

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND CORINTHIANS

May 26, 1982

I. General.

- A. It is the most autobiographical of all of Paul's epistles.
- B. It is more characteristic in style and temperament of the apostle.
- C. It is a great challenge to try and explain references to persons, situations and events so familiar that precise definitions were unnecessary.
- D. Of all the epistles, this one has suffered a totally unmerited measure of neglect.
- E. This epistle does not come up short in sublimity of doctrine, warmth of feeling, spontaneousness of expression, or elevation of spirit when compared to Paul's other letters.
- F. There is none that sustain with such intensity the heights of the transcendental victory of grace in and through the everyday experience of the believer in whatever circumstances, whether of exaltation or of affliction he may find himself.

II. Occasion.

- A. Certain false teachers, who claimed to be apostles, had infiltrated the ranks of the church.
- B. In promoting their claims, they went out of their way to discredit Paul and to call into question the genuineness of his apostleship.
- C. This letter was written to refute the accusations and insinuations against him by these impostors, who were poisoning the minds of the Corinthians.
- D. Sequence of events leading up to the writing of this letter (see also 1Cor.16:59).
 1. Paul sent 1Cor. from Ephesus by the hand of Titus and company in the spring of 56AD, cp. 2Cor.2:13.
 2. Paul left Ephesus and, arriving in Troas, found an open door for the gospel, 2Cor.2:12.
 3. Paul, not meeting Titus as he expected, moved on into Macedonia, 2Cor.2:13.
 4. Paul was reunited with Titus somewhere in Macedonia. Titus brought him news of the situation at Corinth, 2Cor.7:5,6.
 5. Paul wrote 2Cor. in autumn (Sep-Oct) of 56AD and Titus took it back to Corinth.
- E. Titus' report.
 1. The Corinthians had responded to Paul's letter, 2Cor.7:5-16.
 2. Paul learned of the false apostles, 2Cor.11-13.
- F. Paul's third visit to Corinth and the framework of 2Cor.
 1. The change of itinerary is explained, chapters 17.
 2. The preparation for the upcoming (Nov-Dec, 56AD) visit, chapters 8, 9.
 3. The certainty and imminence of the visit, chapters 10-13.

III. The scheme of the epistle (outline).

- A. Paul affirms his personal integrity, 2Cor.1:12ff, and explains the reason for his change of itinerary, 2Cor.1:15-2:4.
- B. He describes how he journeyed to Troas in the expectation of finding Titus and now, not finding him, he traveled on into Macedonia, 2Cor.2:12ff.
- C. An extended digression or parenthesis begins at this point, 2Cor.2:14-7:4. The digression affects the framework, but not the substance, of the epistle.
- D. The account is resumed at 2Cor.7:5, where Paul tells of his long desired meeting with Titus and of the joy and comfort afforded him by the news of the obedience of the Corinthians to 1Cor.
- E. The ensuing chapters, 8 and 9, which are concerned with the collection for the relief of the Jerusalem saints, are integral to the scheme of the epistle, since Paul will soon be there and the collection is to be in readiness upon his arrival, 1Cor.16:1ff. Titus was sent on ahead to supervise this matter.
- F. The final four chapters, 10-13, are an exposure of the impostors who claim to be apostles.

