

May 27 – Finding Strength – 2 Corinthians 12 & 13

# The Quest: Strength in Weakness

Corinth with Acrocorinth, 1847  
by Carl Anton Joseph Rottmann



Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)



FBC Woodville  
Sunday School Class  
Michael G. Maness  
see  
[PreciousHeart.net/SS](http://PreciousHeart.net/SS)



## 1 Corinthians

*chapter*

## from Ephesus

- |           |  |      |                              |
|-----------|--|------|------------------------------|
| 1. Mar 4  | United in Christ                       | 1    | No Divisions – Wisdom of God |
| 2. Mar 11 | Glorifying God                         | 6    | Bought with a Price          |
| 3. Mar 18 | Keeping Commitments                    | 7    | Marriage for Life in Love    |
| 5. Mar 25 | Influencing for Christ                 | 9-10 | All Things to All People     |
| 6. Apr 1  | Easter Sunday – Sunrise Easter Service |      |                              |
| 7. Apr 8  | Remembering the Sacrifice              | 11   | Examine Oneself              |
| 8. Apr 15 | Serving God's People                   | 12   | Gifts of Same Spirit & Lord  |
| 8. Apr 22 | Understanding Love                     | 13   | Greatest of These Is LOVE    |

## 2 Corinthians

*chapter*

## from Macedonia

- |              |                        |       |                             |
|--------------|------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|
| 9. Apr 29    | Enjoying God's Comfort | 1     | Afflicted for Your Comfort  |
| 10. May 6    | Displaying the Gospel  | 4     | Light Shone in Our Hearts   |
| 11. May 13   | Becoming New           | 5-6   | In Christ – a New Creation  |
| 12. May 20   | Giving Faithfully      | 9     | Ministry to the Saints      |
| ☆ 13. May 27 | Finding Strength       | 12-13 | When Weak, then I Am Strong |





## Theme

**Believers can trust in God's strength when confronted with their weaknesses.**

**10:1-18 Paul Validates His Authenticity**

**11:1-15 Paul Demolishes False Apostles**

**11:16 – 12:6 Paul Unfolds His Stupendous Resume**

**12:7-10 Paul's Weakness – Thorn in Flesh, Satan's Messenger**

**13:2-4 Christ's Strength – Christ LIVES by Power of God**

**13:5-8 Our Choice – Test Yourselves ... All for Truth**



## **Key Verse – 2 Cor. 12:10**

**That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight  
in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships,  
in persecutions, in difficulties.**

**For when I am weak,  
then I am strong.**



Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)c





**Alternate Title**

**Strength**

**in Weakness**

**You Must Trust God**



# Outline of 2 Corinthians

**You're HERE**

<b>I. Special Greetings</b>	<b>1:1-11</b>	
A. Address	1-2	
B. Praise & Encouragement	3-7	
C. Paul's Trial in Asia	8-11	
<b>II. Paul's Ministry</b>	<b>1:12-7:16</b>	
A. Paul's Itinerary	1:12-2:13	
B. Paul's Message	2:14-5:10	
C. Paul's Purpose	5:11-7:16	
<b>III. Collection for Needy Christians</b>	<b>8:1-9:15</b>	Sec. 1 - Love
<b>IV. Case Against False Prophets</b>	<b>10:1-13:10</b>	Sec. 2 - Quacks
<b>V. Final Greetings</b>	<b>13:11-13</b>	





I. Special Greetings	1:1-11
II. Paul's Ministry	1:12-7:16
III. Collection for Needy Christians	8:1-9:15
A. Commending Macedonians	8:1-6
B. Appeal to Corinthians' Earnestness	8:7-15
C. Mission of Titus	8:16-24
D. Commending Achaia	9:1-5
E. Collection & Unity of Church	9:6-15
IV. Case Against False Prophets	10:1-13:10
A. Paul's Self-Vindication	10:1-11
B. Issue of Paul's Ministry	10:12-18
C. Emissaries Identified & Opposed	11:1-15
D. Paul's Fool's Story	11:16-12:10
1. Boasting: True & False	11:16-21a
2. Paul's Trials	11:21b-33
3. Paul's Ecstasy & Its Evaluation	12:1-10
E. Paul's Apostolate Justified	12:11-18
F. Warnings & Third Visit Promised	12:19-13:10
V. Final Greetings	13:11-13

**You're  
HERE**



**In closing 2 Corinthians ...**

**and the HOST of directions we could take ...**

**We want most of all to see the Heart of Paul  
The Precious Heart of the Dear Apostle Paul**

**The most significant Apostle from Acts through  
his several inspired books that mold Church doctrine**

**Here,**

**Paul defends his authenticity with a strong HEART**

**Would that ALL of us were this devote**



Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)





Apostle Paul is on a Quest ... a Mission  
Always putting God and His Kingdom First

- ✓ Through trials that would CRUSH most
- ✓ Through a THORN in his Flesh
- ✓ Through Weakness & Threat of His Life

Never Relented ... Eyes on the Prize

Let me quickly offer a song for this part of Paul Life

Song about **NEVER GIVING UP** that has inspired millions

**The Impossible Dream**

subtitled: **The Quest**



Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)



# Impossible Dream

Impossible Dream (The Quest)  
music by Mitch Leigh and lyrics by Joe Darion

2,328 Broadway performances  
won five Tony Awards

Popular song from the 1965 Broadway musical  
*Man of La Mancha*, first with Rex Harrison

1972 film *Man of La Mancha* w Peter O'Toole.

1966: Frank Sinatra on his album *That's Life*

1966: Jim Nabors performed *Gomer Pyle*,  
*U.S.M.C.* in episode "The Show Must Go On"

1968: Andy Williams on the album *Honey*

1968: Cher on the album *Backstage*

1968: *Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*

1972: album *Elvis at Madison Square Garden*





# Impossible Dream

1992: Carter USM on their '92 *The Love Album*

1994: Luther Vandross on the album, *Songs*

2001: Florence Ballard *The Supreme Florence Ballard*

But in the musical “**Man of La Mancha**” ...

The musical played countries around the world,  
with productions in Dutch, French, German,  
Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Icelandic, Gujarati,  
Uzbek, Hungarian, Serbian, Slovenian, Swahili,  
Finnish, Ukrainian ... **AND**

**NINE** distinctly different dialects of Spanish Language

What makes the song *Impossible Dream* all the more **HAUNTING**

**STORY** of the Man of La Mancha



**Played EVERY Decade since '65**

1964 Goodspeed Opera House

1965 Broadway

1966 Madrid

1968 London

1972 Broadway revival

1972 Film

1977 Broadway revival

1992 Broadway revival

1997 Madrid

2002 Broadway revival

2004 Madrid

2014 Brazil revival

2015 Buenos Aires revival

2015 Ciudad Real

2016 Barcelona

**Miguel de Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote* in 1605**

1965 “Man of La Mancha” **LOOSELY** based on 1605 *Don Quixote*

**Original:** *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*

**Trans.:** *Ingenious Nobleman Sir Quixote of La Mancha*

*Don Quixote – read for centuries!*

Don Quixote – the dreamy knight from La Mancha

Height of Spanish Golden Age—1492 to 1659

Considered a foundation to Western Literature

On many lists of **Greatest Fiction Ever Written**

Don Quixote sets out on Chivalrous Quest to

**Bring Justice to the World**





# **Miguel de Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote* in 1605**

**Get a 400th Anniversary Edition**

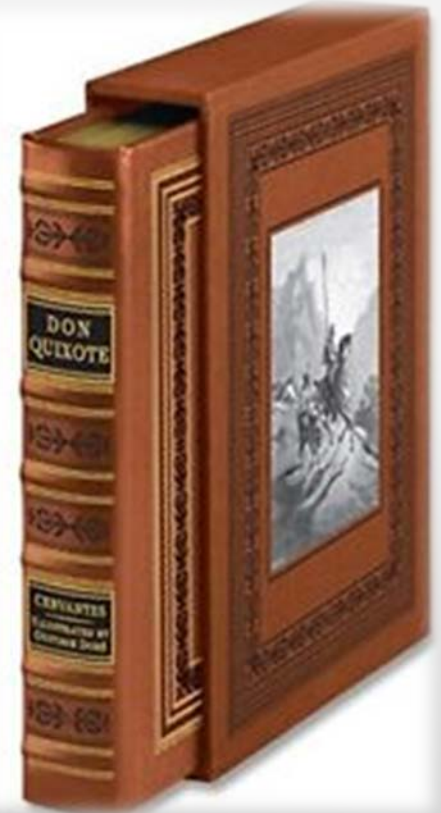
**By Easton Press in fine leather,  
gilded in 24k gold**

**English trans. illustrated by  
Gustave Doré (1832-83)**

**Amazon.com sells them for \$479**

**Yet ... it is long past copyright protection**

**You can download several English  
versions at Google Books**



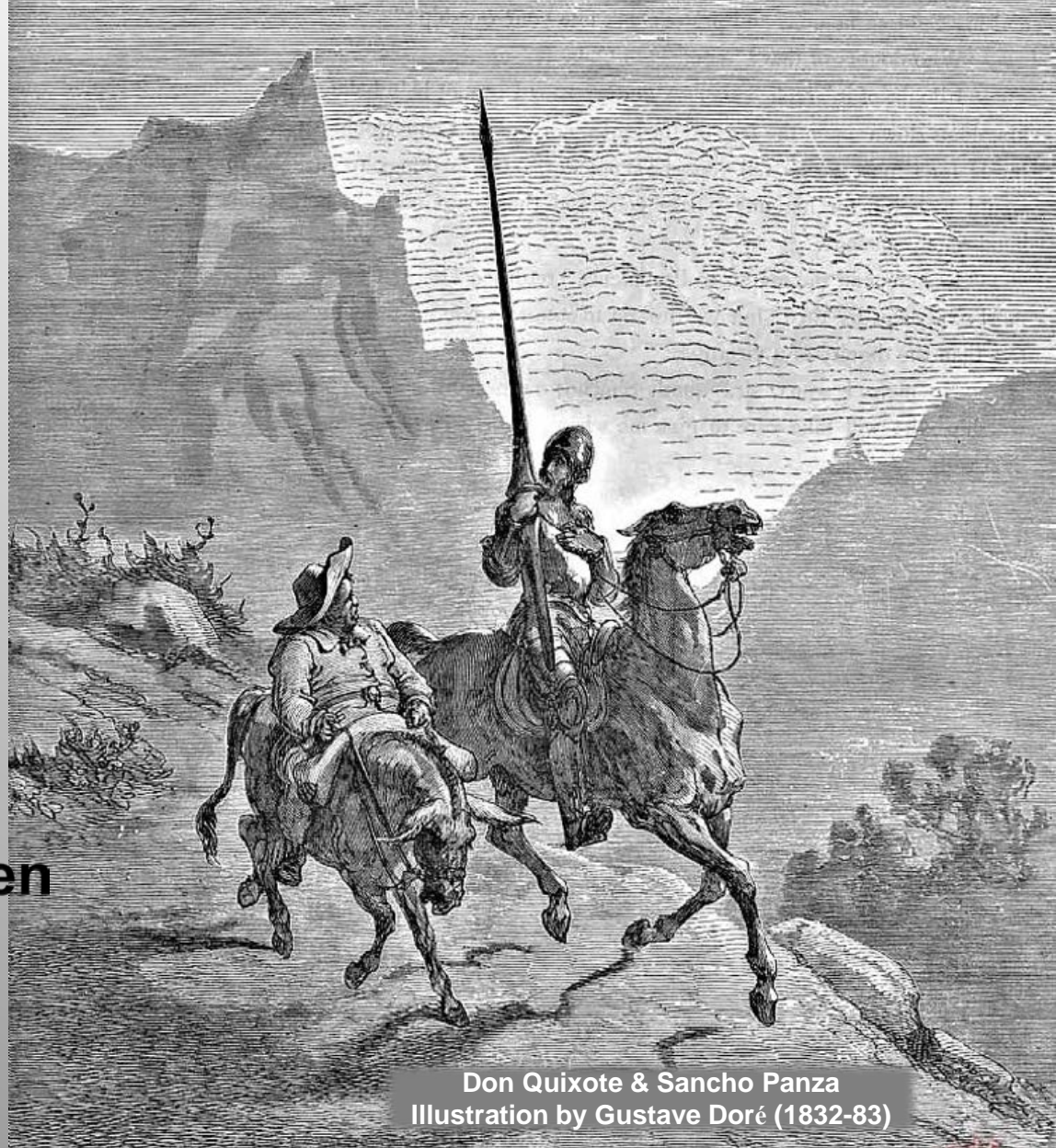
**Don Quixote recruits  
a simple farmer,**

**Sancho Panza**

**Sancho, now his squire,  
chats wittily with Quixote  
throughout their journey**

**Sancho is earthy,  
grounded, ordinary  
in the Age of Superstition  
and Age of Conflict between**

**Cross & Crescent  
Christianity & Islam**



Don Quixote & Sancho Panza  
Illustration by Gustave Doré (1832-83)



# Cervantes – wrote Don Quixote 1605

Don Quixote—a Knight of Chivalry

Devoted to the old “**Knight’s Code of Honor**”

Though there never was an accepted “code”

Most versions & poems include these virtues:

**Christian Faith ~ Courage ~ Justice**

**Wisdom ~ Honorable Fighter ~ Truth**

**Resolution ~ Diligence ~ Hope ~ Valor**

And, of course, **Courtly Love** ...

Don Quixote esteems at a distance Dulcinea as is

**she were Beauty & Virtue Perfected**





# Cervantes – wrote Don Quixote 1605

Don Quixote—a Knight of Chivalry  
Often does not see the real world  
In perhaps the most famous  
scene, illustrated & mocked  
for centuries ...

Don Quixote battles a

**Windmill**

Knightly Honor ... he thinks the

**Windmill is a Fearsome Giant**

Onward in his quest for justice ...



Don Quixote at Windmill  
illustration by Gustave Doré (1832-83)

# 1965 “Man of La Mancha” Play

Loosely based on 1605 Don Quixote: *another world altogether*

In 1965, an actor plays author Cervantes,  
with his manuscript of *Don Quixote* ...

Cervantes and his servant are in prison

*facing dreaded Spanish Inquisition*

Prisoners take his trunk ... hold a mock trial

He pleads before prisoner called “the Governor”

Cervantes will do the play *WITH* the prisoners

Cervantes and his servant *BECOME*

*Don Quixote and Sancho Panza*





# 1965 “Man of La Mancha” Play

Inside the Dungeon of the Spanish Inquisition

*Impossible Dream* is sung through once by Don Quixote as he stands vigil over his armor

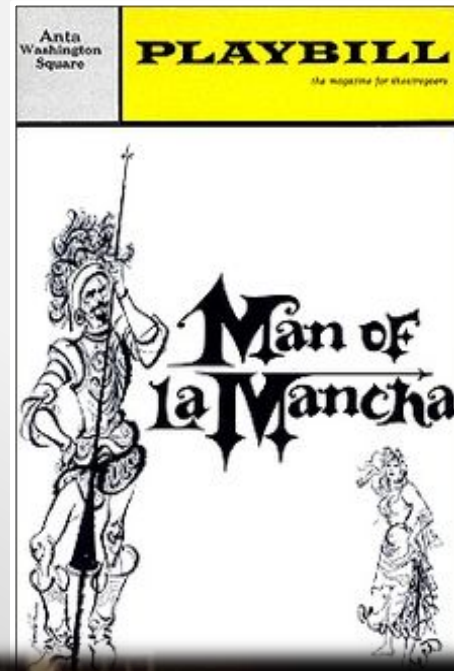
Song is a response to beautiful Dulcinea

asking what means “following the quest”?

Then it’s sung PARTIALLY three more times

lastly sung by the dungeon prisoners as  
forlorn Cervantes & servant mount the  
drawbridge-like staircase to face the

**Dreaded Evil Spanish Inquisition**





# Impossible Dream

To dream the impossible dream ...  
To fight the unbeatable foe  
To bear with unbearable sorrow  
And to run where the brave dare not go

To right the unrightable wrong  
And to love pure and chaste from afar  
To try when your arms are too weary  
To reach the unreachable star

This is my quest  
To follow that star  
No matter how hopeless  
No matter how far



# Impossible Dream

To fight for the right  
Without question or pause  
To be willing to march into hell  
For that heavenly cause

And I know if I'll only be true  
to this glorious quest  
That my heart will lie peaceful and calm  
when I'm laid to my rest

And the world will be better for this  
That one man, scorned and covered with scars,  
Still strove with his last ounce of courage  
To reach the unreachable star





10:1-18 **ONWARD** – Paul Validates His Authenticity

Then ... Paul LOADS both barrels in verses 4-5

<sup>4</sup> Weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

<sup>5</sup> We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

In so many words, Paul said, “If they *CLAIM* Apostleship?”

**“Hah!—we have GREATER Claim”**



Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)





## 11:1-15 Paul Demolishes False Apostles

Paul FIRES both barrels ... *then* ...

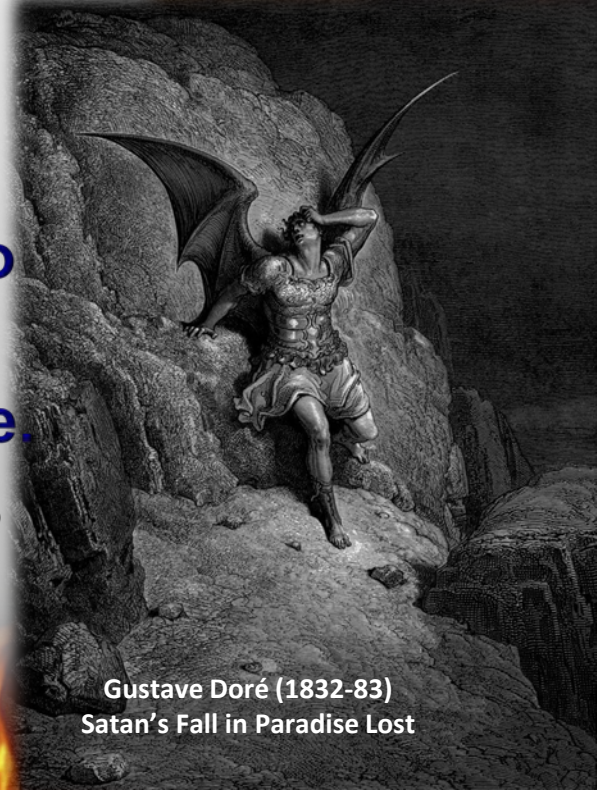
RELOADS & Fires AGAIN and AGAIN to  
the close in verses 14-15

<sup>14</sup> And no wonder, for Satan himself  
masquerades as an angel of light.

<sup>15</sup> It is not surprising, then, if his servants also  
masquerade as servants of righteousness.  
Their end will be what their actions deserve.

Who are these False Prophets?

**Satan's Emissaries**



Gustave Doré (1832-83)  
Satan's Fall in Paradise Lost

11:16-33 Paul Unfolds His Stupendous Resume

Paul almost hesitates ... seemingly reticent ...

Despises self-aggrandizement ... he defends

22 – Hebrew, Israelite, Son of Abraham—**Me TOO**

23 – They “work”—HAH, nothing compared to **ME**

From 23-27 ... **Prison** more times ... **Flogged** more times

Faced **Death** many times ... **5x Flogged 39 Lashes** ...

Beat with **Rods** ... **Shipwrecked 3x** ...

vv. 28-31 ... Paul outlines the BURDEN of HEART

**Paul LOVED the Church**



Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)





## 12:7-10 Paul's Weakness – Thorn in Flesh – Satan's Messenger

These pose no small questions ... or wonder

<sup>7</sup> Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming  
conceited, I was given a THORN in my FLESH,  
a messenger of SATAN, to torment me.

<sup>8</sup> Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.

Goodness ... who has NOT had some struggles?

In a way—thankful Paul does *NOT tell us exactly his THORN!*

*What means:*

**Thorn in the Flesh**



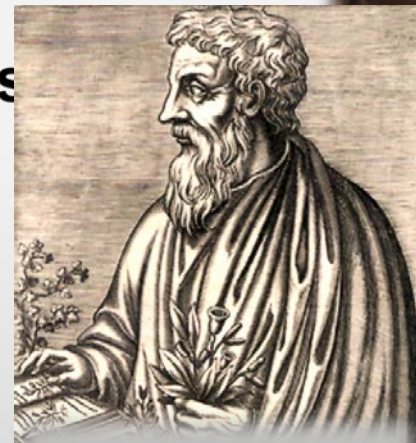
Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)





Word for “**Thorn**” is rooted in “**Stake**” as

- ✓ Stakes around a hole or grave
- ✓ Stakes for torture or impaling people
- ✓ Greek *Impale* & *Crucify* interchange



Pedanius Dioscorides (A.D. 40-90)



Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)

Greek physician Pedanius Dioscorides (A.D. 40–90)  
five-volume, trans into Latin *De Materia Medica* (*On Medical Material*)

Read for 1,500 years ... Arabic translation ... 600+ plants, etc.

Dioscorides used word as *bad splinter causing acute PAIN*

Thorn – Stake = Something Causing Acute Pain

Excruciating Pain



“**Thorn**” in the **FLESH**—*no confusion on FLESH*

Professor Charles Ellicott (1819–1905)

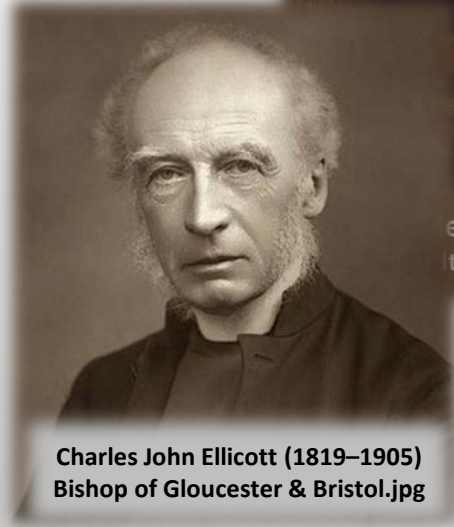
Bishop of Gloucester & Bristol, taught Cambridge

After jettisoning nonsense, Ellicott said  
remained two hypotheses on “**THORN**”:

1. Conflict with sensual passion
2. Chronic infirmity of body with  
recurring attacks of acute pain

Yet, Ellicott weighs forcibly toward #2 ...

One reason is that the sensuous over-indulgent Corinthians  
**would NOT read #1 regarding Paul**



Charles John Ellicott (1819–1905)  
Bishop of Gloucester & Bristol.jpg



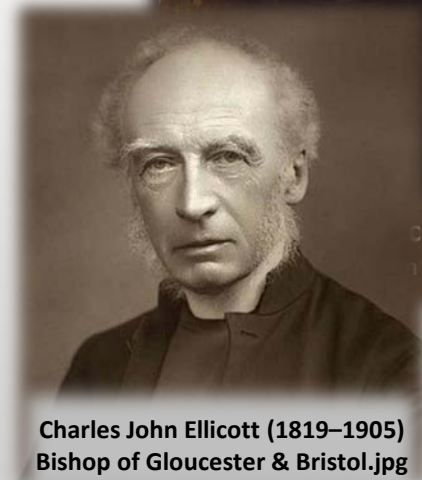
Paul, c. 1657  
Pieter van Rijn (1606-69)





This “Thorn” is in the **FLESH**—*no confusion there*  
Professor Charles Ellicott (1819–1905) notes  
evidence of physical torment:

- ✓ 2 Cor. 1:9, “felt we had the sentence of death ... not rely on ourselves”
- ✓ 2 Cor. 4:10-12, “Carrying in our body death of Christ ... so death works in us...”
- ✓ 2 Cor. 5:2-4, “We groan in this body, desiring to put on our dwelling from heaven....”
- ✓ Gal. 4:15 “plucked your eyes & gave them”
- ✓ Gal. 6:11, “see what large letters I write”



Charles John Ellicott (1819–1905)  
Bishop of Gloucester & Bristol.jpg

**Evidence of  
Bad Eyes**



This “Thorn” is in the **FLESH**—*no confusion there*

Professor Charles Ellicott (1819–1905) said:

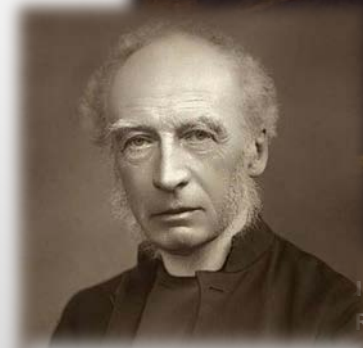
Nor need we be surprised that this infirmity—  
neuralgia of the head and face, or  
inflammation of the eyes, perhaps,  
in some measure, the after consequences  
of the blindness at Damascus—

should be described as “a messenger of Satan.”

[Satan] dominant Jewish thought on causation of disease.

**See:** ❖ Job 2:7, Satan struck Job with sores and boils

❖ Luke 13:16, woman’s infirmity whom Satan bound



Charles John Ellicott (1819–1905)  
Bishop of Gloucester & Bristol.jpg

l, c. 1657  
Rijn (1606-69)





So this woefully painful verse:

<sup>7</sup> Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a THORN in my flesh, a messenger of SATAN, to torment me.

<sup>8</sup> *THREE TIMES* I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.

I believe it a painful “THORN of sorts” regarding his eyes ...

Can't be sure. Yet, who over 50 has NO problems TODAY?

Many need glasses from their youth ... especially after 50 ...

And to STRUGGLE then w bad eyes ... to WRITE God's Words!

**Thorn in the Flesh**



Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)



What if Paul was Far-Sighted with cataracts?  
Then reading & writing were difficult ...  
It took GREAT pains to write the REVELATIONS  
Great pains to articulate the GREAT Truths  
All the while ... so artfully portrayed in the two  
letters to Corinthians we have ... (*of four letters*)  
He LOVED them so ... had such a great heart toward them  
And to have blurry vision ... with Migraine Headaches  
We cannot be sure ... but the **PAIN of it ALL ... THORN**

**WHILE Paul Healed Others!**



Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)





**You MUST understand ...**

**To labor as Paul did ... for 5,000+ miles**

**To undergo HATE ... BEATINGS ...**

**To know that many want to KILL YOU ...**

**Put in Paul was DRIVEN ... CALLED ...**

**Paul had a God-given MISSION ... Driven Forth**

**Come what may ... however serious the trial ...**

**Paul continued on ... with PAIN in his eyes, perhaps**

**WHILE Paul Healed Others!**



Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)



12:7-10 Paul's Weakness – Thorn in Flesh –  
Satan's Messenger

Yet, God did HEAR Paul ... this is what God said:

<sup>9</sup> 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 about  
my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

If we were PAUL ... could we say that ... HAH! ... I doubt it!

We all **SHOULD** say that ... We all likely **WANT** to say that

But the hearty and heartfelt question is

**How often DO WE Say & Mean that?**



Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)





**12:7-10 Paul's Weakness – Thorn in Flesh –  
Satan's Messenger**

**Ha haaa ... if those are HARD to say ...**

**If those are hard to say & MEAN ... listen here:**

**<sup>10</sup> That is why, for Christ's sake,**

**I DELIGHT in weaknesses, in insults,  
in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties.**

**For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

**Some really love memory verses ... but NOT THAT ONE!**

**I don't know ANYONE who WANTS to say that!**



Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)



**13:2-4 Christ's Strength – Christ LIVES**  
**by Power of God**

**Paul is a First-Class Apostle ... so it seems**

- <sup>2</sup> I already gave you a warning when  
I was with you the second time.  
I now repeat it while absent:  
On my return I will not spare those who  
sinned earlier or any of the others,**
- <sup>3</sup> since you are demanding proof that Christ  
is speaking through me.  
He is not weak in dealing with you,  
but is powerful among you.**



Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)



**13:2-4 Christ's Strength – Christ LIVES**  
**by Power of God**

**Paul ... who delights in TRIALS ... in Persecution**  
***now points to Christ ...***

**<sup>4</sup> For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness,  
yet he lives by God's power.**

**Likewise, we are weak in him,  
yet by God's power we will LIVE WITH HIM  
in our dealing with you.**

**Who are you, Corinthians? Who yah gonna TEST now?**

**Paul pulled veil of deceit from the face of the false Prophets**





## 13:5-8 Our Choice – Test Yourselfs ...

All for Truth

With chapters 10-12 ... the words alone ...

Testifying to what the Corinthians KNEW

<sup>5</sup> Examine **YOURSELVES** to see whether you are  
in the faith; test yourselves.

Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—  
unless, of course, *YOU* fail the test?

<sup>6</sup> And I trust that you **WILL DISCOVER** that  
we have not failed the test.



Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)



## 13:5-8 Our Choice – Test Yourselfs ...

All for Truth

Then Paul prays ... his heart EVER urging

<sup>7</sup> Now we pray to God that you will

not do anything wrong—

not so that people will see that we have stood  
the test but so that you will do what is right  
even though we may seem to have failed.

<sup>8</sup> For we cannot do anything against the truth,

but only for the truth.



Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)



Hard for me ... at times, too ...

<sup>10</sup> That is why, for Christ's sake,  
I **DELIGHT** in weaknesses, in insults,  
in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties.  
For when I am weak, then I am strong.

TRUTH ... you say, Apostle Paul

NOTICE ... Paul does not ASK that you and I do this

Paul now takes the High Road ... alone if necessary

Paul now takes the Road Less Travelled ... alone if necessary

Paul now sets his sight on his heavenly home ...

**Come What May!**



Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)





As Paul inspires others ... heals others ...

12:7 .... in order to keep me from becoming  
conceited, I was given a THORN in my flesh,  
a messenger of SATAN, to torment me.

<sup>8</sup> *THREE TIMES* I pleaded with the Lord to  
take it away from me.

Three Times ... Three Times ... *NOT ME*

I have asked God a *DOZEN* times for some *\_?\_* ... *NOT PAUL*

I suspect ... when God said to Paul ...

<sup>9</sup> But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you,  
for my power is made perfect in weakness.”



Apostle Paul, c. 1657  
Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69)



I think ... surmise ... guess ... believe

**Paul never asked again**

Oh, oh my ... to have that resolve ... that FAITH

That is what I strive for ... too ... but I fail

I am Don Quixote ... I'm the Man of La Mancha ...

At times, I also fight Windmills in my mind

I, too, fight real & imagined dark forces

I, too, want Justice & Honor to WIN

yes, yes, yes



**Man of La Mancha**  
The Musical

**I am the Man of La Mancha**



Struggle as I do ... I aspire ... as if ... *AS IF* in an  
**Impossible Dream**

To struggle ... to fight ... to resolve

For “Christ’s sake” to “delight in weaknesses,  
in insults, in hardships, in persecutions”



Like my Lord, like Paul ... I, too, want

To fight the unbeatable foe

To bear with unbearable sorrow

To run where the brave dare not go



**Man of La Mancha**  
The Musical





**This is my quest ... To follow that star  
No matter how hopeless No matter how far  
To fight for the right ... Without question or pause  
To be willing to march into hell ...  
For that heavenly cause**

**Not just Paul ... but WE ...  
We try ... to be bold  
To be strong ... but we are weak, tired  
We ADMIRE Paul, as we do all strong men**



**Man of La Mancha**  
The Musical



And the world will be better for this  
That one man, scorned and covered with scars,  
Still strove with his last ounce of courage  
To reach the unreachable star

To struggle ... to resolve  
For “Christ’s sake” to “delight in  
weaknesses, in insults, in hardships”  
I want to know with ALL MY HEART  
hear in my heart my God say to me



**Man of La Mancha**  
The Musical



**My grace is sufficient for you, for my  
power made is perfect in weakness.**

