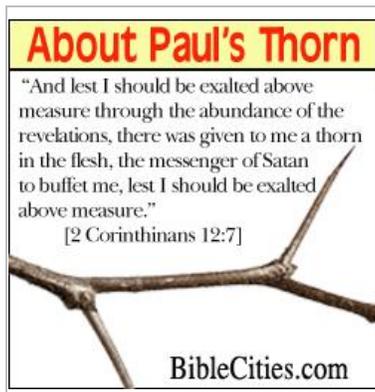


ABOUT PAUL'S THORN:

This article is a brief synopsis of the complete audio message "About Paul's Thorn".



ABOUT PAUL'S THORN

The Scriptures state plainly that despite the denominational and religious teaching of today, when the Lord said to Paul "My grace is sufficient for thee" He was NOT denying Paul the healing that belongs to all of us thru the Covenant.

Discover for yourself the awesome TRUTH that the scriptures reveal as Pastor Moran explains the subject of Paul's "Thorn" in detail

Get it on CD:

http://biblecities.com/CDs_Pauls_Thorn.htm

Scripture Reference:

• 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." [2 Corinthians 12:7]

About Paul's Thorn!

One of the most common arguments to the idea that it is God's WILL for ALL to be Healed is the mention of what the scriptures refer to as the Apostle Paul's THORN IN THE FLESH.

And what we BELIEVE about that thorn - what it was - where it came from - and so on - WILL have a DIRECT effect on our ABILITY to RECEIVE the Healing that Jesus paid FOR us - in His Body on the cross.

Unfortunately ... What most people believe today is NOT what the Scriptures SAY - But rather what they have been TAUGHT about that Thorn.

So I want to examine the scriptures today - And see if what we BELIEVE - is what the Scriptures actually SAY - Or is what we believe based upon some religious or traditional denominational doctrine.

Now when it comes to UNDERSTANDING or INTERPRETING scripture - we must ALWAYS use the Scriptures - REMEMBER: Scripture Interprets Scripture.

We must be VERY careful NOT to allow and preconceived ideas or opinions - or personal experiences or failures - to muddy the water - or dissuade us from what the scriptures actually SAY.

So we are going to Look at the scriptures ONLY - and then draw our conclusion from what the SCRIPTURES SAY.

And if that means that we must correct our thinking - then let's correct our thinking!

This thorn in the flesh that Apostle Paul mentioned has been used - and misused by Christians to justify submitting to nearly any problem that comes along. Satan has twisted this passage of Scripture to deceive many people into believing that God would not heal Paul, ---- and if we believe THAT - How then can WE expect to be healed?

So let's Let us examine this closely and find out exactly what Paul's thorn in the flesh was.

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About Paul's Thorn *Continued...*

“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. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 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. 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.” [2 Corinthians 12:7-10]

FIRST AND FOREMOST:

Notice that the scriptures state clearly in VERSE SEVEN that this "thorn" came because of the abundance of revelations Paul had received.

- [7] *And lest I should be exalted above measure BECAUSE OF the abundance of the revelations,* [KJV]

So - Until a person has an abundance of revelations, similar to what Paul had, there is little possibility that they will have a "thorn" such as Paul had.

That would disqualify just about *everyone* who has been hiding behind Paul's thorn as an *excuse* for not using their faith to receive the promise of healing that 1 Peter 2:24 promises.

SECOND:

Verse 7 also states clearly that this "Thorn" came lest (or to prevent) Paul from being be 'exalted above measure'. A more accurate translation is "TO keep me from being *excessively exalted*" By GOD! REMEMBER that it was GOD who was the one who had given Paul the revelations)

Traditionally, that verse has been interpreted to say the thorn was sent (by the Lord) to keep Paul humble. And if that is true - then surely God had to be the cause - or origin of this 'thorn', because only God would want Paul to be humble.

BUT IS THAT TRUE?

Does the SCRIPTURE state that GOD was the CAUSE of ORIGIN of this 'Thorn in the flesh'.

What if there is a GODLY way of being exalted- - - BY GOD Himself

If there IS - then the idea that it was GOD who was afflicting Paul to keep him humble would have NO merit

FORTUNATELY- - - There IS a godly way of being exalted - And scripture states clearly that God WILL exalt us:

GOD DOES THE EXALTING:

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He [GOD) may exalt -or lift you up' in due time." [Peter 5:6]

Scriptures States clearly that: Those who submit themselves to God - [Humble themselves] - *will be exalted by God.*

According to what this passage actually SAYS - Paul was not speaking of exalting himself above measure through pride, God Himself was exalting Paul thru the incredible revelation that He was giving to Paul.

FURTHERMORE: the scripture state clearly that the thorn came from SATAN---- to keep Paul from being exalted *by God* in the eyes of the people.

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About Paul's Thorn *Continued...*

The Apostle Paul was receiving tremendous revelations from the Lord Jesus Himself that was changing what everyone believed about salvation and grace - healing/ deliverance - including the original remaining 11 Apostles - Peter included [2 Peter 3:15-16]

Add to that the fact that verse 2 Corinthians 12:12 - and Acts 19:11 tells us that SPECIAL MIRACLES were being done by Paul - things unlike anything ever seen before - - - So people whole cities were being affected by His preaching! [see Acts 13]

And many more people would have received what Paul preached if everything was always "rosy" for him. So this messenger of *Satan* is sent to buffet Paul - and scare away the faint-hearted from committing themselves to Jesus, whom Paul was preaching.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE:

We see another example of God Magnifying or Exalting Someone in Joshua:

- “God magnified, or exalted, Joshua in the sight of his people” [Joshua 3:7]

And another example of How GOD Himself exalted people in the NEW covenant is found in Acts 5:13:

- “The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. [13] No one else dared join them, but the people magnified (exalted) them.” [Act 5:12-13]

So, we see that the exalting spoken of is not a negative or sinful kind - but rather a *godly* kind.

Add to this the FACT that the scripture states SPECIFICALLY that the thorn was a: **Messenger of SATAN** - not God!

IDENTIFYING THE “THORN”:

One of the problems that has plagued the Church is the fact that there have been so MANY speculations as to what exactly Paul's ‘THORN in the Flesh’ was.

But again: If we are willing to ACCEPT what the Scriptures SAY - then we can immediately clear up any confusion.

In verse 7, right after the thorn in the flesh is mentioned there is a phrase set off by commas in which Paul says, "**I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan.**."

THIS IS AN EXPLANATION OF WHAT THE THORN WAS.

It was not an "infirmity" such as a sickness or an "eye problem" as so many have wrongly speculated

IT WAS A DEMONIC MESSENGER - a demon - an unclean spirit.

The word used here in the GREEK (*Angelos*) that is translated as "messenger" - is always translated as angel or messenger - one who is sent - and it refers to a *created* being.

So, the SCRIPTURES tell us that Paul's thorn was literally a demon sent from Satan to buffet him. FYI - The word "buffet" means to strike repeatedly as waves would buffet the shore.

So How did this demonic force continually strike or Buffet Paul?

Traditionally it has been taught that it was with sickness,

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About Paul's Thorn *Continued...*

The REASON that many have accepted this explanation is the use of the words "weakness" and "infirmity" in verses 9 and 10 in the King James translation.

- “And he (God) 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. [10] 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.” [2 Corinthians 12: 9-10]

It is certainly true that the word ‘infirmity’ certainly CAN mean sickness and is even used that way in 1 Timothy 5:23.

- “**Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.**” (1 Timothy 5:23)

But that is NOT the ONLY meaning of the word.

It CAN also mean ‘lack or inadequacy’ - such as a lack of ability:

EXAMPLE: Speaking of our prayer life -

- "Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities." [Romans 8:26]

In this passage, the context makes it clear that it is NOT speaking of sicknesses - but rather not KNOWING what to pray for. Because of our limited understanding of things in general - or the future makes our ability to pray as we SHOULD difficult at best.

Here we see that is our MINDS that are the infirmity, or an inadequacy - not because of sickness - but because of our NOT KNOWING.

CONTEXT - CONTEXT - CONTEXT:

If we look at the context of Paul's mention of his thorn in the flesh in verses 9-10, we can see clearly that the word ‘infirmity’ is NOT referring to a sickness that Paul was suffering from.

In 2 Corinthians 11:23-30, Paul uses the exact terminology of "glorying in infirmities" that he also uses again in just a few verses later when speaking about this very thorn.

- "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) (Then) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in being danger of death more often. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory (NIV: boast) , I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities." [2 Corinthians 11: 23-30]

NOTICE:

In the eleventh chapter Paul specifically LISTS what those infirmities were that he referred to in chapter 12.

In verses 23-29, he lists such things as imprisonment, stripes, shipwrecks, and being stoned; none of these speak of sickness. Verse 27 mentions weakness and painfulness, which some have tried to make mean sickness, but it is just as possible he could have been weary and suffered painfulness from such things as being stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:19). All these things listed in 2 Corinthians 11 refer to persecutions as infirmities.

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About Paul's Thorn *Continued...*

In verses 23-29 He lists:

- Imprisonment,
- Stripes (the times he was whipped or flogged)
- Shipwrecks,
- Being stoned

NONE OF THESE IS SICKNESS:

Verse 27 mentions weakness and painfulness, which some have tried to make mean sickness, But considering the context it's more reasonable to conclude that the PAIN and weariness was a result of the things he suffered - like being STONED and left for dead.

I don't know about you - but after enduring being beaten with rod THREE times

- Being STONED and left for dead
- Being shipwrecked not once but THREE times
- Spending a night and a day trying not to drown in the ocean
- Not to mention ALL the other PERILS he suffered

I MIGHT be a little tired - and have a few aches and pains.

Did you notice that the things Paul Mentions as the tests - trials - and PERSECUTIONS he endured - But NOT one of them mentioned is 'sickness'

Yet He specifically CALLS them "Infirmities"

- "If I must needs glory (NIV: boast), I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities." [2 Corinthians 11:30]

Therefore, using the basic law of interpretation of context AND by reading what the scripture actually SAYS, Paul's thorn was a demonic angel or messenger sent by Satan which continually stirred up persecution against him.

STAY WITH ME:

Now I realize that this might be hard for some people to swallow - But I encourage you to continue reading along with me as we discover the TRUTH about Paul's "thorn in the flesh".

DID YOU KNOW THAT THERE ARE THREE OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES ALSO MENTION "THORNS".

That's right! There are three other scriptures where PEOPLE are spoken of as being "thorns in your sides" and "thorns in your eyes."

- "Take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have given you the land to possess. Distribute the land by lot, according to your clans. To a larger group give a larger inheritance, and to a smaller group a smaller one. Whatever falls to them by lot will be theirs. Distribute it according to your ancestral tribes. "But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides (flesh). They will give you trouble in the land where you will live." [Numbers 33:53-55]
- "But if you turn away and ally yourselves with the survivors of these nations that remain among you and if you intermarry with them and associate with them, then you may be sure that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you. Instead, they will become snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land, which the LORD your God has given you." [Joshua 23:12-13]
- "And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides (flesh), and their gods shall be a snare unto you." [Judges 2:2-3]

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About Paul's Thorn *Continued...*

So we see that if we restrict ourselves to SCRIPTURE as the means of discovering WHAT Paul's thorn *was* -we can readily see that Paul really asking the Lord to remove persecution from him, NOT sickness, -- and the Lord's reply was that His grace was sufficient enough for him to ENDURE it and overcome it.

REMEMBER

We are not redeemed from persecution.

JESUS HIMSELF TOLD US:

- "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also." [John15:20]

And then Paul ALSO told us:

- "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." [2 Timothy 3:12]

And THAT is what he meant in verse 9 & 10 when after the Lord told him His grace was sufficient" - He said:

- "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, (and then he LISTS those infirmities) in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." [2 Corinthians 12:9-10]

ABOUT THE WORD : "Glory"

If we do a study of the Hebrew word translated as "glory" - we find that there are several different contexts in which the word is used.

ONE of them is an old English word which means to have *dominion* over or *command*. It is used in Exodus 8:9 where Moses told Pharaoh to *glory* over him, or command him, when to destroy the frogs.

- "And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only?" [Exodus 8:9]

If we read the entire context of Paul's situation we can see clearly that when he speaks of glorying in these infirmities or persecutions, he was speaking of victory even in the midst of continual harassment.

In Acts 14:19, Paul was stoned and left for dead (those that stoned him literally thought he WAS dead) - but God raised him up, and the next day he walked at least twenty miles into the next town and started preaching again. The Lord did not stop the persecution, but God's strength was certainly made perfect in Paul's weakness (verse 9).

Can you imagine what those that stoned him must have thought? They could see Paul's humanity in the cuts and bruises, but they could also see the supernatural strength of God flowing through him. "**For when I am weak, then am I strong**" (verse 10).

There are two other passages of Scripture that those who believe Paul's thorn in the flesh was sickness have tried to use incorrectly to prove their position.

The first one is Galatians 4:13-15. Here Paul writes that he preached the Gospel to these Galatians through an infirmity of the flesh, and in verse 15, he makes reference to these people being willing to poke out their own eyes and give them to him. -----
----- From this, I have heard ministers preach that Paul's thorn was a rare, ancient disease which was characterized by runny, puffy eyes.

Continued....

About Paul's Thorn *Continued...*

But AGAIN - Let's READ the scriptures and discover the CONTECT in which was speaking when he said this.

Paul was writing to the people who lived in the region known as Galatia, which had as its major cities, Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium.

The event where Paul was stoned and left for dead, happened in Lystra, a city of Galatia.

The next day Paul walked to Derbe - another city of Galatia, and began preaching unto them.

Paul had just been stoned and left for dead! - - And I sure that some of those stones he took to the head
So I'm sure he had runny, puffy eyes, along with multiple cuts and bruises, ---- but they were not the result of some disease.
They were the result of having just been stoned.

He also says in verse 13 that his infirmity was "at the first," which leaves the impression it was only a temporary thing that he recovered from.

Another scripture that many try to use to prove that Paul's thorn was bad eyes is also in Galatians, chapter 6, verse 11.

- "Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand."

People have said Paul's eyes were so bad that he had to write in large letters, and this is what he was making reference to. That is only a supposition and not a very good one at that.

It is a lot more credible to believe that he was simply referring to the long letter he had just written to the Galatians.

The reason it is so important to realize that the thorn in the flesh was not something which Jesus died to redeem us from, such as sickness, is so that we won't submit ourselves to these things in the false belief that "IT MUST BE GOD'S WILL" - - Or God is just trying to TEACH US SOMETHING

- James 4:7 says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

We have to resist, or actively fight against, the devil and the things he brings, to see them flee.

SATAN HAS USED TRADITIONAL TEACHING ABOUT PAUL'S THORN TO BRING MANY CHRISTIANS TO A PLACE OF SUBMITTING TO HIM - Instead of God

But, JESUS SAID: "you shall know the truth and the truth, shall set you free"