

Through the Bible Book by Book

New Testament

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SECOND CORINTHIANS

Theme: Of all Paul's Epistles, II Corinthians is the most personal. It is a revelation of his heart, of his innermost feelings and deepest motives. This baring of his heart was not a welcome task to the apostle, but rather a reluctant one. The presence of false teachers at Corinth, who were questioning his authority, impugning his motives, and undermining his authority, had made it necessary for him to defend his ministry. In making this defense, he was compelled to relate experiences about which he would rather have been silent; and through his Epistle he is careful to inform his readers of this fact.

Bearing in mind that II Corinthians is Paul's personal vindication of his ministry, we will sum up its theme as follows:

Paul's ministry:

- Its motives,
- Its sacrifices,
- Its responsibilities
- Its effectiveness.

Occasion for Writing:

1. After writing the first letter at Ephesus, Paul went to Troas, where he waited for Titus to bring him an answer from Corinth (II Corinthians 2:13).
2. Disappointed in his expectation, Paul went to Macedonia where he met Titus who brought him news that the church as a whole had responded to his exhortations, but that there was a small minority that refused to acknowledge his authority.
3. To comfort and encourage the former, and to threaten the latter, Paul wrote his second letter.

Why Written:

1. To comfort the repentant members of the church.
2. To warn the rebellious minority.
3. To warn against false teachers.
4. To resist the attacks made on his ministry by these false teachers.

Where Written:

Probably at Philippi, during the third missionary journey.

Contents:

The book is exceedingly difficult of analysis. As one writer puts it, “It is almost impossible to analyze this letter, as it is the least systematic of Paul’s writings. It resembles an African river. For a time it flows smoothly on, and one is hopeful of a satisfactory analysis, then suddenly there comes a mighty cataract and a terrific upheaval, when the great depths of his heart are broken up.”

We shall divide the book into four sections, as follows:

I. Backward Glance. 1:1 to 2:13.

II. The Dignity and Effectiveness of Paul’s ministry. 2:14 to 7:1-16.

III. The Collection for the Needy Saints of Judea. Chs. 8,9.

IV. Paul’s Vindication of His Apostleship. 10:1 to 13:14.

I. The Backward Glance. 1:1 to 2:13.

1. God sustains Paul in tribulation in order that he may in turn comfort others. 1:1-11.
2. My motives are pure! 1:12-14.
3. Why Paul delayed his visit. 1:15 to 2:11.
4. Paul’s anxious waiting for news from Corinth. 2:12, 13.

II. The Dignity and Effectiveness of Paul’s Ministry. Chaps. 2:14 to 7:1-16.

1. Paul’s triumphs in the Gospel. 2:14-17.
2. Paul defends himself against the Judaizers and shows that the New Covenant is better than the Old. 3:1 to 4:6.
3. In sickness, danger, and persecution Paul’s strength comes from the power of God and the hope of eternal life. 4:7 to 5:10.
4. The secret of Paul’s earnestness is his sense of responsibility to Christ. 5:11-21.
5. Paul defends his faithfulness in preaching the Gospel. 6:1-13.
6. Be ye separate! 6:14 to 7:1.
7. Paul pleads with his converts to ignore the malicious and untruthful reports about him. 7:2-4.
8. Why Paul waited for Titus 7:5-16.

III. The Collection for the Jewish Saints. Chaps. 8 and 9.

1. Remember the example of the poor Macedonians and above all the example of Jesus! 8:1-15.
2. Paul commends the bearers of the funds. 8:16-24.
3. Be ready to give liberally and so reap God’s blessing! Chap. 9.

IV. Paul’s Defense of His Apostleship. Chaps. 10 to 13.

1. Paul contrasts himself with false teachers. 10:1-18.
2. Bear with one who loves you! 11:1-6.

3. Why Paul did not ask for support. 11:7-15.
4. Divine signs and visions, faithful service and sufferings, prove Paul's right to apostleship. 11:16 to 12:13.
5. Please do not make it necessary for me to use my power to discipline you! 12:14 to 13:10.
6. Conclusion. 13:11-14.

~ end of II Corinthians ~

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