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2 Corinthians 2

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Learn the Bible with Friends

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

2 Corinthians 2.

Topics.

- This punishment by the majority is enough.
- Lest Satan should get advantage of us.
- Whoever you forgive I also will forgive.
- God's Spirit in Christ leads Paul.
- We are the aroma of Christ to those who are being saved.
- To one a fragrance to death, to the other a fragrance to life.
- We are not peddlers of God's word, but men commissioned by God.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter Paul spoke of sharing in Christ's sufferings, sharing in Paul's suffering and the Corinthians having a second experience of grace. He talked of all God's promises made to Israel's fathers being yes in the Lord Jesus Christ, why Christian say Amen through Christ to God and of God sealing those in the family of Christ.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

- In certain chapters this letter is written as though Paul is having a conversation with the Corinthians (i.e., he asks them a question and then answers it etc.).
- Though Paul's letter is directed to the Corinthian church the content applies to any church or believer in the same situations.

2 CORINTHIANS 2:1-4

I wrote to let you Know the Abundant Love I have for You.

- **2 Corinthians 2:1-4:** For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you.
²For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained?
³And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. ⁴For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

Paul in these verses is referring back to the first letter he wrote instructing them to change their behaviour when they came together in Christ's name (see introduction of 1 Corinthians chapter one) and to the time he was vacillating over his decision to visit them (2 Cor. 1 17). Paul is basically telling the Corinthians that if he had visited them he would have spent all his time in teaching them proper behaviour which would have caused many of them mental and emotional hurt and therefore they would not have been in any frame of mind to make him happy and that the reason he decided to write to them rather than visit was so that when he did visit them he would not have to discipline anyone and therefore they would all be able to enjoy each other's company.

NOTICE: the spirit of Paul in writing these letters is one of love he cares about those he is writing to, so much so he is in tears at times. It is certain he was upset that the noble and wealthy were being so egotistical and selfish that they were not only causing divisions, but the poorer brothers and sisters were being ignored.

This Punishment by the Majority is Enough.

- **2 Corinthians 2:5-9:** Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. ⁶For such a one this punishment by the majority is enough ⁷so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. ⁹For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything.

The words, "Such a one" (v6) refer to the man in the first letter who was sleeping with his father's wife (most scholars seem to think that this would have been his step mother) (1 Cor 5:1) the punishment by the majority was to put the man out of the church which during Paul's generation would most likely mean that he would also be out of fellowship with his family and friends since church at this time was not a once of the week thing, but meeting in each other's homes throughout the week and sharing a meal together. Paul is now begging the Corinthians to not only forgive the man before he is overwhelmed by extreme shame, embarrassment and sorrow but to love him as they did before.

I might test you and know whether you are obedient: Paul's comment, "That I might test you and know whether you are obedient" means that Paul would watch and see if they did what he said, (i.e., put the man out of the church), but of course he did not want them to reject him forever. In this particular situation the Corinthians obedience to Paul was by extension obeying Christ since not even the pagan world tolerates a man sleeping with his father's wife (1 Cor. 5:2) thus to have such a situation amongst the body of Christ not only dishonours God but also the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 2:10-11

Lest Satan should get advantage of Us.

- **2 Corinthians 2:10-11:** Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, ¹¹so that we would not be outwitted by Satan (adversary) (lest Satan should get an advantage of us in the KJV) for we are not ignorant of his designs

To put the words "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us" into context, Paul in this chapter is writing a letter to the Corinthian church telling them that he does not want to come to them in same affliction, sorrow and tears that he was in when he wrote his first letter to them concerning the man who was having sex with his father's wife (1 Cor. 5) rather he wants to visit them in joy. He then proceeds to tell the Corinthian Church that the whole purpose for writing this second letter (v9) is to say that the man they put out of the church has suffered enough and it is now time for them to comfort and forgive him, Paul tells them whoever they forgive he will also forgive in the Lord Jesus Christ otherwise the man maybe overcome with great grief and sorrow, it is then that Paul makes the statement, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (v11).

In the context of this letter Satan's devices refer to the grief and sorrow that stem from unforgiveness, because unforgiveness leads to bitterness, hatred and revenge etc., which led to divisions, broken relationships and in worst case scenarios even murder. The word Satan in this verse embraces, in its meaning every hurtful thought in the mind, every emotionally harmful attitude in the heart and every destructive outward action that are all a direct result of a person not being forgiven.

Forgiveness is the key to stopping all of these harmful and hurtful thoughts and attitudes from getting a stronghold on a person's mind, their emotions and their heart, which means that Satan in this verse is a word that embraces everything that is harmful and hurtful to the human mind, emotions and heart, and the destructive outward actions that result from these harmful and hurtful thoughts and emotions.

Whoever you forgive I also will forgive: the following are three of the most likely reasons Paul said, "Whoever you forgive I also will forgive" (v10).

1. Because they did what he said in his first letter so he knew he could trust them to do the right thing and make the right judgment.
2. So, they would know that he would support their decision.
3. If they forgave the man and Paul didn't it would not only cause tension and division but also destroy the unity between the Corinthian assembly and Paul such are the ways of Satan's designs and schemes as the flow up out of the human heart when forgiveness is withheld.

For further information on Satan, see the title:

- Satan in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

2 CORINTHIANS 2:12-17

We are the Aroma of Christ to those who are Being Saved.

- **2 Corinthians 2:12-17:** When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord, ¹³my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So, I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia. ¹⁴But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. ¹⁵For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, ¹⁶to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? ¹⁷For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.

Fragrance: (Sweet savour in KJV) means, good-scentedness it carries the idea that a person is a tremendous blessing to whoever they come in contact with (aroma means the same thing).

An interesting principal: there is an interesting principal to notice in what Paul is saying, Paul is in Troas and people are ready to listen to him proclaim the Gospel of Christ, but because Paul missed Titus he went onto Macedonia. This no-doubt is one of the reasons Jesus sent the disciple out two by two, the burden, affliction and work is much lighter when you have someone to share it with and when there is great joy or excitement it is far more fulfilling if you have close friends to share that joy with. But in saying all this Paul concludes that it does not matter where he is, because the knowledge of God goes out as a sweet-smelling fragrance in whatever place he finds himself.

Gods Spirit in Christ leads Paul: Paul says, "It is God in Christ who spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere" (v14). Showing that it was God's Spirit working through Christ and through Paul and by extension continues today to flow through all who are in Christ spreading the knowledge of the Lord everywhere. The Spirit of God the Almighty, our heavenly Father is the source of all life and all things, His Spirit is like a crystal clear river without any impurities that cannot be stopped and has no end, it started life, flows through life and brings life, vitality and energy to whoever dinks of it. God, at Jesus water baptism poured without any limitations His Spirit upon Christ, Jesus then through his life manifested the following three things:

1. God's miraculous power over all creation.
2. God's character, grace mercy and love.
3. God's, promises, purposes and plans for the present and the future.

In this way God's Spirit was working through Christ, manifesting God to those on earth. Paul is saying that the same Spirit that was working through Christ is working through him to manifest Christ on earth. God's Spirit through Paul's faith in Christ was working through him (howbeit with certain limitations i.e., he did not have power to control the stormy seas, or winds or produce bread and fish from nothing to feed five thousand etc.,) and in the same way it is God's Spirit (howbeit with even greater limitations) working through their faith in Christ manifesting the Lord on earth through their speech, character and acts of compassion and kindness to others.

Israel had a false concept of who God was: the Pharisees, scribes and chief priest's saw God as an extremely legal and formal God who only accepted people if they were born into Israel or maintained a high standard of religious and ceremonial rites. Jesus came to manifest the character, mercy grace and love of his heavenly Father, i.e., God's love for the poor and those that do good, the weak, and those in lowly positions of society and those who the Jewish religious leaders, the noble and rich considered unworthy and unclean.

Being saved: the words being saved do not apply to those who have humbled themselves, repented and placed their trust and their lives in the Lord Jesus Christ for their eternal salvation, but rather to those who are hearing the Gospel and have a heart that is open to hear it, these are the people the phrase being saved applies to. The King James Bible leaves no-doubt that eternal salvation in Christ is certain, guaranteed and absolute whereas certain verses of some modern Bibles appear to imply that those in Christ are being saved, but the Gospel of Christ does not proclaim that those who come to Lord in humble repentance and faithfully follow him are only 95% saved and will not be 100% saved until they by their own self-effort achieve the other 5%. This is not the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ rather salvation in the Lord is certain, guaranteed and absolute because it is not based on self-effort but on faith and God's grace. It is interesting to notice that the King James Bible is always empathically absolute when it refers to salvation in Christ, whereas the more modern versions in some verses leave a certain amount of room for doubt.

The following are some examples: in the book of Corinthians, the English Standard Bible says:

- The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are *being saved* it is the power of God.

The King James says of the same verse:

- Unto *us which are saved* it is the power of God (1 Cor. 1:18).

In a later chapter the English Standard Bible again says:

- By which you are *being saved*, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you.

Whereas the King James Bible says:

- By which also *ye are saved* (1 Cor. 15:2).

The English Standard version in the book of Acts says:

- The Lord added to their number day by day those who were *being saved*.

The King James Bible says:

- The Lord added to the church daily as *should be saved* (Acts 2:47).

Since those being saved are being added to the church the term in being saved in this context refers to those who are hearing the Gospel.

SUMMARY: the term, being saved refers to the unsaved in the process of being saved and not to those who are already saved. Salvation in the King James Bible is always absolute, definite, assured and decided it leaves no room for doubt in believing and trusting in the cleansing power of the blood of Christ. The translation of the King James Bible in regards to eternal salvation and those being saved is in perfect harmony with the Gospel message of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If we ask ourselves the following two questions:

1. What can I do by self-effort to pay-back the Almighty and Holy God who so loved me, that he gave his only Son, that if I believe in him, I will not perish but have eternal life? (John 3:16).
2. What can I do by self-effort to pay-back Christ who after suffering a cruel, brutal and horrific death laid his life down so that I could be raised to eternal life?

It not only becomes very clear, but also very humbling that there is nothing we can do by self-effort that is able to put us in a position by which we can stand before God or before Christ and say, "I have paid the debt." Salvation in Christ is certain, the only way anyone is going to be rejected by Christ is for them to consciously and deliberately reject him, all other things fall under the category of gaining some degree of reward or suffering some measure of loss but regardless of the loss those who are in Christ will nevertheless be saved to eternal life as stated in the following Scriptures:

- If anyone builds on the foundation (the Lord Jesus Christ) with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, they will receive a reward, but if anyone's work is burned up, they will suffer loss, though they will be saved, but only as through fire (1 Cor. 3:10-15).

Three groups of people: in regards to eternal salvation the Bible presents the following three groups of people:

1. We, referring to those already saved.
2. Those who are being saved.
3. Those who are perishing referring to those who want nothing to do with God.

To one a fragrance to death, to the other a fragrance to life: Paul's statement, "To one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life (v16) refers to the power those in Christ have when witnessing since when sharing the Good News of the Gospel there are only two responses:

1. Accept and receive eternal life.
2. Reject and continue on the path to eternal death.

This is the reason Paul says, "Who is sufficient for these things?" (v16) meaning who, is worthy to proclaim such a powerful and awesome message and then (in the following verses) he contrasts those who proclaim Christ in sincerity to those who proclaim it for selfish-ambition, power, and fame or for money.

Death to death or life to life: the words, "From death to death, or from life to life" (v16) mean those who reject Christ will go from mortal death to eternal death while those who accept Christ will go from mortal life to eternal life thus the Gospel is a fragrance of life to the ones hearing and believing it, but it is a fragrance of death to the ones hearing and rejecting it.

We are not peddlers of God's word, but men commissioned by God: Paul tells the Corinthian brothers and sisters that, He and those with him, "Are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ (v17).

Peddlers: (corrupt in KJV) peddlers refer to a huckster, a bargainer or buyer and in the context of this verse carries the idea of retailing the Gospel of Christ for one's own gain or profit and thereby adulterating and corrupting it.

Sincerity: means clearness and purity it carries the idea of being open, transparent and honest in motive and behaviour.

NOTICE: even though it was Christ who spoke to Paul on the road to Damascus, Paul says it was God who commissioned him. Paul is very conscious that when he proclaims Christ, he is not only proclaiming it in God's sight, but is also in Christ while he is speaking. How healthy would the global body of Christ be if all who proclaimed the Gospel had this same mindset and what a sweet aroma, we would be to the fallen world we are temporally living in.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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