

**2 Corinthians 12:3** And I know such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know—God knows.

**v. 4** How that he was caught up to Paradise and heard inexpressible words that man may not be allowed to utter. (EXT)

7. These three verses present an explanation of why Paul was the preeminent theologian of the incipency of the Church Age. He leaned so much doctrine that a great deal of it is censured from us.
8. Paul indicates he was “caught up into Paradise.” Since the Lord emptied the Paradise compartment of Hades at His ascension, Paradise in this context refers to the third heaven.
9. Such an event is not unprecedented. It is recorded in Genesis that Enoch “walked with God”:

**Genesis 5:22** After Enoch became the father of Methuselah, he walked with God for 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

**v. 23** The entire lifetime of Enoch was 365 years.

**v. 24** Enoch walked with God and then disappeared<sup>2</sup> because God took him away. (NET)

10. Chapter 5 of Genesis presents the messianic chart pedigree from Adam to Noah. In the synopses of those who lived before and after Enoch, they each end with the phrase, “and then he died.” Enoch is the lone exception.
11. Confirming this translation, the writer of Hebrews mentions Enoch in:

**Hebrews 11:5** By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.

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<sup>2</sup> “The Hebrew construction has the negative particle *’en* (“there is not,” “there was not”) with a pronominal suffix, ‘he was not.’ Instead of saying that Enoch died, the text says he no longer was present” (*The NET Bible* [Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 1996–2005], 18tn18).

12. From this we have the example of Paul being “caught up into Paradise.” Upon his body’s resuscitation, Paul begins his ministry with a soul fully stocked with *epígnōsis* doctrine inculcated from face-to-face instruction from the Lord.
13. Lucifer wanted to suppress this storehouse of knowledge by attacking Paul in a number of ways, but not among them was anything “thorn like” placed in his flesh.
14. We know this thorn was not physically inflicted because of the following phrase, “a messenger of Satan that he might punch me.”
15. The attack was by a demon assigned to Paul by Lucifer for the purpose of discouraging him. This attack was allowed by God so that Paul would not become arrogant about his vast inventory of spiritual information.
16. We know from Job 1 and 2 that God granted Lucifer permission to attack a mature believer which he did on two occasions. The first was by stripping Job of all his earthly possessions, the second by allowing demons to inflict his skin with boils from head to toe.
17. Regardless of these attacks, Job never lost his integrity. By faith, Job endured two intense periods of undeserved suffering.
18. In Paul’s case, Lucifer assigned one of his demons to attack the apostle with orders not to afflict his body but rather to impose mental pressures.
19. These mental thorns are mention by Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:10, “weaknesses, insults, pressures from needs, persecutions, and anguishes on behalf of Christ.”
20. While being mentally staggered, Paul begged the Lord to relieve him of these pressures: “I began to beg the Lord on three occasions that it might depart from me.”

21. This is the situation believers endure when they pray while doubting. The mental assaults on Paul's soul were so intense that he repeatedly asked the Lord to relieve him of the thorn demon.
22. Principle: What is in the divine decree must be faced with doctrine while praying for wisdom to endure, nothing doubting.
23. Paul's repeated prayers show desperation. He is under the assault of repeated attacks from the Dark Side and thus disoriented from grace:

**2 Corinthians 12:8**                      On behalf of this thing [the thorn in the flesh] I began to beg the Lord on three occasions that it might depart from me.

24. This prayer was presented while in the status of doubt. Paul is facing all the assets Lucifer can muster. Paul is enduring hurricane force challenges to his mentality.
25. The pressure was so intense he started to beg, the aorist active indicative of the verb **παρακαλέω** (*parakaléo*): "to entreat or beseech," both synonymous with "beg."<sup>3</sup>
26. Prayers are commonly addressed to the Father, but Paul, having recently attended the heavenly seminary under the guidance of Jesus Christ, on this occasion appeals to **κύριος** (*kúrios*): "Lord."

Only once does Paul express the summons of the *kúrios* [Jesus] with *παρακαλέω* (2 Corinthians 12:8), although he often allows exhortation to become request.<sup>4</sup>

27. Paul's mentality is focused on the training he has just completed with Jesus. Now back in the Angelic Conflict, he begs the Lord to grant relief from the Luciferian onslaught.
28. After submitting three appeals to the Lord for mercy, it suddenly occurs to Paul that he is not praying with confidence but instead is expressing doubt.

<sup>3</sup> Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., s.vv. "beseech," "entreat," "beg."

<sup>4</sup> Johannes Thomas, "παρακαλέω," in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 3:26.

29. James warned of this type of mental attitude failure in his epistle:

**James 1:6** But he must keep on praying [ IM #4 ] for wisdom by means of faith, doubting nothing, for the one who prays while doubting the integrity of God is like the atmospheric and oceanic forces of the sea, whose waves are constantly being agitated by various wind forces hurling them about to and fro. (EXT)

30. It is recall of this doctrinal principle that causes Paul to rebound and get back inside the bubble, that ethereal environment of spirituality that is constantly in jeopardy of assault by the sin nature.
31. Back inside, Paul recalls what the Lord had already taught him. The Lord does not speak at this point. He has already taught Paul the principle and Paul recites it in:

**2 Corinthians 12:10** And he had communicated to me, “My grace produces contentment for you: for the power of God is carried out by means of helplessness.” Therefore, with the greatest of pleasure to a higher degree I will boast in the weaknesses, that the power of Christ may be bivouacked on me.” (EXT)

32. In the scrum of the Angelic Conflict, the believer is allowed to encounter the attacks of the Dark Side. To endure by means of doctrine and the power of prayer to the Father without doubt, each battle will be won in accordance to God’s perfect plan.
33. In this situation, Paul’s petition for the “thorn” to be taken away is denied. His desire to be spared of the distraction and the personal assaults was also denied.
34. Why would this preeminent apostle be denied a prayer request? Because he must demonstrate that it is the Word of God that is alive and powerful and we do not learn of that power by begging God to take away the opportunity to grow in grace.

35. Therefore, when we pray that a situation be canceled, avoided, or withdrawn we may be asking God to remove the opportunity for us to see His grace in action.
36. We are also able to see the situation, “Petition Negative—Desire Negative,” in the second paragraph of James 1:5–8 with emphasis on:

**James 1:6** But he must keep on praying [ IM #4 ] for wisdom by means of faith, doubting nothing, for the one who prays while doubting the integrity of God is like the atmospheric and oceanic forces of the sea, whose waves are constantly being agitated by various wind forces hurling them about to and fro.

**v. 7** For such a man must stop the ongoing process of presuming [ IM #5 ] that he will receive anything in the future from the Lord, (EXT)

37. These four categories of the ways God answers prayer bring us back to the process of how prayer works and how they will be answered in one of the first three ways we’ve just reviewed.

### **The Instantaneous Extradimensional Communications Network:**

1. “Instantaneous” refers to the omniscience of God Who knew of our prayers in eternity past.
2. These were entered into the divine decree in the PROM chip. This is a computer term designed to illustrate the free will of man. It contains all prayers and the manner they are presented.
3. Everything in the PROM chip contains every thought, decision, and action of every believer.
3. God places His answer in the ROM chip. This chip represents the sovereignty of God, an integrated circuit into which unchanging data can be read, but to which no new data can be written.
4. In our illustration, we are isolating the discussion on prayer. Whenever a believer prays, he is guided by biblical revelation on the structure of prayer.