

# Introduction

Second Corinthians 5:16–6:2 rests within one of the most magisterial and problematic sections in Paul’s letters. Paul’s ministry was in danger at Corinth. Tension grew between Paul and his community after the rough reception of 1 Corinthians and the painful visit. To make matters worse, opponents infiltrated the community there and undermined Paul’s authority by questioning his apostolic commission (2 Cor 10–11). Dissension ensued when some Corinthian believers sided with the opponents against him (11:1–6). In 5:16–6:2 Paul explicitly calls on the community to accept and be reconciled to his ministry.<sup>1</sup>

The description of God’s new creation and reconciliation in Christ serves as a catalyst for Paul’s call for the Corinthian audience to be reconciled to his ministry. Paul sets forth his gospel before the community as proof of his divine commission to preach new creation and reconciliation in Christ (5:16–6:2). Since the sinless Christ has died on the cross for humanity (see 5:14–15), humanity’s sins are no longer credited against them (5:19), and thus those who are in Christ and heed his ambassadors (5:20) are now a new creation (5:17).

Numerous previous studies have varied on how to delimit the section and how to understand the call to reconciliation in 5:18–20 within Paul’s theology. These studies have focused on the perspective of the

1. *Pace* Matera (*II Corinthians*, 156–58), 6:11–7:4 does not reflect an “explicit” call to reconciliation from Paul to the community, *per se*. The content certainly implies an attempt to assuage current tension in their relationship (e.g., 7:2), but 5:16–6:2 contains an explicit call to reconciliation since the passage makes repeated use of the noun *katal lāgh*, (“reconciliation”) and the verb *katal lāssw* (“to reconcile”). The section 6:11–7:4 contains no mention of these terms. The content of the section may well echo themes of explicit reconciliation, but it does so in a complementary and secondary manner compared to 5:16–6:2.

author Paul, often comparing 2 Cor 5:18–20 with Rom 5:1–10 (among other texts), or attempting to understand the origin of the concept of reconciliation within his theological matrix.<sup>2</sup> This study proposes a new interpretation of Paul’s call to reconciliation in 5:16–6:2 by focusing on how the authorial audience (i.e., the “textual” or “implied” audience) responds to the microchiastic structure of 5:16–6:2 and the macrochiastic structure of 4:15–6:2.<sup>3</sup>

The audience-oriented method adopted for this study is “text-centered” in that it analyzes how the authorial audience responds to the oral presentation of a text. This method demonstrates for modern readers what the audience experiences within the text’s performance, that is, this method *shows* what the audience *hears*. Within this method the exegete “listens” carefully to repeated terms, themes, and structures.

The present study represents the first audience-oriented study of 2 Cor 5:16–6:2 (and 1:1–6:2 as a whole) and demonstrates it to be a chiastic unit with an A (5:16–17)–B (5:18)–B’ (5:19–20)–A’ (5:21–6:2) structure that is grounded objectively on grammatical and lexical criteria. Furthermore, this study demonstrates 5:16–6:2 to be the closing A’ unit to a six-part macrochiastic unit in 4:15–6:2, and thus presents lexical parallels with the A unit, 4:15–18. As a chiastic unit, 5:16–6:2 has paralleling elements that develop Paul’s exhortation as it progresses through the unit’s structure. In addition to being the conclusion of the macrochiasm 4:15–6:2, the unit 5:16–6:2 is also shown to be the climactic exhortation of 1:1–6:2, which consists of three macrochiastic arguments (1:8–2:13; 2:14–4:14; 4:15–6:2) and emphasizes the symbiotic relationship that Paul and the audience share in Christ.

## History of Interpretation

### Delimitations of the Text

The passage considered in this study, 2 Cor 5:16–6:2, has been studied under various delimitations that can be grouped into two major categories: 5:11–21 and 5:11–6:2. This section will survey the major positions

2. See, e.g., Matera, *II Corinthians*, 126–27; Fitzmyer, “Reconciliation,” 169; Harris, *Second Epistle*, 454–55; Martin, *Reconciliation*, *passim*.

3. The term “authorial audience” and the audience-oriented method will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

regarding the textual delimitation and demonstrate why this study prefers 5:16—6:2 as the proper delimitation.

Several influential commentaries and biblical translations delimit the text as 5:11–21 for thematic and grammatical reasons.<sup>4</sup> Jan Lambrecht, for instance, argues that “a different line of thought [breaks] through” in 5:11: the future destination of believers in 4:16—5:10 is replaced by the present situation of salvation in 5:11.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, he alleges, the grammatical connector *οὐαὶ* in v. 20 concludes the paragraph of 5:11–21.

Other scholars who agree with the terminus at v. 21 see v. 14 as the proper genesis of the passage. Reimand Bieringer delimits the section as 5:14–21 based on the different theological content in 5:11–13 and 5:14–21.<sup>6</sup> Along with Bieringer, Henrick Boer contends that the subject *ἡμαῖς* has different referents in vv. 11–13 (Paul alone) and vv. 14–21 (Paul and his audience). In addition, Boer alleges there are no thematic links between Paul’s defense of his ministry and the discussion of reconciliation.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the large number who prefer v. 21 as the terminus, several scholars consider the terminus at v. 21 to be artificial and argue that 6:2 is the proper endpoint. Richard Mead, e.g., claims the division at v. 21 originates from the “tyranny [*sic*] of chapter divisions.”<sup>8</sup> Mead contends that Paul commonly cites OT Scripture at the climax of an argument.<sup>9</sup> The OT quotation in 6:1–2 then necessitates that 6:2 be the terminus

4. Lambrecht (“Reconcile,” 161–209) exemplifies the scholars who delimit the text as 5:11–21. Other scholars who follow this delimitation include Barrett (*Second Epistle*, 161–62), Martin (*2 Corinthians*, 115–69), Martyn (“Epistemology,” 89–110), and Matera (*II Corinthians*, 127–28), among others. Bible translations with this delimitation include RSV, REB, NIV, and NAB.

5. Lambrecht (“Reconcile,” 170) constructs this section concentrically: (a) 5:11–13, “self-defense”; (b) 5:14–21, “emissary of Christ”; (a’) 6:1–10, “self-defense.” This tripartite structure seems to contradict his delimitation of 5:11–21 as an independent section.

6. Bieringer, “Versöhnung,” 432.

7. Boer, “2 Corinthians 5:14–6:2,” 529–30. Against Boer, the different referents of *ἡμαῖς* do not warrant a prominent break at v. 14; theological themes in vv. 11–13, (such as internal/external and seen/unseen contrasts) are seen in 5:16 and 5:17.

8. Mead, “2 Corinthians 5:14–21.” Despite the title of his article, Mead argues that the correct delimitations are 5:14—6:2. The chapter divisions are traditionally believed to be introduced into the biblical text by Stephen Langton, ca. 1200 CE.

9. Mead (“2 Corinthians 5:14–21,” 144–45) lists a considerable number of examples of Paul’s climactic use of OT citations. See also Heil, *Rhetorical Role*, 10–15.

of the section since a break at 5:21 defuses the poignant statements in 6:1–2. Paul Barnett adds that Paul’s ambassadorial actions in 6:1–2 stand in thematic unity with the defense of his ministry in 5:11–21.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the arguments stated above, this study will treat 5:16–6:2 as a section. This position is grounded on grammatical data since *wpte* in v. 16 presents a logical consequence of the activities of Christ in vv. 14–15, and the terminus of the section is denoted by the abrupt shift from appeal in 6:2 to a recitation of Paul’s hardships in 6:3.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, the chiasmic A-B-B’-A’ structure in 5:16–6:2 presented in this study affirms the grammatical delimitations. The words “now” (*nuh*), “behold” (*idou*), “to know” (*ginwskw*), and “to become” (*ginomai*) establish the A (5:16–17) and A’ (5:21–6:2) sections of the chiasm. The B (5:18) and B’ (5:19–20) sections are marked by the repeated use of the terms “reconciliation/reconcile” (*katallassw/katalagh*) and “us” (*hmih*).

A 5:16 As a result, *now* [*nuh*] we regard no one in a worldly manner; even if we once *knew* [*egnwkamen*] Christ in a worldly way, we do not *know* [*ginwskomen*] him so *now* [*nuh*]. 17 As a result, whoever is in Christ is a new creation. The old things pass away; *behold* [*idou*]: new things *have come* [*gegonen*]!

B 18 And everything is from God, who has *reconciled* [*katallassantoi*] us to himself through Christ and given *us* [*hmih*] the ministry of *reconciliation* [*katalagh*],

B’ 19 such that God was *reconciling* [*katallasswn*] the world to himself through Christ, not holding them accountable for their sins, and placed on *us* [*hmih*] the message of *reconciliation* [*katalagh*]. 20 So we are ambassadors on Christ’s behalf, as though God were pleading through us. We implore on Christ’s behalf: be *reconciled* [*katalaghte*] to God.

A’ 21 He made the one who did not *know* [*gnonta*] sin to be sin for us so that we might *become* [*genwmeqa*] the righteousness of God in him. 6:1 Working in unison then, we plead with you not to receive

10. Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 299, 315. Witherington (*Conflict*, 199–201) argues on rhetorical grounds that 5:11–6:2 is a well-conceived argument that climaxes with the proclamations at 5:19–20 and 6:1–2. Boer (“2 Corinthians 5:14–6:2,” 530) agrees that the paraenetic appeals in 5:19–20 and 6:1–2 establish semantic continuity.

11. Harris, *Second Epistle*, 424–26.

the grace of God in vain. <sup>2</sup> For it says: “At the acceptable time I heard you, and on the day of salvation I helped you.” *Behold* [ιδου]: *now* [nuh] is the acceptable time! *Behold* [ιδου]: *now* [nuh] is the day of salvation!

This structure, as well as the chiasmic structures that precede in 1:1—5:15, will be discussed in further detail in chapter 2.

## Occasion for the Letter

This section will provide further foundation for studying the authorial audience of 2 Corinthians by addressing the situations that precede, are mentioned in, and thus likely influenced the composition of the letter. These issues involve the inception of the community, problems that led to 1 Corinthians, and the events that occurred between the composition of 1 and 2 Corinthians.

### Events between 1 and 2 Corinthians

Paul likely chose Corinth for his ministry because of the size of the city, the popularity of the Isthmian games, and the trade that occurred there.<sup>12</sup> According to Acts 18:5–11, Paul spent eighteen months in the city when he founded the community. Within this time period, Paul likely set the foundation for the community’s theological understanding of Christ and the Parousia.

Problems ensued in Corinth shortly after Paul left. It is difficult to determine the exact number of parties that fractured the community (if there were in fact multiple parties).<sup>13</sup> What is apparent is that an indeterminable but considerable portion of the community, for one reason or another, began to doubt Paul’s apostolic integrity. The community had sent a letter to Paul to request clarification of his teachings on sexuality and food customs (1 Cor 7:1; 8:1). Possible slogans contained in the Corinthians’ letter to Paul indicate a combative attitude among some of the members (1 Cor 6:12–13; 7:1; 8:4; 10:23, 26). In addition to the Corinthians’ direct correspondence with Paul, Chloe’s associates brought word of discord and immorality in the community (1 Cor 1:10). Paul responded to these issues in 1 Corinthians, and it is

12. Thistleton, *First Epistle*, 17.

13. Fee, *First Epistle*, 47–51.

apparent from the letter that he thought his apostolic integrity was being questioned by some in the community (1 Cor 1:10—4:21; 9:1–10). Paul also showed great emotion and rhetorical strategy in responding to matters of immorality (1 Cor 5:1–13; 6:12–20), lawsuits (6:1–11), the Lord’s Supper (11:17–34), conduct in worship (11:2–15; 14:1–34), and the resurrection (15:1–58).

It is difficult to determine whether or not 1 Corinthians had initial success with the community. A change in travel plans may have resulted from a negative response to the letter.<sup>14</sup> Regardless of how 1 Corinthians was initially received, problems ensued between the writing of 1 and 2 Corinthians that created more tension for Paul’s ministry in the city. A study of the situations that occasioned 2 Corinthians, however, is complicated by the sparse details regarding Paul’s visits and correspondence with the community at Corinth between 1 and 2 Corinthians.

In regards to events that took place between 1 and 2 Corinthians, debate focuses around five major topics: (1) Paul changed his travel itinerary and arrived at Corinth earlier than he had planned (1 Cor 16:5–6; 2 Cor 1:15–16). (2) A “painful visit” ensued (2 Cor 2:1). (3) Paul did not return through Corinth as he had planned (2 Cor 1:23) but replied with a “tearful letter” (2 Cor 2:4). Next, (4) Paul suffered a type of malady (2 Cor 1:3–11; 2:10–13), whether an illness or imprisonment; it appears some Corinthians considered him too “weak” to be an apostle of the glorious Lord Jesus. In addition, (5) a group of “false apostles” had infiltrated the community and stirred up mistrust against Paul (2 Cor 2:17; 3:1; 10:1—13:10).<sup>15</sup>

- (1) The change in travel plans caused some within the Corinthian community to question Paul’s authority. The difference in itineraries listed in 1 Cor 16:5–6 and 2 Cor 1:15–16 betrays a change in Paul’s plans to visit the community in Corinth between 1 and 2 Corinthians. The itinerary in 1 Cor 16:5–9 shows that the journey is to begin in Ephesus, proceed to Macedonia, and conclude

14. Barrett, *First Epistle*, 5; Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 15–17.

15. For matters of brevity and relevance, this study will not engage the issue of the integrity of 2 Cor at length. It suffices to say that this study agrees with the majority who view the contents of 2 Cor 1–7 as immediately following the tearful letter, which is lost and is not represented in the present section 2 Cor 10–13. In this way, the findings of this study are compatible with nearly all unity and composite theories regarding the letter.

in Corinth. The modified itinerary in 2 Cor 1:15–16 shows two stops in Corinth: one on the way from Ephesus to Macedonia and a second visit on the return from Macedonia to Ephesus. Although such a change could have occurred for many reasons (bad weather, etc.), the community appears to have viewed the change as instability or weakness in Paul's character. Some scholars argue that Paul changed his itinerary in response to growing problems in Corinth.<sup>16</sup> Whatever the cause, the change required an explanation and defense of his travel plans in 2 Cor 1:15–17.

- (2) A “painful visit” immediately followed the first change in itinerary (2 Cor 2:1–11). Two questions arise in regard to the painful visit: when did this visit occur and what transpired during this visit? As to the first question, the extant evidence in Paul's letters and Acts describe three trips to Corinth. The painful visit was not likely the initial founding of the community and cannot be the impending third visit (2 Cor 13:1). Thus the painful visit has traditionally been associated with the second visit that Paul made after 1 Corinthians and prior to 2 Corinthians, and this view remains the preferred position today.

Some scholars speculate in detail about what transpired during the painful visit.<sup>17</sup> Other scholars suggest that what can be known is that “the offender” played a major role in the frustration that Paul encountered during the visit and that this affected Paul's next travel itinerary and two further letters.<sup>18</sup>

Debate regarding the offender centers around his identity and the time and content of the offense. The offender is discussed in 2 Cor 2:5–11 and 7:12.<sup>19</sup> This figure was traditionally identified with the incestuous man of 1 Cor 5,<sup>20</sup> but this identification has

16. The discrepancy in the itinerary inspires speculation among some scholars. Barnett (*Second Epistle*, 28) believes Paul came earlier to deal with immorality that continued even after his warnings in 1 Cor. See also Murphy-O'Connor, *Theology*, 11.

17. Murphy-O'Connor, *Theology*, 15; Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 7; Lambrecht, *2 Corinthians*, 5–6; Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 7.

18. Matera, *II Corinthians*, 17.

19. The term “offender” comes from *toū adikhōsantōj* in 7:12.

20. This traditional view was prominent from the time of Tertullian to the nineteenth century. Some modern scholars, e.g., Kruse (*Second Epistle*, 42–45; idem, “Offender”) prefer this theory. Cf. Harris, *Second Epistle*, 226.

been rejected by most modern scholars. Lexical connections between 1 Cor 5 and 2 Cor 2:5–11 are negligible or nonexistent, and the tearful letter is no longer viewed as 1 Corinthians, as it once was. Alternative theories vary in details but present the offender either as one from within<sup>21</sup> or from without the Corinthian community.<sup>22</sup> The view that the offender is an outsider is not compatible with the text. If the man had come from without, in what manner would the community punish him, and why would they accept him back after the punishment (2 Cor 2:4–9)?

The majority of scholars place the time of the offense during the painful visit. Paul speaks of the offense within the context of defending his change of travel plans (1:15–2:4), and the term “pain” (luph) is used in reference both to the painful visit (2:1) and to the offense (2:5).

This study agrees with those scholars who see the offender as a member of the community but not as the incestuous man of 1 Cor 5. The offender likely rebuked Paul publicly to the extent that Paul recalled the event as “painful,” amended his travel plans, and wrote a letter in great distress shortly thereafter.

- (3) In response to the painful visit and the offender, Paul wrote a “severe” or “tearful” letter prior to 2 Corinthians. According to 2 Cor 1:23–2:11; 7:5–16, the tearful letter emphasized Paul’s love for the community and admonished them to punish the offender who had rebuked him. Some scholars identify this letter with 1 Corinthians or a letter preserved in 2 Cor 10–13 that preceded 2 Cor 1–9.<sup>23</sup> The most widely held position today, however, views the tearful letter as a letter written between the painful visit and 2 Corinthians and as no longer extant.
- (4) There is no present consensus on the nature of Paul’s affliction in Ephesus. Several offer that this affliction was an imprisonment and possible death sentence (as intoned in 2 Cor 1:9, to. apokrīma

21. Moffatt, *Introduction*, 122; Watson, “Paul’s Painful Visit”; Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 17; Lambrecht, *2 Corinthians*, 5–6. In particular, see Thrall (“Offender”) for a list of proposed criteria regarding the offender and the offense.

22. Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 7; idem, “HO ADIKĒSAS.”

23. Kennedy, *Second and Third*, 81–85, cited in Fulton, “Rhetorical Analysis,” 28–30; Batey, “Interaction,” 139–46.



tou/ qanaʔou). This position has possible merits. Acts of the Apostles 19 recounts a tense episode in which Paul was accosted and tried by a mob, then imprisoned. Another option is that Paul had a recurrent illness that relapsed during periods of immense stress, such as the time that followed the painful visit. This view is supported by the use of the verb *bareih*, which commonly meant to suffer an illness,<sup>24</sup> and by the other mentions of Paul's illness (Gal 4:13). Although the illness is not easily diagnosed, it is thought to be a type of malaria.<sup>25</sup> This view also coincides with his departure from Troas (2 Cor 2:10–13). The tension with the Corinthians exasperated his health to the point that his recurrent illness reemerged, and this physical setback caused his status in Corinth to decline further. Whatever the nature of his illness, the Corinthians found it objectionable enough to question his qualification to be an apostle.

### The Opponents

- (5) In addition to the problems mentioned above, certain Christian missionaries who undermined Paul's authority arrived at Corinth. The identity of these "superapostles" (2 Cor 11:5; 12:15), as Paul calls them, is strongly debated. What Paul knew of these opponents and when he learned of them is unclear from the content of the letter. Evidence in the letter that the opposing Christian missionaries were Jewish (e.g., 11:22–23) leads many to believe the opponents may have been similar to the Judaizing intruders of Galatia and Philippi.<sup>26</sup> Barrett argues that Paul inspired animosity among conservative Jewish Christians. The opponents who knew Jesus personally in Palestine were recommended and funded by the church in Jerusalem. The theology of these Christian missionaries emphasized along with faith in Christ a righteousness based on the law.<sup>27</sup>

24. Harvey, *Renewal*, 9; BDAG, s.v.

25. Harris, *Second Epistle*, 172.

26. Baur (*Paul*, 288) proposes that the opponents acted under the auspices of the Jerusalem church. See also Gunther, *Opponents*, 314.

27. Scholars differ on the influence James had on this group of opponents. Baur (*Paul*, 277) reads "superapostles" (2 Cor 11:5; 12:15) to mean the opponents were

The Judaizer position has many flaws. First, there is no debate over law, food customs, or circumcision in 2 Corinthians. Barrett retorts that Judaizers had a different agenda for every city,<sup>28</sup> but Judaizers without a concern for the law or circumcision in any city would be decidedly ineffective Judaizers. The term *-Ebraiōj* (11:22) does not denote Palestinian origin with any degree of certainty since Paul uses the same term for himself (11:22) but is a native of Tarsus. The opponents may well be Jewish Christian missionaries, but there is no evidence that they were from Palestine or under the auspices of the Jerusalem community.

An alternative to the Judaizer position views the opponents as Gnostics.<sup>29</sup> This position, in principle, considers the opponents in 2 Corinthians to be related to the Gnostic problems that Paul encounters in 1 Corinthians. While many scholars have accepted that some content of 1 Corinthians deals with Gnostic-like tendencies, the view that the opponents of 2 Corinthians are Gnostics has not won wide approval. It is difficult to define what characterizes a “Gnostic” in 55 CE. In addition, the qualities that some scholars see as Gnostic, such as dualism and “gnosis,” were widely held in various forms throughout the Hellenistic world, including Hellenistic Judaism.<sup>30</sup>

Because of the lack of Judaizing terms or evidence for Gnostic tendencies, this study agrees with those scholars who view the opponents as Hellenistic Jewish Christian missionaries with a background similar to that of Paul. These opponents see their abilities and credentials as superior to Paul’s, particularly in terms of spiritual gifts. There is no explicit reference to Jerusalem to argue for the Palestinian origin for the opponents, and the “Gnostic” attributes mentioned by Bultmann and

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prominent apostles from Jerusalem. However, more recent proponents of the Judaizer position argue that the opponents overstated their affiliation with Jerusalem or used their letters of recommendation without Jerusalem’s complete compliance. Barrett (“Opponents”; idem, *Paul*, 35) understands the opponents to be under the auspices of Jerusalem in coming to investigate Paul’s work in Corinth, but they go too far in infiltrating the community. See also Martin, “Opponents,” 286; Thrall, “Super Apostles”; idem, *II Corinthians*, 576–89; Harris, *Second Epistle*, 70–80; Lüdemann, *Opposition*, 90–97.

28. Barrett, *Paul*, 35.

29. Lütgert, *Freiheitspredigt*, cited in Harris, *Second Epistle*, 79; Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 203; Schmithals, *Gnostics*, 26–36; idem, *Gnosis*, 173–77.

30. Schnelle, *History*, 88.

Schmithals do not distinguish the opponents as Gnostics because those attributes were common throughout the Hellenistic Jewish Diaspora.<sup>31</sup>

The text of the letter tells us little about the identity or the origin of the opponents. Paul prefers to present them as shadowy figures rather than outline their positions (a strategy that was common in ancient letters).<sup>32</sup> From a rhetorical angle, he is more interested in addressing what he believes the opponents have said or done, particularly in regards to him and his ministry.

It is probable that the opponents:

- were Jewish Christian missionaries (10:7; 11:6, 22, 23a)
- carried letters of recommendation to demonstrate credibility (3:1)
- boasted in “worldly” things (5:11–13; 11:18)
- accepted payment for their ministry (2:17; 4:1–2)
- had ecstatic experiences, oratorical skills, and performed wonders (4:7–11; 11:20–24)
- overstepped their bounds in their ministry at Corinth, according to Paul’s missionary protocol (10:13–14).

It is likely that the opponents accused Paul of the following:

- he lacked credibility because he had no letters of recommendation (3:1)
- he acted in a worldly fashion (implying a weak nature; 10:2)
- his letters were strong but his presence was weak (10:10–11)
- he was an untrained speaker (5:11–13; 11:6)
- he refused money for himself but took a collection allegedly for the poor in Jerusalem (12:17).<sup>33</sup>

This represents a general description of the opponents that is based on the evidence provided by the letter itself. The list speaks more to what the opponents said about Paul than to their identity, origin, or specific

31. Georgi, *Opponents*, 9–14, 248; Friedrich, “Die Gegner”; Schnelle, *History*, 108; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 53; Witherington, *Conflict*, 247.

32. Du Toit, “Vilification.”

33. For a similar methodology and list of attributes see Furnish (*II Corinthians*, 47–54) and Matera (*II Corinthians*, 20–24). A discussion of methodology can be found in Witherington (*Conflict*, 345–50) and Harris (*Second Epistle*, 67–87).

theology. This list is sufficient, however, for the close reading of the text that will follow.

In summary, the following may describe a likely scenario for the events that immediately preceded the composition of 2 Corinthians. Paul intended to visit Corinth on his trip from Ephesus to Macedonia at the time of writing 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 16:1–5). For reasons we no longer know, he changed his travel plans to arrive in Corinth earlier and hoped to pass through Corinth again on his return to Ephesus (2 Cor 1:15–16). A painful visit ensued, during which the offender openly rebuked Paul in front of the community (2 Cor 2:4–9). Paul did not pass through Corinth on his return to Ephesus as he intended—leading to another change in travel plans (1:23–2:3). Instead he sent Titus with a “tearful letter” to address the painful visit and measures to be taken against the offender (2:4, 9). Paul journeyed to Troas but, despite the promise of a productive ministry, left due to his illness and to find Titus in Macedonia to learn how his letter was received in Corinth. Titus gave Paul a fairly positive, yet mixed, report. The Corinthians had sided with Paul and punished the offender appropriately (7:5–16), but intruders in the community posed a new threat to the relationship. In light of these events Paul was now being forced to defend both his sincerity as a minister to the community and his qualification to be an apostle of Christ.