

## **II CORINTHIANS: MINISTERING TO BELIEVERS FACING FALSE TEACHERS**

### **III. The Apostle Paul's Vindication Of Himself, 2 Corinthians 10:1-13:10**

#### **B. Paul's Critique Of The False Apostles' Superficiality**

**(2 Corinthians 10:7-18)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. False teachers, claiming to be apostles, had entered the Church at Corinth, and they had tried to promote their own views while discrediting the person and message of the Apostle Paul. (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 552)
- B. This was a difficult situation for Paul: his readers were immature believers who had been saved out of corrupt backgrounds in a city known for its vice, so they were easy prey for false teachers, and Paul had to be careful how he handled the situation lest his readers think he was being unjustly defensive and thus discredit himself.
- C. Paul had saved his most trying task for the last part of his letter, that of addressing the false apostles who had opposed him, and in opposing him, they had opposed Christ's true apostle, and thus Christ Himself.
- D. 2 Corinthians 10:7-18 presents Paul's critique of the false apostles' spiritual superficiality. We view the passage for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

#### **II. Paul's Critique Of The False Apostles' Superficiality, 2 Corinthians 10:7-18 NIV (Ibid., p. 577-578).**

- A. Paul charged the false apostles with judging by external appearances, 2 Corinthians 10:7-11:
  - 1. The apostle stated that the false apostles at Corinth were judging by external appearances, 2 Cor. 10:7a.
  - 2. He explained that though the false apostles claimed that they were believers and belonged to Christ, they should consider that Paul and his ministry team belonged to Christ just as the false apostles claimed, v. 7b.
  - 3. Thus, even if Paul spoke freely about the apostolic authority that the Lord had given him for building people up rather than for tearing them down, he would not be ashamed of it, for it was a true claim, v. 8.
  - 4. Paul addressed the criticism of the false apostles who claimed that his letters to the Corinthians were more weighty than his personal appearance before them, 2 Corinthians 10:9-10. He wrote that such critics needed to realize that what he and his ministry team were in their letters to the church at Corinth they also were in person, and their disciplinary actions would prove it! (2 Corinthians 10:11 with 13:1-3)
- B. Paul charged the false apostles with commending themselves by mere human and not divine standards, v. 12:
  - 1. The apostle wrote that he and his team dared not classify or compare themselves with some of the false apostles who commended themselves to others, 2 Corinthians 10:12a.
  - 2. Making such a comparison was not wise, for it compared human ability with human ability without considering the spiritual power of the Holy Spirit and His spiritual gifting of true believers, 2 Cor. 10:12b.
- C. Paul charged the false apostles with trying to usurp his calling as Christ's apostle to the Gentiles, v. 13-14:
  - 1. The apostle's ministry team refused to boast beyond proper limits but confined their glorying to the sphere of service God Himself had assigned them, which sphere included the Corinthian believers, v. 13.
  - 2. Paul wrote that his ministry team was not going too far in their glorying as to their ministry, for had they not come to the Corinthians and evangelized them, there would be no room to glory. However, they had indeed reached to Corinth and discipled them in accord with God's calling, 2 Corinthians 10:14.
- D. Paul charged the false apostles with exaggerating their ministry accomplishments to impress others, v. 15-16:
  - 1. The "church in Corinth was a result of Paul's ministry not" that of the false apostles, v. 15a; Ibid., p. 578.
  - 2. Indeed, the hope of Paul's ministry team was that as the faith of his readers continued to grow, their sphere of activity among them would greatly expand so that Paul's ministry team might preach the gospel to the regions beyond Corinth (like Spain, Rom. 15:23-24; Ibid.). Paul's team did not want to glory in the work done in someone else's territory like the false apostles tried to boast of their work at Corinth, v. 15b-16.
- E. Paul charged the false apostles with lacking God's approval by having commended themselves, v. 17-18:
  - 1. The Apostle Paul asserted that anyone who boasted should boast in the Lord, 2 Corinthians 10:17.
  - 2. After all, it is not the one who commends himself who is approved by God, but the one whom the Lord Himself commends who is thus approved, 2 Corinthians 10:18. The false apostles lacked God's commendation in having relied on their own commendations, making their commendations futile!

***Lesson:*** Paul charged the false apostles at Corinth with judging by external appearances, with commending themselves by human standards, with trying to usurp his calling as Christ's apostle to the Gentiles, with overstating their ministry achievements to impress people, and with lacking God's approval in commending themselves.

***Application:*** May we not function by human might like the false apostles but heed God's calling in His equipping.