

Key to II CORINTHIANS

1. BACKGROUND:

Writer is the Apostle Paul, who signs his name as he begins the letter (1:1); date is about A.D. 60, and the place of writing, Macedonia.

The occasion: Paul had written the first Corinthian letter from Ephesus. Then he had left Ephesus due to a great riot (Acts 19) and had come to Macedonia. In the meantime, he had dispatched Titus to go to Corinth to aid in straightening out affairs in that church. While waiting for word from Titus, he was full of anxiety and concern. When Titus rejoined him in Macedonia he brought tidings that Paul's letter had done great good. Soon he wrote II Corinthians and sent it again by the hand of Titus.

2. THEME:

The subject is that of the problems at hand. First, there is additional counsel for the Corinthian church. Then, due to the fact that much criticism had arisen regarding Paul's apostleship, he writes to vindicate his position, showing that he was indeed GOD's messenger for this hour. In addition, he bares his own sacrificial life in behalf of the churches, and tells of his joy in service despite the rigors and hardships of the ministry.

3. MAIN DIVISIONS:

Paul's principles of action (1-7);
The collection for the saints (8; 9);
Paul's defense of his apostolic ministry (10-13).

4. SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS:

This letter is the most personal of all Paul's letters. It discloses the great pain and weariness of the apostle due to the magnitude of his task in evangelization and the burden of the churches.

II Corinthians is partially Paul's autobiography. In it he discloses things not mentioned elsewhere. For instance: his thorn in the flesh and the reason (12:7); his remarkable visions (12:1-4); the extraordinary privations he endured (11:23-27).

There seems to be no orderly arrangements of the contents. It is largely emotional and throbs with the sense of Paul's personal anguish. Here and there we find an impassioned self-defence because of unjust charges being brought against him.

Some sidelights on the appearance of Paul are hinted at in 10:9, 10; 11:5, 6.

5. OUTLINE:

Introduction

Salutation (1)
Thanksgiving (1)

Vindication of Ministry

Sincerity (1)
Absence Explained (2)
Living Epistles (3)
Tribulation (4)
Hope and Purpose (5)
Conduct (6)
Consolation (7)

Jerusalem Collection

Macedonian Liberty (8)
Titus Commissioned (8)
Bounties and Blessings (9)

Vindication of Authority

Spiritual Power (10)
Labors and Sufferings (11)
Glory in Infirmities (12)

Conclusion

Discipline Determined (13)
Examination Exhorted (13)
Farewell (13)

6. OUTSTANDING TEACHINGS:

The sequel to the judgment for the immoral person found in Paul's first letter is a happy one. Evidently there was genuine repentance which brought forgiveness and restoration (2:1-13).

A large addition to the information as to what happens at death is given in chapter 5. Perhaps this subject weighed heavily on Paul's mind at this time.

The central passage on the grace of giving is found in chapters 8 and 9. There the secret of joy in giving is found to be in first giving one's own self to the LORD.

A rather startling revelation of the deceitful strategy of Satan is taught in 11:13-15.

The important matter of separation from the world is taught in 6:14-18.

7. KEY:

It is very important to know the background of the letter and read it with your heart full of sympathy and admiration for this great man of GOD.

~ end of II Corinthians ~

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