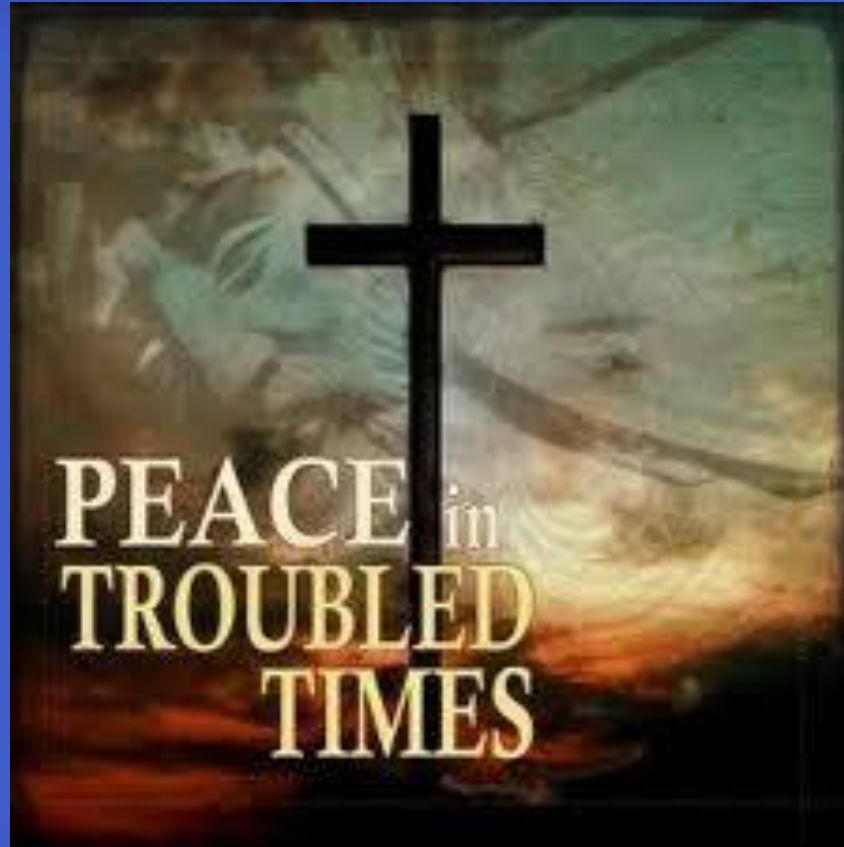


The New Testament Epistle II Corinthians!



How to respond to adversity

Our Text This Morning:

II Corinthians 1:1-11!

(8th Book in N.T.)

The Title:

Introducing the Epistle!

(A Book Causing Much Debate)

The New Testament City Of Corinth!



The Introduction

*Among Biblical scholars there is much **agreement** that the letter of II Corinthians came from the hand of Paul. This letter was written and sent to a church which Paul founded on his **second missionary journey**. Once the church was established, he ministered there for about a **year and a half**, teaching, serving, and maturing new converts for Christ.*

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

1st Missionary Journey

2nd Missionary Journey



The Introduction

*Before coming to the city of Corinth, Paul had been **beaten and jailed in Philippi** and subsequently driven out of the cities of **Thessalonica and Berea** by irate Jews. Because a **sizable community of Jews** resided in Corinth, one would logically conclude that such a place would not seem a likely field for Paul to sow seeds of the Gospel message. However, in spite of the large amount of Jews and the heathen influence of the Gentiles, this is the place **God's Spirit would lead the apostle to plant a church.***

The Introduction

Upon reading this letter one quickly discovers that the church in Corinth was **not immune to the sin** that was taking place throughout the city – for the streets were lined with **prostitutes and fornicators** and the moral climate of the city was low. In response to these sins, Paul **writes the letter** that is today referred to *I Corinthians*. As a result of his writing (*I Corinthians*), **Paul will face a series of personal attacks on his ministry (his calling as an apostle) and his message (the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ)**. To counter these attacks, Paul will write the epistle now before us (***II Corinthians***). He will later follow it up with a personal visit.

The Problem of the Book

*The nature and number of the apostle's contacts and correspondence with the Corinthian believers is a matter not easily agreed upon. The controversy concerns its self with **how many letters** Paul wrote to the church at Corinth (opinions range from three to five letters), and **how many times Paul visited the church** (opinions vary from two to three). This debate is important because it helps shape the interpretation of the book of II Corinthians. It is my conclusion that Paul wrote a total of four letters to the church at Corinth and made three personal visits.*

An Overview of the Letters and Visits!

Paul's First Letter (A Lost Letter)

Paul first visited the city of Corinth in the Spring of A.D. 51.

While ministering there for one and one-half years, he met a Christian couple named Aquila and Priscilla. Paul will leave Corinth and sail away with them to Ephesus. Aquila and Priscilla remained at Ephesus while Paul sailed on to Jerusalem to turn over to the elders money collected for the saints struggling in Jerusalem. While at Ephesus Priscilla and Aquila meet a man named Apollos. He is a gifted teacher. After leading him to Christ, they will teach him and later send him to Corinth

Paul's Second Letter (I Corinthians)

Paul will learn of the Corinthian's problems from a group sent from the household of Chloe (I Cor.1:11). He will also receive an official delegation in the form of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (I Cor.16:17) who brought corroborating news and specific questions on issues dividing the church. This second letter (I Corinthians) was written to address these matters.

Let's Look At The Issues Addressed By Paul!

Problems Addressed In The Letter Of First Corinthians

- 1. Chaps.1-4 – Divisions in the Church.**
- 2. Chap.5 – Incest in the home.**
- 3. Chap.6 – Litigation in Heathen Courts.**
- 4. Chaps. 7 – Marriage and Divorce.**
- 5. Chaps.8-10 – Food Offered to Idols.**
- 6. Chaps.11-14 – Disruption During Worship.**
- 7. Chap.15 – Doctrine of the Resurrection.**

***As a result of the immorality taking place in
the church Paul's letter is a warning!***

Paul's Second Visit (A Painful Visit)

In spite of Paul's letter (I Corinthians) the problems in the church were not resolved. So Paul decided to make a second visit, sailing directly from Ephesus to Corinth. This visit seems to be the “painful visit” referred to by Paul in II Corinthians 2:1. Most likely his visit was a “painful visit” because of the actions of the men mentioned in 2:5 and 7:12, as well as, the churches failure to support Paul.

Paul's Third Letter (Now Lost)

After Paul's visit to Corinth and his return to Ephesus he sent a third letter to Corinth. (note: the first and third letters sent by Paul are lost). In II Corinthians 2:3-4, we are told that it grieved Paul deeply to write this letter because of its sharp disciplinary nature (7:8-9). After a riot, provoked by silversmiths (Acts 19:23-41), Paul left Ephesus in the spring of A.D. 56. Paul was bound for Macedonia (Acts 20:10) with a preliminary stop-over in Troas (Asia Minor) where he hoped to meet up with Titus (2:13) and receive news about Corinth. Because he could not find Titus, he anxiously pushed on to Macedonia where he found Titus. During this reunion, Paul received good news about the general well-being of the saints at Corinth but bad news about several groups that stood in opposition to Paul.

Paul's Fourth Letter (II Corinthians)

From Macedonia Paul wrote a fourth letter to the church at Corinth (II Corinthians). This is the letter that we will study during the next few months.

Paul's Third Visit

After writing his fourth letter, Paul then made a third visit to Corinth during the winter of A.D. 56-57 (Acts 20:2-3). It should be noted that the two lost letters written by Paul were obviously never intended by God to be part of the Biblical canon.

The New Testament City Of Corinth!



The Theme of I Corinthians

In I Corinthians (his second letter) Paul focused on the self-centered nature (narcissism) of the believers in Corinth.

It is within this letter that Paul points out that

***THE SIN of SELF-CENTEREDNESS BRINGS SHAME
UPON THE NAME OF OUR SAVIOR!***

The believer's selfishness and self-centered focus nullifies the very message of the Gospel. Thus it ruins the believer's testimony for Christ.

The Theme of II Corinthians

In Paul's fourth letter (II Corinthians) the apostle builds upon the theme found in I Corinthians. His teaching is this:

Not only does narcissism bring shame upon the name of Christ and ruin the believer's testimony, it also leads to division within the body of Christ.

*As a result of this division in the church at Corinth, Paul is forced to **defend his calling** as an apostle and the **message he was commissioned to preach** (the Gospel).*

The Focus of II Corinthians

Paul will focus on three distinct groups of opposition found in the church at Corinth!

1. The Ascetics / Jews

This group will attack Paul because they believe he is “weak” when it comes to using the law to point out the sinner and confront sin!

2. The Libertines / Gentiles

This group will attack Paul because they believe that he is to “strong” when pointing out sin. They believe that the freedom found in Christ allows them to continue in their sin.

3. The Esatics / Jews and Gentiles

This group will attack Paul because of their immaturity. They believe Paul is renouncing their right to be noticed by men when the assembly gathers together to worship God on the Lord's Day.

Let's Call A Time Out!
The Problem Found in Corinth
Remains Today!

When God's Holy Spirit uses a church leader (an elder) to confront sin and the sinner in any given church, often those in a position of authority rise up to attack the leader.

When they cannot find fault with his ministry and message, they look for ways to attack him personally. And like in Corinth, this usually happens behind his back or when he is away.

II Timothy 3:1-5; 4:1-5!

This Book Will Focus on Several Topics!

Chapters 1-5

The Apostle Paul's Ministry!

1. The Minister's Greeting and Gratitude
2. The Minister's Change of Plans
3. The Minister's Nature



This Book Will Focus on Several Topics!

Chapters 6-7

The Apostle Paul's Exhortations!

1. Be Open to Christ
2. Be Separated from Sin
3. Be Assured of Repentance



This Book Will Focus on Several Topics!

Chapters 8-9

The Apostle Paul's Collection!

- 1. The Principles for Giving**
- 2. The Purpose for Giving**
- 3. The Policies in Giving**
- 4. The Promise in Giving**

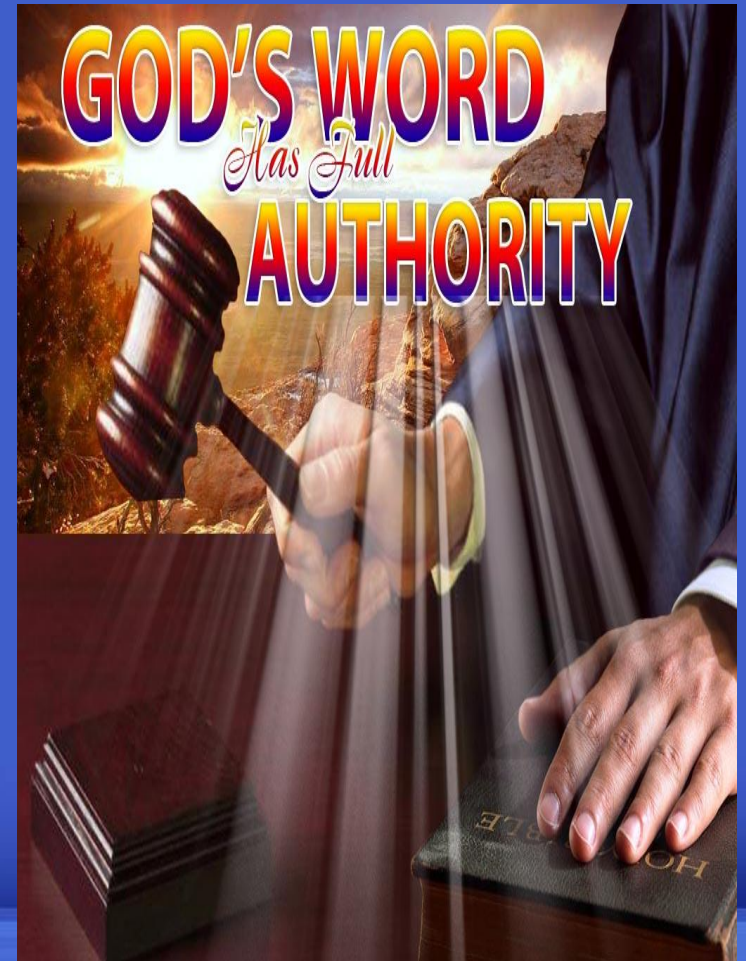


This Book Will Focus on Several Topics!

Chapters 10-13

The Apostle Paul's Vindication!

1. Paul's Authority
2. Paul's Conduct
3. Paul's Suffering
4. Paul's Credentials
5. Paul's Unselfishness
6. Paul's Exhortation / Benediction



NEXT WEEK THE JOURNEY BEGINS!

