

Introduction to NT Books

Dr. Thomas M. Strouse

VIII. II Corinthians

A. The Authorship of II Corinthians

1. External Evidence: Polycarp, Athenagoras, Cyprian, Tertullian, and Irenaeus attested to the Pauline authorship of this Epistle

2. Internal Evidence

a. The author claimed to be Paul (II Cor. 1:1; 10:1).

b. The author claimed to be an apostle (II Cor. 1:1; 12:12).

B. The Date of II Corinthians

1. Paul started the Corinthian church in early 50's and remains 18 months (visit in "heaviness").

2. Perhaps he wrote Proto-I Corinthians and received their letter about marriage.

3. He wrote I Corinthians ("sorrowful letter") about AD 55 from Ephesus.

4. He left Ephesus and went to Troas and Macedonia to find Titus (AD 55).

5. Having received Titus's good report, he wrote II Corinthians (AD 56).

C. The Background of II Corinthians

After writing I Corinthians, he waited at Ephesus for Timothy to indicate a resolve (I Cor. 16:10-11), which did not come. His initial evangelistic trip to Corinth was in heaviness (II Cor. 2:1; Acts 18:5) as he had just left Athens and faced stiff opposition (Acts 18:6). Having written I Corinthians, rebuking the church for her pride, and having required the expulsion of the fornicator, he considered this a "sorrowful" letter (II Cor. 2:2-11). He left Ephesus and went to Troas hoping to find Titus with news about the Corinthians' response, and finally met up with him in Macedonia with the good news of their repentance (II Cor. 2:12-13; 7:5-16). The fornicator had been restored, their pride evinced in factions regarding the ordinances had been stemmed, and their collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem had been fulfilled. However, a new problem developed, namely Jews who attempted to undermine Paul's apostolic ministry (i.e., II Cor. 11:1 ff.), and against whom he defended himself (II Cor. 10:1-12:18).

D. The Purpose of II Corinthians

1. He rejoiced in the Corinthians' repentance.

2. He urged them to finalize their gift to the Jerusalem church.

3. He defended himself against the Judaizers.

E. The Characteristics of II Corinthians

1. Both Epistles are example of practical pastoral theology as Paul's revealed his tenderness as a shepherd and exhortation as a father.
2. II Corinthians gives basic instruction of theological topics such as suffering, the New Covenant, the judgment seat of Christ, and Christian stewardship.
3. Paul focused on rejoicing in the midst of trials, seeking the Lord's strength in weakness.
4. He recognized Satan's efforts to thwart the welfare of the Corinthian assembly.
5. He continued the theme of humility in the believer's life, exalting his office but decreasing his person.

F. The Outline of II Corinthians

- I. Paul's Defense of His Manner (1:1-24)
- II. Paul's Defense of His Ministry (2:1-7:16)
- III. Paul's Defense of His Mission (8:1-9:15)
- IV. Paul's Defense of His Model (10:1-12:13)
- V. Paul's Defense of His Motive (12:14-13:14)