

We have been watching Paul glorying in what had no glory in men's eyes at all. Now he turns abruptly, from being let down in a basket to escape a Gentile governor, to being caught up to heaven for a vision of the Lord in paradise.

It is that now the light comes down from the top, from the finish of the work to the bottom where the sinner is. Without a doubt to make the sinner sensible, that is light; **but not** to condemn him, or **to demand of him** -- not at all; **but to conduct him to the top, to the finish.**

Has your heart travelled that road?

- The light has come to invite us to the glory where our Savior is. *It used to repel us, but now it invites us.*
- **This is the greatest moral revolution. Not merely that our sins are forgiven, but we belong to the glory.**

Luke 23:42-43 (NASB)

⁴² And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!"

⁴³ And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

So far, what is the subject today?

Salvation.

The word is much misused, for it is looked at generally as only what I am saved *from*, while in Scripture it is also what I am saved *to*.

There is a great difference between being occupied with what you are saved *from*, and what you are saved *to*.

1. If we are occupied with what we are saved from, it is only *relief* that is before us.
2. If we are occupied with what we are saved to, we are occupied with the hope of the gospel.

Our blessed Lord was not satisfied with getting us out of misery, but He acquired the Father's house for us to live with Him.

1 Thessalonians 5:8-10

*"But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, **we should live together with him**".*

He died that we might be with Him.

Does that touch your heart?

There is no personal knowledge of God but as we count on Him, as we are practically conscious of depending on Him and what He has told us in His Word.

Acts 22:17-21 (NASB)

¹⁷ "It happened when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I fell into a trance,

¹⁸ and I saw Him saying to me, 'Make haste, and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me.'

²¹ "And He said to me, 'Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

Trance-ekstasis- a condition in which ordinary consciousness and the perception of natural circumstances were withheld, and the soul was susceptible only to the vision imparted by God. Vine's

*Acts 13:2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, **the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."***

It is supposed, that now, following on his being sent forth by the Holy Spirit in the church, his rapture into paradise occurred.

Conformation with authority is difficult, but it tallies with the time given in 2 Corinthians 12.

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It appears to be very probable that it occurred at this time.



2 Cor 12:1 “..... *but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord.*”

Question: Why does Paul bring up “visions & revelations”

- Is it that these false teachers were claiming “visions & revelations from the Lord”?
 - They were servants of Satan & appearing as apostles of Christ - 11:13-15
 - Thus they were deceitful (corrupt) and would claim the Lord spoke to them
- The Lord often communicated with Paul in **visions & revelations**:
 - **PAUL’S VISIONS:**
 - The vision of the glory of Christ on road to Damascus - Acts 9:3-6; 26:19
 - A vision to come to Macedonia - Acts 16:9,10
 - A vision where the Lord says “speak to these at Corinth” - Acts 22:17
 - A vision that Paul & passengers would be saved from shipwreck - Acts 27:23,24
 - **PAUL’S REVELATIONS:**
 - He received the gospel by revelation from Christ - Gal 1:12; 1 Cor 15:3
 - Paul goes up to Jerusalem by revelation - Gal 2;2
 - The mystery of the church is given to Paul by revelation - Eph 3:3
 - The Lord’s Table given to Paul by revelation - 1 Cor 11:23

Meaning: Paul is saying: “I will go on and share with you visions & revelations of the Lord that I have never shared before = those when I was in Paradise.”



2 Cor 12:2,3 (NAS)

I know (knew) a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven.

And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows—

Question: Who is this man in Christ that Paul knows (knew) ?

- “I know (knew)” - οἶδα, *oída*, to know factually, intuitively – fullness of knowledge
 - Perfect tense = knew (in the past)knows (in the present)
 - Indicative mood – the mood of reality - it was real in Paul’s life
- “This man” doesn’t appear to be Paul in the context of 12:2-5
 - However 12:6,7 truly indicates that “this man” is definitely the apostle Paul

Question: Why would Paul refer to himself as a third party?

- Is it possible Paul is distinguishing between his glorified state and his earthly state of infirmity & weakness in his flesh? (1 Jn 3:2)

Question: What was happening in Paul’s life 14 years ago?

- This epistle written in AD 55-57 thus the timing was AD 41-43
- This is approx. 7-9 years after Paul’s conversion (ca. AD 34)
- Paul’s 1st missionary journey approx. AD 44
 - Paul stoned at Lystra & left for dead = a possibility but not a certainty



His Life & Ministry Glories in His Strength & Our Infirmities - 12:1-10

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I know (knew) a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven.

And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows—

Question: What is it to be “in” or “out of” the body ?

- “In the body” - the soul & spirit resides in the body
- “Out of the body” - the soul & spirit resides apart from the body

Question: Why doesn't Paul know (*oida*, to know factually, intuitively) which it is ?

- Think about Paul and the environment which he is in:
 - Paul is beholding the glorified Christ—he is fellowshiping & in nearness to Christ
 - Paul is at home – in the 3rd heaven (paradise)
 - Paul is listening in on “unspeakable words” – heavenly talk

Question: Do you think that in this state of nearness & glorious fellowship with Christ, in one's eternal home, that there could be any thought or focus on self?

- Paul was so absorbed with the object of his love
- The state of his soul & spirit was not of importance

Question: Can we experience this nearness & glorious fellowship with Christ here ?

Jn 17:21-26; 1Jn 1:1-4 (Read “Hungry Heart 7-2)



2 Cor 12:2,3 (NAS)

*I know (knew) a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, **God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven.***

*And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, **God knows—***

- “**God knows**” – Only God knows factually Paul’s state: “in or out” of his body
- “**caught**” - ἀρπάζω, *harpazō*, "to snatch or catch away"
 - Same word used in the “rapture” of the church - 1 Thes 4:17
- “**Third heaven**” - 3 heavens are described in Scripture:
 - 1st heaven = where the clouds are & birds fly
 - 2nd heaven = where the stars are
 - 3rd heaven = the abode of God = “**Paradise**” - 12:4
 - “.....*To day shalt thou be with me in **paradise***” - Lu 23:43
 - “...the tree of life, which is in the midst of the **paradise of God**” - Rev 2:7
- John was the only other apostle who was caught up to the 3rd heaven - Rev 4:1
- **John was allowed to tell of the things he saw & heard – Paul wasn’t - Why ?**



2 Corinthians 12:4 (NAS)

“was caught up into Paradise, and heard *inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.*”

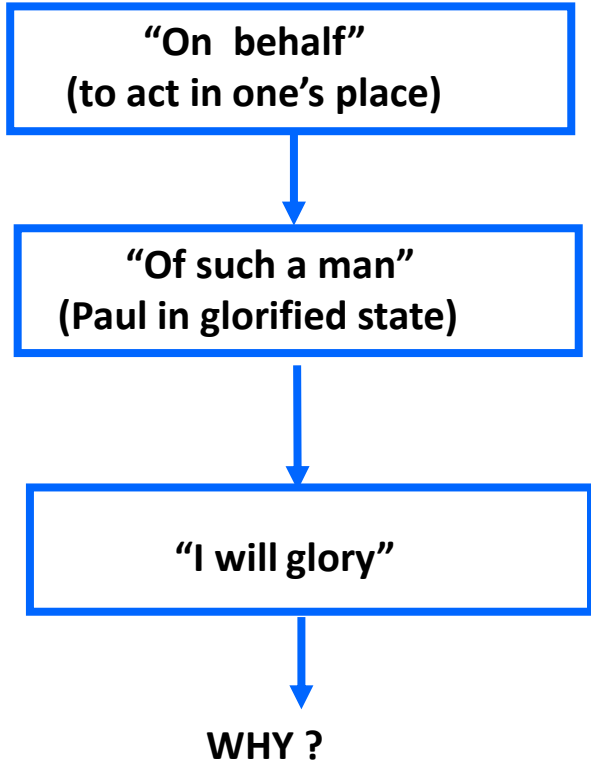
- “**inexpressible**” - ἄρρητος, *arrētos*, primarily, "unspoken" (a, negative, *rhētōs*, "spoken"), denotes "unspeakable,"
 - Used only here in the NT
 - The word is common in sacred inscriptions especially in connection with the Greek Mysteries; hence Moulton and Milligan suggest the meaning:
"words too sacred to be uttered."
- “**words**” - ῥῆμα, *rhēma*, “that which is or has been uttered by the living voice, thing spoken, word” – a specific word/s
 - Observe “word” is not “*logos*” - *logos* is reasoned speech, *rhēma*, an utterance
 - The significance of *rhēma* (as distinct from *logos*) is exemplified in [Eph. 6:17](#)
 - Observe also, there appears to be a heavenly language which we will know when we are face to face
- “**permitted to speak**” - Paul had not the power adequately to utter these words
 - Nor if he had, would he have been permitted
 - Nor would earthly men comprehend them ([John 3:12](#) [1Co 2:9](#))
 - Only a heavenly man can comprehend heavenly language



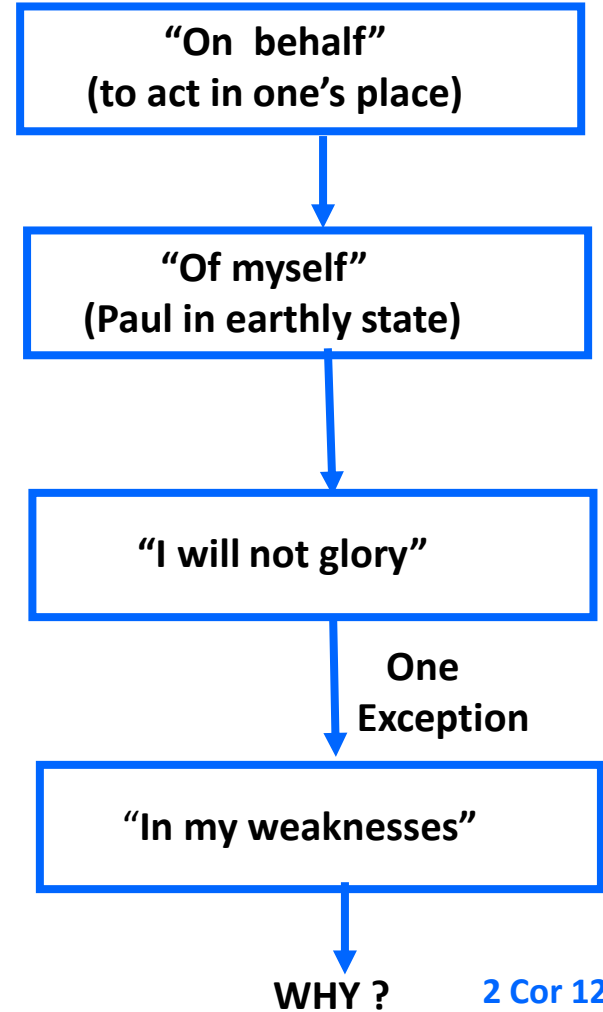
His Life & Ministry Glories in His Strength & Our Infirmities - 12:1-10

2 Cor 12:5 (NAS)

*On behalf of such a man will I boast (glory);
but on my own behalf I will not boast (glory), except in regard to my weaknesses.*



Jn 17:21-28
1 Jn 3:2
God's Eternal Purpose



2 Cor 12:9



2 Cor 12:5 (NAS)

*On behalf of such a man will I boast (glory);
but on my own behalf I will not boast (glory), except in regard to my weaknesses*

Observations:

- Paul's revelations & experience were of untold & indescribable blessedness
 - While in the light of it – everything is “for him”
 - But when he comes back – everything is “against him”
 - The things without (false teachers, persecution, trials, suffering, etc)
 - The things within – (the care of the churches – believers fallen from grace)

Question: Should we expect anything different ?

- As we are seated above & beholding Christ there:
 - everything is “for us” - Rom 8:31-35, 37
 - But here everything is “against us” - Rom 8:36
 - Our old man (sin nature) is against us
 - The world is against us
 - Satan is against us

Glorifying God:

- We can glorify God for our position there
- We can glorify God for our weaknesses here



2 Cor 12:6 (NAS)

For if I do wish to boast (glory) I shall not be foolish, for I shall be speaking the truth; but I refrain from this, so that no one may credit me with more than he sees in me or hears from me.

- “if” / “Then” - It’s a 3rd class conditional sentence - A probable future condition
- “if” - I desire to glory (and it hasn’t happened yet, but it probably will & when it does)
- “Then” - I shall not be foolish about glorying – that is:
 - Not to glory in man - 1 Cor 3:21
 - Not to glory in myself (except my weaknesses) - 2 Cor 12:5
 - But only to glory in the Lord - 1 Cor 1:31; 10:31; 2 Cor 10:17
- I will speak the truth – since it will focus on the glory of Christ
 - The focus of my glorying will not be on me
 - So nobody may form a higher estimate of me
 - But may form a high estimate of Christ
 - Who they see through me as I abide in Him
 - And hear the message He has given me in His grace

In [2 Corinthians 12](#) we are learning to deal with Christ on entirely new ground.

A man in Christ is taken into a new sphere.

- Now we recognize we are united to a Man in heaven, and heaven is the place that we belong to,
- Even though we are His body upon earth, we are not in any way connected with anything here.
- We are united to a Man in heaven so that we may know that all our thoughts, and joys, and expectations are in another scene - a scene that is foreign to our birth and condition here.
- We are not without associations with all that is here, but we need to ignore the man that is here, and the place that he is in.

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

