

The New Testament, Book 8

The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians

Paul's second letter to the church at Corinth must be read within the context of his first letter to that church; the second chapter of this letter deals with disciplining the person who had taken his father's wife as a lover, a subject first dealt with in Chapter 5 of 1st Corinthians. Although, by the time of the writing of this second letter, many of the problems at Corinth had been remedied as a result of his previous letter, there were apparently some there who did not recognize Paul's authority over the Corinthian church.

Much of this second letter is devoted to defending his position as an apostle, and as the founder of that church; but these local problems are by no means the only subjects of the letter. This book contains some treasures in the form of succinct statements of truth, concerning such things as suffering, the letter of the law versus the spirit of the law, the eternal nature of things unseen, relationships, and what happens at the moment of death.

There are also precious words of Jesus recorded here in Paul's second letter to the church at Corinth, and they are to be found nowhere else.

A. Author. As with 1st Corinthians, Paul has been widely recognized as the author of this letter since the time of its writing, in the 1st Century.

B. Place and Date. This letter was probably written about A.D. 55, perhaps nine months after the writing of the 1st letter to Corinth, in the Autumn of the same year. It is generally believed that it was written from Macedonia, probably Philippi, on the return leg of his third and final missionary journey.

C. Occasion. Paul had expected to meet Titus at Troas, on the coast of Asia Minor; and, when Titus did not come, Paul continued his trip northward into Macedonia, anxious to have news from Corinth. Titus found him there. The news was mixed--that his first letter to the Corinthians had done much good, but that false teachers had come to Corinth, questioning Paul's integrity and his authority as an apostle. Paul then wrote this letter, and sent it back to Corinth by Titus.

Not long thereafter, Paul traveled on to Corinth himself, and spent the Winter there (three months)¹. During those three months at Corinth, he wrote his great Letter to the Church at Rome, the letter that was probably his

¹ Normal shipping in the Mediterranean was suspended during the Winter, because of bad weather.

magnum opus, the greatest accomplishment of his very great body of writing.

NOTE: *In terms of exactly where he went, and when, there are portions of Paul's third missionary journey that are simply **unknown**. For this reason maps tracing this journey will often disagree, as will commentaries describing the journey. Although they may be presented as if they are facts, the truth is that, in some portions of his third missionary journey, where he actually was, and when, are unknown.*

D. Theme. The theme of II Corinthians is (at least) threefold: comfort for those who have repented of sin as a result of his first letter; vindication of his apostleship; and the need for an offering for the impoverished believers in Judaea.

NOTE: *In the fourth year of the reign of Roman Emperor Claudius, there was a great famine in Palestine, and it was particularly severe in Judaea². This had been prophesied in the church at Antioch, by a prophet from Jerusalem named Agabus³. Chapters 8 and 9 of this epistle are devoted to the need for giving to the relief of the Judaeans believers.*

E. Highlights. Highlights of II Corinthians include the following:

1. God as Comforter. (1:1-5)

In the salutation of this second letter, Paul includes Timothy, who is with him, and addresses the letter to the church at Corinth "with all the saints which are in all Achaia⁴."

Then, in some of the most beautiful poetry in the New Testament, he follows with praise to God as Comforter, a concept prophesied by Isaiah (Isaiah 61:2), and declared by Jesus to his disciples on the night in which He was betrayed (John 14-16). This is a radical concept for the Corinthians; among the gods of their pagan background, such an attribute among their pagan gods is unknown--in fact, unthinkable.

Included in the salutation is a commandment: an admonition that they should comfort one another with the comfort with which God comforts them.

NOTE: *Concerning the comforting love of our God, **Muslims (who are simply monotheistic pagans, worshipping a pagan, cruel, Moon god whose name is Allah)** reject the concept of a loving God, whom we can know and love. To them, it is unthinkable. The concept of their pagan god, Allah, as a god who loves and comforts his followers is unthinkable, shockingly*

² Romans 15:25-27; Josephus, Antiquities, 20. 2.1, 5.2.

³ Acts 11:28.

⁴ A Roman province, essentially most of today's southern Greece.

bizarre and greatly offensive. A young woman in a Muslim country, who came to the Lord and, filled with the liberating love of God, announced with joy that she loved God. She was sentenced to death, under Sharia law, for blasphemy. She, and others like her, will be comforted by our loving God as they face death, and will wear martyr's crowns in Heaven.

2. There Will Be Suffering. (1:6-12)

Paul says that he and his companions have suffered much in Asia Minor. The situation at Ephesus seems to have been the most hazardous, but there must have been other times of danger and suffering, for he emphasizes this point in a general sense. However, he says, when there was suffering it was always the price for reaching the lost with the gospel, and for caring for them. And, he says, through all of the suffering, there was also the comfort of God. In all the trials, when at times they expected to die, he says, they were sustained by the comfort of God, and by the prayers of the Corinthian church. And, he says, they can expect no less than what he and his companions have suffered. Also, he and his fellow workers take comfort in knowing that when they brought the gospel to Corinth, they declared it with simplicity and sincerity--not with intellectual cleverness or religious complexity, but in simplicity and sincerity by the grace of God.

***NOTE:** One basic fact of Christian life is that, if we live our lives as Christians should, we must expect suffering and persecution. This fact was introduced by Jesus, in warning his disciples that they should expect the same hostility from the world that He had received⁵. This bit of reality is repeated, and made very clear, by Paul (here, and in II Tim 3:12).*

*If we are not being persecuted, we should wonder why. And, when prominent Christians are accepted, spoken of positively, never criticized in secular print or television, appear frequently as guests on secular television, treated as friends and never asked hard questions, **we should question their validity.***

3. The Promises of God are Yea and Amen. (1:18-20)

Paul says to the Corinthians that what he has declared to them and taught them is the simple truth of God, and that God always means what he says. There has been no concealed or double meaning in what he has spoken in person, and what he has written in letters. And, he adds, there has been no "maybe yes, or maybe no" in his utterances, and in those of Sylvanus (Silas) and Timothy; everything they have declared has been the simple and positive truth of Christ. And, he says, this is always the case with the truth

Commented [JM2]: Prior to publication to a general audience need to consider how this entire Note is presented. I would look toward softening a few words while still maintaining the truth of the note.

While the statement is true, not all true things should always be said. The fat man doesn't always need to be told that he is fat. And, if presented a little differently, the marginal muslim seeker reading a world class Bible survey, might turn to the Lord Jesus Christ if what is emphasized here is the concept of God as Comforter, Jehovah Nacham.

Commented [JM3]: Recommend, "we should wonder why"?

⁵John 15:20, 16:33.

and good news concerning the blessings in Christ, for “all the promises of God in [Christ] are yea and amen⁶.”

4. The Earnest of the Holy Spirit. (1:21-24)

It is interesting to consider how many things that were part of the ancient world, are unchanged among us today. One of these things is the practice of providing earnest (the noun) in business transactions. When a business transaction is entered into, and full payment cannot be made at that time, the buyer will deposit a smaller amount of money which is called “earnest,” or “earnest money.” This is the guarantee that the buyer is “in earnest” concerning the transaction. This money seals the deal. When final payment is made, this deposit is counted as part of the final payment; if the potential buyer backs out of the deal, however, he forfeits this partial amount. Here, Paul writes to the Corinthians that God’s promises are sealed by the gift of the Holy Spirit; the Spirit is the “earnest” of his promise of ultimate redemption. In human terms, the Spirit “seals the deal” and is our guarantee that God will not change his mind. Charles Wesley, the great hymn writer and brother of John Wesley, wrote of this in his hymn, *Father, if Thou My Father Art*:

*Come, Holy Ghost, my heart inspire,
Attest that I am born again,
Come and baptize me with fire,
Nor let thy former gifts be vain,
I cannot rest in sins forgiven,
Where is the earnest of my Heaven?*

5. Restoration of a Repentant Sinner. (2:1-14)

Paul is delighted to hear that the man who had been censured by the church (concerning his sinful relationship with his father’s wife) had repented. Now, he says, the church should forgive and comfort him, and welcome him back into full fellowship. Otherwise, he says, the man may be deceived by Satan into thinking that he cannot be forgiven and lose all hope. Paul says that he, and they, know how Satan operates; and they must not let him destroy this man.

NOTE: *In v 11 Paul states that “we are not ignorant of Satan’s devices”-- his tactics and methods of deceiving us. This is as important today as it was*

⁶ Literally, “Yes, and let it be that way.” **NOTE:** When “amen” is spoken by God, it means “it is and shall be”; when spoken by men it means “so let it be” or “so be it.” Once in the NT “Amen” is used as a title of Christ (Rev 3:14) with the expansive meaning that through Him all of the purposes of God are accomplished (“they are all done and fulfilled”).

⁷ a. The concept of the sealing of our redemption by the earnest of the Holy Spirit is important enough to be repeated three times more in the letters of Paul: II Cor 5:5; and Eph 1:13-14, 4:30.

b. Concerning being baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire, see Matt 3:11 and Lk 3:16.

*in the 1st Century, yet many Christians do not believe that the Church is in a spiritual war that has gone on, uninterrupted, since its founding by the Savior. As a result, Satan has great advantage over such Christians and many, unlike this repentant sinner at Corinth, are deceived by Satan's accusations and destroyed. There is only **one** unforgivable sin: blasphemy of the Holy Spirit⁸.*

6. Paul's Living Credentials. (3:1-2)

Defending his authority as an apostle, and as the founder of the church at Corinth, Paul says that he doesn't need legal documents to verify these things and justify himself. He says that the Corinthian Christians are his evidence. They are his living credentials. You are my documentation, he says, walking around, "known and read of all men." They and their Christian lives are the undeniable fruit of his ministry there.

7. The Law Written in the Heart. (3:3-5)

Paul then introduces a principle which deserves constant reminding: it is that, when we are redeemed, the Holy Spirit moves into our hearts (our human spirits), so that we are uncomfortable with sin, and we enjoy peace when we live righteously. We no longer need the law, engraved in tablets of stone and given through Moses, to tell us what is right and what is wrong. Nor do we need stacks of documents written in ink to know how we should behave in every detail, for we now have something better. It is the law of God, written by the Spirit of God, in "the fleshly tablets of our hearts⁹." When we meet Jesus, and receive the gift of spiritual life, things change inside us in this way, for we receive spiritual enlightenment. We were spiritually blind and dead before; but, as so simply expressed in the great hymn, "Amazing Grace," "now we see."

8. The Letter Killeth, But the Spirit Giveth Life. (3:6)

In one verse (actually only half a verse), Paul expresses an enormously important principle; and it is one that we should have framed and permanently hung in a prominent place in our thoughts. It is that the letter of the law kills; but the spirit of the law gives life. This vital principle was perfectly illustrated in the ongoing, three-year conflict between the Pharisees and Jesus. Jesus fought, and taught against, legalism, during his entire earthly ministry.

The gospels vividly reveal the harshness of the hard-hearted Pharisees, who loved the letter of the law, versus the loving, far-seeing compassion of

⁸ Matthew 12:31; Mk 3:29; Lk 12:10. See also "The Troubling Matter of the Unforgivable Sin" in Part IV (Selected Topical Summaries).

⁹ See also Ps 40:8; Is 30:21; and Jer 31:33.

Jesus, who tried to show them the spirit of the law. Over and over, in the three years of his earthly ministry, we see this contrast. The Law, with its multiplied layers of man-made additions, was a crushing burden. And the Pharisees (and Sadducees), who loved its letters (details), but were blinded to its principles (the spirit of the Law), administered it with short-sighted harshness and cruelty.

Jesus, to their constant chagrin, cut through the letter of the Law to proclaim the liberating, life-giving New Covenant--the spirit of the Law¹⁰. He personified the spirit of the Law; and, in a very real theological sense, He was (and is) the Spirit of the Law. With rare exceptions, the Pharisees (and Sadducees) remained blind to the truth and, ultimately, conspired to have Him crucified, on false accusations of violating the letter of the law¹¹.

*NOTE: Even for those of us whose hearts have been quickened by Jesus and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, there is danger of becoming like the Pharisees in our dealings with others. And, as was the case with the Pharisees, it is likely to occur in dealing with matters of doctrine. It is easy to fall in love with a doctrine, and, unknowingly, allow it to become the central focus of our thoughts and affections. We will think we are simply in love with Jesus (Who is, after all, Truth personified), when we are actually in love with **an idea about Him**. Without realizing it, Jesus, Himself, will have slipped out of our central focus, replaced with the idea (doctrine). When this happens, our approach to life in the Church becomes increasingly mental, and less and less spiritual. We are likely to become argumentative, offended by those who don't agree with our idea (doctrine), and our hearts will harden. Also, our circle of fellowship and influence will become increasingly smaller, including only those who also love our idea. It is a deadly trap. For more on this principle see "Falling in Love with a Doctrine: an Insidious Trap" in Part IV (Selected Topical Summaries).*

9. The Glory and the Veil. (3:7-18)

Paul begins to write of the glory of the gospel and spiritual blindness--the inability to see this glory. He begins with the analogy of Moses when he came down from Mount Sinai with the tablets of the Law; his face had shone with a glorious light as a result of his being in the presence of God. Because of this glorious shining, the Israelites were afraid to come near him

¹⁰ See in this regard Hebrews 8:6 and 12:24.

¹¹ The most obvious and important such convert was Saul of Tarsus, who became Paul the apostle and the author of this epistle. In addition to Paul we can probably safely add Nicodemus, member of the Sanhedrin, and Joseph of Arimathea, whose grave Jesus occupied briefly.

until he put a veil over his face to hide it¹². This was the glory of God's Law, i.e. the Old Testament. Paul then goes on to compare the glory of the Old Testament with the greater glory of the New Testament. Reversing the metaphor somewhat, he says that now the Jewish people have a veil over their hearts so that they cannot see and receive the good news of Christ, even though the Old Testament scriptures, which they hear, reveal Him. Even though they read and hear the evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, they cannot see it because of the veil "that is upon their hearts." However, he says, a day will come when the Jewish people will turn to the Lord, the veil will be removed from their hearts, and they will see and enter into the glory of the gospel of Christ. Then they shall also be free, for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

NOTES:

a. Here, in v 14, is the first time the Old Testament (Old Covenant) is identified by this name; it is also the last.

b. This passage does not mean that no Jew can now be able to see the truth of the gospel and be redeemed--born anew into the Body of Christ; this fact is obviously illustrated in the growing numbers of messianic Jews, i.e. Jewish Christians, today¹³. Rather, it refers to the Jewish people as a whole, who will someday have this veil removed, see the glory of Jesus at last, and multitudes will turn to Him and be redeemed.

c. In v 16, the word "it" presents a bit of a problem. "It" is the literal Greek in the AV (KJV) (based upon the Textus Receptus) and in the ASV (American Standard Version of 1901), which is based upon the Westcott/Hort Greek text).

Most modern versions take some liberty with "it" and render it "a person" (or something similar), but that is not the literal meaning of the Greek. So, what do we do with "it"? Perhaps the best interpretation is to add, in parentheses, "the heart of a man," for that is where the transaction takes place.

10. Blinded by the God of This World. (4:1-4)

Paul declares that he and the others of his group have been given the ministry of taking the gospel to the lost. They do not get discouraged and quit, he says, and they have renounced, as wrong, all craftiness and deceit in

¹² Exodus 34:29-35.

¹³ Examples of Jews who had already seen the truth, turned to Jesus as Messiah and been redeemed when this passage was written are Paul the apostle, who wrote this epistle, Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, and Joseph of Arimathea, whose tomb Jesus occupied briefly. It is important to remember that the very first Church, the Jerusalem church, was entirely Jewish in its beginnings.

Commented [JM4]: ἐπιστρέφω /epistreyh I spent some time studying this out & certainly don't know enough Greek to have an opinion on this, but it does seem from studying all the different ways this transitive verb can be used and all the different ways it is used in the NT (39 times), a rendering which would be faithful to the original manuscripts, and to the context would be to translate it as Darby and others do: "16 But when they shall be converted to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away ", meaning either the jews, or people in general being converted.

preaching this message. Rather, he says, they are determined to declare the gospel honestly, openly, and plainly. If, when they declare this good news clearly and simply, some reject it and are not redeemed, it is because Satan, who is “the god of this world,” has blinded their eyes, preventing them from seeing “the glorious light of the gospel¹⁴.” In this way, the fact that Jesus the Christ is the very revelation of God, is hidden from them.

*NOTE: It seems to be true that Satan has neither the power, nor the authority from God, to literally prevent anyone from hearing the truth of the gospel and being redeemed; if he had such authority or power, **no one** could be redeemed. Rather, it seems, he blinds those who are disinterested and not disposed to seeking the redeeming relationship with God. And, he blinds them, not with absolute power, but with cunning and deception.*

11. The Glorious Treasure Is in Earthen Vessels. 4: 5-7

When someone in ministry is particularly effective--a gifted teacher or a compelling preacher--it is a natural mistake for those receiving the ministry to appreciate the one who is ministering, and forget that he is only an imperfect human vessel through which the power and inspiration of Jesus are at work. Paul makes it clear that he and his ministry team are just imperfect mortals, through whom the light and glory of the Lord have shown, transforming and empowering them. In the process, he utters a classic illustration of this fact: he says that he and his friends have this perfect gift of grace and effectiveness within them, but this perfect gift from God is contained in very human men and women. “We have this treasure,” he says, “in [ordinary, imperfect] earthen vessels....” This foundational fact must be kept in mind, so that God receives the glory for all that is accomplished in ministry, and not the people whom He uses.

NOTE: In Paul’s day, the wealthy drank from silver or gold cups; only the poor drank from clay cups. Today, in the age of plastic and glass, “earthen vessels,” i.e. cups made from clay (pottery and porcelain), can be very expensive; but in Paul’s day the very opposite was true, and so the full impact of his illustration can be lost on the reader. It may help us to see the contrast between the treasure of the perfect light and gift of God, and us imperfect human vessels, by paraphrasing it as, “We have this treasure in styrofoam cups.”

12. Renewal of the Inner Man. (4:8-17)

Paul speaks at some length of the fact that he and his ministry team have ongoing difficulties and trials to overcome. He says that they are often

Commented [JM5]: Is this allusion (we hold this treasure in earthen vessels) really not understood by the average reader? I’m just asking. Does the average reader not understand this as written?

¹⁴ Concerning Satan’s identity as the “god of this world,” see also John 14:30.

troubled and distressed, but never without hope. They are persecuted for proclaiming the good news, but not destroyed. They constantly face the possibility of being put to death, even in the way that Jesus was put to death; but they live with this constant threat of death so that they can minister life to the unredeemed. Quoting from a Psalm, he says that they believe and, because they believe, they must declare what they believe¹⁵. They know, he says, that God, who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, will also raise him and his team in the last day, with the Corinthian Christians, and bring them all into the presence of God in glory. All these things, he says, are being done for the sake of those to whom they minister, so that they, and multiplied multitudes of others, may give thanks and praise to the glory of God.

Because of this, he says, although the physical body is worn down and injured in the conduct of the ministry, “the inward man,” i.e. the eternal human spirit indwelt by the Holy Spirit, is renewed in hope and refreshed each day¹⁶. These trials and tribulations are nothing, he says, when compared with the blessedness and everlasting glory that await us in the presence of God.

13. Our Primary Focus Should Be on the Invisible. (4:18)

And here Paul states a profoundly important, and succinctly expressed, fact concerning this life. It is so foundational, so important, that books could be written on the subject; yet Paul, inspired by the Spirit, expresses it in one wonderful verse. We should not, he says, let the things which are visible, in our lives, and around us, cause us to take our eyes off of the things that are invisible. The reason for this is that the invisible things are eternal--everlasting--while the things which we can see with our human eyes are temporary. Beauty fades, strength fails us, fame is fleeting and, in itself, meaningless. Abandoned houses and barns rot down. Anything that we can see is someday going to disappear by natural decay and decomposition, fire and destruction, or burn up in the universal fire of the last days¹⁷. Because of this we should keep our primary focus on the invisible realities, for they are eternal. What a verse!

NOTE: *During the 1960s, 1970s and into the 1980s, there was a popular, thought-provoking, bumper sticker among excited Christians. It was often quoted in teaching, preaching, and in conversation. Simply and succinctly, it declared this foundational fact of v 18; it read: “It’s all going to burn.”*

¹⁵ Psalm 116:10.

¹⁶ See also in this regard Romans 12:2.

¹⁷ Concerning this universal fire, see II Pet 3:10.

14. What Happens to the Human Spirit at Death? (5:1-8)

Paul expresses his desire to leave this sin-sick world and be with the Lord in Heaven. In so doing, he reveals to the Corinthians (and, thus, to us) what happens when physical death comes to us; and, in this explanation, he speaks again of the resurrection body¹⁸. In referring to our human bodies, he uses the metaphor of a building or tabernacle (tent) in which we live. He says that while we are alive we live in an imperfect body, but there is a perfect body waiting for us--one made for us that will be ours eternally in Heaven. In so doing, he also speaks again of death's being conquered, "swallowed up by life"¹⁹. He then summarizes this matter of life, death and being with the Lord: while we live here on Earth, he says, we are physically absent from the Lord; but, he clearly implies, when we die physically we (our spirits and souls) are--immediately--present with the Lord.

***NOTE:** As a general rule in this study guide I avoid doctrinal matters that are non-vital; here, however, I believe that clarification of a heresy is justified. Some groups proclaim the doctrine of "soul sleep"; the largest groups who embrace this doctrine are the Jehovah's Witnesses and their doctrinal cousins, the Seventh Day Adventists. This doctrine insists that when we die physically the soul (actually, in such matters, it would be more accurate to speak of the human spirit; but they don't seem to make that distinction) remains in the dead body, knowing nothing, aware of nothing, until the day of final judgment. Luke 23:46, Acts 7:59-60, Jas 2:26, and this passage, however, argue strongly against such a belief. In fact, it seems to me that, in this passage, v 8 alone should settle the matter.*

15. What Is a New Creature? (5:14-17)

Paul says that the love of Christ constrains and impels the believers because, if one (Christ) died for all of mankind, then, prior to that, all of mankind was spiritually dead. And, since the Messiah died so that all could have spiritual life, then those who do receive this gift of spiritual life should no longer live as if they were dead. They should not live (physically) any longer for themselves; rather, they should live for Him who died for them and rose again. Therefore, if we have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ (the Church), we are spiritually new creatures--new creations--of the Spirit of God, Who has quickened (imparted life to), and indwelt, our human spirits²⁰. If we are recipients of this new life in the Spirit, then the old spiritual blindness and the fundamental self-centeredness,

¹⁸ We first encountered the resurrection body in I Corinthians 15.

¹⁹ See in this regard I Cor 15:51-58.

²⁰ See the study guide to I Corinthians 12:12-26 and the **NOTE** concerning v 13.

Commented [JM6]: I would leave out the text highlighted in yellow . It would still make the theological point without naming names...I wouldn't be surprised if most Adventists didn't even know of this doctrine.

are passed away--things of the past; and, as Frances Siewert has expressed it, "the fresh and new has come²¹."

NOTE: Does this mean that when we receive the new birth, and become part of the family of God, that we become instantly perfect and will never again do wrong? Definitely not! What happens at the new birth is spiritual--not physical or psychological. Following the new birth we see all things differently, and spiritual things that were mysteries before suddenly make sense; but then there begins a process in which our minds are renewed, day by day, as old attitudes, desires and habits are burned out of us, and we grow in knowledge, spiritual strength and understanding²².

*There are many examples of this in the New Testament. Bold Peter allowed the fear of man to cause him to commit the sin of dishonesty concerning eating with Gentiles, when the Jewish Christians came from Jerusalem to Antioch. His bad example caused Barnabas to commit the same sin, and Paul rebuked Peter for it publicly²³. Paul himself struggled, saying that he still did things he should not do, and failed to do things that he should do. John the beloved, late in life, was not perfect; he wrote that if **we** say that we have no sin in our lives **we** deceive ourselves and the truth is not in **us**. Notice that he used the 1st person plural, clearly including himself²⁴.*

16. The Ministry of Reconciliation. (5:18-20)

All good things are from God, who has reconciled us to Himself through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ; and, now that we are reconciled to God, we have been given the ministry of reconciliation, to reach others who are separated from God by sin, as we once were. We are to share the good news of salvation with the lost world, as ambassadors for Christ, offering those outside the Kingdom the wonderful means of being reconciled to God.

17. Did Jesus Become Sin? (5:21)

Did Jesus just pay the sin debt for us on the cross? Or, in the process of paying that sin debt, did He actually become sin, there on the cross? It seems clear that, in what I have come to call "the sin-bearing moment," He not only paid the sin debt for us but, in the process, for that one, unimaginably horrible moment, He actually **became** sin for us--a mass of terrible, ugly, horrible, sin--as his Father looked away from Him,

²¹ Katherine Kuhlman, prominent healing evangelist of the mid-late 20th Century, often said that the greatest miracle is the changed life (resulting from the new birth). I agree.

²² See also Isaiah 28:9-12; Rom 12:2 and II Cor 4:16.

²³ Galatians 2:10-14.

²⁴ Romans 7:15-24; I Jn 1:7-10.

momentarily leaving Him alone with this revolting agony. He endured this horror for us; and when He did so, He endured it alone. For the first and only time in all eternity, He was without his Father's loving presence.

NOTE: This matter of the sin-bearing moment is important enough for this single verse to be a highlight. In this regard see the study guide to Mark 15:34-37; Ps 22:1; and Matt 27:46. For a more thorough treatment of what I call "the sin-bearing moment" see "The Sin-Bearing Moment" in Part IV (Selected Topical summaries).

18. The Principle of Separation from the Ungodly World. (6:14-18)

After describing in some detail the nature of his ministry and, in the process, describing the standards of behavior that protect a ministry's reputation and credibility, Paul lays out a fundamental principle of Christian life and, especially, Christian ministry: it is the principle of separation from the ungodly world around us. This principle is sometimes expressed as, "We are **in** the [ungodly] world, but not **of** the [ungodly] world."

Having been rescued from the wickedness of the unredeemed world, and set free from the power of sin to enslave us, we should not return to it--not even to a small part of it--and allow it to contaminate our lives.

We cannot completely escape all contact with the unredeemed world around us; but we are not to be a part of it anymore. Likewise we are not to allow it to besmirch us with its influence. In his first letter to Corinth Paul makes this clear, saying that, to escape all contact with the ungodly world, we would have to leave the Earth²⁵. And, even if we could escape completely from the world around us, we would then be unable to share the good news of redemption with the unredeemed and fulfill the great commission. James, the brother of Jesus, in his general epistle to the Church, makes this point in saying that as we go about our Christian lives we are to keep ourselves "unspotted from the World²⁶."

*NOTE: Some Christian groups enshrine this principle as the "doctrine of separation." They extend the obvious meaning of this principle to create what I see as an error, meaning that they should have no fellowship with other Christians who do not agree with them **in every point of doctrine.***

This, it seems to me, is regrettable; for it isolates such groups from the rest of the Body of Christ, reducing the combined influence and impact of the universal Church on the lost world. It also robs those, who are thus separated, of the mutual support and edification of the rest of the Church.

²⁵ I Corinthians 5:10; Eph 5:6-12.

²⁶ James 1:27.

Commented [JM7]: I agree... many people have been tortured to death unjustly for other people but no one else has born, become, owned everyone else's sin... This is an unimaginable price to pay. And I do not see that it was for a moment or an instant. In our timeline it could have been hours... in His timeline (which isn't a line, but multi-dimensional) He can still probably touch it and never forget it.

19. Rejoice with Them that Do Rejoice. (Chapter 7)

In Chapter 7 Paul reflects on the correction of the Corinthian church concerning the sexual sin there: the man with his father's wife. And, in the process, he adds something precious to the picture for us--something that is found only here: that, when Titus reached Paul in Macedonia with the good news that the problem at Corinth was resolved, relieving Paul's worrying, Titus was rejoicing over it! It is a long walk from Corinth to Macedonia, and Titus was still bubbling over with joy when he arrived with the good news! Here there is revealed an important aspect of good church leadership: that when punishment results in repentance and righteous change, it is, for the leader, a cause for relief and joy--not a haughty, lingering attitude of "how could you have done such a thing?" Paul does not sit in an elevated position of separation, looking down on the flock with lofty superiority; instead, he enters into their sorrow, and he also enters into their joy.

NOTE: *Paul will soon arrive in Corinth, where he will write his magnificent letter to the church at Rome. In it he will famously direct the Roman Christians to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." It is almost certain that, when he writes those words to the Church at Rome, he will be remembering his current experience of this leadership principle, there in the church at Corinth²⁷.*

20. The Two Kinds of Sorrow. (7:10)

Verse 10 of Chapter 7 deserves special attention. Ordinarily, this singled-out verse would be dealt with as an explanatory **NOTE**, following the highlight containing the verse. In this case, however, there is no good way to interrupt Paul's joyful reflection in Chapter 7 on the improved situation at Corinth. And so, uniquely, we will go back into Chapter 7 to consider separately this single verse.

In this single verse there is a clear expression of a vital fact of Christian life. This fact is that there are two kinds of sorrow: godly sorrow, which leads to repentance; and the sorrow of the (unredeemed) world, which moves one in the direction of death.

Godly sorrow strikes us when we see clearly that we are doing something wrong, and know that it is something that must be dealt with in repentance, followed by forgiveness. After this, that ungodly thing is out of our lives, and the ungodly sorrow, with its hopelessness, is gone. The way ahead is bright with promise, as a right relationship with the Lord and his Church is

Commented [JM8]: 466 miles.... About a month and a half's walk in rugged terrain .

²⁷ Romans 12:15.

restored, hope returns to our hearts, and we journey on, on the “highway of holiness²⁸.”

On the other hand, the sorrow of the world is draped in black, with no hope for a solution, and it leads to death--either the slow death of an ongoing sinful life and its consequences, or the tragic solution of suicide.

NOTE:

*A related matter, and a terribly important one, is the difference between **conviction** (which is godly) and **condemnation** (which is ungodly).*

Conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit, calling our attention to a sin in our lives which needs to be dealt with²⁹. Conviction can be a persistent unease concerning something in our lives that isn't pleasing to the Lord; or it can strike like a lightning bolt. Conviction by the Holy Spirit is always specific, dealing with a particular sin, pointing the way to repentance, and the freedom it brings. It focuses only on the problem area, and holds before us the need for repentance, with bright hope of the future.

Condemnation, on the other hand, is from Satan; it is always generalized, and it leads to discouragement and hopelessness. In conviction the Holy Spirit says, in effect, “You are doing fine, but here is a problem we must correct.” In condemnation Satan (or, more likely, one of his demonic underlings) says, in effect, “You have failed again, and you will always fail; you are no good, you are hopeless, and you will never be any different.” This ungodly condemnation (“sorrow of the world”) leads, one way or another, to death.

21. The Law of Sowing and Reaping. (9:6-15)

Chapter 8 is a rather lengthy explanation of the Christian principle of sharing with one another when any of us is in need. Continuing in Chapter 9 to speak about the offering he expects in Corinth, to relieve the needy Christians in Judaea, Paul summarizes another principle of the Kingdom of God, one that we might call “the law of sowing and reaping.” Using the analogy of a farmer sowing seed, he points out that the more seed the man sows, the greater will be his crop, and the greater his harvest. If we, in giving to others in need, give liberally, we will reap rewards (of various kinds) liberally³⁰.

²⁸ See in this regard Isaiah 35:5-10.

²⁹ See John 16:7-11. The Greek word rendered “reprove” in the passage in John is *elencho*, meaning to convict, reprove, rebuke, expose or discover. In modern English we might say, “to call a problem to one’s attention.” The same Greek word (*elencho*) is used in the same sense in Ephesians 5:11.

³⁰ This principle is repeated in Paul’s letter to the church at Galatia (Galatians 6:6-10).

One important aspect of this principle is the spirit in which we give. We should not give grudgingly--rather, we should give with joy, because we have abundance making possible our ability to give, and the joy that comes from helping others. And, in putting this into words, Paul creates a familiar axiom--one that most of us, as children, first heard in Sunday school: "God loveth a cheerful giver." And, in the final verse, he reminds us of the one gift that is above all others in value: God's "unspeakable gift" of redemption.

***NOTE:** The English word "unspeakable" appears three times in the NT and does not appear at all in the OT. Here in v 15 the underlying Greek word is "anekdiegetos," and this Greek word is found nowhere else in the Bible. It means "that which is inexpressible."*

The fact that this Greek word appears nowhere else in the Bible seems to say that the gift of redemption is a gift from Jesus that is unique--in a class all its own--and that there is no other comparable gift. I think we can all say "Amen!" to that.

22. The Weapons of Our Warfare. (10:1-5)

In Chapter 10 Paul make the clear distinction between physical warfare and spiritual warfare. Yes, he says, we now live our lives in mortal, flesh-and-bone bodies; in this state we go through life and, at times, just living physically is a struggle. However, he says, the conflict that really matters is spiritual--not carnal. We are facing ongoing spiritual warfare, against spiritual enemies, and we must realize that spiritual warfare requires spiritual weapons. We have been given spiritual weapons, including prayer, fasting and authority in the name of Jesus; and these weapons are powerful through God, making us able to conquer and tear down the strongholds of Satan's kingdom³¹. And, he adds, one way in which we need to use these weapons is in controlling our thoughts, forbidding that Satan contaminate our lives with lingering evil thoughts. Our goal in this sense should be to make every deliberate thought pleasing to God. We may not always have success in this way, and we should not give up when we fail; but this should be the standard that we keep before us.

***NOTE:** Satan seems to have the freedom to send ungodly thoughts into our minds; they seem to come "from nowhere," suddenly and with no warning. I believe that this is one form of the "fiery darts" that we are to use the shield of faith to resist³². Even Jesus, in his full humanity, was apparently*

³¹ Luke 10:19; James 4:1-10

³² Ephesians 6:16.

subjected to these sinful suggestions, for He was tempted in every point, even as we, and yet without sin³³. When we are struck with such thoughts we are not to allow them to linger; we are to rebuke them, count them our enemies, and return our minds to healthy, God-pleasing thoughts. Martin Luther expressed this concept in an interesting metaphor; he said that we cannot prevent birds from flying around our heads, but we must not allow them to build a nest in our hair.

*When we hear an ungodly song and it remains in our minds (and it **will** remain), the remedy is to begin to hum or sing a Christian song, and it will replace the ungodly one. For me, it works every time; my favorite musical counterattack is "Onward Christian Soldiers," but any Christian song will do.*

23. [The Pure and Simple Gospel. \(11:1-4\)](#)

One beautiful aspect of the Gospel of Christ is that it is simple. It is also, so long as we don't try to "improve it" in any way, a pure revelation from the True and Living God,, uncontaminated by human hands or minds.

On the other hand the occult, including the mental sciences and mystery religions of paganism, is always complex and confusing; and over many centuries, has been added to, twisted and made increasingly complex by the writings of a long string of competing "holy men." It is also demanding. These religions always glorify man and require the attainment of exalted knowledge—often referred to as something like “the hidden wisdom of the ancients.”

Consider, from the Kaballah (Quaballah, variously spelled), the following example: “The Sephirothic Tree consists of ten globes of luminous splendor arranged in three vertical columns and connected by 22 channels. The fifth emanation of the Sephiroth is... , etc., etc. etc.³⁴.”

Compare this with, from the Bible, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved³⁵.” The comparison should be striking and, I hope, instructive.

Below is one of numerous diagrams of the Kabbalistic system of truth. I am glad that my eternal destiny doesn't depend on understanding it (and if I should accomplish that, it may be the wrong system)!

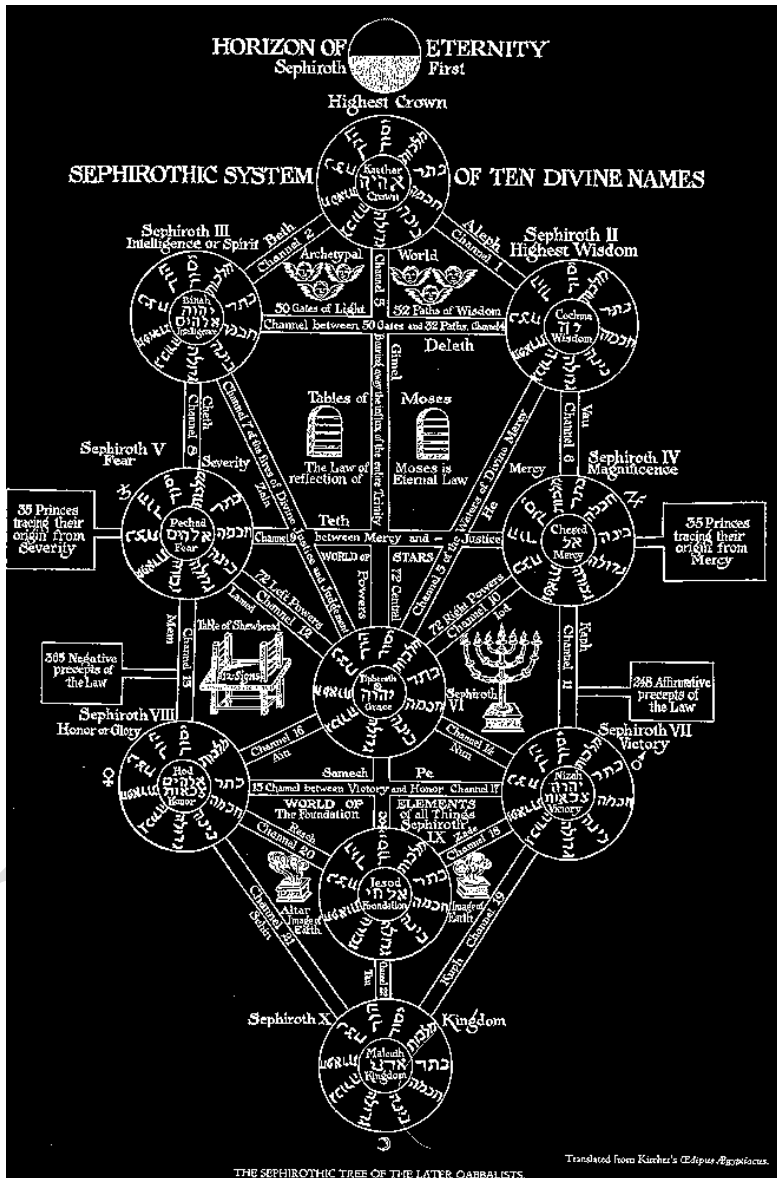
³³ Hebrews 4:15.

³⁴ The Kabbalah (variously spelled) is a medieval, occult, mystical, and extremely complex, interpretation of the Old Testament. This is what Hassidic Jews study. These Hassidic Jews are usually called "ultra-orthodox"; but it is a misnomer--they are not orthodox at all. They study the Kabbalah, not the Jewish Bible (our Old Testament). Orthodox Jews study the Jewish Bible.

³⁵ Acts 16:31.

Commented [JM9]: The late conservative rabbi and Jewish Theological Seminary professor, Dr. Saul Lieberman, remarked that he did not want his students to study Kabbalistic texts (however, he did permit the study of such texts simply for their historical value). He declared, "It is forbidden to have a course in nonsense."

Commented [JM10]: Excellent point, well made.



A Diagram of the Complex Kabbalistic System ("Tree of Life")

False religions consist of things we must do, or knowledge we must possess, in order to redeem ourselves, and they are always complicated.

The Gospel, on the other hand, is simple; it consists of what God has already done for us, and all we must do is to accept his unspeakable gift in grateful faith. Here Paul says that he fears that, as the serpent beguiled Eve in the Garden, the minds of the Corinthians might be robbed of the **simplicity** which is in the Gospel of Christ. We should be always on our guard in this way, rejecting any of the complicated, legalistic, demanding confusion of false religions, and rejoicing in the blessed peace and assurance of the simple gospel³⁶.

24. Warning Concerning False Apostles and Their Master. (11:5-15)

Paul again defends his apostolic position and repeats the fact that, while he is gathering money for the needy believers in Judaea, he has kept none of it for himself³⁷.

He then speaks of certain false apostles that have been deceiving people in Achaia (a Roman province, most of today's southern Greece). He says that these men are servants of Satan, pretending to be ministers of righteousness. It should not be surprising, he says, that they can deceive people so effectively, for Satan himself can take on the appearance of an angel of light. However, he says, in the end their false works will be exposed as such, and their punishment will be just.

25. The Hazards of Apostolic Ministry. (11:16-28)

It appears that some of the Corinthians have been deceived by the false apostles, who have also taken their money and goods. Paul waxes a bit sarcastic in comparing himself and his team with the false apostles, and then he enumerates some of his apostolic credentials. Are they Jews, he asks? So is he. Are they Israelites? So is he. Are they the seed of Abraham? So is he. Have they served Christ and suffered for the gospel, he asks? He then recites some of his history in service to the Lord. He has labored tirelessly, been beaten and imprisoned; five times the Jewish authorities have whipped him with 39 stripes³⁸. Three times he was beaten with rods and once he was stoned³⁹. He was shipwrecked three times and spent a day and

³⁶ See in this regard II Cor 1:12.

³⁷ Paul was receiving financial support from the church at Philippi (Philippians 4:15-17); he also worked as a tentmaker to support himself (Acts 18:1-3).

³⁸ At that time, a sentence to 40 lashes was considered a death penalty; thus, for serious-but-not capital offenses, the usual sentence was "39 lashes, well laid on." Thirty nine such lashes, however, could severely injure or kill.

³⁹ Paul was stoned at Lystra on his first missionary journey, his body dragged out of the city and left for dead. He was raised up and healed, by the prayers of the saints. His executioners left him for dead, and

night in the water. He had traveled constantly, crossed dangerous waters, had been endangered by robbers and hostile Jews, had faced danger in cities, in deserts, at sea and, as if this were not enough trouble, he was endangered by false brethren who had infiltrated the churches. He has also suffered great weariness, pain, anxiety, hunger, thirst and lack of warm clothing. And, he says, in addition to all these hardships, he carries with him constantly the pressure of responsibility for all of his churches.

26. [Paul's Journey to the Third Heaven. \(12:1-4\)](#)

Continuing to defend his authority, and with his manner somewhere between tongue-in-cheek facetiousness and holy sarcasm, he gives us the only account in Scripture of his amazing visit to Heaven⁴⁰. Speaking in the third person (but obviously of himself), he tells of a man who had an amazing, spiritual experience. "This man" was caught up to the Third Heaven, which he also calls "paradise," where he saw and heard things too sacred to repeat. He says that he does not know whether this man went into paradise in the body or in the spirit. This abbreviated, tantalizing, description of Paul's experience begs for explanation and expansion; we want to know more, but he leaves us with just this much.

It is doubtful that the Corinthians failed to see that he is describing his own experience, for it is part of his defense of his own credentials, which immediately continues.

NOTE: What do we make of this "Third Heaven"? The ancient rabbis wrote of three Heavens, or three levels of the heavens. They would seem to represent: the first (atmospheric) heaven, i.e. the lower level with oxygen, nitrogen and water vapor; the second (starry) heavens, i.e. space; and the third level, beyond the created Cosmos, the eternal, unchanging, abode of God and his angels. It seems that it was to this level, that is, to the very throne room of God, that Paul was caught up, and from which he returned.

27. [Paul's Famous Thorn in the Flesh. \(12:5-11\)](#)

Paul follows his mysterious mention of the trip to Heaven by saying that, because of the many revelations that God has granted him, he has had to deal with an ongoing problem from which he cannot get free. This problem, he thinks, has been brought into his life to keep him humble, due to the many

he may actually have been dead; but the passage does not clearly say so (Acts 14:11-20). Dead or not, to have been injured that severely, and then just stand up and walk back into the city was supernatural.

⁴⁰ Not only is this the only account of Paul's being caught up to Heaven, it is the only account of **anyone's** being so taken to Heaven and returned, with the single exception of the Lord Jesus Himself, and He was already there when He came to us as the child of Mary the blessed virgin.

revelations God has given him. He calls this nagging problem his “thorn in the flesh.”

Scholars and other students of the Bible, have long debated the identity of Paul’s thorn--probably ever since Titus delivered this letter from Paul to the Corinthians, and it was first read to the congregation there. Paul calls it “the messenger of Satan,” sent to “buffet” him. He says that he has asked the Lord to remove it from him, not just once, but three times. God’s response is a classic statement, a promise that we can apprehend for ourselves; his reply is, “My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in [your] weakness⁴¹.” God will not remove this “thorn,” but He will give Paul the grace and ability to overcome it and function in spite of it.

The Lord goes on to say that his strength is made perfect in (Paul’s) weakness, and herein is another gem of revelation: that when we are unable in our own strength to succeed in what we are sent to do, God steps in with his unlimited strength and ability, to make us able to succeed. This accomplishes the mission, while God (not we weak mortals) receives the glory.

NOTE: *There are many opinions as to the identity of this “thorn.” Some think Paul struggled with poor eyesight, because at the close of his letter to the Galatians, he speaks of the large letter he wrote with his own hand⁴². Other explanations are dreamed up out of whole cloth: that he had a club foot (yet he walked thousands of miles in ministry); that he had homosexual tendencies (because of his perceived views on marriage). So, what can we make of this? The only clues we have are:*

(1) Concerning his eyesight, the word “letter” in Gal 6:11 is singular, referring to the entire epistle—not to each letter in each word.

Additionally, documents in that day were written in “uncials” (what we call capital letters), about one inch high. If he could not see letters an inch high, he could not have seen to write at all.

(2) He calls his thorn “a messenger from Satan.” The Greek word rendered “messenger” is “angelos,” which also means “angel,” and strongly suggests an evil spirit.

(3) It only “buffeted” him, making his life difficult from time to time; whatever it was, it did not prevent him from performing his duty.

⁴¹ Outside of the gospels and Revelation, the precious words of Jesus are found only in Acts and the letters of Paul. They are found in Acts 1, 9, 11, 18, 20, 22, 23, and 26, and in I and II Corinthians. Here, in v 9, is the final instance.

⁴² Galatians 6:11.

Commented [JM11]: Additionally Paul wrote that “the Galatian church would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him if it were possible (Galatians 4:15).” and his failure to recognize the high priest of the Sanhedron (Acts 23:3-5) could be further evidence of an ophthalmologic problem

(4) The verbs “to be exalted” and “buffeted” are in the present tense, suggesting something ongoing.

(5) The metaphor “thorn in the flesh” almost always refers to people--those who make life difficult. See in this regard Num 33:55; Josh 23:13; Judg 2:2-3.

(6) In Paul’s enumerations of all of the difficulties that he has had to overcome in carrying out his ministry, which we just read (11:23-28), he makes no mention of sickness or physical handicap.

Conclusion. Considering all of the above, it is my conclusion (which, of course, is not conclusive) that Paul’s thorn was in the form of the hostile Jews, motivated by doctrinal demons and hate, who followed him wherever he went, with relentless attacks on his ministry, trying to interfere with, and undo, the good that he accomplished. To a lesser extent, this could also include the Judaizers--those legalistic Jewish Christians who followed him, insisting that to be a Christian one must first be an observant adherent to Judaism (being circumcised and obeying the rest of the law).

* * * * *

Understanding the Judaizers.

The “Judaizers” were Jewish Christians who followed Paul, insisting that Gentiles must be compliant converts to Old Covenant Judaism before they could become Christians. There were also non-Christian Jews who viewed him as a dangerous heretic, and followed him, hoping to have him killed. These groups were his constant aggravation, one that never ended, definitely a “thorn in his flesh,” creating danger for him, and confusion in the churches. He devoted much time and effort to undoing the damage they created.

We can better understand the vehemence of the Jewish Christians if we realize that the original Church was exclusively a Jewish Church; Gentiles, as we have seen, were soon added; but all of the first Christians were Jews, serving their Jewish Messiah. To them it was unthinkable that uncircumcised gentiles would claim to be disciples of their Jewish Messiah, without first becoming proselytes (converts to Judaism) and conforming to the Law. The decision of the apostles, formally pronounced by James, should have settled the matter; but it didn’t⁴³.

⁴³ Acts 15:19-29.

Commented [JM12]: This is a relatively commonly held opinion, and does fit with what little evidence we are given, (except that Paul specifically states that 3 times he had asked the Lord to take “IT” away from him, not “THEM” or “HIM”but vexing people has never seemed to me like much of a “ thorn in the flesh”.... (and though Paul refers to the hostile Jews in numerous other places, he never calls them a thorn in the flesh)... The hostile Jews have always seemed more like a fact of life instead of a personal thorn in the flesh to me.
I personally conclude that we can’t know & that this ambiguity is probably good, for it allows all of us to personally identify with “ my strength is made perfect in weakness” and “ my grace is sufficient for thee”.... All of us who need that reassurance, & not just those with eye problems, or persistent opposition, or homosexual desires... In the end I find the “not knowing” to be another evidence of God’s superior wisdom. You might mention, or even conclude this note with this consideration.

Perhaps Paul's greatest accomplishment was not just carrying the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles, but that he also labored to bring unity between the Gentile churches, and the Jewish churches. His vision was of one great Church, Jew and Gentile--not two Churches, one Jewish and one Gentile.

Perhaps the greatest personification of his vision was the personal and ministerial relationship of Paul, the Jew of Jews, with Luke, his beloved Gentile physician, who was the author of the gospel bearing his name and the Book of Acts, and Paul's faithful friend and companion--the only one still with Paul as he awaited martyrdom in Rome.

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28. A Third Trip to Corinth? (12:12-13:1)

Scolding the Corinthians for what he is hearing about them, and reminding them (with holy sarcasm) that he had supported himself with his trade of tent-making while he was among them, he is ready for "the third time" to visit them, saying that, again when he comes, he will not take their money for himself. This, he says, in spite of the fact that it seems that the more he loves them, the less they love him. Paul has sent Titus to visit them and report back to him; and, he reminds them, Titus and his associate also took nothing from them--they had paid their own expenses (probably with money provided by Paul). Also, he fears that when he again arrives himself, he will still find strife, envy, back-biting and whispered criticism of one another, as well as lasciviousness and sexual sin, still un-repenting of. With this warning he again writes that he is coming, apparently for the third time. **NOTE:** For centuries there has been debate over whether Paul did, or did not, make a brief visit to Corinth during his third missionary journey. If he did, Luke failed to record it in Acts, and Luke was a meticulously careful historian. Scriptures suggesting a brief third visit to Corinth include 12:14 and 13:1 here. Those who argue against this third visit interpret these verses to mean that Paul intended to come ("ready to come," 12:14), but do not say that he actually made the trip. And, in 13:2 he says "...if I come again..." (emphasis mine), not "**when** I come." The honest answer seems to be that we simply don't know; parts of his third missionary journey are unknown.

29. Summing Up. (13:2-14)

Summing up, Paul says that if he comes again he will straighten things out, for he has the apostolic authority to do that; and he recommends that the Corinthians examine and correct themselves, so that he will not have to do it

Commented [JM13]: Paul's personality again showing through underscores one of the differences of the "inspiration" of the Holy Bible, vs. the "inspiration" of other "Holy writ". In the 66 books of the Bible, one can readily see the process as being, God inspired the heart and mind of some man or men with some idea, some message, some teachings, encouragement, correction, reproof, instruction in righteousness... and that man or men communicated that inspired communication as faithfully as they could. We get the Word of God as communicated to men.

On the other hand, in other "Holy Writ", the process is that some man (usually one exalted person), is possessed by some supernatural theophany or some supernatural messenger of the greater power, and given some message **word for word** like an occult verbatim magic recipe. The writer's personality & understanding & situation is supposed to have nothing to do with it. Even the original language is supposed to be Holy & magical and the possession/ channeling doesn't work if not verbatim in the original language.

Considering these things, after study and consideration, I find Paul's seemingly petty sarcasm, which at first is off-putting, to be reassuring that what is key here is that God communicated to men... to us... to me... through real human beings doing the best they could to be faithful to pass on the message. And the result is something greater than the sum of its' parts.... The Word of God just perfect for every need of every person.

when he gets there. He urges them to live in peace and to greet one another with a holy kiss. And, with a closing benediction, he bids them farewell.

DRAFT