

# Chesswood Baptist Church

Where Everybody is Somebody

Pastor Howard Daniel, Jr.

4357 US Hwy 59 South

P.O. Box 343

Livingston, Texas 77351

936-327-8870



MINISTRY OF THE WORD

**AND LEST I SHOULD BE EXALTED ABOVE MEASURE  
THROUGH THE ABUNDANCE OF THE REVELATIONS,  
THERE WAS GIVEN TO ME A THORN IN THE FLESH,...**

PASTOR HOWARD DANIEL, JR.

SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 7, 2021

SCRIPTURE READING: **2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-7**

**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.**

## 1. BACKGROUND

Refer to the Evening message February 7, 2021

## 2. INTRODUCTION

- a. Today the Spirit of God has led me to preach from **2 Corinthians Chapter 12**.
- b. There are many testimonies from people this day in time, especially from people who have claimed to have had some type of gigantic experience where the Lord has appeared unto them.
- c. There are some who will tell us they have died and gone to Heaven and have seen certain things.
- d. It is necessary from time to time for us to reflect on the attitudes of people who have had experiences in the third Heaven.
- e. According to what I understand the Bible teaches there are only three men who have been caught up to the third Heaven.
- f. The **first**, of course being the Lord Jesus Christ. **John 6:38, For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.**
- g. In His ascension, His disciples were told as they stood and watched this same Jesus will come in like manner. **Acts 1:11, Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.**
- h. The **second** person to ever go into the third Heaven would be John when he was on the Isle of Patmos. **Revelation 4:1-2, After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. 2: And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.**
- i. The **third** person would be the Apostle Paul as reflected in this chapter we will

preach from today.

- j. Paul tells us in **2 Corinthians 12:2**, *I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.*
- k. The aforementioned verses speak to the three men that have experienced the third Heaven.
- l. Neither of these men have much to say about their experience in the third heaven. The Lord Jesus spoke more about Heaven than the other two. **1 Corinthians 2:9**, *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*
- m. There might be some question as to whether Enoch or Elijah went to the third Heaven.
- n. We must remember the Scriptures speak of three Heavens. The first is where the birds are and the second Heaven is where the stars are and lastly, the third Heaven is the abode of the Throne of God.
- o. When we look at Jesus, John, and Paul's testimony, these had first-hand knowledge of the third Heaven but shared little with us.
- p. We must be careful when we meet people who give us glowing testimonies of the Lord's appearance to them.
- q. We must remember the Bible is complete and there are no extra revelations this day in time. There are no special revelations from God where He appears to people and tells them something that is contrary to the Preserved Word of God. **Psalms 119:160**, *Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.*
- r. As God unfolds the Bible to us, He says in **John 21:25**, *And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen. John 20:31*, *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*
- s. Today, a glowing testimony will draw a large crowd but there is little interest in the Preserved Word of God among the body of Christ. **2 Timothy 2:15**, *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*
- t. We must return to **the Book** and get down to brass tacks as to what **"thus saith the Lord."**
- u. We are going to get some insight into the mind of the Apostle Paul as we preach from this fantastic book as to how and what he thought about his experience in the third Heaven.
- v. With that Introduction, let us see what we can glean from Preserved God's Word today.

### 3. SIX POINTS TO THE MESSAGE

#### a. ...I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

- 1. **2 Corinthians 12:1**, *It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.*
- 2. As we take a bird's eye view of the previous chapters, we will find that in **Chapter 1** God gives us comfort for our life plans. **2 Corinthians 1:3-4**, *Blessed*

- be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4: Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*
3. As a matter of fact, it should be a wake-up call for every saint who claims the name of Christ that instead of complaining we need to focus on two primary verses. **Psalms 34:1**, *A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed. I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.* **Psalms 50:23**, *Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.*
  4. He tells us how to obey God's plans. **Job 14:1**, *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*
  5. God gives us a solution and a plan. He says in **John 10:10**, *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*
  6. In **2 Corinthians Chapter 2**, God is in the business of restoration. Restoration has always been the mind of God. He is all about comforting and restoring the saints. **Galatians 6:1**, *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.* **Romans 8:1**, *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*
  7. He also shows us how we can have a glorious ministry in the Lord Jesus Christ in the **Third Chapter**. The Lord takes us to the mountain top and then brings us down into the valley in this chapter as well.
  8. In **Chapter 4** God comforts the ministers who suffer for Christ. Paul speaks a lot about his suffering for the Lord and talks more about that than he talks about anything else.
  9. In **Chapter 5** God comforts and ministers to those who are martyred for the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  10. Those who live Godly in Jesus will suffer persecution. **2 Timothy 3:12**, *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*
  11. **Chapter 6** gives us comfort in all circumstances regardless of what they are whether they be trying or not.
  12. If we run this race with our eyes on Him, we will continue to be in His will. **1 Corinthians 9:24**, *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.* **Hebrews 12:1**, *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*
  13. God gives comfort to Paul. Paul had some difficult times. As a matter of fact, we are going to focus on some of those today.
  14. I believe God comforts the Godly pastor whatever the circumstances or situation might be. **Hebrews 13:5**, *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* **2 Corinthians 1:4**, *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any*

trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

15. In **Chapter 8** God gives us some examples of Christian giving; as to how we ought to give of our money, time, talents, and abilities as we make Christ first priorities in our lives. **2 Corinthians 8:2**, *How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 2 Corinthians 8:11-12*, *Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. 12: For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. 1 Corinthians 16:2*, *Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*
16. We addressed several Sunday's ago that we need to take care of the poor and God addresses that in **Chapter 9**.
17. As we approach **Chapter 10-11**, Paul is about to defend his apostleship. Paul was called by God and was given revelation directly from the Lord. **Galatians 1:12**, *For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*
18. In **Chapter 12** God gave Paul some special revelation. *I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.*
19. When he comes to those visions and revelations, he shares with them and us but does not talk about his experience in the third Heaven. *It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory.*
20. This means to God be the glory, great things He hath done. **Isaiah 43:7**, *Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.*
21. All should be for the glorification of Christ.
22. Sometimes those who consider themselves extremely spiritual will come to us with reports that are about themselves and not about the Lord. We are to glory not in ourselves, but we are to give God all the glory and praise. **To God be the glory, great things He hath done. Isaiah 48:11**, *For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.*
- b. **I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago,...**
  1. **2 Corinthians 12:2**, *I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago. (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.*
  2. There is no question that there are three heavens. One for the birds, one for the moon and stars and the third Heaven where God the Father and His Throne is.
  3. How naive were the Russian space travelers to say they did not see God?
  4. Certainly, to see God one must have the keys to Heaven. The key to Heaven is what one does with the Lord Jesus Christ. **Romans 3:22**, *Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:*
  5. Have you accepted Him as your Personal Saviour? Have you realized that you are a sinner no matter how much good you do? **Romans 3:23**, *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Romans 3:10*, *As it is written, There*

*is none righteous, no, not one: John 1:12, But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

6. Paul dates this about 14 years before he wrote this epistle.
7. This date is significant for us because it approximates the time of his first missionary journey.
8. Paul went on three missionary journeys and this was written before the first journey.
9. **Acts 14:19-20, And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. 20: Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.**
10. The question is, was he dead? The apostle Paul does not address this subject, but merely says, **whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;**)
11. Since Paul does not elaborate on it neither should we.
12. We can say that there is a possibility that God raised him from the dead in this instance. The Bible does not teach that so do not get the impression the pastor said this was the case.

**c. And I knew such a man,...**

1. **2 Corinthians 12:3, And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)**
2. The things that God knoweth; we leave those things to God. **Isaiah 55:8, For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.**
3. There are two states he could have been in.
4. He could have been dead because God could have raised him up. He also could have been unconscious. Nevertheless, the key to this passage is he was caught up to Paradise.

**d. How that he was caught up into paradise,...**

1. **2 Corinthians 12:4, How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.**
2. Let us contrast this with all the people who have had these so-called gigantic experiences.
3. They are willing to talk about it; but Paul is silent concerning the matter. He only relates that he **heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.**
4. We know from our study of the lower parts of the earth that paradise was at one time below where there was a great gulf fixed between paradise and the place of torment commonly referred to as Hell.
5. **Luke Chapter 16** speaks to that situation.
6. We know when Jesus died and went to the cross, He descended into the lower parts of the earth and led captivity captive and gave gifts to men. **Ephesians 4:8-10, Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9: (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10: He that**

*descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

7. Paradise has now moved. Paul was caught up into paradise.
8. *heard unspeakable words*, - he heard things that were not to be uttered.
9. I believe Heaven is so beautiful man cannot even grasp the concept. **1 Corinthians 2:9**, *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*
10. Paul says a guard has been put on his lips and he cannot speak about it. *which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*
11. I wonder if we really understand what God has for us. We should not speculate or allow our imaginations to try to figure out what God has in store for us. He tells us emphatically that our heart is not to be troubled.
12. He tells us to comfort ourselves. **John 14:1-3**, *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2: In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3: And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*
13. Notice the things that are not lawful for a man to utter; Paul does not utter them. As a matter of fact, he has little to say about his trip to the third Heaven.
14. He does, however, have a lot to say about his suffering for Jesus Christ.

**e. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool;...**

1. **2 Corinthians 12:5-6**, *Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. 6: For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.*
2. There is **no self-glory** here from Paul.
3. Sometimes I wonder about people who have extra-biblical revelation. There seems to be a lot of self-glory. Some saints think they are super-duper and raise themselves above everyone else based on their so-called experience.
4. Paul focuses on his infirmities.
5. Man was created to bring glory to God. We must all keep that in mind. **Isaiah 43:7**, *Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.*
6. Although Paul had special things he could have talked about, it was not lawful for him to utter.
7. Paul focused on his sufferings for his Saviour Jesus Christ.

**f. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh,...**

1. **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.*
2. Paul tells us of his infirmities but does not say very much about his experience; his revelations and things that God had revealed to him came directly from the Lord Jesus Christ. **Galatians 1:12**, *For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*
3. When God tells us not to talk about things, we need to be obedient. We need

- not ever go beyond the Preserved Word of God.
4. We must understand that the Bible is complete and there is no extra revelation. **John 20:30-31**, *And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. 1 Corinthians 13:8-10*, *Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9: For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10: But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*
  5. Many times, God's servants will suffer. It is not always God's will to heal.
  6. I do not want to be misunderstood; God is capable and able to heal in every respect.
  7. We should go straight to the Throne of God with our supplications. **Philippians 4:6**, *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*
  8. Paul had heard many things in the third Heaven, but he focuses on the thorn that is in his flesh.
  9. That indicates that all of us need to understand that we are not the Shepherd; we are His sheep; we work for the Lord Jesus Christ. **John 10:27**, *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:* We must clearly understand that He is the potter, and we are the clay. **Isaiah 64:8**, *But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand. John 10:27-30*, *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29: My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30: I and my Father are one.*
  10. Paul knew he was not God. He was not able to try the reins of mankind. **Psalms 7:9**, *Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins. Ephesians 4:11*, *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 1 Peter 3:15*, *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*
  11. Paul was trying to get the Preserved Word of God out. If you recall he made three missionary journeys. The purpose of that was to control the tongue and speak the Word of God with boldness.
  12. He could have boasted about a lot of things, but he was given a thorn in the flesh to remind him and keep him humble.
  13. Pride is an awful thing. **When we are prideful God cannot use us. Proverbs 16:18**, *Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*
  14. This kept Paul from exalting himself above measure.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

- a. Do you know the Saviour? If you do not, today needs to be your day of salvation.
- b. We thank God that there is a level playing field and He is not a respecter of persons. **Acts 10:34**, *Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is*

*no respecter of persons:*

- c. **Romans 3:23**, For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
- d. **Romans 3:10**, As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:
- e. **Romans 10:9-10**, That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **10:** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.  
**2 Peter 1:4**, Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. **John 10: 27-29**, My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: **28:** And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. **29:** My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. **2 Timothy 1:12**, For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. **Romans 8:38-39**, For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, **39:** Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. **1 John 5:13**, These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.
- f. Would you please stand?

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