

## **PTB2-25a: The Ministry, II Corinthians.**

You would think that the subject of “Spiritual Wisdom” in a way would continue in II Corinthians; however, while the major gist changes to “The Ministry”, Paul does continue with things like his Apostolic authority started in the first letter, also about the Greek orator Apollos, there is a little more about “understanding” and wisdom. There were, you can sense from reading II Corinthians a lot of reactions from the church members at Corinth to the first letter; for example, some of them were saying how bold he was in letters and yet how timid and non eloquent in person. Something was going on in the church and perhaps the churches about the young pastor Titus, and Paul spends over two chapters talking about the role of Titus in “our Ministry”. II Corinthians is much more personal, no doubt also part of a response to the reaction of the first letter. Time and again, even more than you read the key word “ministry” do you read “we”, “we”, and “we”; and when you try to discover that “we” based on the context of II Corinthians, you find it primarily to be Paul, Timothy, Silas, and Titus, and of course Apollos in a more rhetorical sense. Paul explains that Apollos presence was requested, but he declined to come.

11-1: The “WE”s of II Corinthians.

As a prelude, look at just some of the many “WE”s of II Corinthians that set the very personal tone of this letter from the Apostle Paul. Of course, it is also personal to Paul in that he must explain what he had not made the announced trip there, and also explain how he and his companions had despaired even of life, with the corresponding sufferings in Macedonia, and offering that as one explanation of the failed appearance. It is in 1:6 that “we are afflicted”, though for the consolation and salvation of the church {which needs some explanation}; in 1:8 it is “our trouble which came to us in Asia where we despaired even of life because of the burden; in 1:13 is “we” are writing to you for understanding; in 1:24 it is “not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers”.

{Parenthetically there is a very “I Paul” statement in 2:1,2, much like Paul always writes, but it stands out in this letter because of all the “WE”s: “But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow. For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who make me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me?” (II Corinthians 2:1,2) Something significant has happened since I Corinthians to place Paul on shaky ground as an Apostle to the Corinthians. He defends in I Corinthians somewhat, not as much as in II Corinthians, his position and status as an Apostle; and when in I Corinthians 4:13 he ends a treatise about how hard it is to be an apostle, after discussing in the passage of 4:6-13 some of the differences between him and Apollos, and as he get into the apostle part thus separating himself from Apollos, the end of the

passage being another "WE", this time for Apostles--and perhaps we will find in some of the other WE's apostles, though of course not because of Timothy, Titus, and Silas, and again the end is "We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things UNTIL NOW." And I think this is clear that at that moment in time, Paul felt a security of status with the church at Corinth as related to his apostolic authority and status. As we progress in our study of II Corinthians perhaps this will become clearer, and perhaps even with some help of the church history from Acts.}

Definitely you will see the difference between the tone of "I Paul" in I Cor {for I Corinthians} as compared to the tone of "We" in II Cor. Previously in I Cor it was "I thank my God" in 1:4, "Now I say this" in 1:12, "I thank God that I baptized one of you except Crispus and Gaius" in 1:14, "And I brethren, when I came to you" in 2:1 {in all fairness though the argument remains the same there is a "we speak wisdom" in 2:6}, a "And I brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ" starts chapter 3 of I Cor in 3:1 {with enough ire to irritate the Greek Christian mentality at Corinth that perhaps did not have the same effect on the Jews at Rome in Romans 2 of the Jews of the synagogues in Hebrews on babes and the need to be teachers}, "I do not write thee things to shame you" in 4:14, "I wrote to you in my epistle" {an epistle we are not sure about since there is not one to Corinth before I Cor that we can think of}; but you get the point of the "I's" in I Cor so that we can continue what we started in the above paragraph on the tone of "WE"s in II Cor: {we stopped briefly above with a parenthetical statement with the we of II Cor 1:24} in 3:1 it is "do we begin again to commend ourselves?", in 3:5 and 3:6 respectively "not that we are sufficient of ourselves" and God "made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant", in 4:1 we do not lose heart since we have received mercy to have this ministry, in 4:7 we have this treasure--no doubt the treasury of the ministry--in earthen vessels, and since you get the point the last one I will mention until we do a complete exegesis of II Cor around "The Ministry" is one that supports the very gist of the title of this volume of the LEARN CHRIST commentaries, with that of "we also believe and therefore speak" (4:13) from Paul based on the "I believed and therefore I spoke" of David in Psalm 116:10 that Paul quotes.

11-2: What We Do Get of II Corinthians from Our Topical Bible Outline. Back again to chapters 2 and 3 for all mentions of II Corinthians in our Topical {plus books of the OT in historical sequence} Outline of the Bible.

Exodus 16:18 and II Corinthians 8:15: (1) During Gods supply of manna during the 40 years in the wilderness, those who gathered much had nothing left over and those who gathered little were not hungry so that it was completely by the grace of God and according to the individual needs; and (2) Paul quotes this in II Corinthians to illustrate

equality among Christians in the churches, or to illustrate the democratic nature of salvation. {Paul, of course, here is talking of the Church Ministry of Giving.}

Leviticus 28:12 and II Corinthians 6:16: God desires a distinct or special people among whom He can dwell and be their God. {NOTE: In Isaiah 52:11 as quoted in II Corinthians 6:17 this is to be a clean and separate people.}

11-3: A Possible Outline of II Corinthians.

The Outline of II Corinthians will be more simple than that of I Corinthians, and so it should be in a second book that was written to respond to reactions from the first book, not so much introducing any new doctrines or new and astounding truths from either the OT or the Ascended Christ, However, before we look at that simple outline, it would be wise to also compare the type and extent of OT quotes between I Cor and II Cor. And immediately you see Paul's love of and dependence on Isaiah.

TABLE 2. Quotes in I Corinthians versus in II Corinthians

OT quote	I Corinthians	OT quote	II Corinthians
Isaiah 29:14	I Cor 1:19	1. Psalm 116:10	4:13
Jeremiah 9:24	I Cor 1:31	2. Isaiah 49:8	6:2
Isaiah 64:4	I Cor 2:9	3. Leviticus 26:12	6:16
Isaiah 40:13	I Cor 2:16	4. Jeremiah 32:38	6:16
Job 5:13	I Cor 3:19	5. Ezekiel 37:27	6:16
Psalms 94:11	I Cor 3:20	6. Isaiah 52:11	6:17
Deut 17:7	I Cor 5:13	7. Ezekiel 20:34,41	6:17
Genesis 2:24	I Cor 6:16	8. II Samuel 7:14	6:18
Deut 25:4	I Cor 9:9	9. Exodus 16:18	8:15

OT quote	Corinthians	OT quote	Corinthians
Exodus 32:6	Cor 10:7	Psalms 112:9	9:9
Psalms 24:1	Cor 10:26	Jeremiah 9:24	10:17
Psalms 24:1	Cor 10:28	Deut 19:15	13:1
Isaiah 28:11,12	Cor 14:21		
Psalms 8:6	Cor 15:27		
Isaiah 22:13	Cor 15:32		
Genesis 2:7	Cor 15:45		

Isaiah 25:8            Cor 15:54  
Hosea 13:14          Cor 15:55

TABLE 2. Quotes in I Corinthians versus in II Corinthians

**NOTES on the Table:** You will notice that in II Corinthians how Paul well into the letter, in fact into the fourth chapter of only 13 chapters, or almost a third of the way, before the first OT quote. You can tell he is on the defense because of the reactions at Corinth to I Cor, and then he is ready to get down to the work of writing Scriptures.

You see a similar mix in both cases of Isaiah and Psalm, although of course, there are only 12 quotes in the 13 chapters of II Cor, while there are 18 quotes in the 16 chapters of I Cor for respectively a quote/chapter density of 12/13 and 16/18 or 92 % and 89% so the ratio is more balanced between the two than at first appears, and the decision would still lean in favor of Paul having planned a certain number of quotes from a book of "The Ministry", at least on his own Apostleship part. You will notice also that Paul threw up 4 from the law in the first case, and 2 from the law in the second case; there is one from Jeremiah in both cases; one minor Prophet, Hosea, in the first and the major Prophet Ezekiel in the second. Also we should note that while Job is quoted only in I Cor, one of the historical books, that of II Samuel, is quoted in II Cor. Also you will note that quotes from Ezekiel are an addition to II Corinthians, Ezekiel 37:27 and Ezekiel 20:34,41.

While Paul is going to continue to deal with the problems in the church at Corinth, even as he did in I Corinthians and in another epistle, the primary compulsion on him is to fulfill His own commission to Christ and God as chief editor of the NT. You see, Paul's perspective is that God has a plan for the Jewish people to complete the oracles of God, and that he has a part in that to write 14 letters of the NT according to what Christ told him in Arabia and according to what he had written down on a parchment back at Tarsus of OT quotes that must be explained in the NT. For this writing of the epistle of II Corinthians, Ezekiel would be a key part of both: (1) a forever part of the Word of God that would go to all nations and peoples across the total earth and across time; and (2) a proper dealing with the problems of God's people for all time, God and the problems also being consistent and similarly the same and planned on by God. In other

words, Paul had the confidence even as James expressed that “known unto God are all His works from the beginning of time”, that God knew the church at Corinth as all churches would have these kinds of problems even as He had known the Hebrew children would have similar problems--God’s people then and God’s people now. Paul knew that if by revelation through the Holy Spirit of God, and based on his list of OT quotes and in the light of what Jesus told him in Arabia, he could deal with total human problems in light of God’s plans for solutions, then he could also deal with the problems in the churches at Corinth. After all, these were church members that God Himself had picked out. In a search for problems and solutions that transcend any local church with solutions for those local churches, we will start with the eternal teachings from God the Father as recorded in Ezekiel.

11-4: II Corinthians 6, the Ministry of a Distinct and Empowered People of God.

This approach places the sixth chapter of II Corinthians at the focal point of our study and of the Ministry, because not only does it contain the two quotes from Ezekiel-- 37:27 and 20:34,41--but also contains a grand total of 7 OT quotes. We will look at them in the order they are given in chapter 6 with the explanations and applications of the Holy Spirit through Paul. [{the way to get the ASPI}](#). First a reminder of the underlying problem at Corinth as made clear in I Corinthians was a certain pride that either the Word of God was originated by them or that the Word of God had come to them only. This is what created a major problem among the people of God in the Old Testament, and this is what creates major problems among God’s people today.

1. That oft repeated message from the other epistles of Paul is in the first quote of chapter 6, a call that “now is the accepted time” to receive the grace of God, and not in vain”, that “now is the day of salvation”. Jew or Greek, Hebrew or Corinthians, no individual, Jew or Gentile, could have grace, mercy, and salvation except on the timetable of God the Father. While it is offered, take it; as God does not always extend the same offer on the same schedule and to the same people. Even as the children of Israel had only 40 years to “test, try, and prove God” in the wilderness, even as the restored Israel after captivity in Assyria and Babylon had only 3 and 1/2 years after the Crucifixion for salvation of the Jews until the Fulness of the Gentiles was complete, even as Gentiles led by the US had only period from the Fulness of the Gospel preached to every nation to the Falling Away of the end time [{the time when churches no longer endure sound doctrine, the time when sin abounds and the love of many wax cold, the same time when Satan is loosed as the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from earth, and the same time when the third man of sin of Daniel is revealed}](#), so there is a period, called “now-time” for the church at Corinth. Now was one now time for the children of Israel in the wilderness, now was one now time for the Jewish people in the restored Israel of the time of Christ, now was a different now time for the church and other churches of

the Gentile Roman Empire, and now is a different now time for us, near the end of the Fulness of the Gentiles, near the end of the Gospel being preached to every nation, at the beginning of the 40 year Falling Away, and near the end of the Age as Christ comes again. What remains the same through all of these “now-time” periods is: God, God’s Word and words, and the plan of God for any specific period.

“In an acceptable time {the time acceptable to God and according to the generalized and specific plan of God which He did and always does make known to His own people in the words of the Bible} I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.” (II Corinthians 6:2 and Isaiah 49:8)

God chooses your time of salvation according to His plans and phases; God chooses to help Jews or Gentiles when He sees fit.

(1). The context before and after this quote is “we as workers with Him” pleading with you to receive the grace of God when and how it is offered (6:1); that we know now and here to be the accepted time and place for you at Corinth; and that we put the Ministry first. We do not want the Ministry to be blamed in anyway, therefore we are careful to give no offences in anything. We do promote ourselves as “the ministers of God” by: patience, in tribulation, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fasting’s, by purity, knowledge, longsuffering, kindness, the Holy Spirit, sincere love, word of truth, power of God, armor of righteousness, honor and dishonor, evil and good report, deceivers and true, famous and infamous, as living dead, chastened but not killed, in sorrow and rejoicing, as poor and making rich, and having nothing on earth while possessing on things eternal. Wow, did Paul get all that out of those few words of Isaiah 49:8? Yes, in that these are the many ways Isaiah and the other Prophets were helped by God even as Paul and his company were helped by God. The only difference was in the kind of salvation and help for the now-season: the help of God for His former people the Jews was almost over {surely even time now we are 3 and 1/2 years after the Crucifixion}, and the beginning of the now-time for the Gentile Greeks was starting with an unknown cutoff time of approximately one thousand years. There was the Old Covenant between God and the children of Israel with a few Gentiles that existed from Mount Sinai to Christ; there was the new covenant for believing Jews until the Apostles, first churches, and until God’s cutoff 3 and 1/2 years after the Crucifixion; and a 3 and 1/2 year overlap with the Gentile age from Christ to the Falling Away, the period leading up to the Fulness of the Gentiles and the Gospel to every nation, a period for Gentiles only.

(2). O Corinthians that we have spoken to with open hearts--you do the same--  
BE NOT UNEQUALLY YOKED TOGETHER WITH UNBELIEVERS, II Corinthians 6:14. This is a problem God has dealt with now and in OT times.

“For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?” (II Corinthians 6:14-16a)

2. You are the Temple of the Living God, II Corinthians 6:16b.

“As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them {the anointing of the inward Holy Spirit} and walk among them {which God did through Jesus for approximately 33 years}. I will be their God {Jews and Gentiles for 36 and 1/2 years, then only Gentiles, that is for new people}, and they shall be My people {we have the historical event of the establishment of a new group to be called “God’s people.}” (II Corinthians 6:16b and Ezekiel 37:27 with Leviticus 26:12 and Jeremiah 32:38) {Some additional food for thought in a NOTE: how does the approximately one thousand years from a new Hebrew nation with a covenant with God of Mount Sinai, about from 1491 BC to about 36 and 1/2 AD--approximately because we know our usual dating schemes to be somewhat off even as God’s knows that we can not be responsible for exactness in time, thus giving us a rounded off number of one thousand for a long and indefinite time, not to Him but unknown completely by us until fulfilled, and then we have a problem with history--or a “now period” of say of approximately 1530 years; that is how would that 1530 years compare to the from 39 A.D. to 2006 plus AD during which we as leaders in the US of the Gentiles of the Fulness of the Gentiles, or the 1967 years of our one thousand years? Of course, you must remember that the binding of Satan happened when the coming of the Holy Spirit on earth in a unique and powerful way--more of the now time of that period--starting the famous “one thousand years” found only in one Bible passage and in the book of Revelation, a book of spiritual representations by numbers like 12, 7, etc.; and ending the famous one thousand years when the Holy Spirit (II Thessalonians) is withdrawn from earth which does release Satan from bondage. Without the work of the Spirit to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, Satan is released to do almost all that he desires in the world, also knowing that his time is short, somewhat in the nature of the 40 years of the Falling Away. (What Daniel calls the time when the power of the Holy people is completely shattered.) And what adds the indefiniteness to the 1530 and the 1967 years to make them both one thousand years is in the first case the exact time after the Crucifixion when God cut the Jews off as His people, and in the second case the exact time when the Falling Away of the Gentiles started. Well, while we do not have charts and diagrams and hideous pictures with a time table to show you like fundamentalists and PREs, we do like them have our speculations--I hope based more on the total context of the Bible, rather than a book of Revelation taken out and away from the total context of the rest of the Bible, especially from Jesus on eschatology, from Paul and Peter, and even from Daniel.}

