

## 2 Corinthians 11:22-23

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.