

**2 CORINTHIANS: DEFENDING GOD'S SERVANT TO HIS CRITICS**  
**Part X: Overcoming Oppressors By Heeding Our Final Accountability To Christ**  
**(2 Corinthians 5:10-11 et al.)**

**I. Introduction**

- A. 2 Corinthians was written "to defend the authenticity of " Paul's "apostleship and his message" to a church of believers who were susceptible to heeding false teachers who critiqued him, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 552.
- B. One way Paul's ministry team overcame the negative discouragement of their oppressors was by focusing on their accountability to Christ at His judgment seat, providing a great example for us (as follows):

**II. Overcoming Oppressors By Heeding Our Final Accountability To Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:10-11 et al.**

- A. Paul had claimed in 2 Corinthians 5:9 in view of the extended context of facing false teachers who critiqued him before his Corinthians readers that whether present in the body or absent from it in being with the Lord, his ministry team labored in serving the Lord in order to be pleasing to Him.
- B. Just why Paul's team kept focused on pleasing the Lord even amid such strong temptations to be distracted and discouraged from ministering amid their false teacher critics was due to an awareness by Paul's team of their great accountability to the Lord at the judgment seat of Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:10-11; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15:
  - 1. Paul explained that all believers must appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive what is due them for what they have done in the body as believers, whether it be good or evil, 2 Corinthians 5:10a.
  - 2. This judgment does **not** determine whether one will be saved or lost for the following reasons:
    - a. The Greek word in 2 Cor. 5:10 for "judgment seat," *bema*, when used of Christ's judgment in Scripture, always refers to His judgment of **believers** (Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 139) where His judgment of the lost in Rev. 20:11 occurs at His great white throne (*thronos*, Ibid., p. 364-365).
    - b. Once one trusts in Christ, he forever unconditionally passes from death unto eternal life, meaning he has unconditional eternal security and cannot lose his salvation even at Christ' judgment seat, John 5:24.
    - c. Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 3:14 KJV on this judgment seat judgment prove it: even if a believer's works are burned up, "he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" in unconditional salvation security!
  - 3. Thus, the judgment seat of Christ is for **believers** in the **Church era**, and it regards the **works** they performed **as believers after they trusted in Christ for salvation**; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 566.
  - 4. Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 how God will evaluate one's works as a believer (as follows):
    - a. Good works are Biblically sanctioned works that are based on Christ (1 Cor. 3:10-11), thus works done in accord with God's will by relying on the Holy Spirit's power and gifting, Rom. 8:3-4; 2 Tim. 1:3-4:5.
    - b. Every believer's work will be tested by God's fire to see if it withstands being consumed like valuable gold, silver and precious stones or whether it is burned up as worthless wood, hay and stubble, 1 Cor. 3:12-13. Specifically, God's judgment will determine of what "sort" is the believer's work, that is, of what "quality" (*hopoios*, Thayer's Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1963, p. 449) it is.
    - c. If the believer's work survives God's judgment fire, he will receive a reward, but if his work is burned up, he will suffer a loss of reward, but only as one escaping through the flames, 1 Cor. 3:14-15 NIV.
  - 5. Knowing then their awesome accountability to the Lord, what causes a healthy fear of God, Paul's ministry team worked to persuade men to heed the truth they proclaimed regardless of the opposition they faced from false teachers who oppressed them, 2 Corinthians 5:11a. In other words, a greater fear of God than of their critics drove Paul's team to offset the temptation to be spiritually defeated by their foes that they might be found acceptable to God at the judgment seat of Christ! (Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T.)
  - 6. Paul and his team knew that their own consciences were clear before the Lord, and he hoped this fact was also evident to his readers that it might dispel the effect of the criticisms the false teachers leveled against them, 2 Cor. 5:11b. Paul's testimony that he knew he was deeply accountable to Christ for his ministry should have persuaded his hearers to believe he was being honest with them in what He taught them.

***Lesson:*** *Paul's team handled the dispiriting opposition they faced by focusing on their accountability to Christ at His Judgment Seat. Their greater reverence for and accountability to Him drove them to function above concerns about their foes, and the transparency of their motives worked to persuade their hearers to believe their teaching.*

***Application:*** *(1) May we overcome temptations to be discouraged from fulfilling our ministry assignments from the Lord by recalling how accountable we will be to Him to fulfill those assignments. (2) May we live transparently upright lives before those we disciple that they may be persuaded not to heed our critics, but our message.*