

# The Book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians

## Chapter 6:1-18

*January 24, 1999*

- **Outline of 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians:**
  - Chapter 1 God equips His people through trial, comfort and perseverance.
  - Chapter 2 Restore fellowship to the repentant; One aroma, two response.
  - Chapter 3 The glorious covenants
  - Chapter 4 The Light of the Glory of Christ
  - Chapter 5 Longing to be further clothed; Christ died for the world
  - Chapter 6 Faithfulness in persecution; Separation from the World
- **Review & Introduction**

In this section, Paul will conclude his defense against those who were in opposition to him at Corinth. This chapter marks a shift from simple defense to an offense where he will reveal the true nature of those who are making false accusations and spreading false teaching.

- **Exposition of 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6:1 - 18**

*We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.<sup>2</sup> For He says:*

*"In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

- God's purposes in evangelism extend beyond the declaration of doctrine. As workers for God, we not only teach, correct and rebuke, we also must plead because it is God who is pleading through us. There is an important principle here to keep in mind; God is on both sides of the declaration of the Gospel. It is God who is pleading and declaring and He is also the one granting repentance and causing regeneration. As we warn all men of the dangers of not heeding the scriptures, God is working through all things ensuring that His glory is manifested. Our efforts will be used to reveal God's grace in the sinner or it will be the means by which condemnation is further secured—the aroma of life or the aroma of death. Neither case is our responsibility.
- Receiving the grace of God in vain is an external conformity but is not an efficacious receiving of grace unto salvation. As Peter mentions in 2 Peter 2:22 by using the picture of a dog or a pig, even if you clean things up on the outside, if there has been no fundamental change in nature, (i.e. made a new creation) then you still have condemnation. A true conversion is an absolute miraculous spiritual renewal that is not accomplished by and external compliance.
- Paul quotes Isaiah 49 which prophetically predicts the advent of Christ and the expansion of the kingdom of God beyond just the Jews to include the world. Paul teaches that the verse was speaking of his day when God had revealed the time acceptable to Him for hearing and bringing the day of salvation. We see that Paul understood the day of salvation to be referring not to a 24 hour period but rather to an age or aeon.

*3 We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed.<sup>4</sup> But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses,<sup>5</sup> in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;*

- Paul wanted to be sure that the manner in which he conducted himself as a minister of the Gospel would not be a distraction to the world or be a stumbling block to the lost. He is simply acknowledging the difference between an offense coming from the message rather than the messenger. Romans 2:21-24
- He had hope that in all of his life, both in victory and oppression, he had lived in such a way that his conduct was worthy of being a minister and therefore pleasing to God. Through all of the circumstances that God brought him through, Paul demonstrated great patience by restraining himself in adversity and faith knowing that it is God who is sovereign over all things.
- Paul then begins a complicated sentence listing categories of conduct by using a triplet of triplets. The first triplet refers to general afflictions where tribulations, needs and distresses are general forms of poor circumstances either through assault or impoverished situations. The second set of triplets refers to those afflictions imposed upon him by others which include his beatings and stoning, numerous imprisonments and riots and fleeing for his life. It is remarkable to consider the promising career as a leader among his peers in the Pharisaical ranks that he gave up to follow Christ and then suffer such horrific assaults. It is clear to see evidence of the new creation in Paul. The third triplet referred to those afflictions generally imposed on Paul by himself. These were not Paul's attempts at asceticism, but were the fruits of self denial that Paul endured for the sake of the Gospel and the lost.

*6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,<sup>7</sup> by the word of truth, by the power of God,*

*by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,<sup>8</sup> by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true;<sup>9</sup> as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed;<sup>10</sup> as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

- Paul goes on to say that he endured the afflictions in purity, understanding, by means of the Spirit of God and the word. Having been armed with these things you will notice that Paul was then equipped for battle at any time. Paul was a servant of God equipped to be used by Him for furthering the kingdom.

*11 O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open.<sup>12</sup> You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections.<sup>13</sup> Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open.*

- We can see that Paul is not cold and calculating toward this church that he loves. Having conducted himself faithfully in their midst, he implores them to not make the mistake of heeding the assaults of those whose lives are evidence of faithlessness. Notice Paul is speaking from a heart that is "enlarged" meaning it swells with love for them. The conflict in the minds of the Corinthians comes from the fact that they have been tolerating these teachers and have forgotten the instruction provided to them by Paul.

*14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?<sup>15</sup> And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup> And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."*

- Some have contended that this section was added later by someone other than Paul because of the sharp change in subject between here and 7:2. The only problem with this theory is that there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that it is possible. All of the oldest manuscripts include the section.
- The application that Paul is making is not at all difficult to understand. The Corinthians were associating themselves with false teachers. Here we begin to see a transition from defending himself to shining light on the opposition. They were not just a group of muddled Christians, they were actually unbelievers. By using three rhetorical questions, all of which are answered "none at all" Paul teaches that we should not be bound to unbelievers. Obviously the two easiest applications are marriage and business dealings. Any place where a Christian willingly makes himself covenantally bound to the behavior of an unbeliever is something to be avoided.
- Because we are the temple of the living God, we should not bring things into it that are defiling. Notice that the temple of God is the Church where each believer is a living stone. The new Jerusalem is the bride, the wife of the Lamb, which will be made spotless by the blood of the Lamb. This bride is the Christian Church. Revelation 21:1-4; Hebrews 12:18-24
- Just as Jesus demonstrated His care for the purity of the earthly temple by driving out the moneychangers and animal vendors, how much more would He care about the spiritual temple and drive evil from its doors? We must be careful not to defile the temple because this is a temple purchased by the blood of our Lord.

*17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."<sup>18</sup> "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty." NKJV*

- Paul quotes this verse as an admonition for us to be separate from the world. Although we cannot leave this world we must live our lives in such a way that we recognize that we are not *of* the world. Friendship with the world is hatred for God. James 4:4