

Paul and How Many “Others”?
A Discourse on Alterity in 2 Corinthians

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Abstract

Paul’s use of the term *ὑπερλίαν απόστολοι* has generated much debate about who Paul references. Scholars provide several specific historic groups for possible identification; Jewish Christians at the church at Jerusalem or closely related subordinates, missionaries with Jewish heritage, and Gnostics, those of Jewish heritage, Jewish Christians, and even Gentile Gnostics.

Entering into the previous scholarship of *ὑπερλίαν απόστολοι* one notes that the conclusions are widely divergent. A study of ancient letter-writing context, rhetorical context, and general Corinthian context provides helpful analysis. Finally, a study of Paul’s description and definition of the opponents not only in 2 Corinthians but external evidence as well provides information that perhaps there is another conclusion. This thesis is a discussion on the possibility of identifying the *ὑπερλίαν απόστολοι* with a nonspecific group thus allowing for any of the previous scholarship or perhaps more appropriately anyone whom Paul relegated to “other.”