



Portion:

SCRIPTURES

- Acts 13-14
- II Corinthians 12:7-10

Title:

CHRISTIAN IDOLATRY

- The Mission
- The Temptation

Maybe it's happened to you before, both applause and persecution, celebration and suffering. Can you imagine the successive occurrence of these polar opposites? One moment you are being extolled, the next you are being stoned. And quite frankly, it is easy to understand that perseverance in the midst of persecution is an admirable quality. But, what may be even more difficult, and therefore more commendable, is when you don't become a victim of your own fame. When the whole world wants to applaud you, how do you respond? When praise, acclamation, admiration, adulation, compliments, and tribute are forthcoming, do you accept the worship, draw attention to yourself, soak it up, or deflect it away?

Maybe you are the one offering worship. Do you turn leaders into idols? Do you bow in the wrong direction, worshipping the worship? Are you applauding the worship, the one who worships, or the One being worshiped? Are you involved in Christian idolatry or the Christian faith. Is Y'shua the Lord of your life or one of the many objects of your idolatry, your religion? That's a scary thought. Are you addicted to the truth or are you addicted to the experience.

The journey never turns out the way you've planned. You can certainly be confident that you are called and you can certainly be sure of your destination, but the road you will travel has many questions strewn along the path, many roadblocks, a myriad of twists and turns. There will be victories and some losses along the way; there will be persecution and there will be many things to tempt you, maybe none worse than the temptation to become full of yourself, imagining, "I'm all that!" Or possibly you tempt another by fostering that idea about him, "He's all that!" Don't do either, but rather, bow your knees only to the Father of your Lord Y'shua the Messiah, from whom the whole family of mankind receives breath. And, if you are ever tempted to boast or to feed someone's boasting, do this instead; boast in the Lord. For it is not someone who commends himself that is approved by God, but the one whom the Lord commends. That says it all!

PROPHETIC SEED:

"Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes." Acts 14:11-13 NKJV

PROPHETIC FRUIT:

"But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that

are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” **And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.”** Acts 14:14-18 NKJV

THE MISSION

1. Organized Chaos

A. Excellent Ministry Mixed Results

(1) Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch from Jerusalem (Acts 13:1-3)

(a) Barnabas and Saul are set-apart and anointed.

1. “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, **the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”** Then, having **fasted** and **prayed**, and **laid hands** on them, they **sent** them away.” Acts 13:1-3 NKJV

(2) Preaching in Cyprus (Acts 13:4-12)

(a) Resistance is Futile!

1. “So, **being sent out by the Holy Spirit**, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they arrived in Salamis, they **preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews**. They also had John as their assistant. Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they **found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus**, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But **Elymas** the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) **withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.** {9}***Then Saul, who also is called Paul**, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, “**O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.**” And immediately **a dark mist fell on him**, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. **Then the proconsul believed**, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.” Acts 13:4-12 NKJV
2. “**He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.**” Acts 18:4 NKJV

(3) The Ministry Continues in Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:13-41)

(a) A Turbocharged History Lesson (Acts 13:13-25)

1. “Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. But when they departed from Perga, they came to **Antioch in Pisidia**, and **went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day** and sat down. And **after the reading of the Law and the Prophets**, the **rulers of the synagogue** sent to them, saying, “**Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.**” Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, “**Men of Israel, and you who fear God**, listen: The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when

they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. **“After that** He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And **afterward** they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when He had removed him, **He raised up for them David** as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, **‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.’** From this man’s seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus— after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was finishing his course, he said, **‘Who do you think I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.’**” Acts 13:13-25 NKJV

(b) Paul brings history into that present day (Acts 13:26-37)

1. **““Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God,** to you the word of this salvation has been sent. For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they **did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him.** And though they **found no cause for death** in Him, they **asked Pilate** that He should be put to death. Now when **they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him,** they **took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb.** But **God raised Him from the dead.** He **was seen for many days** by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His **witnesses** to the people. **And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us** their children, **in that He has raised up Jesus.** As it is also written in the **second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’** And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: **‘I will give you the sure mercies of David.’** Therefore He also **says in another Psalm: ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’** “For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; **but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.**” Acts 13:26-37 NKJV
2. *“Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with **the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers [God-fearers],** and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.”* Acts 17:17 NKJV
3. *“Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore **he also brought Greeks into the temple** and has defiled this holy place.” (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)”* Acts 21:28-29 NKJV
4. *“You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.”* (Psalms 2:7)
5. *“I will give you the sure mercies of David.”* (Isaiah 55:3)
6. *“You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.”* (Psalms 16:10)

(c) Here’s the bottom line about Y’shua... (Acts 13:38-41)

1. "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that **through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.** Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets **come upon you: 'Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you.'** "" Acts 13:38-41 NKJV

B. Jealously Invokes Conflict

(1) Blessing and Conflict in Antioch (in Pisidia) (Acts 13:42-52)

(a) Shake the dust from your feet and move on...

1. "So when the **Jews** went out of the synagogue, **the Gentiles** begged that these words might be preached to them **the next Sabbath.** Now when the congregation had broken up, **many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas,** who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. **On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God.** But when **the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.** Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "**It was necessary** that the word of God should be spoken to you first; **but since you reject it,** and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, **we turn to the Gentiles.** For so the Lord has commanded us: '**I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'** " Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. **And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.** But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, **raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.** But **they shook off the dust from their feet** against them, and came to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit." Acts 13:42-52 NKJV
2. "*how **unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation.** But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.*" Acts 10:28 NKJV
3. "For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that **blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.**" Romans 11:25 NKJV
4. "I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, **As a light to the Gentiles,**" Isaiah 42:6 NKJV
5. "Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; **I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'** "" Isaiah 49:6 NKJV
6. "Arise, shine; For your light has come! ... **The Gentiles shall come to your light, ...**" Isaiah 60:1-5
7. "But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. **For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham;** but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; **but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.**" Romans 9:6-8 NKJV

8. “For **he is not a Jew who is one outwardly**, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; **but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart**, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.” Romans 2:28-29 NKJV
9. “What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? **“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”**” Romans 4:1-3 NKJV
10. **“just as Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”** Therefore know that only **those who are of faith are sons of Abraham**. And the Scripture, **foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith**, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, **“In you all the nations shall be blessed.”** So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.” Galatians 3:6-9 NKJV
11. **“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus**. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is **neither Jew nor Greek**, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.**” Galatians 3:26-29 NKJV
12. “And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, **shake off the dust from your feet.**” Matthew 10:14 NKJV [See [Apostolic Footprints](#)]

THE TEMPTATION

2. Will you enjoy the attention?

A. The Object of Praise or The Object Persecution

(1) At Iconium (**Acts 14:1-7**)

(a) A Divided City

1. “Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the **synagogue of the Jews**, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the **Jews and of the Greeks believed**. But the **unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds** against the brethren. Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was **bearing witness** to the word of His grace, **granting signs and wonders** to be done by their hands. But **the multitude of the city was divided**: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. And when a **violent attempt** was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, **to abuse and stone them**, they became aware of it and **fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia**, and to the **surrounding region**. And they were preaching the gospel there.” Acts 14:1-7 NKJV

(2) Idolatry in Lystra (**Acts 14:8-18**)

(a) Worship Directed in the Wrong Direction

1. “And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother’s womb, who had never walked. This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and **seeing that he had faith to be healed**, said with a loud voice, **“Stand up straight on your feet!” And he leaped and walked**. Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the **Lycaonian language**, **“The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!”** And **Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes**, because

he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul **heard this**, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out and saying, **“Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, *who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things** that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, ****gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons**, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” **And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.”** Acts 14:8-18 NKJV

2. *“As Peter was coming in, **Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him**. But Peter lifted him up, saying, **“Stand up; I myself am also a man.”**”* Acts 10:25-26 NKJV
3. *“**Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, Whose hope is in the Lord his God, Who made heaven and earth, The sea, and all that is in them; Who keeps truth forever,**”* Psalms 146:5-6 NKJV
4. *“**“Are there any among the idols of the nations that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Are You not He, O Lord our God? Therefore we will wait for You, Since You have made all these.”*** Jeremiah 14:22 NKJV

B. The Key Inflection Point

(1) Applause and Applauded

(a) Praise, acclaim, acclamation, admiration, commendation, adulation, approbation, approval, extolment, compliments, tribute, assent, accolades—NOW WHAT?

1. *“Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, **“The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!”** And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. **Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city,** brought oxen and garlands to the gates, **intending to sacrifice** with the multitudes.”* Acts 14:11-13 NKJV

(2) **“The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!”**Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes...

(a) See that you do not do that; I am your fellow servant!

1. *“Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’ ” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.” **And I fell at his feet to worship him**. But he said to me, **“See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant**, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. **Worship God!** For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.””* Revelation 19:9-10 NKJV
2. *“Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, **I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things**. Then he said to me, **“See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant**, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. **Worship God.**””* Revelation 22:8-9 NKJV

(3) **“Then the priest, whose temple was in front of their city...”**

(a) The Prominent Church

1. "Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and **worship of angels**, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, **and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body**, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, **grows with the increase that is from God.**" Colossians 2:18-19 NKJV

(b) There is a law against such idolatry!

1. ""You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; **you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations** of those who hate Me," Exodus 20:4-5 NKJV

(c) Bad things are in store for those who...

1. "So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. And the people kept shouting, **"The voice of a god and not of a man!"** Then **immediately an angel of the Lord struck him**, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died." Acts 12:21-23 NKJV

(d) Persist in doing so and...

1. "Therefore God **also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts**, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, **and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator**, who is blessed forever. Amen." Romans 1:24-25 NKJV

(4) **Bad Churches (It's not uncommon!)**

(a) The Compromised Church (Pergamos)

1. **"But I have a few things against you**, because you have there those who hold **the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.** Thus you also have those who hold **the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent**, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth." Revelation 2:14-16 NKJV
2. *"Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, **we know that an idol is nothing** in the world, and that there is no other God but one."* I Corinthians 8:4 NKJV
3. *"However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; **and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.**"* I Corinthians 8:7 NKJV

(b) The Corrupt Church (Thyatira)

1. "Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman **Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.** Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, **unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.**" Revelation 2:20-23 NKJV

(c) The Dead Church (Sardis)

1. ...“I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, **but you are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.**” Revelation 3:1-3 NKJV

(d) The Lukewarm Church (Laodiceans)

1. “I know your works, that **you are neither cold nor hot.** I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, **I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—** I counsel you to **buy from Me** gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, **that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed;** and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. **As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.** Therefore be zealous and repent.” Revelation 3:15-19 NKJV

(5) **Bowing in the Right Direction**

(a) No Applause Please (Paul get’s it right!)

1. “Men, **why are you doing these things?** We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from **these useless things to the living God.**” Acts 14:15 NKJV

(b) Hers is a “Safety Net” whenever you feel like becoming the object of attention!

1. “He must increase, but **I must decrease.**” John 3:30 NKJV

(c) To whom shall you bow?

1. “For this reason **I bow my knees to the Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ, **from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,**” Ephesians 3:14-15 NKJV

(d) Every knee shall bow to one God for His glory.

1. “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus **every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth,** and of those under the earth, and that **every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**” Philippians 2:9-11 NKJV

C. From Worshiped to Stoned

(1) Stoning and Escape to Derbe (**Acts 14:19-20**)

(a) Jealousy finds a way!

1. “Then Jews from **Antioch** and **Iconium** came there; and **having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.** However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And **the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.**” Acts 14:19-20 NKJV
2. **Antioch in Pisidia:** “But when **the Jews** saw the multitudes, they were **filled with envy;** and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.” Acts 13:45 NKJV

3. **Iconium:** “But **the unbelieving Jews** stirred up the Gentiles and **poisoned their minds** against the brethren.”
Acts 14:2 NKJV

(2) Strengthening the Converts (**Acts 14:21-28**)

- (a) “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”
 1. “And **when they had preached the gospel to that city** and made many disciples, **they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch**, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, **“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”** So when **they had appointed elders in every church**, and **prayed with fasting**, they **commended them to the Lord** in whom they had believed. And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. **From there they sailed to Antioch**, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, **and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles**. So they stayed there a long time with the disciples.” Acts 14:21-28 NKJV

D. Conclusion

(1) When you are tempted believe, “I’m all that...”

- (a) You will realize that God does not work quite the way you think!
 1. **“For you see your calling**, brethren, that **not many wise** according to the flesh, **not many mighty, not many noble**, are called. But **God has chosen** the **foolish things** of the world to put **to shame the wise**, and God has chosen the **weak things** of the world to **put to shame the things which are mighty**; and the **base things** of the world and the things which are despised **God has chosen**, and the **things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are**, that **no flesh should glory in His presence**. **But of Him you are in Christ Jesus**, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— {31} that, as it is written, **“He who glories [boasts], let him glory in the Lord.”**” I Corinthians 1:26-31 NKJV [Inspired from Jer. 9:24]
- (b) For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends!
 1. **“But “he who glories [boasts], let him glory [boast] in the Lord.”** For **not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.**” II Corinthians 10:17-18 NKJV
- (c) And in case that is not enough to keep things in proper perspective.
 1. “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. 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**. 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.**” II Corinthians 12:7-10 NKJV