

The Second Epistle To The Corinthians



**A Study Guide With Introductory Comments,
Summaries, Outlines, And Review Questions**

(Student Edition)

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The Second Epistle To The Corinthians

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This study guide was developed in preparation for teaching adult Bible classes.

- ♦ The objectives for each section are usually things I plan to emphasize during the class.
- ♦ I have found that summarizing and outlining helps me to better understand the Word of God. It is a practice I highly recommend to others.

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The outlines were developed in the course of my ministry as a preacher of the gospel. Feel free to use them as they are, or adapt them to suit your own personal style. To God be the glory!

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The Second Epistle To The Corinthians

Introduction

AUTHOR

Paul, the apostle, along with Timothy (**1:1**). External testimonies for its genuineness include statements by Irenaeus (Against Heresies, 3,7,1), Athenagoras(Of the Resurrection of the Dead), Clement of Alexandria (Miscellanies, 3, p. 94; 4, p. 101), and Tertullian (On Modesty, 13).

PLACE OF WRITING

Somewhere in **Macedonian**, while Paul was on his way to make another visit to Corinth. This would be during his third missionary journey, in a part of which Luke says very little (cf. **Ac 20:1-2**).

TIME OF WRITING

Possibly in **the fall of 57 A.D.**, making it but a few months after writing First Corinthians (likely written in the spring of 57 A.D.).

MESSENGER

Titus, who was accompanied by two others on his journey (**8:16-24**).

BACKGROUND OF THE EPISTLE

The church at Corinth began in 52 A.D., when Paul visited there on his second missionary journey. It was then that he stayed one and a half years, the first time he was allowed to stay in one place as long as he wished. A record of this visit and the establishment of the church is found in **Ac 18:1-18**.

This second letter of Paul to the Corinthian church was occasioned by the report brought back by Titus, who informed Paul of their reception of the first letter, and how they received the rebuke that letter contained (**2:12-13; 7:5-9**).

PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE

Titus' report was encouraging, but evidently it also brought troubling news that some at Corinth were questioning Paul's authority as an apostle. This doubt may have planted by "Judaizing teachers" who seemed to follow Paul and attempted to undermine his teaching concerning the Law. They appear to have questioned his veracity (**1:15-17**), his speaking ability (**10:10; 11:6**), and his unwillingness to accept support from the church at Corinth (**11:7-9; 12:13**). There were also some people who had not repented of their licentious behavior (**12:20-21**). Paul's primary purpose, then, in this epistle is:

TO VINDICATE HIS APOSTLESHIP AND MANNER OF LIFE

He hopes that by writing in advance of his visit he can get all of the necessary rebuke out of the way (**1:23-2:3; 13:10**). He also uses the opportunity to encourage them to have the collection for the needy saints in Jerusalem ready when he comes (**9:1-5; cf. 1 Co 16:1-2**).

This letter is the most biographical and least doctrinal of Paul's epistles. It tells us more about Paul as a person and as a minister than any of the others. Those who would be ministers of the gospel would do well to carefully study it (along with Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus).

KEY VERSE: 2 Corinthians 7:2

"Open your heart to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have defrauded no one."

BRIEF OUTLINE

SALUTATION AND THANKSGIVING (1:1-11)

I. PAUL EXPLAINS HIS MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION (1:12-7:16)

A. HE DEFENDS HIS INTEGRITY

1. The Changed Plan (**1:12-22**)
2. The Delayed Visit (**1:23-2:4**)
3. The Penitent Offender (**2:5-11**)

B. HE DESCRIBES HIS APOSTOLIC MINISTRY

1. Triumphant (**2:12-17**)
2. Accredited (**3:1-3**)
3. Glorious (**3:4-18**)
4. Honest (**4:1-6**)
5. Suffering (**4:7-18**)
6. Hopeful (**5:1-10**)
7. Devoted (**5:11-17**)
8. Reconciling (**5:18-21**)
9. Approved (**6:1-10**)

C. HE MAKES HIS APPEAL TO THEM

1. To Open Their Hearts (**6:11-13**)
2. To Be Separate From The World (**6:14-7:1**)
3. The Comfort And Confidence They Have Given Him (**7:2-16**)

II. THE COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS IN JERUSALEM (8:1-9:15)

A. THE EXAMPLE OF MACEDONIA (8:1-5)

B. THE BASIS FOR HIS EXHORTATION (8:6-15)

C. THE MESSENGERS FOR THIS MINISTRY (8:16-9:5)

D. THE ENCOURAGEMENT TO GIVE LIBERALLY (9:6-15)

III. PAUL DEFENDS HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY (10:1-13:10)

A. EXPLANATION CONCERNING HIS CONDUCT

1. He Uses Weapons Mighty In God (**10:1-11**)
2. The Contrast Between Him And His Opponents (**10:7-18**)

B. SOME FOOLISH BOASTING

1. The Necessity For Boasting (**11:1-21**)
2. The Grounds For His Boasting (**11:22-12:10**)
3. His Rebuke For Compelling Him To Boast (**12:11-13**)

C. HIS FINAL WARNINGS

1. Motivated By Love, He Seeks Their Edification (**12:14-19**)
2. His Fear Of What He Will Find (**12:20-21**)
3. His Coming Will Be In Judgment If Necessary (**13:1-6**)
4. But He Hopes To Avoid Sharp Words By Writing In Advance (**13:7-10**)

CONCLUDING EXHORTATIONS AND BENEDICTION (13:11-14)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE INTRODUCTION

- 1) **On which journey did the apostle Paul establish the church in Corinth?**
- 2) **Where does one read about the establishment of the church in Corinth?**
- 3) **On which journey did Paul write both of his epistles to the Corinthians?**
- 4) **From where did Paul write his FIRST epistle to the Corinthians? (cf. 1 Co 16:8)**
- 5) **From where did Paul write his SECOND epistle to the Corinthians? (cf. 7:5; 8:1; 9:2-4)**
- 6) **What is the approximate date of writing?**

- 7) **Whose arrival likely prompted Paul's writing of this epistle? (7:5-7)**

- 8) **What sorts of things about Paul were questioned by those challenging his apostolic authority? (cf. 1:15-17; 10:10; 11:6; 11:7-9; 12:13)**

- 9) **What is the purpose of this epistle?**

- 10) **What other topic does Paul discuss in this epistle? (9:1)**

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Chapter One

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To understand the source and proper use of our comfort
- 2) To appreciate the value of prayer in working with God, and in producing thanksgiving in others
- 3) To see what are proper grounds for "boasting"

SUMMARY

Paul is joined by Timothy as he begins this epistle with greetings to the church in Corinth, and to all the brethren in Achaia (**1-2**). A feature common in Paul's epistles is to start with a few words of praise and/or thanksgiving, and in this epistle he includes both. He first praises God for the comfort offered through Christ in the midst of tribulation, and expresses his confidence that both the sufferings and comfort he receives because of Christ can work to the benefit of the brethren at Corinth (**3-7**). He then informs them of the wonderful deliverance God provided in Asia (perhaps referring to the "Diana incident" in **Acts 19:23-41**), telling them their prayers were instrumental as well, and that this will lead many people to give thanks (**8-11**).

Paul's first order of business after his salutation and thanksgiving is to offer a defense of his integrity. He begins with a profession of sincerity and simplicity, both in his conduct and his writing, and then reminds them that they will have good reason to "boast" in each other when Christ comes (**12-14**). Evidently his sincerity had come in question because Paul had made a change of plans concerning his visit to them. Therefore he explains that his change was not due to fickleness, but as God and His promises in Christ are trustworthy, so is Paul, for God has anointed and sealed him with the Holy Spirit (**15-22**). With God as his witness, Paul states that his change of plans was an effort to spare them. This is not to suggest Paul exercises some sort of domination over them, for he considers himself as a fellow worker for their joy (**23-24**).

OUTLINE

I. SALUTATION & THANKSGIVING (1-11)

A. SALUTATION (1-2)

1. From Paul and Timothy (**1a**)
2. To the church of God at Corinth, with all the saints in Achaia (**1b**)
3. Grace and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (**2**)

B. THANKSGIVING (3-11)

1. For comfort in the midst of affliction (**3-7**)

- a. From the Father of mercies and God of all comfort (3)
 - b. So that we may comfort others in their trouble (4)
 - c. Which like the sufferings of Christ, our comfort abounds through Christ, and both work for our salvation (5-7)
2. For deliverance in Asia (8-11)
 - a. Burdened beyond measure, Paul had despaired of life, and was left with only his trust in God (8-9)
 - b. But with the help of their prayers, God delivered him from death, resulting in much thanksgiving (10-11)

II. PAUL DEFENDS HIS INTEGRITY (12-24)

A. HIS PROFESSION OF SINCERITY (12-14)

1. In good conscience he has conducted himself with simplicity and godly sincerity toward them, and continues to do so in his writing to them (12-13a)
2. He hopes they understand that they have reason to boast in each other when the Lord returns (13b-14)

B. THE CHANGED PLAN (15-22)

1. His original plan was visit them on his way to Macedonia, and to return on his way to Judea (15-16)
2. His planning was not done lightly (17-22)
 - a. It was not done according to the flesh, in an unreliable manner (17)
 - b. But as God is faithful, and the promises of God in Jesus are reliable, so were his words to them (18-20)
 - c. Indeed, Paul (along with Silvanus and Timothy) has been...
 - 1) Established with them in Christ and anointed by God (21)
 - 2) Sealed by God, and given the Spirit in their hearts as a deposit (22)

C. REASON FOR THE DELAYED VISIT (23-24)

1. To spare them, as God can confirm (23)
2. This is not to suggest an attitude of domination over them, for he views himself as one working for their joy, and he acknowledges that they stand on the basis of their faith (24)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**

- 2) **Who joins Paul in writing this epistle? (1)**

- 3) **What two groups of people does Paul address in his salutation (1)**

- 4) **How does Paul describe the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? (3)**
- 5) **What is the proper use of comfort we receive from God? (4)**
- 6) **What two things abound in Christ? (5)**
- 7) **Where had Paul experienced some trouble? How serious was it? (8-9)**
- 8) **What had worked together with God in providing deliverance? What other effect did it have? (11)**
- 9) **In what could Paul "boast"? (12)**
- 10) **What could Paul and the brethren in Corinth look forward to boasting in, when Christ comes again? (14)**
- 11) **What appears to be the reason Paul's integrity was in question? (15-17)**
- 12) **Paul professes that his word is as faithful as what two things? (18-20)**
- 13) **What assurances does Paul offer that he is faithful? (21-22)**
- 14) **Why had Paul changed his plans about coming to Corinth? (23)**

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Chapter Two

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To appreciate the attitudes Paul had in writing his first epistle
- 2) To understand the need for proper follow-up toward one who has reacted favorably to church discipline
- 3) To see the different effects the gospel can have on people

SUMMARY

Paul continues to defend his integrity by explaining that his change of plans was an effort to prevent his coming to them in sorrow. Indeed, his previous letter was written for the same reason, and with much anguish of heart (1-4). Speaking of grief, he reminds them that the one who caused most of it had properly repented after their disciplinary actions, and they should be careful to forgive and comfort the person. Paul himself was willing to forgive the penitent offender, because he knew how Satan could easily take advantage of their situation (5-11).

He then reveals the anxiety of trying to find Titus, which prompted his leaving an "open door" in Troas to go on to Macedonia (12-13). He will return to the subject of finding Titus and the comfort he received upon doing so (7:5-7), but at this point Paul begins vindicating his ministry as an apostle of Christ. With thanks to God, Paul describes the "triumphant" nature of his ministry, in which God leads him as in a victory procession. Carrying the imagery of a victory procession a little further (in which it was common to have incense as part of the parade), Paul views himself and his work as the "fragrance of Christ" which to those being saved is an "aroma of life", but to those who are perishing it is an "aroma of death" (14-16b). Realizing his own insufficiency for such things, he speaks not as those who "peddle" the Word of God, but with sincerity and with an awareness that it comes from God, and is in the sight of God (16c-17).

OUTLINE

I. PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS INTEGRITY CONTINUES (1-13)

A. THE REASON FOR HIS DELAY (1-4)

1. He was determined not to come to them in sorrow (1-2)
2. His previous letter he wrote in sorrow, lest when he came there would be sorrow and not joy for both him and them (3-4)

B. FORGIVENESS FOR THE OFFENDER (5-11)

1. Speaking of sorrow, much of their grief was caused by one man (5)

2. However, their discipline was effective and the penitent offender should be forgiven and reassured of their love for him (6-8)
3. His previous letter was a test of their obedience, and he is willing to forgive those they have forgiven, lest Satan take advantage of their situation (9-11)

C. HIS CONCERN FOR THEM (12-13)

1. In Troas, the Lord had given him an "open door" to preach the gospel (12)
2. But with no word from Titus, anxiety for their situation prompted him to leave for Macedonia (13)

II. THE "TRIUMPHANT" NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (14-17)

A. ALWAYS LED IN TRIUMPH BY GOD IN CHRIST (14a)

1. Paul expresses thanksgiving to God
2. The reason: for leading them in a triumphal procession similar to that enjoyed by a military leader after a victory

B. THROUGH THEM "FRAGRANCE" IS DIFFUSED (14b-16)

1. God diffuses the "fragrance of His knowledge" in every place (14b)
2. To God, they are the "fragrance of Christ" (15)
 - a. To those who are perishing, they are an "aroma of death" (16a)
 - b. To those who are being saved, they are an "aroma of life" (16b)
3. He realizes his dependency upon God for sufficiency to be such things (16c-17)
 - a. Unlike many, who "peddle" the Word of God (17a)
 - b. In contrast, he speaks sincerely, as from God, and in the sight of God (17b)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**
- 2) **What was Paul determined not to do? (1)**
- 3) **Why did he write his previous letter? (3)**
- 4) **How did Paul write as he penned his letter? (4)**
- 5) **What did Paul want them to do with the man who had sinned, yet repented after their disciplinary action toward him? (7-8)**

- 6) What was one purpose in writing to them as Paul had done? (9)**

- 7) Why was Paul so willing to forgive the offender once the Corinthians had forgiven him? (10-11)**

- 8) When Paul came to Troas to preach the gospel, what did he find? (12)**

- 9) Who did he not find that troubled him greatly? Where did he then go? (13)**

- 10) Why does Paul give God thanks? (14)**

- 11) How does Paul describe God working through him? (14)**

- 12) In what two ways, and to what two groups of people, does Paul describe himself as "the fragrance of Christ"? (15-17)**

- 13) How do many misuse the Word of God? How did Paul speak the Word? (17)**

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Chapter Three

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To learn how one becomes an "epistle of Christ"
- 2) To see the contrast between the old and new covenants
- 3) To appreciate the role of the Spirit in the new covenant, and in producing our transformation

SUMMARY

Having just begun vindicating his ministry as an apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul reminds the Corinthians that he really needs no letter of accreditation, for they are his epistles of commendation. Through his ministry, in which he had written upon their hearts with the Spirit of the living God, they themselves have become an epistle of Christ (1-3). This he says, with full realization that it is God who has made him sufficient as a minister of the new covenant, which is a ministry of the Spirit who gives life (4-6).

Paul then proceeds to contrast the new covenant with the old covenant, to illustrate the glorious nature of his ministry. With **Exodus 34:29-35** as his reference, he equates the glory of the old covenant with the glory on Moses' face that was temporary. But if the old covenant, described as one of death and condemnation, had glory, then how much more glorious is the new covenant, a ministry of the Spirit and of righteousness which is not passing away (7-11)!

Paul then declares that those who listen only to the Old Testament still have a veil on their hearts (12-15). But when we turn to the Lord (whom Paul equates with the Spirit), the veil is taken away and there is liberty. Also, by beholding the glory of the Lord with unveiled face we are being transformed into the same glorious image by the Spirit of the Lord (16-18).

OUTLINE

I. THE "ACCREDITED" NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (1-3)

A. PAUL HAS NO NEED FOR LETTERS OF COMMENDATION (1)

1. He does not mean by his words to commend himself (1a)
2. For Paul does not need, as might others, letters of recommendation (1b)

B. THE CORINTHIANS ARE PAUL'S EPISTLES OF COMMENDATION (2-3)

1. They are evidence of his handiwork, which all can know and read (2)
2. They are an "epistle of Christ", upon whose hearts Paul has written with the Spirit of the living God (3)

II. THE "GLORIOUS" NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (4-18)

A. HIS TRUST AND SUFFICIENCY IS FROM GOD (4-6)

1. His trust is not based upon confidence in himself, but in Christ and the sufficiency that God provides (4-5)
2. God has made him sufficient as a minister of the new covenant (6)
 - a. A covenant of the Spirit, not of the letter
 - b. A covenant that gives life, not death

B. THE GLORY OF THE NEW COVENANT (7-18)

1. In contrast with the Old Covenant, written and engraved on stones (7-11)
 - a. The ministry of death vs. the ministry of the Spirit (7-8)
 - b. The ministry of condemnation vs. the ministry of righteousness (9-10)
 - c. That which is passing away vs. that which remains (11)
2. In comparison with the Lawgiver, Moses (12-16)
 - a. With the more glorious nature of the new covenant, Paul could speak with great boldness (12)
 - b. With the reading of Moses (the Old Testament), however, a veil remains on the heart (12-15)
 - 1) An allusion to the events of **Exodus 34:29-35**
 - 2) With the veil on Moses' face, the children of Israel could not see that the glory of his face was fading (13)
 - 3) Israel's inability to see then is like their inability today, unless they come to Christ (14-15)
 - c. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed, just as Moses did when he returned to the presence of the Lord (16)
3. Summary explanation (17-18)
 - a. Paul explains that the Lord of verse 16 is the Spirit of the Lord, who provides liberty (17)
 - b. When we (like Moses) are able to behold with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord transforms us into the same image (18)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**

- 2) **Who was Paul's "epistle of commendation"? (1-2)**

- 3) **What writing instrument had Paul used to make the Corinthians an "epistle of Christ"? And upon what had he written? (3)**

- 4) **Who made Paul sufficient as a minister of the new covenant? (5-6a)**
- 5) **Of what is the new covenant? And what does it give? (6b)**
- 6) **How is the "old covenant" described in verses 7-9?**
- 7) **How is the "new covenant" described in verses 7-9?**
- 8) **What is said of the glory of the old covenant when compared with the glory of the new covenant? (10)**
- 9) **How else are the old and new covenants described in verse 11?**
- 10) **What remains on the heart when only the Old Testament is read? (14-15)**
- 11) **What happens when one turns to the Lord? (16)**
- 12) **In turning to the Lord, who is it one is actually turning to, and what does one find? (17)**
- 13) **As we behold the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, what happens? (18)**
- 14) **By whom does this transformation take place? (18)**

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Chapter Four

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To appreciate Paul's transparency and view of service
- 2) To understand why some people are so blinded to the obvious
- 3) To gain insight into why God allows His children to suffer
- 4) To glean Paul's secret for not "losing heart" (getting discouraged)

SUMMARY

Paul continues his defense of himself and his ministry. With such a glorious ministry described in chapter three, he does not get discouraged. Instead he has renounced the use of deceitful tactics and openly proclaims the truth (1-2). If the gospel seems veiled, it is only to those whom Satan has blinded so they might not see the light of the gospel (3-4). Paul is simply preaching Christ Jesus as Lord and considers himself as a servant for their sakes. He humbly realizes that it is God who has shone in his heart so he might share that light of the gospel with others (5-6).

As magnificent this "treasure" may be, he is simply an "earthen vessel". As such he experiences great suffering in his ministry, but he knows that God allows it so that the "life of Jesus" (the power of God) might be manifested in his mortal body by the way he endures it, and that such grace from God might cause much thanksgiving to the glory of God (7-15). In addition, he does not lose heart because his inward man is renewed daily by the knowledge that affliction is light and temporary compared to the eternal weight of glory that awaits him, and by keeping his focus on things which are unseen but eternal (16-18).

OUTLINE

I. THE "HONEST" NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (1-6)

A. THE HIDDEN THINGS OF SHAME RENOUNCED (1-2)

1. Having received a glorious ministry by the mercy of God, Paul does not lose heart (1)
2. He has renounced the hidden things of shame (2a)
 - a. He does not walk in craftiness
 - b. He does not handle the Word of God deceitfully
3. But with open presentation of the truth he commends himself before all and before God (2b)

B. THE GOSPEL VEILED ONLY TO THE PERISHING (3-4)

1. If the gospel seems veiled, it is only the perishing who think it so (3)

2. For their unbelieving minds have been blinded by the "god of this age" (4a)
3. So that the light of gospel of the glorious Christ does not shine on them (4b)

C. PROCLAIMING CHRIST AS LORD, AND THEMSELVES AS SERVANTS (5-6)

1. Preaching not themselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord and themselves as their servants for Jesus' sake (5)
2. It is God who has shone in their hearts so that they might spread the light of the knowledge of God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ (6)

II. THE "SUFFERING" NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (7-18)

A. SUFFERING PERMITTED TO DEMONSTRATE THE LIFE OF JESUS (7-15)

1. The treasure of the gospel is in "earthen vessels", but this is so the excellence of God's power might be demonstrated in them (7)
2. Examples of overcoming suffering (8-9)
 - a. Hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed
 - b. Perplexed, but not in despair
 - c. Persecuted, but not forsaken
 - d. Struck down, but not destroyed
3. In this way, "dying for Jesus" gives them opportunity to demonstrate the "life of Jesus", which in turn blesses others (10-12)
4. Confident of the resurrection and ultimate glorification, he knows that all things can be to their benefit, resulting in thanksgiving and glory to God (13-15)

B. AFFLICTION PRODUCES AN ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY (16-18)

1. He is not discouraged, even when the outward man is perishing, for the inward man is renewed daily (16)
2. Affliction is light and temporary, compared with the eternal weight of glory (17)
3. His focus is on the unseen, on things that are eternal (18)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

1) What are the main points of this chapter?

2) Why does Paul not "lose heart"? (1)

3) In renouncing the hidden things of shame, what two things does Paul not do? (2)

4) To whom is the gospel "veiled"? Who has blinded them? (3-4)

- 5) **Who does Paul preach? How does he view himself? (5)**

- 6) **How is the "light" that God has commanded to be shone in his heart described? (6, cf. 4b)**

- 7) **How does Paul describe the gospel, and himself in comparison? (7)**

- 8) **What four examples does Paul use to describe how God's power had worked in him? (8-9)**

- 9) **Why was Paul and others allowed to suffer for Christ? (10-11)**

- 10) **Who benefited by the things Paul suffered? (12,15)**

- 11) **Why did Paul not "lose heart" when his outward man was perishing? (16)**

- 12) **In what two ways does Paul contrast his affliction and the glory to come? (17)**

- 13) **Upon what does Paul keep his focus? (16)**

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Chapter Five

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To understand the basis for Paul's hope despite his suffering
- 2) To see what motivated Paul in his work as a minister
- 3) To appreciate the gospel as a "ministry of reconciliation"

SUMMARY

As Paul continues describing the nature of his ministry, he explains why he remains "hopeful" in spite of his suffering. He knows that should his "earthly house" be destroyed, there is a "house not made with hands" that God has prepared for him. For this he longs, being confident because God has already given the Spirit as a guarantee. So while he must walk by faith, and not by sight, he makes it his aim to be pleasing to the Lord, before Whom he knows he will one day stand to give an account (**1-10**).

Paul then describes his "devotion" as it pertains to his ministry. Motivated by his knowledge of the terror of the Lord, he persuades men. He endeavors to serve God and his brethren in such a way that the Corinthians will be able to provide a defense to those who judge only by appearance. Throughout it all, it is the love of Christ which constrains Paul to live no longer for himself but for the Lord. Unlike his detractors, he no longer judges people based upon appearances, for he knows that if one is in Christ, he is a new creation (**11-17**).

Finally, Paul depicts the work of God in Christ as one in which God is reconciling the world to Himself. Paul's own role is that of an "ambassador for Christ", who has been entrusted with the "ministry of reconciliation" so he might implore people on God's behalf that they be reconciled to God (**18-21**).

OUTLINE

I. THE "HOPEFUL" NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (1-10)

A. THE PROMISE OF A "BUILDING" FROM GOD (1-5)

1. A house not made with hands, to replace the "earthly tent" (**1**)
2. In this "earthly tent" we groan (**2-4**)
 - a. Earnestly desiring to be clothed with the habitation from heaven (**2**)
 - b. So as not to found "naked", and that mortality may be swallowed up by life (**3-4**)
3. God has prepared us for this very thing, and has given the Spirit as a guarantee (**5**)

B. WHAT THIS PROMISE PRODUCES IN PAUL (6-10)

1. Confidence... (**6-8**)

- a. Knowing that at home in the body means absence from the Lord, necessitating walking by faith and not by sight (**6-7**)
- b. Preferring to be absent from the body and present with the Lord (**8**)
2. An aim to be well pleasing to Christ (**9-10**)
 - a. Whether present or absent (**9**)
 - b. For we must all be judged by Christ (**10**)

II. THE "DEVOTED" NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (11-17)

A. MOTIVATED BY THE FEAR OF THE LORD (11-13)

1. Knowing the terror of the Lord, he persuades men (**11a**)
2. He is aware both God and they know him well (**11b**)
3. His desire is to so live in service to God and them (no matter what some may think of him) that they may find reason to glory in him (**12-13**)

B. MOTIVATED BY THE LOVE OF CHRIST (14-17)

1. Constrained by the love of Christ who died for all, he now lives for Him (**14-15**)
2. He ceases to make superficial judgments based upon appearance, even as he had once done with Christ (**16**)
3. For one in Christ is a new creation, and all things have become new (**17**)

III. THE "RECONCILING" NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (18-21)

A. PAUL HAS BEEN GIVEN A MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION (18-19)

1. He himself has been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ (**18a**)
2. God has given him the ministry of reconciliation (**18b-19**)
 - a. The reconciliation of the world is actually God's work in Christ (**19a**)
 - b. The "word of reconciliation" has been committed to Paul (**19b**)

B. PAUL PLEADS WITH THEM TO BE RECONCILED TO GOD (20-21)

1. As ambassadors of Christ, pleading for God and on Christ's behalf (**20**)
2. For Christ became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (**21**)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

1) What are the main points of this chapter?

2) What did Paul know he would have if his "earthly house" were destroyed? (1)

3) What was Paul's earnest desire? (2)

- 4) **What has God given us as a "guarantee" of the "life" to come? (5)**
- 5) **What remains our condition while we are "at home in the body"? (6)**
- 6) **What does our present condition require of us in our daily "walk"? (7)**
- 7) **What is the desire of the "confident" Christian? (8)**
- 8) **What is the aim of "confident" Christian? (9)**
- 9) **Before what must we all one day appear? (10)**
- 10) **What moved Paul to try and persuade men? (11)**
- 11) **What motivated Paul to live for Jesus Christ? (14-15)**
- 12) **What is the condition of one in Christ? (17)**
- 13) **Through Whom has God reconciled us to Himself? (18)**
- 14) **What two descriptive phrases does Paul use in reference to the gospel that was committed to him? (18-19)**
- 14) **How has God reconciled us to Himself? (19)**
- 15) **How does Paul view his role in this "ministry of reconciliation"? (20)**
- 16) **How is it possible that we can become "the righteousness of God" in Christ? (21)**

The Second Epistle To The Corinthians

Chapter Six

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To see how Paul's ministry commended itself to others
- 2) To appreciate the need for having "hearts wide open"
- 3) To understand the principle of "separation", and why we cannot be unequally yoked with unbelievers

SUMMARY

At the close of chapter five, Paul described himself as an ambassador for Christ who pleads on God's behalf for people to be reconciled to God. With that thought in mind, he makes a special plea for the Corinthians not to receive God's grace in vain, reminding them that now is the time for salvation (1-2).

In the ninth and final description of his apostolic ministry, Paul focuses on the "approved" nature of his ministry. Determined not to give offense nor reason for blame, Paul has acted commendably. This is seen in the physical sufferings he has endured and the spiritual graces he has displayed. Even the conflicting reactions and reports by others, along with the various experiences described in a contrasting manner, help to confirm that his ministry is "approved" (3-10).

At this point, Paul makes an appeal to the Corinthians. With a heart that is wide open to them, he begs for them to open wide their hearts to him as well. Then he pleads with them not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, in order that they might receive the promises of everlasting fellowship with God as their Father (11-18).

OUTLINE

I. THE "APPROVED" NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (1-10)

A. AN ENTREATY NOT TO RECEIVE GOD'S GRACE IN VAIN (1-2)

1. Made by those who are God's co-workers (1)
2. For the "day of salvation" spoken of in **Isaiah 49:8** has arrived (2)

B. PAUL'S MINISTRY AN APPROVED ONE (3-10)

1. Giving no offense, he seeks to commend himself as a minister of God in all things (3-4a)
2. Physical sufferings endured as a minister (4a-5)
3. Spiritual graces demonstrated as a minister (6-7)
4. Conflicting reactions and reports by others toward him as a minister (8)
5. Contrasting experiences as a minister (9-10)

II. PAUL'S PLEA TO THE CORINTHIANS (11-18)

A. TO OPEN WIDE THEIR HEARTS (11-13)

1. Paul's own openness towards the Corinthians (11)
 - a. He has spoken freely (11a)
 - b. His own heart is wide open (11b)
2. The Corinthians likewise need to be open (12-13)
 - a. They are restricted by their own affections (12)
 - b. As a father pleads with his children, Paul appeals to them to reciprocate by being open to him (13)

B. TO BE SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD (14-18)

1. Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers (14-16a)
 - a. Righteousness has no fellowship with lawlessness (14b)
 - b. Light has no communion with darkness (14c)
 - c. Christ has no accord with Belial (15a)
 - d. A believer has no part with an unbeliever (15b)
 - e. The temple of God has no agreement with idols (16a)
2. Implications of the promise given to the temple of God (16b-7:1)
 - a. As the temple of God, God has promised to dwell and walk among us (16b)
 - b. Therefore, we must be separate if we wish to be the children of God (17-18)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**

- 2) **How does Paul describe himself as he pleads with the Corinthians to not receive the grace of God in vain? (1)**

- 3) **Why was Paul so careful not to give offense in anything? (3)**

- 4) **List some of the physical sufferings which commended Paul as a minister of God (4-5)**

- 5) **List those areas where Paul demonstrated his integrity as a minister of God (6-7)**

- 6) **List the contrasting experiences Paul had as a minister of God (9-10)**

- 7) **How does Paul describe his affection toward the Corinthians? (11)**
- 8) **What does he say about the Corinthians' affections toward him? (12)**
- 9) **What charge does Paul give concerning our relation to those in the world? (14)**
- 10) **List the contrasting pairs that Paul uses to show the incongruity of believers being unequally yoked with unbelievers (14-16)**
- 11) **What is necessary to receive the promise of having God as our Father who dwells among us? (17-18)**

The Second Epistle To The Corinthians

Chapter Seven

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To see how God can use others to comfort us
- 2) To understand true repentance: what leads to it, and what is the evidence that it has occurred

SUMMARY

Chapter seven begins with Paul summarizing his pleas to the Corinthians made in the previous chapter. Again he calls for spiritual purity, and for "hearts wide open" (1-3).

Paul returns now to a point where he left off in chapter two, his anxiety when searching for Titus (cf. 2:12-13). After arriving in Macedonia, he finds him and the report Titus has from the church in Corinth is a source of great comfort and joy to Paul. Indeed, even the manner in which Titus was received by the Corinthians filled Paul with joy (4-7).

The Corinthians had received a previous letter from Paul with much sorrow, but with a godly sorrow that led to true repentance. Paul could see that, and he wanted them to know it was only out of care for them he had written it (8-12). Thus, the way they had received Titus and Paul's letter, rendering quick obedience, gave Paul confidence in the Corinthians (13-16).

OUTLINE

I. PAUL'S PLEA TO THE CORINTHIANS (1-3)

A. A PLEA FOR HOLINESS (1)

1. In view of the promises given (1a)
2. By cleansing ourselves from all filthiness (1b)
3. By perfecting holiness in the fear of God (1c)
- This is a summary of the plea found in 6:14-18

B. A PLEA FOR THEM TO OPEN THEIR HEARTS (2-3)

1. To open their hearts for Paul and his companions (2a)
2. For they have done no wrong to anyone (2b)
3. Not said to condemn, but out of love (3)
- This is a repetition of the plea found in 6:11-13

II. PAUL'S COMFORT AND JOY (4-16)

A. COMFORTED BY THE COMING OF TITUS (4-6)

1. Paul's boldness made possible by his comfort and joy (4)
2. Arriving in Macedonia, Paul was troubled (5)
3. But God comforted him by the arrival of Titus (6; cf. 2:12-13)

B. COMFORTED BY HEARING OF THEIR REPENTANCE (7-12)

1. Titus bore good news of their repentance (7)
2. Their repentance made him glad he had written the earlier epistle (8)
3. He was glad their sorrow was that godly sorrow which leads to true repentance (9-10)
4. The evidence of their godly sorrow (11)
5. Even so, he initially wrote out of a desire to express his care for them (12)

C. HIS JOY IN THE JOY OF TITUS (13-16)

1. Comforted in their comfort, he also rejoiced seeing the joy of Titus (13a)
2. Titus' spirit had been refreshed by the Corinthians (13b)
3. The Corinthians had lived up to the reputation Paul have given them (14)
4. Titus grew in his love for them by the way they received him (15)
5. All this increased Paul's joy and confidence in the Corinthians (16)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**
- 2) **In view of the promises in the preceding chapter, what two things does Paul admonish us to do? (1)**
- 3) **What plea does Paul repeat that was made in chapter six? (2)**
- 4) **What was Paul's condition when he first came to Macedonia? (5)**
- 5) **How did God comfort him in Macedonia? (6-7)**
- 6) **What about the Corinthians' sorrow led Paul to rejoice? (9)**
- 7) **What is the difference between "godly sorrow" and "sorrow of the world"? (10)**

8) Name seven things that demonstrated the Corinthians' godly sorrow (11)

9) Why had Paul written to the Corinthians? (12)

10) What gave Paul comfort and joy? (13)

11) What had served to increase Titus' affection for the Corinthians? (15)

12) What else gave Paul joy? (16)

The Second Epistle To The Corinthians

Chapter Eight

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To see how Paul motivated others in their giving
- 2) To ascertain what principles ought to govern our giving
- 3) To appreciate the honorable manner in which Paul handled the collection for needy saints

SUMMARY

At this point Paul addresses an issue that occupied much of his interest during his missionary journeys: the collection for the needy Christians in Judea (cf. **Ga 2:9-10; Ro 15:25-28; 1 Co 16:1-2**). In this letter, two entire chapters are devoted to the subject.

He begins by mentioning the churches in Macedonia. Despite a great trial of affliction and their own deep poverty, their abundance of joy and eagerness to participate in this ministry resulted in great liberality (**1-5**).

Having sent Titus to assist the Corinthians in carrying through with their own desire to give, Paul exhorts them not only by the example of the Macedonians but by the example of Jesus Christ (**6-9**). Since it is to their advantage that they complete what they began a year earlier, Paul reminds them of the principles that ought to govern their giving. These principles involve willingness, ability, and equality (**10-15**).

In an effort to do everything honorable in the sight of others, the collection is to be handled by three men other than Paul. Titus is one, but the other two men are unnamed. However, they are well known and proven in their service to the Lord. Paul encourages the Corinthians to demonstrate to these men and to all the churches the proof of their love in this collection and that Paul's boasting about the church in Corinth was not in vain (**16-24**).

OUTLINE

I. MACEDONIA'S EXAMPLE IN GIVING (1-5)

A. AFFLICTED AND POOR, THEY ABOUNDED IN LIBERALITY (1-2)

1. God's grace was bestowed upon the churches of Macedonia (**1**)
2. Despite affliction and deep poverty, with an abundance of joy their poverty abounded in riches of liberality (**2**)

B. PAUL'S OBSERVATION OF THEIR GIVING (3-5)

1. They gave beyond their ability (**3a**)

2. They gave willingly (3b)
3. They implored Paul to accept their contribution (4)
4. Beyond Paul's expectations, they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to Paul as God willed (5)

II. PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE CORINTHIANS (6-15)

A. TO ABOUND IN THIS GRACE (6-7)

1. Titus was sent to complete this grace in them (6)
2. As they abounded in many other things, Paul encourages them to abound in this also (7)

B. TO BE MOTIVATED BY THE EXAMPLES OF OTHERS (8-9)

1. Not by commandment, but the example of others Paul seeks to test their love (8)
2. Remembering the example of Jesus, through whose poverty we became rich (9)

C. TO COMPLETE WHAT THEY STARTED (10-11)

1. It is to their advantage to complete what they started a year before (10)
2. So that there is not only a desire to do it, but the completion of it as well (11)

D. TO GIVE WILLINGLY AND ACCORDING TO ABILITY (12)

1. There must first be a willing mind (12a)
2. Then it should be according to what one has (12b)

E. TO GIVE SO THAT THERE MIGHT BE EQUALITY (13-15)

1. Paul does not desire that they burden themselves to ease others (13)
2. But that their abundance might supply others' lack, so there can be equality (14)
3. As in the case of gathering manna, recorded in **Exodus 16:18** (15)

III. THE MESSENGERS ADMINISTERING THE COLLECTION (16-24)

A. TITUS (16-17)

1. Paul could see that God put earnest care for the Corinthians in Titus' heart (16)
2. For he not only accepted the encouragement to go, but went on his own accord (17)

B. A BROTHER WHOSE PRAISE IS IN THE GOSPEL (18-21)

1. Not mentioned by name, but whose praise was known by all the churches (18)
2. Chosen by the churches to travel with Paul, so that none would question Paul's handling of the collection (19-21)

C. A BROTHER OFTEN PROVED DILIGENT IN MANY THINGS (22)

1. Also not mentioned by name, but well proven (22a)
2. Known for his diligence, he was very diligent in view of Paul's confidence in the Corinthians (22b)

D. SUMMARY COMMENTS ABOUT THESE THREE MEN (23-24)

1. Titus is Paul's partner and fellow worker (23a)

2. The two unnamed brethren are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ (**23b**)
3. Corinth encouraged to prove their love and Paul's boasting on their behalf to these messengers (**24**)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

- 1) What are the main points of this chapter?**

- 2) What was the condition of the churches in Macedonia? Yet what did they have in abundance? (2)**

- 3) What three things are said in how they gave? (3-4)**

- 4) How did they go beyond Paul's expectations? (5)**

- 5) Why did Paul send Titus? (6)**

- 6) What two examples did Paul use motivate them to give? (8-9)**

- 7) What three guidelines does Paul give to govern their giving? (12-14)**

- 8) What three men were sent to administer this collection? (16,18,22)**

- 9) Why were these men handling the collection, and not Paul? (20-21)**

- 10) What did Paul want the Corinthians to show to these men and the other churches? (24)**

The Second Epistle To The Corinthians

Chapter Nine

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To see how Paul had used the Corinthians' zeal to motivate the Macedonians in their giving (whose sacrificial giving had been used in chapter eight to motivate the Corinthians)
- 2) To appreciate what kind of giving is pleasing to God
- 3) To see the relation between sowing and reaping, and what is the proper use of what we have reaped
- 4) To observe what a collection like this was designed to produce

SUMMARY

As he continues his discussion about the collection for the needy saints, Paul confesses that his writing may be superfluous. That is because he knows their willingness of which he boasted to the Macedonians, who in turn were stirred up by the zeal of the Corinthians. Yet Paul felt it necessary to send the messengers to ensure that the Corinthians had their gift ready, and that it was one of true generosity and not out of a grudging obligation. To find them unprepared would be embarrassing to both Paul and the Corinthians (1-5).

That they might give liberally, Paul reminds them of the principle of sowing and reaping, and that God loves a cheerful giver. He also writes of God's ability to give them an abundance for every good work, and prays that God will multiply the seed they have sown so they will be enriched in all things for even more liberality on their part (6-11).

He concludes this section by pointing out the effect this collection will have. It not only supplies the needs of the saints, it will abound in thanksgiving and praise to God, and produce prayers and longing in the hearts of the recipients for their benefactors. This prompts Paul to give thanks to God, for it is He who makes these things possible (12-15)!

OUTLINE

I. PURPOSE OF THE MESSENGERS (1-5)

A. PAUL'S WRITING MAY BE SUPERFLUOUS (1-2)

1. For he knows their willingness, of which he boasted to the Macedonians (1-2a)
2. Their zeal had stirred up the majority (2b)

B. BUT PAUL STILL BELIEVED THE MESSENGERS WERE NECESSARY (3-5)

1. Lest his boasting of them be in vain (**3-4**)
2. To make sure the Corinthians were prepared with their gift (**5a**)
3. To ensure that their gift was one of generosity, and not of a grudging obligation (**5b**)

II. ENCOURAGEMENT TO GIVE LIBERALLY (6-15)

A. FOR ONE REAPS WHAT THEY SOW (6)

1. He who sows sparingly will reap sparingly (**6a**)
2. He who sows bountifully will reap bountifully (**6b**)

B. FOR GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER (7)

1. Each one must give as they have purposed in their heart (**7a**)
2. Not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves cheerful giving (**7b**)

C. FOR GOD WILL INCREASE THEIR ABILITY TO DO GOOD (8-11)

1. God is able to give an abundance for every good work (**8-9**)
2. A prayer that God will supply and increase the fruits of their righteousness (**10**)
3. So that their enrichment will produce more liberality, leading many to give thanks (**11**)

D. FOR THE EFFECT IT HAS (12-15)

1. It supplies the needs of the saints (**12a**)
2. It produces many thanksgivings to God (**12b**)
3. It causes people to glorify God for the Corinthians' obedience to the gospel and their liberal sharing (**13**)
4. It creates prayer and longing for the Corinthians by the recipients of the gift (**14**)
- All this prompting Paul to thank God for this wonderful gift! (**15**)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**
- 2) **Why was Paul's writing to the Corinthians about this collection superfluous? (1-2)**
- 3) **Why were the messengers being sent? (3-5)**
- 4) **What is the relation between sowing and reaping? (6)**
- 5) **What kind of giving pleases God? (7)**

- 6) What is God able to do? (8a)**

- 7) What is the purpose of the abundance we receive from God? (8b)**

- 8) Why did Paul pray that God supply and multiply the seed sown by the Corinthians? (10)**

- 9) When one is enriched in everything, for what purpose is it? (11)**

- 10) What four things did the administration of this service (the collection) supply? (12-14)**

The Second Epistle To The Corinthians

Chapter Ten

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To understand the nature of the war in which we are engaged, and to appreciate the weapons we have that are "mighty in God"
- 2) To see the folly of judging others by outward appearance, and in comparing ourselves with others

SUMMARY

Having concluded his discussion on the collection for the saints, Paul now returns to his own defense, especially as it pertains to his conduct and authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ. He pleads with them in the meekness and gentleness of Christ, hoping that by so doing it will not be necessary to use boldness in their presence against some who think Paul conducts himself according to the flesh (1-2). While he admits that he walks in the flesh, he does not war according to the flesh since he has weapons that are mighty in God and effective for winning arguments and bringing others to obey Christ (3-6).

He then responds directly in regards to his detractors. Some were evidently judging Paul on outward appearance, that while he sounded weighty and powerful in his writing, his physical presence was weak and contemptible. But Paul's authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ was real, and what he was in word when absent, he could be in deed when present (7-11).

We can also infer that some of Paul's detractors took pride in comparing themselves with others. Such a practice was unwise, and Paul was one who would boast only in those areas in which God had appointed him to serve. That would include the Corinthians themselves, for Paul would only go to areas where the gospel had not been preached and that is how they had come to believe. Reminding them of this, Paul had hope that they would assist him in preaching the gospel in regions beyond them. He then admonishes them to boast only in the Lord, and to remember that not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends (12-18).

OUTLINE

I. PAUL PROVIDES AN EXPLANATION FOR HIS CONDUCT (1-6)

A. HE PLEADS WITH THEM IN MEEKNESS AND GENTLENESS (1-2)

1. With great emphasis, he stresses that he himself is pleading with them by the meekness and gentleness of Christ (1a)
2. It appears that some misread Paul's humility in person as weakness, and that only in absence was he bold (1b)
3. But he is hoping that it not be necessary for him to have the confident boldness he is prepared to use against those who misread Paul (2)

B. THE NATURE OF THE WARFARE, AND WEAPONS MIGHTY IN GOD (3-6)

1. While walking in the flesh, he does not war according to flesh (3)
2. For the weapons he uses are not carnal, but they are mighty in God (4a)
3. Such weapons are capable of:
 - a. Pulling down strongholds (4b)
 - b. Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God (5a)
 - c. Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (5b)
 - d. Being ready to punish all disobedience when their obedience is fulfilled (6)

II. PAUL'S RESPONSE TO HIS DETRACTORS (7-18)

A. TO THOSE WHO JUDGE ON OUTWARD APPEARANCE (7-11)

1. No matter how it might look, rest assured that Paul is Christ's (7)
2. Even if it were necessary to boast about the authority the Lord gave him, Paul would not be ashamed (8)
3. There were some who thought Paul hid behind his letters, while in person he was weak (9-10)
4. Yet Paul was ready to be in person what he was in his letters (11)

B. TO THOSE WHO BOAST OF THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS (12-18)

1. Paul considered it unwise to compare himself with those who measured themselves by others around them (12)
2. If Paul boasted, it would only be in that area God had chosen for him, which included the Corinthians themselves (13-14)
3. He would not boast in other men's labors (15a)
4. He had hope that the Corinthians would help him to preach the gospel where others had not gone (15b-16a)
5. In that way he would not boast in another's man accomplishments, but only in that which the Lord enabled him (16b-17)
6. In the end, only the one whom the Lord commends is approved (18)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**

- 2) **With what two qualities of Christ-like character does Paul plead with the Corinthians? (1)**

- 3) **What does Paul hope would not be necessary when he was with them in person? (2)**

- 4) **Though Paul walks in the flesh, what does he not do? (3)**

- 5) **In what four ways are the weapons of our warfare "mighty in God"? (4-6)**

- 6) **Upon what basis were some people evidently evaluating Paul? (7)**

- 7) **What accusations were being made against Paul? (10)**

- 8) **What did Paul tell such people to consider? (11)**

- 9) **What did Paul say was an unwise practice? (12)**

- 10) **In what area was Paul willing to boast? (13-16)**

- 11) **In whom should we glory? (17)**

- 12) **In the end, who is it that is approved? (18)**

The Second Epistle To The Corinthians

Chapter Eleven

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To understand why Paul felt it necessary to engage in "foolish boasting"
- 2) To see how one might be misled by "false apostles" and "deceitful workers"
- 3) To appreciate the great amount of suffering Paul endured as a minister of Christ

SUMMARY

As Paul continues defending his apostolic authority, he finds it necessary to engage in "a little folly." He does so out of concern for their faithfulness to Christ and his fear that others may have corrupted their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ (1-4). He also explains why he did not accept support from them. Evidently this was the basis for charges against him by those who considered themselves "the most eminent apostles". But Paul, who had good reasons for not accepting their support, recognizes these detractors as they really were: "false apostles" and "deceitful workers" (5-15).

While not desiring to act foolishly, he finds it necessary since it seems that the Corinthians are so willing to accept those who do (16-21). With some foolish boldness, then, Paul claims equal footing with his detractors as it pertains to physical heritage. But when it comes to service as a minister of Christ, he far surpasses them as is evident in the things he suffered. After listing many examples of suffering, he concludes that if he must boast it will be in the things which concern his infirmity, giving his escape from Damascus as an illustration (22-33).

OUTLINE

I. THE NECESSITY FOR SOME "FOOLISH BOASTING" (1-21)

A. OUT OF CONCERN FOR THEIR FAITHFULNESS (1-4)

1. He resorts to a little folly, because with godly jealousy he seeks to present them as a chaste virgin to Christ (1-2)
2. Because of their seeming willingness to receive those who offer a different Jesus, spirit, and gospel, he fears that their minds may be corrupted (3-4)

B. BECAUSE OF COMPARISON WITH FALSE APOSTLES (5-15)

1. Though untrained in speech, it is not the case with knowledge, and Paul has demonstrated that he is not inferior to the "most eminent apostles" (5-6)
2. The reasons he refused to accept support from them (7-12)
 - a. While with them, he received support from other churches (7-9a)
 - b. He is determined to continue this practice of not being a burden to them (9b-10)

- c. Not because he does not love them, but to cut off opportunity for those who wish to be regarded as Paul in matters of which they boast (**11-12**)
3. These boasters are "false apostles" (**13-15**)
 - a. As deceitful workers, they transform themselves into apostles of Christ (**13**)
 - b. This is no great marvel, for if Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, similar tactics can be expected of his ministers (**14-15**)

C. WITH GREAT RELUCTANCE (16-21)

1. For those who think Paul as a fool, then receive him as a fool as he begins to boast (**16**)
2. Boasting is foolish and not of the Lord, but seeing that many boast and they seem to put up with them gladly in their wisdom, then Paul will boast too (**17-19**)
3. Since they seem willing to endure those who abuse them, Paul will be bold and boast a little as well (**20-21**)

II. THE GROUNDS FOR HIS "FOOLISH BOASTING" (22-33)

A. HIS PHYSICAL HERITAGE (22)

1. Like his opponents, He is a Hebrew
2. Like his opponents, He is an Israelite
3. Like his opponents, He is of the seed of Abraham

B. HIS SACRIFICIAL SERVICE AS A MINISTER OF CHRIST (23-33)

1. It is foolish to speak of his opponents as ministers of Christ, but if so, Paul is one much more (**23a**)
2. He has labored more, and suffered more, than they (**23b**)
3. A list of the suffering Paul endured as a minister of Christ (**24-29**)
 - a. Five times he was beaten with 39 stripes by the Jews (**24**)
 - b. Three times he was been with rods (**25a**)
 - c. Once he was stoned (**25b**)
 - d. Three times he was shipwrecked (**25c**)
 - e. A night and a day in the deep (**25d**)
 - f. Miscellaneous perils on his many journeys (**26**)
 - g. Miscellaneous discomforts (**27**)
 - h. His daily concern for the condition of churches (**28-29**)
4. If he must boast, then let it be concerning his infirmity (**30-33**)
 - a. His "infirmity" (possibly his "thorn in the flesh" of **11:7-10**) was the persecution he endured in service to Christ
 - b. As an example, having to flee Damascus (**31-33**)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**

- 2) **How did Paul desire to present the Corinthians to Christ? (2)**
- 3) **What was Paul fearful of concerning the Corinthians? (3)**
- 4) **What were they seemingly willing to put up with? (4)**
- 5) **In what area did Paul concede that he was untrained? In what area was this not so? (6)**
- 6) **What practice of Paul evidently was used as a charge against him? (7)**
- 7) **While at Corinth, from whom did Paul receive support? (8-9)**
- 8) **Why would Paul continue the practice of not accepting support from the Corinthians? (12)**
- 9) **How does Paul describe these opponents of his? (13)**
- 10) **How does Satan often transform himself? And his ministers? (14-15)**
- 11) **How did Paul view the confidence of boasting? (17)**
- 12) **Then why does Paul engage in such boasting? (18-19)**
- 13) **In what three ways was Paul equal to his opponents? (22)**
- 14) **List five things endured by Paul as a minister of Christ (24-25)**
- 15) **If Paul must boast, in what would he boast? (30)**
- 16) **What event does he relate as an example of his infirmity? (31-33)**

The Second Epistle To The Corinthians

Chapter Twelve

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To understand why the Lord allowed Paul to suffer so much persecution
- 2) To see why Paul took pleasure in his infirmities suffered for Christ's sake

SUMMARY

We find Paul compelled to continue his "foolish boasting". Coming to the issue of visions and revelations of the Lord, he describes "a man in Christ" (most commentators believe Paul has reference to himself) who fourteen years before had been caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words unlawful to utter. Paul would boast of "such a one", but in direct reference to himself he would only boast in his "infirmities", lest people think too highly of him (1-6).

Lest he be exalted above measure because of the abundance of revelations he had received, a "thorn in the flesh" (also described as a "messenger of Satan") was given to buffet him (that is, to keep him humble). When he asked the Lord on three separate occasions to remove it, the Lord's reply was that His grace was sufficient and His strength was made complete in times of weakness. This prompted Paul to take pleasure in his "infirmities" endured for Christ's sake (which I believe to have been the "thorn in the flesh"). For when he was weak, the power of Christ in him made him strong (7-10).

Paul's "foolish boasting" concludes with a mild rebuke for their compelling him to do it, for it is they who should have commended him. Indeed, while with them he demonstrated the "signs of an apostle" (signs, wonders, mighty deeds) that clearly showed he was not in anyway behind "the most eminent apostles". The only charge that could be brought against him? He had not accepted support from them like he had from other churches (11-13).

The remaining part of this chapter is filled with an expression of love and concern for them. He explains again why he will not accept support from them: like parents for their children, Paul will gladly spend and be spent for their souls. Neither he nor those he sent to them had taken advantage of them in any way, and have sought to do all things for their edification (14-19). Finally, he expresses his fear that when he comes the conditions will not be what he and they wish. He is fearful that there will be all sorts of strife, and that many of those who have sinned will not have repented (20-21).

OUTLINE

I. PAUL'S "FOOLISH BOASTING" CONTINUES (1-13)

A. THE VISION OF PARADISE (1-6)

1. Though such boasting is not profitable, Paul finds it necessary to discuss visions and

- revelations of the Lord **(1)**
- 2. He writes of one (possibly himself) who:
 - a. Was caught up to the third heaven, that is, Paradise **(2-4a)**
 - b. Heard inexpressible words, unlawful for a man to utter **(4b)**
- 3. Of such a one Paul would boast, but not of himself, except in his infirmities **(5)**
- 4. His concern is that people might think too highly of him **(6)**

B. THE THORN IN THE FLESH (7-10)

- 1. That he not be exalted above measure by the abundance of his revelations, he was given a thorn in the flesh **(7)**
 - a. Called a messenger of Satan
 - b. Designed to buffet him
- 2. He pleaded with the Lord that this "thorn" might depart from him **(8-9a)**
 - a. He did so three times **(8)**
 - b. The Lord's reply **(9a)**
 - 1) "My grace is sufficient for you"
 - 2) "My strength is made perfect in weakness"
- 3. This led Paul to boast in his infirmities, for in his weakness the power of Christ has opportunity to make him strong **(9b-10)**

C. THE SIGNS OF AN APOSTLE (11-13)

- 1. He was compelled to engage in foolish boasting by those who ought to have commended him **(11a)**
 - a. For in nothing was he behind "the most eminent apostles" **(11b)**
 - b. For among them he accomplished the signs of an apostle: signs, wonders, and mighty deeds **(12)**
- 2. His only mistake? He had not been a financial burden to them! **(13)**

II. PAUL'S LOVE AND CONCERN (14-21)

A. HIS LOVE FOR THEM (14-19)

- 1. Ready to come for the third time, he will not be burdensome to them **(14-16)**
 - a. He does not seek what is theirs, but them **(14a)**
 - b. Like parents providing for their children, he will gladly spend and be spent for their souls **(14b-15a)**
 - c. Even though it seems to jeopardize their love for him **(15b)**
- 2. Some have taken this to be craftiness and guile on his part **(16-19a)**
 - a. But he asks them whether he has taken advantage of them by any of those he had sent to them **(17-18)**
 - b. He needs no excuse, for he does all things for their edification **(19)**

B. HIS CONCERN FOR THEM (20-21)

- 1. His fear is that when he comes, they will not find one another the way they wish **(20a)**
- 2. His fear is that there will all sorts of strife **(20b)**
- 3. His fear is that he will find many of them unrepentant of their sins **(21)**

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

- 1) What are the main points of this chapter?**

- 2) As Paul continues his "foolish boasting", what does he now come to? (1)**

- 3) Where was the "man in Christ" taken? What did he hear? (2-4)**

- 4) Of himself, in what would Paul boast? About what was he concerned? (5-6)**

- 5) Why was Paul given "a thorn in the flesh"? (7)**

- 6) How many times did Paul plead with the Lord to remove the "thorn"? What did the Lord respond? (8-9)**

- 7) In what, then, did Paul choose to boast? Why? (9-10)**

- 8) What were the "signs of an apostle" that Paul had done among the Corinthians? (12)**

- 9) What did Paul do that some charged made the Corinthians inferior to other churches? (13)**

- 10) Why would Paul continue not to be a burden to them? (15)**

- 11) What was the motive behind all that Paul did for the Corinthians? (19)**

- 12) What was Paul afraid might occur when he got to Corinth? (20)**

- 13) What was Paul afraid of finding when he got to Corinth? (21)**

The Second Epistle To The Corinthians

Chapter Thirteen

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To appreciate that a time must come when discipline can no longer be spared
- 2) To see the need for periodic self-examination in order to prove that Christ does indeed dwell in us
- 3) To notice what will ensure that the God of love and peace will be with us

SUMMARY

In this final chapter, Paul makes final comments in preparation for his coming. This being the third time he is coming, there has been ample opportunity for those in need of repentance to do so. Especially since they seek proof of Christ speaking in him, he will not spare them on this visit (1-4).

His desire, however, is for their faithfulness. He therefore encourages them to engage in self-examination to prove whether or not they are in the faith, and whether Christ is in them (5-6). His earnest prayer is that they do no evil, but that which is honorable, and to be made complete. It is in keeping with this that he has written this epistle, and to avoid having to use sharpness when in their presence (7-10).

Paul closes his epistle with exhortations designed to ensure that the God of love and peace will be with them, some words of greetings, and a benediction that includes all three Persons of the Godhead (11-14).

OUTLINE

I. FINAL COMMENTS IN PREPARATION OF HIS COMING (1-10)

A. WARNING OF IMPENDING DISCIPLINE (1-4)

1. This will be his third visit, which will serve to verify their true condition (1)
2. With this visit, he will not spare to exercise his authority in Christ (2)
3. Since they seek proof of Christ speaking in him (3-4)

B. EXHORTATION TO SELF-EXAMINATION (5-6)

1. To prove whether or not they are in the faith (5)
2. His trust is that they will know that he is not disqualified (6)

C. HIS DESIRE FOR THEIR FAITHFULNESS (7-9)

1. His prayer is that they do no evil, but that which is honorable (7)
2. Not for his sake, for even if he should seem disqualified, he can do nothing against the truth

(7-8)

3. He will gladly be weak if it means they are strong, for his prayer is that they may be complete (9)

D. HIS PURPOSE IN WRITING THIS EPISTLE (10)

1. So that when present he does not need to use sharpness
2. Which is in keeping with the authority he has from the Lord for their edification

II. CONCLUDING REMARKS (11-14)

A. FINAL EXHORTATIONS (11)

1. Become complete
 2. Be of good comfort
 3. Be of one mind
 4. Live in peace
- For then the God of love and peace will be with them

B. GREETINGS (12-13)

1. An admonition to greet one another with a holy kiss (12)
2. Greetings sent to them from the saints (13)

C. BENEDICTION (14)

1. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
 2. The love of God
 3. The communion of the Holy Spirit
- Be with them all. Amen

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**

- 2) **What will be the significance of Paul's third visit to them? (1)**

- 3) **What is Paul's warning should he come again? (2)**

- 4) **What does Paul exhort them to do? (5)**

- 5) **What was Paul's prayer for them? (7,9)**

- 6) **Why was Paul writing this epistle? (10)**

- 7) **In expressing farewell, what four exhortations does he leave with them? (11)**

- 8) **Provided they heed these four exhortations, what blessing will they enjoy? (11)**

- 9) **What final exhortation does he give to them? (12)**

- 10) **What three blessings does Paul pray for them as he closes this epistle? (14)**