



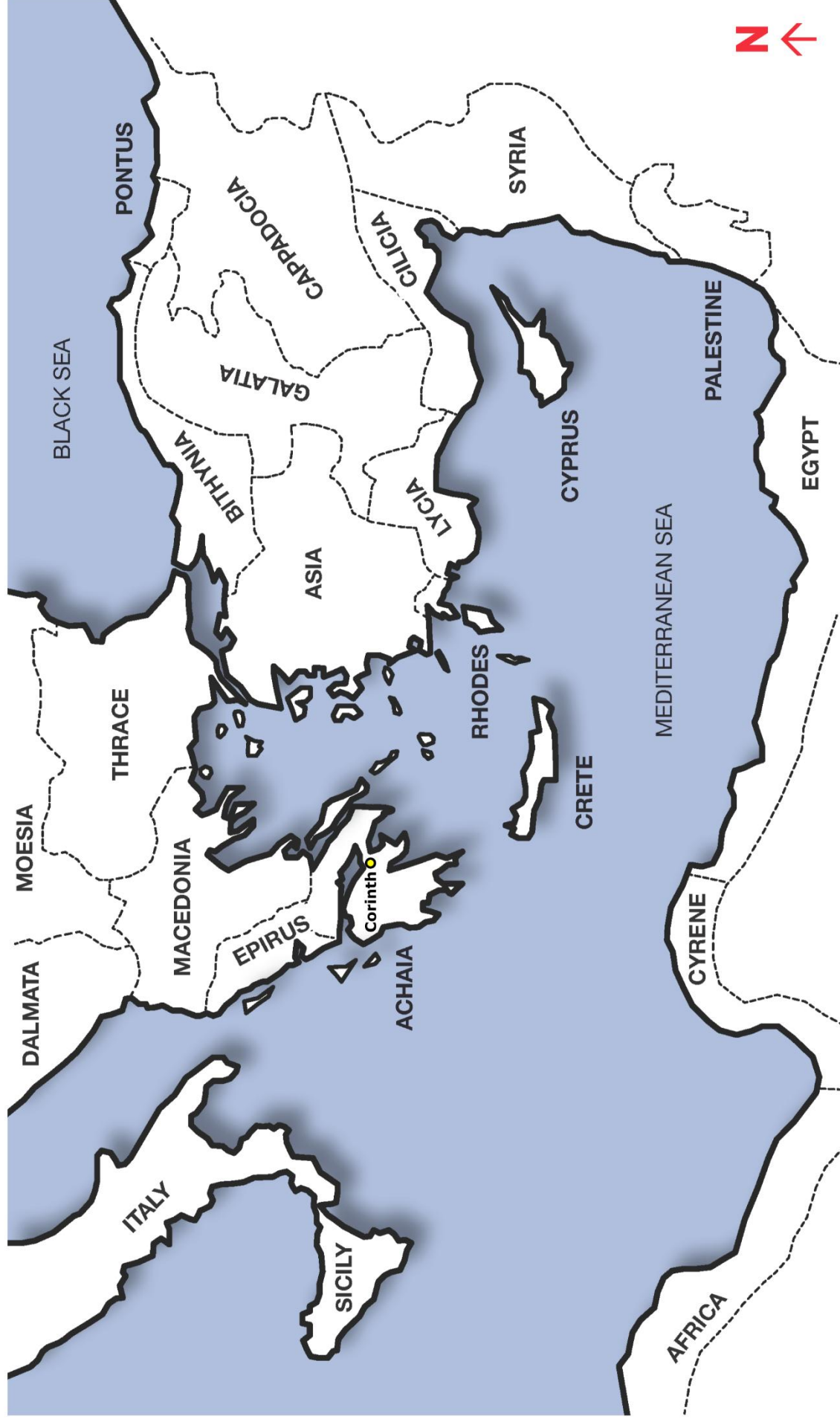
# **JESUS SHAPED FRUIT**

## **2 CORINTHIANS**

Series Guide

# THE PROVINCES OF ASIA MINOR 1ST CENTURY A.D.

© Mark Barry 2009 | [visualunit.me](http://visualunit.me) | Please do not republish without permission, but feel free to copy for personal use.



## Background Information

### THE CITY OF CORINTH

The city of Corinth had been destroyed in 146BC by the Roman consul Lucius Mummius. It was re-established as a Roman province by Julius Ceaser in 44BC. Under the reigns of Augustus (31 BC - AD 14) and Tiberius (AD 14-37) it experienced significant growth in construction, and many of its people prospered greatly. It was, however, also known for its poverty and misery of its poorest citizens.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> century, Corinth was the primary economic, political, and trade centre for the region. It was a key port city, acting as a shipping bridge between the east and west.

Corinth was the centre of the Christian world in the ancient regions of Macedonia and Achaia (roughly equivalent to the boundaries of modern Greece).

### WHO WROTE IT

The Apostle Paul, along with Timothy (1:1), around AD 56.

### WHY DID THEY WRITE IT

The nature of this letter is quite different to that of 1 Corinthians. Although Paul does address some of the same topics, the overall tone has changed. It appears that much has changed in the relationship between Paul and the church in Corinth.

What happened between sending these two letters? In 2 Corinthians, we learn that:

- Paul has had a painful visit to them (2:1).
- Paul has written another letter “out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears” (2:3-4; also 2:9; 7:8, 12).
- An unnamed ‘offender’ has clearly caused significant grief among the Christian community (2:5-11; 7:12).
- The Corinthians had begun – but not yet completed – a collection for Jerusalem (8:10-11).
- The Corinthians had received a visit from other “super-apostles” (11:4-15), an ironic label for those who had sowed division and false teaching among them. Although their identity appears clear to the Corinthians, we have no way of discerning exactly who they were.

Paul first visited Corinth in Acts 18, where he stayed a year and a half teaching and establishing the church (Acts 18:11). He mentions his intention to visit a third time (2 Cor 12:14; 13:1). We have no account of his second visit, other than his note that it was a painful one (2:1).

His comments on the contents of the previous letter (2:3-4, 9; 7:8, 12) suggest that this is not referring to 1 Corinthians, but a later, separate letter for which we have no record.

Thus, Paul writes to address these issues that have arisen since his previous visit and letter, to clarify his perspective of events, and to articulate how the gospel of Jesus should shape their understanding and reactions to those events.

## Key Ideas

### THE COMFORT OF GOD

The letter begins with a convicting expression of God's comfort in our suffering (1:3-11). The theme continues through the book, as Paul explains the many ways that he has received deep comfort from God despite his circumstances (e.g. 2:12-17; 3:7-5:10; 11:16-12:10). As Paul describes his many experiences of hardship, he repeatedly reminds them that God has sustained him through it all, and thus he can sustain them, too.

### RECONCILIATION

Through the letter, Paul explains how the gospel message is one of reconciliation. Through Jesus, God has reconciled us to himself (5:11-21). As such, one of our key responses ought to be pursuing reconciliation with one another (2:1-11). Much of Paul's defence of his own ministry throughout the book is shared in order to reconcile his relationship with the Christians in Corinth, and ensure they are in agreement in their gospel convictions and practices.

### THE OUTWORKING OF THE GOSPEL

Paul's instructions to the Corinthians are consistently framed as a means of applying the gospel: forgiveness (2:10); courage (3:10); speaking truth (4:2); selflessness (4:7-12); reconciliation (5:14); fleeing idolatry (6:14-16); repentance (7:10); generosity (8:9). For Paul, these are not merely a moral way to live, they are a direct application of God's love and grace toward us.

## Outline of 2 Corinthians

The book can be broadly divided into three parts.

1:1-11 Introduction and greetings

### **Part 1 – Gospel ministry**

1:12-2:11 Paul's previous visit and letter

2:12-5:21 The challenges and ordinary nature of gospel ministry

6:1-7:16 Encouragement to persevere

### **Part 2 – Generosity**

8:1-9:15 Instructions and encouragement of generosity

### **Part 3 - Warnings**

10:1-12:10 Paul's defence of his own ministry

12:11-13:14 Paul's warning about his next visit

## Sermon Series Outline

We will be preaching through 2 Corinthians in two parts.

### 2025

#### 2 Corinthians 1-8: Jesus Shaped Fruit

Comfort	2 Corinthians 1:1-11
Joy	2 Corinthians 1:12-2:4
Forgiveness	2 Corinthians 2:5-11
Knowledge	2 Corinthians 2:12-3:6
Glory	2 Corinthians 3:7-18
Mercy	2 Corinthians 4:1-18
Hope	2 Corinthians 5:1-10
Reconciliation	2 Corinthians 5:11-21
Perseverance	2 Corinthians 6:1-10
Purity	2 Corinthians 6:11-7:4
Repentance	2 Corinthians 7:5-16
Generosity	2 Corinthians 8:1-15

### 2026

#### 2 Corinthians 8-13: How to be a fool

"Make empty promises"	2 Corinthians 8:16-9:15
"Judge by appearances"	2 Corinthians 10:1-18
"Believe everything you hear"	2 Corinthians 11:1-15
"Boast in yourself"	2 Corinthians 11:16-12:10
"Take people for granted"	2 Corinthians 12:11-21
"Don't prepare for the future"	2 Corinthians 13:1-14

## Additional Resources

### VIDEOS

#### **The Bible Project**

<https://bibleproject.com/videos/2-corinthians>

The Bible Project offers a great visual summary of 2 Corinthians, along with some related resources.

### BOOKS

#### **2 Corinthians For You – Gary Millar**

This book is part of an excellent series that provides an easy-to-read guide for 2 Corinthians. It does not assume a high level of biblical knowledge. A great introductory read, providing a summary of the book, along with reflection questions at the end of each chapter.

### COURSES

#### **Introduction Course: Knowing the Bible: 2 Corinthians**

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/knowning-bible-2-corinthians/>

This offers a relatively short walkthrough of 2 Corinthians. It draws out some key themes, and offers many questions for reflection, discussion, or study.

### COMMENTARY

#### **Online Commentary**

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/commentary/2-corinthians/>

An accessible and free online commentary. It can be helpful for getting into more of the details of particular verses or passages.

