

Dr. Dave Mathewson, New Testament Literature, Session 18, 2 Corinthians, Galatians Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 18, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Mathewson's lecture provides an overview of the New Testament books of 2 Corinthians and Galatians. The lecture discusses the historical background and purpose of 2 Corinthians, highlighting Paul's complex relationship with the Corinthian church and the challenges to his authority. **The content explores the abrupt changes in tone within the letter and possible explanations, including the idea that it may be a compilation of multiple letters.** For Galatians, the lecture addresses the debated location of the Galatian churches, the timing of the letter in relation to the Jerusalem Council, and Paul's passionate defense of his gospel against the Judaizers. **Emphasis is placed on Paul's frustration with the Galatians for abandoning the true gospel.** The lecture overall emphasizes Paul's goal to reestablish his apostolic authority and the singular importance of faith in Christ.

2. 19 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 18 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Daniel).



**Mathewson_NTLit_S
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3. Briefing Document: Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 18, 2 Corinthians, Galatians

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from Dr. Mathewson's Lecture 18 on 2 Corinthians and Galatians:

Briefing Document: 2 Corinthians and Galatians

Overview:

This lecture provides an overview of the context, purpose, and key themes of Paul's letters to the Corinthians (specifically 2 Corinthians) and the Galatians. Dr. Mathewson emphasizes understanding the historical and pastoral context of these letters, avoiding the interpretation of them as purely theological essays. He stresses the importance of understanding the issues faced by these early churches and how Paul addresses those issues through his letters.

2 Corinthians

- **Background and Purpose:**
 - 2 Corinthians is at least the fourth letter Paul wrote to the Corinthians. "We saw technically is 4 Corinthians. It's at least the fourth letter that Paul, that we know of, that Paul wrote to the Corinthians probably."
 - It was written in response to two developments: (1) many Corinthians responded positively to Paul's "tearful letter" (written after 1 Corinthians), and (2) some continued to oppose Paul's authority, influenced by "super-apostles."
 - The purpose of 2 Corinthians is to praise those who responded positively and to warn/admonish those who still oppose him, re-establishing his apostolic authority. "...Paul writes 1 Corinthians to praise the Corinthians for responding to his letter that he had written to them, this tearful letter, so he writes to praise those who have responded, but he also writes to warn and admonish those who are still opposed to him."
- **The "Tearful Letter":**
 - Paul refers to a previous, "painful" or "tearful" letter written out of "much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears" (2 Cor. 2:4).
 - This letter was written to address a challenge to Paul's authority.

- **Structure and Tone:**

- Scholars note an abrupt shift in tone between chapters 1-9 (positive) and 10-13 (negative/harsh).
- A common suggestion to explain this is that 2 Corinthians may be a compilation of two separate letters. "One of the solutions is that 2 Corinthians is actually, at least in the form that we now have it when it was included in the New Testament canon, some feel 2 Corinthians is actually a compilation of two separate letters that Paul wrote, because the shift is just so abrupt, and the change so drastic, that certainly it couldn't be two letters, so some have suggested chapters 1-9 and 10-13 are two separate letters that have been combined when they made their way into the New Testament..."
- Alternative explanation: the change in tone reflects Paul addressing two different groups within the Corinthian church – those who responded positively and those who continued to oppose him.

- **Giving to Jerusalem:**

- Chapters 8-9 focus on Paul encouraging the Corinthians to take up a collection for the church in Jerusalem, which was likely facing famine.
- This is seen as a way to foster solidarity between Jewish and Gentile Christians. "If the Jerusalem church is primarily Jewish and the Corinthian church more Gentile, this would be another way for Paul to establish the solidarity between Jew and Gentile, by having a Gentile church now support the church in Jerusalem."
- Paul emphasizes generosity and gratitude for Christ as the basis for giving, rather than a rigid adherence to tithing. "...2 Corinthians 8 through 9 is clear that Paul talks in terms of giving as generously as you can out of gratitude and love for Jesus Christ and what he has given you."

- **Theme: Glory Through Suffering:**

- A central theme of 2 Corinthians is that God's power and glory are made manifest through Paul's suffering and weakness. "...the primary sign or indication of the validity of Paul's apostleship is always his suffering."
- Paul's weakness is not an indication of inadequacy but a demonstration of God's power working through him. "...For whenever I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Cor. 12:10, quoted indirectly).

Galatians

- **Recipient:**

- The letter is addressed "to the churches of Galatia."
- The "South Galatian theory" (more widely accepted) suggests Paul was writing to churches in the Roman province of Galatia, encompassing cities like Lystra and Derbe, which he visited on his missionary journeys (mentioned in Acts).
- The "North Galatian theory" posits that Paul was writing to ethnic Galatians in the northern part of central Turkey, but this theory is less supported by the biblical record.

- **Date:**

- The dating of Galatians (early vs. late) hinges on how Galatians 2 (Paul's visit to Jerusalem) is related to events in Acts.
- If Galatians 2 corresponds to the famine relief visit in Acts 11, Galatians would be considered Paul's earliest letter.
- If Galatians 2 corresponds to the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, Galatians would be dated later (after the council), making 1 Thessalonians Paul's earliest letter.
- Dr. Mathewson favors the view that Galatians 2 refers to Acts 15, making Galatians a later letter and 1 Thessalonians his earliest.

- **Purpose:**

- Paul is addressing a crisis caused by "Judaizers" – Jewish Christians who were undermining Paul's gospel by insisting that Gentile Christians must also adhere to the Law of Moses. "...certain Jewish Christians are actually undermining Paul's gospel...Gentiles can also participate in the blessings of salvation and can become the people of God apart from submitting to the law of Moses."
- The Judaizers seemingly believed that faith in Christ *plus* adherence to Mosaic Law was necessary for justification/salvation.
- Paul argues that faith in Christ *alone* justifies (vindicates) a person, accompanied by obedience through the Holy Spirit (of the new covenant), not through the Mosaic Law.

- **Tone and Style:**
- Galatians has a different tone compared to Romans. Paul seems more agitated, abrupt, and harsh.
- Notably, Galatians lacks the standard thanksgiving section found in Paul's other letters and most first-century letters. "However, what is unusual is that in Galatians, when you compare Galatians to all the other letters Paul wrote in the New Testament, it's missing something that you find in all the other letters and that would have been found in any first-century letter, and that was a thanksgiving."
- Paul's ending, where he emphasizes writing "in my own hand" with "large letters," suggests his urgency and frustration. "See what large letters I make when I am writing in my own hand."

Key Takeaways:

- Paul's letters are best understood within their specific historical and pastoral contexts. They are not abstract theological treatises.
- 2 Corinthians addresses issues of authority, suffering, and reconciliation within the Corinthian church.
- Galatians tackles the fundamental question of how Gentiles can be included in God's people and the relationship between faith in Christ and adherence to the Law of Moses.

4. Study Guide: Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 18, 2 Corinthians, Galatians

2 Corinthians and Galatians: A Study Guide

I. Key Concepts and Themes

- **2 Corinthians:** Paul's Purpose: To praise those who responded positively to his "tearful letter" and to warn those who still oppose him, re-establishing his apostolic authority.
- Super-Apostles: Individuals challenging Paul's authority and undermining his ministry.
- Suffering and Apostleship: Paul uses his suffering as a credential for his apostleship, demonstrating God's power is made perfect in weakness.
- Tone Shift: The letter shifts from a positive tone (chapters 1-9) to a harsher, more negative tone (chapters 10-13).
- Collection for Jerusalem: Paul's efforts to collect funds from the Corinthian church for the church in Jerusalem, to promote unity between Jews and Gentiles.
- Giving: Paul emphasizes generosity and gratitude as the primary motivation for giving, rather than tithing.
- Main Theme: Glory through suffering; God's power manifest through Paul's suffering.
- **Galatians:** South Galatian Theory: Paul is addressing churches in the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia.
- Date of Writing: The dating of the book depends on how Galatians 2 connects with Acts. Early dating would mean Galatians 2 relates to Acts 11, and Galatians was the first letter written by Paul. Late dating means Galatians 2 relates to Acts 15, and Galatians was written after 1 Thessalonians.
- Judaizers: Jewish Christians undermining Paul's gospel by insisting on the necessity of Gentiles adhering to the law of Moses for salvation.
- Paul's Gospel: Gentiles can participate in the blessings of salvation and become the people of God through faith in Christ, without submitting to the law of Moses.

- Justification by Faith: Faith in Christ is the primary requirement for being declared righteous and belonging to the true people of God. Obedience is linked with the Holy Spirit.
- Absence of Thanksgiving: The letter unusually lacks a thanksgiving section, unlike Paul's other letters.
- Tone: Paul writes with a tone of frustration and astonishment.

II. Quiz: Short Answer Questions

1. What was the primary reason Paul wrote 2 Corinthians, and what groups within the Corinthian church was he trying to reach?
2. How does Paul use his suffering as a credential for his apostleship in 2 Corinthians?
3. Explain the abrupt tone shift in 2 Corinthians and the different perspectives scholars suggest to account for the change.
4. Explain Paul's perspective on giving in 2 Corinthians 8-9.
5. Explain the North Galatian theory and the South Galatian theory.
6. Why does the dating of Galatians as "early" or "late" matter, and what key event in Acts is related to this debate?
7. Who were the Judaizers, and what was their impact on the Galatian churches?
8. Summarize Paul's gospel message in Galatians concerning salvation for Gentiles.
9. What is unusual about the beginning of Galatians compared to Paul's other letters, and what does this suggest about Paul's emotional state?
10. How does Paul portray justification through faith as being intertwined with obedience to Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit?

III. Quiz Answer Key

1. Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to praise those who responded to his tearful letter and to warn those who still opposed him and were challenging his authority. He aimed to reach both the receptive Corinthians and the "super-apostles" who were undermining his ministry.
2. Paul argues that his suffering demonstrates God's power is made perfect in weakness, highlighting that his ministry's effectiveness comes from God, not his

own abilities or credentials. This combats the super-apostles' claims that his weaknesses disqualify him.

3. The tone shifts from positive (1-9) to negative (10-13). Some scholars propose that 2 Corinthians is two combined letters. Others suggest that Paul's tone reflects addressing two different groups within the church with varying attitudes towards him.
4. Paul emphasizes generosity and giving out of gratitude for what Jesus has done rather than adherence to a strict tithe. He encourages the Corinthians to give generously according to their ability and out of love.
5. The North Galatian theory suggests Paul addressed ethnic Galatians in northern Galatia, while the South Galatian theory posits that Paul addressed churches in the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia, which included cities he visited on his missionary journeys.
6. The early/late dating of Galatians impacts its relationship to Acts and the order of Paul's letters. The debate centers on whether Galatians 2 refers to the famine relief visit in Acts 11 (early date) or the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 (late date).
7. The Judaizers were Jewish Christians who insisted that Gentile converts must adhere to the Mosaic Law (e.g., circumcision) in addition to faith in Christ. This undermined Paul's gospel message of salvation through faith alone.
8. Paul's gospel in Galatians emphasizes that Gentiles can participate in the blessings of salvation and become the people of God through faith in Christ, without being required to adhere to the law of Moses.
9. Galatians lacks the typical thanksgiving section found in Paul's other letters. This suggests Paul's immediate frustration and astonishment with the Galatians' wavering faith.
10. Paul contrasts justification through faith with the requirement of the law, while linking obedience not to the adherence of Mosaic law, but with the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. He saw justification as being marked by an obedience brought about by the new covenant Holy Spirit.

IV. Essay Questions

1. Analyze the arguments for and against the theory that 2 Corinthians is a compilation of two separate letters. How might understanding the letter in this way affect our interpretation of Paul's message?
2. Compare and contrast Paul's approach to dealing with conflict in 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. What different strategies does he employ, and what might account for these differences?
3. Discuss the implications of Paul's emphasis on suffering as a qualification for apostleship in 2 Corinthians. How does this challenge common perceptions of power and authority?
4. Examine the social and cultural context of Galatia, and explain how this might have influenced the spread of the Judaizers' teachings and the challenges Paul faced.
5. Evaluate the significance of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) in light of Paul's arguments in Galatians. How does the Council's decision relate to Paul's understanding of salvation and the inclusion of Gentiles?

V. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Apostle:** A person sent out with a specific mission or message, particularly one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus or someone recognized as having a similar role in the early church.
- **Justification:** The act of being declared righteous or vindicated in God's sight, often associated with faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Judaizers:** Jewish Christians who insisted that Gentile converts must adhere to the Mosaic Law (e.g., circumcision) in addition to faith in Christ.
- **New Covenant:** The promise of God to establish a new relationship with humanity, marked by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and a transformation of the heart.
- **Super-Apostles:** A term used to describe individuals challenging Paul's authority and undermining his ministry in the Corinthian church.
- **South Galatia Theory:** The view that Paul's letter to the Galatians was addressed to churches in the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia.
- **Tearful Letter:** A letter written by Paul to the Corinthian church after 1 Corinthians, addressing challenges to his authority.
- **Thorn in the Flesh:** A metaphor used by Paul in 2 Corinthians to describe a hindrance or limitation that kept him from being conceited, possibly physical or spiritual.
- **Tithing:** Giving a tenth of one's income, traditionally associated with Old Testament law, though Paul does not directly command tithing in the New Testament.

5. FAQs on Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 18, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here are some frequently asked questions about 2 Corinthians and Galatians, based on Dr. Mathewson's lecture:

1. Why did Paul write 2 Corinthians, considering he had already written 1 Corinthians?

Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to address a complex situation within the Corinthian church. While many Corinthians responded positively to 1 Corinthians, some began to challenge Paul's apostolic authority, influenced by individuals he refers to as "super-apostles." The letter aims to praise those who have repented and responded positively to Paul's previous "tearful" letter, warn and admonish those who continue to oppose him and his authority, and ultimately, to re-establish his authority as an apostle.

2. Why does 2 Corinthians appear to have an abrupt change in tone?

The abrupt shift in tone, particularly between chapters 1-9 (positive) and 10-13 (negative and harsh), has led some scholars to suggest that 2 Corinthians might be a compilation of two separate letters. However, another explanation is that Paul addresses different groups within the Corinthian church. Chapters 1-9 could be directed towards those who responded favorably to his earlier letter, while chapters 10-13 are aimed at the segment of the Corinthian church that continues to oppose him and challenge his authority.

3. What is the significance of Paul's emphasis on his suffering in 2 Corinthians?

Paul highlights his suffering as a primary sign of the validity of his apostleship. In a culture where power and rhetorical skill were valued, Paul instead points to his weaknesses and hardships. He believes God's power is made perfect in weakness, and that his suffering demonstrates that it is God working through him, not his own strength. Therefore, Paul's suffering is not a sign of weakness but a testament to God's power working through him, validating his apostolic authority. The main theme of 2 Corinthians is glory through suffering. God's power and glory is made manifest through the apostle Paul's suffering.

4. What is the collection Paul was gathering from the Corinthian church for the Jerusalem church and why was it important?

Paul was collecting an offering from the Corinthian church to send to the church in Jerusalem, which often faced famine and hardship. Beyond humanitarian aid, this collection was important to Paul as a means of fostering solidarity between Jewish and Gentile Christians. By having the Gentile Corinthian church support the primarily Jewish Jerusalem church, Paul aimed to demonstrate the unity of God's people and the inclusion of Gentiles in the promises made to Israel. Also, Paul was intent on getting them to take a collection up so he could take that back to the Jerusalem church, besides just being good humanitarians and showing compassion and concern for those who are suffering and who are in need, Paul also wanted it to be a call for the Gentiles to recognize the true roots of their participation in the Gospel, to realize that you owe some, not that they're paying for anything, but in a sense it's a recognition that, as Paul will say elsewhere, Gentiles were separated from the commonwealth of Israel, they were strangers and foreigners and aliens, but now they have been made shares in the promises and covenants that have been made to Israel.

5. What is the main issue Paul addresses in Galatians?

In Galatians, Paul confronts the influence of "Judaizers," Jewish Christians who were undermining his gospel by insisting that Gentile Christians must also adhere to the Law of Moses (e.g., circumcision) to be truly part of God's people. Paul vehemently opposes this view, arguing that salvation and justification are attained through faith in Jesus Christ alone, not through adherence to the Mosaic Law.

6. What is the North Galatian theory vs. the South Galatian theory?

The North Galatian theory suggests that Paul's letter was addressed to the ethnic Galatians in the northern part of central Turkey, an area settled by the Gauls. The South Galatian theory, which is now more widely accepted, posits that Paul wrote to churches in cities like Lystra and Derbe, located in the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia. This province encompassed cities Paul visited on his missionary journeys, as described in Acts.

7. When was Galatians written in relation to the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15?

The dating of Galatians (whether it was written early or late) is linked to how Galatians 2 relates to the events in Acts. Galatians 1 and 2 summarize Paul's life and references two visits to Jerusalem. The first visit corresponds to the one in Acts 9-10. The question is whether the visit to Jerusalem in Galatians 2 refers to Acts 11 (the visit of Paul to Jerusalem to relieve the famine, the famine relief effort) or Acts 15 (the Jerusalem Council).

If Galatians 2 refers to Acts 11, then Galatians is the earliest letter Paul wrote. If Galatians 2 refers to Acts 15, then Galatians is written later, after the Jerusalem council, bumping 1 Thessalonians to be the first letter Paul wrote. The lecture posits that Galatians 2 refers to Acts 15. This is a minority position, though, as most link Galatians 2 with Acts 11, suggesting it was the first letter Paul wrote.

8. How does the tone of Galatians differ from Paul's other letters, like Romans?

Compared to Romans, Paul's tone in Galatians is more abrupt, harsh, and emotional. The letter lacks the typical thanksgiving found in Paul's other epistles and begins immediately with Paul expressing his astonishment at the Galatians' quick abandonment of the true gospel. This suggests Paul was writing out of a sense of urgency, frustration, and deep concern for the spiritual well-being of the Galatian churches.