

The Second LETTER of PAUL to the CORINTHIANS¹

LAST GENERATION VERSION

Translation & Notes by Tim Warner

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Chapter 1

Greeting

Paul, Emissary of Jesus Anointed by the will of God, and Timothy the brother, to the assembly of God, the one in Corinth, together with all the holy ones being in the whole of Achaia. 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Master Jesus Anointed.

God's great Deliverance at Ephesus

3 Blessed² the God and Father of our Master Jesus Anointed,³ the Father of compassions and God of all consolation, 4 the one consoling us over all our affliction [in order] to empower us to console those in every affliction through the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled under God. 5 Since just as the sufferings of the Anointed are multiplying unto us, thus also our consolation is multiplying through the Anointed. 6 Yet whether we are afflicted, [it is] for your consolation and deliverance (which is effective in endurance of the same sufferings which we are experiencing). Whether we are consoled, [it is] for your consolation and deliverance. 7 And our hope over you [is] solid, having observed that even as you are sharers of the sufferings, thus also [you are sharers] of the consolation. 8 For we are not willing for you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning our affliction which happened to us in Asia,⁴ because we were extremely burdened beyond our ability, so that we despaired even to live. 9 But we have accepted the sentence of death in ourselves, so that we may not be having confidence in ourselves but upon the God who arouses the dead, 10 who rescued us from such a great death, and now rescues, unto whom we have hoped that He also will continue rescuing [us]. 11 You also, assisting

¹ The second letter to the Corinthians was carried by Titus to Corinth less than a year after the first letter (2 Cor. 8:10,23). It was written after Paul's departure from Ephesus (Acts 20:1), having just stopped to visit the assemblies in Macedonia – Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea – (Acts 20:2-3; 2 Cor. 1:15-16; 2 Cor. 2:12-13) on his way to Corinth to collect their donation mentioned in 1 Cor. 16. Since in this letter Paul mentioned the generous gift he collected from all the assemblies of Macedonia (2 Cor. 8:1-5) on his way to Corinth, this letter must have been written from Berea, the last assembly of Macedonia that Paul visited before arriving at Corinth. It is not clear who transcribed this letter for Paul, but it should be noted that the Greek grammar and style is more clumsy and awkward than most of Paul's other letters.

² See note on Eph. 1:3.

³ The New Testament frequently refers to God as both the "Father" and the "God" of Jesus, showing clearly the Son's subordinate position. This statement appears at the beginning of almost all of Paul's letters, yet was borrowed from Jesus Himself (John 20:17).

⁴ Acts 19:23-41

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in prayer over us, so that He may be thanked concerning us from many faces for the gift [granted] unto us through many [prayers]. 12 For our boast is this, (the witness of our conscience), that we conducted ourselves with simplicity and sincerity of God in the world, not in fleshly wisdom, but in God's grace, and even more-so towards you.

The Cause for Paul's Delay in Coming

13 For we write nothing to you besides what you read and understand.⁵ And I trust that you will understand until the end, 14 just as you understood us from a portion,⁶ that we are your boast even as also you are ours in the Day of the Master, Jesus. 15 And I was intending previously to come to you⁷ with this confidence so that you might have a second grace,⁸ 16 and to pass into Macedonia because of you, and again from Macedonia to come to you, and [then] to be sent unto Judea by you.⁹ 17 Then intending this, I did not employ insincerity! Rather, that which I intend, I am intending according to the [limitations of the] flesh¹⁰ so that with me "yes" should be [simply] yes and "no" should be [simply] no!¹¹ 18 Yet God is faithful, so that our word toward you did not become "yes" and "no."¹² 19 For the Son of God – Jesus Anointed – having been proclaimed among you by us, (by me and Silvanus and Timothy), did not become [both] "yes" and "no," but has become "yes" in Him. 20 For whatever promises are from God are "the YES" in Him, and are "the AMEN"¹³ in Him. 21 But God is the one confirming us together

⁵ This was a rebuke to those who attempted to read between the lines in Paul's first letter, and ascribe motives and intentions to him which he did not intend.

⁶ Paul acknowledged that his own knowledge was not as yet complete, since the Emissaries themselves were still being taught by the Breath of Truth (John 16:13). His teaching to them thus far was based upon the limited revelation that he had received thus far from God. (See: 1 Cor. 13:9-10,12).

⁷ In 1 Corinthians 16, Paul stated that he was planning to visit Corinth once he left Ephesus where a great opportunity had presented itself for ministry (1 Cor. 16:9). Paul wrote that letter towards the end of the two years he taught in Ephesus in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:8-10). He initially planned to stay in Ephesus through Pentecost (1 Cor. 16:8), and then arrive at Corinth to spend the entire winter with them (1 Cor. 16:6). But the opportunity for effective ministry in Ephesus was greater than Paul imagined, so he sent Timothy and Erastus on ahead while he stayed longer than he had anticipated in Ephesus (Acts 19:21-23). Consequently, when the Corinthians received the first letter, they made preparations for Paul's arrival and stay with them for the winter. But they were disappointed when he did not show up, and began to question his sincerity.

⁸ To bestow additional spiritual gifts upon them (cf. 1 Cor. 1:4-7).

⁹ 1 Cor. 16:3-6

¹⁰ Luke recorded that "Paul intended in the Breath" to pass through Macedonia on his way to Corinth (Acts 19:21).

¹¹ This is a reference to Jesus' commandment not to swear "oaths" (pronounce a certainty) because many things are outside of our control. He said that a simple "yes" or "no" is sufficient without adding any guarantees which are outside of our power to control (Matt. 5:33-37). James expounded on this topic, writing "Instead you are to say, 'If the Master may also be willing we will live and will do this or that'" (James 4:15). Paul did not fail to follow Jesus' command and James' rebuke in his initial letter to the Corinthians, writing, "But I will come quickly to you whenever the Master may allow" (1 Cor. 4:19). Thus, Paul's "yes" and his "no" should have been taken by them with these qualifiers, and they should not have assumed that he was insincere in his original plans.

¹² That is, God is faithful to ensure that Paul would reach Corinth, even though not in the timeframe that he originally intended.

¹³ Hebrew word for agreement and affirmation – "May it be so."

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with you¹⁴ unto the Anointed, and the one having anointed us, 22 and the one having sealed us and given the deposit of the Breath¹⁵ in our hearts. 23 Yet I call upon God, the witness over my soul, that in sparing you¹⁶ I delayed coming unto Corinth, 24 not that we dictate your faith, but we are co-workers for your joy. For you have stood¹⁷ “by faith.”¹⁸

Chapter 2

The Cause for Paul's harsh Rebukes in the first Letter

But I decided this within myself, not to come to you again with grief. 2 For if I grieve you, who else is gladdening me except the one being grieved from me? 3 And I wrote this same thing to you, having confidence over you all, so that in coming I might not have sorrow from the ones required to make me rejoice, because my joy is from all of you. 4 For I wrote to you out of much conflict and burden of heart, through many tears, not so that you would be grieved, but so that you may understand the surpassing love I have for you. 5 But if anyone has caused grief,¹⁹ he has not grieved me, but some [of you], so that I may not burden all of you. 6 This rebuke to such [a man] by the majority²⁰ is sufficient, 7 so as [now] instead [should be] to graciousness and to consoling, so as such [a man] should not be swallowed up by excessive grief. 8 Therefore, I enjoin you to affirm your love to him. 9 For I wrote this so that I may know your trustworthiness, if you are obedient unto everything. 10 Yet, to whomever you forgive, I also [forgive]. For if I also forgive anyone, it is [the one] whom I have forgiven through you in the presence of Jesus Anointed,²¹ 11 so that we should not be outmaneuvered beneath the Adversary, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

The Aroma of Life and Death

12 Yet having come to Troas for the Good-Message of the Anointed, and a door having been opened to me in the Master, 13 I have had no relief in my breath to not find my brother Titus, but departing from them, I came into Macedonia.²² 14 Yet thanks [be] to God, the one always [causing] us [to] triumph²³ in the Anointed, and manifesting the smell of His knowledge through us in every place, 15 because we are the fragrance of

¹⁴ 1 Cor. 1:4-9

¹⁵ Eph. 1:13-14; Eph. 4:30

¹⁶ 1 Cor. 4:21

¹⁷ 1 Cor. 15:1

¹⁸ Compare Hab. 2:4 which Paul frequently quoted (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38 & repeatedly in Heb. 11).

¹⁹ Paul was referring specifically to the public rebuke of the member who had taken his father's wife and his rebuke of the elders for not immediately excommunicating him (1 Cor. 5).

²⁰ 1 Cor. 5:3-5

²¹ 1 Cor. 5:4 It is clear from such language that Paul understood the presence of the holy Breath in the assembly to be the invisible presence of Jesus Himself.

²² Paul wrote this letter from one of the assemblies in Macedonia, probably from Berea, after having collected their donations (cf. 2 Cor. 8:1-5).

²³ Including the celebration associated with winning in battle.

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God, in those being delivered and in those being destroyed. 16 Indeed, to them [we are] the smell of death [leading] unto death. But to others, [we are] the smell of life [leading] unto life. And who is proficient in such things? 17 For we are not like most, peddling the message of God. But we speak in the Anointed as out of sincerity, as [the message] out from God in the presence of God.

Chapter 3

The Glory of the New Covenant exceeds the Old

Do we begin again to recommend ourselves? Or do we not need (as do some) letters of recommendations to you, or recommendations from you? 2 You are our letter, having been written in our hearts, being known and being read by all men, 3 because you are manifesting the letter of the Anointed, having been administered by us, not having been written with ink, but with the Breath of the living God, not in stone tablets, but in fleshly tablets of the heart. 4 And such is the confidence we have towards God through the Anointed. 5 [It is] not that we are sufficient from ourselves to reckon anything, as though out from ourselves, but our sufficiency is out from God, 6 who also made us administrators of the New Covenant, not of the Writing,²⁴ but of the Breath. For the Writing kills, but the Breath makes alive.²⁵ 7 Now if the administration of death, having been chiseled in stones, originated in glory so that the sons of Israel were unable to stare directly into Moses' face because of the glory of his face (which was being diminished), 8 how much more will be the glory of the administration of the Breath! 9 For if the administration of the diminishing [was] glory, how much more the administration of the justice surpasses in glory! 10 For also what has been glorified, has not been glorified in this respect, because of the surpassing glory! 11 For if what is diminishing [came] by glory, how much that which continues in glory! 12 Having then such expectation, we use great boldness, 13 and are not like Moses who was placing a covering on his own face, intending for the sons of Israel not to stare unto the conclusion of what was diminishing. 14 Yet their reasonings were calloused. For until today the same covering remains upon the reading of the Old Covenant, not being uncovered, which [covering] is abolished in the Anointed. 15 And [even] until today, the covering lays upon their heart whenever Moses is read. 16 But if ever one may turn toward the Master, the covering is lifted. 17 Yet the Master is the Breath!²⁶ And where the Breath of the Master is,²⁷ there is freedom.²⁸ 18 And we all, with face having been uncovered, are reflecting the glory of the Master,

²⁴ Here Paul cryptically referred to the Mosaic Covenant written on "stone tablets" (cf. v. 3).

²⁵ The Law of Moses can only condemn, but the Breath of God working through the New Covenant produces age-enduring life.

²⁶ The Anointed one (Jesus) is the "Breath" in vss. 3,6,8 (cf. 1 Cor. 8:6). John affirmed this also from Jesus' own words, when He promised the "advocate," the "Breath of Truth," and then immediately said, "I will not leave you orphans, I am coming to you" (Jn. 14:18).

²⁷ The "holy Breath" dwells in the local assembly (Eph. 2:19-22).

²⁸ Freedom from the Law of Moses for an Israelite is found only in Jesus and the New Covenant (cf. Heb. 3:5-6).

we are being transformed [into] the same image from glory to glory,²⁹ even as from the Master, the Breath.³⁰

Chapter 4

The Administration of the New Covenant

Therefore, having this administration, according as we were [given] mercy, we do not despair. 2 But we disavowed the hidden things of disgrace, not walking in deviousness, not perverting the message of God, but in showing forth the truth, recommending ourselves to the conscience of every man in the sight of God. 3 But if our Good-Message is having been concealed also, it is having been concealed in those being destroyed 4 among whom the god of this age blinded the reasonings of the disbelieving, so that the light of the Good-Message of the glory of the Anointed, who is the image of God, does not shine unto them. 5 For we do not proclaim ourselves but Anointed Jesus, the Master, and ourselves your slaves through Jesus. 6 Because God, the one who having called forth light to shine out of the darkness, shined in our hearts for illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Anointed. 7 Yet we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the excess of power should be from God, and not out from us. 8 Being afflicted among all, but not crushed, perplexed, but not despairing, 9 persecuted, but not abandoned, cast down, but not destroyed, 10 always carrying around in the body the death of the Master so that also the life of Jesus may be manifested in our body. 11 For we, the living, are always delivered over to death because of Jesus so that the life of Jesus should be apparent in our mortal flesh. 12 So indeed death operates in us, but the life in you. 13 And having the same breath of faith, according to what has been written, *"I believe, therefore I speak,"*³¹ we also believe and therefore we speak, 14 having observed that the one having aroused the Master Jesus will also arouse us through Jesus,³² and will present us together with you. 15 For everything is because of you, so that the grace having gained through the increase, the thanksgiving should overflow unto the glory of God. 16 Therefore, we do not despair. But even if our exterior man decays, yet the interior is renewed day by day. 17 For our momentary light-weight affliction is producing for us according to an exceeding unto exceeding substantial-weight of age-enduring glory. 18 We are not considering what is seen, but what is unseen, for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is age-enduring.

²⁹ From the diminishing glory of the Old Covenant to the remaining and exceeding glory of the New Covenant.

³⁰ Many translations incorrectly reverse the genitive nouns, making it "the Spirit of the Lord." The correct translation is "from the Master, the Breath," referring back to Paul's statement in vs. 17, "the Master is the Breath." The NASB & NRSV handle the genitive nouns correctly, *"from the Lord, the Spirit,"* and the NIV, CSB, ESV, HCSB all paraphrase with the correct sense, *"the Lord, who is the Spirit."*

³¹ Psalm 116:10

³² Jesus will call forth the dead, but God will arouse them (John 5:24-30; John 11:23-26, 41-44; 1 Thess. 4:14)

Chapter 5

*The Hope of Immortality, sharing in the Anointed's Resurrection*³³

For we have observed that if our terrestrial dwelling³⁴ of the tent should be destroyed, we have an edifice out of God,³⁵ a dwelling not hand-made, age-enduring in the skies.³⁶ 2 For in this condition we are groaning,³⁷ longing to clothe with our occupancy out from heaven. 3 Certainly also if [we will be] over clothing,³⁸ we will not be found naked.³⁹ 4 For those also being in the tent groan, being burdened, over which we are not willing⁴⁰ to unclothe,⁴¹ but rather to over-clothe ourselves, so that the mortal condition might be swallowed up by life.⁴² 5 Yet the one having prepared this same thing for us is God, and

³³ This passage, along with Phil. 1:21-24, is used to support the alleged intermediate state of the dead. This idea is based on the pagan-Greek concept of "immortality of the soul" which implies that the dead are awake and living apart from the body. Yet the Scriptures are clear that the dead are not conscious: (Job 3:11-13; Job 10:18-19; Job 14:10-14; Psalm 6:5; Psalm 115:17-18; Psalm 146:3-4; Eccl. 3:18-21; Eccl. 9:3-6; Eccl. 9:10; Isa. 38:17-19). Instead, the dead are asleep as a multitude of Scriptures attest (Matt. 9:24; Matt. 27:52; John 11:11-15; Acts 7:60; Acts 13:36; 1 Cor. 11:30; 1 Cor. 15:6,18,20,51; 1 Thess. 4:13-15, 1 Thess. 5:10; 2 Pet. 3:4). They will be "awakened" at the resurrection (Dan. 12:1-2).

This passage is mistakenly used to claim that the hope of the Christian is the transfer of his immortal ghost into a different (celestial) body that God has already prepared and reserved for each believer in heaven. Yet that concept is not "resurrection," but "reincarnation." The resurrection is spoken of in Scripture as the dead being called out from their graves at the return of Jesus (Dan. 12:1-3; John 5:28-29; 1 Thess. 4:16). Biblical "resurrection" was also demonstrated by Jesus Himself as the same body that hung on the cross and was laid in the tomb came forth out of the tomb, still carrying the marks of His crucifixion in His hands and side (Luke 24:36-40; John 20:24-29).

³⁴ This is metaphorical language referring to our current mortal condition as an abstract concept (cf. Rom. 8:18-25), not to the physical body itself as a concrete thing. Concerning the body itself (as a concrete thing), Paul wrote in the previous letter, *"Thus is also the resurrection of the dead: it [the body] is planted in a corrupt state, it [the body] is aroused in a non-corrupt state, it is planted in dishonor, it is aroused in honor; it is planted in infirmity, it is aroused in power; it is planted a soulish body, it is aroused a spiritual body"* (1 Cor. 15:42-44). Thus the same lifeless and decomposing body deposited in the earth in burial comes forth regenerated by the Breath of God (spiritual). It is the condition of the body that is changed from corrupt to perfection, which is accomplished by the mortal body being "over-clothed" by a shared immortal condition which Jesus alone possesses now at the Father's side.

³⁵ The Son of God is "out from God" (John 8:42), and His resurrected and immortal state now has God as its source.

³⁶ Paul here referred to Jesus Anointed Himself, having been raised from the dead, seated and sustained at the Father's side. Being the prototype of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20-23), and the head of the local assembly (Eph. 1:18-23), He is the model for our hope of resurrection and immortality (Rom. 8:9-11) since we are promised to become physically "like Him" in the resurrection (Phil. 3:20-21).

³⁷ Rom. 8:18-25

³⁸ We will share in the immortal condition of Jesus' resurrection as an over-garment.

³⁹ The Christian hope is the resurrection of the body, not the hope of Greek philosophy, where a naked conscious ghost lives outside the body (Plato's theory of an immortal soul and reincarnation to inhabit another body).

⁴⁰ For those who teach an intermediate state of the dead, where the immortal ghost allegedly departs the body and remains "unclothed" and "naked" until the resurrection, Paul's statement here flatly contradicts their interpretation of his words in Phil. 1:23. These same interpreters claim Paul desired to "depart" from his mortal body in order to be with Christ which he called "far better" than his current state. How can an alleged intermediate state for the dead be "far better" for Paul while saying here that Christians are "not willing to unclothe" and "we will not be found naked?" Paul was contrasting the true hope of resurrection with the Platonic hope of an "unclothed" (pure spirit) existence, something for which he harshly rebuked the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 15.

⁴¹ That is, the Christian hope is not an intermediate state of a "naked" and "unclothed" ghost, but that the old mortal body should be "over-clothed" through resurrection.

⁴² If God has new and different physical "bodies" already created and waiting in heaven for our allegedly immortal ghosts to inhabit, then how does Paul's "over-clothing" metaphor work? How will we "over-clothe" our corpses with

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has given to us the deposit of the Breath.⁴³ 6 Therefore being always courageous, and having observed that within-communing⁴⁴ among the Body we are without-communing⁴⁵ away from the Master.⁴⁶ 7 (For we walk by faith⁴⁷ not by sight). 8 But we also take courage, desiring⁴⁸ to without-commune from the Body⁴⁹ and to within-commune together with the Master.⁵⁰ 9 Therefore, we are also eager, whether within-communing or whether without-communing, to be well-pleasing to Him. 10 For we all must appear before the platform of the Anointed⁵¹ so that each one may receive the

a different body? Reincarnation requires the complete abandonment of the old body, which is impossible to reconcile with Paul's teaching.

⁴³ God's "Breath" shared together by the members of the local assembly is a deposit on the resurrection of the body, not a deposit on an alleged intermediate (naked & unclothed) state of the dead (Rom. 8:9-11, 23; Eph. 1:13-14).

⁴⁴ The Greek word ἐν-δημοῦντες means to be communing among one's own people or kindred, for which there is no adequate English equivalent. It does not merely mean "at home" as incorrectly translated in most English Bibles. Its true meaning cannot work with the modern metaphorical interpretation of the alleged immortal ghost leaving the physical body, since the Greek word requires a condition of community with others within the "Body." Paul's choice of very rare Greek words here strongly reflects his teaching in 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 and Romans 12:4-5 concerning the "Body of Christ" consisting of many members working seamlessly together, bound together by the shared deposit of the Breath of God.

⁴⁵ The Greek word ἐκ-δημοῦμεν means to be away from the public of one's own people or kindred, for which there is no adequate English equivalent. It does not merely mean merely "absent" as incorrectly translated in most versions.

⁴⁶ While the local assembly fellowships and socializes face to face, together as "the Body of the Anointed," our Head remains in heaven even though He is observing through the holy Breath. Thus, we are indeed "socializing" among one another, yet it is away from Jesus Himself in person.

⁴⁷ Our trust is in the concrete promises of the resurrection of the body, not in an alleged intermediate (naked, unclothed) state that is nowhere promised in Scripture.

⁴⁸ See notes on verse 4.

⁴⁹ That is, the "Body" without its "Head" being present in person, as the "Head" is now in heaven (Eph. 1:17-23).

⁵⁰ Our hope is to no longer be merely a part of "the Body" without our "Head" literally being among us, but rather to "socialize" and fellowship together with our Head Himself, the Anointed one present in our midst (Psalm 22:22; Heb. 2:12).

⁵¹ This is a single event to be experienced together by all Christians, not an individual event experienced at the time of death. It is referred to as "the Day" in 1 Cor. 3:13. This indicates that Paul's subject in verses 1-9 does not describe an intermediate state of the dead, or what happens to individuals at the time of their death, but rather refers to the resurrection at the coming of the Anointed one. See also Rom. 14:10.

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[rewards] through⁵² the Body with which he participated,⁵³ whether good or whether worthless.⁵⁴

Paul's Mission

11 Having then perceived the fear of the Master, we persuade men, but we have been [completely] exposed to God. But I expect also to be exposed in your consciences. 12 For we do not recommend ourselves to you again, but are giving to you a starting point to boast concerning us, so that you may have a retort for those who boast in outward appearances and not in the heart. 13 For whether we went insane,⁵⁵ [it was] for God. Whether we are sane, [it is] for you. 14 For the love of the Anointed compels⁵⁶ us, having determined this: that if one died for all, then all died. 15 And He died for all so that the alive ones should not live for themselves, but for the one having died for them and having been aroused. 16 Consequently, from now on we have observed no one according to the flesh. Yet even if we have known the Anointed according to the flesh,⁵⁷ we do not still know [Him thus].⁵⁸ 17 Therefore, if anyone [is] in the Anointed,⁵⁹ [he is] a renewed creation. The original things passed by, look, everything has become renewed. 18 Yet everything comes from God, the one having reconciled us to Himself through Jesus

⁵² The preposition διὰ (through) refers to agency, and requires that the rewards are received “through” the “Body,” thus requiring the “Body” to be present in order to be the agent through which rewards are received by the individual. Many translations incorrectly add the word “done” (KJV, NIV, NKJV, NRSV) and change the preposition “through” to “in” (NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV) in order to disconnect the clause “through the Body” from the verb translated “receive” by providing a different referent for the prepositional phrase from what Paul actually wrote.

⁵³ That is, each individual will be judged and rewarded along with the local assembly (Body) in which he practiced the Christian Faith. The seven letters in Revelation 2-3 illustrate this concept also, as overcomers in whole local assemblies are promised very specific blessings collectively. This is also implied in 1 Cor. 3:10-23, where teachers of the local assembly are warned concerning how they build up the local Body where they serve, building exclusively upon the foundation established by the Emissaries of the Anointed one. This statement is also problematic for those who teach reincarnation instead of resurrection, that the former physical body is dissolved and an entirely different body becomes the dwelling place of an alleged “immortal soul.” How then is the former dissolved body present at the platform of the Anointed and rewards received through that former dissolved body?

⁵⁴ The earliest manuscripts have “worthless” but the majority manuscripts have “evil.” The “good” refers to the “gold silver, gems” and the “worthless” refers to the “wood, hay, straw” in 1 Cor. 3:12.

⁵⁵ Paul was accused of being “insane” when he repeated his testimony of his encounter with Jesus on the Damascus road (Acts 26:24-25). And his opponents, both Jew and Gentile, continued to make this charge against him.

⁵⁶ Paul’s compulsion to preach the Gospel and suffer was not driven by insanity, but by the love of the Anointed one.

⁵⁷ Paul’s authority as an Emissary of the Anointed was challenged on the grounds that he was not one of the original Twelve whom Jesus taught on earth in the flesh. His story of Jesus’ appearing to him on the Damascus road was portrayed as evidence of his insanity. Yet, Paul indicated that He saw Jesus in the flesh, as a witness to His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:8), referring to his encounter on the Damascus Road. See also 2 Cor. 12:1-2.

⁵⁸ He is no longer present in the flesh, but sits at the Father’s side (Psalm 110:1). We now know Him by His presence in the assembly through the holy Breath (2 Cor. 3:17-18).

⁵⁹ Paul’s language of being “in the Anointed” cannot be distinguished from his language concerning being part of the local assembly, the “Body of the Anointed.” Compare Rom. 6:3; Rom. 12:4-5; & 1 Cor. 12:12-13. Pristine Christianity looked far different from modern Christianity, where the concept of collective salvation is largely lost, in favor of individual salvation. Thus, the critical role of the local “Body,” and the individual’s responsibility towards it just as much as his responsibility towards God, has been replaced by a vertical relationship exclusively.

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Anointed, and has given to us the administration of the reconciliation, 19 how that God was in the Anointed one,⁶⁰ reconciling the world to Himself, not reckoning to them their sins, and having placed among us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are representatives then for the Anointed, pleading as God calling through us for the sake of the Anointed, "Become reconciled to God!" 21 For the one not having known sin became the sin [offering]⁶¹ for us so that in Him we might become God's justice.

Chapter 6

A Warning against Falling Away due to bad Associations

We then, working together [with God], plead with you not to receive the grace of God for nothing.⁶² 2 For He says, *"In the approved appointed time I heard you, and in the day of deliverance I helped you."*⁶³ Look! Now is the most approved appointed time! Look! Now is the day of deliverance! 3 We are not giving any reason to stumble in anything so that the ministry may not be tainted. 4 But in everything we are recommending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in much affliction, in needs, in distresses, 5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in riots, in pains, in sleeplessness, in fasts, 6 in blamelessness, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the holy Breath in genuine love, 7 in the message of Truth, in the power of God through the tools of justice from the right and the left, 8 through glory and dishonor, through slander and praise, [considered] as deceivers, and faithful, 9 as being strangers and being recognized, as dying, yet look, we live as being disciplined and not dying, 10 as mourning yet always rejoicing, as poor yet enriching many, as having nothing yet possessing everything. 11 Our mouth has been open toward you, Corinthians, our heart has been enlarged. 12 You are not restrained in us, but you are restrained in your compassions [for us]. 13 But with the same reciprocation, (I say this as to [my] children), you also be enlarged. 14 Do not become together miss-yoked to unfaithful ones. For what partnership [is there between] justice and lawlessness? And what fellowship [is there between] light and darkness? 15 And what commonality [is there between] the Anointed and Belial?⁶⁴ Or what portion [can be shared between] a faithful one with an unfaithful one? 16 And what commonality has the Temple of God with idols? For you all⁶⁵ are the Temple of the living God, according as

⁶⁰ John 3:2; John 5:19,30; John 8:28; John 14:10; John 17:21; Acts 2:22; Acts 10:38

⁶¹ The word ἁμαρτίαν (sin) was commonly applied in the LXX to a sin offering, and the English translations of the LXX add the word "offering" to clarify this sense. Paul was borrowing from the LXX. See: Ex. 29:36; Lev. 4:20.

⁶² As stated in 1 Cor. 15:1-2 ff, turning aside from the true Good-Message to the false hope of Greek philosophy logically leads to the denial of Jesus' resurrection and thus ultimately can lead to the forfeiture of the inheritance.

⁶³ This is a quote of Isaiah 49:8 where these words and those that follow were spoken by the Father to His Son in response to His prayer to His Father in John 17, announcing that He will fulfill the promise to His Son declared at the beginning of the creation week (preserved by David in Psalm 2).

⁶⁴ The transliterated Hebrew word בְּלִיַּאל meaning the wicked one (the Adversary), often found in the phrase, "sons of Belial."

⁶⁵ The assembly collectively, not the individual, is the "Temple" of God.

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God said that *"I will dwell among them ... and I will walk among them, and I will be their God and they shall be My people."*⁶⁶ 17 Therefore the Master says,⁶⁷ *"Come out from the midst of them and be segregated, and do not touch anything unclean."*⁶⁸ And **THE SOVEREIGN MASTER OVER ALL**⁶⁹ says, *"I will receive you, 18 and I will be a Father unto you, and you will be sons and daughters to Me."*⁷⁰ 7:1 Having then these promises, beloved, we should cleanse ourselves⁷¹ from all pollution of the flesh and breath, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Chapter 7

Genuine Repentance

2 Make room for us! We injured no one, we corrupted no one, we cheated no one. 3 I do not say this for condemnation, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. 4 My boldness is great towards you, my boasting concerning you is great. I am overflowing with joy over our every affliction. 5 For even upon our arriving in Macedonia our flesh has had no rest, but in every place being thronged, striving outside, fears inside. 6 But God, the one consoling the humble, consoled us by the arrival of Titus, 7 yet not only by his arrival, but also in the consolation in which he was consoled concerning you, reporting to us your earnest desire, your anguish, your fervency concerning me, so that I instead rejoiced 8 that even though I grieved you with the [former] letter, I do not regret it even though I was regretting [it]. For I see that the letter grieved you, even if for [just] an hour. 9 Now I rejoice, not that you were grieved, but that you grieved unto repentance. For you were grieved in harmony with God, so that in nothing you should suffer forfeiture⁷² from us. 10 For grieving in harmony with God produces repentance leading to deliverance without regret. But the grieving of the world produces death.⁷³ 11 For look, this same thing, for to grieve yourselves in harmony with God, how much it produced diligence in you, what apology, what resenting, what fear, what desire, what zeal, what vindication! You have recommended yourselves to be pure in everything in [this] matter. 12 Consequently, if I wrote to you not because of the one

⁶⁶ Lev. 26:11-12

⁶⁷ The "Master" is Jesus Anointed (compare 1 Cor. 8:6). Paul made a clear distinction between the words quoted from "the Master" (Jesus) and those quoted from "The Sovereign Master over All." It is significant that Paul attributed the following quotation from Isaiah to the Son of God, since immediately afterward God Himself refers to His "Servant" (vs. 13). This is immediately followed by Isaiah's description of the Son's atoning sacrifice in chapter 53. Reading Isaiah 52 from the Septuagint, it indeed should be attributed to the Son speaking in verses 1-12, but then the Father Himself speaking in verses 13-15.

⁶⁸ Isa. 52:11 LXX

⁶⁹ See notes on Rev. 1:8.

⁷⁰ Isa. 56:4-5 & Jer. 3:19 LXX combined and paraphrased

⁷¹ Rev. 19:7

⁷² 1 Cor. 15:1-2; 2 Cor. 6:1

⁷³ Judas Iscariot is a good example, as well as all apostates from God (Heb. 10:26-31).

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injuring, not because of the one injured, but in order to show our mission⁷⁴ concerning you in the sight of God. 13 Therefore we have been consoled over your consolation, and even more exceedingly we rejoiced over the joy of Titus, because his breath has been refreshed from all of you. 14 Because if I have boasted to him concerning you, I was not embarrassed. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, thus also our boasting concerning Titus became truth. 15 Also his compassions toward you are reinforced, recalling the obedience of you all, as with fear and trembling you received him.⁷⁵ 16 I rejoice, then, that in everything I have confidence in you.

Chapter 8

The Donation collected from the Assemblies of Macedonia

But we are informing you, brothers, [concerning] the gift of God which has been donated among the assemblies of Macedonia, 2 because in great trial and affliction their surplus of joy (even in their deep poverty) overflowed into the riches of their generosity, [being] self-motivated. 3 I testify that according to ability, even beyond [their] ability, 4 urging us to accept the gift with much pleading, even the fellowship of their service unto the holy ones [in Jerusalem], 5 even not as we expected, but [from] themselves, [they] gave primarily to the Master, and to us by the will of God. 6 Consequently, we urged Titus so that just as he previously began thus also he might complete for you this gift too. 7 But since in everything you exceed, in faith, and in word, and in knowledge, and in all haste, and in the love out from you among us, [give] so that you may also excel in this, the gift. 8 I am not saying this as a command, but also testing the genuineness of this love of yours through the [example] of the diligence of others. 9 For you know the gift of our Master, Jesus Anointed, that being rich⁷⁶ He became poor⁷⁷ because of you, so that you might be made rich⁷⁸ out from His poverty. 10 And in this I give advice, for this is profitable for you not only to perform what some of you undertook last year,⁷⁹ but also to be willing. 11 But now complete also the performance, so that the completion out of [your] means equals the eagerness to be willing. 12 For if the eagerness is present, [it is] acceptable

⁷⁴ Rom. 12:11

⁷⁵ As Titus delivered the first letter to them.

⁷⁶ John 1:11-14; John 3:31; John 6:38; Phil. 2:5-7; Heb. 2:9-18

⁷⁷ The active voice of the verb ἐπτωχευσεν ("became poor") is significant, showing that the incarnation was a self-act of the Son of God. The same is true with Paul's statement in Phil. 2:7, that He ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν (emptied Himself).

⁷⁸ As co-sharers in His inheritance (Psalm 2:7-8; Rom. 8:17; Rev. 2:27).

⁷⁹ Paul originally wrote to the Corinthians concerning this donation in the late spring or early summer, sometime between Passover and Pentecost (1 Cor. 16:1-8). He intended to spend the winter with them in Corinth (1 Cor. 16:6), which he apparently did, staying three months (Acts 20:1-3). Paul's purpose all along was to deliver the donation from all the Gentile assemblies on the following Pentecost (Acts 20:16). Since he wrote this letter just prior to arriving at Corinth (just before winter), and since he referred to their reaction to his previous letter as being "last year," it is evident that Paul reckoned the "new year" to begin on Rosh Hashanah (in September), and expected his readers in Corinth to also understand his use of terminology from the biblical calendar rather than the ancient Roman calendar which had its "new year" begin March 1.

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according to what one has, not according to what he does not have. 13 For [this is] not intended as relief to others yet your burden, but out of equality in the present appointed time⁸⁰ – your excess unto those in need – 14 so that also their excess⁸¹ should become unto your need, and thus equality may occur. 15 Accordingly it has been written, “*The one [gathering] much had no excess, and the one [gathering] little did not lack.*”⁸²

Encouragement to display similar Diligence concerning the Donation

16 Yet thanks [be] to God, the One providing this same diligence concerning you in the heart of Titus, 17 indeed because he accepted the challenge, yet being even more diligent, he went out toward you voluntarily, 18 also the brother with him of whom the praise in the Good-Message [circulates] throughout all of the assemblies. 19 Yet not only [this], but also having been selected our traveling companion by the assemblies together with this gift – the dispensing by us toward the same glory of the Master and our⁸³ eagerness – 20 thus avoiding that anyone might blame us⁸⁴ in this abundance which is being delivered by us, 21 considering honest things, not only in the sight of the Master, but also in the sight of all men. 22 Yet we sent with them our brother, whom we approved, being diligent frequently in many things, yet now much more diligent, in great confidence toward you. 23 Regarding Titus, [he is] my companion and co-laborer for you. Concerning our brothers, [they are] emissaries of the assemblies, the glory of the Anointed. 24 Consequently, display for them, and for the sight of the assemblies, the exhibition of your love and our boast concerning you.

Chapter 9

For indeed, it is redundant to me to write to you concerning the dispensing [of the gift] to the holy ones. 2 For I have observed your eagerness which I boast over you to the Macedonians, that “Achaia has been prepared since last year,” and the zeal out from you

⁸⁰ The use of the clause τῷ νῦν καιρῷ (the present appointed time) refers to a specific scheduled event which Paul was eager to meet in delivering this gift to Jerusalem. The term translated “appointed time” commonly referred to the Feasts at Jerusalem in the LXX. Acts 20:16 indicates that Paul was eager to deliver this gift on Pentecost. He mentioned it later in his letter to the Roman assembly indicating that since the Gentiles have been partakers of the Israelites spiritual covenants, it was their duty to share with them in material things (Rom. 15:26-28). When writing the initial instructions to the Corinthians concerning this gift, Paul referenced God’s instructions to Israel concerning bringing their annual free-will offering to the Temple on Pentecost “*which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you*” (Deut. 16:10), which he interpreted for the Corinthians as “*however he may be being prospered.*” Thus it was an important gesture for Paul to deliver this free-will offering from the Gentile assemblies to the Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost as an act of solidarity.

⁸¹ Rom. 15:27 The excess of Israel’s spiritual covenants flows to the Gentiles. Compare Eph. 2:11-22.

⁸² This statement is a quote of Exod. 16:18 from the LXX, and refers to the gathering of manna which God sent down upon the Israelites in the wilderness. Paul’s point was clearly that whatever they had was God’s supply, and thus ought to be shared with their sister assemblies in Judea where many were in dire need.

⁸³ The Textus Receptus has “your” but the majority and earliest manuscripts have “our.”

⁸⁴ The traveling companions from the assemblies could certify that nothing had been pilfered by Paul or others in his company.

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provoked the majority! 3 Yet I sent the brothers so that our boast concerning you should not become empty in this regard, so that you might be prepared according as I had been announcing. 4 Otherwise, if Macedonians should come together with me and they should find you unprepared⁸⁵ we might be humiliated (not to mention you) in this confidence of boasting. 5 I then considered it necessary to implore the brothers so that they should go on ahead in coming to you, and they should prepare in advance your previously announced generosity. This is to be ready in this way – as generosity and not as extortion. 6 Yet [know] this, the one planting meagerly will also harvest meagerly, and the one planting abundantly will also harvest abundantly. 7 Each one [should give] according as he purposes in his heart, not out of regret or out of necessity, for God loves an eager giver. 8 And God is able to lavish every gift unto you, so that you always, in everything, having all necessity, may overflow unto every good work. 9 Accordingly it has been written, “*He scattered, he gave to the needy, his justice continues unto the age.*”⁸⁶ 10 But the one supplying seed to the planter and bread for food, may He also supply and multiply your seed, and may He grow the produce of your justice, 11 being enriched unto all generosity which produces thanksgiving to God through us, 12 that the ministry of this service is not only fulfilling the needs of the holy ones, but also excelling through much thanksgiving to God, 13 by the proving of this ministry, glorifying God over the obedience of your profession unto the Good-Message of the Anointed, and to generosity of the benevolence unto them and unto all, 14 and of their prayers concerning you, longing for you because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. 15 But thanks [be] to God concerning His indescribable gift.⁸⁷

Chapter 10

Concerning Credentials, Scope of Ministry, & Authority

Yet I myself, Paul, appeal to you through the meekness and gentleness of the Anointed, who am in appearance indeed lowly among you, yet being absent I am bold unto you. 2 But I am pleading [now so as] to avoid boldness [when] being with you, with the confidence which I intend to dare upon any of those considering us as walking according to the flesh. 3 For walking in flesh, we do not war according to flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful in God toward demolition of fortresses – 5 dismantling theories and every lofty thing being exalted against the knowledge of God, and taking each philosophical scheme captive unto the obedience of the Anointed,⁸⁸ 6 and

⁸⁵ Paul had specifically instructed them to have this collection completed before he arrived (1 Cor. 16:1-6).

⁸⁶ Psalm 112:9 LXX

⁸⁷ 2 Cor. 8:9

⁸⁸ Here Paul described the work of a Christian apologist, to overthrow world-views and erroneous presuppositions by the superior knowledge and understanding of God received through the Anointed one. Paul demonstrated this when he publically addressed the philosophers at Athens (Acts 17). All of Paul’s discourses in Acts and his arguments in his letters display a logical approach and persuasive reasoning, thinking things through to their logical conclusion. Truth

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being ready to punish all disobedience whenever your obedience should be completed.⁸⁹ 7 You are looking at the [outward] appearance of things. If anyone has become confident in himself to be of the Anointed, let him consider again from himself that according as he is of the Anointed, thus also [are] we of the Anointed. 8 For even if I should boast excessively concerning our authority (which the Master gave us for your confirmation and not demolishing) I will not be embarrassed. 9 In order that I may not appear as to frighten you through the letters, 10 since someone says “The letters are indeed heavy and powerful, but the bodily arrival is weak and the speech having been despised.” 11 Let such reckon this: that whoever we are in speech through letters, being absent, such also in action, [we will be] being present. 12 For we are not daring to judge or compare ourselves to any of those who recommend themselves. But they, measuring themselves among themselves, and comparing themselves to themselves, are not right-thinking. 13 Yet we will not boast excessively, but according to the parameters of the scope which God dispensed to us, of the range to reach even as far as you. 14 For we do not overreach ourselves, as though [our authority] is not extending to you. For in the Good-Message of the Anointed we reached even as far as you, 15 not boasting beyond limits in the work of others, but having expectation of your faith growing, to be magnified exceedingly among you in accord with our scope, 16 to evangelize even beyond you, not being ready to boast in another’s scope. 17 Yet, let the boasting one boast in the Master. 18 For the one recommending himself is not approved, but whom the Master recommends.

Chapter 11

Paul has far more to boast about than the false Emissaries

O that you would tolerate a little foolishness from me, but you also excuse me! 2 For I am jealous [over] you with the jealousy of God, for I engaged you to one husband to present you a pure virgin to the Anointed. 3 But I am afraid that as the Serpent seduced Eve in his cleverness, thus also your reasonings might somehow become corrupted from the singlemindedness⁹⁰ which [leads] unto the Anointed. 4 For indeed if one coming to you announces another Jesus whom we did not announce, or you receive a different breath which you did not receive, or a different good-message which you did not accept, you would well tolerate it. 5 For I consider [myself] to have lacked nothing of the preeminent Emissaries.⁹¹ 6 But even if [I am] unskilled in speech, I am not in knowledge, but in everything having been made apparent unto you. 7 Or did I sin in lowering myself so that you may be exalted, since I proclaimed the Good-Message of God to you freely? 8 I

is always superior to deception. But it takes skill and understanding from God to make effective use of the “weapons” as Paul repeatedly demonstrated.

⁸⁹ The completion and delivery of the promised donation.

⁹⁰ Some manuscripts have “singlemindedness and purity.”

⁹¹ Peter, James, and John, the three chosen by Jesus to experience the “Transfiguration” as a preview of the Kingdom; See note on 2 Cor. 12:3.

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plundered other assemblies, accepting rations for ministering to you. 9 And being present with you, and having been lacking, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers coming from Macedonia supplied my need, and I kept myself without burden to you in everything, and I will keep. 10 The truth of the Anointed is in me, that I will not be prevented from this boasting among the regions of Achaia. 11 [Is it] because I do not love you? God has seen. 12 But what I am doing, I also will [continue] doing so that I might cut off the opportunity of those desiring an opportunity so that in what they boast they might also be seen like us.⁹² 13 For such are false emissaries, fraudulent workers, disguising themselves into Emissaries of the Anointed. 14 And no wonder, for the Adversary⁹³ disguises himself into a messenger of light! 15 It is no wonder that his servants are disguised as servants of justice, of whom the end will be according to their deeds.⁹⁴ 16 I say again, no one should consider me to be foolish, yet if so, also receive me as foolish so that I might boast a bit. 17 What I am saying [now], I do not say according to the Master, but as in folly in this confidence of boasting. 18 Since many are boasting according to the flesh, I will also boast, 19 since you, being sensible, eagerly tolerate the foolish. 20 For you tolerate [it] if someone enslaves you, if someone devours [your food], if someone receives [payment], if someone elevates himself, if someone pummels you in the face, 21 I say this to [your] shame, as though we became weak. Yet in whatever someone [else] dares, (I say foolishly), I am also daring. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they servants of the Anointed? (I speak, being irrational), I exceed [them]: much more in labors, surpassing in blows, many more imprisonments, frequently in [peril of] deaths. 24 Five times I received forty [lashes] minus one under the Judeans;⁹⁵ 25 three times I was caned; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; I spent a night and a day in the sea; 26 frequent in journeys; in dangers of rivers, in dangers of robbers, in dangers from my [own] race, in dangers from gentiles, in dangers in the city, in dangers in the wilderness, in dangers in the sea, in dangers among false brothers; 27 in toil and labor, frequently in vigils, frequently in famine and thirst, frequently in fasts, frequently in cold and nakedness. 28 [All this is] beside what is apart from me – my daily burden – the care of all the assemblies. 29 Who is weak, and I am not [also] weak? Who is scandalized, and I am not ignited? 30 If it is necessary to boast, I will boast concerning my weakness. 31 The God and Father of our Master, Jesus Anointed (who is blessed unto the ages), has seen that I am not lying. 32 In Damascus, the commander from Aretas⁹⁶ the king was

⁹² The false emissaries and false teachers were betrayed by their own greed, offering their alleged superior revelation and knowledge in exchange for financial gain. Thus, Paul preempted their appeal by never accepting financial support from the Corinthians while he was among them.

⁹³ 1 Peter 5:8-9

⁹⁴ 2 Peter 2:1-22; Jude 1:4-16

⁹⁵ Gal. 6:17

⁹⁶ Aretas IV died in AD 39, which necessarily places Paul's conversion before this.

garrisoning the city of the Damascenes desiring to arrest me. 33 And I was lowered in a basket through a window through the wall, and I escaped his hands.

Chapter 12

Paul encountered Jesus twice, on the Damascus Road & in Arabia⁹⁷

For me to boast is necessary, not profitable. For I will come to visions and revelations⁹⁸ of the Master. 2 I have observed a man (before the fourteen years in the Anointed),⁹⁹ such having been seized unto the third sky (whether within the body I have not perceived or whether outside of the body I have not perceived, God has perceived).¹⁰⁰ 3 I have also observed such a man, that he was seized unto the Garden¹⁰¹ (whether within body or

⁹⁷ In Galatians 1:13-16 Paul spoke of his Damascus Road encounter, then in vs. 17 his retreat to “Arabia” shortly thereafter. He then placed Mt. Sinai in “Arabia” (Gal. 4:25), which suggests that this is where Paul was when he had his second encounter with Jesus. Paul retraced Elijah’s steps when he searched for answers after encountering “the Messenger of YHVH.” Elijah then immediately began to fast, and traveled south to a cave on Mt. Sinai where God then spoke directly to him (1 Kings 19). It was when Paul repeated Elijah’s retreat to Mt. Sinai that Jesus appeared to Him a second time and taught him “the mystery” directly, by divine “revelation” (Gal. 1:11-12; Eph. 3:3). Paul remained there for three years (Gal. 1:18), the equivalence of the other disciples’ training under Jesus Himself. While in Elijah’s cave, Paul had a vision of being “seized [away] unto the Garden” [of God]). Peter, James, and John previously had a vision of the Kingdom in their Mount of Transfiguration experience (cf. Mark 9:1-9; 2 Pet. 1:16-19). Here Paul was provided a similar encounter. This is why he could say “For I consider [myself] to have lacked nothing of the preeminent Emissaries.” (2 Cor. 11:5). Shortly after writing this letter, on his way to Jerusalem to deliver the donations, Jesus appeared to (lit. “stood over”) Paul a third time (Acts 23:11).

⁹⁸ Paul categorized his encounters with Jesus as “visions” and “revelations,” rather than out-of-body travels. Both terms in Scripture refer to something that does not actually relocate the prophet, but appears as real and tangible to his perception (cf. Ezek. 8:3; Ezek. 40:2; Rev. 4:1).

⁹⁹ Paul’s Damascus Road encounter with Jesus marks the beginning of the well-documented fourteen-year period of Paul’s Christian life (counting from his baptism at Damascus by the hand of Ananias {Acts 9:17-18; Acts 22:12-16} until he began to fulfill his apostolic charge from Jesus to the Gentiles, having been officially commissioned and sent out from the Antioch assembly {Acts 13:2-4}). This fourteen-year, pre-apostolic period for Paul (as a Christian but not yet a functioning Emissary of the Anointed) was well known both orally and from Paul’s very first letter (Galatians 1:11 – 2:10), written shortly after his first missionary journey, but before the Jerusalem council in Acts 15.

¹⁰⁰ Paul’s statement that he could not tell whether his heavenly Damascus Road experience was “within the body” or “without the body” refers only to his perception, whether he was transported bodily or merely mentally. According to other eyewitnesses, Paul interacted with Jesus on the Damascus road with his own physical mouth. Luke records that he “fell to the ground,” and “trembling and astonished said, ‘Master, what do You want me to do?’” Luke then says that those traveling with him also heard Jesus’ voice (Acts 9:7), but did not understand the language (Acts 22:9) because Jesus spoke in Hebrew not Greek (Acts 26:14). The other witnesses also saw the bright light (Acts 22:9), yet they did not see Jesus (Acts 9:7). But Paul did see Jesus as he stared into that bright light of the third sky, as he indicated in 1 Cor. 15:8. Luke indicated that Paul remained on the ground, and spoke with his physical mouth in answer to what Jesus was communicating to him. To Paul, it seemed as though he was actually seized into the very presence of God, face to face with Jesus seated at the right hand of God. But his perception on this was not sufficient to make a definitive statement. In any case, he was not describing an “out of body experience” as many commentators claim, or the eyewitnesses would not have reported that he was answering the voice speaking to him.

¹⁰¹ The “Garden” παράδεισος is the term used throughout the Septuagint for Eden, the “Garden” that God planted (Gen. 2:8 LXX). It is to be restored in the Kingdom as the “Garden of the Master” (παράδεισον κυρίου – Isa. 51:3 LXX). The “Garden” παράδεισος is where Jesus assured the dying thief that he would join Jesus in the resurrection (Luke 23:43). And Jesus assured the overcomers of the Ephesian assembly that they would eat of the Tree of Life “in the Garden of God” (ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τοῦ θεοῦ – Rev. 2:7). Compare Ezek. 47:1-12 & Rev. 22:1-2.

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whether outside the body I have not perceived, God has perceived), 4 and heard unspeakable sayings which humans are not allowed to utter.¹⁰²

Paul's "Thorn in the Flesh"

5 I will boast over such a man, but over myself I will not boast except in my infirmities. 6 For if I ever should desire to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will declare the truth. But I refrain¹⁰³ so that no one may account unto me above what he sees [in] me or hears from me. 7 And regarding the transcendence of the revelations, so that I may not be uplifted, a thorn in the flesh¹⁰⁴ was given to me, a messenger of the Adversary so that he¹⁰⁵ may pummel me, so that I should not be haughty. 8 I pleaded with the Master three times over this so that it should be removed from me. 9 And He has said to me, **"My grace is enough for you, for my power is completed in infirmity."** Most gladly, then, I will rather boast in my infirmities so that the power of the Anointed might tabernacle upon me. 10 Therefore, I rejoice in infirmities, in insults, in needs, in persecutions, in difficulties concerning the Anointed. For whenever I may be weak, then I am strong.

Paul's true Motivations

11 I have become a fool in boasting! You compelled me! For I was being owed to be recommended under you. For I lack nothing of the preeminent Emissaries,¹⁰⁶ even if I am nothing. 12 Indeed, the signs of the Emissary¹⁰⁷ were produced among you in all endurance, in signs and wonders and abilities.¹⁰⁸ 13 For is there anything in which you were shorted beyond the rest of the assemblies, except that I myself was not an encumbrance¹⁰⁹ of yours? Forgive me this injustice! 14 Look, a third [time] I am ready to come toward you,¹¹⁰ and I will not be an encumbrance of yours. For I am not seeking what

¹⁰² Rev. 10:1-4

¹⁰³ Paul refrained from disclosing all that he saw and heard during these two encounters with Jesus.

¹⁰⁴ This indicates a real physical ailment. Galatians includes statements which indicate Paul had very poor eyesight (Gal. 4:13-16; Gal. 6:11). While Paul was totally blinded by his first encounter with Jesus, after Ananias laid hands on him, scales fell from his eyes and he could see. It seems perfectly natural that the "thorn in the flesh" would be the result of his Damascus-road encounter, and that his eyesight was only partially restored. This would not only serve to keep Paul humble, but also was evidence that his story about his conversion was not a fable, as he still suffered because of it. It would be rather odd, however, for his sight to be restored completely through Ananias only to be later afflicted again, which would seem to be required if the first encounter above was at a later time (merely "fourteen years ago" as most English translations incorrectly translate this passage).

¹⁰⁵ The present, passive, subjunctive, 3rd person verb "he may pummel" indicates that this "messenger of the Adversary" was a real being who constantly harassed Paul, perhaps mocking him for his physical handicap.

¹⁰⁶ Peter, James, and John. See: 2 Cor. 11:5.

¹⁰⁷ Those Emissaries who were personally commissioned by Jesus Himself possessed a gift or ability unique to them alone, as proof that they were approved and recommended by Jesus Himself. That was the ability to be the sole agents through which God dispensed supernatural spiritual gifts to believers (Acts 8:14-21; Rom. 1:9-12; 2 Tim. 1:6).

¹⁰⁸ The abundant spiritual gifts bestowed upon the Corinthians through Paul's hands (1 Cor. 12:27-31).

¹⁰⁹ 2 Cor. 11:8-9

¹¹⁰ Paul had only visited Corinth once before, when he first established that assembly (Acts 18:1-18). In his first letter, he expressed his intention to them immediately after Pentecost (1 Cor. 16:5-8). However, he was delayed due to the events described in Acts 19:23-41, and some of the Corinthians then questioned his sincerity (2 Cor. 1:15-17).

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is yours, but you. For the children ought not to store up for the parents, but the parents for the children. 15 Yet with satisfaction I will spend and be spent concerning your souls, even if [in] loving you excessively I am loved less. 16 Yet be that [as it may], I did not overburden you. Yet, being clever, I caught you using deceit?¹¹¹ 17 Did I defraud you through him, [through] those I sent to you? 18 I entreated Titus, and together-commissioned the brother. Did Titus defraud you in anything? Did we not walk with the same breath, in the same footprints?¹¹² 19 Again you presume that we are being defensive. We speak before God in the Anointed, yet everything, beloved, for your confirmation. 20 For somehow I worry, [that] coming, I may not find you as I desire to find you, (and [that] I may not be found by you as you desire),¹¹³ such as arguments, jealousies, angers, quarrels, insults, gossips, egos, commotions, 21 [that] having come again, God may humble me toward you and I will mourn many who have previously sinned and not repented concerning the impurity and fornication and shamelessness which they practiced.

Chapter 13

A final Warning

This, the third [attempt], I am coming toward you. *“Upon the mouth of two and three witnesses every statement will be established.”*¹¹⁴ 2 I have stated before¹¹⁵ and I forewarn a second time as if present [yet] writing now absent, I will not spare 3 since you seek proof of the Anointed speaking in me, [He] who is not weak unto you but strong among you. 4 For even though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives out from the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we will live together with Him out of the power of God unto you.¹¹⁶ 5 Test yourselves, whether you are in the Faith; examine yourselves. Or do you not yourselves know that Jesus Anointed is among you, unless some of you are disqualified?¹¹⁷ 6 But I expect that you will know that we are not disqualified! 7 Yet I wish to God [that] you do no evil in anything, not so that we might appear approved, but so that you should do what is right, yet we may be as if disqualified. 8 For we are powerless [to do] anything against the Truth; but [only] for the sake of the Truth. 9 For we rejoice whenever we may be weak but you may be strong. Yet this we also desire – your perfection. 10 Consequently, I write these things being absent so that being present I

¹¹¹ The reason Paul felt it necessary to justify himself as an Emissary of the Anointed not less than Peter, James, and John, was because the “false emissaries” which some of the Corinthians had listened to, cast doubt on Paul, claiming that he was deceiving them, and using this alleged donation for the Jerusalem assembly to become rich by them.

¹¹² Rom. 4:12

¹¹³ That is with discipline and rebuke (2 Cor. 10:8-11).

¹¹⁴ Deut. 17:6; Deut. 19:15

¹¹⁵ In 1 Cor. 5:3-5, without being present Paul passed judgment on one who had committed fornication as though he was present, and was participating together with the elders at Corinth in excommunicating that member.

¹¹⁶ God’s power to bring forth the dead from their graves (Rom. 8:9-11).

¹¹⁷ ἀδόκιμος – failed to qualify, disqualified, rejected, cast away (Rom. 1:28; 1 Cor. 9:27; Titus 1:16; Heb. 6:8)

2 Corinthians

would not act harshly according to the authority which the Master gave to me unto confirmation, and not unto tearing down.

Salutations

11 Finally, brothers, rejoice! Be completed! Receive exhortation! Be of the same mind! Be at peace! And the God of love and peace will be with you. 12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. 13 All the holy ones greet you. 14 The grace of the Master, Jesus Anointed, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the holy Breath be with you all, Amen.