

11/18/12

Intro. To 2Corinthians

The second letter to the Corinthians is a gem among God's treasure chest, the Bible.

1. The letter reveals many of the sufferings of Paul, difficulties and heartaches, which otherwise would have remained unknown.
2. It gives to us great insight into Paul himself, as a servant of God and his love for the people of God.
3. The letter is a picture of a spiritual father trying to reconcile with his impertinent children, who think they know more than their father.
4. Paul acts out the conduct of a true shepherd, willing to lay his life down for the sheep, rather than a hireling who flees when the wolf comes, as Jesus taught. Jn. 10

The church was established on the second missionary trip of Paul, during a period of eighteen months. Acts 18

1. The location made it a sea port city, two thirds being slaves.
2. The city had much immorality and vice.
3. The temple of Aphrodites or Venus was one of the main sources of immorality with it's 1,000 priestesses, who prostituted themselves to finance the temple through sexual worship.
4. The Isthmian games were held every two years and were second to Olympics.

5. The majority of church members were gentile, some Jews and of various social levels.

The first letter to the Corinthians was corrective and instructional, the church being filled with many problems

1. They had splits and quarrels.
2. They were mixing worldly wisdom.
3. They were taking each other to the law courts.
4. They were involved in sexual uncleanness.
5. They had a wrong view of sex in marriage, divorce and singleness in service of Christ.
6. They were abusing their Christian liberty
7. They had a local cultural veil problem.
8. They were not clear as to the order in church for women.
9. They were lacking the love God.
10. They were abusing the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
11. They were teaching that there was no resurrection.
12. They had to be reminded about the offering they promised for to the poor at Jerusalem and to gather it when they came together on Sunday.

Now the second letter to the Corinthians is all together different, being reconciliatory filled with emotions of love, but polemic in nature in defense of both his ministry and apostleship of Paul.

- * The letter is the most autobiographical of all his letters.

We might view the stern plea of Paul to the Corinthians to be ready by their obedience when he came to them, as a type of our Lord's pleas and warning for every believer to be found ready and occupying in obedience to His word when He comes. 2Cor. 2:9; 12:20-21, 13:2

Yet Paul was on no power trip for he exposes himself as a mere man, like any other exposed to suffering and weaknesses.

I. The occasion for the epistle.

- A.** The servant Timothy had been sent to put the Corinthians in mind of Paul's ways in Christ in some specific issues. 1Cor. 4:17
1. The body of Christ was one under Christ, not under the factions of the various teachers or leaders.
 2. The power of God was His Holy Spirit, not intellectual pride.
 3. The accountability of sin in the church has to be dealt with and resolve Biblically.
 4. The pagan practices of sexual sin had to be abandoned, as well as depriving sexual companionship to one's mate for the sake of spirituality.
 5. The practices of rituals of meat and drink were to be understood and not used to stumble the weak.

6. The example of Israel's past carnal behavior should put away the idea that God won't judge severely those who live carnal.
 7. The idea that one member is superior to another was and is evidence of pride and carnality.
 8. The gifts were for the edification of the body, not the individual.
 9. The message of salvation is tied to the resurrection, why were they denying it?
 10. The collection was to be a matter of love with regularity.
- B.** The report of Timothy caused Paul to send Titus to Corinth to deal with the situation and then report back at Troas. 2Cor. 2:12-13
1. The uproar and mob riot that occurred at Ephesus could of cause Paul to leave prematurely. Acts 19:23-20:1
 2. The apostle proceeded to Troas as planned and while he waited, the Lord opened a door to preach, but Titus never showed up. 2Cor. 2:12
 3. The apostle then was restless in his spirit and moved on to Macedonia. 2Cor. 2:13
 4. The meeting finally took place in Macedonia, as Paul arrived anxiously only to find troubled on every side, outside were conflicts, inside were fears. 2Cor. 7:5

5. The coming of Titus comforted them even in their downcast condition, knowing that they had repented and rejoiced over the fatherly corrections of Paul and instructions for godliness, in his First letter. 2Cor. 7:6-7
6. Silas along with Timothy and Titus were named as co-workers at Corinth. 2Cor. 1:19
7. The apostle at the same time took advantage to take up the collection for the poor saint at Jerusalem which he indicates. 2Cor. 8:1-5
8. The apostle had to deal with the Judeaizers, who had raised up a small group to opposed Paul, identified by the word “some”. 2Cor. 3:1, 10:2
* This is the common word found also in the first epistle. 1Cor. 4:18

This was the occasion of the epistle!

II. The place and date of the epistle.

- A. The epistle was written from Macedonia
 1. This was the meeting place of Paul and Titus, as Titus returned from Corinth. 2Cor. 2:13; 7:5-7
 2. The reference to the offering was related to the Macedonians. 2Cor. 8:1, 9:2-4

3. The specific city is not given, but most believed it to be Philippi, others from Thessalonica
- B.** The date of the epistle has to be close to the first in view of the problems at hand.
1. The first letter was written in the spring of 55-56 some say 57 A. D. 1Cor. 16:8
 - a. Paul was brought before Gallio in the summer of 51.
 - 1) The limit of the proconsul was one year, Gallio served from July 1st A. D. 51 to the June 30, A. D. 52.
 - 2) Archeologist discovered near Delph discovered an inscription with the name of Gallio, as proconsul of Achaia connected with Claudius.
 - b. Paul was there eighteen months, three years at Ephesus.
 - c. Paul wrote the first letter from Ephesus towards the end of his ministry, the year before he left at Pentecost, spending three years at Ephesus. 1Cor. 16:8; Acts 20:31
 - 1) Paul had dispatched Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia, Timothy did not know about the First letter, till he arrived at Corinth. Acts 19:22; 1Cor. 4:17

- 2) When Paul left Ephesus, he sent Titus to Corinth. 2Cor. 2:13; 7:6
2. Acts tells us that Paul departed after the riot at Ephesus to Macedonia and went to Greece remaining there for three months. Acts 20:1-3
 - a. Paul made his second visit between the first and second letter, being the “painful visit”! 2Cor. 2:1; 12:14; 13:1
 - b. The only thing we can conclude is that the writing of first Corinthians is the severe letter that he wrote with anguish of heart and tears. 2Cor. 2:3-4
 - c. Those that favor the hypothesis of another severe letter refer to a personal confrontation Paul had with someone in his second visit in the section of forgiving the offender, rather than to the restoration of the sinning brother in first Corinthians. 1Cor. 5:5; 2Cor. 2:3-4
 4. The most logical time of the writing of 2Corinthians would fit as he departed from Ephesus, perhaps late summer or early autumn of the same year 55-56 A. D. or the following 57 A.D.
 5. This is confirmed by the fact that we are told next that Paul was at Philippi for the feast of Unleavened Bread, which would have to be the spring of the following year. Acts 20:6

6. He wrote to the Romans from Corinth in his third visit, telling them he had preached in Illyricum, as he went into Macedonia. Rom. 15:19
- C. The epistle was carried to Corinth by three individuals.
1. Titus was exhorted to go to Corinth and he accepted the commission, but more than that he of his own accord wanted to go. 2Cor. 7:6; 13-14; 8:16-17
 2. Others accompanied Titus who were chosen by the church to be trustworthy in every way, to avoid any false accusations. 2Cor. 8:18-24; 12:18

This was the place and date of the epistle!

III. The purpose of the epistle.

- A. To reconcile the sinning brother who was ex-communicated in view of his repentance. 2Cor. 2:3-9
1. Paul had rebuked them in the first letter for allowing him to fellowship while being in an incestuous relationship with his step-mother. 1Cor. 5:1-2
 2. Paul told them to ex-communicate the man, turning him over to Satan. 1Cor. 5:3-5

3. Paul now had to exhort them to reconcile the man in view of his repentance and forgive him, lest he be overcome with sorrow. 2Cor. 2:7-8
- B.** To express his joy over their positive response to his “severe letter”.
1. Paul was eagerly waiting for Titus to meet him at Troas with news, but he never showed up so he went to Macedonia. 2Cor. 2:12-13
 2. Paul along with others arrived tired at Macedonia and trouble and conflict was all around, yet the coming of Titus comforted them about their earnest desire, their mourning and zeal for Paul, so he rejoiced over them. 2Cor. 7:4-7
- C.** To expose the agitators.
1. They were not from Corinth and prided themselves in the letters of commendation they possessed. 2Cor. 3:1
 2. They claimed to have super apostolic authority. 2Cor. 11:5, 22
 3. They were Judeaizers, who prided themselves in the Jewish distinctive. 2Cor. 3:7-18; 11:22
 4. They lorded over the church. 2Cor. 11:20
 5. They were liberal in their attitude and practice. 2Cor. 6:14-7:1; 12:21

6. They preached a different gospel. 2Cor. 11:3-4
 7. They opposed and spoke strongly against Paul and his teaching. 2Cor. 10:1, 10, 11:6
 8. They opposed and spoke against Paul’s teaching. 2Cor. 2:17; 10:12-18; 11:7-12
 9. They spoke against his fickleness and stern authority. 2Cor. 1:15-18; 10:9-11; 12:16-19
 10. They were false apostle and ministers of Satan. 2Cor. 11:13-15
 11. They did not love the Corinthians but themselves. 2Cor. 12:14-18
- D.** To exhort them regarding the collection for the poor.
1. He used the Macedonians as an example of giving to the poor to plead that they do likewise. 2Cor. 8:1-7
 2. He reproved them for their procrastination of a year. 2Cor. 9:1-2
- E.** To communicate that they had allowed themselves to be deceived.
1. Paul compares it to the deception of Eve in the Garden to another gospel. 2Cor. 11:1-4
 2. Paul recounts what they were submitting themselves to as bondage when they were free in Christ. 2Cor. 11:20-21

3. Paul warned them of his fear of coming and finding some unrepentant and God humble him, having to mourn for them, either due to being ex-communicated or being struck by death. 1Cor. 11:30

F. To re-establish his authority in the Corinthian church that had been marred by false accusations. 2Cor. 13:10

1. That Paul wanted to rule over. 2Cor. 1:24, 7:2
2. That Paul carried no letters of commendation because he commended himself. 2Cor. 3:1; 4:2, 5; 5:12; 6:4; 10:12, 13-14, 18; 12:11
3. That Paul wrote to cause pain, condemn and destroy. 2Cor. 2:2; 4:5; 7:2, 3, 8; 10:8; 13:10
4. That Paul was bold in absence but weak in presence. 2Cor. 10:1-2, 9-11; 11:6; 13:3-4, 9
5. That Paul was a counterfeit apostle not willing to take money. 2Cor. 11:5, 7-11, 13; 12:11-15; 13:3a, 6
6. That Paul in fact while denying funds was deceiving them by taking them for himself in guise for the poor. 2Cor. 12:16-18

G. To prepare them for his third coming.

1. He did not want to be burdensome to them but to be spent for them. 2Cor. 12:14-15
2. He would come with the authority of Christ to deal with sin. 2Cor. 13:1-3

This was the purpose of the epistle!

IV. The characteristics of the epistle.

- A.** The language is personal and filled with emotions.
 1. Paul's emotions run high and low from despair of life to comfort that they excepted his letter, to pleading.
 2. Paul's love is evident accompanied by being stern.
 3. Paul's speech is rebuking and at the same time almost apologetic due to his love and concern for them..
 4. Paul's metaphor are mixed and extreme to communicate the miracle of salvation and the seriousness of eternity.
 5. Paul's letter is not so systematic and theological in nature, though it is full of theology, but it is marked by specific problems at Corinth in an informal way, lending itself with extended digressions.
 6. Paul revealed his heart of a Shepherd for the sheep without any concern for self.

- a. He asked them to point out his failure to them. 2Cor. 11:5-11
 - b. He saw himself as their spiritual father ready to be spent for them though they might not understand or believe his love for them not to destroy but to edify! 2Cor. 12:14-15, 19
7. Paul gives some very sound theology in the letter.
- a. The role of a shepherd to the flock, laying down his life in every way. 2Cor. 1:24; 2:6, 7; 6:1, 11-13; 10:2; 11:2-3; 13:11; 15:5, 10
 - b. He revealed the sufferings of a shepherd. 2Cor. 1:3-11; 4:7-18; 6:3-10; 11:24-28; 12:1-10
 - c. He revealed the role of a shepherd in distinction and relationship between the old and new covenant. 2Cor. 2:14-17; 3:17-18; 4:1-5; 5:16-21; 11:28, 29; 12:14-15
 - d. He revealed the confidence of the believer to be present before Christ immediate at death in his eternal body. 2Cor. 4:7-5:10
 - e. He revealed the presence of the believer at death. 2Cor. 5:1-8
 - f. He gave the proper view of giving out of love. 2Cor. 8:1-9:15

- g. He revealed the war to be spiritual. 2Cor. 10:1-6
 - h. He reveals that deception is ever present from within. 2Cor. 11:1-4
 - I. He revealed the servant type attitude of a servant trusting God. 2Cor. 10-13
- B. The information given is unique in part, found nowhere else.
- 1. Paul tells us the he was sought out by King Aretas was seeking for Paul with a military guard desiring to arrest him in Damascus and he was let down in a basket through a window in the wall. 2Cor. 11:32-33
 - a. Luke tells us of the escape and his flight to Jerusalem where Barnabas introduced him to Peter and James, without identifying the King. Acts 23:27
 - * King of Arabia Petraea, whose daughter Herod Antipas married and afterwards divorced.
 - b. Paul told the Galatians that this was three years after being in Arabia and returned to Damascus at which time he fled to Jerusalem to see Peter. Gal. 1:17-18
 - 2. Paul tell of his being caught up to the third heaven where God dwells. 12:1-6

- a. The event is believed to be the one at Lystra when Paul was stoned for preaching and dragged out of the city, thinking he was dead, only to get up, shake himself off and go back into the city to preach again. Acts 14:19-20
 - b. The phrase “caught up” is “harpazo” the same word used for the removal of the believer from the earth at the coming of Christ for His church. 1Thess. 4:17
 - c. The apostle says he could not express what he heard, yet so many today write books about their out of body experience.
3. Paul told of God’s denial of his petition for the removal of his infirmity only to tell him that God’s grace was sufficient and it would keep him humble. 2Cor. 12:7-10
- a. The revelation epitomizes the sovereign wisdom of God.
 - b. The revelation magnifies the power of God through man’s weakness.
 - c. The revelation teaches us dependency on God, the secret of our strength.
4. Paul clearly said he had been to Corinth two other times, this would be the third. 2Cor. 12:14
- a. The first when he founded the church.

- b. The second after he left Ephesus and went into Macedonia.
- c. The third he is writing about.

These are the characteristics of the epistle!

V. The problems people had created.

- A. The first attack came in 1776.
 - 1. Semler introduced the hypothesis of chapters 10-13, which form part of the “severe letter” now lost, written before chapters 1-9 of 2Corinthians.
 - 2. This hypothesis of a “severe letter” that they say is lost is used to explain the tone of second Corinthians, declaring that the first letter does not fit the nature of tears and anguish of heart when written. 2Cor. 2:4
- B. The critical attack in attempts to bridge the gap between the first and second letter.
 - 1. They have proposed 2Cor. 2:14-7:4 to be part of the first letter lost mentioned. 1Cor. 5:9
 - 2. They also because of the abrupt change in 2Cor. 2:13 connect it with 2Cor. 7:4.
 - 3. They also classify a small section as an interpolation of fragments of previous letters. 2Cor. 6:14-7:1

C. These critics speak of the lack of unity in the second letter yet is there.

1. Chapter one deals with Paul's comfort through the difficulty of the drift, his deliverance in Asia and the sincerity of his original plans, but God redirected him.
2. Chapter two deals with his reluctance to come to them in sorrow again, his desire to have the repentant brother reconciled and his difficulty in waiting for word from Titus in Troas, but that God was sufficient for the ministry of the gospel, rejected by some and embraced by others.
3. Chapter three deals with the fact that he and Timothy did not need letters of commendation as other, for they were their epistle written in their hearts, most likely implying the Judaizer who were false apostles and charging Paul with many faults and who were interested in making them a sect of Judaism while being blind themselves living after the Law.
4. Chapter four Paul concluded that in view that they have such a ministry of the Spirit of grace not the Law they do not loose heart, knowing Satan blinded those desiring to live by the Law and they preach sincere and without pretense in

the power of God with all the frailties of their human bodies, knowing the difference between the temporal and eternal.

5. Chapter five Paul confidently assured his presence before God immediately at death, the judgment of every believer and non believer, therefore the urgency is not to boast in appearance evidence of love for self but to be compelled by the love of Christ to reach the lost who He died for.
6. Chapter six Paul pleaded that they not receive the grace of God in vain and be a proper example as they in ministry by denying self and pleads that they not be unequally yoked with the unbeliever but rather come out.
7. The seventh chapter Paul rented his heart open before the Corinthians declaring they had done nothing wrong, his confidence in them due to their repentance and then he ties these the first seven chapters together by sharing the comfort he received as he met Titus at Troas and declares his love for them.
* Chapter 7 summarizes 1-6
8. Chapters eight and nine deal with the offerings for poor saint at Jerusalem using the Macedonians as an example of the love and compassion of Christ and

that in view of their promise a year ago and their encouragement to others to give they should follow through now before it makes them look bad.

9. Chapter ten Paul pointed out that the opposition is really spiritual and must be fought spiritually not in human boasting as the false teachers who were self appointed, commending themselves by comparing themselves yet both of these things should be left to God.
10. Chapter eleven Paul clearly told the Corinthians that they have been deceived by accepting another gospel, he was not an inferior apostle as charged for not receiving wages but not wanting to hinder the gospel and then he told them of some of his sufferings and persecutions.
11. Chapter twelve revealed Paul's privilege of being caught up to heaven and God allowing a messenger of Satan to buffet him to keep him humble so that he would not exalt himself, God's denial of it's removal and that His grace would be sufficient for an apostle of Jesus and his plans to come for the third time.

* Chapter 12 epitomizes chapter one the concept of not trusting in oneself but God for His comfort and deliverance

in tribulation, sufferings even death and his new plans to visit.

12. Chapter thirteen Paul told them he will come to set things in order, not sparing the sinful, as he was accused of being weak in presence and called them to examine themselves, but the authority was of Christ.

- D. The things we do know from the letters and Scripture.
 1. There is a lost letter, but it isn't the fabricated "severe letter", the lost letter is the one referred to in 1Corinthians where Paul told them not to fellowship with immoral people in the church. 1Cor. 5:9-10
 - 2 That means that what we call 1Corinthians is really the Second letter to them and what we call Second Corinthians is really the third letter to the Corinthians!
 3. The belief that the letter consists of fragments or dissection is unfounded and there is absolutely no manuscript evidence, version or Church Father that can be found to support such a theory.
 4. In fact the evidence is to the contrary.
 - a. Clement of Rome A. D. 96
acknowledge the letter as is by Paul.
 - b. Polycarp quoted from it in 105 A. D.

- c. Irenaeus quoted from it in 185 A. D.
 - d. Clement of Alexandria in 210 A. D.
 - e. Tertulian in 210 A. D.
 - f. It is listed in Marcion's Apostolicon A. D. 140.
 - g. The Muratorian canon acknowledged it, about 175 A. D. , second century.
5. It would be charging God with being unfaithful to preserve the scriptures that he inspired and a charge of adding to the Scriptures by the very absence of Scripture.
- * It is best to interpret Second Corinthians by the information that we have in the First Corinthian letter as well as knowing that the apostle Paul did make a second visit between the first letter and the second.

These were problems people had created!

VI. Interval between the two epistles.

- A. The situation had gotten more severe in opposition against Paul's authority at Corinth.
- B. The opposition was by the Judaizers. 2Cor. 10:7, 11:23

- C. Titus had been sent to rectify the rebellious parties to submit. 2Cor. 2:12-13; 7:6-15
- D. Paul was on his way to Corinth when he wrote the letter, this would be the third time. 2Cor.12:14; 13:1
- E. Paul wrote the first letter with many tears. 2Cor. 2:3-4
- F. Paul's motive was the benefit to the people in the first epistle as well as this second. 2Cor. 7:6-9; 11-12
- G. Paul's desire was to restore the repentant brother as much as he first desired that he be ex-communicated. 1Cor. 5:5; 2Cor. 2:4-7

This is the interval between the two epistles!

VII. The key words, phrases and verses.

- A. Key words.
 1. Comfort "paraklesis" nine times and it's verb form "parakaleo" eight times.
 2. Affliction "thlipsis" nine times and afflict "thlibo" three times.
 3. Joy "chara" two times, rejoice "chairō" four times.
 4. Weakness "astheneia" six times and weak "astheneo" seven times.

5. Boast “thai” nineteen times.

B. Key phrases.

1. The majority. 2Cor. 3:6
2. Christ 48, Jesus 20

C. Key versus.

1. 1:3
2. 1:10
3. 2:4
4. 4:7
5. 5:6
6. 5:17
7. 6:14
8. 10:3-4
9. 10:12
- 10.11:3
- 11.12:9
- 12.12:14-15
- 13.15:5

These are key words. phrases and verses!

VIII. The simple division of the epistle.

- A.** Paul's defense of his ministry integrity to the Corinthians and his life. 2Cor. 1-7
- B.** Paul’s desire to receive the Collection for the poor saints. 2Cor. 8-9

C. Paul’s defense of his apostleship in view of the False teachers. 2Cor. 10-13

This is the Divisions of the epistle!