

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan

II CORINTHIANS 12

II Corinthians 12

This great chapter opens with the great apostle sharing what he shared nowhere else in the writings of sacred scripture: the account of his sufferings. He did this because his very apostleship was being questioned. His character was being questioned. He had not talked about this because the ministry of the gospel was not about him nor any servant of God. It is about the Lord himself. But Paul recounts his sufferings and trials at the close of chapter 11, then opens chapter 12 with his "out-of-body" experience.

He was caught up into the third heaven, into the paradise of God. Please listen to the podcast for II Corinthians 12 and others I have made, which talk about death, dying, paradise, and heaven. Below, please see the recounting of Paul's suffering, which he called "light affliction," compared to the suffering of the Lord Jesus. It was the expectation of the Apostle Paul and all the Apostles of Jesus and the early believers to suffer for the name of Jesus. They believed the words of Jesus, who said, ***"In this world, you will have tribulation/crushing, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."***

"I say again, let no one think of me as a fool. If otherwise, at least receive me as a fool, that I also may boast a little. What I say, I speak not according to the Lord, but as it were, foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I also will boast. For you put up with fools gladly since you yourselves are wise! For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face. To our shame I say that we were too weak

for that! But in whatever way anyone is bold—I speak foolishly—I am bold also.

Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ? —I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting's often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches." (II Corinthians 11:22-28)

Western Christianity, in general, and specifically in the United States, is spoiled, weak, and anemic. We are prone to complain if we lose a friend because of our testimony of Jesus. We complain about having to get up and go worship once each week like that is something special. We complain that no one greeted us properly, the message was too long, the coffee was not hot enough, or too hot. You get the picture. Unless there is repentance, regeneration, and renewal in the US, our nation is doomed. The condition in our country is not because of those without Jesus but because of the weakness, comfortableness, and silence of those who know Jesus.

Prayer and Action Steps

Lord, please awaken my heart to Your Word, Your Spirit, and to a life consumed by You. Please help me to love You more than the applause and approval of anyone. Amen