



SECOND CORINTHIANS

LESSON THREE

Please memorize the following verse and be prepared to write it out at the end of this lesson.

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (2 Corinthians 12:9–KJV).

Which Bible version are you using to do this lesson? _____

CHAPTER ELEVEN

FALSE APOSTLES AND PAUL’S SUFFERING FOR THE SAKE OF THE MINISTRY

Read 2 Corinthians 11: 1-15 _____ Check

Note: Apparently there were individuals that had gone to Corinth posing as apostles and challenged Paul’s authority as well as his personal integrity. In this chapter Paul exposes these men for who they are (vs. 13) and speaks of the personal suffering which he has experienced as a testimony of the sincerity of his service to Christ (vss. 16-33).

1. (vs. 2) What do you think Paul means by this verse? _____

2. (vs. 3) What was Paul’s fear for the Corinthians? _____

3. (vs. 4) Compare this verse with Galatians 1:6-9. What warning does Paul give the Galatians regarding those that preach another gospel than what Paul preached? _____

4. (vss. 5-6) Did Paul think of himself as less than any of the other apostles? _____ **Yes** _____ **No**

Note: Although Paul was not one of the 12 apostles chosen during the Lord's earthly ministry, he nonetheless knew that his apostleship was of special significance. He is the only person ever referred to as the "Apostle to the Gentiles." For that reason Paul said, "I magnify my office." (Romans 11:13) Paul had a unique ministry from God, which was to proclaim the Gospel of the Grace of God to everyone equally, without regard to Israel's status as a favored people as in other dispensations.

5. (vs. 13) How does Paul describe the false apostles? _____

6. (vs. 14) How can Satan present himself? _____

Read 2 Corinthians 11: 16-33 _____ Check

7. (vss. 16-21) What is Paul scolding the Corinthians for in these verses? _____

Note: The individuals that Paul is referring to in this passage are probably the same false apostles he is speaking about in verse 13.

8. (vss. 22-23) List four qualifications that the false apostles claim which Paul can also say about himself.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

9. (vs. 23) Paul lists four types of hardships he has endured for the sake of the gospel. List them here.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Note: In verses 24-27 Paul describes in detail the kind of suffering he endured for the sake of the gospel. Take some time to read through this list and then meditate on what Paul and other heroes of the faith have endured so that we may know the good news of Christ and the message of salvation by grace. Say a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord for such faithful and dedicated servants.

10. (vs. 28) What further burden does Paul bear? _____

11. (vs. 31) Read Acts 9:23-25 for the story of Paul's escape from Damascus. _____ Check

CHAPTER TWELVE

PAUL DESCRIBES VISIONS AND REVELATIONS

Read 2 Corinthians 12: 1-10 _____ Check

Note: In 2 Corinthians 12:1-6 Paul is describing an event in which, by revelation, God allowed Paul a glimpse into the heavenly realm. Although he writes as if it was another person that experienced this, he says in verse 7 that it was he that had this experience.

1. (vs. 1) What is Paul now going to discuss? _____

2. (vs. 2) How long before Paul was writing this letter did this experience take place? _____

Note: If we assume the dating of this letter to be about 54-58 AD then this vision took place between 40-44 AD. Saul of Tarsus (who later came to be known as Paul the Apostle) probably became a believer in Jesus Christ around 36 or 37 AD (Acts 9: 1-17). We also know that he spent 3 years in Damascus (Galatians 1:17-18). Therefore, this vision probably took place sometime while Paul was near the end of his time in Damascus, while he was in his home town of Tarsus (Galatians 1:21; Acts 11:25) or when he was in Antioch (Acts 11:26), before he embarked on his first missionary journey.

3. (vs. 2) Where was Paul taken in this journey? _____

Note: The Jews believed the universe was divided into three realms beyond the earth. The first heaven was the sky and atmosphere around us, the second heaven was outer space – the place of the moon and stars, and the third heaven was the dwelling place of God.

4. (vss. 2-3) Did Paul know if he was transported to the third heaven in or out of his body? _____ **Yes** _____ **No**

5. (vs. 4) What other name does Paul give to the place in which he was taken? _____

6. (vs. 4) What did Paul experience during this vision? _____

7. (vs. 7) What was Paul given so that he would not become conceited about the revelations he had received? _____

Note: No one is certain what Paul's thorn in the flesh was. Some believe it might have been a problem with his eyes or perhaps it was physical disability as a result of the many beatings and deprivations he experienced. Others have suggested that the thorn in the flesh was those people that challenged his ministry and discredited his apostleship. It probably was a physical ailment.

8. (vs. 7) Who was the source of this problem that Paul had and what impact did it have on him? _____

9. (vs. 8) What did Paul ask the Lord to do about the thorn and how many times did he pray about it? _____

10. (vs. 9) What was God's response to Paul's prayer? _____

Note: This is one of the most important passages in the Bible about unanswered prayer. It is clear from this verse that it is not always God's will to give us what we ask for. God knows what we need and what is best for us. At times we need to learn to accept our circumstances and learn to rely on the power of God's grace to take us through the situations we find ourselves in.

11. (vs. 9) Why does Paul boast (glory – KJV) in his weakness (infirmities – KJV)? _____

12. (vs. 10) "When I am _____ then I am _____."

PERSONAL COMMENTS BY PAUL

Read 2 Corinthians 12: 11-21 _____ Check

Note: In 2 Corinthians 12:11-21 Paul makes several personal comments regarding a variety of topics related to his ministry to the Corinthian believers. He once again was defending his apostleship and the sincerity of his work against the accusations of false apostles. He also is preparing them for his plan to visit them for a third time and he reminds them that he never took their money, but was only interested in sharing God's Word with them.

1. (vs.12) What does Paul say are the marks (signs- KJV) of an apostle? _____

2. (vs. 14) Including the trip that Paul is planning, how many visits did he make to Corinth? _____

3. (vss. 14-18) In your own words, describe why you think Paul is so concerned that the Corinthians are reminded that he took no money from them. _____

4. (vss. 20-21) What is Paul worried will be the situation he will find when he visits Corinth? _____

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

FINAL WARNINGS

Read 2 Corinthians 13: 1-14 _____ Check

1. (vs. 1) What principle does Paul use to explain his need to make a third trip to Corinth? _____

2. (vs. 2) What will be Paul's attitude toward those that have sinned but did not repent? _____

3. (vs. 3-4) How does Christ work among us? _____

4. (vs. 4) Explain how the principles in this verse compare with those expressed in 2 Corinthians 12: 9-10. _____

5. Can you give a personal example of a time when Christ's power was able to work through your weakness?

6. (vs. 5) What instructions does Paul give to the Corinthians? _____

7. (vs. 5) If we are in the faith (we believe the gospel) where is Christ? _____

Note: This is an important verse that reinforces the fact that we have a divine indwelling. In this case the emphasis is upon Christ indwelling us, however, this is done through the Holy Spirit, who is identified in other places with Christ and the Father. In that sense when one member of the Trinity indwells us we are indwelt by all. Read the following passages that speak of the indwelling of the believer by God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:9-11; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 2 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 1:13; Ephesians 2:21-22; 2 Timothy 1:14.

8. (vs. 9 and vs. 11) What is Paul's prayer for the Corinthians? _____

9. (vs. 10) For what purpose was Paul given authority (power – KJV) _____

10. (vs. 14) How is the truth of the Trinity (one God in three Persons) expressed in this final benediction? _____

Write 2 Corinthians 12:9 from memory on the lines below.

Use the space below for any questions or comments:

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