

## **2 CORINTHIANS: DEFENDING GOD'S SERVANT TO HIS CRITICS**

### **Part XV: The Godly Ministry Of Giving, 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15**

#### **B. Giving With Protective Checks And Balances**

**(2 Corinthians 8:16-9:5)**

#### **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. One of the problems created by this crisis may have been that the false teachers had taught Paul's readers to divert some moneys to themselves that were initially intended to go to needy Jerusalem saints, *Ibid.*, p. 572.
- C. If so, Paul had to give careful instruction to counter errant views on giving by false teachers, and 2 Corinthians 8:16-9:5 continues that instruction, teaching believers to give with protective checks and balances:

#### **II. Giving With Protective Checks And Balances, 2 Corinthians 8:16-9:5.**

- A. False teachers were notoriously greedy for dishonest gain from their hearers (cf. 1 Timothy 6:5), so if Paul wanted to defend his credibility as a true teacher to readers who had heard slander about him by false teachers, and if he also wanted to get his readers to give money for the needy Jerusalem believers, Paul had to provide ample, credible checks and balances lest he or anyone with him be charged with stealing from the money!
- B. To that end, Paul wrote about adequate, credible checks and balances of collections in 2 Corinthians 8:16-9:5, providing us excellent guidelines in handling collections from donating believers today (as follows):
  1. First, Paul was sending his fellow worker Titus to his Corinthian readers, a man Paul personally trusted and who was earnestly desiring of ministering to the Corinthian believers, 2 Corinthians 8:16-17, 23a.
  2. Second, Paul knew that more than Titus was needed to take the collection from Corinth for the Jerusalem saints, for since he was Paul's close associate, he could possibly be charged with pilfering the collection in order to give some of it to Paul. Thus, a second, unnamed, widely recognized believer, likely one from Macedonia, would go with Titus as a credible co-auditor of the collection, 2 Cor. 8:18-21; *Ibid.*, p. 575:
    - a. This co-auditor was known and famous among all the Churches for his preaching of the Gospel, so he had their confidence that he was a true believer and teacher, 2 Corinthians 8:18 ESV.
    - b. Also, he had been appointed by the other giving churches to go with Paul's team as a co-auditor of the transfer of the collections from their churches to the needy Jerusalem saints, 2 Cor. 8:19a. Including this special believer as an auditor would glorify God and show the goodwill of Paul's team, 2 Cor. 8:19b-21.
  3. Third, in addition to Titus and this widely renowned, credible co-auditor and minister of the Gospel would go a third co-auditor, one who had repeatedly proven himself to be trustworthy and zealous for the Lord who was likely appointed by the Macedonian churches to audit the collections, 2 Cor. 8:22a, 23b-24; *Ibid.*, p. 574. This man had great confidence in Paul's readers and he was eager to visit them, 2 Cor. 8:22b.
  4. Fourth, Paul did **not** go with this collection team to avoid creating problems by his presence, 2 Cor. 9:1-5:
    - a. The apostle wanted to avoid the possibility of being charged with greed and dishonest gain, so he did **not** go with these other men to Corinth to gather the believers' donations, that no giving occur out of undue pressure because of his presence as a dominant apostle, 2 Corinthians 9:1-3, 5; 1 Corinthians 16:2.
    - b. Paul was also concerned that were the Corinthian believers not to be ready with their collection when the men from Paul arrived to pick it up, they and Paul might be embarrassed in the presence of the co-auditors from Macedonia whose fellow believers had eagerly given, creating tension, 2 Cor. 9:4-5; *Ibid.*, p. 575. Such tension could inflame old hurts of the past between Paul and his Corinthian readers (2 Cor. 7:8-10), what Paul wanted to avoid in an effort to rebuild a healthy, positive relationship with his readers.

***Lesson:*** Taking great care to guard against charges of greed for dishonest gain in receiving the collections from the Corinthians for the Jerusalem saints, Paul (1) sent trusted fellow worker Titus (2) with a co-auditor, a renowned servant of God likely from Macedonia whom all the other giving churches recommended, (3) together with a third, proven, zealous co-auditor who was selected by the Thessalonian believers in particular (4) while also keeping himself OUT of the collection party to avoid pressuring the Corinthian donors as a dominant apostle and to guard his relationship with the Corinthian believers in case they might not then be ready with their collection!

***Application:*** May we select (1) multiple, (2) trustworthy treasurers and auditors to handle our donations. (3) May we not pressure others to give, but protect the privacy and goodwill of donors. (4) May we who minister the Word and receive support from donors totally exclude themselves from handling the collections to edify all involved.