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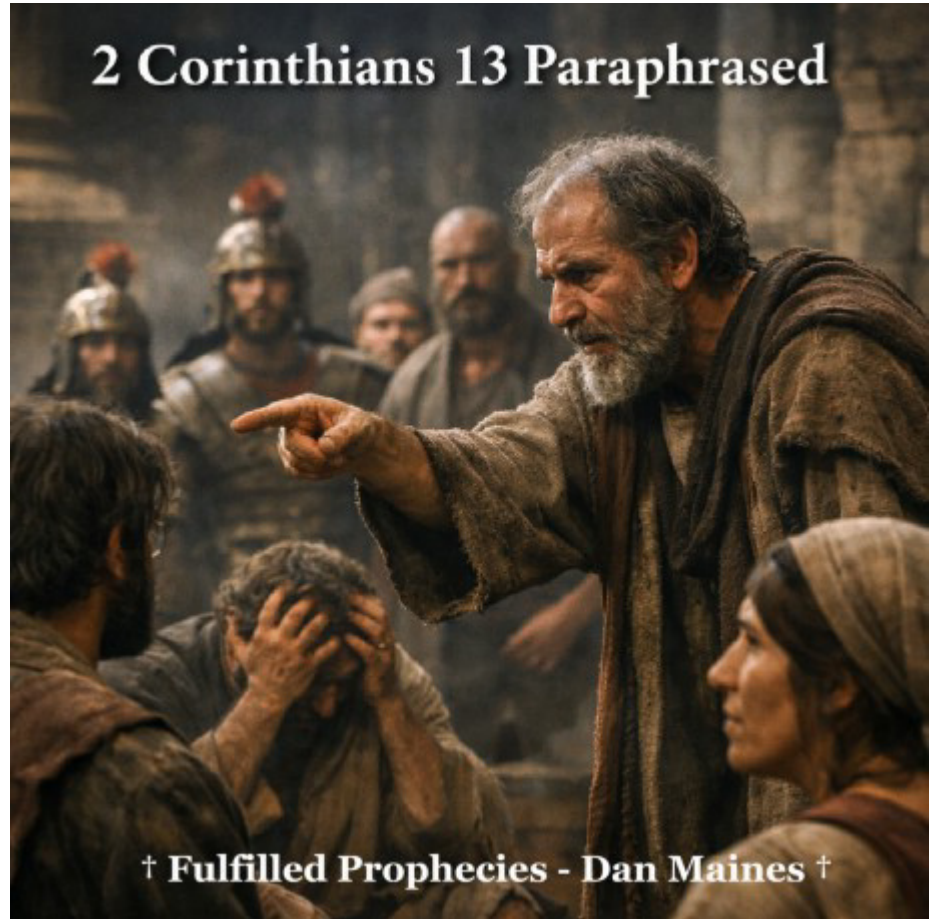
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2 Corinthians 13 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

2 Corinthians 13 Paraphrased

Introduction

† In this final chapter Paul closes his second letter to the Corinthians with a firm warning and a call for self examination.

† He reminds the church that truth is established by witnesses and that Christ's authority will be proven among them if correction is necessary.

† This chapter also shows the pastoral balance of the apostles, firmness against sin but restoration and peace for those who

walk in obedience (Acts 20:28-31).

2 Corinthians 13:1

This will be the third time I'm coming to visit you. Every accusation must be confirmed by two or three witnesses before anything is established.

† Paul appeals to the long standing biblical principle that testimony must be confirmed by multiple witnesses before judgment is made (Deuteronomy 19:15).

† This shows the apostles did not act impulsively but followed the legal and moral standards already given in scripture.

† Jesus Himself confirmed this same principle when correcting believers in the church (Matthew 18:16).

2 Corinthians 13:2

I warned those who sinned before and everyone else the last time I was there, and I'm warning you again while I'm away, when I return I won't spare anyone.

† Paul's authority as an apostle included discipline within the church when sin continued without repentance (1 Corinthians 5:4-5).

† His warning shows that patience has limits when the health of the church is threatened by ongoing rebellion.

† Early church discipline was not about punishment but about restoring holiness among believers.

2 Corinthians 13:3

You want proof that Christ is speaking through me. He isn't weak toward you, he's powerful among you.

† Paul's critics questioned whether Christ truly worked through him, yet the transformation of the Corinthians themselves proved his ministry (2 Corinthians 3:2-3).

† Christ's power was displayed through the gospel that had already changed their lives.

† The authority of the apostolic message was confirmed through truth and spiritual transformation.

2 Corinthians 13:4

Christ was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. In the same way we may appear weak in him, but we will live with him by God's power toward you.

† The cross looked like weakness to the world, yet it was the very instrument God used to defeat sin and death (1 Corinthians 1:18).

† Paul's ministry often appeared weak outwardly, yet God's power worked through it to bring life to the churches.

† This pattern reflects the entire gospel, humility leading to victory.

2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves to see if you're living in the faith. Test yourselves. Don't you realize that Jesus Christ is in you, unless you fail the test.

† Paul directs believers to examine their own faith rather than constantly questioning others.

† The indwelling presence of Christ is the evidence of genuine faith and transformation (Galatians 2:20).

† Self examination keeps believers grounded in truth and prevents hypocrisy.

2 Corinthians 13:6

But I trust that you'll realize we ourselves have not failed the test.

† Paul expresses confidence that honest evaluation will prove the legitimacy of his apostolic ministry.

† The fruit of his work among them already testified to the truth of his calling (1 Corinthians 9:2).

† Apostolic authority was rooted in Christ's commission, not human approval.

2 Corinthians 13:7

Now we pray to God that you won't do anything wrong, not so we may appear approved, but so that you'll do what's right even if we appear unapproved.

† Paul's concern was never his own reputation but the spiritual health of the believers.

† True ministry focuses on righteousness rather than personal recognition.

† This reflects Christ's example of humility and service.

2 Corinthians 13:8

For we can't act against the truth, but only for the truth.

† The gospel message stands above human authority and cannot be manipulated.

† Apostles served the truth, they did not control it.

† The truth of Christ always remains the final authority for the church (John 17:17).

2 Corinthians 13:9

We rejoice when we are weak and you are strong. What we pray for is that you'll be made complete.

† Paul's goal was maturity in the believers even if it meant his own role appeared diminished.

† Spiritual leadership seeks the growth of others rather than personal prominence.

† The word complete reflects the idea of restoration and strengthening in faith (Ephesians 4:12).

2 Corinthians 13:10

I'm writing these things while I'm away so that when I come I won't have to be severe in using the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not tearing you down.

† Apostolic authority existed to strengthen the church, not to destroy it.

† Correction was always meant to restore fellowship and unity.

† Paul's letters served as preparation so discipline would not be necessary when he arrived.

2 Corinthians 13:11

Finally brothers and sisters, rejoice. Be restored. Encourage one another. Be united in mind and live in peace, and the God

of love and peace will be with you.

† Paul's closing appeal emphasizes unity and restoration within the church.

† Peace and encouragement were essential for the early Christian community to remain strong under persecution.

† These instructions continue the theme of reconciliation found earlier in the letter (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

2 Corinthians 13:12

Greet one another with a holy kiss.

† The holy kiss was a cultural expression of Christian fellowship and unity in the early church (Romans 16:16).

† It symbolized reconciliation and brotherly love among believers.

† The practice emphasized the family nature of the Christian community.

2 Corinthians 13:13

All the saints greet you.

† This shows the strong connection between different Christian communities during the first century.

† Churches shared fellowship, encouragement, and support despite geographical distance.

† Unity among believers was essential during times of hardship and persecution.

2 Corinthians 13:14

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

† This closing blessing highlights the full relationship believers share with God through Christ and the Spirit.

† Grace, love, and fellowship summarize the foundation of the Christian life.

† It reminds the church that their strength and unity come from God's presence among them.

Historical References

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that Paul's letters demonstrated the structure and discipline of the early churches.

† Irenaeus noted that apostolic letters like 2 Corinthians were written to correct error and preserve unity in the faith.

† Eusebius recorded that the letters of Paul were widely circulated and recognized as authoritative among the earliest Christian communities.

How It Applies To Us Today

† Believers are still called to examine their faith and remain grounded in truth rather than tradition or human authority.

† The church must always pursue restoration, unity, and peace instead of division and pride.

† True spiritual authority builds people up and leads them closer to Christ.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why did Paul emphasize multiple witnesses when addressing accusations?

A: Because God's law required testimony from two or three witnesses before judgment was established (Deuteronomy 19:15).

Q: What does it mean to examine ourselves in the faith?

A: It means honestly evaluating whether our lives reflect the presence and teaching of Christ (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Q: Why did Paul warn the church about discipline?

A: To protect the church from ongoing sin and restore believers to righteousness (1 Corinthians 5:4-5).

Q: What is the purpose of apostolic authority?

A: It was given to build up and strengthen the church, not to destroy it (2 Corinthians 13:10).

Q: What does Paul's final blessing teach about the Christian life?

A: That grace, love, and fellowship from God are the foundation of the believer's life (2 Corinthians 13:14).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† 2 Corinthians 13

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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