Second Corinthians is the most personal and passionate letter of Paul’s correspondence. Written in the midst of a severe crisis that profoundly affected his relationship with the Corinthian community, the letter exhibits the full range of the Apostle’s emotions, from expressions of tenderness and love to outbursts of anger and resentment toward those who questioned his ministry. Paul provides the Corinthians—and the contemporary Church—with a breathtaking exposition of apostolic ministry, portraying himself as the minister of a new covenant whose ministry is confirmed by his daily participation in the sufferings and death of Christ. As the minister of a new covenant, Paul allows people to see the glory of God on the face of Christ by hearing the paradoxical gospel of a crucified Christ who is the very image of God. As Christ’s ambassador, Paul calls people to embrace the reconciliation God offers the world through this crucified Christ in whom God makes all things new. Focusing on the theological and rhetorical dimensions of this letter, and always attentive to its historical setting, Frank Matera provides a reading of 2 Corinthians that embraces the letter’s literary integrity. He maintains that Paul is addressing two crises at Corinth, one which has been resolved (the crisis of the painful visit) and one which still needs to be resolved (the presence of intruding apostles). In chapters 1–9 Paul deals with the first crisis and summons the Corinthians to complete the collection for Jerusalem. Building on this initial reconciliation and boasting in his weaknesses, in chapters 10–13 he responds to the charges that the intruding super-apostles and their Corinthian supporters have leveled against him. In this way Paul prepares the community for his third and final visit to Corinth.

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