



**A Vision of Heaven that changes our ideas about our privileges, rights, and weaknesses.*

**2 Corinthians 12:1 It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— 4 how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 5 Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. 6 For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me.*

V:1-2 Paul was given more than seven visions and several divine mysteries.

Revelations of the Lord. Jesus would create the Church His bride as the manifold wisdom of God. **Eph.3:10-11**

The vision of third heaven. The 1st heaven is the sky, the 2nd heaven is the abode of Satan, and the third heaven is the abode of God.

V:3-6 Heavenly concepts that challenge our earthly understanding.

What Paul heard and saw challenged and changed how he views things on Earth.

Heavenly and spiritual warfare has been the substance of this portion of Paul's letter to the Church.

Paul waited 14 years to admit to this event, and what he heard was not lawful for a man to utter.

Our culture is fanatical about our personal peace and comfort. This view will see comfort as a right when taken to an extreme. This view will hide from us and even blind us to the power of infirmities and discomfort God can use.

Comfort for my infirmities.

**Our secret weapon is revealed in our weakness.*

**2 Corinthians 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

11 I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing. 12 Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds. 13 For what is it in which you were inferior to other churches, except that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong!

Insights for V:7-10 The thorn is the connection to Paul's revelations in heaven.

Pride will destroy every human. Paul understood this temptation.

Three times, Paul pleaded to God to remove the infirmity. Was it his natural eyesight? Many believe so in order to keep his heart in check about the abundance of spiritual insights.

***Paul's infirmity or weakness became his life's** secret weapon of grace.

1. *The infirmity was his protection from the flesh.
2. *The infirmity was a reminder of the power of grace.
3. *The infirmity was the backdoor to his strength in Christ.
4. *The infirmity became the power of Christ in him.
5. *The infirmities became his comfort (Pleasure). In them, Paul experiences great insight, power, grace, strength, and comfort.

Sustaining grace and strengthening grace are needed in the Christian life. We often fail as Christians in our strengths, not our weaknesses.

V:11-13 A person's spiritual expectation should never be confused with spiritual promises.
The Corinth church expected so much but wanted to be responsible for so little.

***If we don't mature spiritually, we will be found in an uneducated mess of flesh.**

**2 Corinthians 12:14 Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. 15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved. 16 But be that as it may, I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you by cunning! 17 Did I take advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you? 18 I urged Titus, and sent our brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps? 19 Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But we do all things, beloved, for your edification. 20 For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults; 21 lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.*

V:14-18 Spiritual self-importance is ugly to God and the world.

Majoring in minor things places you in the category of a minor player in the Kingdom of God.

V:19-21 A lack of appreciation reveals a lack of dedication.

A Christian that isn't sold out will be found in the middle of many fleshly issues.

The Kingdom will not advance by the focus of a "me" generation, but the Christian will become discouraged and defeated. (Sin will take over every arena of the Christian world.)

The selfless act is the path to victory. (Communion reminds us of this kind of dedication.)