

# 2 Corinthians 4

## Review of 2 Corinthians so far

- When was this letter written?** 6-18 months after *1 Cor.*
- Purpose?** To deal with lingering problems at the church at Corinth
- Chapter 1* – Explains why he hasn't returned to Corinth
- Chapter 2* – He had to "ask" (actually order or command) the Corinthians to forgive the man who was disfellowshipped in *1 Cor. 5* for living with his step-mother
- Also he had to deal with attacks on him from the Judaizing teachers
- Who were the Judaizing teachers?** False teachers who were trying to bind the Old Testament on the Christians – examples: Jewish holy days, circumcision, prejudice against Gentiles, other things from Old Testament worship
- Chapter 3* – **Advantages of a letter of recommendation for new members?** It protects the congregation from false teachers and charlatans
- How was Paul's preaching better than the preaching of the Judaizing teachers?** Paul was preaching the New Covenant, not the letters of stone (the Old Covenant)
- Did the Old Testament have glory?** Yes, but nothing like the New Testament
- Is Christ still veiled to the Jews today?** By and large, yes

## 2 Corinthians 4.1-6 – The thrilling nature of the New Covenant

### V1 – What ministry? The New Covenant

- Why would Paul talk about the mercy he had received?** The circumstances of his conversion
- "Lose heart?"** He was not going to get discouraged, even when attacked by false teachers

### V2 – Had Paul's methods as an evangelist been secretive or "above board"? Always open and honest

- Example: He had accepted no money for his preaching at Corinth
- Another example: He had asked several men to go with him in taking the money to Jerusalem
- Remember *Acts 23.1* – he had a clear conscience about everything he had done as a Christian and as an apostle
- Paul had not played politics; there was no cunning behavior in his past
- How do some people "adulterate" the word?** By acting deceitfully
- Paul and his associates had based their reputation on their proclamation of the truth

### V3 – *1 Cor. 1.18* spoke of the gospel being foolishness to those who are perishing

- Some have let Satan blind them to the gospel

### V4 – "The god of this world"? *Rev. 12* – Satan was thrown down to the earth

- See *John 12.31, 14.30, 16.11, Eph. 2.2, 6.23*

### V5 – The essence of Paul's message? Christ is Lord

- There is no place for self-glorification in preaching or in church work in general

**V 6** – A reference to *Gen. 1.3* – light from darkness

- Paul is enthusiastic about preaching, because the light has been shone into his heart and had taught him about the glory of Jesus
- God created both physical light and spiritual light
- Some people "see the light" and are converted – other never see it
- But all who see the light of Christ want to be baptized immediately

**2 Corinthians 4.7-15** – The glory of the gospel and the suffering of God's ministers

**V 7** – **To what is he comparing preachers?** Earthen vessels (clay pots)

- How are ministers like clay pots?** Valuable, but flawed and of no great value in themselves
- The city of Corinth was famous for little clay lanterns; they sold for 2-3 cents, but gave a lot of light
- Old Testament parallel?** Gideon and his men VS. the Midianites – Gideon and his men had torches inside clay pots; they broke the clay pots and terrified the Midianites (*Judges 7.15-22*)
- People frequently put valuable things inside cheap holders
- Example:** Silverware in a wooden box, jewels in jewelry boxes, etc.
- In other words, the power is from God, not from ourselves
- In some congregations, too much emphasis is placed on the preacher, his personality, his manner of dress, his family, etc., instead on the message of salvation that he is preaching

**V 8-11** – **What problems did Paul have as an evangelist?**

1. Afflicted, but not crushed
  - Explanation?** Maybe his thorn in the flesh
2. Perplexed, but not despairing – he was confused sometimes
3. Persecuted, but not forsaken (possible reference to being beaten at Philippi)
4. Struck down, but not destroyed (a possible reference to *Acts 14.19* – left for dead at Lystra)

**V 12** – It was a "living death" for Paul and those with him on the 4 missionary journeys

**V 13** – **If things were so bad, why did Paul keep on preaching?**

- He quoted *Psalms 116.10*; he believed; therefore, he spoke!
- What a great philosophy for a gospel preacher
- 1 Cor. 9.16* – *Woe is me if I preach not the gospel*

**V 15** – **Paul's goal as a preacher?** To spread the gospel

- And *Romans 15.20* – not to build on another's man's foundation (to establish congregations where none had already been established)

**2 Corinthians 4.16-18** – How he was able to endure

**V 16** – **How does the world view the decay of the outer person?** Terrible: special creams for the face, face-lifts, Botox, wigs, new clothes, sports cars, etc.

-We can look at pictures of ourselves when we were 20 years old – what a change today

-World can only produce death (the Grim Reaper)

**V 17** – **Persecution?** It produces eternal glory

**V 18** – What a powerful verse!

-If we can see something in this life, then it is not permanent – it will not last

-In fact, try to think of something that we can see in this life that will endure into heaven

-It is the things that we cannot see that will last into eternity: The human soul, our righteous deeds, love, etc.

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