

Exegetical Notes – 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen for Cornerstone Fellowship
101 Kylies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320
610-384-1375
charleshjensen@aol.com

Verses 1-2

***Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
To the church of God in Corinth, together with all his holy people throughout
Achaia:***

²*Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

- Paul begins this letter with his signature as is the custom in ancient Greek letters. He is “Paul, the apostle of Christ by the will of God.” Remember from 1 Corinthians that some believers there questioned Paul’s claim to the office of apostle. The first qualification for that office was that those who bore it had been with Jesus while he was on earth in human form. Some said that Paul had not been with Jesus during Jesus’ earthly ministry and was, therefore, NOT qualified to call himself an apostle. Paul does not argue their point here or anywhere else. He holds this office by the will of God. If people do not agree, they should take the matter up with God who called him.
- Timothy (see 1 & 2 Timothy), Paul’s “son in the Lord,” is with him as he writes this letter.
- He is sending this letter to the Christians in the city of Corinth and to all the churches in Achaia.
- Peace is the normal salutation in a Greek letter of the time. Paul always adds grace to his greeting for it is by grace that we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ. Our salvation comes from God because it is a matter of grace and is not earned by works.

Verses 3-5

**³*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of
compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our troubles, so
that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive***

from God. ⁵ For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

- Paul begins by praising God for his compassion and comfort. He says that God comforts his people “in ALL their TROUBLES.” The word “all” means that this is so no matter what or how deep the trouble. In every trouble, God comforts his people.
- The verses also declare that God’s people will have troubles. It is assumed that they will. God’s people should not expect a trouble free life because they are God’s people.
- They should expect and will receive God’s comfort when they face troubles. But, the reason God comforts His people is not simply for their benefit alone. God comforts his people so that they will be able to comfort each other in the same way that they have been comforted by God. God sets the example for his people. He comforts us so that we will be able to comfort our brothers and sisters.
- Christians are those who receive hope and salvation through the sufferings and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thus, they have shared the sufferings of Jesus and received comfort from them. Jesus’ sufferings have brought us great comfort. Therefore, our troubles and sufferings should enable us to give comfort to others.

Verses 6-7

If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. ⁷ And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

- Paul says that this principle is at work in his relationship with the Christians to whom he is writing this letter. He has endured troubles and sufferings in his ministry. Through these he has been comforted by God. And now he is able to comfort other Christians with the comfort he has received from God. As they endure sufferings for their faith, knowing that he has endured these same things, will bring them hope and help them endure what they face.
- Remember that at the time Paul wrote these words, great persecution was breaking out against the Church everywhere. Paul is confident that his readers will be comforted by God in this as he himself was comforted by God.

Verses 8-11

⁸ We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. ⁹ Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. ¹⁰ He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, ¹¹ as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

- Paul wants his readers to know what he has suffered. He has been under great pressure. He felt that he could not endure what was happening. He was sure that he would die for his faith. But, he learned that all this happened to teach him to rely on God alone. God delivered him. Therefore, his hope is in God alone.
- He asked for prayers from God's people that God will continue to deliver him from what he faces. Prayer helps us endure troubles. Christians should hold each other up in prayer. When they do, they will be able to thank God for his favor to those who suffer, for they will see their prayers answered.

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