

2 Corinthians 12:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

Analysis

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. Paul reluctantly shifts to apokalypseis (ἀποκαλύψεις, "revelations")—divine unveilings received directly from Christ. The phrase **not expedient** (ou sympheron, οὐ συμφέρον) signals his discomfort: boasting contradicts gospel humility, yet the Corinthians' fascination with visionary experiences (encouraged by the "super-apostles," 11:5) forces his hand.

Paul's visions and revelations of the Lord are not self-generated mysticism but objective divine communication—the same category as his Damascus Road encounter (Acts 9:3-6, 22:6-11) and Arabian revelation (Galatians 1:12, 17). Unlike the false apostles who boasted in ecstatic experiences to validate ministry, Paul mentions his reluctantly and only to defend the gospel's authority among wavering Corinthians.

The grammar is careful: revelations of the Lord (genitive of source) means Christ initiated them, not Paul's spiritual prowess. This anticipates verse 7's "thorn" as God's prophylactic against pride from such experiences.

Historical Context

Written from Macedonia (AD 55-56) as Paul defends his apostolic authority against opponents who valued ecstatic experiences and spiritual credentials. Greco-Roman religion prized visions and divine encounters as proof of spiritual status. Paul's

reluctance to "glory" in such experiences would seem weak to Corinthians impressed by charismatic displays, yet he inverts their values by emphasizing weakness (12:9-10).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Why does Paul consider boasting in spiritual experiences "not expedient," and how does this challenge modern celebrity Christianity that markets dramatic testimonies?
2. What's the difference between revelations "of the Lord" (divine origin) versus spiritual experiences generated by technique or pursuit of mysticism?
3. How should extraordinary spiritual experiences function in the Christian life —as credentials for ministry or as private encounters that produce humility?

Interlinear Text

Καυχᾶσθαι δὴ οὐ συμφέρει μοι ἐλεύσομαι γὰρ εἰς
to glory doubtless not It is for me I will come G1063 to
G2744 G1211 G3756 G4851 G3427 G2064 G1519

όπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου
visions and revelations of the Lord
G3701 G2532 G602 G2962

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 1:12 (Parallel theme): For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 John 5:20 (Parallel theme): And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

2 Corinthians 12:7 (Parallel theme): 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.

Acts 23:11 (References Lord): And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

Acts 18:9 (References Lord): Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:

1 Corinthians 10:23 (Parallel theme): All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

John 16:7 (Parallel theme): Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

2 Corinthians 8:10 (Parallel theme): And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.

2 Corinthians 12:11 (Glory): I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.

Galatians 2:2 (Parallel theme): And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.