

The Weight of Our Afflictions

International Bible Lesson

2 Corinthians 4:1-18

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“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:17-18—KJV).

“For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:17-18—NRSV).

Some scientists at Caltech have reported that Earth weighs about 13,170,000,000,000,000,000,000 pounds. Perhaps astronomers have also tried to measure the weight of the universe, even though we have not reached its outer limits. Even if the universe could be weighed, mathematicians might not have a large enough number to record its weight. God is not a physical being who can be weighed in terms of pounds. God's weight is His infinite value to the universe and every created being, which has little to do with physical dimensions. Whereas things in the created universe are temporary, God, who cannot be seen because He is Spirit, is not temporary. The eternal God created and keeps the whole universe in being moment-by-moment, so God is greater than all He has created. However, even though God created everything, everyone has rebelled against God in unbelief; so, God sent His only begotten Son to Earth to prepare an eternal future and inheritance for everyone who would trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Someday, everyone who follows Jesus Christ will have the opportunity to explore and value their inheritance throughout God's vast created universe. Of even greater value, they will be able to see the unseen God and praise Him for His loving character and infinite value. As Paul did, Christians thank God for the afflictions and persecutions that prepare them for the future, and when compared to God's weight are slight, momentary, and weigh very little.

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Thinking Further

1. Why has the god of this world blinded the minds of unbelievers?
2. What can unbelievers do in order to see the glory of Christ with their minds?
3. Since Paul did not teach about himself to draw people to himself, who did he teach about and why did he teach about someone other than himself?
4. How can someone learn more about God?
5. Paul suffered in many ways; how did his afflictions have an effect on his faith in Jesus and his daily life?