

B.G. White

Pain and Paradox in 2 Corinthians

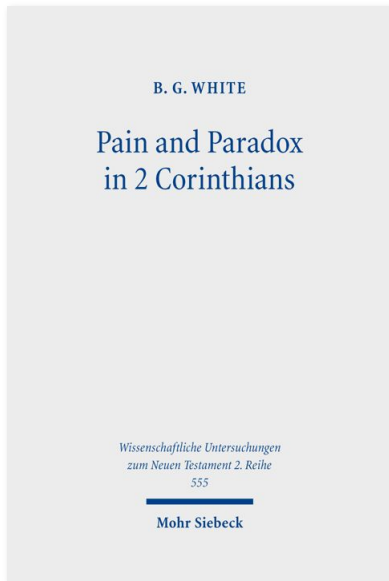
The Transformative Function of Strength in Weakness

[Pain and Paradox in 2 Corinthians]

Published in English.

Most studies of 2 Corinthians characterize the community as rebels who accuse Paul of weakness. Paul is thought to respond defensively, asserting his power in weakness. B.G. White confronts this consensus by arguing that interpreters overlook the material's most immediate context – a pained community (2:1–7; 7:5–16). After arguing that the Corinthians have ongoing pains, the author develops the implications for the interpretation of the strength in weakness paradox and the letter's literary integrity in a variety of texts (e.g. 1:3–11, 4:7–15, 6:1–13, 12:1–10). He argues that Paul's paradoxical life is a paradigm for the community to learn how Christ transforms their pains to create new emotions and behaviors – even reconciliation with Paul. More than a fiery retort, 2 Corinthians has the pastoral purpose of increasing human potential in weakness, without rendering that weakness inherently redemptive.

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2021. XV, 266 pages. WUNT II 555

ISBN 978-3-16-159912-5
DOI [10.1628/978-3-16-159912-5](https://doi.org/10.1628/978-3-16-159912-5)
eBook PDF €94.00

ISBN 978-3-16-159911-8
sewn paper €94.00

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