

PAUL AND HIS CRITICS COMPARED SPIRITUALLY
II COR. 12:1-12

Introduction:

- A. Paul felt it a necessity to defend his apostolic ministry. v1
 - 1. "If we are to boast (although boasting is out of place), I will go on to the visions and revelations the Lord has granted me." Knop.
 - 2. He felt that he was forced to boast.

- B. He had already gloried in his infirmities.
 - 1. v11:30.
 - 2. Now he would list his vision and power.

I. THE VISION OF PAUL. V2-4

- A. This was not his salvation experience.
 - 1. Some have the idea that the born again experience is the only experience of a Christian.

- B. Paul was in a peculiar physical situation.
 - 1. "whether in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell." v2,3
 - 2. It was not that important.

- C. He was caught up to the third heaven.
 - 1. "such an one caught up to the third heaven." v2
 - 2. "he was caught up into paradise." v4
 - 3. paradise = paradeisos = the summer abode of the wealthy, the blissful courts of the now saved.

- D. He received a revelation. v4
 - 1. unspeakable = arretos - What cannot be specified.
 - 2. lawful = it is permitted, = not.

II. PAUL WOULD NOT GLORY IN HIS EXPERIENCE. V5,6

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- A. Paul separates himself from this man. v5
 - 1. "This was what happened to me, but I will not glory"

- B. Paul was afraid that his pressing of the issue would make him appear foolish. v6
 - 1. "more than he seeth me to be."
 - 2. "more than he heareth of me."

III. GOD'S WAY OF KEEPING PAUL FROM GLORYING. v7

- A. "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations."
 - 1. thorn = skolops = anything pointed or sharp, a thorn or a splinter, a stake for impaling.

- B. God would not remove it.
 - 1. "messenger of Satan."
 - 2. It was to buffet Paul.

IV. PAUL'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S PLAN. v8

- A. Paul knew it was God's will but he asked God to remove it.
 - 1. He asked the Lord "thrice."
 - 2. depart = ahistemi - to place away from, remove.

- B. Jesus knew God's will, he prayed that the cup of suffering would pass from him.
 - 1. Luke 22:39-46, (v42) "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me, nevertheless....."

V. GOD'S ANSWER TO PAUL'S PRAYER. v9a

- A. "My grace is sufficient for thee;"
 - 1. sufficient = arkeo - to ward off, to keep off, to avail, to be strong enough.
 - 2. grace = whatever God is and whatever He can do.

- B. "my strength is made perfect in weakness."
 - 1. perfect = teleitai == to bring to completion.
 - 2. My power is being perfected in weakness.
 - 3. The Lord said, my strength, not your strength.

VI. PAUL'S SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL. V9b, 10

- A. "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."
 - 1. If this is the price I pay for Christ's power I will pay it.

- B. "Therefore, I take pleasure..."
 - 1. eudokeo (No. 4, with eu, well, prefixed). Here, the good and right thing is not merely understood, as in No.4, but actually asserted, it seemed good, where stress is laid on the resolve and its willingness and freedom, marking the design as something good, either in reality or intention.

- C. Two words to consider. v9
 - 1. power = dunamis - the power to do anything.
 - 2. rest = episkenoo - to pitch a tent upon, to come and dwell upon or in, to descend and abide upon.
 - a. See God in His tabernacle (body) as the glory of God rested on the Tabernacle of God.

- D. The things that Paul knew he could see God using. v10
 - 1. infirmities = astheneia = feebleness, sickness.
 - 2. reproaches = hubris = wanton violence arising from the pride of strength, passion, or lust; wantonness, injurious treatment.
 - 3. persecutions = diogmos - pursuit of enemies.
 - 4. necessities = anagke - force constraint, things that arise from force.
 - 5. distresses = stenochoria - a crowding into a narrow place, want of room.
 - 6. "for Christ's sake."

E. Paul wanted strength.

1. "for when I am weak, then am I strong."
2. Paul was willing to have the things that made him weak because he knew the power of God.

VII. PAUL'S GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT. V11

A. Paul felt that their immaturity forced him to be a fool or to write foolishly.

1. "I am become a fool in glorying."
2. "Ye have compelled me."
 - a. compelled = anagkazo - to necessitate, constrain

B. The church should have defended Paul.

1. "for I ought to have been commended by you."
 - a. commended = sunistemi - to introduce to one's acquaintance and favorable notice, to represent as worthy.
2. Why should they have defended him?
 - a. v11b,12.