

Paul's "Thorn in the Flesh"

Most people are familiar with Paul's prayer of request for God to remove his "thorn in the flesh"

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

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.

Paul does not tell us that God did not answer his prayer. He did receive an answer. He was given an understanding of why he had been given his infirmity.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

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.

Paul had written earlier in 2 Corinthians that we have the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ shining in our hearts. God gives this to frail humans, earthen vessels, so that His power will be of Him and not of us.

2 Corinthians 4:6-7

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, **hath shined in our hearts**, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. **But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.**

Many speculate that his infirmity was visible to others and that it had to do with his eyes. Paul tells the Galatians that they did not despise him or reject him because of his infirmity. He calls it a temptation (test) in his flesh. He thought that

they were so kind that they would have given him their own eyes to help him.

Galatians 4:13-16

Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. **And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God,** even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? **for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.** Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

Paul told the Philippians that they should follow him and use him as an example. He reminded them that their conversation was in heaven where Jesus Christ would change our vile bodies into glorious bodies like His. It seems that this prayer was answered, too. Christ gave Paul something that his followers would see every time they looked at Paul to remind them that of

the vile bodies they currently had which would be changed like Christ's glorious body.

Philippians 3:17,20-21

Brethren, **be followers together of me**, and mark them which **walk so as ye have us for an ensample**.

20For our conversation is in heaven; **from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body**, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Our God is a wonderful God! He answers every prayer in the way that it should be answered.