

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

September 28, 2022

Series - *The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul*

The Corinthian Letters

The Last Letter (Second Corinthians)

Text – 2 Corinthians 12 – *Paul's Compulsion to Assert Himself*

Memory Verse – 2 Corinthians 12:11

"I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing."

- I Paul's Glimpse into the Third Heaven (vs. 1 – 6)
- II Paul's Glorifying in his Thorn in the Flesh (vs. 7 – 10)
- III Paul's Gift on the Third Trip (vs. 11 – 19)
- IV Paul's Grief over Those Yet Unrepentant (vs. 20 – 21)

Introduction

Chapter twelve will continue the discussion of Paul's authority. Paul is attempting to convince the Corinthians that they should stop listening to the Judaizers or any other false teachers that have established themselves in Corinth. He is clearly uncomfortable talking about himself; but here we will see that Paul was *compelled to glory*. This chapter opens the door for many other discussions that are extremely helpful in our understanding of Bible doctrine. We will understand a little more about our sufferings and more about God's grace. We will learn a little bit more about heaven. All of these are side issues in this chapter; but thank the Lord that Paul included these thoughts while trying to win over the Corinthians. The chapter will end and transition into chapter thirteen with a word of warning to those who are yet unrepentant.

- I. Paul's Glimpse into the Third Heaven {Rapture} (vs. 1 – 6)
 - A. Paul is most likely referring to himself in the third person.
 - 1. Paul was speaking about himself and was uncomfortable.
 - 2. Paul's humility can be seen here. He says he will "glory" only in his infirmities
 - B. Paul could be referring to his stoning at Lystra (Acts 14:8 – 22; or 2 Corinthians 11:23 "in deaths oft").

1. “in the body” – meaning he was brought up bodily alive into heaven; or that he had seen this in a vision of some sort.
2. “out of the body” – meaning he had actually died and his soul went to heaven; but afterward returned. (See Revelation 1:10)
3. “caught up” – picture of the rapture (I Thessalonians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 15:51 -54; Revelation 4:1; Revelation 12:5)

Note – One thing is for sure Paul knew something about heaven; and he could only partially reveal what he knew (See Revelation 10:1 – 4). He wanted to be there; but he also knew that God needed him to stay “in the flesh” for a while (Philippians 1:21 – 24).

II. Paul’s Glorifying in his Thorn in the Flesh {Reproach} (vs. 7 – 10)

A. The Substance of Paul’s Thorn

1. Was it his sight?
2. Was it a sickness?
3. Was it something else? Nobody really knows.

B. The Source of Paul’s Thorn – Satan (Job 1; Luke 22:31; Ephesians 6:11 – 12; 1 Peter 5:8)

C. The Strength from the Thorn – God’s grace

1. The thorn humbled Paul.
2. The thorn strengthened Paul’s dependence on the Lord.

III. Paul’s Gift on the Third Trip {Restraint} (vs. 11 – 19)

A. Paul lacked nothing that the other Apostles possessed. (vs. 11 – 12)

B. Paul loved the Corinthians by giving to them expecting nothing in return. (vs. 13 – 19)

IV. Paul’s Grief over Those Yet Unrepentant {Remorse} (vs. 20 – 21)

Paul was afraid that when he visited the church at Corinth, he would find there some who were still hardened. He states that this would be a great source of grief and humility for him.

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” (3John 4)