

## New Testament Foundations: Session Twelve

# II Corinthians: Paul's Apostolic Defense

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### Authorship

1. Paul wrote II Corinthians from Macedonia sometime after he wrote I Corinthians, probably in \_\_\_\_\_ or 56 AD.
2. Paul had a life-threatening \_\_\_\_\_ near the end of his stay in Ephesus that profoundly affected his life. This experience is reflected in numerous statements and attitudes in II Corinthians.

#### II Corinthians 1:8-10

*For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope.*

#### F.F. Bruce

*"There is one area of Paul's thinking in which the effect of the crisis can be discerned with special clarity—his thinking about the life to come."*<sup>1</sup>

#### II Corinthians 4:7-12

*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you.*

#### II Corinthians 4:17, 18

*For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

### Background

1. After the silversmiths' riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:23-20:1), Paul left for \_\_\_\_\_ to meet Titus. When he could not find him there, he went to Macedonia, concerned about Titus' safety. (II Corinthians 2:12, 13; 7:5) There he met Titus who brought good news about the general well being of the Corinthian church but bad news about a group opposed to Paul.

#### II Corinthians 7:6-7

*"But, God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more."*

2. Paul was concerned that the church would not receive his \_\_\_\_\_ from his first letter. But Titus comforted him with the report of the Corinthians' "mourning."

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<sup>1</sup> F.F. Bruce, Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free, p. 300

### II Corinthians 7:8-10

*"For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance. For the sorrow that is according to God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation."*

3. Although the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church received Paul's letter ("**Corinthians C**"), a faction still opposed his authority. This faction consisted of people who followed certain Jews from Palestine who claimed to be apostles.

### II Corinthians 11:13

*For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ.*

- They charged him with contemptible \_\_\_\_\_.

### II Corinthians 10:10

*For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account."*

- They claimed his ministry was \_\_\_\_\_ to theirs.

### II Corinthians 12:11, 12

*I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I was not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing. The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.*

- They charged him with financial \_\_\_\_\_.

### II Corinthians 11:7-9

*Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge? I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you. And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so.*

- They challenged his \_\_\_\_\_ calling and credentials.

### II Corinthians 11:23-28

*I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.*

4. Although the Judaizers (and church members) challenged Paul, he knew the real \_\_\_\_\_ was to the Gospel message. He was fighting for the very lives of the believers at Corinth.

### II Corinthians 11:3, 4

*But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.*

## Style

1. II Corinthians is the most \_\_\_\_\_ of Paul's letters.

**The only letter that comes close to the amount of personal detail is Galatians.**

2. II Corinthians is the most \_\_\_\_\_ of Paul's letters.

3. II Corinthians is the most \_\_\_\_\_ of Paul's letters.

4. II Corinthians is the most \_\_\_\_\_ of Paul's letters.

### David K. Lowery

*"No letter of Paul's is more personal and intimate in nature than II Corinthians. In it he bared his soul and professed his abiding love for the Corinthians despite the apparent fickleness of their affection for him."*<sup>2</sup>

## Purpose

1. Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthians to encourage the church to share in the \_\_\_\_\_ for the Jerusalem saints (8:7, 10, 11).

2. Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthians to urge the church to personal \_\_\_\_\_ (7:1).

### F.F. Bruce

*"It was clearly no easy matter even for regenerate Christians to break free from the besetting sin of their city, especially when 'enlightened' members of their community kept assuring them it was really not a sin at all."*<sup>3</sup>

3. Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthians to \_\_\_\_\_ those in the church who were questioning his apostolic authority.

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<sup>2</sup> D. K. Lowery, The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>3</sup> F.F. Bruce, Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free, p. 262