via Ephesus, Caesarea, Jerusalem (Acts 18:18-22).	
A.D. 52/54	-	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Letter: Corrective Letter.</b> After leaving Corinth but before writing <i>1 Corinthians</i> , Paul hears of immorality in Corinthian church and writes rebuking, corrective response (1 Cor 5:9-11).
A.D. 52-58: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Journey A.D. 52-55: 2.5 yr in Ephesus		
A.D. 55		<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Letter: 1 Corinthians.</b> In Ephesus, Paul hears of more problems from at least two sources: (1) Chloe's people (1 Cor 1:11) and (2) letter from Corinth asking for clarifications (1 Cor 7:1) ( <i>delivered by three (1 Cor 16:17)?</i> ). Paul responds with this letter to address <i>Division, Disunity, and Discipline</i> .
A.D. 55	<b>Timothy Visit.</b> Paul sends Timothy from Ephesus (1 Cor 4:17; 16:8-11) with <i>1 Corinthians</i> . Timothy unable to solve the church's problems.	
A.D. 55	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Visit: Painful Visit.</b> Paul hears disturbing news (from Timothy?) of further problems, including arrival of false apostles who attack Paul's authority and character. Paul makes emergency visit (2 Cor 2:1) that was painful and unsuccessful.	
A.D. 55		<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Letter: Severe Letter.</b> Paul, saddened by their unrepentance and lack of loyalty, returns to Ephesus (2 Cor 1:23) and writes a strong response and sends it with Titus (2 Cor 2:3; 7:5-16).
A.D. 55/56	<b>Titus Visit.</b> Paul sends Titus with <i>severe letter</i> . Paul leaves Ephesus after riot (Acts 19:23-20:1), anxiously seeks Titus to hear Corinth's response. After not finding Titus in Troas, finds him in Macedonia (Philippi?) (2 Cor. 2:12-13; 7:5,13).	
A.D. 55/56		<b>4<sup>th</sup> Letter: 2 Corinthians.</b> Paul (in Macedonia) rejoices to hear from Titus that most repented and responded to his leadership. With thanksgiving (2 Cor 7:11-16) but wise concern, Paul writes a strongly personal, surprisingly doctrinal, seemingly disordered letter. The letter can be divided into Paul's <i>Description</i> of his ministry (ch1-7), the <i>Donation</i> to poor in Jerusalem (ch8-9), and Paul's <i>Defense</i> of his ministry against the false apostles (ch10-13). It was probably written from Philippi (2 Cor 11:9; Phil 4:15; early manuscripts) and delivered by Titus.
A.D. 56/57	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Visit:</b> Paul makes a third visit to Corinth, (Acts 20:2-3; 2 Cor 12:14; 13:1-2). It is assumed he stayed there during the winter months and, while there, wrote <i>Romans</i> . In <i>Romans</i> , it is implied that the Corinthians <i>did</i> participate in the Jerusalem offering (Rom 15:26), further implying Paul's third visit to the church was successful.	

## **II. Summary of Paul's Final Letter to Corinth (2 Corinthians)**

### **A. Autobiographical and intensely Personal—one of most in all Scripture**

*--and knowing full story of Paul's relationship and ministry to Corinth explains why!*

When understand personal attacks Paul withstood fr/false apostles—believed by brethren!—

*Can understand Paul's detail of personal descriptions and defense of his ministry and person*

When understand personal affliction and labor of love that Paul has put into Corinth

*Can understand Paul's expressing such highs and lows of joy and frustration in letter to them.*

Just as it took the supernatural strengthening of God to help Paul in his weakness in Acts 18,

God continued to display His power thru Paul's weakness through whole Corinth ministry.

And a major theme of 2 Corinthians is

*“God's displaying His strength thru weakness of His servant.”*

This is seen repeatedly in Paul writing of *God's using the lesser to display the greater.*

### **B. Basic Outline of 2 Corinthians**

#### **Ch1-7: Paul's Description of His Ministry**

Surprisingly autobiographical and doctrinal

Describing suffering and labors in ministry

Doctrines ranging from ministry of *New Covenant* to *Intermediate State*

to *Return of Christ* and *Judgment* to *Reconciliation* and *Justification*

#### **Ch8-9: Paul exhorting Donation (Collection) for poor in Jerusalem**

Philippians/Thessalonians set extraordinary example—*giving richly* out of *own poverty*.

Giving as purpose in heart, not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver.

#### **Ch10-11: Paul's Defense of His Ministry**

Attempt to fully convince and protect Corinthians from false apostles.

**Again** going into much detail of willing suffering/persecution on behalf.

And then giving desire to come see them one more time.

### **C. Consistent Theme of God's Strength Displayed in Our Weakness (2 Cor 12:7-10)**

*(God surprisingly works greater from the lesser!)*

**Ch12:** <sup>7</sup> And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. <sup>8</sup> Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. <sup>9</sup> And He said to me, **“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”** Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. <sup>10</sup> Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

A major theme throughout 2 Corinthians: God using the weak things to display His strength.

And God using the lesser things to bring about the greater things.

Should be a great encouragement to we who are weak, seemingly insufficient for task.

Or when circumstances don't look so “powerfully” good.

*Let's look at some of them.....*

### **1. Ch1: Comfort through Suffering (2 Cor 1:3-7)**

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,  
<sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. <sup>5</sup> For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. <sup>6</sup> Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. <sup>7</sup> And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.

God faithfully comforts in tribulation that we may comfort others with His comfort

As Christ suffered for our comfort, when we suffer in Christ then will be comforted in Christ.

Our enduring affliction in Christ is encouragement to others who may endure same thing

Our comfort in affliction will also be encouragement to others—God will comfort!

**We gain comfort in midst of affliction because of all of this**

**--so can encourage others who suffer that God will supply comfort in their time, too.**

### **2. Ch2: Sufficiency through Insufficiency (2 Cor 2:14-16) (after expressing great anxiety in ministry)**

<sup>14</sup> Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. <sup>15</sup> For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. <sup>16</sup> To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? [Our sufficiency is from God! 3:5]

We merely captives—joyously willing captives!—following Christ in Kingly victory parade!

We are not worthy or sufficient to carry out this ministry given us.

Yet we can be the aroma of Christ—of life to the brethren, of death to the perishing!

**May we be such a “fork in the road”! May we rest in the sufficiency of Christ’s power!**

### **3. Ch3: Glory of NC through death of OC (2 Cor 3:4-18)**

Compares OC to the NC, showing that now the Law is not merely externally forced upon the sinner from the outside to condemn his resulting inability to fulfill it,

but now w/NC established by the blood of Christ the Law is written internally on new heart and by power of Spirit it works its way from inside to be displayed for Christ’s glory.

<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. <sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. <sup>18</sup> But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

#### 4. Ch4: Life through Death (2 Cor 4:7-12)

<sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.  
<sup>8</sup> We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— <sup>10</sup> always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. <sup>11</sup> For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. <sup>12</sup> So then death is working in us, but life in you.

We are merely weak jars of clay chosen to show forth power of God in Christ!

Our persecution due to Christ and His death meant to display life/glorify of Christ to all  
And rejoice that this might be used to bring life/salvation to others.

*Why so confident? Look at other lesser to greater promises by sovereign power of God:*

##### **a. Ch4: From Lesser Light to Greater Light (2 Cor 4:5-6)**

<sup>5</sup> For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup> For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Same sovereign power of God that created light from darkness creates greater light in new heart!

##### **b. Ch4: From Single Resurrection to Innumerable Resurrections (2 Cor 4:14)**

<sup>14</sup> knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.

Same sovereign power of God that raised Christ bodily will raise all redeemed as well!

##### **c. Ch4: From Temporal to Eternal and Affliction to Glory (2 Cor 16-17)**

<sup>16</sup> Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory

Same sovereign power of God will sanctify the inner man while outer man weakens.

Same sovereign power of God will glorify the whole man as whole man is afflicted.

##### **d. Ch5: From Nakedness to Fully Clothed (2 Cor 5:1-8) (intermediate to final state!)**

<sup>4</sup> For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup> Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

Same sovereign power of God will not leave our soul naked forever when body dies,

but will fully clothe us with glorified resurrected body, w/Spirit as guarantee!

**--then death will fully be conquered by life! Final "Life thru Death!"**

## 5. Ch5: Righteousness through Sin (2 Cor 5:14-21; 8:9)

What? Righteousness through sin?

- <sup>14</sup> For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; <sup>15</sup> and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.
- <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
- <sup>18</sup> Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,
- <sup>19</sup> that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.
- <sup>20</sup> Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.
- <sup>21</sup> For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**14) All who have repented and place faith in Christ, Christ has died for and been raised for.**

They have died in Christ to sin and have been raised in Christ to new life.

**17) They a new creation—have been transformed by Spirit with new heart and Law written upon it.**

And the new inner man is renewed and being renewed day by day.

**18) They have been reconciled to God through life and death and resurrection of Christ**

Need reconciliation because sin—nature and actions—makes them enemies of God

and justly deserving God's eternal wrath and judgment

*--in fact earlier in Ch5, Paul says that ALL will come before Judgment Seat of Christ!*

This is why love of Christ compels us! Why we implore you to be reconciled to God!

**19) But only in Christ can trespasses not be imputed to you—not credited to your account!**

**21) How?**

Christ who knew no sin became sin, that we might become righteousness of God in Him.

*What?! Righteousness thru Sin?! How can that be?!*

As 2 Cor 8 says, <sup>9</sup> For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

Christ, though sovereign God of universe, owner of all riches of glory

Became poor by humbling Himself to take on flesh in becoming lowly man,

that He might live perfect life to fulfill the Law of God, earning perfect righteousness,

and die the perfect death to fulfill the penalty of His people's breaking that Law.

On the cross, the Father looked at Him as if He guilty of all sin of His people

and poured out His wrath accordingly, Christ absorbing it all in our place.

So that all that would come before Christ in repentance and faith

May have their sin imputed, credited, to Christ who fully pays penalty

And Christ, instead, imputes, credits, His perfect righteousness to sinners account

So the Father accepts them, reconciled to the sinner,

Because sees their sins no more—been paid in full by Christ!

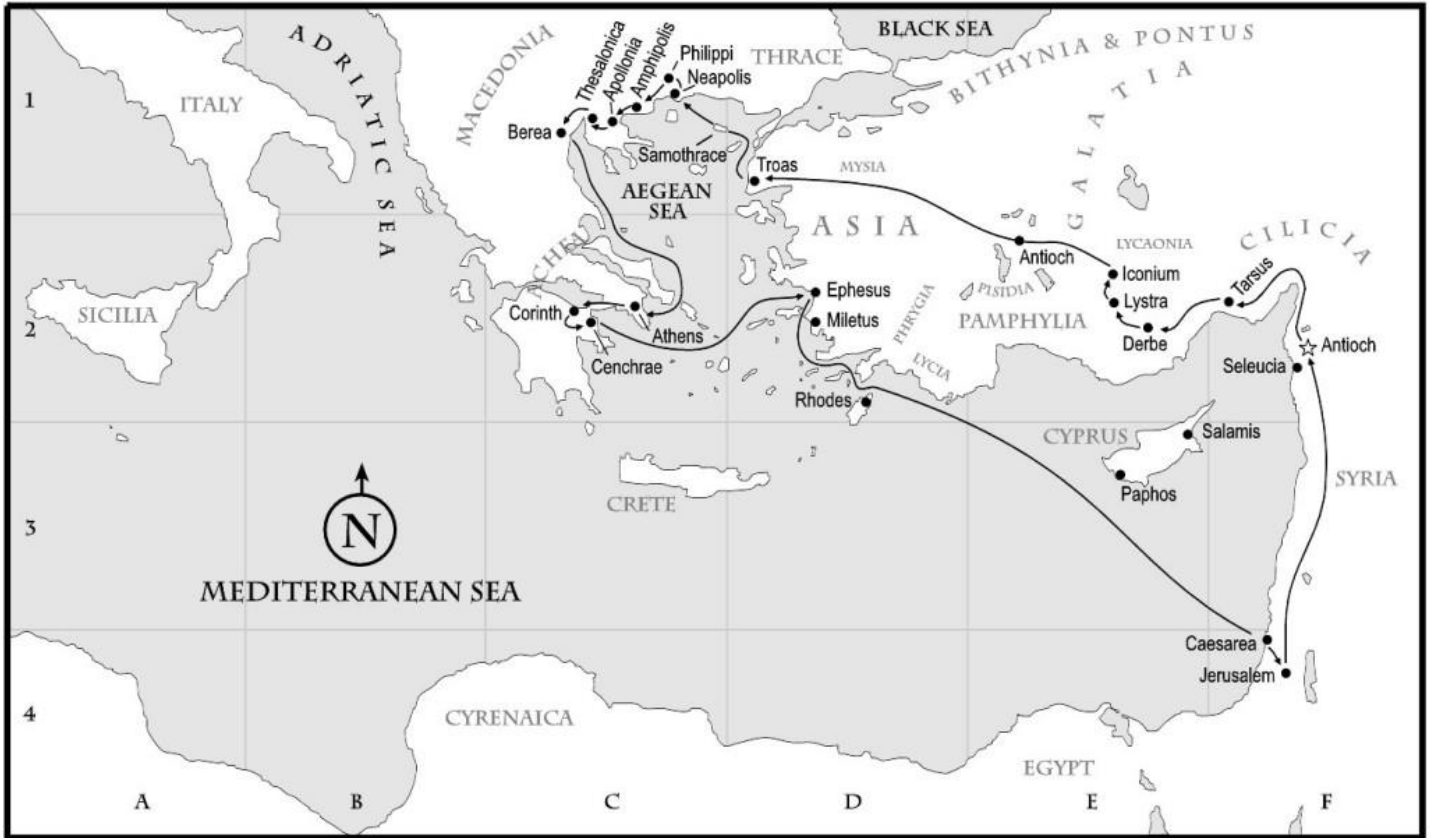
Because sees righteousness of Christ covering them fully.

**Yes! Gloriously! Righteousness through Sin!**

*Christ takes the sin of the believer and exchanges it for His righteousness!*

*Paul also tells the Corinthians in Ch6 that NOW is the time of salvation....*

*...why would you delay a moment longer!?*





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*The Summary of Paul’s Faithful Labors and Final Letter to Corinth*

**INTRODUCTION: Review of Part 1 and 1 Corinthians**

- A. City of Corinth
- B. DisCouragement of Paul and EnCouragement of God.
- C. 1 Corinthians

**I. Summary of Paul’s Faithful Labors to Corinth (from Acts 18 to 2 Corinthians)**

*See table on back*

**II. Summary of Paul’s Final Letter to Corinth (2 Corinthians)**

**A. Autobiographical**

**B. Basic Outline**

- 1. Ch1-7: Paul’s Description of His Ministry
- 2. Ch8-9: Paul’s call for Donation to Jerusalem
- 3. Ch10-13: Paul’s Defense of His Ministry

**C. Consistent Theme: *God’s Strength Displayed in Our Weakness (2 Cor 12:7-10)***

- 1. Comfort through Suffering (2 Cor 1:3-7)
  
- 2. Sufficiency through Insufficiency (2 Cor 2:14-16)
  
- 3. Glory of New Covenant through Death of Old Covenant (2 Cor 3:4-18)
  
- 4. Life through Death (2 Cor 4:7-12)
  - a. From Lesser Light to Greater Light (2 Cor 4:5-6)
  
  - b. From Single Resurrection to Innumerable Resurrections (2 Cor 4:14)
  
  - c. From Temporal to Eternal; From Affliction to Glory (2 Cor 4:16-17)
  
  - d. From Nakedness to Fully Clothed (2 Cor 5:1-8)
  
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Possible Order of Visits and Letters from Paul's Ministry to Corinth		
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