

2 CORINTHIANS: DEFENDING GOD'S SERVANT TO HIS CRITICS

Part II: The Transparency Of Paul And God That Undergirds Our Dispensational Faith (2 Corinthians 1:12-2:1)

I. Introduction

- A. 2 Corinthians was written "to defend the authenticity of " Paul's "apostleship and his message" to a church of believers who were susceptible to heeding false teachers who critiqued him, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 552.
- B. In defending his honesty before critics who charged that he inconsistently vacillated, Paul alluded not only to his own transparency, but to God's transparency in keeping His Abrahamic Covenant that undergirds our dispensational faith, what is important since many in Christendom oppose dispensationalism.
- C. Thus, we view this truth in 2 Corinthians 1:12-2:1 for our insight and edification:

II. The Transparency Of Paul And God That Undergirds Our Dispensational Faith, 2 Corinthians 1:12-2:1.

- A. False apostles at Corinth had apparently tried to discredit Paul by raising questions to the believers in the Church there about his level of commitment to them, *Ibid.*, p. 556.
- B. Addressing this charge, Paul wrote that he and his team had not conducted themselves with worldly wisdom toward his readers, but with sincerity "that could stand the closest scrutiny," 2 Corinthians 1:12-14; *Ibid.*
- C. The cause of the criticism had been Paul's failure to visit the Corinthians opposite his earlier stated plans:
 1. Paul wrote that he had twice intended to visit the Church at Corinth while first going to Macedonia and then returning from that region, but that these plans had changed, 2 Corinthians 1:15-16.
 2. This change in plans was used by Paul's critics to charge that he had spoken deceitfully, saying both "Yes, yes" and "No, no" with supposed false motives, 2 Corinthians 1:17; *Ibid.*, p. 556-557.
- D. Since such a charge also negatively reflected on the truthfulness of Paul's Gospel, he retorted that just as God was faithful, the Gospel of Christ that he and his co-workers gave was not a deceptive "Yes" and "No," but always "Yes," not vacillating on asserting that salvation was by faith in Jesus Christ, 2 Corinthians 1:18-19.
- E. Indeed, Paul added that all God's promises were "Yes" in Christ, that they were all affirmed in Him so that through Him the "Amen" expressing the certainty of one's faith was spoken to the glory of God, 2 Cor. 1:20.
- F. This truth has great application in supporting our belief in dispensational theology today (as follows):
 1. The Genesis 12:1-3 Abrahamic Covenant is the basis of all God's Scripture covenants (J. D. Pentecost, Things To Come, 1972, p. 69-70), and they find their ultimate fulfillment in Christ (Gal. 3:13-16).
 2. These covenants, like all covenants, were meant to be interpreted not in some mystical way, but literally to convey transparently decisive meaning, what leads to the view that they are eternal, unconditional and made to the nation Israel, *Ibid.*, p. 69, citing G. N. H. Peters, The Theocratic Kingdom, 1952, I, 290-91.
 3. Interpreting these promises this way leads to dispensationalism where God's promises to Abraham are fulfilled to his physical seed contrary to non-dispensational views that replace Israel with the Church via the non-literal interpretation of Scripture, Charles C. Ryrie, Dispensationalism Today, 1970, p. 20-21.
 4. In other words, accepting God's Scripture promises at face value, that is, literally, treating them as all "Yes" in Paul's way of expressing God as being transparently affirmative, leads to dispensational theology.
- G. Paul added that God had made both his Corinthian readers and his missionary team stand firm in Christ, having anointed and sealed them with the Holy Spirit, setting His sure seal of ownership upon them and giving them His Spirit as a guarantee of the glory to come, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22.
- H. Returning to the charge of his critics, Paul explained that as God was his witness, he had chosen not to come to Corinth in contrast to his initial plan because he wanted to spare them excess pain caused his presence at the time due to some disciplinary action he had previously taken with them, 2 Corinthians 1:23.
- I. Paul further explained that he did not lord over the faith of his readers by trying to inflict excess pain on them, but that he worked with them for their joy, for they stood firm in the Lord by faith, not by Paul, 2 Cor. 1:24.
- J. Accordingly, he had determined not to make another painful visit to them lest his doing so overwhelm them with sorrow, needlessly adding to the pain of the discipline he had already administered, 2 Corinthians 2:1.

Lesson: *Just like Paul had not visited Corinth as he had first planned not because he was unreliably deceptive, but because he transparently meant to help his readers, so God has transparently consistently affirmed that all of His promises in Christ are literally, grammatically and historically fulfilled, what produces our dispensational faith.*

Application: *May we trust Paul's transparent honesty as expressed in this passage as well as trusting God's transparent honesty about fulfilling His Abrahamic promises in Christ, thus holding to dispensationalism.*