

(2 Corinthians 12:1-10)

# CORINTHIANS

THE *Second Letter* OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

## PAUL'S THORN In The Flesh

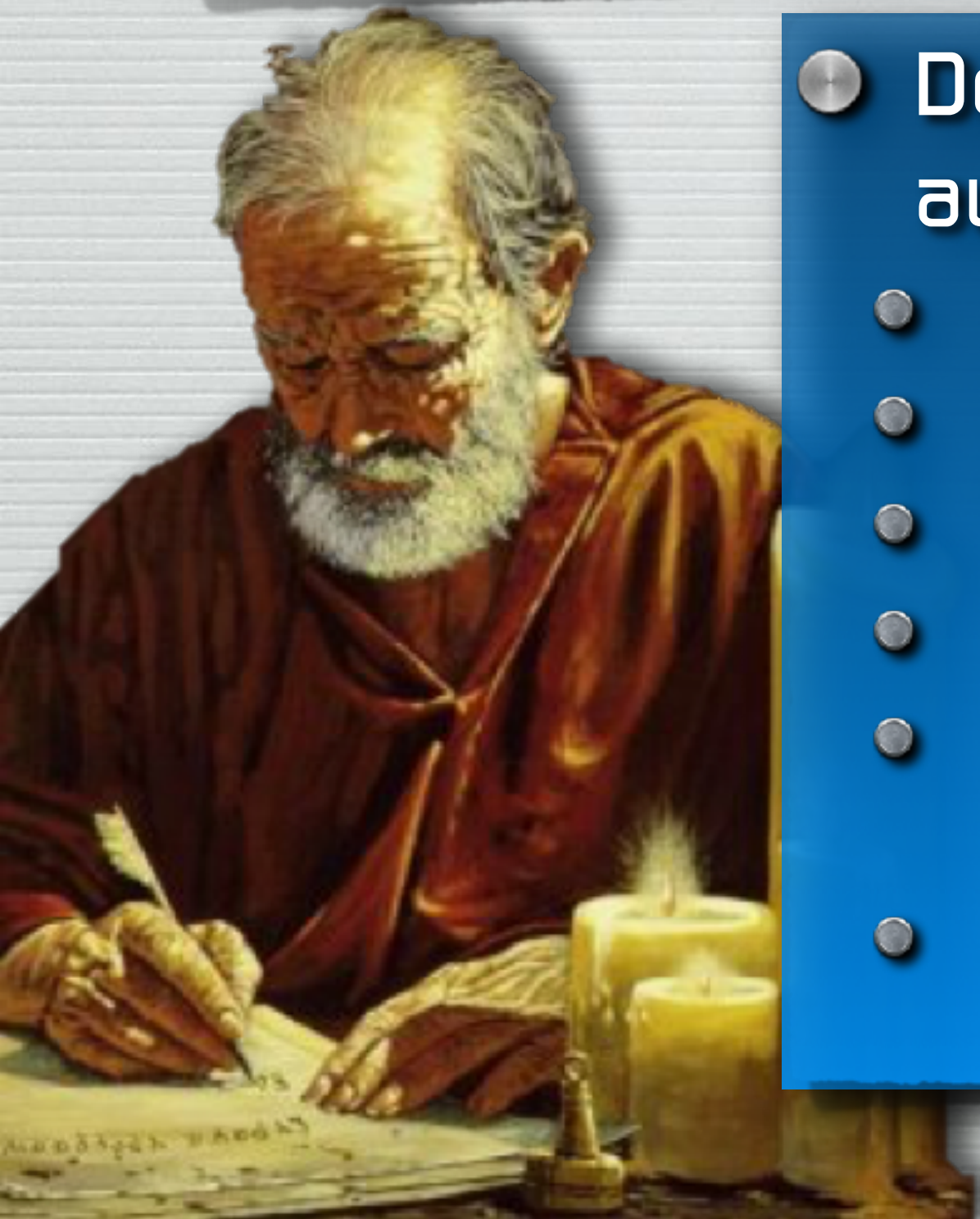
2 Corinthians 12:10 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> 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.



# *Paul's Thorn In The Flesh (A Messenger From Satan)*

<sup>10</sup> 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. (2 Corinthians 12:10)



- **Defense of Paul's apostolic authority – 10:1-13:10**
- Concern for their faithfulness - 11:1-4
- Equal to the others – 11:5,6
- Paul's free gift to them – 11:7-11
- Warns of false teachers – 11:12-15
- Reluctant boasting in his sufferings – 11:16-31
- Paul's thorn - a messenger from Satan -



## 2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-10 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup> It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: <sup>2</sup> I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. <sup>3</sup> And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—



## 2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-10 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. <sup>5</sup> Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. <sup>6</sup> For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me.



## 2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-10 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. <sup>8</sup> Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.



## 2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-10 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. <sup>10</sup> 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.



# *Paul's Thorn In The Flesh (A Messenger From Satan)*

## Visions & Revelations - 12:1-6



- *“... I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord:”*

2 Corinthians 12:1 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup> It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord:

- Paul continues the validation of his apostolic authority by reluctantly appealing to “*visions and revelations*” apparently responding to the taunts of his opponents — (1, cf. vs. 11)
- Acts is full of such visions (Acts 9:4-6; Acts 16:9; Acts 18:9; Acts 22:18; Acts 23:11; Acts 27:23).



# *Paul's Thorn In The Flesh (A Messenger From Satan)*

## Visions & Revelations - 12:1-6



- *“... I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord:”*

2 Corinthians 12:2 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven.

- “I knew a man in Christ ...”  
Most all commentators believe this is a reference to himself—  
(2, cf. vs. 5,7, Gal. 2:2)
- “Fourteen years ago” — A.D. 42–44. — After Paul's conversion, (AD 37) but before Paul's missionary journeys, (47-49 AD; Acts 13) — (Cf. Galatians 2:2)



# *Paul's Thorn In The Flesh (A Messenger From Satan)*

## Visions & Revelations - 12:1-6



- *“... I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord:”*

2 Corinthians 12:2 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven.

- *“whether in the body ...”* IN a trance, such as Ezekiel’s journey, in the visions of God, from the banks of Chebar to Jerusalem (Ezekiel 8:3; 11:1)
- *“caught up to the third heaven”* in the presence of God —into paradise (3,4). Not allowed to speak what he heard (4; cf. Is 8:16; Dan 12:4, 9; Rev 14:3)



# *Paul's Thorn In The Flesh (A Messenger From Satan)*

## Visions & Revelations - 12:1-6



- *“... I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord:”*

2 Corinthians 12:5–6 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. <sup>6</sup> For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me *to be* or hears from me.

- Instead of boasting of his raptures into the third heaven and into paradise, he will boast of those very weaknesses for which his enemies ridiculed him, because, the more weak and contemptible he appeared in the eyes of the world — (5,6; 9, 10; ch. 11:30)



# *Paul's Thorn In The Flesh (A Messenger From Satan)*

## Paul's Thorn In The Flesh - 12:7-10



- *“... a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.”*

- What was the thorn?

2 Corinthians 12:7 (NKJV)  
7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

- Doddridge - A paralytic disorder?
- Latin Fathers - An unruly desire??
- Chrysostom & Jerome - headache?
- Tertullian, - an earache
- A Physical infirmity? - Gal 4:13
- Eye disorder? - Gal 4:15
- Persecution? - 2 Cor. 11:23-30



# *Paul's Thorn In The Flesh (A Messenger From Satan)*

## Paul's Thorn In The Flesh - 12:7-10



- *“... a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.”*

2 Corinthians 12:7 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

- The thorn most likely was the persecution he received from Satan's ministers — (11:20-27; Acts 9:16.23,24; 13:45-50; 16:22, 23; 17:13; 21:32 ...)
- Kept Paul humble - 7
- A messenger from Satan, (God can take things Satan attempts to use to destroy us and use them for our benefit — (1 Pet 1:3-6; Ja. 1:2-7; etc)



# *Paul's Thorn In The Flesh (A Messenger From Satan)*

## Paul's Thorn In The Flesh - 12:7-10



- *“... a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.”*

2 Corinthians 12:8 (NKJV)  
8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

- Whatever it was – Paul wanted relief! Paul prayed three times that it be removed – (vs. 8; cf. Mat 26:36-46)
- Nothing wrong with asking God for relief - but we must realize that sometimes God will say know – (1 John 5:14-15; 1 Pet 5:7; James 1:5,6)



# *Paul's Thorn In The Flesh (A Messenger From Satan)*

## Paul's Thorn In The Flesh - 12:7-10

- 
- *“... a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.”*

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

- The answer was “No”: God’s grace was sufficient (9; cf. Philippians 4:19; James 1:2-6; 1 Pet 1:3-9).
- My strength is made perfect in weakness — (9; 1 Cor. 1:18-25; Ep. 3:16; Phi. 4:13; Col. 1:11; He. 11:34).



# *Paul's Thorn In The Flesh (A Messenger From Satan)*

## Paul's Thorn In The Flesh - 12:7-10



2 Corinthians 12:9 (NKJV)  
9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

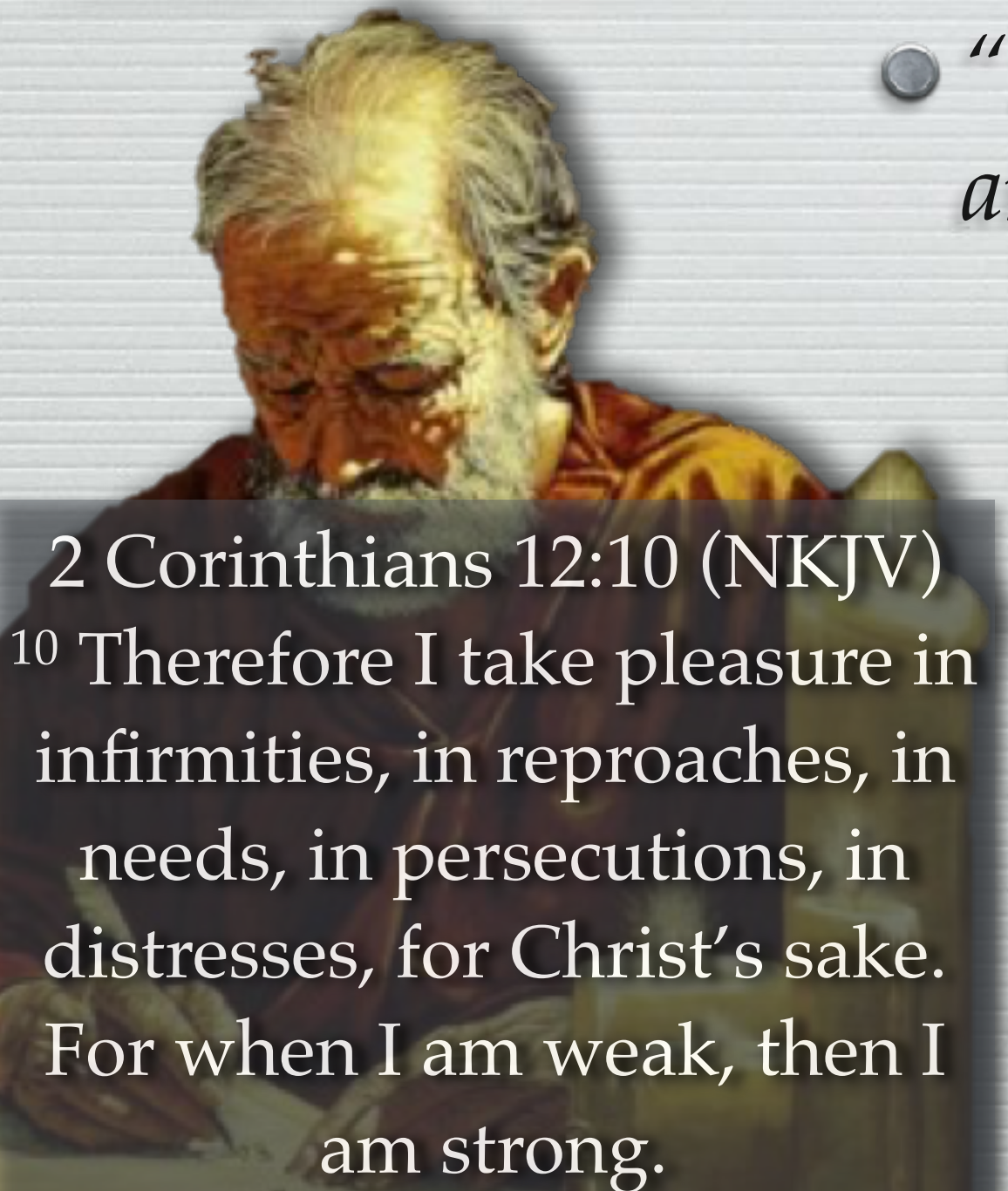
- "... a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure."

- Therefore Paul will not "glory" in grand, great revelations and extraordinary visions, but rather in human sufferings and frailties, which God gave him power to overcome.
- There will be no exaltation of "Paul," but glory to God (10:17).



# *Paul's Thorn In The Flesh (A Messenger From Satan)*

## Paul's Thorn In The Flesh - 12:7-10



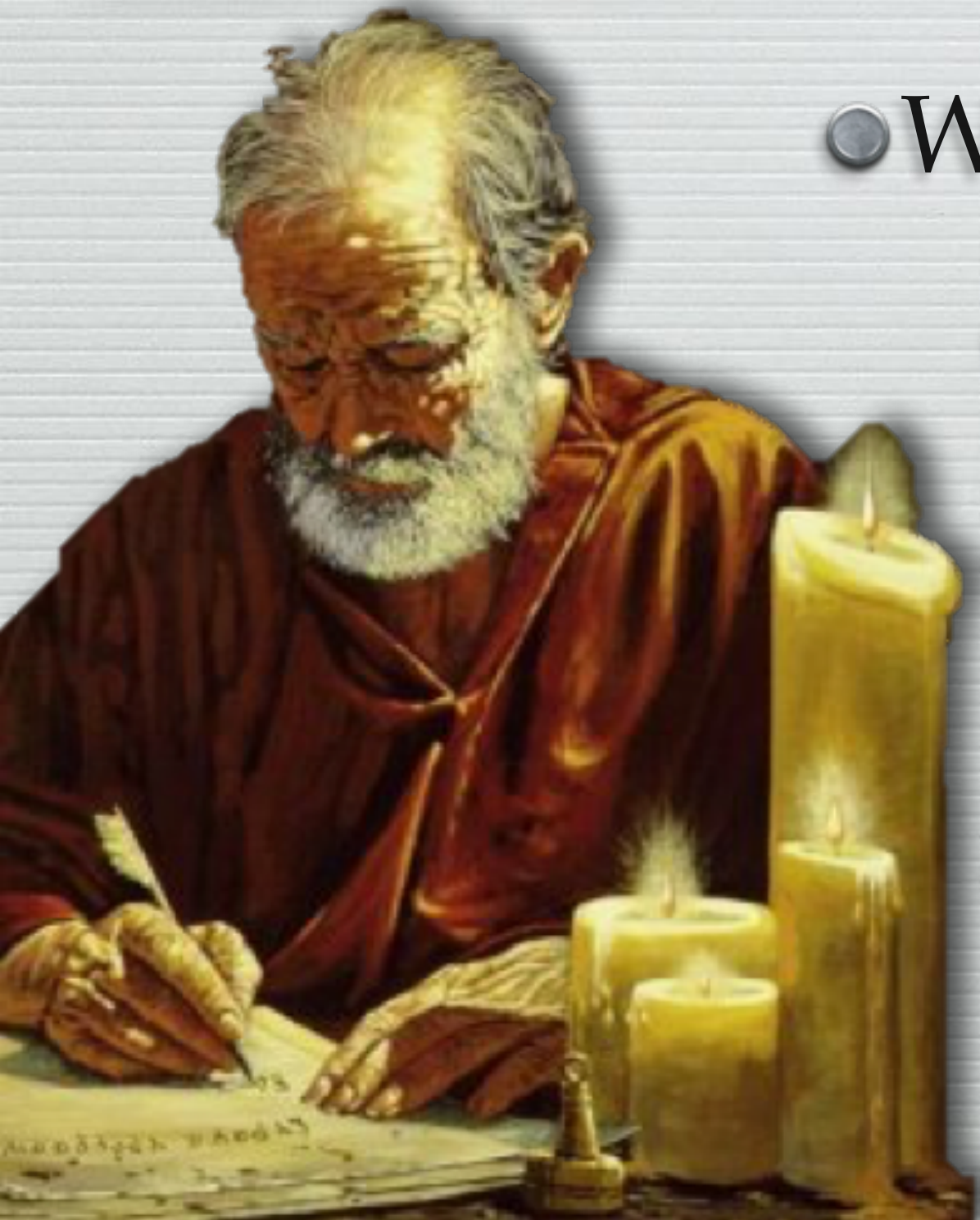
2 Corinthians 12:10 (NKJV)  
<sup>10</sup> Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- "... For when I am weak, then I am strong." (10)
- Take pleasure - compare James' teaching regarding trials, (James 1:2-9) and Peter's, (1 Pet 1:6) — (10; 11:20-26)
- Gladly suffers for Christ's sake — (10; 4:5,11; Lk 6:22; Jn 15:21)
- strong — "powerful" in "the power of Christ" (2 Co 12:9; 13:4; Eph. 6:10; Heb 11:34).



# *Paul's Thorn In The Flesh (A Messenger From Satan)*

## Paul's Thorn In The Flesh - 12:7-10

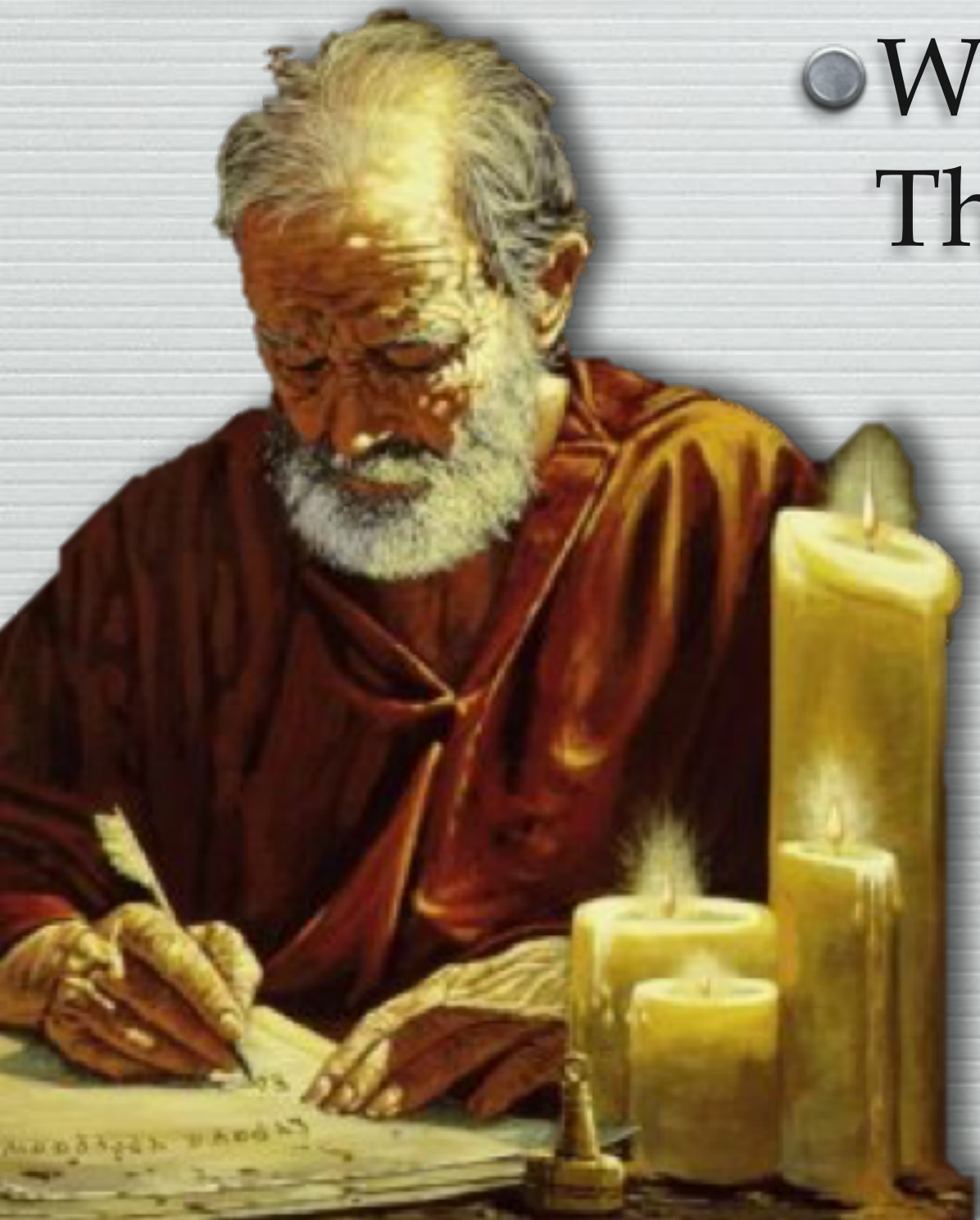


- Who is free from thorns?
  - Physical Hindrance or Pain? — *Age / Illness Injury / Disability ...*
  - Illicit Desire? — *Chem. Addiction Immoral Thoughts / Selfishness / Greed ...*
  - Relationship in Distress? — *Job Conditions / Spouse / Parents / children / Brethren ...*



# *Paul's Thorn In The Flesh (A Messenger From Satan)*

## Paul's Thorn In The Flesh - 12:7-10

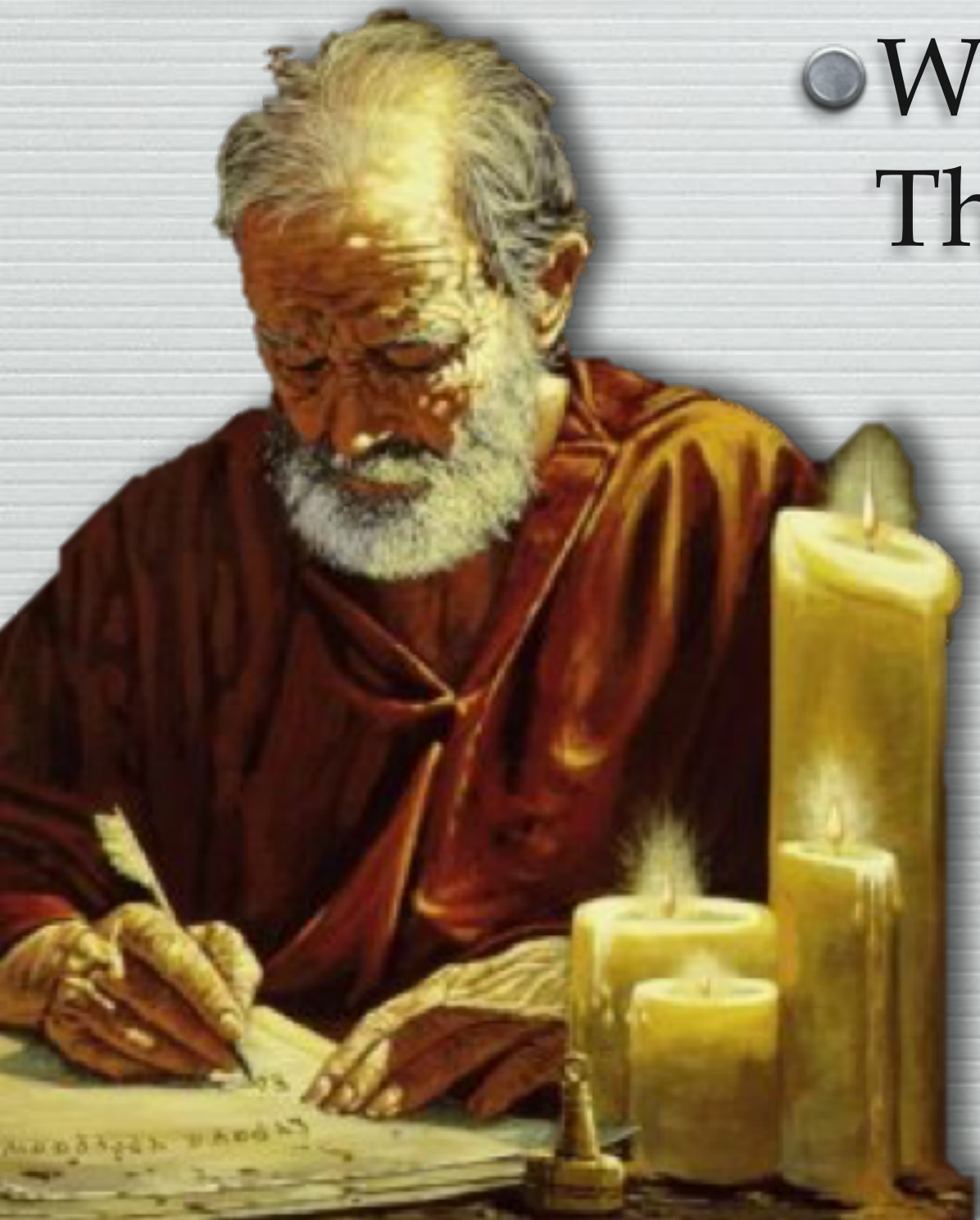


- What Is My Response To The Thorn?
- Why Me?
- Where is God?
- How Can This Be?
- Does God Care?
- The Issue Is NOT The Thorn!



# *Paul's Thorn In The Flesh (A Messenger From Satan)*

## Paul's Thorn In The Flesh - 12:7-10

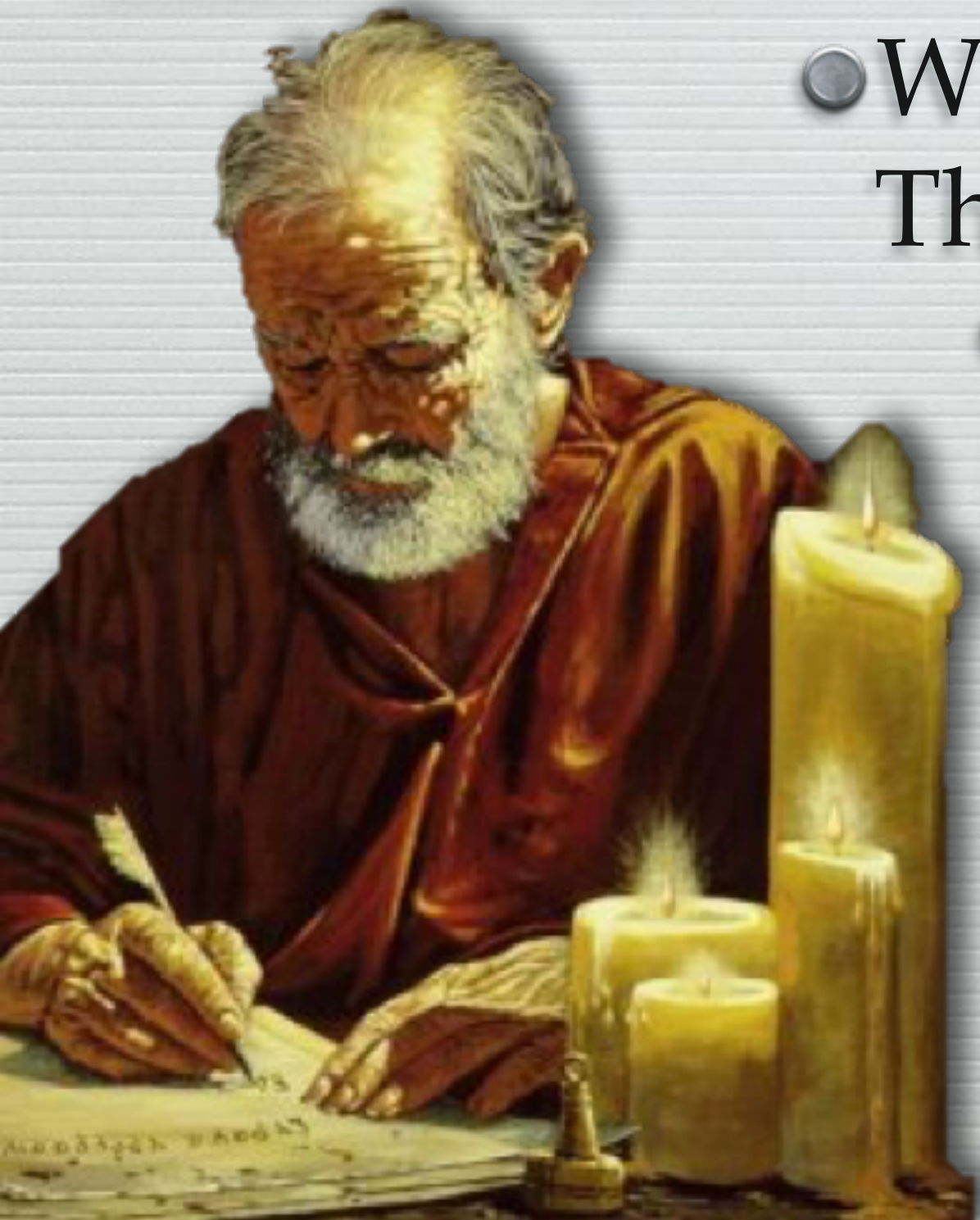


- What Is My Response To The Thorn?
  - The Battle Is NOT EXTERNAL BUT INTERNAL! 2 Cor. 11:24-28; Job 14:1
  - How Does One Retain His Faith? Phil 4:11-13; 2 Cor 4:16; 2 Tim 4:6-8
  - Can we gladly accept our thorns – (9,10; Col 1:24; James 1:2; 1 Peter 1:6,7; 4:13; 2 Cor 4:8-17)



# *Paul's Thorn In The Flesh (A Messenger From Satan)*

## Paul's Thorn In The Flesh - 12:7-10

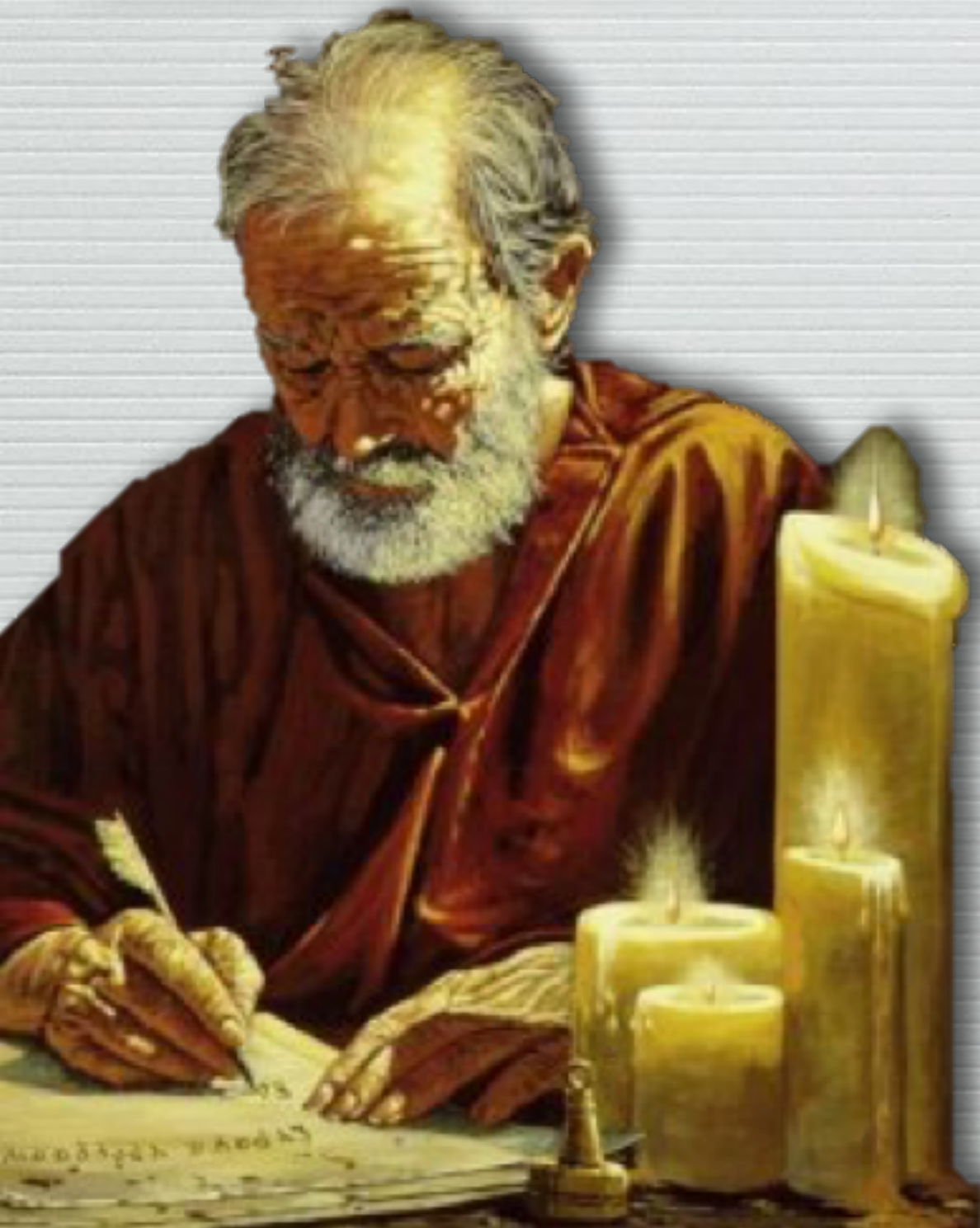


- What Is My Response To The Thorn?
  - Can we see value in thorns?  
*(For when I am weak, then I am strong. (10) James 1:1-6,12; 1 Peter 5:7-19; Heb 2:17-3:1; 12:1-3*
  - True strength comes by facing resistance!
  - The Battle can be WON! -



# *Paul's Thorn In The Flesh (A Messenger From Satan)*

## What Is My Response To The Thorn?



- Do Not Judge God – Job 9:32
- Look To The Cross – Rom. 5:8
- Keep Your Perspective – Rom. 8:18
- Be Of Help To Others – 2 Cor. 1:4
- Ask God For Help – James 1:5;
- Pray For Deliverance From Temptation – Mat 6:13; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Tim. 4:17-18
- Accept The Challenge – James 1:12; Rev 2:10







(2 Corinthians 12:1-10)

# CORINTHIANS

THE *Second Letter* OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

## PAUL'S THORN In The Flesh

**Charts by Don McClain**

Prepared & preached February 19, 2017;

West 65<sup>th</sup> Street church of Christ P.O. Box 190062 / Little Rock AR 72219 /

501-568-1062 / Email – [donmcclain@sbcglobal.net](mailto:donmcclain@sbcglobal.net)

Prepared using Keynote – More PPT & Audio Sermons:

<http://w65stchurchofchrist.org/coc/>



## JAMES 1:1-6 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup> James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings. <sup>2</sup> My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. <sup>4</sup> But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.



## JAMES 1:1-6 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.