

EVERY WORD BE ESTABLISHED

2 CORINTHIANS 12:14 – 13:14



~ Paul described to us how he had been called up to the third Heaven in our last report from our Spiritual Safari. Interestingly, that description didn't advance our knowledge of the third Heaven or what happened there. Not much is said about Heaven in the Word of God because, if we knew how wonderful it really is, there would be a mass exodus to go there! Well, God kept Paul humble, indeed; and He did so with a thorn in the flesh. If you have not read our last two reports, I suggest you go back and read those; and this report will be our final dispatch with Paul from second Corinthians. Paul didn't have anything to say about the High Throne of the third Heaven; also interestingly, at least to me it is — in our next report, as we begin the Book of Esther, we'll see what the unknown writer of that book of the Bible has to say about the throne of God, too. It seems most likely and logical that Mordecai wrote Esther — but it may have been Ezra — but we'll get to that....

XII

14 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

16 But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.

17 Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you?

18 I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps?

19 Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

20 For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

21 And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

~ Paul was their spiritual father as he had founded the church in Corinth. Even so, this almost has the note of a complaint in verse fifteen. It's interesting the things that God would have Paul note instead of the things Paul saw in Heaven. It was a huge burden that Paul had loved many people; but not many people had loved Paul in return! In fact, some in the church were totally unfair with Paul; making accusations that they knew were false. Paul didn't want to debate any of this with the minority that he was writing to.

They were uber pompous people opposing Paul; and they were skilled at causing strife and division in the Corinthian church. We have the same problems today. Cliques break off and circulate something to be signed – that's usually a very bad first indicator of very bad things to come. The city outside was even more vile and well-known as a center of abject sinfulness – sort of like Las Vegas, Atlantic City, Reno, New York and Los Angeles all rolled together. The end result was that people looked lightly on the things mentioned in verse twenty; and we have too much of that going on today, too. It's not a pretty picture of the church.

I can honestly say that I know the True and Living church is still alive and functioning in the world today; but, let's just quickly suppose the Lord removed the True church – all believers – from the world right now. That would mean the Great Tribulation period would begin; and one huge part of what makes the Great Tribulation so terrible is merely the absence of the

church. Even with the awful shape the church has gotten in today, it is still the light and salt in this world. The Holy Spirit still indwells the true body of believers. Quite candidly, I could easily make arguments that the world is getting *better* — but equally as strong points that the world is getting worse! Actually, the world isn't getting worse; but the men on the earth are getting worse and worse. The wheat and the tares are growing together. Things are bad now, but you haven't seen anything yet, my friends. The greatest sin of all is a rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ called unbelief. The Lord Jesus convicts the world of sin because they believe not on Him.

Overall, our quality of life today is better than it was two thousand years ago. We live more comfortable lives today, to be sure. So, an easy argument can be made that the world is getting better. However, the purpose of the church is not to plant flowers and make some small piece of the world a little bit better for a day or two; any more than it was Israel's business to plant flowers in the wilderness. They were pilgrims passing through it — not hanging around — and that was a huge part of delivering their message and witness. Well, that's how the church should operate; they need to be a body that is holy unto God. I wish we could point to the church and say, "*it's wonderful*" — and my church is — but, the church isn't wonderful overall today; and that is why the world is passing it by and rejecting it wholesale.

Nonetheless, the church is still the group whom the Lord Jesus Christ loves; and it is the church that Christ gave Himself for! Christ washes the church with His Word and cleanses the church by His Blood; and that's how we are made acceptable to God. Today, we're very far from that — so, let's begin moving back in His direction, shall we? We're getting an amazing insight into a Christian life in an ancient Roman city — and how bad it really was. I don't think we should say that the church is not affecting the world in any way; although I have been guilty of saying that. I think the church is affecting the world very little but, even so, if the church were removed today, the world would immediately become a terrible place. I don't think we should be praying for or hoping for that....

XIII

¹ This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

² I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare:

³ Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.

⁴ For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

⁵ Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

⁶ But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.

⁷ Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

⁸ For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

⁹ For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection.

¹⁰ Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

¹¹ Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

¹² Greet one another with an holy kiss.

13 All the saints salute you.

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen. (The second epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, a city of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas.)

~ So, our Spiritual Safari concludes commentary on second Corinthians in this final report with Paul bringing everything right out in the open. From here forward, Paul is going to execute his office as an apostle. The power of the Lord Jesus Christ working through Paul's meekness and weakness was Paul's credentials of that apostleship - period. Christ's weakness was when He went to the cross; read verse four again. Pray for wisdom and judgment now, too!

Every believer should make an examination of themselves regularly. Are you really in the faith? Are you willing to live up to all of this and make Christianity a reality in your life? Paul made that inventory in his own life, and he wasn't a reprobate. Paul didn't worry about anyone else doing things against the truth because – that's impossible. No one can do anything against the truth. That's why we should simply declare the Word of God – never defend it. And trust Christ. We can only genuinely trust Him when we begin to grow in the Scriptures and become mature Christians ~

