

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

2 Corinthians: God's Pattern For Victory Over Severe Ministry Opposition

Part XII: Responding To Challenges Of One's Ministry Calling From God, 2 Corinthians 10:1-13:14

5. Calling God's People To Deal Properly With God's Opposed Servant (2 Corinthians 12:11-13:14)

I. Introduction

- A. When the ministry and calling of a servant of God is wrongly opposed, once the facts are clarified, the Lord holds the people to whom His servant ministers highly accountable to deal properly with him.
- B. This truth was dramatically illustrated in 2 Corinthians 12:11-13:14 as follows:

II. Calling God's People To Deal Properly With God's Opposed Servant, 2 Corinthians 12:11-13:14.

- A. Paul summarized his argument on the issues involving the criticism of the false apostles, 2 Cor. 12:11-18:
 - 1. He admitted he was "a fool" to boast of his ministry, but that he was forced to such action since the Corinthians had passively heeded his critics' charges, 2 Cor. 12:11a; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 583.
 - 2. Thus, Paul briefly repeated his case, claiming he was certainly not less than the disciples of Jesus (11b) and that his great patience, signs, wonders and miracles marked him as a true apostle, 2 Cor. 12:12.
 - 3. Paul noted that if he lacked anything, it was his failure to receive payment from his Corinthian readers (2 Cor. 12:13), but that he would still not receive any money due to his love for them regardless if they loved him the less for continuing with this practice, 2 Corinthians 12:14-15.
 - 4. However, Paul openly countered the charge of his critics that his refusal to receive income was a trick, that he secretly planned to pocket some of the offerings Titus collected for Jerusalem saints, 2 Cor. 12:16-17. Paul asked the Corinthian Church for evidence of this claim, 2 Corinthians 12:18.
- B. Following this summary, Paul reaffirmed that his motive in the matter at hand was not self-serving, but that he was concerned for his readers, that they not heed his critics to their spiritual harm, 2 Cor. 12:19-21.
- C. Accordingly, Paul gave the Corinthians the responsibility to receive his ministry in righteousness that he not have to take forcible, apostolic disciplinary action with them when he arrived, 2 Corinthians 13:1-10:
 - 1. Announcing he was planning to come to them the third time, Paul said he would let every fact be established at the testimony of two or three witnesses as a prelude for exercising apostolic discipline, which discipline could include capital punishment, 2 Cor. 13:1-2 with 1 Cor. 5:3-5 and Acts 5:1-11.
 - 2. Paul wrote that since the Corinthians sought proof that Christ was speaking through his ministry, he was prepared to demonstrate that fact by the supernatural discipline he could administer, 2 Cor. 13:3-4.
 - 3. Thus, he solemnly charged them to examine themselves to see if they really were true believers, and he urged them to realize that he and his ministry team were not unsaved men, 2 Corinthians 13:5-6.
 - 4. Paul added that he prayed that the Corinthians would do what was right so that they would be blessed, and that he not have to administer destructive apostolic discipline when he came, 2 Cor. 13:7-10.
- D. In the end, Paul urged the Church to relate righteously with one another and the Lord, 2 Cor. 13:11-14:
 - 1. In closing, Paul called his Corinthian Christian readers to "aim for perfection," to "listen" to his appeal, to "be of one mind" and "live in peace," 2 Corinthians 13:11a NIV.
 - 2. If they heeded this appeal, the God of love and peace would be with them, 2 Corinthians 13:11b.
 - 3. Paul closed the epistle with one of Scripture's greatest and one of the Church's earliest witnesses to the Trinity: he urged that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of the Corinthian believers, 2 Corinthians 13:12-13, 14.

Lesson: *After presenting his case to a Church that wrongly and irresponsibly had passively watched Paul's conflict with his false critics, the congregation at Corinth was handed the responsibility of supporting Paul's true ministry or possibly suffering apostolic capital punishment in divine discipline.*

Application: *(1) God holds the listener of His wrongly opposed servant highly accountable to Himself to respond well to His servant. (2) As this case at Corinth involved possible capital punishment for sin, and since there are no humans today in the office of apostle, making such punishment the role of GOD ALONE (cf. 1 Cor. 11:29-31), the listener in a similar case today is highly accountable to the Lord to respond well in such a situation as it may otherwise involve severe discipline from the Lord!*