

QUESTION: What was the thorn in Paul's flesh?

Ans: Let's read,

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

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me"

There has been a lot of speculation about the thorn in Paul's body, some still think it was a real thorn placed on his side, that every time he tries to brag then it pierces him.

others say it is a memory of the bad things he did in the past so God was bringing him thoughts that were stirring him up, and that turns out to be like a thorn to him and he stops bragging/boasting.

But, in all of this, if we look closely at verse 7, it says that God had a thorn in his body a “**messenger of the devil**”.

That Word, “messenger”, is a Word that means a person and not some idea or some thoughts or something. Even in the common sense what does the thorn bush have to do with bragging?

So Paul wasn't talking about a thorn bush or some disease in his body, but he was talking about someone, who was like a thorn to him.

Now another question you will ask is why does it say it is in the body and not in the spirit?

The answer is that the word body can mean the life of a person or people...

Let's read the following verses that the Lord was telling the children of Israel and we will understand more.

Numbers 33:55 “ But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.

56 Moreover it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them”.

Judges 2: 3 “Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you”

Have you seen that? .. one's life can be compared to a body, and the person who is disturbing and torturing you in your life can be likened to a thorn in your body.

But if we return to the Apostle Paul, Who was this thorn?

When we read .. 2Timothy 4:14 says ..

"Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works:

15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words"

The Bible has not given much information about this Alexander, a coppersmith. But it tells us he was Paul's greatest obstacle, in his life and ministry. He used not only the word "evil" but the word "much evil", to show that many evil deeds this Alexander showed Paul.

Probably, he was just misrepresenting Paul all the time, he was only talking about his own shortcomings, how he had been a killer in the past (killing and persecuting Christians), witnessing false statements before people who believed in Paul.

And that made that Paul, who is famous for so many revelations, and many miracles, and great ministries, seemed to be nothing in the midst of some who believed in him.

It is not unusual to see it today, you can see it for many world leaders, God raises up opponents as a thorn for them, to speak only of their evil, or their shortcomings, no matter how many good things that leader has done. God permits this so that the leader does not boast too much.

Such was the case with Paul for the bronze-smithing Alexander. He was a great thorn, until he begged God to take him away, (to be killed)

Read, *1 Timothy 1:20 "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme"*

but God told him His grace was sufficient. So he remained with it until his time was over.

Likewise with us, if we are arrogant, we think we are something, we have done something better than others, or we have something bigger than others.

Let us remember that the Lord can lift up the thorns for us.

Shalom, Maran atha!

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