

2 Corinthians 11:22-33

11:22 – **Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I.**

- A. This reference to Hebrews, Israelites, and “offspring of Abraham” would seem to secure the identity of one group of the false-teachers and the super-apostles as Jews from Jerusalem trying to lead the church back into Judaism.
- B. Other references in the letter show Paul attacking the rhetorical skills of Greek philosophers and contemporary speakers.
- C. The fact that Paul was born in Tarsus, Cilicia (Turkey today, or Asia in NT) gave his critics room to challenge the authenticity of his Jewish roots.
 - 1. Like they challenged Jesus in John 8:39
 - 2. The Ebionites, a Jewish/Christian cult, claimed that Paul was a Gentile by birth and a Jewish imposter.
- D. Paul simply claims to have as much Jewishness and Abrahamic bloodline as they do. The NT supports this claim:
 - 1. Acts 21:39
 - 2. Acts 22:3-5 – Paul gives his background
 - 3. Phil. 3:4-8 – counts as nothing
 - 4. Romans 9:4-9 – Paul recognizes the historical significance of his place on God’s timeline.
 - 5. Romans 9:1-3 – Paul concern for his Jewish people
 - 6. Acts 8:3 – Paul a former Pharisee
 - 7. 1 Timothy 1:13 – Paul a former persecutor
 - 8. Phil. 3:3 – Paul puts no confidence in this fleshly inheritance, but instead counts it as nothing and trusts Christ.

11:23 – **Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death.**

- A. Paul refers to the imposters as servants of Christ without actually admitting they are. He does this merely to create the ability to compare himself (a true servant of Christ) with them (false servants)
- B. 11:23-33 contains situations that are not recorded anywhere else. This indicates how little we know of Paul’s ministry’s day to day activity and struggles.
- C. Remember, the Book of Acts is not a biography about Paul, but some historical details about the apostles, the Spirit of God and Christ’s continued work through the church between the years of 30-62 AD.
- D. Note: The suffering of the Apostle, the true servant of Christ. Contrast that with the false apostles of Paul’s day and the leaders of the Western church.
- E. Jesus promised this to Paul in:
 - 1. Acts 9:16
 - 2. Acts 20:23
 - 3. 2 Corinthians 4:7-12
 - 4. 2 Corinthians 6:4-10
 - 5. 2 Corinthians 6:4-6
- F. Paul’s recorded imprisonments in Acts between 35-62 AD and 2 Timothy in 67 AD:
 - 1. Philippi – 16:23
 - 2. Jerusalem 22:29 and 23:10

3. Caesarea – 23:35; 24:23; 25:4; 26:32
 4. Rome - 28:16
 5. Rome #2 - 2 Timothy 1:8
- G. 2 Corinthians is written in fall of 55 AD (maybe fall of 56 AD). The only imprisonment mentioned in the text of Scripture that has occurred at the time of writing 2 Corinthians is the one in Philippi in 50 AD. So, there has been a lot of jail time before 55 AD that is not recorded.

11:24 – Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned.

- A. At the end of verse 11:23 Paul stated, “and often near death.” Now, in verse 11:24 Paul details some of the “near death” events.
 1. Forty lashes minus one
 2. Beaten with rods
 3. Stoned
- B. Also, note that any glory of being a Jew (Abraham’s seed, etc.) that was described in 11:22 is neutralized here when Paul credits the Jews with persecuting him just as Jesus had warned the his own apostles.
- C. Five times Paul was given the Jewish scourging
 1. Mosaic Law in Deut. 25:1-3 establishes forty as the maximum number of stripes a guilty man could be given.
 - i. To avoid breaking the Mosaic Law by accidentally miscounting the Jewish leadership would only administer 39 of the 40 lashes.
 - ii. In NT times this punishment occurred in synagogues.
 1. Any of the times Paul was confronted in the synagogue could have led to his being lashed for blaspheme during the years before this letter, 35-55 AD.
 - a. Damascus
 - b. Jerusalem
 - c. Pisidian Antioch
 - d. Iconium
 - e. Thessalonica
 - f. Berea
 - g. Corinth
 - h. Ephesus
 - iii. Jesus warned of this lashing in the synagogues in:
 1. Matt. 10:17 and Mark 13:9 - “Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues.”
 2. Matthew 23:34, “Therefore I am sending you prophets and sages and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town.”
 3. Luke 12:11 - When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.”
 4. Luke 21:12, “But before all this, they will sieve you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison.”
 5. Paul himself used the synagogue system of punishment before he was converted: Acts 26:11, “I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.”
- D. The Gentiles beating came through a rod.

1. One time would have been at Philippi in Acts 16:22.
 2. The other times could have been at Antioch or Lystra,
 3. Paul's Roman citizenship should have protected him from these Roman beatings, but the local magistrates often acted independently and were often brutal.
- E. The stoning was in Lystra in Acts 14:19. It was the penalty for blasphemy

11:25 – Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea;

- A. Then only recording of Paul's shipwreck occurs 3 years later (59-60 AD) is in Acts 27
- B. The book of Acts does record Paul traveling by sea on nine different occasions up to this point (56 AD). There must have been many more times Paul traveled by sea otherwise these numbers present the image that Paul was in a ship wreck every third time he got on a boat.

11:26 - on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers;

11:27 - in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

11:28 – And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

11:29 - Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?

- A. The new, young believer who is growing in their faith is weak. Paul's concern, thoughts and prayers for his converts provided him a constant burden.
- B. Paul personally knew the struggles of growth and temptation. He anticipated his own converts struggles and experienced the burden and concern for their spiritual development.

11:30 – If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

- A. This is a pivotal verse.
- B. Paul's boasting is NOT in his own natural, carnal, fleshly ability measured by human standards
- C. Paul's boasting is CHRIST'S GLORY that is manifest in Paul's own weak nature and carnal state.
- D. Paul is ultimately turning the false apostles human boasting and glory upside down by showing the only thing that will last is Christ manifesting himself in our own weak attempts to serve him.
- E. This verse is actually the closing of Paul's human boasting and begins Paul's glory in Christ.
- F. This has been the theme of the book from the beginning – The glory of Christ in the church.

11:31 – The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

11:32 – At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me,

11:33 – “but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.”

2 Corinthians 12

11:1 - I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord.

11:2 - I know a man yin Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows.

11:3 - And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—

11:4 - and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.

11:5 - On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses—

11:6 - though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me.

11:7 - So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, ha messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.

11:8 - Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.

11:9 - But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

11:10 - For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

11 I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I was not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing. 12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works. 13 For in what were you less favored than the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!

14 Here for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours but you. For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. 15 I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? 16 But granting that I myself did not burden you, I was crafty, you say, and got the better of you by deceit. 17 Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you? 18 I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not act in the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?

19 Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? It is fin the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and gall for your upbuilding, beloved. 20 For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. 21 I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over

many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.