
2 CORINTHIANS VERSE-BY-VERSE | DR. RANDY WHITE

SESSION 1 | 2 CORINTHIANS 1:1-10

PAUL PRAYS FOR COMFORT FOR THE CORINTHIANS | 2 CORINTHIANS 1:1-7

See the Scofield Reference Bible (1917) for an excellent short introduction to the book.

- Verse 1 -
 - The letter is given from both **Paul** and **Timothy** and is written to both the **church of God** and the **saints which are in all Achaia**.
 - Paul wrote 1st Corinthians along with Sosthenes and directed it to the church at Corinth, to the saints, and to all who call upon the name of the Lord.
- Verse 2 -
 - Paul's customary greeting. Also found in Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 1:3, Philemon 1:2, Colossians 1:2, 1 Thessalonians 1:2, 2 Thessalonians 1:2 and Philemon 1:3.
- Verses 3-4 -
 - The formula, "**Blessed be God...who...**" is found in vv 3-4 as well as in Ephesians 1:3. The terminology is strongly Jewish in flavor (see Gen. 14:20, 1 Chron. 29:10, etc).
 - Paul speaks of the **comfort** that God has provided through his **tribulation** in order that he (and Timothy) **may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble**, using that same comfort which they have received.
 - Later Paul will use the abundance of God's grace in the same pattern of being given in order that the recipient might bless others (2 Cor. 9:8). Compare also v. 5.
 - The word **comfort** is the common Greek word παρακαλέω [parakaleo], with the idea of *coming alongside to encourage*.
 - The root word is used 10 times in vv. 1-7.
 - Nine of these times it is translated *comfort* or *consolation*.
 - The first usage is in the word **church** in v. 1, which has the root *kaleo* in *ecclesia*. Indeed, the church *comes out of a calling* and is encouraged when it recognizes its *call*.
 - The Greek word θλίψις [thlipsis] is used three times in vv. 4-6.
 - Translated as **tribulation** in v. 4. The word **tribulation** is used of the *Great Tribulation* (Mt. 24:21) but is used here in general terms of affliction and trouble of any kind.
 - Translated as **trouble** in v. 4, in reference to the troubles of others.
 - Translated as **afflicted** in v. 6, speaking of Paul's personal troubles that resulted from his witness.
 - Please note that, Paul is specifically speaking of **us** (Paul and Timothy).
 - While there may be more general application to anyone, Paul is *not* making such an application.
 - One who makes a promise where there is no promise will undoubtedly run into disappointment down the road. Sadly, almost all commentaries and sermons attempt to make direct application from this verse, when the verse is Paul's personal testimony, not Paul's description of the Christian life.

- Verse 5 -
 - In the previous verse Paul made a transition from **you** (v. 2) to **us/we** (Paul/Timothy). This distinction becomes more clear and relevant in v. 5.
 - Since it is hard for most of us to claim that **the sufferings of Christ abound in us**, we can only make an indirect application.
 - Paul was able to continually be a **consolation** through Christ for others who suffered or needed the Gospel.
- Verse 6 -
 - Paul continues with personal testimony, that any affliction or comfort that he and Timothy experienced is for the **consolation and salvation** of the Corinthians.
 - This salvation is **effectual** (i.e.: working to its intended result, namely the **enduring of the same sufferings**).
- Verse 7 -
 - Since the Corinthians have an effectual salvation, Paul says **our hope of you is steadfast**.
 - Paul knows that being a participant in the **sufferings** of Christ also means that one is a partaker in the **consolation** of Christ. Paul says that, just as the Corinthians have been *partners in suffering* so shall they be *partners in comfort*.

PAUL'S TESTIMONY OF SUFFERING IN ASIA | 2 CORINTHIANS 1:8-10

- Verse 8 -
 - The fact that Paul speaks of **we** and **you** in this verse (and following) gives evidence that we should not take the first person plural of the previous verses in any different (i.e.: more general) manner.
 - Both **we** and **you** are specified pronouns, referring to Paul/Timothy and the church at Corinth.
 - For *me and you* to put ourselves in the place of Paul and Timothy is an idea not grounded in reality.
 - What was Paul's **trouble which came to us in Asia**? Likely the episode in Ephesus in which the silversmiths caused an uproar and Paul was forced to flee to Greece (Acts 19:23-20:3), though it could be another of his many tribulations (of which we will learn more in chapter 4).
- Verse 9 -
 - The wording of this verse, in Greek, is challenging.
 - Young's Literal says, "we ourselves in ourselves the sentence of the death have had..."
 - Very likely the meaning is that no actual **sentence of death** had been given (historically we do not know of one) but that Paul and Timothy had, in themselves, prepared themselves for what seemed to be the inevitable. This caused them to focus on the resurrection and trust in **God which raiseth the dead** rather than their own strength.
- Verse 10 -
 - Paul now moves to the present tense, in which the danger has passed and they have been **delivered...from so great a death**.