

- Verse 2 -
 - As discussed in verse 1, there is confusion about the **third time** (v. 1) and the **second time** in this verse.
 - It appears that he had told them three times (2 Cor. 12:20, 21, and 13:1) that he would come a **second time**.
 - Now he says, **I told you before, and foretell you** that even though he is **absent** from them now, he is writing **as if...present** on the planned second visit.
 - His words are a word of warning, saying that he **will not spare** (the rod of discipline) when he arrives, if it is necessary.
 - Those who **heretofore have sinned** is likely a reference to those claiming to be apostles, whom Paul addresses in chapters 10-12. However, though the words are chiefly directed to them, it is also **to all other**, thus a general warning.
- Verse 3 - The accusers of Paul did not believe it was **Christ speaking** in him, and this is given as the reason that Paul **will not spare** (v. 2). Christ **to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you** speaks of His power in the Corinthian congregation.
- Verse 4 -
 - Christ **was crucified out of** (Greek *ek*) **weakness**, likely a reference to his human nature. He could have called to God and received **more than twelve legions of angels** ([Matt. 26:53](#)), but rather He **made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant...and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death** ([Phil. 2:7-8](#)).
 - **Yet he liveth** (a word about His resurrection) **by the power of God**.
 - Paul then gives a personal testimony when he says **we also are weak in him** (compare [2 Cor. 4:7-12](#)).
 - Those who want this to be a general statement of living in Christ's strength should look elsewhere, because Paul clearly says that, in their weakness, they **shall live with him by the power of God toward you** (the Corinthians).
 - The words **toward you** make it impossible to make this a statement of general application to all believers, because **you** is clearly a reference to the Corinthians.
 - In essence, the second half of the verse says, "We are physically weak (as Christ was), but in our ministry to you we will be strong by God's power."
 - Paul could also be saying, "I ministered to you in weakness and it didn't stick. Now I'll minister to you in strength and see if you will listen."
- Verse 5 -
 - When Paul says **examine yourselves** he is speaking to each *individual* within the group.
 - We know this because of the "ye+plural" rule: *when a second person plural personal pronoun is used with a plural, it applies to each individual within the group. When used with a singular, it applies to the group as a singular whole.*
 - In this case, **examine** in Greek form is in the plural.
 - Furthermore, Greek word order allows for emphasis by placing words outside of their default order of verb-subject-object.
 - In this case, the order is object (**yourselves**) and verb/subject combined ([**ye**] **examine**). Therefore, **yourselves** is in the emphatic position. So, Paul, who has been under scrutiny by the Corinthians, tells the Corinthians *take a look in the mirror*.
 - Most English translations miss this subtlety. Paul has been examined and put under the microscope by the Corinthians (see verse 3), now it is the Corinthians time to **examine** themselves and **prove** themselves.
 - Though the wording of the second sentence is challenging, the concept is simple and connected with the instruction Paul has just given.

- The Corinthians were to **prove** themselves, using the word δοκιμάζω [dokimazo] to see if they had Jesus Christ in them, or if they were **reprobates**, where Paul uses the word ἀδόκιμος [adokimos], the negation of *dokimazo* (thus, no proof).
 - Note again that in verse three the Corinthians **seek a proof** δοκιμή [dokime] of Paul's Christian experience, but Paul tells them to **prove** δοκιμάζω [dokimazo] **your own selves** to see if there was "no proof" ἀδόκιμος [adokimos], thus they were **reprobates**.
 - While the word **reprobate** has come to mean "rejected by God," the word is based on the same root as *probate*, a process by which a will or other legal document is tested for authenticity (i.e.: proven). In the 17th Century the term was often used of coinage that did not have the *silver proof* it claimed to have.
 - Note: verse 3 and verse 6 are necessary for a full understanding of this verse.
- Verse 6 -
 - Paul insists (in defiance of his accusers) that he and his companions **are not reprobates** (i.e.: they have all the proof that is necessary).
 - A few points of application:
 - These verses have been misused untold numbers of times to bring a guilt trip on believers, getting them to bring some kind of works as proof of salvation. Those who use the verses in this manner are *misusing* the verses.
 - The context of the verse is that the Corinthians should individually *prove yourself* not others.
 - The only trustworthy *proof* of a person's salvation is their faith. Good works can (and should) be done by anyone, in the faith and out of the faith.
 - When others question the validity of your salvation, there is no need to accept their accusations.
- Verse 7 - Once again, Paul uses the word δόκιμος [dokimos], translated **approved**. Paul's desire that **ye do no evil** is not to *prove himself* (for he had bragged on them), but that they would simply be **honest**, regardless of whether Paul and companions **be as reprobates** or *be pure as the driven snow*.
- Verse 8 -
 - The **we** in this verse is Paul and his companions. Paul insists that they are *duty bound* to do that which is **the truth**.
 - Once again, Paul is giving personal testimony about his planned visit. Any personal application is secondary.
- Verse 9 - The **truth** that Paul *prefers* to share (v. 8) is that he would rather be **weak** (as on his first visit) and the Corinthians be **strong**. Indeed, he wishes for their **perfection**. The word **perfection** is κατάρτισις [katartisis], from *artizo* (to bring to an end), with the *kata* prefix (which intensifies to the ultimate degree). We get the English word *art* from *artizo*, thus Paul's prayer is that they be a *finished work of art*.
- Verse 10 - Paul's desire is that the Corinthians be *perfect*, **therefore** he writes this letter while **absent** to avoid the **sharpness** which he wants to avoid in a face-to-face encounter. Paul confirms that his ministry is one of **edification, and not to destruction**. Every grace-based (i.e.: Pauline) ministry should be the same.

2 CORINTHIANS 13:11-14 | PAUL'S FINAL GREETINGS

- Verses 11-14 -
 - Paul gives several instructions:
 - Rejoice! (KJV uses **farewell**, but the Greek is an imperative verb).
 - **Be perfect** - using *katartizo* as in verse 9.
 - **be of good comfort** using *parakaleo*, the word for encouragement, comfort, and exhortation.
 - **be of one mind** - literally, *think on the same things*.
 - **live in peace** - with the result that **the God of love and peace shall be with you**.
 - **Greet one another with an holy kiss** - a reminder that all commands must be taken contextually, otherwise churches should observe *the ordinance of the Holy Kiss*.
 - Paul closes with greetings from **all the saints** and a benedictory prayer.