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## 2 CORINTHIANS VERSE-BY-VERSE | DR. RANDY WHITE

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SESSION 22 | 2 CORINTHIANS 11:17-33

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### 2 CORINTHIANS 11:1-12:13 | PAUL'S BOAST OF APOSTOLIC CREDENTIALS

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- Verses 11:1-3 on session 20
- Verse 11:4-16 on session 21
- Verses 17-18 - In verse 16 Paul offered to show foolishness. In these verses, Paul delivers, boasting **after the flesh** as others had done.
- Verses 19-20 -
  - Paul is playing the part of a fool because the Corinthians **suffer fools gladly** (though, apparently, were much more critical of true apostles).
    - The word **suffer** is "to endure."
    - The Corinthians will endure if a man bring you into bondage or devour you or exalt himself or smite you on the face.
  - Sadly enough, many in the Christian world today fall into one of two categories:
    - Those who allow the *bullying* of men like Paul describes
    - Those who teach others to *turn the other cheek* but do not rightly divide those words of Jesus with the dispensation in which they are given.
  - May you and I be in neither group!
- Verse 21 -
  - Paul's speech in the first part of the verse is sarcastic, saying, "we were too weak (spiritually) to let others devour us, take us, exalt himself among us and smite us on our face" (with reference to verse 20). All through this section he has "praised them" for things unpraiseworthy, doing so as a means of emphasizing the folly of their behavior.
  - In the second half of the verse, Paul continues the sarcasm, going from **weak** to **bold**, even *more bold* than any others. His boldness is to "brag" on his Jewish credentials. Why would he do this? It only makes sense that his unnamed Corinthian enemy was setting himself forth to be an apostle and denying Paul's apostleship, thus Paul was *boldly* declaring his credentials.
- Verse 22 -
  - The issue (said in three ways with only slight shades of difference) of Paul's Hebrew / Israelite / Abrahamic credential displays a two-fold issue:
    - An apostle was expected to be of this lineage (not a gentile)
    - The fake apostles were of this lineage and claiming such, showing that the Hebrew nature of the Corinthians was far more important than most modern interpretations convey.
- Verses 23-24 -
  - The fake-apostles were claiming to be **ministers of Christ**, but Paul says he is foolish in even asking the question as to the validity of this claim.
    - In every measure (**labours, stripes, prisons**, etc.) Paul could say **I am more**.
    - The phrase **in deaths oft** refers to the number of times he was near death due to persecutions.
    - It is possible that this phrase should begin a new sentence, tying in with verse 24.
  - In verse 24 Paul speaks of **the Jews**.
    - The word *Jew* is a Middle English word.
    - The Latin translations are closer to the Greek, using *Judaeis*, the Greek uses *Ἰουδαῖος* [*Ioudaios*], which is "Judean."
    - It was those of Judea that persecuted Paul (who was of Tarsus, thus not *Judean*).
  - The Judeans, on five occasions, gave Paul **forty stripes save one**.
    - This was due to Torah law (Deut. 25:1-3) which allowed for 40, but the Jews would only give 39 out of an abundance of caution, thus the phrase "forty save one" came into being.

- Note that the text itself says **forty...save one**. Translations which say "39" are not giving a literal translation and take the reader a step away from the Jewish nature of the thinking.
- Verses 25-27 -
  - In these three verses Paul continues his description of his sufferings and **perils**, some of which were natural or related to travel itself, others of which were inflicted by people with ill intent, and others that were related to the human condition.
  - One linguistic item of interest: Paul said he experienced **perils by *mine own* countrymen and perils by the heathen**.
    - The word **countrymen** is γένος [genos] which is a word that comes from the verb *being* or *becoming* (as in *Genesis*) and is sometimes translated "kind" or "kindred."
    - Only here is it translated **countrymen**, namely because it is contrasted with **heathen**, which is not "filthy sinners" but rather a transliteration of the Greek *ethnos*.
- Verse 28 -
  - Paul continues in the same theme, in this verse speaking of internal pressures, namely **the care of all the churches**.
- Verses 29-30 -
  - Paul's rhetorical questions in verse 29 are obviously not meant for information, but illustration.
    - Are there those who are **weak** while Paul is strong? Are there those who are **offended** and Paul doesn't care?
    - The natural answer to these questions is, "Of course not!"
  - In verse 30 Paul says, **If I must needs glory** (that is, "if I need to boast," since **glory** is a verb) then **I will glory...in infirmities**.
- Verse 31 -
  - Paul's strong statement that **I lie not** refers either to what he has just said or what he is about to say. Context does not determine which.
- Verses 32-33 -
  - Paul here explains one instance of a "close call." He was **In Damascus** and the entire city was under guard in order to **apprehend** Paul, but Paul **escaped his hands** by leaving the city wall through a window with a basket.
  - This story is also given in Acts 9:23-25.
  - King **Aretas** was a Nabatean King ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aretas\\_IV\\_Philopatris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aretas_IV_Philopatris)).