



# Paul, His Life and Teachings

## Paul's Strengths and Weaknesses

### Lesson 7

*Biblical-Literacy.com*

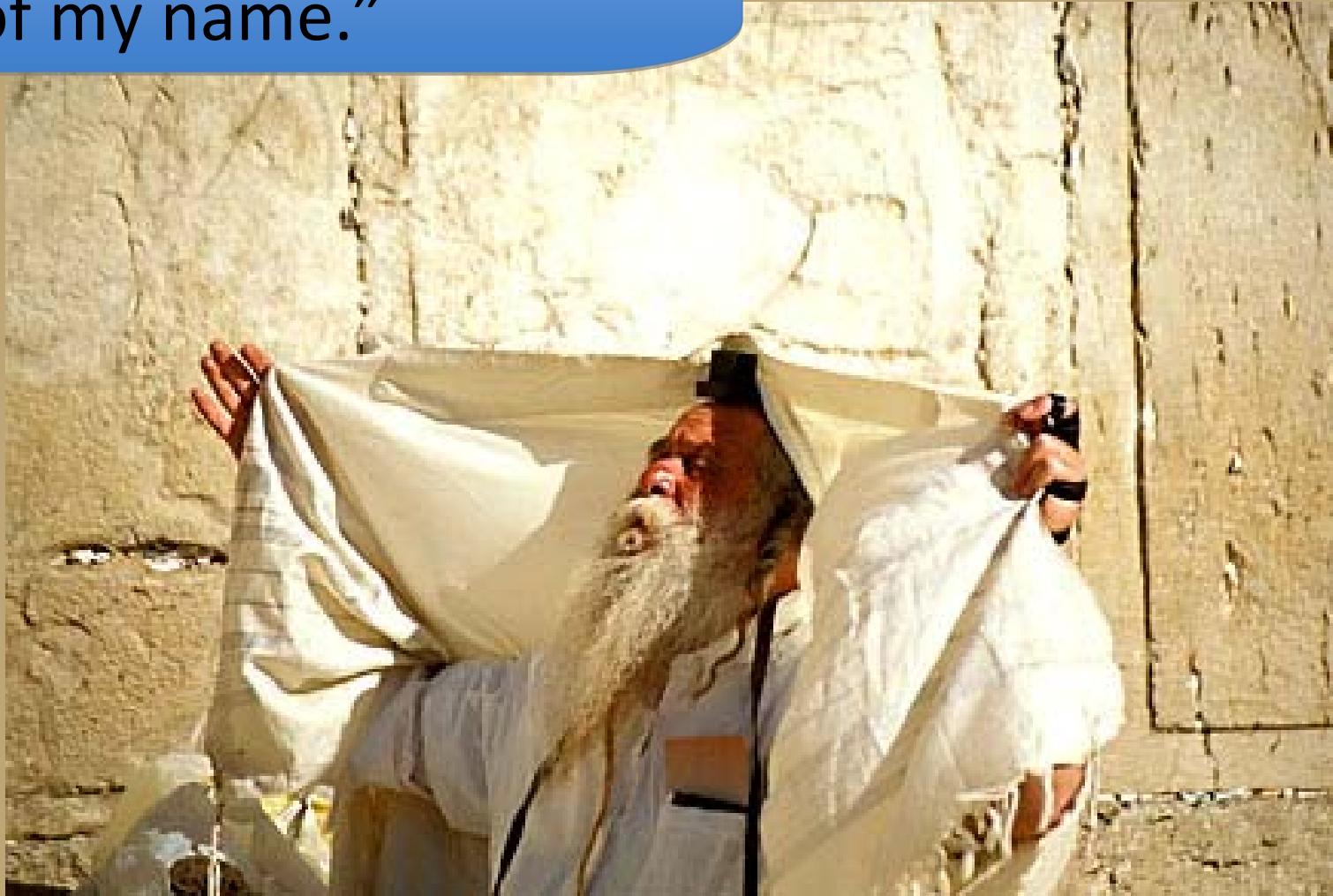
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Find Paul, lay hands on him.  
He is my chosen  
instrument.



“I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”



# Paul's sufferings

# Paul's sufferings



39 lashes 5x

# Paul's sufferings



39 lashes 5x



3x beaten w/rods

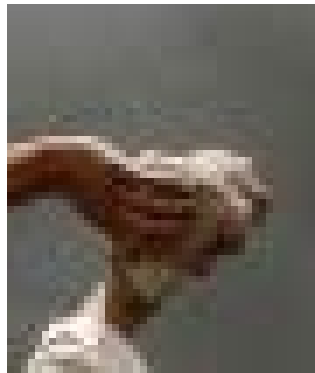
# Paul's sufferings



39 lashes 5x



3x beaten w/rods



Stoned



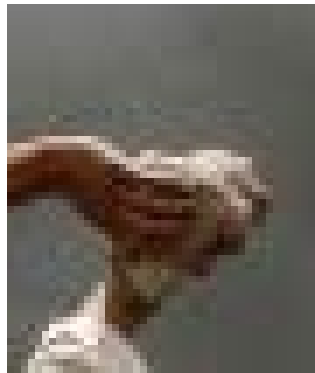
# Paul's sufferings



39 lashes 5x



3x beaten w/rods



Stoned



Shipwrecked 3x



So what does Paul's suffering have to do with Paul's strengths and weaknesses?



We find our  
answers in  
some problems  
at Corinth



Some came in  
claiming to be “super  
apostles” putting  
down Paul and his  
teaching as inferior



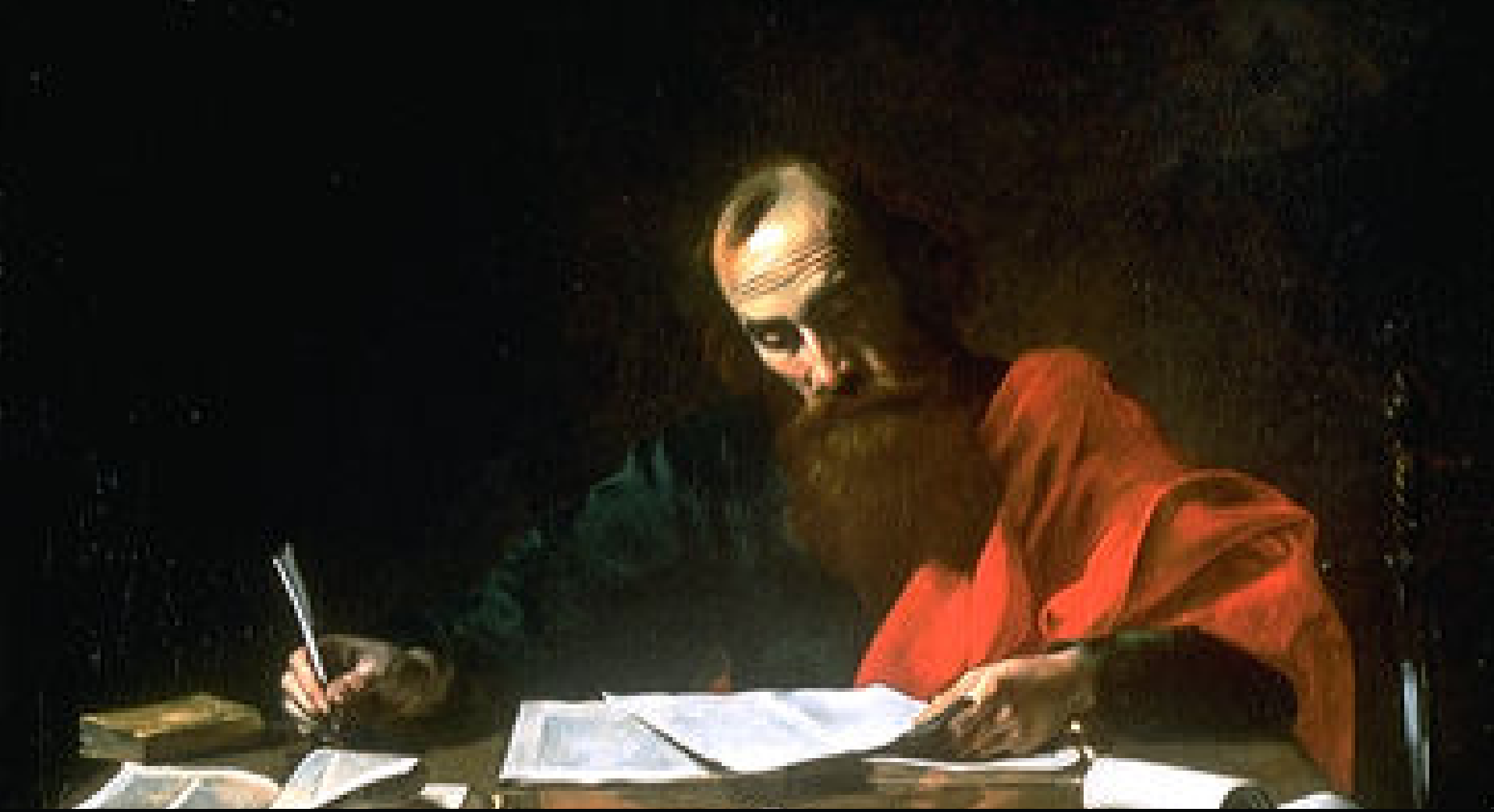
Seeking to lead the  
Corinthians “astray  
from a sincere and  
pure devotion to  
Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3)



Leaving Paul forced to  
prove his credentials



Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord.



I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven ... this man was caught up into paradise.





And he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. On behalf of this man, I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses.



Though if I wished to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain from speaking it, so that no one may speak more of me than he sees in me or hears from me.



So to keep from being too elated by the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from being too elated.



Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”



Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.



For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities.



For when I am weak, then I am strong

What was Paul's thorn?





Does the Greek help?

# Does the Greek help?

*skolops* (σκόλοψ) = “thorn”  
or “splinter”



# Does the Greek help?

*skolops* (σκόλοψ) = “thorn”  
or “splinter”



*sarki* σαρκί = “flesh” “body” or  
“corrupt human nature”

Physical





# Physical

- Headaches



# Physical

- Headaches
- Eyesight



# Physical

- Headaches
- Eyesight
- Malaria



# Physical

- Headaches
- Eyesight
- Malaria
- Epilepsy





# Physical

- Headaches
- Eyesight
- Malaria
- Epilepsy
- Speech impediment



# Physical

- Headaches
- Eyesight
- Malaria
- Epilepsy
- Speech impediment
- Malta fever



# Physical

- Headaches
- Eyesight
- Malaria
- Epilepsy
- Speech  
impediment
- Malta fever
- and more!

# Spiritual



# Spiritual

- Pangs of conscience over his former life



# Spiritual



- Pangs of conscience over his former life
- Entrapment in some sin

# Spiritual



- Pangs of conscience over his former life
- Entrapment in some sin
- and more!

# Circumstantial





# Circumstantial

- Paul's hardships



# Circumstantial



- Paul's hardships
- Paul's need to work

# Circumstantial



- Paul's hardships
- Paul's need to work
- Paul's opponents



A suggestion:



A suggestion:

Paul leaves it  
ambiguous on  
purpose



A suggestion:

Paul leaves it  
ambiguous on  
purpose

Paul is concerned with  
the *principle* not the  
*particulars*

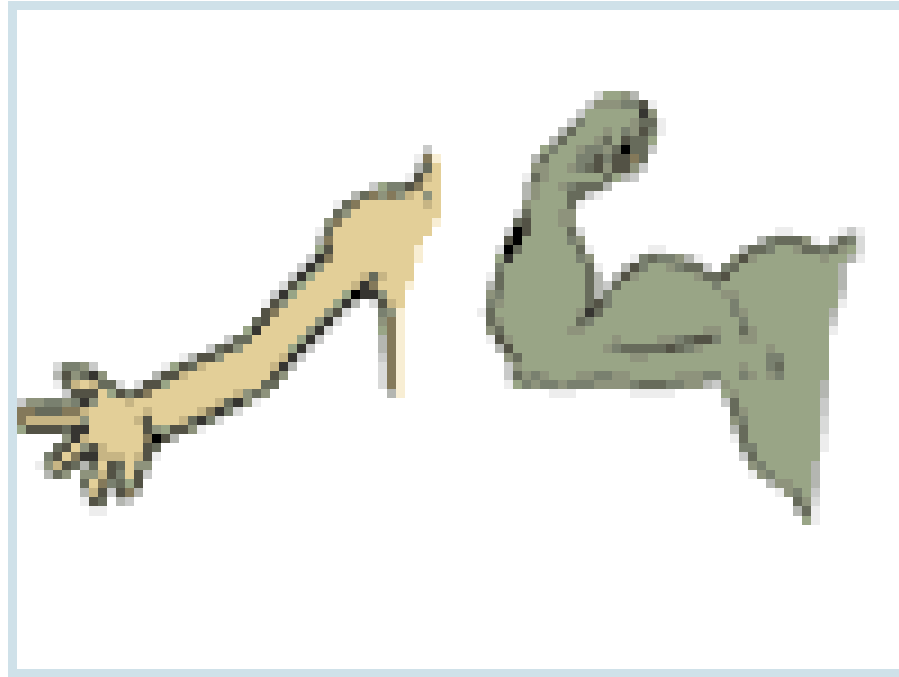


So what does Paul's suffering have to do with Paul's strengths and weaknesses?

“God’s grace is sufficient”



“God’s grace is sufficient”



“For when I am weak, then I am strong”

Points for  
Home:

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Points for  
Home:

The true marks of  
leadership and authority  
are humble acts of service

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Points for  
Home:

The true marks of  
leadership and authority  
are humble acts of service



“For I have given  
you an example,  
that you also  
should do just as I  
have done to you”  
(Jn 13:15).

Points for Home:  
everyone has a  
thorn(s)

Points for Home:  
everyone has a  
thorn(s)



Points for Home:  
everyone has a  
thorn(s)



Points for Home:  
everyone has a  
thorn(s)





Points for Home:  
everyone has a  
thorn(s)



“Entrust your soul to a  
faithful Creator while doing  
good (1 Pet. 4:19)



# Points for Home: Humility

# Points for Home: Humility



“Let the one who  
boasts, boast in the  
Lord” (2 Cor. 10:17)