**Dealing With A Thorn In The Flesh**

**Reading - 2 Corinthians 12:6-10**

**SEVERAL POSSIBILITIES HAVE BEEN PROPOSED...**

1. Tertullian proposed that Paul had a .

2. The medieval commentators attributed his thorn to .

***(Acts 23:6) Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee…***

***(Philippians 3:4-5) though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: {5} circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;***

3. The commentator MacKnight attributes Paul’s .

***(1 Corinthians 2:1) And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech….***

***(2 Corinthians 10:10) "For his letters," they say, "are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."***

4. Ramsay came to the conclusion that Paul suffered .

5. Farrar and others said that Paul had .

***(Galatians 4:13-15) You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. {14} And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. {15} What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.***

***(Galatians 6:11) See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!***

6. Chrysostom proposed it was the .

**"And so by the "messenger of Satan," he means ... those who contended with and fought against him, those that cast him into a prison, those that beat him, that led him away to death); for they did Satan's business." (Homilies 26)**

***(Numbers 33:55) 'But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell. (Judges 2:3) "Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.'"***

The term "messenger" in Paul's writings always refer to a and not to a such as an illness.

The basic topic of 3 chapters [2 Corinthians 10 -13] is Paul's .

Paul parallels the "thorn" with a "weakness" (or infirmity) in which he will glory; in the context of 2 Corinthians Chapters 10-13 he connects his infirmities or weakness with persecution:

1. ***(2 Corinthians 11:30-33) If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity…{32} In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; {33} but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.***
2. ***(2 Corinthians 12:10) 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.***
3. ***(2 Corinthians 13:3-4) since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you. {4} For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.***

# WHY WAS THE "THORN" GIVEN?

LEST PAUL BE "***EXALTED ABOVE MEASURE***-" (**2 Corinthians 12:7**)

TO "BUFFET" HIM (**2 Corinthians 12:7**) ***(1 Corinthians 9:27) But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.***

THERE IS A PRACTICAL LESSON RELATED TO HUMILITY... ***(Luke 18:13-14) "And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' {14} "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."***

***(1 Peter 5:5-6) Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." {6} Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,***

**The LORD'S ANSWER** "***My grace is sufficient for you***" **2 Corinthians 12:9**

The Lord would give Paul what he but not necessarily what he .

Infirmities can be a time for rejoicing! ***(Romans 5:3) And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;***2. "***My strength is made perfect in weakness***"

***(James 1:2-4) My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, {3} knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. {4} But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.***

The Lord may choose not to remove your thorn either, ***(Titus 3:4-8) But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, {5} not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, {6} whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, {7} that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. {8} This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.***