

Studies In Second Corinthians

(II Corinthians 12:1-10)

1. While Paul did not consider it expedient to continue to glory, did he reveal that he had visions?

Yes: *"It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord"* (II Corinthians 12:1).

- There is a difference between authorized and expedient actions. Something may not be wrong with the Lord, but may not be expedient either (I Corinthians 6:12 and I Corinthians 10:23).
- Paul certainly had visions and revelations (Acts 16:5-10, Acts 18:7-11, Acts 22:17-21, Galatians 1:8-12, and Galatians 2:1-2).

2. When Paul had visions, was there always clarity in what he was seeing?

No: *"(2) I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. (3) And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)"* (II Corinthians 12:2-3).

- Knowing a man "in Christ" tells us Paul knew he was a Christian (Romans 16:7, I Corinthians 1:2, II Corinthians 5:17, and Galatians 3:26-28).
- Some knowledge is to God, not us (Deuteronomy 29:29 and Acts 1:6-7).
- The third heaven is in reference to Paradise (II Corinthians 12:4). *More on that to come in the next question...
- There is a difference of being in the flesh and being in a spiritual body (Philippians 1:22-23 and James 2:26).
- This could have been an angel who both are spirits (Psalms 104:4) and took on flesh (Hebrews 13:2; cf. Genesis 18:1-2; 16; 19:11).

3. What was the man, that Paul had a vision of, caught up into?

Paradise: *"How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter"* (II Corinthians 12:4).

- Paradise (Luke 23:39-45).
- We know Jesus went to Hades (Acts 2:23-27) and thus Paradise is in that realm (Luke 16:19-31).
- Prior to Heaven, this is where the faithful go when we overcome this world (Revelation 2:7).

4. If Paul does glory, what was he going to glory in?

His infirmities: *"Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities"* (II Corinthians 12:5).

- II Corinthians 11:30; cf. I Thessalonians 3:3-4, II Timothy 3:12, I Peter 2:20-21, and I Peter 3:14.

5. Did Paul want to be exalted?

No: *"For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me"* (II Corinthians 12:6).

- Paul didn't want exalted (Acts 14:8-18, Romans 15:17-18, I Corinthians 3:5-6, and II Corinthians 4:5; cf. John 7:18).
- He didn't want them to look at him as their standard, above what is written, either (I Corinthians 4:6).

6. What happened to Paul so that he should not be exalted above measure?

He was given a thorn in the flesh: *"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure"* (II Corinthians 12:7).

- Galatians 4:13.
- The messenger of Satan (Job 2:7) to buffet [to strike with the fist; Strong's # 2852] (Matthew 26:67).

7. How many times did Paul plead with the Lord concerning what had befallen him?

Three times: *"For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me"* (II Corinthians 12:8).

- Paul was persistent in asking (Jeremiah 29:12, Luke 18:1, and Philippians 4:6).
- God says ask and you will receive (Matthew 7:7 and Mark 11:24).
- Even in moving mountains (Matthew 21:17-22).
- Yet, you must ask aright, in part, in not seeking carnal things (James 4:3 and I John 5:14-15).
- Healings, and all other miracles, had a purpose that already had been fulfilled in Paul and not necessary again (Mark 16:17-20).

8. Did the Lord heal Paul after Paul pleaded for Him to do so?

No: *“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” (II Corinthians 12:9).*

- This answer applies to all – grace is sufficient (**Acts 15:11** and **Ephesians 2:1-10**) so stop wanting everything else too (**Philippians 4:11-17**, **I Timothy 6:6-10**, and **Hebrew 13:5-6**).

9. How did Paul look at his sufferings?

He took pleasure in them: *“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (II Corinthians 12:10).*

- **Matthew 5:10-12, Colossians 1:24, James 1:2, I Peter 1:3-9, and I Peter 4:13-14.**