

The Reconciliation Conundrum

Nowhere in the Bible does anyone send the Body of Christ into the mission field to evangelize anyone.

NOTE Any mention in this article of “the Body of Christ” refers to those individuals who have a relationship with God and possess the Spirit of God. The mention does not mean those followers of Covenant / Reformed Christianity who do not belong to God and have neither.

The Body of Christ is not a religion. It is a relationship with God, and the abiding Spirit of God.

Christianity is the 4th century religion of Covenant Theology that misunderstands and misinterprets the Bible. This lack of foundation results in confusion as many different religions and religious each see something different.

A number of religious groups believe that the Apostle Paul gave to believers the ministry of reconciliation, and that every believer is duty-bound to share the Gospel with everyone they meet lest God call them to account for every missed opportunity. Nothing here is true and no such thing exists in the biblical text. This study explains the problem behind this peculiar Christian-Protestant interpretation.

For more information, see this website for the articles, “[A Discussion of Protestantisms](#)”, “[Why the Christian Religion Failed](#)”, “[What’s Wrong With the Church](#)”, and many others.
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The Greater Commission

Just as the Evangelicals take their “Great Commission” out of context (Matthew 28:19 “Go Ye”), there is a Protestant sub-set taking II Corinthians out of context – the entire book. Interestingly, they see that the Protestant Evangelical Great Commission is a misinterpretation of scripture, yet, they have their own evangelistic imaginings in their “ministry of reconciliation” that they call “The Greater Commission”. Both the “Great” and the “Greater” Commissions are false and nowhere mentioned in the Bible.

Fun Fact: There is no such thing in all of the Bible as a “Great Commission” or a “Greater Commission”. These are phrases coined by the wayward religions that invented the term, decided to make it their religion, and chose to spend their lives promoting and following a misunderstanding. It is not a Biblical truth.

These Protestant groups promoting The Greater Commission, the Berean Church and the Grace Church movement among others, think the Apostle Paul gave every believer the ministry of reconciliation, and that each believer, on account of their salvation, has an obligation and requirement to carry out and fulfill this mission and ministry to reconcile all people to God. This

misunderstanding is due to a lack of Bible knowledge. Nowhere in any of Paul's 13 epistles - or the entire Bible - does anyone teach, mention, or allude to any such thing for the Body of Christ. Instead, as is common in Protestantism, their verse references were taken out of the Bible, out of context, removed from the textual flow, and so, misappropriated, misinterpreted, misunderstood, and misapplied. Just one big miss-mess.

Note Studying the Bible, scripture always interprets scripture. For the Matt 28 and II Corinthians 5 passages to say what these wayward religions believe they say, given the gravity of what these people think they mean, there would be numerous references throughout the New Testament repeatedly calling the Body of Christ to their obligation and required ministry of reconciliation, anointing them ambassadors, and telling them to Go Ye and evangelize and missionize the world on threat of judgment from God. Instead - Zilch! There is not one mention of any such thing anywhere in the Bible, and certainly not in the Matthew or II Corinthians verses. These verses have a completely different meaning and context when compared to the faulty interpretations these groups preach. What these groups believe is a tradition of what someone thought the Bible meant, embellished over the years, passed down through generations. It is not biblical truth.

J. C. O'Hare popularized this "Greater Commission" idea in the early 1900's. In the spirit of Protestantism, O'Hare took a verse out of the Bible, out of context, in a vacuum, and in isolation, then concocted a meaning to the words that the Bible does not support. As such, the passage says what it says, but what it says isn't what these religious zealots believe it means.

For 100 years, this error has passed from one generation to the next without anyone catching their mistake. All anyone ever had to do is take twenty minutes and read II Corinthians, but apparently, no one ever did. It will be interesting to see if anyone in this group ever finds their error in the years to come.

Consider In the four Jewish Gospels, during His three-year ministry, Jesus went to the Jew only, deliberately omitting the Gentiles and calling them "dogs", His words. Neither Jesus nor His disciples ministered to, or interacted with the Gentiles, avoiding them entirely, and referring to both the Gentiles and Samaritans as heathens, and sinners.

Post-ascension, Jesus commissioned the Apostle Paul to minister to the Gentiles with a new message that Christ never spoke to His disciples; information the world had never heard, information that God chose for the Gentiles to receive from the mouth of the Apostle Paul, information that had nothing to do with the Jewish Old Testament or the four Jewish Gospels, the Jewish Hebrew epistles, or the Gospel Jesus.

That the Christian religion of today believes that Jesus, 2000 years ago, spoke specifically to them, a misguided, biblically ignorant group of Gentiles, without God or the Spirit of God, despising the Jews, preaching a false gospel, a false

Spirit, and a phony Jesus, ignoring Christ's messenger to the Gentiles, the Apostle Paul - and they thinking Jesus commanded them into the mission field to convert the world to their brand of made-up religion is beyond absurd.

The Set Up

This study will show the error in the Greater Commission, reveal the reason the error exists, and in so doing, reveal the truth. While we will not look at every verse in II Corinthians, you will see more than enough to make the case. Consider continuing your study through the entire book.

First, let's jump to the passage in question, and then rewind a bit and work back toward it:

II Corinthians 5

18 And all things [are] of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [you] by us: we pray [you] in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Reading this small piece of scripture by itself, out of the textual flow, in a vacuum, disconnected from the whole, these religions believe that **"We"** and **"Us"** refers to Christians and the Christian religion then and for all time, and that all "believers" have been given a ministry of reconciliation and a word of reconciliation as a command of God by virtue of their salvation. They also believe that in these verses, Paul anoints all Christians "ambassadors" and gave them an obligation to evangelize. Not one word of this is true.

Fun Fact: Christianity is not the Body of Christ. The many man-made, made-up religions in Protestant Christianity simply went through the Bible picking out various verses to create the hodge-podge of things they chose to believe, totally disjointed and out of context. Their belief systems have no continuity with the Bible and so, these are false religions, plain and simple. Mormonism was created in the same fashion.

The Plural Paul

The problem is very simple. Paul often speaks of himself in the plural. This occurs in many of his writings, but in II Corinthians it is almost total. Paul's introduction shows that it is Paul writing, and Timothy is with him:

II Corinthians 1

:1 ¶ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy [our] brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:

Here is a similar verse from Romans where Paul speaks of himself in the plural.

Romans 1:5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

Who is speaking?

Paul is writing, Timothy is with Paul, and Paul could speak in the plural for this reason alone. By far, the plural references are of Paul singular. From here on, almost every "we", "our", "us", "ourselves" is a plural reference to a singular Paul.

Who is Paul Speaking To?

Paul is writing specifically to the Corinthians. From here on "ye", "you", "yourselves" refers to the Corinthians and no one else.

Reading II Corinthians and mentally replacing the "we" etc. with "Paul" will help the reader understand the letter as pinned by the Apostle. To begin, consider this selection taken at random:

II Corinthians 1

5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

6 And whether we be afflicted, [it is] for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, [it is] for your consolation and salvation.

7 ¶ And our hope of you [is] stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so [shall ye be] also of the consolation.

8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

It is clear that the speaker is Paul who says, "our trouble which came to us in Asia". The Our, Us and We cannot possibly refer to the world wide Christian religions of all time and its members as the Bereans and Grace Church followers have believed for the last 100 years. (over the previous 1900 years, no one had this opinion.)

This plural reference to Paul continues as you will see. If these verses, and the many more, are Paul in the plural, there is no reason to imagine that the verses of 5:18-20 would not follow suit, which they do.

The Counter Balance

As Paul writes, there is an important key to notice: the counter balance. It shows that there is a target for Paul's words; who he is addressing: we/ye; our/your, etc. The counter balance is always there. So long as the counter balance is present, Paul is speaking specifically to that particular

party: in this case the Corinthians. Paul is NOT speaking to the future religions of all time, and certainly not the Berean Christian, Grace Church movement of the 1920's, nor can it be interpreted as such.

Let's do another one.

II Corinthians 3

1 ¶ Do **we** begin again to commend **ourselves**? or need **we**, as some [others], epistles of commendation to **you**, or [letters] of commendation from **you**?

2 **Ye** are **our** epistle written in **our** hearts, known and **read of all men**:

3 [Forasmuch as **ye** are] manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by **us**, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

As you can see clearly, it is Paul who is speaking, and the counter balance here is the Corinthian Church, making it certain to whom Paul is speaking. It is also certain that the "**WE**" and "**OUR**" are **not** a reference to the Body of Christ of that day, or throughout the known world then, or any association to the Christian religion of this present age. Paul is not referring to the 300-year future, corrupt, apostate Roman pagan religion of the fourth century and beyond, or to the Protestant religions that began in the 16th century and continue to this day. Instead, some 20th century Protestants picked up a Bible, mistakenly appropriated these verses, out of context, then applied those verses to their personal brand of false religion in error.

This pattern of interpretational error and misappropriation has created confusion and misunderstandings in the Christian religion for 500 years .

Fun Fact: If the Apostle Paul were with us today, he would warn the Body of Christ to have nothing to do with the false religions called Christian. He would also throw in an anathema or two.

We could go through many passages in this manner throughout the book of II Corinthians with few exceptions, but you get the idea.

The Study

Now for our study, we begin in **chapter four** where Paul continues speaking of his ministry efforts, a theme popular with Paul in all his epistles. This topic carries on through to the problem verses in chapter five.

Paul continues to speak of himself in the plural as he

1. expounds on his ministry and
2. explains salvation.

There are a few back-and-forth changes as noted. There are also a few **offsets** to look for that will be explained as we go.

This is a study and comments on the verses explain the text.

IMPORTANT: Notice here in 4:1, Paul says exactly what he will say in the target verses, 5:18-20, namely, that Paul has a ministry, the ministry belongs to Paul, and Paul's ministry was given to him by God, not to anyone else, and Paul did not give his ministry to the Corinthians, the Body of Christ or anyone else.

II Corinthians 4:1 ¶ Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have **received mercy**, we faint not;

The "**WE**" is Paul who the ascended Christ called to a ministry to the Gentiles on the road to Damascus. Paul (previously Saul) persecuted the Jewish Christian church that believed Christ was the Messiah. On this account, Paul **received mercy** from the Lord in his conversion. Here Paul was given

1. **the ministry of reconciliation to go to the Gentiles and**
2. **the word of reconciliation to preach to the Gentiles.**

This becomes plainly evident as we will see in Chapter 5. In fact, this is a prelude to our problem verses as chapter 5:18-20 re-states these words from 4:1.

THIS IS IMPORTANT. Paul is not giving a ministry to anyone! Not here in 4:1 and not in 5:18-20 and nowhere in between, or anywhere else in II Corinthians, or anywhere in any of Paul's other epistles.

Paul **received** the ministry from the ascended Christ. Nowhere in scripture does Paul, or the Gospel Jesus, or anyone else give Pauline Gentile believers as a group a ministry to do anything for anybody.

4:2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending **ourselves** to **every man's conscience** in the sight of God.

This is Paul: commending himself. Paul also makes a counter balance in the universal reference to "every man's conscience" as he speaks to the Corinthians. He is, after all, the Ambassador Christ called to the ministry of the Gentiles.

Next: Paul, speaking of himself, now refers to the lost and unsaved – **them** - who become the counter balance of the statement. The **them** is a reference not only to all the world who will not believe, but a specific reference to the Jews who Paul repeatedly tries to convince, but they refuse to accept.

The "**our**" reference is Paul alone, and not the entire Body of Christ. Note that Paul in his epistles often refers to "**my Gospel**" as it is unique and different from other Gospels, namely, the Jewish Gospel Jesus gave to his disciples, and Peter's Jewish Gospel in the Acts 2 Jewish church. Here Paul says "**our**" Gospel. It is all Paul singular referring to himself and his Gospel in the plural.

Also, these two verses are an "**offset**". A parenthetical diversion from the main topic to include other "good to know" information that does not connect directly to the thought at hand, but adds

dimension to the converse, much like the **Fun Facts** in this study. Paul steps out of the flow of his dialogue in speaking of his ministry, changing briefly to speak of those who will not believe. The word “But” shows this side-step or “offset”. Again, **them** is aimed at the **Jews** who Paul “sought with tears” who will not believe, as well as the world in general.

4:3 But if **our** gospel be hid, it is hid to **them** that are lost:

:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of **them** which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto **them**.

Verses 4:5- 12 The **offset** of 4:3-4 above now complete, Paul returns to speaking of his ministry. Notice the Corinthian counter balance at the beginning and the end of the verses, like bookends. Paul is writing to the Corinthians. Again, **important**, the **we**, etc. is not the entire Body of Christ. This misapplication has been a problem for these religions for 100 years.

4:5 For **we** preach not **ourselves**, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and **ourselves** **your** servants for Jesus’ sake.

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in **our** hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

7 But **we** have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of **us**.

8 ¶ [**We** are] troubled on every side, yet not distressed; [**we** are] perplexed, but not in despair;

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in **our** body.

11 For **we** which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in **our** mortal flesh.

12 So then death worketh in **us**, but life in **you**.

Paul continues to speak, quoting from **Psalms 116.10**. As in 4:12 above, this “**us**” reference is Paul with counter balance the Corinthians. This reference is not the Body of Christ in general or eternal or anyone else, and certainly not the Christianity of today, Berean, Grace, or otherwise.

13 **We** having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, **I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we** also believe, and therefore speak;

14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up **us** also by Jesus, and shall present [**us**] with **you**.

Paul and the counter balance: Jesus will raise up Paul with the Corinthians

From 4:14, everything Paul does is for the Corinthians

15 For all things [are] for **your** sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

II Cor 4:16 – 5:9 Paul continues the counterbalance by expounding / explaining his ministry “for **your** sakes” to the Corinthians - ref the verse above.

In 4:16 the “for which cause” refers back to the previous verse - 4:15: for **your** sakes...

In 5:9, “**we** Labor” is a ref to his work in the ministry mentioned elsewhere in his epistles.

This section flows through the chapter break, always Paul speaking of himself. The “**we, us, our**” is not the Body of Christ in general for all time, or anyone else. This is Paul speaking of himself.

16 **For which cause** **we** faint not; but though **our** outward man perish, yet the inward [man] is renewed day by day.

17 For **our** light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for **us** a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory;

18 While **we** look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen [are] temporal; but the things which are not seen [are] eternal.

II Cor 5

1 ¶ For **we** know that if **our** earthly house of [this] tabernacle were dissolved, **we** have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 For in this **we** groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with **our** house which is from heaven:

3 If so be that being clothed **we** shall not be found naked.

4 For **we** that are in [this] tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that **we** would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

5 Now he that hath wrought **us** for the selfsame thing [is] God, who also hath given unto **us** the earnest of the Spirit.

6 Therefore [**we** are] always confident, knowing that, whilst **we** are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

7 (For **we** walk by faith, not by sight:)

8 **We** are confident, [I say], and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

9 Wherefore **we** labour, that, whether present or absent, **we** may be accepted of him.

This next “**we**” is one of the few exceptions where Paul breaks from the plural ref of himself. Referring instead to a wider reference, **ALL** as the counter balance, including himself with his audience. This is also another “**offset**” where Paul steps off the topic of his ministry. The counter balance is “we all” and “everyone” making it clear to whom he is referring. This is clearly a reference to all of mankind.

10 For **we** must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that **every one** may receive the things [done] in [his] body, according to that he hath done, whether [it be] good or bad.

Paul here ends the **offset** and returns to the plural Paul beginning in the next verse.

Next: after the statement in 5:10 above, “**the judgment seat of Christ**”, Paul pivots back to himself and back on topic, continuing to speak of his ministry with the counter balance again being the Corinthians. There can be no possible doubt that the “**we**” is Paul speaking to the Corinthians about his ministry given to him by God - (ref II Cor 4:1; Col 2). Notice one of the few “**I**” references. Paul refers to the unbelievers “**them**”.

:13 – again Paul repeats the reason for what he does is for the Corinthians.

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, **we** persuade **men**; but **we** are made manifest unto God; and **I** trust also are made manifest in **your** consciences.
 12 ¶ For **we** commend not **ourselves** again unto **you**, but give **you** occasion to glory on **our** behalf, that **ye** may have somewhat to [answer] **them** which glory in appearance, and not in heart. (**Jews**)
 13 For whether **we** be beside **ourselves**, [it is] to God: or whether **we** be sober, [it is] for **your** cause.

Again, Paul, not the entire world for all time.

Next 5 :14-17 - This section answers 5:11- :13 above. Paul here begins another **offset**: a new section that ends at 5:17. Here the counter balance is the believer in Christ and the subject is “one died for all”. The subject ends at :17 with the conclusive “Therefore” summation. (You can see how this back-and-forth writing style can cause confusion if the reader does not read carefully.)

After the flesh – no one knows someone after they die (after their life in the flesh ends). Yet, Paul knew Christ after Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension. No one else did. The “**we**” is Paul alone, for no one else then present with Paul writing to the Corinthians had seen Christ after He died - “after the flesh”. Only Paul. The plural “**WE**” can only refer to the singular Paul. Here, as throughout these passages, Scripture interprets Scripture showing us Paul’s penchant for speaking of himself in the plural.

14 For the love of Christ constraineth **us**; because **we** thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

15 And [that] he (**Christ**) died for all, that **they** which live should not henceforth live unto **themselves**, but unto him (**Christ**) which died for **them**, and rose again.

16 ¶ Wherefore henceforth know **we** no man after the flesh: yea, though **we** have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know **we** [him] no more.

17 Therefore if **any man** [be] in Christ, [**he** is] a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

The bottom line is the transformative life because of Christ’s sacrificial death.

We're Here

II Corinthians 5:18-20 Here we revisit the set of verses we reviewed at the beginning of this study. These are problem verses for many who lift them out of the textual flow and context of the letter. You can never do that with any verse. Protestantism tends to do this with almost every verse.

They read them in a vacuum; as stand-alone verses, and assign the “we” and “us” to mean not only the entire body of Christ for all time, but also the wayward Christian religion of our day that has no connection to the Body of Christ, and did not exist in the time of Paul’s writing, but chose to apply these verses to their religion and their followers.

The **offset** from above complete, Paul continues where he left off from the text block 5:11-13. Paul was speaking of himself and his ministry, and now continues that theme. Notice the counter balance is the Corinthians.

18 And all things [are] of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing **their** trespasses unto **them**; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Note the transition and conclusive statement “Now then”.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [you] by us: we pray [you] in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.

There is no doubt what Paul is saying: “beseech [you] by us”: and we pray [you] in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled... It is Paul to the Corinthians, Paul beseeching... There is no way anyone can find in these words Paul giving anyone a ministry or making anyone an ambassador, certainly not the Corinthians who Paul here calls to be reconciled to God as he stands before the Corinthians, an ambassador of God.

This is very simple. Now that we understand the verses, let’s step through them carefully:

- The context of our verses from 4:1 and preceding, is Paul speaking of his ministry, repeating it here in 5:18-20, like bookends.
- The use of “us”, as it has been throughout the book to this point, is still Paul and he is speaking of his ministry given him by God as he did back in II Cor 4:1; (Col 2)(I & II Tim)
- **:18 This is important:**
 - God HATH (past tense) reconciled Paul to Himself by Christ (on the road to Damascus)
 - and HATH (past tense) **given** him (Paul) the **ministry** of reconciliation.
 - He already had the ministry of reconciliation as a feature of his ministry that he is explaining - **TO BE A MINISTER**
- **:19 Meanwhile**
 - God WAS (past tense) reconciling the **world** unto Himself through Christ
 - and HATH (past tense) **committed** to Paul the **word** of reconciliation.

Conclusion

Whatever these religions, The Bereans, The Grace Movement, the Evangelicals, and others, believe these verses in Matthew 28 and II Corinthians say, they don't.

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Companion articles you might enjoy entitled "*Missionary Madness*" "*Why People Cannot Understand*" "*It is Finished*" "*All Scripture?*" "*The Four Jewish Gospels*" "*The Jewish Hebrew Epistles*"
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