

Text: 2Cor. 11:2 “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. **For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.**”

Intro: In *verse 2* we learn the reason for the strength of Paul’s feelings toward the Corinthian Church. The key is in the word “**betrothed**”. This word is translated from the Greek ἁρμόζω harmozō meaning to promise a person in marriage. Paul pictures himself as the father bringing his daughter (the Church) to Christ in the marriage ceremony. The Church is devoted to no other but Jesus (**pure virgin**). There is no question of the brides fidelity to the Lord.

—**Paul’s fear**

—**2Cor. 11:3** “But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray **from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.**” (NIV)

—They had readily received the Gospel of Jesus Christ (*v. 4*) but it appears that they are believing what Paul tongue-in-cheek calls these “**super-apostles**”. (*v. 5*)

—Over against these so called “**super-apostles**” Paul is not a trained speaker as they are—“I may not be a trained speaker,” (**2Cor. 11:6**)

—They apparently are charging the Church for their preaching; he preached without charge—“**...preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge?**” (**2Cor. 11:7**)

—Other Churches of Asia-Minor supported Paul as he preached the Gospel to them—**2Cor. 11:8** “I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you.” (This established the pattern of modern day missions)

—These “**super-apostles**” “...are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ.” (**2Cor. 11:13**)

—They are only following the pattern of their lord—**2Cor. 11:14** “And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.”

—Paul reflects on the reason he was called to preach the Gospel; Jesus said of Paul—**Acts 26:18** “to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

—Satan was Lucifer, **Isa. 14:12** “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!”

—The name Lucifer in Hebrew is לְיָלֵךְ hēlēl meaning shining one.

—He can still appear as he was before his fall.

—They changed their true form (masquerades) for one that attracts and deceives; it should be a great concern to the Church—**2Cor. 11:15** “Therefore it is no great thing **if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.**”

—*Paul's Qualifications as a True Apostle*

—Paul is a Hebrew and a true Israelite (v. 22).

—He has suffered greatly for the Gospel—**2Cor. 11:23** “Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.”

—He goes into great detail of his sufferings (vv. 24-29)

—Even more, his qualifications include direct revelations from Jesus.

—**2Cor. 12:2-4** “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*. And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”

—If there is any question as to whether this is Paul’s experience or not—**2Cor. 12:1** “It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.”

—Also refer to **2Cor. 12:7** “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.”

—What is the “*third heaven*” of v. 2?

—He also calls this place “*paradise*” in v. 4.

—The first heaven is the atmosphere surrounding the earth, where the birds fly and where the clouds are; the second heaven is that of the stars; and the third heaven as the heaven of heavens, the highest heaven, the place where the throne of God and paradise are.

—Rabbinic Judaism taught that there are seven heavens, this was also the thought of some early Christians, but there is no biblical evidence for this teaching. .

—Paul makes an important, having pointed to his power spiritual experience he does not want to “*boast*” about it—**2Cor. 12:6** “Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say.”

—People have a spiritual experience, it becomes a point in which much is made, and they become the object of focus.

—Paul will not allow that to happen, he only intends this to be proof of his true apostleship.

—To keep him from bragging about his experience the Lord has allowed Paul to have a ***“thorn in his flesh”***—“To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, ***there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.***” (2 Cor. 12:7)

—Rather than engage in the speculation about ***“the thorn in the flesh”***, read the text.

—All we can be sure about is that God gave Satan permission to harass Paul, just as He gave permission to harass Job.

—The word ***“messenger”*** is translated from the Greek ἄγγελος angelos (most often translated angel); since it is ***“of Satan”*** it is a demon allowed to trouble Paul.

—***“Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.*** 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.” (2Cor. 12:8–9)

—The Lord’s answer was, the demon would remain with Paul, but so would the Lord’s grace to manage it.

—God wanted Paul to find comfort and security in the grace he had received in Christ—the same thing God desires for all believers.

—The Greek structure of this verse tells us this applies to more than just Paul, it is true for every believer.

—Some troubles of this life may never be resolved in this world, but we are given strength in the Lord’s grace to continue to walk with Jesus.

—If there is anything to boast about, boast about ***“the power of Christ”*** that rest on your life that allows you to endure—2Cor. 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.”

—***What are the true signs of an Apostle?***

—People like to claim spiritual office, but that person better have the signs of the office manifest in their lives—2Cor. 12:12 “Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.”

—Paul’s third trip to Corinth—2Cor. 13:1 “This will be the third time I am coming to you. “By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.”

—Paul is ready to come a third time, with every intention of finally dealing with the issues that he has raised.

—He does not intend to listen to accusations, or rumors—“By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.” (2Cor. 13:1)

Paul the Betrother
2Cor. 11:2
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—Paul first visited Corinth about **50 AD**, during the last phase of his second missionary journey. (*Acts 18:1–18*)

—His second visit, the "**painful visit**," was in **55 AD**, a quick trip to deal with troubles in Corinth that were serious enough to require direct personal confrontation (*2 Corinthians 2:1; 13:2*).

—Paul's third Visit to Corinth occurs about **57 AD**, when he gathered the collection of Jerusalem.

—**2Cor. 13:5** "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified."

—The true test of every believer is straightforward.

—If the Corinthians' claims to faith is true, and they are united to Christ, then the Holy Spirit is making the truth of their claims evident in their lives.

—But if the life of any believer showed no signs of the Spirit's activity, then the Spirit was not working in him and Christ was not indwelling him.

—Paul does not want to come to them as Apostle, and need to exercise authority over them—**2Cor. 13:7** "Now I pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved..."

—He would rather the people of the Church would correct themselves, than he would have need to correct them.

—**2Cor. 13:10** "Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction."

—For any person in a place of spiritual authority, this should be the guide, authority should never be used to destroy, the goal is always to build up and make better.

—The Trinitarian benediction—**2Cor. 13:14** "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen."

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