

# **Dr. J. Ayodeji Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 1, Introduction**

## **Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 1, Introduction, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

Dr. Ayo Adewuya's teaching session on 2 Corinthians begins with an introduction to the complex relationship between Paul and the Corinthians, highlighting extensive communication and several letters exchanged. The session notes that 2 Corinthians, considered one unified letter, offers a uniquely personal glimpse into Paul's heart as he addresses misunderstandings and defends his ministry against opposition. **Key theological themes explored include Paul's understanding of the triune God, the crucial concept of reconciliation, the integral role of suffering in Christian life, the significance of the church, the call to holiness, eschatological perspectives, financial stewardship, and the reality of spiritual warfare.** Adewuya emphasizes that this occasional letter tackles practical pastoral issues still relevant today. **He frames Paul not merely as a theologian but as a "marketplace theologian" whose teachings arose from his experiences as a pastor and missionary.**

**2. 34 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 1 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → 2 Corinthians).**



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### **3. Briefing Document: Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 1, Introduction**

#### **Briefing Document: Dr. Ayo Adewuya's Introduction to 2 Corinthians**

##### **Overview:**

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Ayo Adewuya in the first session of his teaching series on Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians. Dr. Adewuya, a Professor of Greek and New Testament at Pentecostal Theological Seminary, provides an introduction to the letter by discussing the complex relationship between Paul and the Corinthians, the circumstances leading to its writing, and the major theological themes that will be explored in subsequent sessions. He emphasizes the "occasional" nature of the letter and its profound relevance to pastoral ministry today, offering a unique window into Paul's heart and struggles.

##### **Key Themes and Important Ideas:**

#### **1. The Complex Relationship Between Paul and the Corinthians:**

- Dr. Adewuya highlights that Paul's relationship with the Corinthians was "quite a very complex one," evidenced by the multiple letters Paul likely wrote to them (more than the two in the canon, potentially four or five).
- He references 1 Corinthians 5:9 ("Paul told the Corinthians that he had written to them a previous letter") and 2 Corinthians 2:3-4 and 7:8-12 ("Paul talks about a severe letter") to support the idea of multiple communications.
- The Corinthians also communicated with Paul through letters seeking answers to questions about Christian living (e.g., idols, marriage, resurrection) and sent delegations (mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:11-12 and 16:18). Paul also sent delegations (Timothy and Titus).
- The events leading to 2 Corinthians involved a "frayed relationship" due to a problematic "flying visit" by Paul and a subsequent "sorrowful letter." Paul sent Titus to mend this relationship.
- Dr. Adewuya refutes the idea of a long time gap between 1 and 2 Corinthians, suggesting that some issues from 1 Corinthians persisted.

## **2. The Occasional and Personal Nature of 2 Corinthians:**

- 2 Corinthians is described as "the most occasional of Paul's letters," meaning it was written to address specific circumstances and issues within the Corinthian church.
- Dr. Adewuya argues that if you want to understand Paul as a person with feelings and emotions, "then come to 2 Corinthians." He contrasts this with the often heroic and seemingly unemotional portrayal of Paul.
- The letter reveals the "rollercoaster" of the Corinthians' feelings towards Paul (love and hate), their questioning of his authority and character due to "interlopers" and his delayed visit, and misunderstandings about his acceptance of their financial support.
- Paul had to "defend himself" against accusations and misunderstandings, revealing his heart as a pastor who felt betrayed by those he led to Christ. He states, "You see Paul as a pastor in the real sense of it. Paul, as a pastor, talks from his heart. I mean, he was unburdening his heart because the Corinthians misunderstood him."

## **3. The Compositional Integrity of 2 Corinthians:**

- Dr. Adewuya addresses the scholarly debate about whether 2 Corinthians is a compilation of multiple letters.
- He asserts that "there is no manuscript that we have that does not contain the entire 2 Corinthians that we have," supporting the view that it is one complete letter.
- He acknowledges the shifts in tone within the letter (e.g., chapter 10-13) but argues that this is natural in a longer writing process and dependent on the specific issues being addressed. He emphasizes focusing on the message as it exists in the canonical form: "What we have in the canon is one letter, not five letters. And so, we want to deal with it that way."
- He places the "burden of proof" on those who argue for interpolation theories.

#### 4. The Context of Corinth:

- Corinth was a city "filled with vice" and an unlikely place for church planting due to its diverse population and numerous religious sites ("as many as 26 sacred places are devoted to many gods").
- The Corinthian Christian community was also diverse, with ethnic and social differences.
- 2 Corinthians is a "real letter written to real people who faced real problems" that arose after Paul's 18-month stay.

#### 5. 2 Corinthians as a Pastoral Epistle:

- Dr. Adewuya contends that 2 Corinthians is a "pastoral epistle, in the real sense of being pastoral," even more so than 1 Timothy, Titus, and 2 Timothy, because it directly addresses issues faced by pastors and ministers today.
- He gives examples of these issues: "integrity of Paul," questioning of his "message," problems with "money," strained "relationship," and "suffering." He concludes, "Everything we have in the ministry today, you look at 2 Corinthians, you'll find it there."

#### 6. Major Theological Themes in 2 Corinthians (Introduction):

Dr. Adewuya provides an overview of several key theological themes that will be explored in detail:

- **Paul's View of God:** Emphasizes the triune nature of God (Father as the source of grace, purity, mercy, comfort, resurrection, and witness; Jesus as a source of grace, deity affirmed, his incarnation, meekness, death for all; Holy Spirit's role in formation, equipping, preservation, credentialing, and as the agent of the new covenant). He stresses that the Trinity is not hierarchical: "different persons, but one essence."
- **Reconciliation:** Not just between God and humanity but also between people. It is initiated by God through Christ and requires human embrace. Reconciliation is the motivation for discussing authentic ministry. "There can be no genuine reconciliation unless we have the experience of Christ because that's the only thing that can take hatred away."

- **Suffering:** An "integral part of his missionary calling and practice," not an add-on. Paul's suffering was sacrificial and missiological, "for the sake of others," and he did not adopt a "victim mentality."
- **Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesia):** Local congregations are real and representative of the wider world community. Members are "letters written by the spirit." The church is the locus of God's eschatological activity, a community of believers belonging to God, betrothed to Christ, and described through metaphors like the temple of God, the body of Christ, and the people of God. "Paul's theology is communal. It's together. It's about people."
- **Holiness:** Members are called "saints of God" and must demonstrate ethical holiness in all aspects of life, beyond just a personal relationship with God. He critiques the "I, me, and myself" focus, stating, "That's exactly the problem we have... the problem of sin? Is the letter in the middle? I."
- **Eschatology:** The "already and not yet" tension is present, with discussions of earthly and heavenly dwellings.
- **Financial Stewardship:** An integral part of Christian life and ministry, exemplified by Christ's sacrificial giving and meant to demonstrate fraternal love within the body of Christ. Giving should be "liberal, voluntary, and insistent."
- **Spiritual Warfare:** Christian ministry is warfare against the devil, who seeks to "outwit and defraud believers," encourage an "unforgiving spirit," and "blind the understanding of unbelievers." Believers are already in this war and have divine weapons to "pull down strongholds." "God has provided enough weapons for us beyond... These weapons imply the nature of the struggle."

### **Conclusion:**

Dr. Adewuya's introduction to 2 Corinthians sets the stage for a detailed exploration of this significant letter. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the historical context, the personal dynamics between Paul and the Corinthians, and the profound pastoral and theological insights the letter offers for believers today. His highlighting of the major themes provides a valuable framework for engaging with the subsequent sessions of his teaching.

## 4. Study Guide: Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 1, Introduction

### Study Guide: Introduction to 2 Corinthians

#### I. Key Concepts and Background

- **Author:** Identify the author of 2 Corinthians.
- **Audience:** Who was the intended audience of this letter? Describe their location and the general characteristics of the city.
- **Paul's Relationship with the Corinthians:** Describe the overall nature of Paul's relationship with the Corinthian church. Was it simple or complex? What indicates this?
- **Previous Communication:** Detail the communication that occurred between Paul and the Corinthians prior to the writing of 2 Corinthians. Mention specific types of communication (letters, visits, delegations) and any known content or purpose.
- **The "Previous Letter":** Where is the mention of a prior letter found in 1 Corinthians? What was the general topic of this letter?
- **The "Severe Letter":** Where in 2 Corinthians does Paul refer to a "severe letter"? What was the likely purpose and impact of this letter?
- **Delegations:** Name the individuals who led the delegations sent by Paul to Corinth and the delegation sent by the Corinthians to Paul (if mentioned). What were the general purposes of these visits?
- **Timing of 2 Corinthians:** How does the speaker suggest the time between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians was? What evidence is given to support this view?
- **Occasional Nature:** What does it mean that 2 Corinthians is considered an "occasional" letter?
- **Paul's Personality in 2 Corinthians:** How does this letter provide a unique perspective on Paul's character and emotions compared to some other letters? What specific examples illustrate this?
- **Challenges to Paul's Authority:** What were some of the challenges or criticisms leveled against Paul by individuals within or influencing the Corinthian church?

- **Compositional Integrity:** Explain the debate surrounding the compositional integrity of 2 Corinthians. What is the speaker's stance on this issue and why? What evidence supports this view?
- **Theological Themes:** What is emphasized about Paul's role as it relates to his theology? What does it mean to be a "marketplace theologian"?

## II. Major Theological Themes in 2 Corinthians (as introduced)

- **Paul's View of God:** How does Paul demonstrate the triune nature of God in 2 Corinthians, even without an explicit formulation of the Trinity?
- Identify specific attributes and actions Paul ascribes to God the Father, referencing chapter and verse where possible.
- How does Paul present Jesus Christ? Mention his pre-incarnate existence, earthly life, death, and role in reconciliation. Reference chapter and verse where possible.
- Discuss the significance of the Holy Spirit in 2 Corinthians. How many times is the Holy Spirit mentioned? What roles and responsibilities are attributed to the Holy Spirit in the Christian life and the church? Explain the analogy used regarding the Trinity and the Holy Spirit's role.
- **Reconciliation:** Explain the importance of reconciliation in Paul's theology, particularly in 2 Corinthians.
- Discuss the scope of reconciliation as presented: is it just between God and humanity?
- Who initiates and what is the goal of reconciliation? What role do humans play?
- How does reconciliation relate to authentic ministry?
- **Suffering:** Describe Paul's understanding of suffering in the context of his apostleship. Was it an unexpected hardship or an integral part of his calling?
- How does the speaker contrast a "triumphalistic" view of faith with the reality of suffering in Scripture and in 2 Corinthians?
- What was the purpose of Paul's suffering? Did he adopt a "victim mentality"?
- **The Church (Ecclesia):** How does Paul view local congregations? Are they just collections of individuals?

- What metaphors does Paul use to describe the church? Explain at least two of them.
- What is the significance of being "in Christ"?
- **Holiness:**How does Paul address the concept of holiness in relation to the Corinthian church?
- Is holiness solely a personal matter, or does it have broader ethical implications?
- Explain the point made about the "I" in "sin."
- **Eschatology:**How does the concept of "already and not yet" manifest in 2 Corinthians? Provide examples from the mentioned chapters.
- What contrast does Paul draw regarding earthly and heavenly existence?
- **Financial Stewardship:**According to Paul (as discussed), is giving just about meeting immediate needs? What else does it signify?
- What are some characteristics of giving according to Paul?
- **Spiritual Warfare:**How does Paul portray Christian ministry in terms of spiritual warfare? Is it a call to initiate battle?
- Identify some of the tactics of the devil mentioned in the context of spiritual warfare in 2 Corinthians.
- What is the source of the believer's victory in this warfare?

#### Quiz: Short Answer Questions

1. Describe one key reason why Paul's relationship with the Corinthians is considered complex, referencing a specific piece of communication mentioned in the introduction.
2. According to the speaker, what makes 2 Corinthians a valuable book for understanding the challenges faced by pastors and ministers today? Provide one specific example.
3. Explain how Paul's personal experience influenced his theological understanding, particularly as a "marketplace theologian."
4. Describe one attribute of God the Father as presented by Paul in 2 Corinthians, including a chapter and verse reference.



5. What is the significance of the Holy Spirit being referred to as God's "down payment" on our inheritance?
6. Explain why reconciliation is considered both an "accomplished fact" and an "ongoing process" in the context of 2 Corinthians.
7. According to Paul's understanding in 2 Corinthians, what was the primary purpose or impact of his suffering as an apostle?
8. How does Paul's understanding of the church as the "temple of God" influence how believers should conduct themselves?
9. Briefly explain how the tension between the "already" and "not yet" is evident in Paul's eschatological perspective in 2 Corinthians.
10. What is one way the devil attempts to deceive or harm believers, as described in the section on spiritual warfare in 2 Corinthians?

#### **Answer Key: Short Answer Questions**

1. Paul's relationship with the Corinthians was complex, as evidenced by the fact that he wrote more than two letters to them (likely four or five), indicating ongoing issues and a need for repeated communication and correction. This is further supported by the mention of both a previous letter (1 Corinthians 5:9) and a severe letter (2 Corinthians 2:3-4, 7:8-12).
2. 2 Corinthians addresses real issues faced by pastors today, such as the questioning of one's integrity and message, problems with finances, strained relationships within the church, and the experience of suffering in ministry. For example, Paul had to defend his integrity against accusations of inconsistency in his plans and actions.
3. Paul's theology stemmed directly from his experiences as both a pastor and a missionary, meaning he addressed theological concepts in the context of real-life situations and the needs of the churches he served. As a "marketplace theologian," his theological reflections arose from his practical engagement in ministry and the challenges faced by his congregations.
4. Paul refers to God the Father as the source of grace, as seen in 2 Corinthians 1:2: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

5. The Holy Spirit being God's "down payment" signifies that believers have already received a portion of their future inheritance and serves as a guarantee or pledge of the full inheritance to come, including the resurrection.
6. Reconciliation is an "accomplished fact" through the death and resurrection of Christ, making it potentially available to all. However, it is an "ongoing process" because individuals must respond to the message of reconciliation and actively embrace being reconciled to God in their lives.
7. The primary purpose of Paul's apostolic suffering was not for its own sake, but rather for the benefit of others and the furtherance of the gospel. His suffering served as a rhetorical tool to encourage his converts and demonstrated the sacrificial nature of his mission.
8. Understanding the church as the "temple of God" implies that believers, both individually and collectively, are the dwelling place of God's Spirit and should therefore live lives characterized by holiness and purity in all aspects of their existence.
9. The tension of "already and not yet" is seen in Paul's eschatology, such as in the contrast between the present earthly "tent" which is dissolving and the future heavenly "house" which is eternal (2 Corinthians 5). Believers experience the blessings of salvation "already" but await the full realization of their hope in the future.
10. One way the devil tries to harm believers is by blinding the understanding of unbelievers to prevent them from believing the gospel. Additionally, he seeks to outwit and defraud believers by overwhelming them with excessive sorrow after wrongdoing or by fostering an unforgiving spirit.

## Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the complexities of Paul's relationship with the Corinthian church as revealed in the introductory session on 2 Corinthians. Discuss the various factors that contributed to these complexities and their impact on the writing of the letter.
2. Discuss the significance of 2 Corinthians as a "pastoral epistle" in a broader sense, as argued by the speaker. How does the letter address issues relevant to Christian leadership and ministry in any era, and what makes it particularly insightful for contemporary challenges?
3. Explore the interconnectedness of the theological themes of reconciliation and suffering in Paul's understanding as presented in the introduction to 2 Corinthians. How does Paul's experience of suffering inform his understanding and teaching on reconciliation, and vice versa?
4. Examine Paul's understanding of the church (ecclesia) in 2 Corinthians as it is introduced in the session. Discuss the key metaphors he uses to describe the church and the implications of these metaphors for the identity and conduct of believers.
5. Analyze the concept of spiritual warfare as presented in the introduction to 2 Corinthians. According to the speaker, what is Paul's perspective on this reality, and what are some of the strategies and weapons involved in this spiritual battle?

## **5. FAQs on Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 1, Introduction, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions on 2 Corinthians based on Dr. Adewuya's Introduction**

#### **1. What makes Paul's relationship with the Corinthian church unique and how did it influence the writing of 2 Corinthians?**

Paul's relationship with the Corinthians was complex and multifaceted, evidenced by the numerous letters and communications exchanged. He founded the church and invested heavily in its members, yet faced misunderstanding, opposition fueled by interlopers, and strained trust. This tumultuous dynamic, marked by love, frustration, and the need for reconciliation, heavily influenced the content and tone of 2 Corinthians, making it a deeply personal and pastorally driven letter where Paul defends his integrity and ministry while seeking to restore their relationship.

#### **2. Why is 2 Corinthians considered a particularly "occasional" and personal letter of Paul?**

2 Corinthians is considered the most occasional of Paul's letters because it directly addresses specific issues and tensions that arose between Paul and the Corinthian church after his initial ministry there and the writing of 1 Corinthians. It offers a unique "window into Paul's heart" by revealing his emotions, struggles, and defense of his apostleship in response to misunderstandings, criticisms, and the influence of others. Unlike some of his more theologically systematic letters, 2 Corinthians is deeply rooted in the particular circumstances of this relationship.

#### **3. What evidence suggests that Paul wrote more than the two canonical letters to the Corinthians?**

The text of 1 Corinthians 5:9 mentions a "previous letter" Paul had written to the Corinthians, warning them about associating with immoral individuals within the church. Additionally, in 2 Corinthians 2:3-4 and 7:8-12, Paul refers to a "severe letter" he sent, which is distinct from 1 Corinthians. These references strongly indicate the existence of at least one, and possibly more, letters that are not included in the New Testament canon.

#### **4. What were some of the key issues and misunderstandings that led to the strained relationship between Paul and the Corinthians?**

Several factors contributed to the strained relationship. These included Paul postponing a promised visit, leading some Corinthians to question his trustworthiness. They also misunderstood his initial refusal of their financial support, interpreting it as a lack of love, especially when he later organized collections for the Jerusalem church. Furthermore, the arrival of rival teachers ("interlopers") who challenged Paul's authority and message caused divisions and turned some Corinthians against him.

#### **5. What are some of the major theological themes that Dr. Adewuya highlights in 2 Corinthians?**

Dr. Adewuya emphasizes several key theological themes in 2 Corinthians, including Paul's understanding of the triune God (Father as the source of grace, Jesus' deity and atoning sacrifice, and the Holy Spirit's active role in the Christian life and forming the church), reconciliation (between God and humanity, and among believers), the significance and purpose of suffering in Christian ministry, the nature and importance of the church as a community, the call to holiness, eschatological perspectives, the principles of financial stewardship, and the reality of spiritual warfare.

#### **6. How does 2 Corinthians offer insights into the nature of authentic Christian ministry?**

According to Dr. Adewuya, 2 Corinthians serves as a vital text for understanding authentic Christian ministry. It reveals Paul as a pastor deeply invested in his flock, grappling with issues of integrity, the reception of his message, financial matters, and interpersonal relationships – challenges still relevant for ministers today. The letter underscores that authentic ministry is often characterized by vulnerability, defense of one's calling, a commitment to reconciliation, and an acceptance of suffering as integral to God's work, all motivated by the love of Christ.

**7. What is Paul's perspective on suffering as presented in 2 Corinthians, and why is it significant?**

Paul's perspective on suffering in 2 Corinthians is that it is not merely an academic concept but a lived experience integral to his apostolic calling and practice. He understood suffering as a participation in Christ's sufferings, a means of theological reflection on his identity and mission, and a rhetorical tool for encouraging believers. Rather than adopting a victim mentality, Paul viewed his suffering as sacrificial and missiological, for the benefit of others, highlighting a significant but often underemphasized aspect of the Christian life.

**8. How does Paul describe the church (ecclesia) in 2 Corinthians, and what are some of the key metaphors he uses?**

In 2 Corinthians, Paul portrays the local congregations as real and representative of the wider Christian community, emphasizing the communal nature of faith. He describes the church as "letters written by the Spirit" and the "temple of God." Additionally, he employs foundational metaphors such as "in Christ," "body of Christ," and "people of God" to illustrate the close fellowship between believers and their union with Christ through baptism, highlighting the church's importance as a new creation belonging to God and betrothed to Christ, called to purity and ethical holiness.