

"How Did I Miss That?"

Ron Roberts

When we read through the Bible in a year we often come upon a passage we do not recall reading before. We slap our head and ask ourselves, "How did I miss that?"

The reason is the Bible is so deep that our level of comprehension cannot grasp it all. We see new items each time we read because we are going deeper and deeper into the unsearchable riches of God's mind. Of course we also read things and forget we read them. We might be reading with distracting noise in the background and thus skim the text. Or we could be focusing so heavily upon the verses around it that we fail to draw out the riches of this particular passage.

In reading through the New Testament I came across a passage I do not recall reading before. It is 2 Cor 8:18-22.

The background of the passage is Titus' return to Paul. This young preacher had delivered the first letter to the Corinthians which contained many rebukes. Paul was concerned with how the church would take his condemnations and receive his messenger, Titus. The young preacher had returned with good news of the church's repentance, their love for Paul, and their fine treatment of his messenger. We then come to the passage I seemed to have overlooked.

2 Cor. 8:18 *And we have sent with him **the brother**, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches;*

19 *And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: 20 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: 21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. 22 *And we have sent with them **our brother**, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you.**

The first question that came to my mind after, "How did I miss that?" was "Who was this brother and why did Paul not name him?" Commentators agree that there is not enough information to identify him but they speculate: He was Luke, Silas, Barnabas, Apollos, or Mark. The majority seem to favor Luke, but Matthew Henry believed it was Apollos.

The Bible often leaves us with questions of identity. Paul refers to a man who was taken into glory, but he does not tell us who he was (2 Cor. 12:2-5). Mark mentions a man who ran naked from the garden, but does not tell us who he was (Mark 14:1-52). John does not use his name, but most of us believe he is talking about himself when he says "*the disciple whom Jesus loved*" (Jn. 13:23, 20:2, 21:7, and 21:20).

Perhaps Paul did not need to mention his name because

he was so well known and respected that he needed no introduction. More important than his name was his character which is described in detail.

He is described as ***the brother**, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches;* and who was *chosen of the churches to travel with us*, He was selected *that no man should blame us*, because these men were *Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.* This brother was *oftentimes proved diligent.*

Among the duties of this brother was the responsibility to deliver Paul's letters to the Corinthians and bring back their response to him. He was also going to be entrusted with the benevolent contributions of many congregations for the poor saints in Jerusalem. Traveling with great sums of money causes many men to change their course. Greed overtakes them and they steal what was put in their care.

The Corinthians were already suspicious in the area of money. Paul preached for them without charge because he felt they would take it wrong if he was paid by them. So, along with Titus, Paul sent a brother who was proven, well reported, chosen of churches, and honest above question. He was a man of Character that we should all strive to imitate. It is important that we learn to be blameless. This cannot be achieved by half hearted devotion to the Lord.

Could Paul have sent you or me to the Christians in Corinth with a similar description or would he simply tell them to trust Titus?