

## Second Corinthians XII The Trials and Difficulties of the Apostle Paul

(Chapters 11-13)

*Compared to Paul, God's people today have gone through nothing!*

Fred R. Coulter—August 18, 2018

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to Sabbath services! Just yesterday we finished two Church at Home {[churchathome.org](http://churchathome.org)} messages: *Sex Scandals of the Catholic Priests in Pennsylvania*.

At [truthofGod.org](http://truthofGod.org) we will have a link to this video, which is the Attorney General of Pennsylvania bringing charges against hundreds and hundreds of priests that affects thousands and thousands of children. You may have seen some of it on the television news. I don't know if they put it on the 'fake news' or not. It's really quite shocking!

Then we have two articles that we're putting on, and all the text of the Attorney General's statement concerning it. They spent years investigating, and all the information they have is what came about because of those who came forward. How many did not come forward? *We don't know!* But probably 50-70% didn't come forward. Maybe even a higher number.

Then we have here a summary of some of the churches of the Catholic Church where they have had pedophilia problems with the priests, bishops, and it runs all the way up to the pope.

The thing that people don't understand is that the Roman Catholic Church, *every bit of it is a lie!* Catholic hospitals and Catholic charities are money-making organizations and they get most of their money—or a great deal, a good percentage—from taking care of the immigrants that they want to be church members in their cathedrals, because their attendance is diminishing down to near nothing. They get that money from the government.

One of the last articles is that right in Rome the priests had homosexual orgies with cocaine delivered in a Vatican limousine that have Vatican plates on it, that the police never stop. It was blocks away from the Vatican.

It shows that *once evil starts*—that's why we have the Feast of Unleavened Bread—*a little leaven leavens the whole lump!* Look what happened: This came from ancient Babylon and came on down through, then came into the Churches of God after the death of the apostles, and was forced upon the people who claimed to be Christians, by Constantine, a pagan Roman emperor. Ever since then, there have been fights and wars, then the Inquisitions.

That's why we are having the series done up in Blanchard, Idaho, to cover the history of the Church 100<sub>AD</sub> to 1600<sub>AD</sub>. There was a lot blood shed!

It's called *the mystery of lawlessness* (2-Thess.). How does lawlessness come? What are the two forms of lawlessness?

- breaking the commandments
- changing the commandments and adding traditions

*And this is what has happened!*

We covered in part eleven how *false prophets* get all of this started. Rev. 17 shows the harlot—the woman—riding the scarlet colored beast:

Revelation 17:5: “And across her forehead a name *was* written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And after seeing her, **I wondered with great amazement**” (vs 5-6).

In other words, how could something like this come to pass? *Satan is the 'god of this world'!* This is *his* system! **We are called out of it! We're called to live God's way** in a system that is contrary to the world's system:

- living by every Word of God
- keeping the commandments of God
- obeying the voice of God
- loving God
- loving our neighbor

The seeds of it were found in the later writings of the apostles in the New Testament. The rest of it is a matter of history.

2-Corinthians 11:13: “For such *are* false apostles... [we're going to talk about apostles] ...deceitful workers who are **transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.**”

How many Catholics really believe that the Catholic Church came from Christ to Peter to what it is today? In spite of all the gross sins, how many remain faithful? In most countries of the world, which you can see in the reports, it will never be

known. But Delores has said many times, the Catholics in America are different. They are different than the Catholics in the rest of the world.

America is the only place where it began to take the pedophile priests and bring them to the civil court of law for judgment and payment. That doesn't make them better, but it makes them less evil, if we could put it that way.

So, when you come out of a false religion, especially one that is setup as tightly controlled as the Catholics, you've got a lot of work to do.

Verse 14: "And *it is* no marvel, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light." Stop and think about this for just a minute. Remember the temptation of Satan against Christ. What is the first line of defense against all false doctrine? *Jesus said it by quoting Scripture*, 'It is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'

From that comes *obey My voice*, from which comes the *written Word of God!* No one has to say, 'If God spoke it thousands of years ago, how do I know what He said?' The court reporters called *scribes* wrote it down!

Sidebar: I've give another sermon on Jesus' scribes {note sermon: *Jesus' Stenographers*} It's amazing! Read Matt. 5-7 and what do you find? *Word for word quotes of what Jesus actually taught!* How did they get it word for word if it was only orally transmitted for 200-plus years? *NO! They wrote it down!* They weren't dumb, stupid people like the History Channel likes to picture Christians: dirty, stuffy, miserable people dressed in gunnysacks. That's the way they show them.

What happened to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist when he didn't believe the angel? *Couldn't say a word!* He came home to Elizabeth and mumbled; he couldn't talk. What did he do after John was born and they wanted to name John *Zacharias*. Elizabeth insisted it would be John, so they said, 'What does Zacharias (the father) have to say? He asked for a tablet and a writing instrument.

What do you know! *They wrote!* If you wanted to present a legal document, wouldn't you want to have secretaries and scribes make accurate copies if it, especially if it was going to go to the whole world, and especially if it was to be in many different languages.

So, that's exactly what God has done! However, as you know, there is a major key: *When you read something in the Bible and you know it's something you should do, you need to obey it*, if you want to continue understanding any other parts of the Bible. That is the key. *If you do not obey, you do not understand!*

That's how the lawlessness of fake religion comes about! They take part of the Scriptures, or the name of God, and they put their traditions to it. As we find in the book: *My Catholic Faith: A Manual of Religion* by Louis LaRavoire Morrow. The monsignor who wrote that 'the Catholic Church could preach the Gospel without the Bible.'

That's like saying that you can take a shower and never get wet and be clean. It will never work! Or they give you a hose to put out fire and it's hooked up to a gasoline tank. You're never going to put it out.

Satan comes along, and the first line of defense from Christ is 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God!' What is the second line of defense? *Mark 4:5!*

It's amazing! Study the first Psalm! Guess what you find in the first Psalm? *A major part of the plan of God!*

Matthew 4:5: "Then the devil took Him to the Holy city and set Him upon the edge of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down; for it is written...'" (vs 5-6). *Don't trust them just because they quote Scripture!* Check it; is it true? That's fine!

The Word of God is true, even if Satan the devil quotes it true. What does Paul tell us to do with all things? *Prove all things! Why? Because of this:*

"... 'He shall give His angels charge concerning You, and they shall bear You up in *their* hands, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'.... [Jesus answered with Scripture]: ...Jesus said to him, 'Again, it is written, "You shall not tempt *the* Lord your God.'"'" (vs 6-7).

In other words, you cannot take the Word of God and twist the meaning of it, so you can cause something to happen that is not true. *So, you prove it!*

The next line of defense: Don't take any of the doctrines of the religions of this world and use them. It comes about this way:

Verse 8: "After that, the devil took Him to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory"—Luke

adds: *in a moment of time*. What do people see? *Wealth, fame, power, control the whole thing!*

Sidebar on this thing with the pedophile priests in Pennsylvania: They found that many of the politicians did not want to press charges, because the Catholic Church came around and said, ‘We’ll help you retain your office.’

Verse 9: “And [Satan] said to Him, ‘All these things will I give You, if You will fall down and worship me.’”

- If people worship Satan the devil, can they be rewarded? *Yes!*
- Can he give a blessing back to them? *Yes, he can!*
- Can he make them feel good? *Yes! Satan is great at humor! Great at making people feel good!*
- Why? *Because they’re deceived!*

The world doesn’t understand how Satan works; that he’s subtle and clever in powerful ways as ‘the god of this world.’ It all gets back to those two verses in 2-Cor. 11.

Verse 10: “Then Jesus said to him, ‘Be gone, Satan! For it is written...’” You come back with the truth of the Scriptures that answers the false interpretation. That’s how!

“...‘You... [talking to men, so Jesus is saying to Himself] ...shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone shall you serve’” (v 10).

Look how much are in those verses, if you really look at them and study them carefully.

How many people want power and control? Let’s just look at the Churches of God today. Two men—and there was a third one previous that—claim they are apostles. One, since he has the stone that minister used up in Oregon, now gives him ‘the right even over the Queen of England.’

The other one says that he is the apostle for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and he will appoint the two witnesses. *This is within the Churches of God!* A recently released inmate, who claimed to be one of the two witnesses—and his wife was the other one—is back in business again. Even in the Churches of God people don’t prove things, and they follow them. It’s an amazing thing! That’s why we have what we have:

- Church at Home
- the Truth of God
- prove all things
- we don’t have a hierarchy
- we teach the Truth

- we want all the brethren to develop the Godly responsibility of their spiritual lives

***to grow, change and overcome so that they can qualify for the greatest amount of reward!***

Living in this world with Satan the devil, we have a harder task than what all the others who come after Christ’s return will have. Satan won’t be around!

So, we’ll read on and ask: **Does anyone want to be an apostle?** Think about it! Remember the calling of Paul by Christ? *His name was Saul at that time and he was on way lickity split to Damascus with a crew with him to put into chains the Christians!* To torment them and even agree to their being killed. God knocked him flat on the ground!

Saul/Paul said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ *Jesus whom you persecute! Is it hard to kick against the pricks!* Think of it this way:

- You know the big spikes that they show on the crown of thorns?
- What if you had all of those and you were kicking against it with your bear feet?
- Where are you going to go?

*That’s a real losing proposition!* You’d rather hit your thumb with a hammer than that.

Paul was blind for three days, and He said to Saul, ‘You go into this place in Damascus and Ananias is going to come and tell you what you need to do. Jesus told Ananias, ‘I’ve called Saul.’ Ananias said, ‘We’ve heard about this guy.’ Jesus said, ‘I have called him as a chosen vessel for the things that he is going to do to preach the Gospel to the children of Israel and to the Gentiles, ***and to suffer!***

Paul wrote in Col. 1 that his life was ‘the completing of the sufferings of Jesus.’ That’s how it was! Let’s see what Paul went through with these arrogant Greeks in Corinth, thinking that they are so profoundly good and their mental abilities above anybody else. ***And that makes them subject to false prophets!***

2-Corinthians 11:15: “Therefore, *it is no great thing if his servants...*” *Satan has servants: ministers, apostles, priests, mediums, séances, politicians; he’s got a lot of them!*

One of them out there today, who is preaching socialism—Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez—I read to you how good socialism is in the sermon: *Sexual immorality: A National Disgrace.*

“...also **transform themselves as ministers**

of righteousness... [by telling you how good they are] ...whose end shall be according to their works” (v 15).

- How does God judge everyone? *By their works!*
- Isn't that what He said to the churches in Rev. 2 & 3? *Yes!*

Verse 16: “Again I say, no one should consider me a fool; but if otherwise, receive me even as a fool, that I also may boast a little. What I am *now* saying, I do not speak according to *the* Lord, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting. Since many boast... [a little cynicism here] ...according to *the* flesh, I also will boast. For since you are *so* intelligent, you gladly bear with **fools**” (vs 16-19)—the Greek word means *morons!*

Look at the political and religious landscape today; is that not true? *Yes!*

Verse 20: “For you bear *it* if anyone brings you into bondage, if anyone devours *you*, if anyone takes *from you*...” *That's why Paul said that he wasn't taking anything from them!* ‘You're so stinking carnal I don't want a penny from you.’ But later we'll see at the end that he says, ‘Forgive me for it, because that was wrong.’ But they were willing to give to all these false apostles. We'll find out about who they are.

“...if anyone exalts himself, if anyone beats you on the face” (v 20). Have you ever felt that way going to church? You come to church and expect everything to be real good and what does the minister do? *He gets up there and he lambastes and almost beats up everybody in the Church!*

I tried that once and never did it again. That was because the Director of the Ministry (WCG) said that ‘you have to give an attack sermon against all the sins in the congregation once a year.’ So, I did once! Took me two years to win the members back, and never did it again!

Verse 21: “I speak as though we were under reproach for being weak; but in whatever way anyone else is bold (I speak in foolishness), I also am bold. Are they Hebrews? **So am I**...” (vs 21-22).

What did Jesus say in John 8 to those who said, ‘We are Abraham's seed’? *I know you're Abraham's seed, but IF you are Abraham's children you would do like Abraham!*

It doesn't make any difference if they're Hebrews, those are just the ones you want to get to be false preachers, because then they can say, ‘Look

at me, I'm a Hebrew.’

There are very few Jews that I know—I only no of one man and one woman—who have forsaken all of the traditions of the Jews and things like this. But I've experienced I don't know how many times, that a Jew comes into the congregation for the first time and says, ‘I'm a Jew’ as if he's there to takeover!

“...Are they Israelites? **So am I**. Are they *the* seed of Abraham? **So am I**. Are they servants of Christ?...” (vs 22-23).

It doesn't matter what you are in the flesh. What did Paul write to the Galatians? *If you are Christ's, you're Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise! Where there is neither male or female before God, neither bond nor free, neither Greek nor Jew, you're all one in Christ!* So, it doesn't make any difference!

“...(I am speaking as if I were out of my mind.) So am I, above *and beyond measure*—in labors more abundant...” (v 23).

Now look at what he had to go through, so the next time you stub your toe, or hit your thumb with a hammer, whatever, remember what Paul went through. Think of this, Christ said that Paul was going to suffer. Think of all the suffer involved in what we're going to read here:

“...in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure...” (v 23). Why? Where was the first place that Paul had to go? *To the Jewish synagogue!* Remember Acts 13 and when he came to Corinth.

“...in imprisonments more frequent... [in Philippi and beaten] ...in deaths often.... [Death watches. Am I going to live or die?] ...Five times from *the* Jews I received forty *stripes* less one” (vs 23-24).

- How is your back?
- Don't you think he had a pretty horrible looking back?
- Don't you think it was painful for him?

Verse 25: “Three times I was beaten with rods... [that's on top of the whipping with stripes] ...once I was stoned...” [left for dead (Acts 14). Is that why he had Luke, the physician, with him all the time? *Could very well be!*

“...three times I was shipwrecked...” (v 25). There's no pleasant thing in being shipwrecked. You read about what happened when they put him on the ship to go to Rome. That was a terrible voyage.

“...a night and a day I spent in the deep” (v

25). Probably clinging to a piece of wood, praying: ‘God, here I am down here in the ocean, all alone, please keep the sharks away. Help someone to find me.’

Next time you go out and look at the ocean, seeing the expanse on the horizon, how far out could you look to see the head of person bobbing in the waves? You talk about lost!

Verse 26: “*I have been in journeyings often, in perils of rivers...*” Maybe the bridge is out, how do you get across?

“...in perils of robbers, in perils from *my own race...*” (v 26). Remember, he was going to go straight across over to Asia Minor, but the Jews were waiting for him, so he came around came upon over the top across to Troas.

Look what happened when Paul went to Jerusalem; that’s quite a thing! Look what happened when he came to James, and their view of what was going to happen was not as fully understood by them in Jerusalem, as Paul. They were thinking that Christ was going to return pretty quick, and ‘we’re here, in charge in Jerusalem.’ That’s why when Peter went along with the circumcision party in Gal. 2, that’s why he was afraid. *But Paul knew better and rebuked him!*

So, what happened? Paul told him everything that was happening, all the miracles, all the healings, all he conversions, all the things that he was doing, and they said, ‘Oh, we’re so happy, look at the thousands here who believe in Jerusalem.’

Remember what we said about thousands believing. How did they believe? *Well, in Jerusalem, as long as the temple stood, it was all right to continue with the rituals and the offerings!*

So, James and the elders said to Paul, ‘Look, everybody up here hears that you out there are telling the Jews not to circumcise their children. So, why don’t do this, you take charges, because there are men who have been under and oath, and they’re ready to finish it and you pay for it and go to the temple to show that you’re not against it.’

A political move! Did it backfire? *Yes!* What happened? *Different ones there saw them and said, ‘Oh look! There he is!’* So, they grabbed Paul and seized him. They were going to kill him!

{Note the DVD: *The Temple Mount*. You will see the colonnades coming down around the edge of the temple.}

The soldiers immediately—because they were guarding up there—came down and rescued Paul. They were going to kill him. Look at how

desperate that was! What did Paul do? *He said, ‘I’m glad you rescued me, take me upstairs and get me out of here.’* Then he said, ‘Let me say something to the crowd.’ So, here they are all of them ready to kill him! Paul started speaking in Hebrew and there was a great hush. He started talking about going way back and coming up to the time of Christ, and then he told them that he was sent by Jesus to go to the Gentiles.

They came to take him out of the hands of the soldiers. So, the captain took him out. Look at what he went through. The perils of his own countrymen. Then there were 40 men under a vast charge to kill Paul and not let him out of the city. That came to the Centurion and he got the troops ready and took them down to Caesarea by night to save Paul. God intervened to help him.

Look at all that he went through. Paul never really had any rest until he got to Caesarea and was there two years before he went off to Rome to appeal his case.

“...in perils from *the Gentiles...*” (v 26)—everybody! You think everybody is against you? *Look at Paul!*

“...in perils in *the city*, in perils in *the desert*, in perils on *the sea*, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides *all* these things from the *world* outside pressing on me daily is the care of all the churches” (vs 26-28).

Anyone want to volunteer to be an apostle like Paul? *No way!* We’ll see the qualifications for an apostle in just a little bit.

Verse 29: “Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I do not burn? If it is necessary for me to boast, I will boast *in* the things concerning my weakness. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is blessed into the ages of *eternity*, knows that I do not lie” (vs 29-31).

*Think about that! What a time! Look at all that Paul wrote!* And he obviously supervised Luke, and when they were Caesarea that Luke went up to Jerusalem and got all the information that he needed to write the Gospel of Luke. He was the one who wrote Acts.

Look at what we have today. The next time we have trouble—and I will put myself in there—and it’s difficult, *don’t complain!* Take it to God, because *He knows!* Isn’t that true? *Yes, indeed!* Trust in God, He’ll see us through. *He will help us!*

I imagine that the day that I resigned (from

WCG) Delores and our four children were all there, and I imagine Delores was thinking: What are we going to do? But you either stand for Truth and trust God to provide, or you go along with the group and get devoured in the lawlessness that infiltrates the Churches of God! Next year on Atonement will be 40 years from resigning.

My part compared to what others have gone through is nothing! **Nothing!**

I was talking to John Gunether about some of the things he sent to finish up and send to Ken, and he said that there accounts of those who are being led off to be killed, tortured, burned at the stake and martyred who on their way were singing praises to God and *thanking Him for the calling that God had given them, and they knew that they were going to be slaughtered very shortly!*

The next time you have a tough day, you get your mind on Christ. Thank God for what He's given, and what we need to do is all really get into God's way diligently! Because the way the world is going, all those tough times are coming back again!

(go to the next track)

A question was asked: Do you think this exposé against the Catholic Church in Pennsylvania will really do anything. It may do some good, but you can't reform it. How are you going to reform it? ***It's founder is not Christ!***

The head of it is Satan the devil! Any changes will be temporary. If anything would be a step toward something permanent, it would have to be something like this:

1. the pope would have to declare a total fast worldwide in all churches. All priests, bishops, cardinals archbishops—everybody—sackcloth and ashes!
2. first order of business, all priests ***must be married—period!***
3. destroy all your crosses, crucifixes and idols and move out of St. Peter's Basilica and destroy it to the ground
4. reject Sunday, all the pagan holidays
5. keep the Sabbath and all the Holy Days

***IF*** they did that, there may be a chance of reform! But since they won't do that, the chance of reform is just a small percentage of those who still have conscience left.

***Those five steps I laid out are impossible for them, because they're so steeped in it!*** Maybe one or two or a few individuals could do it, ***but everything I said is going to happen when Christ returns!***

There will no longer be any priests! ***We will be!*** Satan will be bound! Remember that the whole purpose of the Day of Atonement with the two goats is very simple: human beings can have all their sins forgiven over and over again, ***but unless the author of sin has all of those sins that he has committed to perpetrate on human beings is put on his head and he is judged and sent away, you're never going to change the system!*** Never will!

What did Jesus say of the priests who ran the temple of God? How far do these things come in? ***He told them, 'You are of your father the devil!' The priests at the temple of God! Why? Because they put in their traditions and their ways! And who inspired those? Satan!***

- Did they receive Christ? ***No!***
- Did they love God? ***No!***

That's why it takes deep repentance, receiving the Holy Spirit, and growing in grace and knowledge the rest of your life! However long that is! The only way there's ever going to be total sin-free world is when there's a new heaven and new earth.

Think about what great things God has for us, and His whole plan. All these difficult problems and things that we go through, and I get frustrated and upset just like you do. You have your sins and problems to overcome, and so do I. Read Rom. 7 and see the difficult time that Paul had. Think about how he really had to control his attitude going through everything that he did.

This had to be one after another, ***after another, after another!*** Think about what we need to do. On the other hand, think about everything that God has provided for this age to really get the Gospel out and teach the brethren; how fantastic and marvelous that that is! We need to take full advantage of everything that God has provided and really keep at it.

In some Churches of God they don't want to come against the 'queer' society that we're in. I've got a report here:

Colleges Offer Courses on "Queering" Children & the Bible by Tyler Durden, Aug. 26, 2018 {<https://www.zerohedge.com/news/2018-08-16/colleges-offer-courses-queering-children-bible>}

We're going to be up against it whether you like it or not! You can't avoid it! There's a nice little ad put out by Service Pros, and it starts out with the young couple in their house and there's water coming under the door. The wife says, 'I didn't know that water could do that much damage.'

It's the same way with this society. God is not going to change it at this time! We may have troubles, we may not; maybe we ought to be more thankful that we can meet here in Hollister, CA, where there is not all this pressure of the big city queers coming against us.

Like I said on Church at Home, some of you are going to say that we're 'homophobes.' Well, I say to you, 'You're hetrophobes!' That's the way it is! ***What Satan wants us to do is to compromise!***

Sidebar: A little truth—When the auditorium in Pasadena was built, it was supposed to be built with money that the brethren gave; we all gave. However, the right hand *unconverted man* of HWA—Stanley R—got a loan at Bank America. Who owns Bank America? *Catholics!* So, he got the loan with the proviso that they tone down the attacks on the Catholics! *Look at what happened!*

2-Corinthians 12:1—Paul writes: “Indeed, it is not expedient for me to boast. But I will come to visions and revelations of *the Lord*. I know a man in Christ *who*, fourteen years ago, was caught up to the third heaven.... [he's talking about himself] ... (Whether *this man* was in *the body*, I do not know; or out of the body, I do not know—God knows.) Now, I know such a man (whether *taken up* in *the body*, or out of the body, I do not know—God knows), *and* that he was caught up to Paradise, and heard unutterable sayings, which a man is not permitted to speak” (vs 1-4).

When you come to Rev. 4 & 5, that changed with John. Why do you suppose it changed with John?

1. John was a descendant of the line of Aaron  
*So, John was actually priest-blood!*
2. God wanted this vision of what's going on in heaven to be known to the churches and to whomever would read the Bible, that the things that are going to happen from 2-Cor. 6-on are all coming at the command of God! Every bit of it!

*Not just the thoughts of men; not just what people suppose!* It wasn't time for that with Paul, and Paul was not of the priest-line. Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin. So, Paul being able to have this vision was far different from what it was with John.

Verse 5: “I will boast of such a one as this; but of myself I personally will not boast, except concerning my weaknesses. But even if I choose to boast, I shall not be a fool; for I will speak the Truth.... [that's what it has to be] ... However, I will forbear, lest anyone think of me above what he sees me *to be*, or what he hears from me. But in order that

I might not be exalted by the abundance of the revelations...” (vs 5-7).

Remember that Paul spent three years in the Arabian desert where he was taught by Christ personally and in vision.

“...*there* was given to me a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me, so that I might not be exalted” (v 7).

So, every time Paul started getting exalted, this angel of Satan would come and give in trouble to keep him humble. That's very important, because he wrote more of the Bible than any other man in the world.

Verse 8: “I besought the Lord three times for this, that it might depart from me; but He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you; for My power is made perfect in weakness.’ ....” (vs 8-9).

Why? *Because when you're weak then you trust God! You cry out to God and say, 'Help me, O Lord God!' Isn't that true? Yes, indeed!* And you realize in your weakened condition that even your best efforts are going to be miniscule!

This is probably not Paul's eyes, and this would be from time to time. Remember that Paul had to have a giant ego to do the things that he was doing and to be excelling in Judaism more than the other of his own contemporaries. He was looking to be one of the top ones in Judaism. He couldn't be a priest, but he certainly could be one of the top ones in the Sanhedrin, couldn't he? *Yes, indeed!*

So, all that's involved there, we don't know. We just have to take it with what we have here. This is a spiritual battle. It may have some physical ramifications, because of all that he went through, But certainly all the things that he went through over in 2-Cor. 11, how many demons were around to do that? It's like this:

- How are you going to change the Catholic Church? *You've got to get rid of all the demons!*
- Where are you going to put them?

What it always did when all those things took place, what happens? ***That drives you to God!*** If it drives you away, *then that's a choice you make!* But let it drive you to God.

“...Therefore, most gladly will I boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For this reason, I take pleasure in weaknesses...” (vs 9-10).

Notice Paul's attitude that he had to have. Talk about a converted attitude! None of us can even

come to three percent of what he went through. *Think of that!* Test: Get a flat tire on the way home and see how you react!

“...**I take pleasure in** weaknesses... [and we worry about them] ...in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ...” (v 10). I tell you, what he went through was really something! Imagine that!

“...for when I am weak, then I am strong. I have become a fool *in this* boasting. You have forced me *to do so*, when I ought to have been commended by you. For in no way was I inferior to those highly exalted *so-called* apostles—even if I am nothing” (vs 10-11).

When you come down to it, we all have to realize that when you really examine it and get it clear down to everything, that’s why we have the title of the book: *From a Speck of Dust to a Son of God: Why Were You Born?* You could not even be seen with the naked eye when you first became you. That’s how small you were. That’s why we need to realize that ***in God we live, move and have our being! Everything comes from God!*** So, Paul wrote this in the way that he did!

Verse 12: “Indeed, the signs of an apostle were demonstrated *by me* in all patience, in signs and wonders and miracles among you.” Not only that, Paul had to have a lot of God’s Spirit *in* him. In order to do that, to have that kind of strength and that kind of resolve, read Rom. 8 where he said, ‘It doesn’t matter what happens, ***all things work together for those who love God and are called according to His purpose.***’ Then he lists everything, every problem and trial that can come on you face-to-face. He says in that ‘you’re more than conquerors.’

That has to tell us ***how great the calling of God is!*** How fantastic is it going to be to be spirit beings? Think about it! So awesome that we can’t handle it as human beings! But we must, through the Spirit of God and God the Father, qualify for it by being faithful in serving Him in truth and in love.

### **Signs of an Apostle**

What were they? *Miracles, healings, going through troubles and difficulties, like Paul did here!*

#### 1. Signs and wonders:

- Didn’t that happen? *Yes, they did!*
- Did it happen with all the apostles?

Look what happened when you read Acts 5. Peter and the apostles: even the passing of the shadow of Peter healed those who were sick lying

alongside the street when he came. Jesus said that ‘these works that I’ve done, you’re going to do greater works.’ Was that not a greater work? *But it was Christ doing it through Peter!* When you think of those who claim to be apostles, do they measure up to these requirements?

#### 2. Called by God to be an apostle

I don’t think there were truly any apostles after the time that John died. Evangelists? *Yes!* Hard workers? *Yes!* Pastor, preachers, teachers? *Yes!* But no apostles, because they were sent with the authority of Christ sent by Him *personally*. That’s what He said in the last part of the Gospel of Matthew, ‘You go into all the world and you make disciples in all nations! You teach them everything whatsoever I have commanded you.’ ***Sent by Christ!***

I don’t think that the one who was thought to be an apostle for a very long time was ever an apostle! And that there are no apostles today!

They saw Christ and were sent by Christ. Barnabas saw Christ and was sent by Christ. You can go through all of the other Scriptures.

Concerning the two witnesses: ***They are chosen by God Himself!*** We’ve got a sermon where I have shown that Zechariah 3 & 4 show very clearly that one of them will be the coming high priest at the temple that they will build, and the other will be a governor of Judea. The third person to come will be the third Elijah. What will Elijah do? *He will take care of the baptizing of those Jews in the Holy Land who repent because of the two witnesses!* They’re not going to have time to do anything like that. So, you read very carefully about Elijah:

- there’s the original
- there’s John the Baptist
- there’s the Elijah to come before the great and terrible Day of the Lord (Mal. 4)

{note: there are several sermons on the two witnesses, including *The Two Witnesses and Elijah* found at **[truthofGod.org](http://truthofGod.org)**}

Revelation 11:1: “Then *the angel* gave me a measuring rod like a staff, saying, ‘Arise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship in it.’”

This is why you find in Matt. 24 and Mark 13, whosoever reads concerning the *abomination of desolation*, let him understand.

Do the two witnesses have to be converted? *Yes, they’ll be converted with the power of God!* Their conversion will be different than ours. We



don't know how it will come out, but God is going to choose them!

Verse 2: "But leave out the court that *is* within the temple *area*, and do not measure it because it has been given *up* to the Gentiles; and they shall trample upon the Holy city *for* forty-two months. And **I will give power to My two witnesses...**" (vs 2-3).

Giving power, receiving the Holy Spirit the way that they will, does that not have to be conversion? *Yes, indeed!*

"...and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* sixty days, clothed in sackcloth" (v 3). He tells who they are, and the only place that you find this is in Zech. 4.

It will not unequivocally, ***cannot be*** any minister from the Church of God. Why? *Very simple! The Jews will never listen to a Gentile—period!* Case over and done!

Verse 4: "These are the two olive trees, and *the* two lampstands that stand before the God of the earth." ***No minister between them and God!***

Are there people in the Church of God who don't know their Bibles well enough to understand that? And they believe the vain sayings of a man proclaiming himself to be the 21<sup>st</sup> century apostle of God who will have authority to appoint the two witnesses? *May God be merciful to him!*

2-Corinthians 12:13: "For in what *way* was it that you were inferior to the other churches, except that I myself did not burden you?..." What does that mean? *I didn't take tithes and offerings from you!*

We read that Paul took wages from other churches so he wouldn't take it from them. But he told them in 1-Cor. 9 that Christ commanded that those who preach the Gospel will live of the Gospel. I look at it the same way today. I don't take tithes and offerings that people send. I take a wage; that's it! The rest of it goes to serve the brethren, to preach the Gospel, to give you the things that you need and we don't charge for it. ***Jesus said that it's more blessed to give than receive!*** That the cycle that it needs to be.

***Those who receive give back automatically because they love God!*** That's the way it is. You can beat people over the head and say that they have to tithe and send in all of this. I remember some of the deacons at the Feast of Tabernacles when a minister would say, 'We're in competition with this other Feast site over here, they gave so many thousands of dollars, so we want everyone of you here at this Feast site to give a little extra. Everyone of you

reach into your pocket or purse and put in all the change that you have.'

That's not the way that God does it! If you are convinced in the mind and heart and converted in the mind and heart to do the will of God, then all the extraction of money from you will do no good! It's that simple!

It's like Galileo: The church made him say that the earth was flat, but he walked out the door and said to himself, 'Nevertheless, it is still round!' It's the same way with tithing! If you don't freely give because you have freely received, then.... God has to do the judging! If you get on the extraction of funds, it's at best going to be temporary. Why? *You have to operate this way, and this is the way we operate:*

Someone will ask, 'What is your budget?' ***Whatever God sends! That's the budget!*** We've been able to take care of everything that we need to do, because God sends it. People are faithful to do it. Do they have to be 'beaten over the head' to extract money from them? *No!*

Paul was saying, 'I'm not taking a penny from you. You're so carnal that you pick on me all the time, and you talk against me all the time, and you entertain all of these false prophets as something good, and you give them money! I'm not going to take a penny from you.'

But he said, "...**Forgive me this wrong.** Behold, a third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not burden you... [he isn't going to come for money; don't do it because I said you should] ...for I do not seek what is yours, but you; for the children are not obligated to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. Now, I will most happily spend, and am willing to be totally spent, for your souls; although the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved" (vs 13-15).

Look at the life he had to live! What a thankless life!

Verse 16: "Yet, even so, I did not burden you; but being crafty, I caught you with guile." ***I got you in your own carnal trap! That you didn't want to do what God says!***

Verse 17: "Did I make a gain of you by any of those whom I sent to you? I urged Titus *to go to you* and sent with *him our* brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit and in the same steps? Again, do you think that we are making an excuse to you? We speak before God in Christ; and everything *we do*, beloved, *is* for your edification" (vs 17-19). ***That's what it has to be!***

Verse 20: “But I fear that when I come, perhaps I may find you *in a state* such as I do not wish, and I may be found by you such as you do not wish; that *there may be* strifes, jealousies, indignations, contentions, evil speakings, whisperings, puffings up, commotions... [What a church! What a handful that is!] ...*and* that when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall grieve over many of those who have already sinned, and have not repented of the uncleanness and sexual immorality and licentiousness that they have practiced” (vs 20-21). **What a church!**

2-Corinthians 13:1: “This *is the* third time that I am coming to you.... [Paul is giving them warning] ...*In the* mouth of two or three witnesses every matter shall be established.” *He’s coming there to have court!*

Verse 2: “I have previously told *you*, and I am telling you in advance the second time, as though I were present; but since I am absent now, I am writing to those who have continued to sin until now—and to all the rest—that **if I come again, I will not spare.** Since you seek a proof of Christ speaking through me (Who is not weak toward you, but is powerful in you... [you’re so converted that you can live in sin and God still loves you] ...for although He was crucified in weakness, yet, He lives by God’s power; and we are indeed weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by God’s power toward you), **examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; prove your own selves.** Don’t you *of* your own selves know that Jesus Christ is in you? Otherwise, you are reprobates” (vs 2-5).

It sounds like, to me, that they’re a lot of tares in amongst them! *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 6: “But I hope that you will recognize that we are not reprobates. Now, I am praying to God *that* you do no evil; not that we may appear *to be* approved, but that you may do what *is* right, even if we are *regarded* as reprobates” (vs 6-7). ***In other words, repent!***

Verse 8: For we do not have any power against the Truth, but *only* for the Truth”—because if you sin, the Truth is going to convict you as a sinner.

- **IF** you repent, then God will forgive the sins and take them away!
- **IF** you live according to the Truth of God, that’s for God!

There’s nothing anyone can do against the Truth of God, because it’s a living law: the love of God, the Truth of God, and it all functions automatically!

I’m glad none of you are like that. But I tell you this: down in Pasadena with thousands there, think of it! They had 1200 in the auditorium, 1200 in the assembly place. They had another 1200—**3500 in Pasadena, and how many are there now? I couldn’t tell you!**

Verse 9: “And we rejoice when we are weak and you are strong; for we are also praying for this—*even* your perfection.” That’s what Christ wants. That’s what He said right there in:

Matthew 4:48: “Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect.”

2-Corinthians 13:10: “For this cause, I am writing these things to you while I am absent, in order that when I am present I may not treat *you* with severity, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.” ***I don’t want to have to do it, but if you want to be the way you are, I’m going to have to do it!***

Whew! We’re finally at the end! The Corinthians are a burden! Really!

Verse 11: “In conclusion, brethren, rejoice!....” After all of that! Yea! Paul is coming!

“...**Be perfected; be encouraged; be of the same mind; be at peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.** Greet one another with a Holy kiss. All the saints send salutations to you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit *be* with you all. Amen” (vs 11-13).

Then Paul sent this off to them! I wonder how it was received when it was read in the congregation?

What is “...a Holy kiss....”? I think it’s the way you see a lot of the people in the Mediterranean area do with each other: kind of kiss each other on each cheek. But when you see the pope and different ones do it, that’s an unholy kiss! When Judas betrayed Jesus, the Greek there is that he ‘ardently kissed Him.’ And Jesus said, ‘Friend...’ In this age, we are of such that a sincere handshake that is equivalent, or better.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 17:5-6
- 2) 2 Corinthians 11:13-14
- 3) Matthew 4:5-10
- 4) 2 Corinthians 11:15-31

- 5) 2 Corinthians 12:1-12
- 6) Revelation 11:1-4
- 7) 2 Corinthians 12:13-21
- 8) 2 Corinthians 13:1-9
- 9) Matthew 5:48
- 10) 2 Corinthians 13:10-13

Scriptures quoted, not referenced:

- Matthew 5-7
- Colossians 1
- Revelation 2-3
- John 8
- Acts 13-14
- Galatians 2
- Romans 1
- Revelation 4-5
- Romans 8
- Acts 5
- Zechariah 3-4
- Malachi 4
- Matthew 24
- Mark 13
- 1 Corinthians 9

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