

## Likely Chronology of Paul's Interaction with the Corinthian Church\*

1. Paul helped found the church, staying for 18 months (Acts 18:1-11), c. AD 51.
2. Divisions and pride arose within the church, which prompted Paul to write two letters, one now lost (cf. 1 Cor 5:9-13), and 1 Corinthians, sent by Timothy, c. AD 54.
3. Paul likely made an emergency visit to Corinth after receiving Timothy's report on the state of the Corinthian church (contra his plans stated in 1 Cor 16:5-9; 2 Cor 1:15-16).
4. The visit was a hard one (2 Cor 1:23, 2:1; 12:14; 13:1), as Paul was personally attacked with no one coming to his defense (2 Cor 2:5-8; 7:11-12).
5. Paul returned to Ephesus back in Asia and did not go on to Macedonia (see 3 above).
6. Paul wrote a sorrowful, severe letter (now lost) to the Corinthians to test their faith and see if they will confront and discipline his attacker (2 Cor 1:23; 2:3-4, 6; 7:8, 12).
7. Paul's life then became threatened in Asia but God rescued him (cf. 2 Cor 1:8-11).
8. Titus may have delivered this severe letter to the Corinthians, staying long enough to ensure their repentance and restore their relationship with Paul, still absent (2 Cor 7:14).
9. Paul hoped to meet Titus in Troas, but when Titus does not appear, Paul assumed he travelled by land to Macedonia and sought to find him there (2 Cor 2:12-13; 11:28).
10. Paul found Titus and received a good report on the Corinthians (2 Cor 2:6; 7:6-15).
11. But Paul also heard about new teachers who had arrived in Corinth to challenge his leadership, so-called "super-apostles" who stressed strength & success (11:5, 13; 12:11).
12. Paul then wrote 2 Corinthians to continue the reconciliation with the church at Corinth and to counter these new false teachers, hence the personal nature of this letter with the emphasis on "glory amidst weakness." He sent this letter with Titus, and also to complete a collection for the needy in Jerusalem (8:6-22), c. AD 55.

\* **Based on David E. Garland**, *The New American Commentary*, Vol 29, B&H Publishing Group, 1999, pp. 26-30.