



BIC Volume 11
Second Corinthians
Lorin L Cranford
Ministry Part Three C:
Topic 10.2.3.3.2
2 Cor. 11:1-12:13

Quick Links to Study

[10.2.3.3 Ministry part three, 10:1-12:13](#)

[10.2.3.3.2 Apostolic Boasting, 11:1-12:13](#)

[10.2.3.3.2.1 Paul and the 'super-apostles,' 11:1-6](#)

[10.2.3.3.2.2 Paul's independence, 11:7-11](#)

[10.2.3.3.2.3 Servants of the devil, 11:12-15](#)

[10.2.3.3.2.4 Boasting from suffering, 11:16-33](#)

[10.2.3.3.2.5 Boasting from visions etc., 12:1-10](#)

[10.2.3.3.2.6 Boasting from compassion, 12:11-13](#)

10.2.3.3 Ministry part three, 10:1-12:13

This section of Second Corinthians also has a controversial interpretive history. Many over the past two centuries have been convinced that it actually is what is left of the so-called 'severe letter' written from Ephesus after his 'sorrowful visit' (cf. 2 Cor. 2:1; 12:14; 13:1-2; 2:4; 7:8). Or perhaps it comes after chapters 1 - 9 as a followup letter targeting specifically his opponents at Corinth. In my estimation, the most defensible view is to view Second Corinthians as we have it as a unified document with three or four major sections in the letter body (appx. chaps. 1-7, 8-9, 10-13).¹

¹"After the warmhearted appeals of chs. 8 and 9, the change of tone at 10:1-2 to vigorous and sustained self-defense, self-assertion, and polemic comes as 'a bolt from the blue.'¹ This difference in tone and technique between chs. 1-9 and chs. 10-13 may be easily overdrawn, for there are elements of remonstrance in the earlier chapters (e.g., 2:17; 5:12; 6:14) and reassurances of warm affection in the last four chapters (e.g., 11:2; 12:14b-15a). Nevertheless, the suddenness of the change at 10:1 calls for some explanation. No special explanation is required, of course, for those who argue that 2 Corinthians 10-13 is part of the earlier 'severe letter' (the 'Haus-rath hypothesis') or 'part perhaps nearly the whole' (Furnish 459) of a letter later than 2 Corinthians 1-9 (the 'Semler hypothesis'), for in those cases a totally different occasion and purpose is postulated for these four chapters. It is those who defend the integrity of 2 Corinthians who must suggest adequate reasons for the change of tone and style. Nine such explanations are mentioned in the Introduction (p. 30 above). It is my contention (see above, pp. 30-31, 50-51, 104-5) that chs. 1-9 were written in stages over a considerable period and that after Paul had written these chapters, he received distressing news of further problems at Corinth that prompted him to write chs. 10-13 and then send off all thirteen chapters as a single letter.² What this news might have been can only be conjectured. We may suppose that the intruders from Judea had become more open and aggressive in their effort to discredit Paul and that the Corinthians in general had become more recep-

In the assumption that these four letters belong with the first nine chapters as the letter body (1:12-13:10), one will look for internal signals of what prompts these more stern words in comparison to the less severe tone of most of the previous chapters.²

The orientation of these four chapters defies precise outlining much in the same way as we encountered in the first nine chapters. Paul's ministry as an apostle missionary is the unifying theme of these chapters. It centers on his rights to speak and write as one called of God in 10:1-18. He moves into hesitantly boasting of his rights as an apostle in 11:1-12:13. Then he discusses his upcoming visit to Corinth in light of his rights in 12:14-13:10. Inside each of these segments one finds

...tive to their teaching and more open to their influence. On this view 2 Corinthians 10-13 is Paul's response to more intense opposition at Corinth.³" [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 661.]

²Again modern interpreters must severely guard against turning Paul into a post-enlightenment thinker who could not both praise and reprimand his readers in the same letter. The apostle was a product of his own world in both the Jewish and Hellenistic aspects of it. If that means anything, it signals that his thought patterns are in no way going to follow modern trends of thinking. Just a cursory reading of the Greek text of Second Corinthians dramatically illustrates not just this, but also that his thinking when dictating this letter did not function much like it did in most of the rest of his letters, including First Corinthians. The very distinct circumstances behind this letter mandated a different approach to dealing with the Christian community at Corinth at this point in his long term relationship with them. The letter is very personal, it is very emotional, it is packed full of Paul's reaching out to the Corinthians in both positive and negative ways that should characterize one who cared for the Corinthians as much as he did.

smaller sub-units of text materials which will be identified in the exegesis below.

I use the label ‘apostolic’ in my outlining very hesitantly. To be sure, the dominant interpretive stream in modern commentaries follows the theme of apostolic authority. Yet close examination of this text does not find him using the terms ἀπόστολος or ἀποστολή hardly at all, and then only in reference to the claims of his opponents (cf. 11:13). Unquestionably, the self-defense made in these four chapters bears little resemblance to his defense of his apostleship in Galatians et als. The use of the first person plural references most naturally designates Paul and his associates here, as it consistently has designated in the first nine chapters. The label ἀπόστολος would not be appropriate for the ‘we’ references.

The real issue is not of some theoretical issue of authority. That, I suspect, is an issue born mostly of the modern western world’s preoccupation with power and control, both inside Christianity and in the surrounding world as well.³ What at stake in Second Corinthians is Paul’s relationship with the community as its founder and influence upon the community as a teacher of the Gospel. It is very important to note that Paul’s claims of power are in reality claims of God’s working in his ministry and also in the church.

Observing the way he goes about defending his consistency and faithfulness to the Gospel reflects the wisdom of couching an argument in meaningful and persuasive tones to one’s readership, the Corinthians. Much military language is employed by Paul in these chapters, as an example.⁴ What is especially fascinating is the similarities of argument strategy often used by the Greek philosophers against the sophists.⁵

³The playing off of these chapters as an issue of apostolic authority has made the maize of partition theories easier for some to adopt.

⁴“Metaphors abound in these few verses. There are appeals to the language of military installations (v 4) and soldiers’ campaigns (v 5: *αἰχμαλωτίζοντες*, ‘making captive’)—these terms seem drawn from the “wars of the Maccabees” literature (see Comment); allusions to the rhetorical schools with their cultivation of arguments (v 5) and reasonings (v 5); and the familiar idiom of the twin ideas of erecting a building and demolishing it (v 8), the latter verb linked with the idea of v 4.37 And possibly a use is made of forensic terminology (v 6: ‘to punish every disobedience’; cf. Rom 13:4). This section is carefully crafted, as we see from the assonance of *καθαίρουντες*, ‘demolishing’ (v 4), and *ἐπαίρομενον*, ‘opposing’ (v 5), and of *ὑπακοή*, ‘obedience’ (vv 5–6), and *παρακοή*, “disobedience” (v 6); the quick succession of metaphors, sometimes mixed (v 5); and the thoughtful positioning of the words, e.g., in the chiasmus of v 11.” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 483.]

⁵“Also, Paul uses here a style of writing parallel with the devices used by the philosophers in their debate with the sophists.³² In this ‘letter of apology’ we have several exchanges of arguments

One of the really challenging issues in these four chapters is the identity of those who oppose Paul at Corinth.⁶ It is clear that some in Corinth oppose Paul.

used by which the true philosopher was distinguished from the false one or by which genuine leaders in Attic Greece were marked off from the boastful charlatan (*γότης, ἀλαζών*). The popular way in which such distinctions were drawn included the employment of sarcasm, irony, and parody. (1) Examples of sarcasm and the stronger feature of invective will be seen throughout these chapters, especially in the section 11:1–12:10,33 where Paul’s boasting (*καύχησις*) is designed to show him as self-consciously taking the role of the ‘fool’ in a highly contrived way.³⁴ Paul’s ridicule of his opponents is seen in 10:1–11 in his exaggerated descriptions of their positions as ‘fortified vantage points’ (v 4), a military metaphor for ‘lofty ideas’ (v 4) that need to be ‘pulled down’ (v 4, as Paul has the right to do [v 8]). (2) His irony comes through as he does not directly negate what the opponents say about him; rather he accepts it in an ad hominem way and turns their negative and prejudicial assessment of him into an affirmation of positive and personal credit (e.g., his ‘timidity’ is a commitment to his preaching of a humiliated, now exalted, Lord.³⁵) (3) The style of parody is illustrated (more clearly in 11:16–33) in the way Paul uses imitatively the literary expressions of his opponents but turns their evaluation of him on its head—a favorite trick of the true philosopher who, like Socrates, appeared innocently to disclaim knowledge of the truth in order to mock his rivals. “ [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 483.]

⁶Note the charting out of references by Harris in the NIGTC:

10:2	τινάς	B and C (and possibly A)
7	τις	A
10	φησίν	B and A
11	ὁ τοιοῦτος	B and A
12	τισὶν ... αὐτοί	A
15	ἀλλοτρίοις	D
16	ἀλλοτρίῳ	D
17	ὁ ... καυχώμενος	E and A
18	ὁ ... συνιστάνων ... ἐκεῖνος	E and A
11:4	ὁ ἐρχόμενος	A
5	τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων	D
12	τῶν θελότων	A
13	οἱ ... τοιοῦτοι ψευδαπόστολοι ἐργάται δόλιοι ἀποστόλους Χριστοῦ	A A A A
15	οἱ διάκονοι αὐτοῦ διάκονοι δικαιοσύνης	A A
18	πολλοί	A
20	τις (five uses)	A
21	τις	A
22	Ἑβραῖοι ... Ἰσραηλίται ... σπέρνα Ἀβραάμ	A
23	διάκονοι Χριστοῦ	A
29	τίς (twice)	E
11:16	τις	E
12:6	τις	E
11	τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων	D
21	πολλούς	C
13:2	τοῖς προηυαρηκόσιν	C

But it is also clear that some opponents come from outside Corinth and have influenced the thinking of some in the Christian community there. Whether they have a connection to the Judaizers that opposed Paul's preaching and inclusion of Gentiles and were based in Jerusalem or not is debated among commentators.

As we go through the text, observations will be highlighted that call attention to the distinctives of what the apostle does in defending himself to the Corinthians.

For the detailed commentary on 10:1-18 (topic 10.2.3.3.1), see the preceding chapter: [Ministry Part Three A, 10:1-18](#).

10.2.3.3.2 Apostolic Boasting, 11:1-12:13

In this second section of apostolic ministry emphasis, the apostle first touches on his opponents in vv. 1-15 and then on the guiding qualities of his ministry in 11:16-12:13. These are the dominating emphases although his opponents are brought into the picture as well. The identity of these opponents is important to remember. Verse four is important because here a strong signal is given that the people Paul has in mind now are not primarily, or at all, Corinthians from inside the church in the city. Instead they are the outsiders who have come to Corinth, perhaps from Judea, and have linked up with the Corinthian opponents inside the church.

Additionally this second section in 11:1-12:13 expands on Paul's *weapons of warfare*, τὰ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν (10:4a), and especially there is a delineation of his limited boasting about his divine authorization, *καυχῆσώμαι περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν* (10:8b). Thus part two, 11:1-12:13, builds off of part one, 10:1-18. The same literary strategy will be true for part three, 12:14-13:10. His defense of his ministry in 10:1-13:10 thus builds toward the climatic section of part three detailing the anticipated trip to Corinth. It is guided by the axiom laid down in 10:11: ὅτι αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν, φησί, βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί, ἡ δὲ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενῆς καὶ ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενήμενος. *Let such people understand that what we say by letter when absent, we will also do when present.*

10.2.3.3.2.1 Paul and the 'super-apostles,' 11:1-6

-
- A — the Palestinian intruders or their ringleader
 - B — those Corinthians who (at least in part) supported the intruders and felt estranged from Paul
 - C — certain unrepentant Corinthians⁵
 - D — The Jerusalem Twelve⁶
 - E — any believer, especially any Corinthian believer

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 663.]

11.1 Ὅφελον ἀνείχεσθέ μου μικρόν τι ἀφροσύνης· ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνέχεσθέ μου. 2 ζηλῶ γὰρ ὑμᾶς θεοῦ ζήλω, ἡρμოსάμην γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἐνὶ ἀνδρὶ παρθένον ἀγνήν παραστῆσαι τῷ Χριστῷ· 3 φοβοῦμαι δὲ μή πως, ὡς ὁ ὄφις ἐξηπάτησεν Εὐάν ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ αὐτοῦ, φθαρῆ τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀπλότητος καὶ τῆς ἀγνότητος τῆς εἰς τὸν Χριστόν. 4 εἰ μὲν γὰρ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν κηρύσσει ὃν οὐκ ἐκηρύξαμεν, ἢ πνεῦμα ἕτερον λαμβάνετε ὃ οὐκ ἐλάβετε, ἢ εὐαγγέλιον ἕτερον ὃ οὐκ ἐδέξασθε, καλῶς ἀνέχεσθε.

5 Λογίζομαι γὰρ μηδὲν ὑστερηκέναι τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων. 6 εἰ δὲ καὶ ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλ' οὐ τῇ γνώσει, ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ φανερώσαντες ἐν πᾶσιν εἰς ὑμᾶς.

11.1 I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! 2 I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. 3 But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by its cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. 4 For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you submit to it readily enough.

5 I think that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles. 6 I may be untrained in speech, but not in knowledge; certainly in every way and in all things we have made this evident to you.

In this beginning pericope, the apostle sets up a contrast between the motivations behind his devotion to the Corinthians and those of the outsiders who have come to Corinth to undermine Paul's preaching of the Gospel. He stands as their spiritual father, while these people come as seducers of the Corinthians. The family image is an important backdrop to what Paul asserts here.

The key verb, repeated three times here, is ἀνείχεσθέ (v. 1); ἀνέχεσθέ (v. 1); ἀνέχεσθε (v. 4), all forms from ἀνέχω. Five of the 15 total uses in the entire NT are found here in Second Corinthians chapter eleven. It has the sense of enduring something unpleasant. In the imperfect tense form ἀνείχεσθέ (v. 1) and the present imperative form ἀνέχεσθέ (v. 1) the genitive case direct object of both verbs is μου, *me*. The voluntative usage of the imperfect tense here expresses a wish of the apostle Paul, and particularly in connection to the use of Ὅφελον, a particle of modality with the sense of "oh that...". Combined, the two words generate the meaning of *oh that you would put up with me*. Implicit in the expression is the assumption that the Corinthians likely will not be patient with Paul in what he is about to say.⁷

⁷“The sentence joins two contrasting statements: an unrealizable wish (ὄφελον; a fixed form, functioning as a particle to introduce an unattainable wish [BAGD]) and—by contrast (ἀλλά) but more a concession—a declaration that Paul's wish is to be granted, 'yes, do what I cannot really ask.' The middle term is the verb

11.1	ὄφελον	
218	ἀνείχεσθέ μου μικρόν τι ἀφροσύνης· ἀλλὰ καὶ	
219	ἀνέχεσθέ μου.	
11.2	γὰρ	
220	ζηλω ὑμᾶς θεοῦ ζήλω, γὰρ	
221	ἡρμοσάμην ὑμᾶς ἐνὶ ἀνδρὶ παρθένον ἀγνήν παραστῆσαι τῷ Χριστῷ·	
11.3	δὲ	
222	φοβοῦμαι μή πως, ... φθαρῆ τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν ὡς ὁ ὄφις ἐξηπάτησεν Εὐᾶν ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ αὐτοῦ, ἀπὸ τῆς ἀπλότητος καὶ τῆς ἀγνότητος τῆς εἰς τὸν Χριστόν.	
11.4	γὰρ	
	εἰ μὲν ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἄλλον Τησοῦν κηρύσσει ὃν οὐκ ἐκηρύξαμεν, ἢ πνεῦμα ἕτερον λαμβάνετε ὃ οὐκ ἐλάβετε, ἢ εὐαγγέλιον ἕτερον ----- ὃ οὐκ ἐδέξασθε,	
223	καλῶς ἀνέχεσθε.	
11.5	γὰρ	
224	Λογίζομαι μηδὲν ὑστερηκέναι τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων.	
11.6	δὲ	
	εἰ καὶ ἰδιώτης (εἰμί) τῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλ' οὐ τῇ γνώσει (εἰμί), ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ	
225	(ἔσμεν) φανερώσαντες ἐν πᾶσιν εἰς ὑμᾶς.	

There is a certain reluctance in even asking them to endure his statements which he will then characterize as ἀφροσύνη, *foolishness*, in 11:1, 16, 17, 19, 21, 12: 6, 11.

The adverb μικρόν qualifies the verb ἀνείχεσθέ and asks the Corinthians for just a small amount of endurance. The τι ἀφροσύνης, *in some foolishness*, provides the reference point of what they need to endure Paul regarding.⁸ The accusative demonstrative pronoun followed by the genitive of identity noun highlights even further Paul's hesitation with the literal sense of *in some of foolishness*.

But he asks them anyway: ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνέχεσθέ μου, *but do bear with me*. This request in part plays off another reality mentioned in verse four, καλῶς ἀνέχεσθε, *you are enduring them readily*.⁹ These are the false teachers who are coming to Corinth with a twisted version of the Gospel (v. 4a). The Corinthians ironically were listening to them while not so willing to listen to Paul. At least some of the Corinthians were. The self boasting of these teachers had appealed to those inclined to be hostile to Paul.

Paul justifies his request for a little toleration of him from the Corinthians in two ways with γὰρ in vv. 2-3 (#s 220-222) and 4 (#223). The first centers on the nature of his relationship to them and the second targets the appeal of the false

Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 516.]

⁸Some will combine μου μικρόν τι ἀφροσύνης in taking τι as the direct object of the verb. The resulting meaning is *endure my little foolishness*. But the verb virtually never takes its object in the accusative case. Thus making such an understanding highly unlikely. This accounts for a substantial tendency of copyists to omit τι in the copying of the text: F G H K L P 81. 104. 630. 1175.

ἀνέχομαι, 'endure, bear with, put up with.' Clearly something like the last-mentioned translation is required here (as in Mark 9:19: ἕως πότε ἀνέξομαι ὑμῶν, 'how long am I to bear with you?'). Paul can hardly bring himself to ask for this indulgence, that the Corinthians will put up with his display of 'folly' (ἀφροσύνη; 'the decisive catchword for this sentence,' and what is to come—see v 4—in the entire 'Fool's Discourse').²¹⁴ [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed.

1241. 1505. 2464 M it; Lcf Ambst [Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 571.]

⁹His sarcasm toward the Corinthians becomes more pointed in vv. 19-20.

teachers. These will pave the way for more detailed defense of his actions that follow beginning in v. 5.

In the compound sentence of vv. 2-3, the apostle defines his relationship to the Corinthians as that of a father to a daughter, and then expresses apprehension that suitors have come in an effort to seduce his daughter the Corinthians.

The father / daughter image in v. 2 is interesting: ζηλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς θεοῦ ζηλω, ἡρμοσάμην γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἐνὶ ἀνδρὶ παρθένον ἀγνήν παραστήσαι τῷ Χριστῷ, *for I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*. The apostle's founding of the church stands as the basis of this image. As the responsible father he had arranged for the Corinthians to have a husband, Christ.¹⁰ The marriage contract had already been signed. The Corinthians were betrothed to Christ as their spiritual husband and they His bride. Paul stresses his fatherly concern for his 'daughter' as a divine mandate: θεοῦ ζηλω.¹¹

¹⁰The details of the father / daughter image are developed completely within the first century almost universal tradition that it was the father who determined who would be the husband of his daughter, and not the daughter herself. Of course, the modern western pattern today is drastically different. Thus the application of the image to our time is rather limited. But the father having the best interests in mind for his daughter remains at the core of both the image in Paul's world as well as in ours. One big difference is that the Roman world of Paul would define the daughter's best interests largely in terms of what would advance her birth family, rather than exclusively on her own personal interests.

¹¹"We have seen that in vv. 2-5 Paul gives three substantial reasons for his appeal for tolerance (ἀνέχεσθε, v. 1b), thereby indicating his considerable unease in embarking on this journey of boasting and his clear realization of the considerable danger in imitating the worldly tactics of his opponents. His first reason is his jealous concern for his converts. ζηλω here could mean simply 'I am deeply concerned about you' (cf. BAGD 338a) or 'I care deeply for you' (Furnish 484), but the following reference to the need for pre-nuptial purity (παρθένον ἀγνήν) suggests that the more intensive and specialized meaning, 'I am jealous' (= ζηλοτυπέω, Meyer 639) or 'I am jealously concerned' (Thrall 656), is intended in the context, particularly since the character of Paul's ζῆλος is described as being θεοῦ. In the phrase θεοῦ ζηλω, the dative expresses manner (sometimes called the "associative dative") and the construction ζηλω ... ζηλω imitates the Hebrew absolute infinitive,¹⁶ although there is some precedent for the construction in Classical Greek.¹⁷ For its part the genitive θεοῦ has been seen as subjective ('with a jealousy God inspires [in me]'¹⁸), qualitative ('a divine jealousy'¹⁹), or possessive ('God's own jealousy,'²⁰ or 'a jealousy which God has'²¹). However, Paul is not simply indicating the source of his ζῆλος although God is undoubtedly its ultimate origin, nor is he merely affirming that it is supernaturally strong (one possible sense of 'divine'). He is claiming to have a jealousy such as God himself has, or a jealousy that has the characteristics of God's jealousy (a 'godly' or 'divine' jealousy). The OT depicts Yahweh not simply as a jealous God (Deut. 4:24), one consumed with holy zeal for his name, but as a God whose very name is Jealous (Exod. 34:14). His jealous anger burns against sin (Exod. 20:5; Ezek. 23:25), especially idolatry (Deut. 6:15; Josh. 24:19-20; Nah. 1:2), yet his jealous care protects his people (Ps. 17:7-8; Prov.

As such, he then 'betrothed' the Corinthians to one husband: ἡρμοσάμην ὑμᾶς ἐνὶ ἀνδρὶ. The aorist verb comes from ἀρμόζω with the literal sense of joining together. In the context of ancient marriage, it denotes the role of the father in choosing a proper husband for his daughter and setting up the marriage contract with the groom's father. Since God functions as the groom's father in this image, such a contract would not have been difficult to establish.

The depicting of the evangelizing of the Corinthians as a spiritual betrothal of people to Christ is quite interesting. The background for the image most likely comes out of the OT depiction of God as Israel's heavenly husband and her as a bride: Isa 50:1-2; 54:1-8; 62:5; Ezek 16; Hos 1-3. But the image is different from Paul's in that God is the husband, rather than the father.¹² But the chastity of Israel as a bride stands as a major emphasis in the Jewish image. Plus the jealousy of God for Israel provides a helpful comparison to Paul in his concern for the Corinthians.

Paul's image updates that in the OT to the situation at Corinth with the false teachers seeking to influence the Corinthians away from Christ. His role in the spiritual life of the Corinthians can be graphically portrayed as the spiritual father responsible for the chastity of his daughter for her wedding day. Thus his efforts with the Corinthians must be then viewed like those of a deeply concerned father. Such an image would have spoken volumes to virtually everyone in the city of Corinth, whether Christian or not.

The challenge for the bride's father was παρθένον ἀγνήν παραστήσαι τῷ Χριστῷ, *a chaste virgin to present to Christ*. Because the wedding day was a long time away from the betrothal date, the father's duty was to keep his daughter morally pure for her official wedding day.¹³

18:10; Isa. 41:10). As the verse goes on to show, Paul's godly jealousy for his spiritual daughter (the Corinthian congregation) is evidenced in his passionate concern to protect her purity from being violated by potential paramours in the period between her betrothal and her wedding day. No rivals to her one husband, Christ, would be tolerated.²² If she were caused to fall, he would burn with jealous anger (cf. 11:29)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 734-735.]

¹²Martin (WBC, vol. 40, p. 517), misses the point of the image by seeing Paul not as father but as 'best man.' Only the father could betroth a daughter. This exclusive role for the father was universal across the ancient Roman world of Paul.

¹³"παραστήσαι defines the aim of the betrothal (ἡρμοσάμην) and is used with a τινά τινι ('someone to someone') construction: 'in order to present you as a pure maiden to Christ himself.'³⁸ This verb points to a solemn or formal presentation, as when the infant Jesus was 'presented' to the Lord by his parents in the Temple (Luke 2:22).³⁹ Since the same verb is used in 4:14 of God's 'presentation' of believers to himself or to Christ or before Christ's tribunal after the resurrection (ἐγερῆι καὶ παραστήσει), we may

Paul found himself in the predicament of many fathers both ancient and modern: how to keep daughter's morally pure for their wedding date.

The pressure was created by 'suitors' of the daughter attempting to entice her into immorality (v. 3): φοβοῦμαι δὲ μή πως, ὡς ὁ ὄφις ἐξηπάτησεν Εὐάν ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ αὐτοῦ, φθαρῆ τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀπλότητος καὶ τῆς ἀγνότητος τῆς εἰς τὸν Χριστόν. *But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by its cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*

His apprehension is expressed in φοβοῦμαι δὲ μή πως, *but I am fearful lest....* In the NT, this construction is found only here and in 12:20 where a similar fear about the conduct of the Corinthians is expressed in more direct language.¹⁴ Here in 11:3 the apostle's apprehension about the Corinthians centers on τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν, *your thoughts*. A νόημα is both the mind that thinks and also the thoughts that it thinks.¹⁵ Among ancient Se-

ly conclude that Paul's 'presentation' of the Corinthians to Christ would also occur on the last Day.⁴⁰ Confirmation of this may be found in the use of παρίστημι in Eph. 5:27; Col. 1:22 in reference to the church's being presented before God or Christ in unblemished purity at the parousia. παρθένον ἀγνήν stands in apposition to an implied ὑμᾶς, the direct object of παραστήσαι (cf. Wolff 209). Perhaps sensing that the adjective ἀγνήν is pleonastic with παρθένον ('chaste virgin') and that wedding symbolism is dominant, some render this phrase 'pure bride' (Goodspeed, RSV; Furnish 484) or 'faithful bride' (Weymouth). But the pleonasm is not stark, for on occasion παρθένος could denote an unmarried woman who was not a virgin.⁴¹ Clearly, παρθένον ἀγνήν emphasizes undefiled virginity. τῷ Χριστῷ is emphatic by position and should not be construed with ἡρμοσάμην (so RSV, NEB, REB); the sense is '... to one husband ... I refer, of course, to Christ'." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 737–738.]

¹⁴² **Cor. 12:20.** φοβοῦμαι γὰρ μή πως ἐλθὼν οὐχ οἶους θέλω εὐρῶ ὑμᾶς κἀγὼ εὑρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἷον οὐ θέλετε· μή πως ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθειᾶ, καταλαλιά, ψιθυρισμοί, φυσιώσεις, ἀκαταστασία·

For I fear that when I come, I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish; I fear that there may perhaps be quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder.

¹⁵It is connected to a large complex of Greek words having to do with thinking and human facilities for thinking: νοέω, νοῦς, νόημα, ἀνόητος, ἄνοια, δυσνόητος, διάνοια, διανόημα, ἔννοια, εὐνοέω, εὐνοια, κατανοέω, μετανοέω, μετάνοια, ἀμετανόητος, προνοέω, πρόνοια, ὑπονοέω, ὑπόνοια, νοουθετέω, νοουθεσία. [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:948.]

This listing is only of those words with some connection to early Christianity. A secular Greek listing is much longer, as is reflected in Liddell, H.G. *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996, and Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones, and Roderick McKenzie. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. Additionally, other relat-

ive peoples in particular, this was located not in the head, but in the heart anatomically.

The comparison to the deception of Eve in the garden is made for clarification: ὡς ὁ ὄφις ἐξηπάτησεν Εὐάν ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ αὐτοῦ, *like the serpent deceived Eve by its cunning*.¹⁶ Satan as the snake misled Eve by trickery. ed word groups existed as well, cf. Louw-Nida, *Greek Lexicon*, topics. 26.1 - 26.16.

The core verb νοέω and noun νοῦς even in very early pre-classical Greek denoted more than rational thinking based on sensory perception of reality. Abstract thinking was a big part of the foundational idea behind this group of words. "In the LXX νοέω is mostly used for ἦ, hi, hitp (with συνήμι and γινώσκω), e.g., 2 Βασ. 12:19; Prv. 20:24; 1:2, 6; Jer. 2:10; 23:20, or for ἦψ hi (with συνήμι), Prv. 1:3; Jer. 10:21; 20:11 etc.⁴ That νοέω and συνήμι are felt to be synon. may be seen from their par. use in Prv. 28:5 (not 2 Βασ. 12:19) and the vl. Job 15:9; Prv. 28:5; 29:7 (cf. also Da. 12:10 Θ; ψ 49:22 Ἀλλ.). *In the LXX the organ of νοεῖν is often the καρδιά in acc. with OT thinking* (→ III, 609 f.), cf. 1 Βασ. 4:20; Job 33:23; Prv. 16:23; Is. 32:6; 44:18; 47:7.⁵" [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:949.]

¹⁶"With the expression 'just as the snake deceived Eve by his cunning' Paul states a precedent that informs his fear. It would appear that he intends his hearers to recognize three parallels between the record of Eve's temptation by the snake in Gen. 3:1–13 and the situation he himself faced in Corinth.

"First, just as Eve was deceived in her thinking (Gen. 3:1–6) and so lost her innocence (Gen. 3:7),⁵⁴ so too the Corinthian church was at risk of being deluded in thought (φθαρῆ τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν) and so losing her virginity (ἀπὸ ... τῆς ἀγνότητος). In response to God's inquiry, 'What is this you have done?' Eve declares, 'The snake deceived me (ὁ ὄφις ἠπάτησέν με, LXX)' (Gen. 3:13). As in 1 Tim. 2:14, Paul uses the compound verb ἐξηπάτησεν, where the prefix ἐκ- points to 'successful deceit' (Moulton and Howard 311) or, more probably, to complete deception. With the movement from παρθένον ἀγνήν (v. 1) to ἀγιότητος (v. 2) Paul is clearly developing the betrothal-marriage analogy further (see above), but he may also be introducing a new analogy, that of 'the church as in some sense the last Eve, related to Christ in the same way that Eve was related to Adam—derived from him, existing for his sake, and for him only.'⁵⁵ It is sometimes alleged (e.g., by Batey, "Image" 177) that Paul is alluding here to the rabbinical tradition that the serpent seduced Eve to sexual immorality.⁵⁶ Now although the verb ἐξαπατάω, 'I turn (someone) away from the right road by deceit' (Zerwick, Analysis 409), could be rendered 'entice' or 'lure,' it need not refer to sexual seduction. For Paul, the means of the deceit was not lust, but cunning (ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ αὐτοῦ), and the word νοήματα, not σώματα, is the subject of φθαρῆ. We need not go outside Genesis 3 to explain the expression ὁ ὄφις ἐξηπάτησεν Εὐάν.

"Second, just as Eve's deception was carried out by the snake (= the devil),⁵⁷ so too the cause of any enticement toward disloyalty among the Corinthians was Satan. Although no agent is expressed with the passive φθαρῆ (τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν), the parallelism in the verse and the explicit reference to ὁ Σατανᾶς in v. 14 indicate that we should take Satan to be the one who corrupts the thinking of the Corinthians. If Satan, as 'the god of this (present) age,' is capable of blinding the minds (νοήματα) of unbelievers (4:4), it is not unjustified to assume that he could also pervert the thoughts of believers. Moreover, he has the ability to gain the advantage over believers by means of his stratagems (2:11) and to trick them by

The comparative ὡς, as, sets up this OT deception as the model being followed at Corinth. Those following the teachings of the outsiders are being misled exactly like Eve was by Satan. Clearly implicit is that Satan stands behind these outsider false teachers. Already in 4:4, Paul has asserted to the work of Satan the blinding of unbelievers to the Gospel. Additionally he is working through these outsider teachers to accomplish the same thing inside the Christian community at Corinth.

Here τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν focuses on decisions made out of being led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ: φθαρῆ τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀπλότητος καὶ τῆς ἀγνότητος τῆς εἰς τὸν Χριστόν. The core verb φθεῖρω here denotes the idea of corruption and destruction contextually of the inner life¹⁷ through making false de-

masquerading as an angel of light (11:14). In each case the sphere of his most virulent attack is the mind. But in the case of the Corinthians it was through his deputies that Satan would accomplish his purposes of deceiving the mind (cf. 11:13–15).

“Third, just as Satan operated by craftiness (ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ αὐτοῦ)⁵⁸ in beguiling Eve, so too his agents were using cunning in beguiling the Corinthians. Genesis 3 begins with the assertion that ‘the snake was more crafty (LXX, φρονιμώτατος, ‘most shrewd’) than all the wild animals the LORD God had made’ (Gen. 3:1). This craftiness was evident in his casting doubt on God’s intent (Gen. 3:1, ‘Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any of the trees in the garden?’⁵⁹), on God’s threat (Gen. 3:4, ‘You will not ‘certainly die’ [cf. 2:17]), and on God’s motivation (Gen. 3:5, ‘For God knows that when you eat of it [the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, 2:17], your eyes will be opened, and you will become like God, knowing good and evil’). As for the cunning of the interlopers from Judea, they had mastered the art of masquerading already perfected by their principal (11:13–15, where μετασχηματίζω, ‘masquerade,’ ‘disguise,’ occurs three times), and, like the Edenic snake, they would deceive by means of cunning words (cf. Rom. 16:18). ‘Paul sees words—erroneous in content but smooth of delivery—as Satan’s instrument to seduce the church from her loyalty to Christ’ (Barnett 502).”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary 223 (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 740–742.]

17. to cause deterioration of the inner life, ruin, corrupt

a. *ruin or corrupt τινά someone*, by erroneous teaching or immorality, so perh. **2 Cor 7:2** (s. 1a above). ἥτις ἐφθείρεν τὴν γῆν (=τοὺς ἀνθρώπους; see γῆ 2) ἐν τῇ πορνείᾳ αὐτῆς **Rv 19:2**. Pass. (UPZ 20, 17 [163 B.C.]; TestJud 19:4 ἐν ἁμαρτίαις φθαρεῖς) τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν φθειρόμενον κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας **Eph 4:22**. Cp. Hs 8, 9, 3 v.1.

b. *ruin or corrupt τι someth.* by misleading tactics πίστιν θεοῦ ἐν κακῇ διδασκαλίᾳ **I Eph 16:2**. The ἐκκλησία (opp. τηρεῖν) **2 Cl 14:3ab**. On φθείρουσιν ἥθη χρηστὰ ὁμιλίας κακαῖ **1 Cor 15:33** cp. ἥθος. Pass. be led astray (Jos., Bell. 4, 510) μήπως φθαρῆ τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀπλότητος (νόημα 2) **2 Cor 11:3** (φθ. of the seduction of a virgin, s. 1c above).

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early*

decisions based on the misinformation gained from the false teachers. The impact of these false decisions is to move their target ἀπὸ τῆς ἀπλότητος καὶ τῆς ἀγνότητος εἰς τὸν Χριστόν, away from sincere and pure devotion to Christ. The central idea of ἀπλότης is of something simple and uncomplicated by corrupting influences. Closely related is ἀγνότης with the meaning of pure and undiluted. It is important to note that these two traits are expressed in concrete actions. The deception of the false teachers then was having clear impact on the morality and spiritual living of those infected with it. This anticipates the later apprehension of Paul in 12:20 discovering upon arriving in the city the presence of μήπως ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθεΐαι, καταλαλαί, ψιθυρισμοί, φυσιώσεις, ἀκαταστασίαι, quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. The apostle had some specific misdeeds in mind with his assertion. Individuals engaging in such actions have no claim to being genuinely Christian.

The second justifying sentence (γὰρ) in v. 4 that follows the first one in vv. 2-3 rather sarcastically asserts the gullibility of some of the Corinthians to fall for these outsider teachers: εἰ μὲν γὰρ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν κηρύσσει ὃν οὐκ ἐκηρύξαμεν, ἢ πνεῦμα ἕτερον λαμβάνετε ὃ οὐκ ἐλάβετε, ἢ εὐαγγέλιον ἕτερον ὃ οὐκ ἐδέξασθε, καλῶς ἀνέχεσθε, for since indeed the one coming preaches a Jesus whom we did not preach, or you receive a totally different spirit which you had not received, or you welcome a completely different gospel which you had not received, you are yielding yourselves quite readily (to deception).

γὰρ
εἰ μὲν ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν κηρύσσει
ὃν οὐκ ἐκηρύξαμεν,
ἢ
πνεῦμα ἕτερον λαμβάνετε
ὃ οὐκ ἐλάβετε,
ἢ
εὐαγγέλιον ἕτερον -----
ὃ οὐκ ἐδέξασθε,
καλῶς
ἀνέχεσθε.

All of these accusations define the seduction of these false teachers who have come into the Christian community with their corrupting message. Three charges are leveled against them in the first class conditional protasis introduced by εἰ (see above diagram). The first and third have to do with the Gospel message, while the middle one centers on reception of the Holy Spirit in salvation.

First, the false teacher, ὁ ἐρχόμενος, reference follows the singular reference as in the earlier pattern in τις (10:7); φησὶν (10:10); ὁ τοιοῦτος (10:11); ἐκεῖνός (10:18).

Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1054.]

¹⁸The one difference is the participle ὁ ἐρχόμενος implies here coming into the church from the outside.¹⁹ His orally preached message (κηρύσσει) is of ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν, another Jesus, who is different from the Jesus preached by Paul and his associates earlier to the Corinthians (ὃν οὐκ ἐκηρύξαμεν).²⁰ No details are provided about the profile of this alternative Jesus being advocated, beyond the fact the picture did not match the real Jesus that Paul preached.

The second and third charges reverse the angle to stress what the Corinthians have accepted as opposed to what was presented to them (κηρύσσει / ἐκηρύξαμεν). A contrast between now and back then is highlighted with λαμβάνετε (present tense) and ἐλάβετε as well as ἐδέξασθε (both aorist verbs).²¹

¹⁸“In other contexts ὁ ἐρχόμενος (‘he who comes’) is a title of the Messiah,⁶¹ but here it means ‘your visitor’⁶² (anaphoric article) or ‘some interloper’⁶³ (generic article), the implication being that this person comes from outside Corinth. He comes on the scene at Corinth as an intruder.⁶⁴ Simply because the singular is used we need not assume that an isolated individual is in mind. He may be the ringleader or spokesman of the visitors, or the reference may be generic.⁶⁵ This latter possibility is to be preferred in light of the use of ὁ τοιοῦτος (10:11), φησὶν (10:10), and τις (10:7, 12; 11:20, five times) in the immediate context, alongside the plurals οἱ τοιοῦτοι (11:13), πολλοί (11:18), and εἰσὶν (11:22–23, four times). This substantival participle ὁ ἐρχόμενος is equivalent to a substantival adjective with a generic sense (ὁ δίκαιος = οἱ δίκαιοι).⁶⁶” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 742–743.]

¹⁹Paul does draw some distinction between his opponents inside the church at Corinth (mostly in chapter ten) and the outsider false teachers (mostly in chapters eleven and twelve). But due to the attraction of the Corinthian opponents to the false message of the outsiders, the boundary lines are not drawn sharply since a common message links the two groups together. The corrupted message is far more important for Paul than the personalities involved. The sharpest distinction is that Paul adamantly contends the outsiders are false Christians and servants of Satan, but he leaves the door somewhat open regarding the spiritual condition of the insider opponents within the Corinthian church. Whether they are real or not solely depends on the fruit they produce. At the time of the writing of this letter this was an open question for Paul.

²⁰“In the conditional sentence εἰ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ... κηρύσσει ..., καλῶς ἀνέχεσθε, the protasis states a present reality (‘if, as is the case’), not some hypothetical possibility (‘if it were the case that’ = εἰ ... ἐκήρυσεν) (as Munck 176–78). The condition is assumed to be true (cf. Zerwick §311); a certain type of proclamation was actually being made at Corinth at the time Paul was writing (note κηρύσσει, not ἐκήρυξεν).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 742.]

²¹“Also, we may assume that λαμβάνετε (‘you receive’) is to be supplied in the third phrase on the basis of the second, and that the three aorists in the ἄλλον/ἕτερον ... ὃν/ὃ οὐκ construction, viz. ἐκηρύξαμεν, ἐλάβετε, ἐδέξασθε, refer to the time of the

The different Jesus, ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν, is defined as εὐαγγέλιον ἕτερον, another totally different gospel. Less clear is the intended reference in πνεῦμα ἕτερον, a totally different spirit. What is obvious, however, is that this spirit is not the Spirit of Christ or of God. Whether or not Paul is alluding to demons is not certain, but seems likely, since its promoter is labeled later a servant of the devil (vv. 14–15).

Thus the apostle bundles together into a single package: Jesus-Holy Spirit-Gospel. This he and his associates first preached to the Corinthians (ἐκηρύξαμεν) and in their conversion the Corinthians accepted (ἐλάβετε / ἐδέξασθε). But now a very different message is being presented to them by these outsiders and they seem to be inclined to accept it in place of the apostolic Gospel first presented by Paul.²² It is idle speculation

Corinthians’ conversion (1:19). ἐδέξασθε is probably a synonym for ἐλάβετε, with the distinction being not in the verb used but in what is received, the gift of the Spirit or the teaching contained in the gospel. Similarly, ἕτερος should here be probably considered synonymous with ἄλλος,⁶⁷ used for stylistic variety,⁶⁸ although one would not want to disallow a distinction between the two words in Gal. 1:6–7.⁶⁹ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 743.]

²²“Jesus-Spirit-gospel is an apt summary of Christianity (cf. Windisch 327), and what Paul himself signified by these key terms is unambiguous. His κήρυγμα centered on Jesus Christ crucified and risen,⁷⁵ on the gift of the Spirit of God or of Christ as the fulfillment of promise and the pledge of inheritance,⁷⁶ and on the good news of forgiveness and reconciliation in Christ as the instrument of God’s saving power.⁷⁷ He knew that these three elements stood or fell together, for ‘another Jesus’ would inevitably mean both a ‘different Spirit,’ since the Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:9; Phil. 1:19), and a ‘different gospel,’ since the gospel is about Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 2:12; 9:13; 10:14). His opponents apparently used the same three terms, but their content was so different that the message they were proclaiming amounted to a perversion of the gospel, indeed a false gospel, no gospel at all. The threefold antithesis expressed by ἄλλον/ἕτερον ... ὃν/ὃ οὐκ underlines this radical divergence between the two messages to which the Corinthians had been exposed.

“But it is a hazardous—indeed, an impossible—undertaking to try to specify the precise content of the opponents’ message. Proposals are not in short supply⁷⁸ and are comparably divergent. To illustrate this latter point from two recent commentators, according to Barnett (505) Paul uses the name ‘Jesus’ (cf. ‘Christ’ in vv. 2–3) because his ‘historic Jewish persona was being emphasized at the expense of his risen Lordship.’ Thrall, on the other hand, believes that the ‘another Jesus’ proclaimed by Paul’s rivals was ‘a splendid figure of post-resurrection glory by contrast with the Pauline gospel of the crucified Christ’ (940; cf. 669–70).⁷⁹ Certainly Paul’s concern is not with the details of the ‘different gospel’ being propounded—he offers no rebuttal—but with the Corinthians’ response to the rival message and to his own (‘you receive ... you received ... [you receive] ... you embraced’) and with the consequences of a total Corinthian capitulation to this alien gospel (11:3).⁸⁰ It was not merely the presence of rivals at Corinth that

to attempt to detail this alternative message since the apostle provides no details of it himself.²³ What was important was the apostolic Gospel first preached to them and this exclusive message bringing salvation and authentic relationship to Christ. Adoption of the alternative message signaled no relationship to Christ and a disastrous end to their life in eternity. Thus Paul appeals to them to at least listen to his claims to authenticity. This they are doing for these false teachers: *καλῶς ἀνέχεσθε*. As their founder he deserves equal time.

aroused Paul's anger, the fact that they had invaded foreign territory (10:13–16), but their arrival in Corinth as purported agents of Christ (11:13, 23) declaring a gospel that he knew to be not only different in emphasis from the gospel that he had preached and to which the Corinthians had responded, but so different in content that it could be described only as a 'totally other,' that is, a false gospel (cf. Gal. 1:6–7)."

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 744–745.]

²³The most flimsy excuse for exegesis as useless speculation is found in Thrall, ICC, p. 667:

The obvious item of evidence for the Judaizing theory is the parallel with Gal 1:6, where the apostle marvels that his readers have so quickly transferred their loyalties *εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον*. For Windisch, Bruce, and others this would be a message which devalued grace, and presented the appropriation of Christ's salvific work as dependent upon human meritorious achievement.⁸⁷ The 'other Jesus' is then seen as a more 'Jewish' character,⁸⁸ believed to require the imposition of obedience to the law.⁸⁹ The 'alternative Spirit' might be identified with the 'spirit of bondage' of Rom 8:15.⁹⁰ More recent interpretation of the situation in Galatia sees the Judaizers' promotion of circumcision as differently motivated. Circumcision would ensure full membership of God's covenant people. It would symbolise acceptance of the obligation to maintain the distinctiveness of the chosen nation.⁹¹ Neither interpretation of Galatians, however, would appear transferable to the situation in Corinth. There is no reference in 2 Cor 10–13 either specifically to circumcision or to the law in general.⁹² Lack of reference to the law might also tell, as additional evidence, against a variation of the Judaizing theory proposed by Oostendorp. He suggests that the rival missionaries, who have links with the Palestinian church, claim that there is soon to be a fulfilment of God's promise to establish his kingdom in Zion. They call their message *εὐαγγέλιον*, on the basis of Isa 52:7–8, where the participle of the cognate verb (*εὐαγγελιζόμενος*) describes the activity of the messenger who proclaims this imminent fulfilment.⁹³ For them, Jesus is the Christ who has 'introduced a new era in which the primacy of Israel over the Gentiles' is to be made evident: see 11:18, 20, 22.⁹⁴ The 'other Spirit' refers to a gift of the Spirit which will result in the recipients' observance of the law of Moses, as in Ezek 36:26–27.⁹⁵ But nothing can be deduced from the occurrence here of the word *εὐαγγέλιον*, which is Paul's frequent term for his own apostolic message (1 Cor 4:15; 9:12, 14, 18, 23; 15:1; 2 Cor 2:12; 4:3–4; 8:18; 9:13), and had the opposition been concerned with the primacy of Israel he would surely have broached the subject directly.

[Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 667–668.]

The break point into the next section is somewhat vague and is reflected in alternative paragraphing by different translations. Either v. 5 starts the new unit or verse 7. At minimal, verses five and six function to transition from the theme of vv. 1-4 into vv. 7-11 with a new focus. The *γὰρ* conjunction in v. 5 makes it clear that this unit stands as an additional justification (cf. v. 2 used twice) for his appeal to the Corinthians to give him their attention in explaining the basis for his ministry (v. 1).

As the third justifying expression (*γὰρ*) for the plea in v. 1, verses five and six put forth the assertion of Paul's confidence in himself as at least equal to these false teachers whom he labels as 'super apostles': 5 *Λογίζομαι γὰρ μηδὲν ὑστερηκέναί τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων*. 6 *εἰ δὲ καὶ ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλ' οὐ τῇ γνώσει, ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ φανερώσαντες ἐν πᾶσιν εἰς ὑμᾶς*. 5 I think that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles. 6 I may be untrained in speech, but not in knowledge; certainly in every way and in all things we have made this evident to you.

	11.5	γὰρ	
224		Λογίζομαι	μηδὲν ὑστερηκέναί τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων.
	11.6	δὲ	εἰ καὶ ἰδιώτης (εἰμί) τῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλ' τῇ γνώσει οὐ... (εἰμί),
225		ἀλλ' (ἔσμεν) φανερώσαντες	ἐν παντὶ ἐν πᾶσιν εἰς ὑμᾶς.

Paul does a lot of 'calculating' (*λογίζομαι*) in Second Corinthians with eight uses of this verb out of 40 total uses inside the NT. Here he adds up the pluses and minuses of his ministry and concludes that it is, at minimum, equal to that of *τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων*, the *super apostles*. His opponents at Corinth were concluding that his ministry was inferior to that of these outsiders. But their 'math' wasn't correct.

The initial declaration is short and to the point: *Λογίζομαι γὰρ μηδὲν ὑστερηκέναί τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων*. For I calculate that I am in no way inferior to these super apostles. Thus the Corinthians should allow the apostle to do some calculation using 'proper math.' Two interesting expressions play pivotal roles in the precise sense of this statement (# 224 in diagram). The perfect tense infinitive *ὑστερηκέναί* as the direct object in indirect discourse of *λογίζομαι* is from *ὑστερέω* with the sense of being deficient of something. In regard to

what the super apostles (τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων) poses Paul asserts, “I lack nothing” (μηδὲν ὑστερηκένα). The use of the perfect tense form here is untranslatable into English easily. Paul asserts that no deficiency exist that would cause inferiority to be present in his life.

What does Paul mean by the label τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων? Some commentators, going back to Chrysostom among the church fathers, see the label as respectful, and thus referencing Peter, James, and John.²⁴ But the sarcastic tone clearly in the larger context argues against such a positive understanding.²⁵

²⁴“In favour of this interpretation there are the following arguments:

“(a) If Paul is speaking seriously and using ὑπερλίαν as a term of respect, to whom else could the appellation refer? Chrysostom supposes that he is alluding to Peter, James and John as the chief apostles.¹¹³ But even if the phrase is intended ironically (as the majority of commentators suppose), such an allusion would still be conceivable. Barrett draws attention to the ironical reference to the ‘pillar’ apostles in Gal 2:6, 9.¹¹⁴

“(b) Paul does not claim superiority to these people, but claims only that he is not inferior to them. Surely he would not speak like this were he comparing himself with those opponents in Corinth whom he castigates (vv. 13–15) as Satan’s servants and the like.¹¹⁵

“(c) Paul’s rough and bitter treatment of the visiting missionaries, together with the fact that they had gained an unopposed hearing in Corinth, demands the supposition that they were able, or claimed to be able, to rely on some weighty authority in the background. The Jerusalem apostles would best fit this requirement.¹¹⁶

“(d) The letters of recommendation brought by the opponents (3:1) show them to be an official delegation from some other church, since documents of a less official kind would not have occasioned the extensive exposition of the apostolic office found in chap. 3. This points to the Jerusalem church as the origin of the letters, and makes it natural to identify the ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι with the Jerusalem apostles.¹¹⁷

“(e) Barrett sees a latent allusion to the Jerusalem ‘pillars’ in 10:12–18, where it is a question of who has apostolic rights in Corinth. This recalls the division of labour mentioned in Gal 2:7–10, and Paul appears to blame the rival missionaries for failing to observe this agreement made between himself, on the one hand, and James, Cephas and John on the other. If, then, he has the Jerusalem concordat in mind, it is likely that it is the leaders of the mother church whom here he calls ‘super-apostles’.

“(f) Barrett further observes that the two allusions to the ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι are followed almost immediately by Paul’s defence of his refusal to accept financial support from the Corinthians (11:7–11; 12:13–15). Now we find this same conjunction of themes (defence of apostleship and the matter of apostolic maintenance) in 1 Cor 9, and there a comparison is drawn with Cephas, the Lord’s brothers, and the other (Jerusalem) apostles. This parallelism suggests that the ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι were ‘high officials’ in Jerusalem, as are those with whom Paul compares himself in 1 Cor 9.¹¹⁸”

[Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 671–672.]

²⁵ “Each of these arguments has in turn been countered as follows:

“(a) Not only is there general agreement that the appellation

Very likely they represent the kind of deceptive claim to apostolic authorization described by Paul as happening at Antioch in Gal. 2:11–14, πρὸ τοῦ γὰρ ἐλθεῖν τινὰς ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου, *before some came from James* (v. 12a). These same kind of people then weaseled their way into the churches of Galatia and caused havoc: διὰ δὲ

is ironical, but there is substantial agreement also that the irony is too strong to allow for an allusion to the Jerusalem apostles. It is described as sarcastic, contemptuous,¹¹⁹ and derisory.¹²⁰

“(b) Paul’s claim to simple equality with the ‘super-apostles’ can be interpreted differently. If the claim is seen as ironical, what he may be insisting on in reality is his absolute superiority to these people, who must, in consequence, be identified with his opponents in Corinth.¹²¹ The difficulty with this explanation, however, is that it seems not to fit very well with v. 6a, where Paul does concede that he is ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ in apparent contrast to the skills of the ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι.¹²² Is his claim, then, an aspect of his boasting ‘as a fool’ (and so not to be regarded as a serious statement)?¹²³ But in the ‘foolish boasting’ that is introduced in vv. 16–21 and begins in earnest in v. 22 it is not that Paul is making false claims about himself but rather that it is foolish to parade these claims, however true they may be. In the present verse, then, the folly would lie not in the content of the assertion of equality but in the fact of its being made. Does this mean, then, that the ‘super-apostles’ are, after all, the Jerusalem apostles? This conclusion is not absolutely necessary. Bultmann suggests that, in order to open his readers’ eyes to the true nature of the situation, Paul has to do two apparently contradictory things: to demonstrate the real character of his opponents (hence his castigation of them in vv. 13–15), and also to show that he himself has powers equal to theirs (as he indicates in the present verse).¹²⁴

“(c) We do not need to postulate the backing of Jerusalem to explain the success of the rival missionaries in Corinth. They could well have made their mark there on the basis of their own impressive manner, eloquence, wonder-working, and the like.

“(d) As we have noted in our exegesis of 3:1, there is no parallel to the kind of official document presupposed as the basis of the fourth argument above for the identification of the ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι with the Jerusalem apostles, nor would Paul have designated such an hypothetical communication as a συστατικὴ ἐπιστολή.¹²⁵ We have suggested further that it was Jewish criticism in Corinth, primarily, that evoked his exposition of the apostolic office in chap. 3.¹²⁶

“(e) We have agreed that in 10:12–18 there is some indirect allusion to the Jerusalem agreement of Gal 2:7–10,¹²⁷ and have allowed that the rival missionaries may have been operating in accordance with their own understanding of it.¹²⁸ This still does not require, however, the identification of the ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι with the Jerusalem apostles, although it might suggest such an interpretation, other things being equal.

“(f) The same might be said in respect of the parallelism in the matter of the connection between apostolic maintenance and defence of apostolic authority. Whilst the parallelism might suggest that the rival missionaries have some connection with the Petrine mission, this does not in itself demand that Paul’s phrase in the present verse should refer to Cephas and the other Jerusalem apostles.”

[Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 672–673.]

τοὺς παρεισάκτους ψευδαδέλφους, οἵτινες παρεισήλθον κατασκοπήσαι τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἡμῶν ἣν ἔχομεν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα ἡμᾶς καταδουλώσουσιν, **but because of the sneaking in of these false brothers to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ in order to re-enslave us** (Gal. 2:4). They first made their appearance at the Jerusalem conference, described both in Gal. 2:1-10 and Acts 15, and then later in the province of Galatia. Luke in Acts 15:1-2, 5 as Pharisees who seemingly converted to Christianity: **τινες τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αἰρέσεως τῶν Φαρισαίων πεπιστευκότες, some believers from the sect of the Pharisees.**

But those outsiders now in Corinth are not the Jerusalem apostles, but rather individuals perhaps claiming to represent them although this is not entirely clear.²⁶ The uncertainty of the identity of these outsider indi-

²⁶ “In favour of this interpretation it might be said:

“(a) The term ὑπερλίαν constitutes irony of a fairly powerful kind, and is more appropriate to the direct contest with the opposition in Corinth than to an allusion to higher authorities in the background somewhere else. It relates to the rival missionaries’ high opinion of themselves and their exaggerated claims.¹²⁹ Betz notes that similar terms are used in philosophical polemic. The platonic Socrates, for example, ironically regards sophists as πάσσοφοι.¹³⁰

“(b) In v. 6 Paul concedes that the ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι are superior to him in eloquence. As Furnish observes, this concession would not have been necessary if it is the Jerusalem apostles whom he has in mind: ‘They could not have qualified as more polished orators than he—certainly not in Greek (note Acts 4:13).’¹³¹

“(c) The claim of v. 5 and the actual phrase ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι are repeated in 12:11. Here the reference is clearly to the contest with the rival missionaries present in Corinth which begins in 11:21 and continues until 12:11, and in which it is Paul’s equality with these people that he is arguing for, not his equality with the Jerusalem apostles.¹³² The following verse (12:12), moreover, clearly refers to the apostolic signs which he has performed in Corinth. Consequently, it is in Corinth that the ‘super-apostles’ have put Paul in the shade through their own activity: their identification with the Jerusalem apostles is thus precluded.¹³³

“Again, there might be something to be said in reply, at least in respect of the first two arguments above:

“(a) It may be that the degree of irony felt to be inherent in the term ὑπερλίαν is to some extent a matter of subjective judgement.

“(b) Käsemann finds it possible to suppose that the people to whom Paul refers in v. 5 are different from those with whom he is by implication comparing himself in v. 6. In v. 5 there is a reference to the Jerusalem apostles, whilst in v. 6, as in v. 4, he has, the rival missionaries in view. Thus, we cannot use what is said in v. 6 to identify the ‘super-apostles’ of v. 5. There is a dialectical quality, Käsemann claims, in the polemic of chaps. 10–13. Paul does not respect the intruding missionaries, and attacks them harshly, yet at the same time he is restrained by the thought of the authorities standing behind them, with whom he does not wish to come into conflict, and with whom, also, he wishes simply to assert his equality. He refers to the former group in 11:4, 6, and to the latter in 11:5 and 12:11.^{134*}

[Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 674.]

viduals now at Corinth urges caution about drawing hard conclusions. The most natural meaning of τῶν ὑπερλίαν²⁷ ἀποστόλων (both in 11:5 and 12:11) is that it refers to the outsider individuals themselves, not someone they claim to represent back in Jerusalem, contrary to Thrall’s conclusion (“*iii Conclusion*,” ICC, 674). The tone of sarcasm most not be overlooked, as well as the secondary meaning of ἀπόστολος as missionary. This would allow the understanding the τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων as **these supposedly super great missionaries.** The validating marks of a genuine missionary are clearly what Paul zeros in on with the statements that follow through chapter twelve. Much of the modern commentary about this phrase focuses on the issue of valid apostolic authority. But Paul is much more concerned about a valid message of the true Gospel being accepted by the Corinthians. Who preached it was very secondary. His contention is that this authentic message came from him and his associates and not from these outsiders. Their experiences reflected the hand of God on their missionary preaching, something these outsiders could not claim.

Although at a superficial level it seems like he is comparing himself to these outsiders, in reality what he lists off as pluses were not a part of their self calculation. He insists on proper calculation rather than phony ones. In this he cuts directly cross grain to the Greek and Roman cultural profile of a successful leader. Plus he asserts what in religious circles would be a negative to be a positive trait of affirming legitimacy. In a nutshell the apostle affirms God’s standards of verification that deny the legitimacy of human standards. In one sense, it represents an application of his earlier assertions of the superiority of God’s wisdom to that of Greeks and Jews (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18-25). The Corinthian opponents favored Greek wisdom and the outsiders evidently favored Jewish wisdom. Paul condemns both.

In the follow up to the initial assertion in v. 5 (#224), the apostle asserts the bottom line criterium in v. 6 (#225) that becomes basic to what follows in vv. 7-11, and beyond.

The highly elliptical concessive protasis introduced by εἰ καὶ, **even if**, assumes the existent of two things one negative and one positive: **ιδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλ’ οὐ τῇ γνώσει, an idiot²⁸ in speech but not in knowledge.** It is pre-

²⁷The adverb ὑπερλίαν, used adjectivally here, comes as a compound from ὑπέρ + λίαν, beyond great, and is only found in this twice occurring phrase in Second Corinthians inside the NT. The impact of modifying ἀποστόλων is to create the idea of someone beyond the level of just apostolic greatness. Few commentators seem to catch this nuanced meaning of τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων.

²⁸“Originally, an ιδιώτης was a person whose interests and concerns were restricted to his own affairs (τὰ ἴδια) and who took no active part in public life.⁹⁸ Then it came to be applied to someone without formal rank (such as a private as opposed to an

sented in a reversed angle admitting deficiencies in rhetorical skills but affirming full competency in understanding of spiritual things.

The Greek sophist tendency toward τῷ λόγῳ is reflected here with the sense of eloquent presentation of ideas as the most important trait of the successful leader. The content of the ideas was of little significance in this approach. The Corinthian opponents of Paul had bought into this mind-set as is reflected in their criticism of Paul's speaking skills being contemptible, ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος (cf. 10:10). On the other hand, the outsiders evidently were eloquent in speaking and this caught the attention of the Corinthian opponents. Ironically, Paul's assertion of being fully knowledgeable τῇ γνώσει actually represents the typical Greek classical philosophical retort in criticizing the Sophists. Put another way, their condemnation of the Sophists was that all these people could do was dress up in fancy garb a lot of hot air with no substance. Quite insightfully Paul uses that same argument in responding to criticism leveled against him.

εἰ καὶ ἰδιώτης (εἰμί)
τῷ λόγῳ,
ἀλλ'
τῇ γνώσει
οὐ... (εἰμί),

The primary point, however, in the core assertion of this sentence comes with the elliptical ἀλλ' ἐν παντί φανερώσαντες ἐν πᾶσιν εἰς ὑμᾶς, **but in every way making this clear in all matters to you**. It wasn't so much that Paul's deep understanding existed, as it was that such was being made clear to the Corinthians in every conceivable way. Note the subtle shift from the singular "I" in the elliptical protasis -ης to the plural "we" in the apodosis -σαντες. In what really mattered, **spiritual understanding**, τῇ γνώσει, the apostle and his associates measured up thoroughly. Here they possessed abso-

officer, or a layman as opposed to a priest) or someone without specialized training (the amateur as opposed to the professional). But although technically a 'non-professional,' an ἰδιώτης could be knowledgeable in a particular field. The term 'does not rule out the individual's informal acquaintance with a subject or practice in it.'⁹⁹ So then, when Paul concedes that he is ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ (dative of respect) he is not denying that he has any knowledge of rhetoric. As Judge observes, there is no unambiguous evidence that Paul had mastered the arts of rhetoric through tertiary-level training under a recognized sophist, but even if he was not formally trained in rhetoric, he must have been familiar with the rhetorical fashions of his time and area, that is, the more florid 'Asiatic' type of rhetoric.¹⁰⁰ If, as we have suggested, ὁ λόγος in 10:10 refers to Paul's speaking ability, including adroitness in extempore speech, it is likely that τῷ λόγῳ has a similar reference, 'public speaking' (NJB), 'rhetoric' (Berkeley) or 'oratory' (Thrall 656).¹⁰¹ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 748–749.]

lutely no gaps or deficiencies: μηδὲν ὑστερηκέαι. And the Corinthians well knew this.

The dual ἐν παντί and ἐν πᾶσιν stresses the totality of clarity regarding the possession of deep spiritual understanding.²⁹ Thus from every possible angle Paul and his associates were not amateurs (ἰδιώτης) in spiritual understanding. The opponents has wrongly concluded this by the superficial judging of rhetorical skills. They should have been concerned about the substance of ideas, not the manner of communication (cf. v. 4). Even the heroic classical Greek philosophers knew this much.

Paul again reflects the top priority of spiritual ideas being in line with God's revelation of them. How eloquently they are presented is a human judgment, not a divine one. And presentation thus has little importance. As Paul asserted in 4:7-11, the messenger is but a clay jar. The message is the divine power that changes lives. And whether that powerful message comes through the messenger to the listeners depends not on the eloquence of the messenger but the holiness of living by the messenger. Modern Christianity could learn much from Paul!

10.2.3.3.2 Paul's independence, 11:7-11

7 Ἡ ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησα ἑμαυτὸν ταπεινῶν ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑψωθῆτε, ὅτι δωρεὰν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν; 8 ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας ἐσύλησα λαβὼν ὀψώνιον πρὸς τὴν ὑμῶν διακονίαν, 9 καὶ παρῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑστερηθεὶς οὐ κατενάρκησα οὐθενός· τὸ γὰρ ὑστέρημά μου προσανεπλήρωσαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, καὶ ἐν παντί ἀβαρῆ ἑμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα καὶ τηρήσω. 10 ἔστιν ἀλήθεια Χριστοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ ὅτι ἡ καύχησις αὕτη οὐ φραγήσεται εἰς ἐμὲ ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τῆς Ἀχαΐας. 11 διὰ τί; ὅτι οὐκ ἀγαπῶ ὑμᾶς; ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν.

7 Did I commit a sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I proclaimed God's good news to you free of charge? 8 I robbed other churches by accepting

²⁹“The prima facie tautology of ἐν παντί ... ἐν πᾶσιν¹¹⁵ might suggest that this is merely an emphatic way of saying ‘in every conceivable way’ (NAB¹), but the two phrases are separated by φανερώσαντες and should be distinguished, with ἐν παντί indicating means (‘in every way’) and ἐν πᾶσιν extent (‘in all circumstances’ or ‘in all matters’ [Young and Ford ²⁷²]). Some EVV, however, take (ἐν) πᾶσιν as masculine rather than neuter, which produces the meaning ‘among all men’ (RV, Montgomery),¹¹⁶ ‘before everyone’ (NJB), or ‘in the sight of all men’ (BAGD 852d), that is, openly not secretly. On our view (‘in every way and in all circumstances’), Paul is emphasizing the comprehensiveness of his demonstration in his dealings with the Corinthians that he was no layman with regard to true γνώσις, that he was very competent in understanding and communicating the divine truth that was enshrined in the gospel.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 750.]

11.7 Η
226 ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησα
ἐμαυτὸν ταπεινῶν
ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑψωθῆτε,
ὅτι δωρεὰν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν;

227 11.8 ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας ἐσύλησα
λαβὼν ὀψώνιον
πρὸς τὴν ὑμῶν διακονίαν,

11.9 καὶ
παρῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς
καὶ
ὑστερηθεῖς

228 οὐ κατενάρκησα οὐθενός·
γὰρ

229 τὸ ὑστέρημά μου προσανεπλήρωσαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ
ἐλθόντες
ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας,
καὶ
ἐν παντὶ
ἀβαρῆ

230 ἐμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα
καὶ

231 τηρήσω.

232 11.10 ἔστιν ἀλήθεια Χριστοῦ
ἐν ἐμοὶ
ὅτι ἡ καύχησις αὕτη οὐ φραγῆσεται
εἰς ἐμὲ
ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τῆς Ἀχαΐας.

11.11 διὰ τί

233 (ἐστίν);

234 (ἐστίν)
ὅτι οὐκ ἀγαπῶ ὑμᾶς;

235 ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν.

support from them in order to serve you. 9 And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for my needs were supplied by the friends who came from Macedonia. So I refrained and will continue to refrain from burdening you in any way. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boast of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. 11 And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

After making his appeal to the Corinthians to give him due consideration to explain himself in v. 1, the superior knowledge of Paul and his associates (v. 6) will now be demonstrated by recounting several aspects of ministry to the Gospel. The first of these comes from the unusual, but pragmatic angle: money.³⁰ While the norm

³⁰“Money matters have already been alluded to in this letter, in each case in a negative context. Paul was not in the habit of making profit from the word of God (2:17); he had ‘exploited’ no one (7:2; cf. 12:17–18, where the same verb, *πλεονεκτέω*, is used); and he had repudiated underhand and disgraceful ways (4:2). But some eighteen months earlier he had dealt explicitly and at some length with the issue of his financial relationship to the Corinthian community (1 Cor. 9:3–18). There he is at pains to defend himself—

for religious workers was to expect and receive funding from the people they ministered to (as laid out in 1 Cor. 9:3-18), the apostle refused to follow the expected pattern. In the earlier discussion in First Corinthians (9:3-18) the apostle had claimed both the right to receive support from the Corinthians (1 Cor. 9:4-12a, 13-14) and also the right to forgo that option if he so chose (1 Cor. 9:12b, 15-18).³¹ The non-Christian world of Paul outside both his apostolic authority (cf. 1 Cor. 9:1–2) and his financial conduct—against those who were in the process of investigating him or trying to examine him (1 Cor. 9:3; cf. 1 Cor. 4:3).¹ He establishes two basic principles—his right as an apostle to receive support from those who benefited from the spiritual seed he had sown (1 Cor. 9:4–12a, 13–14), and his right to forgo that support if there were practical or theological reasons for doing so (1 Cor. 9:12b, 15–18).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 751.]

³¹“The early Christians (= Christian messianic Jews) also shared the missionary impulse. Traveling evangelists were every-

of Judea lived under a system of patronage by which wealthy individuals financially supported others to do various jobs etc.³² For a worker to forgo such support

where present. Matt 10, Luke 10, and Mark 6 all contain instructions for such missionaries. The Acts of the Apostles presents us with a narrative of evangelistic outreach. Second John 10; 3 John 5–8, 10; Didache 11–12 also attest the itinerant Christian evangelist. Luke 10:9; Mark 6:12–13; Acts 6:8–10; 8:6–8; 14:8–18 link miracle and proclamation in this itinerant ministry. Paul himself was such a traveling missionary (Rom 15:18–32), as were his rivals in 2 Corinthians. Like pagans and non-messianic Jews, the early Christians also used certain dimensions of their public worship to evangelize (cf. 1 Cor 14:23–25). Christian Messianists also used the household as a means of evangelization, as texts such as Romans 16:23, Colossians 4:15, Philemon 1–2, and Acts 16 and 34 show. The implication of this evidence for our understanding of 2 Corinthians is that neither Paul nor his apostolic rivals in Corinth were singular figures in antiquity, but were typical of a large number of missionaries in the early church and also were Christian examples of a general cultural phenomenon in Greco-Roman and Jewish antiquity—the itinerant evangelist-missionary.

“In the case of both Paul (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; 12:12) and the visitors to Corinth (2 Cor 11:5, 13; 12:11), one of their self-designations was apostle. Again there is nothing distinctive about this in Christian circles. In early Christianity, apostle was the designation for a large circle without numerical limits (e.g., Rom 16:17; 2 Cor 11:13; 8:23; Phil 2:25, for the time of Paul; Rev 2:2; Didache 11.3–6, for just before and after AD 100). Some tried to set limits on the circle. Paul’s limit was temporal. According to 1 Cor 15:7–8, he was the last. A generation after Paul, Luke-Acts also tried to set a limit that was both numerical and temporal. According to Acts 1:21–22, the apostles were twelve in number and were made up of those who had been with Jesus from the baptism of John until Jesus’ ascension. Rev 2:2 and Didache 11.3–6 testify to the immediate ineffectiveness of such limits. There were many traveling missionaries/apostles in antiquity. Paul and his Corinthian rivals were different examples of the Christian variety.

“Given the diversity of early Christianity, it is not surprising that different types of apostles should exist. One obvious difference between Paul and the interlopers was that Paul worked where no one else had yet gone (Rom 15:20; 2 Cor 10:15–16), while the subsequent visitors to Corinth worked where churches had already been established (cf. similar apostles in Didache 11). Another difference, as will be seen, is that Paul did not accept money from the Corinthians for his ministry, while the visitors did (2 Cor 12:11–13). A more difficult difference to clarify is theological. Yet Paul felt it was so great that he called the interlopers preachers of another gospel (11:4). They were, he believed, false apostles (11:13). This difference can only be clarified as one reads through 2 Corinthians. The one thing that can be said at this point is negative. Contra Georgi, the difference was not that the visitors were miracle workers while Paul was a suffering speaker of the word. In any case, these visiting apostles were being held up by one member of the Corinthian church and his sympathizers as the model for true apostleship. By comparison, Paul allegedly came off second best.”

[Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2002), 144–145.]

³²“We cannot be sure what prompted the Corinthians to criticize Paul’s decision not to accept their offer of support (1 Cor. 9:12b, 15). Perhaps they felt that his manual labor (Acts 18:3; 1

was a serious breach of obligation in the world of the Corinthians. Whether such lay behind the situation at Corinth is unclear. Also in the social background of first century Corinth was the widespread pattern of sophist philosophers to travel from city to city fleecing naive audiences of every bit of money they could get.³³ Some of

Cor. 4:12) was inconsistent with his apostolic status. Or they may have thought that he had breached the conventions of patronage according to which a visiting teacher would be fully supported by wealthy patrons.² Marshall argues that certain wealthy people that formed one of the Corinthian factions offered money to Paul as a gesture of friendship, not as the payment of wages, and that his rejection of this offer amounted to a declaration of ‘enmity,’³ so that thereafter ‘Paul was engaged in ritual enmity with certain Corinthians and their associates.’⁴ But one wonders whether in personal relationships, even against a first-century backdrop of the reciprocity of benefactions, there are not more than two possible options, friendship or enmity.⁵ Paul does not accuse any of the Corinthians of active enmity, but he does chide them for their lack of overt love for him, for their constricted affections (6:12–13; 12:15; cf. 8:7–8, 24). It was a matter of intensity of love. ‘If I love you the more, am I loved [by you] the less?’ (12:15). We should not equate the absence of strong love or of expressions of love with the presence of virulent animosity. As for himself, Paul is anxious to reassure the Corinthians of his paternal love for them (2:4; 6:6, 11–13; 7:3; 11:11; 12:15). Cf. Savage ⁹⁰.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 751–752.]

³³“The first item of background information that needs to be supplied concerns the visiting apostles with whom Paul had been disparagingly compared by the Corinthian challenger and his sympathizers. Whereas 1 Corinthians dealt with problems that were indigenous to the church in Corinth, in 2 Corinthians there is the additional matter of visiting apostles whose style was different enough from Paul’s that, in the minds of some, he came off second best. The charges against Paul’s apostolic authority, made because of his behavior in the intermediate visit, were not only that in person he was not a powerful apostle but also that by comparison to the interlopers he came off second best. This is why he faced the need to deal with the matter of the other apostles. Both Paul and his apostolic rivals are best understood in terms of the larger cultural context (Georgi, 1986, ch. 2).

“The period of the early empire witnessed a strong missionary impulse. The various philosophies and cults of the Greco-Roman world strove for converts. Philostratus’s *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* tells of a wandering neo-Pythagorean philosopher so engaged. Lucian’s *Alexander the False Prophet* speaks of a successful attempt to establish a new religious cult and oracle. Juvenal recounts the evangelistic techniques of the priests of Cybele (*Satires* 6.511–41). Apuleius speaks of wandering preachers from the Cynics and from the Oriental religions (*Metamorphoses* 8.24; 11.8). Strategies for evangelization involved both itinerant teaching/preaching/miracle working and the public display of certain dimensions of the cult.

“Non-messianic streams of Middle Judaism shared this missionary zeal. At Antioch the Jews made converts of a great number of Greeks perpetually (Josephus *War* 7.3.3 §45); at Damascus the wives of almost all were addicted to the Jewish religion (Josephus *War* 2.20.2 §561); at Alexandria Jews needed the emperor’s reminder to keep their own laws and not show contempt for the

this seems to stand behind Paul's simplistic preaching of the Gospel to the Corinthians as set forth in 1 Cor. 2:1-5, as well as in 9:1-18. He does mention in 1 Cor. 9:3-7 that the other apostles expected the churches they visited to provide support for both them and their families traveling with them. It could well be that the criticism of Paul's not claiming financial support came from the critics in the church who gladly financed the work of the outsider false teachers.³⁴

Paul in claiming the right to forgo the Corinthians financial support signals a different set of standards from the cultural based standards shaping the negative

observances of others (Josephus *Antiquities* 19.5.3 §290); in Rome Jewish men (Josephus *Antiquities* 18.3.5 §81) and women (Juvenal *Satires* 6.541-47) alike strove for converts. Jewish legend told not only of the last king of Babylon, Nabonidus, being evangelized through a healing and pardoning of sins by a Jewish exorcist of the exile (Prayer of Nabonidus 1.4), but also of the conversion of queen Helena of Adiabene and her son Izates by at least three different Jews (Josephus *Antiquities* 20.2.3-4 §142) and of the conversion of Aseneth, daughter of a prominent pagan family of Egypt (Joseph and Aseneth). With these witnesses one may compare Matt 23:15. The strategies for evangelization included not only itinerant miracle workers (Josephus *Antiquities* 8.2.5 §45-49; Acts 19:13-16), teachers (Juvenal *Satires* 6.542-47), and merchants (Josephus *Antiquities* 20.2.3-4 §142), but also the synagogue service (Philo *Moses* 2.17-25). In addition, patrons also established conventicles in their own homes and invited others to participate. This was true of Dionysian, Mithraic, Sarapian, and Agdistian worship as well as the philosophical schools. (Maier, 1991, 19-23, provides primary data.)

“Since the work of Schurer and Juster at the beginning of the twentieth century, most scholars have subscribed to the view that Jewish proselytizing reached a peak of intensity in the first century AD. In recent years there has been dissent (e.g., J. Munck, D. Rokeah, E. Will, C. Orrieux, Martin Goodman, Scott McKnight). James Carlton Paget (1996) surveys the evidence and arguments and concludes that some Jews proselytized, contra Goodman and McKnight. Shaye J. D. Cohen (1987, 57) draws a similar conclusion: ‘There is no evidence of an organized Jewish mission to the Gentiles, but individuals seem to have engaged in this activity on their own.’ Peder Borgen (1996, 45-69) makes the same point in its critique of McKnight.” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2002), 143-144.]

³⁴“A further complication was the apparent willingness of Paul's rivals to accept financial support from at least some of the Corinthians. These rivals were evidently among the οἱ πολλοί who were making a petty trade out of preaching (2:17). They were ‘devouring’ (κατεσθίει, 11:20) the Corinthians in the sense of eating them ‘out of house and home’ (Barrett 291). Also, in 12:13 Paul states emphatically (αὐτὸς ἐγὼ) that he himself (ἐγὼ) for his part (αὐτός) had not been a burden on them, implying that others had been. See also the commentary on 11:12. This receipt of support from a local Christian community was probably regarded by the intruders (and possibly by the Corinthians) as evidence of their apostolic legitimacy.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 752-753.]

feelings of the Corinthian critics. The Greco-Roman patronage system constrained the beneficiaries to not offend and challenge their benefactors. The apostle adamantly was not willing to give up his freedom to follow God's leadership in his preaching of the Gospel.³⁵

The internal flow of thought in vv. 7-11 can be traced from the above diagram. A rhetorical question is posed at the beginning (# 226; v. 7) raising the issue perhaps leveled at Paul by his critics: “Ἡ ἀμαρτίαν ἐποίησα ἑμαυτὸν ταπεινῶν ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑψωθῆτε, ὅτι δωρεὰν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν; *Did I commit a sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I proclaimed God's good news to you free of charge?* Verses 8-11 (#s 227-235) constitute his answer to this question.³⁶ Parts of his answer probably implies implications of different aspects of the criticism leveled at Paul by his Corinthian critics. The answer given in vv. 8-11 is a series of declarations of what he has done in the past, as well as what he intends to continue doing in the future. In essence, he has never been a financial burden to the Corinthians and never will. But this in no way reflects negatively on his love for them.

First let's take a closer look at the rhetorical question, and then at his response to it.

The core statement “Ἡ ἀμαρτίαν ἐποίησα ἑμαυτὸν, *Or, did I make myself a sin?*”³⁷ poses an interesting issue.

³⁵“As he resumes his ἀπολογία from 1 Cor. 9:3, Paul does not restate his right to support (although this is implied in 11:9) but focuses on his reasons for financial independence of the Corinthians — to preach the gospel to them ‘free of charge’ (11:7) and to avoid being a financial burden on them (11:9)—and his unwavering determination to remain independent (11:9-10, 12).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 753.]

³⁶Whether this is sufficiently defined rhetorically to be labeled *propositio* (v. 7) and *argumentatio* (vv. 8-11) is somewhat doubtful, despite some commentators' assertion:

According to the analysis proposed by Sundermann, v. 7 functions as the *propositio* governing the *refutatio* (vv. 1-15).¹⁸¹ This seems to fit well enough. The matter of Paul's refusal of maintenance and the Corinthians' reaction is the theme of vv. 8-11, and his explanation of his ‘sin’ in v. 12 is connected with the presence of the visiting missionaries and leads to his castigation of them (vv. 13-15).

The following section, vv. 8-11, is then defined as the *argumentatio*.¹⁸² Here Paul contests some accusation made against him.

[Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 681.]

³⁷“Apart from 5:21 and 11:7 Paul never uses the expression ‘commit (a) sin’ (ἀμαρτίαν ποιεῖω).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press,

Does it imply that Paul's critics were accusing him of sinful actions? Probably not since the stated means of 'sinning' is ταπεινῶν ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑψωθῆτε, *by humbling myself so that you might be elevated*. The instrumental of means use of the participle ταπεινῶν, *by humbling*, defines the 'vehicle' of his 'sinning' with irenic sarcasm. This is very similar to the statement in 12:13, τί γάρ ἐστιν ὃ ἠσώθητε ὑπὲρ τὰς λοιπὰς ἐκκλησίας, εἰ μὴ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν; *χαρίσασθέ μοι τὴν ἀδικίαν ταύτην. How have you been worse off than the other churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!* The sense is 'surely I didn't fail you by living without so that you might be lifted up to the grace of God.'³⁸ The Corinthians' 'being lifted up,' ὑμεῖς ὑψωθῆτε, alludes to preaching the Gospel to them in conversion, and Paul's humbling himself by refusing funds from them and thus living at a lower economic level.³⁹

The causal ὅτι clause defines the 'freebie' nature of Paul's preaching of the Gospel at Corinth: ὅτι δωρεάν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, *because freely the Good News of God I proclaimed to you*. Key here is the adverb δωρεάν with the meaning 'without charge.'⁴⁰

2005).]

³⁸"This self-humbling of Paul probably involved three elements — his renouncing of the apostolic right to support (cf. 1 Cor. 9:6, 11–12a, 14); his support of himself by manual labor (Acts 20:34; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8; 1 Cor. 4:12); and his contentment (cf. Phil. 4:11–12) with the Spartan lifestyle and scant means of the first-century artisan (cf. Hock 34–35). A philosopher or teacher of the Hellenistic age could gain his financial support in five ways:¹³ by begging; by charging fees for his instruction; by becoming a resident in a patron's household where he received regular wages for teaching the patron's sons; by accepting voluntary contributions from followers; and by his own physical labor. Apparently Paul's normal means of support was to engage in his trade of making tents and other leather goods (cf. σκηνοποιός, Acts 18:314) as he pursued his evangelistic and pastoral work, but on occasion he accepted aid from fellow believers (Phil. 4:15–16; 2 Cor. 11:8–9).¹⁵ The first three possible ways of gaining a livelihood were totally foreign to Paul's modus operandi.¹⁶" [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 754–755.

³⁹One must read the full sarcasm in these words that have hyperbolic meaning. Luke describes Paul's initial ministry in Corinth in terms of him first staying in the home of Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:1-4), and later on with Titius Justus (18:7-11). Both of these families were not poor by any stretch of the imagination. Out of friendship and shared love for God they had opened their homes to Paul and his associates. No pressure or influence to curb his preaching ever came from them. Given the rather detailed legacy of the Greco-Roman patronage system in place that defined relations between beneficiary and benefactor in that day, one suspects jealously and possible envy by some in the emerging Christian community at not being able to have Paul in their home and thereby exerting some influence over his ministry.

⁴⁰"1. pert. to being freely given, as a gift, without payment, gratis (so, in addition to the ref. in Nägeli 35f and Poland 496 note

Helpful to be noticed is the comparison of lowered / elevated with poverty / riches in 6:10 and 8:9. This pattern follows the example set by Christ (cf. 8:9), and such should be noted by the Corinthians.

The consistently pointed focus on the singular "I" in vv. 7-11 probably signals that the harshest criticism was leveled at Paul rather than at his associates. He was singled out since he had adopted this lifestyle and his associates followed his example.⁴¹ Ironically, his critics turned to pagan cultural norms in their world rather than to Christ's example in order to criticize the apostle. Additionally the phonetical play on similar word sounds among δωρεάν ... εὐαγγέλιον εὐηγγελισάμην asserts the Gospel offered as a divine gift of salvation and should then be proclaimed without charge to those needing it.⁴²

** , GDI 2569, 4 [Delphi]; PSI 400, 16; 543, 19 al. [both III B.C.]; 1401, 8; PTeht 5, 187; 250 [both II B.C.]; Gen 29:15; Ex 21:11 δωρεάν ἄνευ ἀργυρίου al.; Tat. 19, 1) δ. λαμβάνειν (Jos., Vi. 425), διδόναι (Bell. 1, 274, Vi. 38) receive or give without payment **Mt 10:8** (cp. Sextus 242; of an emissary who paid his own traveling expenses IPriene 108, 165); cp. Rv 21:6; 22:17; δ. εὐαγγελισασθαι **2 Cor 11:7**. δικαιούμενοι δ. justified, made upright, as a gift **Ro 3:24**. οὐδὲ δ. ἄρτον ἐφάγομεν παρά τινος we have not eaten bread with (or from) anyone without paying for it **2 Th 3:8**." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 266.]

⁴¹"We may account for the singular εὐηγγελισάμην, in contrast with ἐκηρύξαμεν (11:4) and the explicit reference in 1:19 to Silvanus and Timothy as fellow evangelists at Corinth, by assuming that the present charge of fiscal insensitivity was directed at Paul alone or at Paul in particular. In its position τοῦ θεοῦ is emphatic; elsewhere we always find τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ when articles are used.²³ The implication is that the rival missionaries are not preaching God's gospel (cf. 11:4) and are accepting payment (cf. δωρεάν) for preaching even their own gospel! Whether τὸ εὐαγγέλιον is qualified by τοῦ θεοῦ (only here in 2 Corinthians) or by τοῦ Χριστοῦ (2:12; 9:13; 10:14²⁴), the genitive is probably both subjective ('from God/Christ') and objective ('concerning God/Christ')." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 756.]

⁴²"What made it totally appropriate for Paul to proclaim the good news δωρεάν (the accusative of δωρεά, used adverbially), 'free of charge,' 'without fee or reward,' was the fact that this gospel of God is essentially the offer of a gift (δωρεά), the gift of righteousness (ἡ δωρεά τῆς δικαιοσύνης, Rom. 5:17). The repetition and the juxtaposition of εὐ(αγγέλιον) and εὐ(ηγγελισάμην) draw attention to the goodness and value of God's good news, which nonetheless Paul preaches at no charge to the hearer.²⁵ This correlation between the gospel offered as a gift and its being proclaimed 'free of charge' (δωρεάν = ἀδάπανον, 1 Cor. 9:18) doubtless appealed to Paul's sense of theological congruity, so much so that he viewed payment for declaring the good news as putting 'an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ' (1 Cor. 9:12b). But there were also practical reasons for his settled determination never to become a burden on his converts. Such a practice effectively distin-

227 ^{11.8} ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας ἐσύλησα
λαβῶν ὀψώνιον
πρὸς τὴν ὑμῶν διακονίαν,
11.9 καὶ
παρῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς
καὶ
ὑστερηθεῖς
228 οὐ κατενάγκησα οὐθενός·
γὰρ
229 τὸ ὑστέρημά μου προσανεπλήρωσαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ
ἐλθόντες
ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας,
καὶ
ἐν παντὶ
ἀβαρῆ
230 ἔμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα
καὶ
231 τηρήσω.

Paul essentially responds to the rhetorical question of v. 7 in vv. 8-11. The focal point of answer centers on an elaboration of his preaching the Gospel to the Corinthians δωρεὰν, *freely* (v. 7b).

The first sentence in vv. 8-9 affirms his welcoming of financial support from the Macedonians while in Corinth. Then in v. 10 he asserts his intention to not take any support from the Corinthians in order to be free to preach the Gospel throughout the province of Achaia. He concludes in v. 11 with another rhetorical question followed by his answer that this stance in no way suggests that he doesn't love the Corinthians.

His introductory assertion in vv. 8-9 is composed of two claims (#s 227-228) and the backed up (γὰρ) by three declarations (#s 229-231). The diagram below most clearly presents this structure. 8 ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας ἐσύλησα λαβῶν ὀψώνιον πρὸς τὴν ὑμῶν διακονίαν, 9 καὶ παρῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑστερηθεῖς οὐ κατενάγκησα οὐθενός· τὸ γὰρ ὑστέρημά μου προσανεπλήρωσαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἀβαρῆ ἔμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα καὶ τηρήσω. 8 *I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. 9 And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for my needs were supplied by the friends who came from Macedonia. So I refrained and will continue to refrain from burdening you in any way.*

The initial statement in v. 8 is obviously hyperbolic gushed him from the peripatetic lecturers, some of them notorious for their rapacity, who charged fees for their instruction.²⁶ Again, to remain financially independent meant freedom from any assumed special obligation to donors (cf. 1 Thess. 4:11–12) and from the temptation and danger of showing partiality to one segment of the church in return for their generosity.²⁷ Finally, 'such disinterestedness enhanced his credibility, because it showed that he preached out of utter conviction; necessity was laid upon him and he had no choice (1 Cor. 9:16)' (Murphy-O'Connor 111)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 756–757.

and stands in stark contrast to the preceding statement in v. 7: ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας ἐσύλησα λαβῶν ὀψώνιον πρὸς τὴν ὑμῶν διακονίαν, *I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you.* The exaggeration is deliberate with a note of sarcasm.⁴³ The practice of Paul was not to ask for support, especially from those he ministered to at the moment (cf. 1 Thess. 2:9). If later the newly emerging congregation voluntarily sought to support his ministry, he would and did receive the funds gladly.

The second statement in v. 9 alludes to what Luke depicts in Acts 18:5, Ὡς δὲ κατήλθον ἀπὸ τῆς Μακεδονίας ὁ τε Σιλᾶς καὶ ὁ Τιμόθεος, συνείχετο τῷ λόγῳ ὁ Παῦλος διαμαρτυρούμενος τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις εἶναι τὸν χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, *When*

Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus. Without explicitly so stating why, Luke implies that up to that point of time when Paul was in Corinth on the second missionary journey, he was somewhat restricted in his missionary activity in the Jewish synagogue to just during the Friday evening sabbath gatherings (18:1-4). Most of every week day was spent earning funding through working with Aquila and Priscilla. But Silas and Timothy's arrival enabled him to devote more time and effort to preaching the Gospel. This extra time led to the explosion of opposition that forced him to set up shop next door in the home of Titius Justus (cf. 18:6-11). Paul's second statement here in 11:9 indicates a major reason for being freer to give more time to ministry: Timothy and Silas brought a very generous love offering from the churches in Macedonia: καὶ παρῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑστερηθεῖς οὐ κατενάγκησα οὐθενός.⁴⁴ τὸ γὰρ ὑστέρημά μου προσανεπλήρωσαν οἱ

⁴³As is sometimes the case with asyndetic sentences such as this, a contrast with what precedes is implied (cf. 7:2). 'Rather than accepting payment from you for my preaching (cf. v. 7b), I plundered other churches....' συλάω, found only here and (in the LXX) in Epistle of Jeremiah 17 (EVV, 18), means 'strip off,' 'plunder,' 'carry off as booty' (in the latter sense it means the same as συλαγωγέω [Col. 2:8], another NT hapax), and was frequently used in Classical Greek of the despoiling of the enemy, in particular the act of stripping off armor from a slain enemy.²⁸ In the papyri it denotes the theft of tools and the pillaging of the contents of a house (MM 596d).²⁹ When the apostle 'confesses' to having despoiled or robbed churches, the expression is clearly figurative (as the following two words, λαβῶν ὀψώνιον, show), hyperbolic, ironical, and certainly surprising, given his earlier defense (7:2) against the charge of exploitation.³⁰ He is probably not repeating a Corinthian charge.³¹" [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 757.]

⁴⁴The forms οὐθείς [Hs 9, 5, 6], οὐθέν [Lk 23:14; Ac 15:9;

ἀδελφοὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, **And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for my needs were supplied by the friends who came from Macedonia.** In Phil. 4:15-16, written much later than Second Corinthians, the apostle makes reference to the generous support of the Philippians beginning with the early days of the church: 15 οἶδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, Φιλιππησίοι, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινώνησεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι, 16 ὅτι καὶ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη καὶ ἄπαξ καὶ δις εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι ἐπέμψατε, **15 You Philippians indeed know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. 16 For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs more than once.** To be sure some tension exists between the plural churches (ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας) in 2 Cor. 8:8 and οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία...εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι, **no church except you only.** But given the very different reasons for each of these references, no major problem should be read into this.

The primary point in # 228 is to underscore that during his time with them and when he was in need to support he absolutely refused to 'burden them' with his needs.⁴⁵ Even though his expression is emphatic, Luke

19:27; 26:26; 1 Cor 13:2; Hm 4, 2, 1], οὐθενός [Lk 22:35; Ac 20:33 v.l.; 2 Cor 11:9] for which οὐδ-is freq. read as v.l. in mss. and edd., appear in the lit. since Aristotle [Jos., Ant. 5, 250; 6, 47 al.], in ins [Meisterhans3-Schw. 258f], and in pap [Mayser 181f], PStras II, 125, 4 [5/4 B.C.]; on the forms s. B-D-F §33; W-S. §5, 27f and note 62; Mlt-H. 111f; JWackernagel, Hellenistica 1907, 23; New Docs 2, 83; 4, 164f.—The LXX usage in Thackeray p. 58–62.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 735.]

⁴⁵“One of the most expressive words in 2 Corinthians is καταναρκάω, a verb found only three times in the Greek Bible, here and in 12:13–14. The simplex form ναρκάω, ‘grow stiff/numb,’ occurs five times in the LXX,⁴⁷ while the cognate noun νάρκη denotes the ‘numbness’ caused (for example) by palsy or by fright, but also refers to the ‘torpedo’ or electric ray that benumbs anyone who touches it, so that the Egyptian eel that numbed its victims by an electric ray was called νάρκη ποταμιά.⁴⁸ As a medical term, the compound form καταναρκάω (in the passive) means ‘grow numb,’ ‘be anaesthetized.’⁴⁹ In Paul’s three uses of this verb it is in the active voice and is used figuratively, meaning ‘be a burden to’⁵⁰ or ‘encumber,’ so that κατενάρκησα will not differ in meaning from κατεβάρησα (12:16) or ἐβάρηνα (cf. ἐβαρής in 11:9).⁵¹ According to Jerome, this figurative use of καταναρκάω was a Cilician idiom for the Latin *gravare*, ‘weigh down, burden.’⁵² In the present context the ‘burden’ that Paul refrained from imposing on the Corinthians was financial or economic,⁵³ but if he was aware of the medical use of the verb his intended meaning may be ‘I benumbed no one by becoming a financial parasite.’⁵⁴ οὐθείς, from οὔτε εἷς, is a variant form of οὐδεῖς. The two negatives οὐ ... οὐθενός strengthen each other,⁵⁵ ‘no one at all,’ ‘not a soul.’ Paul ‘burdened no one’ at Corinth in that he neither asked anyone for monetary support nor accepted gifts from anyone.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New

does make it clear that housing and food were provided for him by Aquila and Priscilla, as well as Titius Justus. The apostle’s point is



clearly that he did not ‘sponge’ off anyone in Corinth. His work as a σκηνοποιός (Acts 18:3) provided needed funding until the support from Macedonia arrived. Paul’s deep concern was to avoid causing Christianity to appear as nothing more than a scamming philosophy advocated by the sophist itinerant preachers. To the non-Jews in Corinth both sets of preachers would have appeared the same when viewed superficially.

Paul completes this Greek sentence in vv. 8-9 with the assertion: καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἀβαρῆ ἐμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα καὶ τηρήσω, **and in every way from being a burden to you myself I kept and I will keep.** This rather literalistic translation highlights what Paul highlighted in the underlying Greek expression. The ἐν παντὶ ἀβαρῆ, **in every way from being a burden**, comes at the outset and in the most prominent position in an independent clause. The adjective from ἀβαρής, -ές stresses **not being heavy** and helps define the sense of οὐ κατενάρκησα in the preceding independent clause. He would not allow himself to become dependent materially on the Corinthians while seeking to establish a believing community there. What this references is further defined by τὸ ὑστέρημά μου, **my needs**, also in this sentence.⁴⁶ What was needed by Paul while

International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 760.]

⁴⁶“4. The nouns ὑστέρημα and ὑστέρησις are very rare in ancient lit. apart from the LXX and Chr. writings. For ὑστέρημα cf. Corp. Herm., 4, 10; αὐτὴ διαφορά τοῦ ὁμοίου πρὸς τὸ ἀνόμοιον, καὶ τῷ ἀνομοίῳ ὑστέρημα πρὸς τὸ ὅμοιον, 13, 1, where the initiate asks the mystagogue: σὺ δὲ μοι καὶ τὰ ὑστερήματα ἀναπλήρωσον οἷς ἔφης μοι παλιγγενεσίας <γένεσιν> παραδοῦναι προθέμενος ἐκ φωνῆς ἢ κρυβήν. We have here the underlying expression ἀναπληροῦν ὑστέρημα ‘to fill up what is lacking,’ which is also found in Chr. lit. → 598, 33 ff.; 600, 19 ff. Similarly Test. B. 11:5 (text uncertain): Αὐτὸς ἀναπληρώσει τὰ ὑστερήματα τῆς φυλῆς σου. Cf. also ἀναπληρώσειν τὸ λείπον, Jos. Ant., 5, 214. With ‘what is missing’ ὑστέρημα can also mean ‘want’ like ἡσσημα opp. προτέρημα, though there are only two late examples in secular Gk.: Achmes, *Oneirocriticon*,⁵ 152 with par. λείψις and Eutecnius Παράφρασις εἰς τὰ τοῦ Ὀππιανοῦ κρηνητικά, IV6 with opp. πλεονέκτημα. ὑστέρησις always means ‘want,’ ‘need.’” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:593.]

in Corinth was supplied by the Macedonians.⁴⁷ Not only did Paul not solicit the Corinthians' support during his time of need, he will not ever seek it. Perhaps this grew out of a Corinthian criticism that he was 'plundering' the churches which he mentioned at the beginning of this sentence: ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας ἐσύλησα λαβῶν ὀψώνιον, *other churches I plundered by taking support* (v. 8a). But this is not clear, since the apostle's statement seems to be more sarcastic hyperbole than repeating a criticism leveled against him. But elsewhere signals are given suggesting similar criticisms leveled against him: 2 Cor. 12:16; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8; 1 Tim. 5:16.

In verse ten, Paul comes back with an assertion⁴⁸

⁴⁷In Mk. 12:44 cf. Lk. 21:4 Jesus lauds the poor widow who has put two mites in the offering box: πάντες γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ περισσεύοντος αὐτοῖς ἔβαλον, οὗτη δὲ ἐκ τῆς ὑστερήσεως (Lk. τοῦ ὑστερήματος) αὐτῆς πάντα ὅσα εἶχεν ἔβαλεν, ὅλον τὸν βίον αὐτῆς. Here, then, ὑστέρημα or ὑστέρησις as the opposite of περισσεύον does not denote the lack of something, a remaining something needed for completion, but rather want in general, or poverty. This is Paul's usage too. In the collection which he organises in his churches for the saints in Jerusalem, there should be a balance between them: ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ τὸ ὑμῶν περισσεύμα εἰς τὸ ἐκείνων ὑστέρημα, ἵνα καὶ τὸ ἐκείνων περισσεύμα γένηται εἰς τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα, 2 C. 8:14 → VI, 266, 5 ff. As the Gentile Christians should share the surplus of their earthly goods with the Jewish Christians in their time of physical poverty, so the latter should share their surplus of spiritual goods with the former, cf. R. 15:2727 → VI, 63, 21 ff. The collection, then, is not just designed to relieve the distress of the Jerusalem saints (προσαναπληροῦσα τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν ἀγίων). It is also designed (→ III, 348, 21 ff.; IV, 283, 1 ff.) to lead the Jerusalem Christians to praise God for the obedience of faith of the Gentiles, who demonstrate herewith their fellowship with the Jews, 2 C. 9:12 f.²⁸ When Paul in Corinth would not take any gifts for his support from that congregation, the churches of Macedonia sent him gifts: τὸ γὰρ ὑστέρημά μου προσανεπλήρωσαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, 2 C. 11:9. The point of ὑστέρημα may be seen clearly from the ὑστερηθεὶς of the preceding clause. What Paul did not take from the Corinthians, he received from the Macedonian brethren.²⁹ The expression (προσ-)ἀναπληρῶ τὸ ὑστέρημά τινος—the genitive denotes the person who suffers the lack—seems to have been specially developed → 593, 35 ff.; 601, 18 ff. It is found in the same sense in 1 C. 16:17 and Phil. 2:30 too → VI, 306, 21 ff. In both cases the meaning is that someone in direct fellowship with Paul fills a lack for his community. This lack consists in the momentary spatial distance between the community itself and Paul.³⁰ Paul himself stresses the fact that he did not expect gifts from his churches, so that the utterance of his great joy at what is received is not meant καθ' ὑστέρησιν (Phil. 4:11), i.e., it is not the joy of a poor person whose need has been met. Paul, as one who is basically in the position περισσεύειν καὶ ὑστερεῖσθαι (4:12 → n. 24), rejoices rather at the sharing of his church in his present distress (4:14), which, as often before, the present gift expresses, 4:15–18." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:598–599.]

⁴⁸The opening words are an oath formula (Schwurformel),³⁵⁰ as in Rom 9:1, and Χριστοῦ, 'of Christ,' is subjective genitive, 'Christ's truth,' since it is Christ speaking through the apostle as in 13:3 (cf. 5:20 similarly, with a change of the divine name)." [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie,

couched in axiomatic principle form:⁴⁹ ἔστιν ἀλήθεια Χριστοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ ὅτι ἡ καύχησις αὕτη οὐ φραγήσεται εἰς ἐμὲ ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τῆς Ἀχαΐας, *Truth from Christ is in me that this boasting will not be silenced for me among the regions of Achaia*. The epexegetical ὅτι clause defines the content of the oath as the Truth of Christ in Paul. The sense of φραγήσεται in the future passive voice from φράσσω is literally 'will not be fenced in' with the contextual tone of silencing or stopping. What will not be stopped is ἡ καύχησις αὕτη, *this boasting*, which goes back his not asking the Corinthians for money (vv. 8-9). The prepositional phrase εἰς ἐμὲ defines the connection of the boasting as in regard to Paul's stance. Where this boasting would not be silenced is ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τῆς Ἀχαΐας, *among the regions of Achaia*.⁵⁰ The plural τοῖς κλίμασιν has the sense of the entirety of the Roman province of Achaia that included Athens as well as Corinth. Note in the above map the coverage of the province in the mid-first century.

and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 533.]

⁴⁹ἔστιν ἀλήθεια Χριστοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ ὅτι ἡ καύχησις αὕτη οὐ φραγήσεται εἰς ἐμὲ ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τῆς Ἀχαΐας. 'As Christ's truth is in me, as far as I am concerned this boasting of mine will not be silenced throughout the districts of Achaia.' This is an expansion and confirmation of ἐν παντὶ ἀβαρῆ ἐμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ... τηρήσω (v. 9), with the future φραγήσεται corresponding to τηρήσω. If we define a biblical 'oath of confirmation' broadly as a direct or indirect appeal to the deity as the guarantor of the truth of a statement, especially one that the readers cannot verify for themselves, this verse constitutes an oath (cf. 1:18, 23; 11:11, 31; 12:2–3),⁶¹ 'By Christ's truth in me' (GNB). But on a narrower definition of an 'oath of confirmation' which would require an introductory verb of swearing (cf. ὡμοσεν ἐν ... ὅτι, Rev. 10:6) or a direct invocation (cf. μάρτυρα τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλοῦμαι, 1:23), this verse is simply a solemn declaration.⁶² Either way, the affirmation is even stronger than κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν (2:17; 12:19), and may be rendered 'As surely as the truth of Christ is in me' (NEB, REB). That is, 'the truth of Christ dwells in me and will testify to and guarantee my truthfulness when I say that....' Paul's appeal is not to 'truth about Christ' (objective genitive) that is communicated in his preaching but to divine 'truth given by Christ' (subjective genitive) that he has personally appropriated and is therefore in him (cf. 13:3) in the same way that the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16) and the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9) dwell in him.⁶³ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 763.]

⁵⁰ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τῆς Ἀχαΐας, 'throughout the districts⁶⁷ of Achaia,' is not designed to imply that in other places Paul might restrict or reverse his policy, but simply mentions the general region that corresponds to the destination of the letter, the Corinthian church along with believers throughout Achaia (1:2), in places such as Cenchræe and Athens." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 765.]

Thus Paul indicates that in no uncertain terms that he will not compromise his conviction of not taking funds from communities while being newly established. The integrity of the Gospel witness as reflecting God's saving grace is too important to risk being associated with money grubbing sophist philosophers.

In verse eleven Paul addresses the final point: διὰ τί; ὅτι οὐκ ἀγαπῶ ὑμᾶς; ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν. Why? Because I don't love you? God knows! In some way Paul's refusal to take money from the Corinthians was interpreted as a sign of lack of love for them by the apostle. This is the point made by the introductory question διὰ τί;, literally, *Because of what?* His own answer, ὅτι οὐκ ἀγαπῶ ὑμᾶς;, *because I don't love you?*, defines the assumed reason behind the questioning of his refusal to take funding support from them. He doesn't try to explain or justify his devotion to the Corinthians.⁵¹ Instead, he simply asserts that God knows that he loves them: ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν. That should be sufficient. Although not quite in the form of an oath as v. 10, it expresses strong emotion from the apostle.⁵² Ἀγαπή is proven in action, not by words claiming it. The Corinthians should be able to tell from

⁵¹"It appears that some at Corinth — whether native Corinthians or intruders, or both — had maliciously suggested that the reason for Paul's adamant refusal to accept support was his lack of love for his supposed friends. Why else would he not reciprocate their overtures of friendship? If this verse were not a reply to a charge, we would expect Paul to have answered his own question (διὰ τί;) by ὅτι ἀγαπῶ ὑμᾶς ὡς ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν. He himself would never make the suggestion that he was loveless. See, to the contrary, 6:11–13; 7:3; 12:15. As in Rom. 9:32, ὅτι following the interrogative διὰ τί; means 'because' rather than 'that.'⁷⁵" [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 766–767.]

⁵²"Faced with such a hurtful accusation and aware that any further attempt to justify his motives would be fruitless, the apostle invokes the omniscience of God to testify to the reality and depth of his love for the Corinthians, just as in the previous verse he had appealed to 'the truth of Christ' as the guarantee of the truthfulness of his boast. In both verses he is employing oath formulas, as also in 1:18, 23; 11:31; 12:2–3. A fuller form of the abbreviated formula ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν is found in 11:31, ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ οἶδεν ... ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι, although in 11:11 the content of the divine knowledge ('God knows') is not 'that I do not lie,' but may be assumed to be 'that I do love you,' or possibly 'the truth about that' (Barrett 270) or 'whether that is true or not' (Plummer 301).⁷⁶ Such an appeal to God's all-knowingness presupposes a belief that God is καρδιογνώστης (Acts 15:8), 'the One who knows people's hearts.'⁷⁷ God read Paul's heart and knew the intensity of his love as well as the motives for his actions that he had outlined in vv. 7–10. We may sense the ardor of Paul's agitated emotions here by the successive oaths in vv. 10–11 and the extraordinary brevity of the two questions and one affirmation in v. 11." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 767.]

Paul's continuing efforts to help them that he possesses genuine devotion to them.

Murray Harris (NIGTC) pulls together very effectively a summation of Paul's financial support philosophy:

How may we summarize Paul's policy regarding his financial relationship with his churches? Was it consistent?⁶⁸ His conduct seems to have been governed by two principles.

1. Paul always refused financial aid for himself from those to whom he was currently ministering. He himself gives three reasons for this stance. First, he wished to avoid being a financial encumbrance, an economic parasite, on his converts (11:9; 12:13–14, 16; 1 Thess. 2:9). He probably saw this as an evidence of his love (cf. 11:11; 12:15). Second, by offering the "price-less" good news totally free of charge, he was dramatizing in his own conduct the very appeal of the gospel as the good news of God's free grace (cf. 11:7; 1 Cor. 9:12b, 18). Third, he wanted to maintain an advantage over any rivals who accepted payment for their services (11:12). No one could accuse Paul of preaching for profit. We may speculate on further reasons for his vigorous independence. Fourth, he may have wished to avoid entering a relationship that could be construed as a patron-client contract which placed him under certain social obligations to a restricted segment of a church (cf. 1 Thess. 4:11–12).⁶⁹ Fifth, with respect to the Corinthians, Savage proposes that Paul was aiming at weaning them away from their eagerness to boast about their generosity in giving (96, 98). Sixth, financial independence may have appealed to a natural desire for self-sufficiency. H. W. Heidland comments (TDNT 5.592): "Not claiming the ὀψώνιον is an act of freedom on the apostle's part in relation to the churches and also a venture of faith, which refuses any assured basis of subsistence." Closely related to Paul's motivation for being financially independent of his converts were his motives for choosing to support himself by manual labor⁷⁰—his wish to provide his converts with a model of self-support by hard work (2 Thess. 3:6–9; cf. 1 Thess. 4:11) and of earning money in order to give to the needy (Eph. 4:28; cf. Acts 20:35), and his desire to be distinguished from fee-charging traveling lecturers.

2. Paul sometimes accepted gifts from distant fellow believers (11:8–9; Phil. 4:16) or as he was leaving a region (1:16; Rom. 15:24; 1 Cor. 16:6), in each case to enable him to pursue new evangelistic or pastoral opportunities, not as payment for services already rendered. We have seen (at 1:16) that the verb προπέμπω means not only "accompany," "escort,"⁷¹ but also "help forward," "send on one's way" (BAGD 709 s.v.), in reference to equipping a person with provisions for a journey,⁷² such as food and money and possibly also transport, traveling companions, and letters of introduction. According to his stated plans Paul hoped to receive such gifts when he set out from Corinth (1 Cor. 16:6; 2 Cor. 1:16) and Rome (Rom. 15:24).⁷³ Whether his hopes were realized, we do not know, but these texts in which προπέμπω is used witness to his expectation of receiving provisions for travel and further service. But the question then arises: How can he say to the Corinthians, in reference to the past, ἐν παντὶ ἀβαρῆ ἔμαυτον ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα (11:9), and with regard to the future, ἢ καύχησις αὐτῆ οὐ φραγήσεται εἰς ἐμέ? Perhaps the answer lies in distinguishing carefully between the two principles outlined above. In 11:9–10, 12; 12:14 Paul says that he will not⁷⁴

accept financial support from the Corinthians, that is, while he is present with them; οὐ φραγήσεται and the other futures have special but not exclusive reference to the upcoming third visit. In 11:9; 12:13, 16 he affirms that he was not a financial burden while with them, that is, during his first and second visits. But when he writes οὐ φραγήσεται (11:10) or οὐ καταναρκήσω (12:14; see also 11:9, 12) he is not excluding the future possibility of accepting aid from the Corinthians, if it were offered, for service outside Corinth. Nor did his financial independence mean he refused to accept the gift of hospitality from anyone at Corinth. On the contrary, he stayed with Aquila and Priscilla during his first visit (Acts 18:3), and on his third visit he was a guest in the home of Gaius (Rom. 16:23, written from Corinth).⁵³

The apostle walked a delicate line here particularly with the Corinthians. Seemingly the other churches he established did not pose such issues that caused the difficulty found at Corinth. The unique nature then of the Corinthian situation urges considerable caution about making modern applications.⁵⁴

One thing that does emerge from Paul's example is that we should be fully prepared to make whatever sacrifices are needed in order to preserve the integrity of the Gospel. Preachers must be *servants* of the Gospel, not *lords* over it. Second, making money off the Gospel should be avoided at all costs. The credibility of the Gospel is at stake here. To see Christian ministry as a channel for making money and living luxuriously signals a false teacher before one ever opens his mouth. Such understanding is woefully missing in North American Christianity and very well contributes to the rapid

⁵³Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 765–766.

⁵⁴One phony application in the modern US Protestant tradition is found in some mega churches. Several decades ago W.A. Criswell caused quite a stir in Southern Baptist life when he announced that following Paul's example he would return all of his salary from the First Baptist Church of Dallas back to the church. Naive reporters interpreted this as generosity but didn't realize how they were being manipulated by this pastor. In no shape, form, or fashion was Criswell doing what Paul did in connection to the Corinthians. Criswell never gave up his luxurious life style in his multi-million dollar mansion in north Dallas with one of the largest art collections in the city. His earnings from book royalties, outside speaking engagements etc. provided many times over what his church salary was. All this action did was to give him a much bigger income tax deduction from his multi-million dollar income. Not one of Paul's principles were followed. In fact, Criswell's actions reflected more the 'peddlers of the Gospel' that Paul severely condemns in chapter eleven of Second Corinthians. And it is a modern textbook illustration of what Paul was passionately seeking to avoid.

Virtually the same thing can be said of several more of these kinds of show business preachers such as Joel Olsteen, Rick Warren et als. Their luxurious lifestyle betrays the real motives behind their actions: they want to look pious but it is purely external. Non-believing paganism may be impressed, but one can be certain that the holy Judge of mankind is not.

decline of Christianity in this part of the world.

10.2.3.3.2.3 Servants of the devil, 11:12-15

12 Ὁ δὲ ποιῶ, καὶ ποιήσω, ἵνα ἐκκόψω τὴν ἀφορμὴν τῶν θελότων ἀφορμὴν, ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καυχῶνται εὐρεθῶσιν καθὼς καὶ ἡμεῖς. 13 οἱ γὰρ τοιοῦτοι ψευδαπόστολοι, ἐργάται δόλιοι, μετασηματιζόμενοι εἰς ἀποστόλους Χριστοῦ. 14 καὶ οὐ θαῦμα· αὐτὸς γὰρ ὁ σατανᾶς μετασηματίζεται εἰς ἄγγελον φωτός. 15 οὐ μέγα οὖν εἰ καὶ οἱ διάκονοι αὐτοῦ μετασηματίζονται ὡς διάκονοι δικαιοσύνης· ὧν τὸ τέλος ἔσται κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν.

12 And what I do I will also continue to do, in order to deny an opportunity to those who want an opportunity to be recognized as our equals in what they boast about. 13 For such boasters are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 So it is not strange if his ministers also disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness. Their end will match their deeds.

In this final subunit of vv. 12-15, the apostle turns on the outsider false teachers who had come into Corinth and weaseled their way into influence over some of the believers. The unit stands as a part of the larger 'self-praise' literary unit in 11:1-12:13 which is discussed extensively in ancient Greek and Latin manuals of rhetoric.⁵⁵ What becomes clear is that although Paul's

⁵⁵The second item of background information that may facilitate one's understanding of 2 Cor 11:1–12:13 concerns its literary form, self-praise. Self-praise was the stock-in-trade of many ancient teachers. It was viewed negatively by the Old Testament (e.g., 1 Kgs 20:11; Prov 27:2; Jer 9:23–24) and by certain philosophical circles (e.g., Philostratus apologizes for inserting the philosopher's defense speech before Domitian because it made him sound like a rhetorician [*Life of Apollonius* 8.7]). It was this tradition partially reflected by Paul in 2 Cor 10:12–18. But by the time of the New Testament period certain self-praise was considered all right. Plutarch says self-praise is permissible when defending one's good name, when on trial, and when one is wronged or slandered (On Inoffensive Self-Praise). Given his circumstances in 2 Cor 10–13 (e.g., 12:11; 10:1–11), Paul would have received Plutarch's permission to engage in self-praise.

“Plutarch says certain rules are to be followed when engaging in self-praise. First, one should mix in with one's self-praise certain shortcomings or blemishes in order to temper with shade the blaze of one's glory (On Inoffensive Self-Praise 13). Second Cor 11:30–33 and 12:8–9 fit this criterion. Second, one may boast of one's care and worry over others (14). Second Cor 11:1–4; 11:28–29; and 12:19 satisfy this rule. Third, one's self-praise should be coupled with exhortation so that some advantage to the hearer may be gained (15). Second Cor 11:1–12:13 is followed by a series of exhortations (e.g., 13:5, 11a) and preceded by others (e.g., 10:2, 6). Fourth, where mistaken praise of others injures or corrupts by arousing emulation of evil and adoption of unsound policy, it is no disservice to counteract it by pointing out the difference between oneself and the other (17). Second Cor 10:13–18; 11:12–15; 11:23–29 meet the requirements of this test. It is difficult, in light of the remarkable correspondences between 2 Cor 10–13 and Plutarch's statement of general custom, to deny that in these chapters Paul is

11.12	δὲ	
	Ὅ ποιῶ,	
236	καὶ	
	ποιήσω,	
	ἵνα ἐκκόψω τὴν ἀφορμὴν	
	τῶν θελόντων ἀφορμὴν,	
	ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καυχῶνται εὐρεθῶσιν	
	καθὼς καὶ ἡμεῖς.	
11.13	γὰρ	
237	οἱ τοιοῦτοι (εἰσὶν) ψευδαπόστολοι,	
	ἐργάται δόλιοι,	
	μετασχηματιζόμενοι	
	εἰς ἀποστόλους Χριστοῦ.	
11.14	καὶ	
238	οὐ θαῦμα·	
	γὰρ	
239	αὐτὸς ὁ σατανᾶς μετασχηματίζεται	
	εἰς ἄγγελον φωτός.	
11.15	οὕν	
240	οὐ μέγα (ἐστίν)	
	εἰ καὶ οἱ διάκονοι αὐτοῦ μετασχηματίζονται	
	ὡς διάκονοι δικαιοσύνης·	
	ὧν τὸ τέλος ἔσται	
	κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν.	

engaging in what was called inoffensive self-praise. At the same time, it is clear that the apostle is very uncomfortable with his use of this literary technique (11:1, ‘bear with me in a little foolishness’; 11:17, ‘what I am saying I say not with the Lord’s authority but as a fool’; 11:21, ‘I am speaking as a fool’; 11:23, ‘I am talking like a madman’; 12:1, ‘I must boast; there is nothing to be gained by it’; 12:11, ‘I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you’), as someone with a Hebraic value system would be. That he uses this rhetorical device is testimony to the straits he is in (Judge, 1968; Betz, 1970; Travis, 1973, 527–32).

“Although in 11:1 Paul asks his readers to put up with a little foolishness, it is not until v. 16 that this actually occurs. Between 11:1 and 11:16 is a digression giving Paul’s reason for his foolish boasting, namely, his fear that the Corinthians will be deceived. Second Cor 11:2–15 is a unit held together by an inclusion (11:3–4, the serpent and Paul’s opponents; 11:14–15, Satan and Paul’s opponents). The boundaries of the section are also signaled by v. 1 (‘I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness’) and v. 16 (‘I repeat, let no one think me foolish’). Within the inclusion are four claims made by Paul’s Corinthian opponents, together with the apostle’s responses.

“As he sets forth his reason for boasting foolishly, Paul compares himself to the father of the bride who has arranged a betrothal (i.e., the founding of the Corinthian church) and who watches jealously over the bride’s conduct before the wedding that is to take place when Christ returns at the parousia (11:2). Between betrothal and marriage, the father (Paul) fears lest the church, like Eve, be deceived by the enemy’s cunning and led astray (v. 3). According to Jewish law, the violation of a betrothed virgin was no less serious than if the marriage had already been consummated (Deut 22:23–27; Phil Special Laws 1.107; 3.72). (For marriage language used for the relation between Christ and the church, cf. Eph 5:23–32; Rev 19:7–9; 21:2, 9.)”

[Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and*

oratorical skills may have been weak by human standards, he reflects profound skills in employing the literary devices for advocating the Gospel to non-Jews with the Greco-Roman cultural heritage. Some hint of this comes in Paul’s opening expression Πάλιν λέγω, μή τις με δόξη ἄφρονα εἶναι, *Again I say, Let no one consider me a fool...* (v. 16).

The internal thought flow of vv. 12-15 is rather clearly defined in the above diagram. Paul makes an assertion (# 236, v. 12) that is followed by a series of justifying assertions (vv. 13-15, #s 237-239), as is reflected in the repeated γὰρ conjunction. Also from a literary context viewpoint, vv. 12-15 build on the ideas expressed in vv. 7-11, and lay the foundation for what follows in 11:16-12:13.

The core assertion, “Ὁ δὲ ποιῶ, καὶ ποιήσω, *And what I am doing, I also will continue doing*, effectively summarizes vv. 7-11 in order to provide a basis for the twin purpose statements introduced by the subordinate conjunction ἵνα. Here Paul distances himself from the outsiders with strong condemnation of them as false teachers. Thus he will continue to refuse support from the Corinthians and all other newly established works while being created. The objective is not just the integrity of the Gospel (v. 10) but in order to demonstrate the corrupting motives behind these outsiders. The more distance between them and himself that Paul can put *Theological Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2002), 145–147.]

the clearer it will be for the Corinthians to understand just who these people are.

He condemns them with blunt, strong language in the two purpose statements in v. 12. First, ἵνα ἐκκόψω τὴν ἀφορμὴν τῶν θελόντων ἀφορμὴν, **so that I may chop off the opportunity of those desiring an opportunity.** The outsiders seek ἀφορμὴν, **opportunity.** The content of this opportunity is defined in the second ἵνα clause, which we will discuss below.⁵⁶

The background meaning of ἀφορμὴ is informative. It is a part of the word group ὁρμή, ὄρμημα, ὄρμάω, ἀφορμή⁵⁷ The positive words ὁρμή, ὄρμημα, ὄρμάω connote the idea literally of propelling a stream into motion, either physically or abstractly.⁵⁸ Its opposite

⁵⁶“The second ἵνα, ‘that’-clause is dependent on τῶν θελόντων ἀφορμὴν, ‘those men who are seeking such an opportunity,’ and gives the substance of what constitutes their ‘opportunity.’³⁶² they desire, literally, to be ‘seen or regarded’ (ἵνα ... εὐρεθῶσιν; perhaps the element of surprise is contained in the verb, as in Gal 2:17)³⁶³ in that which is their boast (ἐν ᾧ καυχῶνται) as doing the same work as we do (καθὼς καὶ ἡμεῖς). A number of interpretations may be reviewed. (1) The underlying objection Paul has against them is their ‘pride’ (καυχάομαι) in laying claim to the same mission territory as he believes he has, i.e., at Corinth. So they are interlopers who have entered on a field of mission service where they do not belong. As long as Paul persists in his mission work based on a crucified Jesus and a gospel freely offered (the δωρεάν-principle [Grundsatz]),³⁶⁴ they will not have room to maneuver in Corinth. He will effectively check their activity as poachers on his field of operation.

“Other interpretations are: (2) They were standing on their assumed dignity as true apostolic missionaries, and they were a burden to the Corinthians. So Paul wants to ease his readers of just that burden by resisting the intruders.³⁶⁵ (3) They were guilty of jealousy³⁶⁶ and sought to win the Corinthians — perhaps in the name of the Jerusalem mother church to whose jurisdiction, they asserted, the Corinthians rightly belonged—or at least to capture them to their side (see v 20). (4) What was at stake was apostolic support that they claimed was rightfully theirs (their κούρησις, ‘boasting’).³⁶⁷ So when Paul does not permit himself to be supported by the community, he robs his opponents of the occasion to boast of their apostolic office (Apostelamt). (5) Yet another interpretation wishes to retain the second ἵνα, ‘that’-clause as dependent on the main verb ἐκκόψω, ‘I may cut off.’³⁶⁸ The translation follows: ‘in order to cut off the opportunity from those who would like an opportunity (and) in order that in what they boast they may be found even as we are,’ i.e., fools. The point is that they seek an opportunity to place Paul on the same level as themselves by using categories of validation for their ministry (commendations from other churches, impressive speech, miracle powers, demonstrations of ‘spirit,’ the right of maintenance). But it is hard to see how Paul’s action in not receiving aid would deny that course to them, which is what the joining of ἐκκόψω, ‘I may cut off,’ and the second ἵνα, ‘that,’ requires.³⁶⁹”

[Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 534–535.]

⁵⁷Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:467.

⁵⁸“ὁρμή seems to be linked to the Indo-European root *ser*, ‘to

is ἀφορμή which carries the literal sense of impulse, inclination, opportunity et als.⁵⁹ In the usual negative

stream,’ Sanskrit *sárma-h*, ‘flowing.’¹ The word develops many meanings² which mostly denote the beginning of a swift and even hostile movement, i.e., ‘start’ or ‘starting.’ It is often used psychologically with ref. to various impulses and strivings. The derived ὄρμημα (Hom., Hell., LXX) can also denote psychical as well as physical processes, emotions of anger or temper. The verb ὀρμάω means trans. ‘to set in rapid motion,’ ‘to impel,’ intr. ‘to go out from,’ ‘to storm out,’ ‘to originate.’ The group is common in description of military and other movements, Xenoph HistGraec., I, 6, 20; An., IV, 3, 31; Ditt. Syll.3, 700, 24 (117 B.C.); P. Strassb., 100, 17 (2nd cent. B.C.); P. Oxy., IX, 1216, 20 (2nd/3rd cent. A.D.); VI, 906, 63 (336 A.D.). Trans. ἐφορμάω, Hom. Od., 7, 272; Il., 3, 165. For psychological movements, Il., 13, 74; 21, 572 (inspiration); Od., 8, 499: ὀρμηθεῖς θεοῦ, Soph. Ant., 133: νίκην ὀρμῶμι’ ἀλαλάξαι, cf. Fr., 619 (TGF, 279) ἐφορμᾶν κακά. In Plato we read in Leg., IX, 875b: ἐπὶ πλεονεξίαν ... φύσις αὐσίς αὐτὸν ὀρμήσει (cf. V 5, p 468 Ep. Ar., 270); 4 Symp., 181d ὀρμᾶσθαι ὑπὸ ἔρωτος. Gorg., 502c refers, not to impulses, but to the essential determination of tragedy (ὄρμηται). For impulse to virtue cf. Xen. An., III, 1, 24, for the natural demand for a response of love Mem., II, 6, 28, for preparation for sickness, or even striving after it, Epict. Diss., II, 6, 10. The verb is used for ordered motion in the cosmos, Plato Pol., 273a; intellectual striving is denoted in Soph., 228c; Parm., 135d. ὀρμή is often used of divine or demonic power which impels man irresistibly, Soph. Ant., 135 f.: μαινομένα ζῆν ὀρμᾶ βακχεύων ἐπέπνει, Hdt., VII, 18: δαιμονίη ὀρμή, Plat. Phaedr., 279a: ὀρμή θειοτέρα. ὀρμή seems almost synon. with ἐπιθυμία in Phileb., 35d. For the further development of the term in Gk. philosophy Plato’s basic def. of θυμός as ὀρμή βίαιος ἄνευ λογισμοῦ in Def., 415e is important. Aristot. often uses ὀρμή for unconscious impulses. He thus explains the famous fundamental principle ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον in Pol., I, 2, p. 1253a, 29: φύσει μὲν οὖν ἡ ὀρμή ἐν πᾶσιν ἐπὶ τὴν τοιαύτην κοινωνίαν. ὀρμή is also associated with φύσις in An. Post., II, 11, p. 95a, 1. Whereas ὀρμή is impulsive will, προαίρεσις denotes the considered activity of the will, preference and choice, Metaph., IV, 5, p. 1015a, 27. In the sphere of ὀρμή there is no free decision, Eth. M., I, 16, p. 1188b, 25: ὀρμή is the same as ὄρεσις which divides into εἶδη τρία: ἐπιθυμία, θυμός, βούλησις, *ibid.*, I, 12, p. 1187b. Even the last is no true expression of free will, for uncontrolled men take up what they desire into their will, I, 13, p. 1188a, 28. Their longings are also set on what is contradictory, Eth. Nic., I, 13, p. 1102b, 21. On the basis of Hom. Eth. Nic., III, 11, p. 1116b, 30 elucidates the nature of θυμός, cf. VII, 7, p. 1149a, 31, and on the other hand De Virtutibus et Vitiis, 4, p. 1250a, 41 on πραότης. As it may be said of θυμός: ὀρμᾶ πρὸς τὴν τιμωρίαν, so of ἐπιθυμία: ὀρμᾶ πρὸς τὴν ἀπόλαυσιν, Eth. Nic., VII, 7, p. 1149a, 35; cf. De Virtutibus et Vitiis, 2, p. 1250a, 11; 5, p. 1250b, 13.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:467–468.]

⁵⁹“This is in Gk. a purely formal term for ‘start,’ ‘origin,’ ‘cause,’ ‘stimulus,’ ‘impulse,’ ‘undertaking,’ ‘pretext,’ ‘possibility,’ ‘inclination,’ also as a Stoic word ‘aversion’ as the opp. of ὀρμή. Aristot. Cael., II, 12, p. 292a, 16 has it for ‘means of assistance.’ In Pol., VI, 5, p. 1320a, 39, b, 8 it means ‘opportunity’ for trade or agriculture, or more generally for work with a view to overcoming unemployment. ‘Logical starting-point’ is the sense in Ps.-Aristot. Rhet. Al., 3, p. 1423a, 33; b, 14, 32; 39, p. 1445b, 29; in Eur. Hec., 1238 f. we also find the sense ‘pretext’: βροτοῖσιν ὡς τὰ χρηστά

use of the term inside the NT with Paul's writings, the idea of 'starting point' is the general sense.⁶⁰ Paul uses

πράγματα χρηστών ἀφορμὰς ἐνδίδωσ' αἰεὶ λόγων, cf. also Phoen., 199 f. In the commonly quoted Polyb., 1 3, 7, 5; 32, 7; 4, 58, 8 the term is used in the sense of 'cause' or 'starting-point.' Similarly in an edict of Caracalla (215 A.D.) in P. Giess., I, 40, 2, 11 there is ref. to ἐπιπείρας ἀφορμὴ alongside δελιῆς αἰτία.² In a derogatory sense ἀφορμὴ occurs along with δόλος in a 3rd cent. pap.,³ and in P. Oxy. I, 34, III, 1 f. (127 A.D.) we read: τοὺς παραβάντας καὶ τοὺς διὰ ἀπειθίαν καὶ ὡς ἀφορμὴν ζητοῦντας ἀμαρτημάτων τιμωρήσομαι.⁴ In particular in the pap. the word has the sense of 'occasion,' 'cause,' 'suitable opportunity.' In many cases it is hardly or not at all distinguishable from ὄρμη. Thus in Poimandres, 25⁵ the ἀφορμαὶ κακαὶ are obviously the same as the ὄρμαι ἄλογοι in Philo. It is also worth noting that θυμός and ἐπιθυμία are mentioned in the same context. But the word can have many different meanings in Philo:⁶ Decal., 17: πρὸς τὸ εὖ ζῆν, Migr., 2: εἰς σωτηρίαν, Jos., 258: εἰς ἀργυρισμόν, Leg. All., III, 66: εἰς ἀπολογία. It means 'logical starting-point' in Plant., 36. It is used with ἀρχή in Conf. Ling., 68 and with πηγὴ in Op. Mund., 47.

"The only OT occurrence with a Heb. original is at Ez. 5:7. Here it stands for ἡμῶν The Mas. means: 'On account of your raging more than the Gentiles ...'⁷ The Gk. translators, however, establish a connection with the Gentiles (syr-hex): ἀνθ' ὧν τὸ πλῆθος ὑμῶν ἐγένετο ἐκ τῶν ἐθνῶν, cf. Hier.: *quia multitudo vestra fuit e gentibus. A: eo quod numerati estis in gentibus.* In the LXX, too, ἀφορμὴ refers here not merely to orientation of thought (Θ λογισμοί) under Gentile influence, but to origin. Herewith the historical fact of the derivation of many of the Jews of the Hell. Roman period from the Gentiles is at least correctly perceived.⁸ In Prv. 9:9 the LXX adds ἀφορμὴ in elucidation: δίδου σοφῶ ἀφορμὴν καὶ σοφώτερος ἔσται. In 3 Macc. 3:2 the word is used in the sense of 'cause,' so, too, Sir. Prologue, 29 vl.: μικρὰν παιδείας ἀφορμὴν."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:472.]

⁶⁰In the NT ἀφορμὴ occurs in the usual texts only in the Pauline corpus. In D there is also a vl. at Lk. 11:54: ζητοῦντες ἀφορμὴν τινα λαβεῖν αὐτοῦ = *occasionem aliquam invenire de illo* (it syrc).⁹ This is an old reading¹⁰ in which the word has the same derogatory sense as in Paul. This negative sense, however, is not present in 2 C. 5:12, where Paul says that his aim in the passage is to give the Corinthians ἀφορμὴν καυχήματος, a 'basis' or 'possibility' of boasting. ἀφορμὴ is thus "the 'occasion' or 'starting-point' of something inasmuch as it evokes a movement of will and also provides the material which is exploited in this movement."¹¹

"On the other hand 2 C. 11:12: ἐκκόψω τὴν ἀφορμὴν τῶν θελότων ἀφορμὴν, offers a clear par. to the use in Lk. 11:54 D. All kinds of deceptive 'pretexts' are sought in the attack on Paul as in that on Jesus. Paul disarms these by his conduct. What the content of these was, is not wholly clear, so that textual corruption has been considered.¹² What his opponents boast about, i.e., the apostolic right to support by the churches, Paul ought to claim. For the churches, in view of wandering preachers and their avarice,¹³ interpret in Paul's favour renunciation of this right.¹⁴ If he were to claim it, however, he would give occasion for calumny,¹⁵ as though he also preached for gain. In fact, as Paul ironically affirms, he would then be doing exactly what his adversaries boast of doing. Calvin¹⁶ sees in Paul's conduct an example which teaches Christians to avoid all evil appearance (Luther 1 Th. 5:22): *caeterum hic utilis est admonitio de praecedenda improbis occasione, quoties aliquam captant, hic enim unus est vincendi modus, non autem quum eos*

the term with one exception in 2 Cor. 5:12 to denote the taking advantage of something basically good and using it as the occasion for sinful activity. His use of ἐκκόψω in the aorist active subjunctive from ἐκκόπτω expresses his intention to 'chop off' this renegade root before it has a chance to get really started.

What was the positive thing that the outsiders were seeking to use as a starting point of influence over the Corinthians? The second purpose clause defines it: ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καυχῶνται εὐρεθῶσιν καθὼς καὶ ἡμεῖς, so that they may be discovered in that which they are boasting, i.e., that they are just as we are. Careful consideration of the im-

nostra impudentia armamus.

"In Gl. 5:13 the σάρξ occupies the position of the malicious opponent and seeks a 'pretext' in ἐλευθερία. In 1 Tm. 5:14 it is ἀντικείμενος and in R. 7:8, 11 ἀμαρτία. What offers a 'starting-point' or 'occasion' is not in itself bad, whether it be the apostolic right to support (2 C. 11:12), widowhood (1 Tm. 5:14), Christian freedom (Gl. 5:13) or the Law, God's commandment (R. 7:8, 11). In 1 Tm. 5:14, on the analogy of the other verses, that which gives an 'occasion' or 'pretext' for Jewish or Christian opponents to slander the Christian community or to take other hostile action is not a possible seduction of the young widows,¹⁷ but the state of widowhood itself, which offers Satan¹⁸ an occasion for tempting widows. This alone justifies the radical requirement that widows should marry again. In this way barriers are set up which eliminate the occasion and thus remove the danger outwardly, though they do not overcome it inwardly. R. 7:8, 11 tells us once and for all that neither the erection of such barriers nor any law can act as a safeguard against the abuse of freedom. The very Law itself, God's commandment, can be an occasion for sin. In this respect the Law has a specific task: *detexit in me omnem concupiscentiam, quae dum lateret, quodam modo nulla esse videbatur.*¹⁹ Desire is thus unmasked in its true colours. As Origen expressed it in familiar Philonic terms, ὄρεξις ἄλογος γινομένη κατὰ ὄρμην πλεονάζουσαν παράλογον. From its opposition to the commandment sin receives an impetus to lead men astray into covetousness.²⁰ God's commandment with its authority incites sin to open resistance to God.²¹ In so doing the Law is as little guilty of the instigation of sin by its coming as is the tree in Paradise guilty of the disobedience of Adam, or the coming of Christ guilty of the sin of those who rejected Him (Jn. 15:22; cf. also Hb. 10:29). An ancient Greek commentator,²² who already draws attention to these parallels, has in view especially the greatness of the punishment. In fact the opponents of the Christian community, the power of Satan, sin and the flesh which lies behind them, take the good gifts of God in creation, or indeed the Christian freedom which is the dawn of eternal salvation, and make them into a deceitful occasion²³ for leading men astray. In this way they themselves are given a fresh impulse to resist God.²⁴ The devil in some sense uses the precepts of the Law as materials with which to work.²⁵ It belongs to the inscrutability of the divine counsel that the good gifts of God, including the gift of salvation itself, begin by giving a fresh impetus to sin so that they can then unmask it as such. In this way, however, the formal concept of ὄφορμὴ takes on in the NT a specifically material character. It comes to be grouped with 'offence' and 'temptation' and figures of speech like 'nets' and 'snares.'²⁶

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:472–474.]

mediate context signals the answer. They wanted ‘apostolic status’ claimed by Paul but one that included full financial support from the Corinthians.⁶¹ Paul’s refusal to accept the Corinthians’ support threw a huge ‘monkey wrench’ in their objectives of making a living off the Corinthians and displacing Paul and his associates.

What is the basis for this assertion by Paul that he will continue doing exactly what he has been doing, i.e., refusing support from the Corinthians? Two causal γὰρ assertions provide the basis. Then an inference is drawn in v. 15 linking the two reasons to one another in application to the outsiders at Corinth.

11.13 γὰρ
237 οἱ τοιοῦτοι (εἰσὶν) ψευδαπόστολοι,
 ἐργάται δόλιοι,
 μετασχηματιζόμενοι
 εἰς ἀποστόλους Χριστοῦ.

11.14 καὶ
238 οὐ θαῦμα·
 γὰρ
239 αὐτὸς ὁ σατανᾶς μετασχηματίζεται
 εἰς ἄγγελον φωτός.

11.15 οὖν
240 οὐ μέγα (ἐστίν)
 εἰ καὶ οἱ διάκονοι αὐτοῦ μετασχηματίζονται
 | ὡς διάκονοι δικαιοσύνης·
 ὧν τὸ τέλος ἔσται
 κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν.

The first reason (# 237) includes the outsiders but also encompasses all similar individuals: οἱ γὰρ τοιοῦτοι ψευδαπόστολοι, ἐργάται δόλιοι, μετασχηματιζόμενοι εἰς ἀποστόλους Χριστοῦ, *for such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.* In this mini-vice list the apostles levels harsh condemnation of these outsiders. Now did they say this about themselves? Certainly not! Their claims were the opposite of what Paul asserts.⁶²

⁶¹“As well as comparing themselves with one another (10:12), Paul’s opponents were apparently comparing themselves with Paul himself with regard to their respective financial relations with the Corinthians; they accepted support (see the introduction to this section), but Paul did not. In all probability they regarded themselves as on a par with Paul or superior to him (cf. 10:7, 10; 11:6, 22–23) in every area except one acutely embarrassing respect — he was financially independent of the Corinthians and not a burden on them. His resolute stance on financial support effectively deprived them of the opportunity to be known as those who were working at Corinth on precisely the same terms as he was. Recognizing their desire for parity of status, Paul simply reaffirms here in v. 12 his choice of independence and thus frustrates their longing for equality.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 767–768.]

⁶²“The explicit or implied antitheses between their claims (cf. μετασχηματίζομαι in vv. 13, 15) and the real situation may be set

See 10:7 for the first acknowledgement of their claims: ἐαυτῷ Χριστοῦ εἶναι. Also 11:23 for another acknowledgment of their claim: διάκονοι Χριστοῦ. The distinction between these two acknowledgments of what they claimed and what Paul asserts here in vv. 12–15 lies in how each set is presented. In 10:7 and 11:23, their claim is structured around the rhetorical structure of if they claim these things I also claim them. They are not superior to me. But in 11:12–15 the pressing of differences is central. The assertions are uniformly negative with Paul evidently turning their positive claim on its head by negative assertion about who they really

are. His argumentative strategy here shifts to blunt condemning language. Most likely this is because he knows their weakness in regard to demanding money from the Corinthians in stark distinction to his unwillingness to take money from the church. It is this difference that unmasks the true identity of the outsiders. This is exactly why Paul declares that he will

continue following his policy of not accepting money from the Corinthians, and other believing communities in the process of being set up through evangelization.

First, he labels these people as ψευδαπόστολοι, *false apostles*. This is the exclusive use of ψευδαπόστολος inside the NT. The NT writers including Paul prefer the label ψευδοπροφήτης, *false prophet*, with some eleven uses for personal labels of individuals falsely teaching God’s truth.⁶³ One should note that across the NT more emphasis is placed on false testimony and the action of speaking it.⁶⁴ Here Paul is dealing with individuals out as follows.1

Claim	Reality
v. 13 ἀπόστολοι Χριστοῦ	ψευδαπόστολοι
v. 13 [ἐργάται ἀληθεῖς]	ἐργάται δόλιοι
v. 15 διάκονοι δικαιοσύνης (cf. v. 23, διάκονοι Χριστοῦ)	οἱ διάκονοι αὐτοῦ [= Σατανᾶ]

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 770–771.]

⁶³Other related personal labels include ψεύστης, *liar* (12x); ψευδόχριστος, *false messiah* (2x); ψευδόμαρτυς, *false witness* (2x); ψευδοδιδάσκαλος, *false teacher* (1x); ψευδάδελφος, *false brother* (2x).

⁶⁴ψευδής, *lying* (3x); ψευδολόγος, *lying* (1x); ψεύδομαι, *I lie* (16x); ψευδομαρτυρέω, *I give false witness* (6x); ψευδομαρτυρία,

claiming the status of ἀπόστολος and thus the personal label ψευδαπόστολοι is more appropriate.⁶⁵ One of the open questions is whether ψευδαπόστολοι in v. 13 links up to ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων, super apostles, in v. 5. If the two reference the same group of outsiders, then these individuals were claiming to function as true representatives of the Twelve back in Jerusalem. But if the v. 5 ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων refers to the Jerusalem leadership then these ψευδαπόστολοι in v. 13 were likely assuming apostolic status on their own. But one can't say with clarity what the connection between the Jerusalem leadership and these outsiders was.

Paul's third label, μετασχηματιζόμενοι εἰς ἀποστόλους Χριστοῦ, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ, would seemingly point to the self appointed status of apostles by the outsiders themselves. The verb μετασχηματίζω denotes the 'complete re-structuring' of something into something else very different. It has a positive meaning in Phil. 3:21 in defining the transformation of our earthly body into the resurrection body as the parousia of Christ. But here with 3 of the 5 uses (vv. 13, 14, 15) of μετασχηματίζω in chapter eleven the negative meaning is used in the sense of disguise with intention to deceive. Two of the three uses refer to these outsiders disguising themselves as ἀποστόλους Χριστοῦ, **apostles of Christ**, and as διάκονοι δικαιοσύνης, **ministers of righteousness**. In the middle stands Satan who disguises himself as ἄγγελον φωτός, **an angel of light**. Paul's contention is that in reality these outsiders are both ψευδαπόστολοι, **false apostles**, and οἱ διάκονοι αὐτοῦ, **Satan's ministers**.

Sandwiched between ψευδαπόστολοι and μετασχηματιζόμενοι εἰς ἀποστόλους Χριστοῦ stands ἐργάται δόλιοι, **deceitful workers**. The adjective δόλιος, -ία, -ον, although used only here in the NT, denotes the meaning of **deceitful and treacherous**. It belongs to a much more extensively used word group with the meaning of deceit, as Louw-Nida, *The Greek Lexicon*,

false testimony (2x); ψεῦδος, lie (20x); ψευδώνυμος, falsely labeled (1x); ψεῦσμα, lying (1x). For the words with the ψευδο- prefix see Louw-Nida Greek lexicon topics 33.253-255.

⁶⁵“That Paul's opponents claimed to be genuine ἀπόστολοι is evident from the latter part of this verse. He bluntly rejects their claim by calling them ψευδαπόστολοι, ‘false apostles,’³ a NT hapax legomenon and probably also a Pauline coinage.⁴ In Paul's view they were ‘false’ because: they lacked the authorization of Christ (cf. 1:1); they preached a ‘different gospel’ (11:4); they were trespassing on foreign territory, Paul's own domain in Corinth (cf. 10:15–16); they used cunning, deceptive techniques (cf. δόλιοι, 11:13) to achieve their goals (cf. 4:2); they assumed disguises (μετασχηματίζομαι, 11:13, 15); they excelled in domination (11:20), not service (cf. 11:8), and so failed to reflect the character of Christ (cf. 10:1; 13:4).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 772.]

topics 88.152-88.159 illustrate. This label highlights the nature of the work of these ψευδαπόστολοι as deceiving the Corinthians into believing they were authentic messengers of Christ.⁶⁶ Thus the issue of credibility for Paul as a called apostle was being raised at Corinth. He then puts distance between himself and these false outsiders and appeals to their insistence on receiving support from the Corinthians and his refusal to take money from them as marking the difference between legitimacy and illegitimacy. These people share the deceitfulness of the sophist philosophers seeking to con listeners out of their money.

The second justifying statement in v. 14 is structured with classical Greek eloquence. The elliptical phrase καὶ οὐ θαῦμα, **and no wonder!** is idiomatic with ἐστὶν implied.⁶⁷ The interjection functions as a transition into the second justifying declaration. The readers of this letter should not be surprised that the outsiders are false since they are servants of Satan himself who has the ability to disguise himself as an angel of light.

This second declaration, αὐτὸς γὰρ ὁ σατανᾶς μετασχηματίζεται εἰς ἄγγελον φωτός, **for Satan himself disguises himself into an angel of light**, picks up a motif out of Diaspora Jewish writings regarding Satan's ability to ‘restructure himself’ (μετασχηματίζω) into an angel of light.⁶⁸ Yet Paul in using this Jewish motif does not de-

⁶⁶“In the early church ἐργάτης (‘worker’) was a technical term denoting a person engaged in Christian service,⁶ particularly missionary activity.⁷ No doubt Paul's rivals saw themselves as ἐργάται in this sense, but for him they were ‘workers’ only in the rudimentary sense that they were ‘at work’ within the Corinthian church. Because this ἔργον was marked by deceit, treachery, and cunning, they are called ἐργάται δόλιοι, ‘deceitful workers,’ ‘dishonest workmen’ (BAGD 203b; Goodspeed), ‘crooked in all their practices’ (NEB).⁸ Isaacs' rendering, ‘industrious schemers,’ neatly highlights (by inversion) the significant word in the expression. Just as certain agitators in Rome did not serve the Lord Christ but were slaves to their own appetites and deceived (ἐξαπατῶσιν) the hearts of innocent people with their smooth and flattering words (Rom. 16:17–18), so at about the same time (the mid-50's) these ‘workers’ in Corinth were similarly self-serving, deceiving the minds of the Corinthians (cf. 11:3), diverting their affections from Christ (cf. 11:3), and seeking to reduce them to subservience (11:20).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 772–773.]

⁶⁷“ἐστὶν is frequently omitted in exclamations (‘And no wonder!’ REB).¹² θαῦμα, from θάωμαι, ‘I gaze at in wonder,’ refers to what prompts amazement, so that τὰ θαύματα is used of jugglers' tricks.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 773.]

⁶⁸“The motif of Satan's disguising himself as an angel is found in Jewish sources. In the *Life of Adam and Eve*, in the story of Satan's second temptation of Eve, after the Fall, we read: ‘Then Satan was angry and transformed himself into the brightness of

pend on the legend's credibility for his claim here.⁶⁹ The phrase ἄγγελον φωτός has several possible meanings, the clearest and most likely one is that of a heavenly messenger.⁷⁰ In reality he represents darkness but

angels and went away to the Tigris River to Eve.²⁷⁵ And in the *Apocalypse of Moses* he appears to Eve over the wall of paradise, 'in the form of an angel.'²⁷⁶ Windisch suggests that Paul will have known the legend somewhat in the form in which it occurs in the *Life of Adam and Eve*.²⁷⁷ Other commentators likewise suppose that some form of it lies in the background of the apostle's thinking in this verse.²⁷⁸ Plümmer, however, claims that it is unnecessary to suppose Paul to be referring to any such legend. He argues that the use of the present tense μετασχηματίζεται points to Satan's habitual activity, not to any specific instance of it, and that the Corinthians (few of whom were Jews) could not be expected to understand such an allusion to Jewish legend.²⁷⁹ But reference to Satan's habitual activity may well have been extrapolated from the story of a particular occasion of it, and the force of what Paul is saying does not absolutely depend upon his readers' knowledge of its legendary background. The precise expression ἄγγελος φωτός appears to be unique to this context, although it derives, no doubt, from the general idea that angels make their appearance in a state of radiant glory: see, e.g., Lk 2:9; 24:4.²⁸⁰ The phrase could be Paul's own formulation,²⁸¹ but this is not certain.²⁸² [Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 695–696.]

⁶⁹“What is the source of this description of one of Satan's techniques?”¹⁴ Neither Gen. 3:1–5 nor Job 1:6–12 nor 1 Kgs. 22:19–23 offers a precise parallel.¹⁵ It is in the pseudepigrapha that we find the closest conceptual parallels. For the idea of Satan or the devil adopting a disguise, we find in the *Testament of Job* (first century B.C. or A.D.) no fewer than four different disguises mentioned—as a beggar (6:4), as the king of the Persians (17:2), as a great whirlwind (20:5), and as a bread seller (23:1).¹⁶ The notion of an angelic disguise is found in two places (first century A.D.). In the *Life of Adam and Eve (Vita)* 9:1 Satan transforms himself 'into the brightness of angels' before beguiling Eve for a second time. In the Greek text of the *Life*, the *Apocalypse of Moses*, Satan comes to Eve over the walls of Paradise 'in the form of an angel (ἐν εἶδει ἀγγέλου)' (*Apocalypse of Moses* 17:1) and tempts her to disobey God's command (cf. Gen. 3:3). But we need not posit Paul's reliance on these Jewish traditions for the expression ἄγγελος φωτός.¹⁷ It could be a Pauline coinage, prompted on the one hand by the common association of Satan with darkness (6:14–15) and deception (4:4) and of God or Christ with light and illumination (4:6; Rom. 13:12, 14; Eph. 5:11–14), and on the other hand by his own experience and observation of Satan's various stratagems (2:11).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 774–775.]

⁷⁰“ἄγγελον φωτός could be rendered in four ways (here listed in ascending order of probability).

1. 'A messenger from God' (cf. Schlatter 647), where φωτός is metonymy for 'God' and the genitive is subjective.

2. 'A messenger of [the world of] light' (cf. BAGD 871d, 513c), where φωτός is either a possessive genitive ('belonging to') or a genitive of source ('from').

3. 'A shining angel' (Goodspeed), where φωτός is an adjectival or Semitic genitive, equivalent to φωτεινόν ('shining') (cf. Moule 175, 'perhaps').

seeks to present this as divine enlightenment to morals.⁷¹

4. 'An angel of light' (most EVV) or 'a messenger of light' (Martin 327), where the genitive is adjectival ('characterized by light') or possibly objective ('bringing light').

“Paul's point is that Satan habitually tries to achieve his villainous aims within the church by craftily assuming the guise of a heavenly emissary who embodies all that is upright and true. But while appearing to represent the realm of light (= purity and truth), in reality he represents the domain of darkness (= impurity and falsehood), which is his natural habitat (cf. 4:4; Acts 26:18; Eph. 6:12; Col. 1:13).”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 773–774.]

⁷¹σαταν, ὁ indecl. and σατανᾶς, ᾧ, ὁ (the former=Hebr. שָׂטָן 3 Km 11:14; Just., D. 103, 5; the latter Sir 21:27, also TestSol 1:1 D al.; TestJob; Test12Patr; ApcMos 17; Just.=Aram. שָׂטָן; for σατανος Lk 11:18 P⁷⁵ read σατανας) literally 'adversary', in our lit. only as title or name: **(the) Satan**, in a very special sense, the enemy of God and all of those who belong to God, simply **Satan, the Enemy** (on the concept of Satan s. the lit. s.v. διάβολος 2), almost always w. the art. (B-D-F §254, 1), without it only in **Mk 3:23; Lk 22:3; 2 Cor 12:7** and in personal address.—**Mt 4:10** (here, as well as in the two passages from Mt and Mk near the end of this entry, without the art. and in the voc.); **Mk 1:13; 3:26; Lk 11:18; 22:31**. W. διάβολος of the same being **Rv 20:2**; cp. **2:9f**; Pol 7:1 (Just., A I, 28, 1 al.). The *Lawless One* (Antichrist) appears κατ' ἐνέργειαν τοῦ σατανᾶ **2 Th 2:9**. He incites people to evil (cp. Homeric usage LfgrE s.v. δαιμόνι[ος] col. 198; TestJob 41:5 Ἐλίους ἐμπνευσθεῖς ἐν τῷ Σ.; 23:11 ὁ Σ. ... ἐπλαγίαζεν αὐτῆς τὴν καρδίαν; cp. 26:6) **Mk 4:15; Ac 5:3; 1 Cor 7:5; 2 Cor 2:11; Rv 12:9**. Esp. guilty of instigating Judas' evil deed by entering into this disciple **Lk 22:3; J 13:27**. Causing sickness **Lk 13:16** (s. δέω 1b, end). Hence driven out in healings **Mt 12:26; Mk 3:23**. Hindering the apostle in his work **1 Th 2:18** (cp. Julian., Ep. 40 [68] p. 46, 19 Bidez-Cumont εἰ μὴ τι δαιμόνιον γένοιτο κώλυμα). Causing false beliefs to arise **1 Ti 5:15**; hence the one who denies the resurrection and judgment is called πρωτότοκος τοῦ σ. Pol 7:1; Polycarp uses the same expr. in speaking of Marcion, Epil Mosq 3. Persecutions of Christians are also inspired by Satan **Rv 2:13ab** (on the θρόνος τοῦ σ. s. θρόνος 1be); hence certain Judeans who were hostile to Christians are called συναγωγή τοῦ σ. **Rv 2:9; 3:9**. God will crush him **Ro 16:20**. Jesus saw Satan falling (or fallen) fr. heaven **Lk 10:18** (Burton, Moods and Tenses §146 [deZwaan §148]; FSpitta, ZNW 9, 1908, 160–63; CWebster, ET 57, '45/46, 52f: πεισ. is timeless and means 'I watched him fall'). Imprisoned, but freed again after a thousand years **Rv 20:7**. ὁ σ. μετασχηματίζεται εἰς ἄγγελον φωτός Satan disguises himself as an angel of light **2 Cor 11:14** (TestJob 6:4 μετασχηματισθεῖς εἰς ἐπάτιν a beggar; ApcMos 17 ἐγένετο ἐν εἶδει ἀγγέλου; s. μετασχηματίζω; on the subject s. Windisch ad loc.). ἄγγελος σατανᾶ **2 Cor 12:7** (UHeckel, ZNW 84, '93, 69–75); ἄγγελοι τοῦ σ. B 18:1 (ἄγγελος 2c). αἱ δυνάμεις τοῦ σ. I Eph 13:1 (δύναμις 5). τὰ βαθέα τοῦ σ. **Rv 2:24** (s. βαθύς 2). ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ σ. the power of Satan **Ac 26:18**; ending of Mk in the Freer ms. ln. 6 (ἐξουσία 2); ibid. ln. 2 ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος ... ὑπὸ τὸν σ. ἐστίν.—παραδοῦναι τινα τῷ σ. **1 Cor 5:5** (s. ὄλεθρος; cp. the Christ. ins New Docs 3, 83); **1 Ti 1:20** (s. on both passages παραδίδωμι 1b).—In **Mt 16:23; Mk 8:33** Peter is called Satan by Jesus, because his attempt to turn Jesus aside fr. his divine assign-

240 οὐ μέγα (ἐστίν)

εἰ καὶ οἱ διάκονοι αὐτοῦ μετασχηματίζονται
 | ὡς διάκονοι δικαιοσύνης·
 ὧν τὸ τέλος ἐστὶν
 κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν.

to be genuine Christians, even though they claimed to be Christian leaders.⁷³

In modern Christianity, whose tenden-

The inferential conjunction οὖν, then, in v. 15 draws an inference out of the preceding statement to make it explicit. And this is the connection of Satan to the outsiders at Corinth: οὐ μέγα οὖν εἰ καὶ οἱ διάκονοι αὐτοῦ μετασχηματίζονται ὡς διάκονοι δικαιοσύνης· ὧν τὸ τέλος ἐστὶν κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν, thus it's not anything great if his ministers disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

The introductory οὐ μέγα parallels οὐ θαῦμα in v. 14 as idiomatic expressions with similar meanings. οὐ θαῦμα is no wonder while οὐ μέγα is no great thing. Both convey the sense of it shouldn't be surprising that....⁷² This pair of idioms serve to link the two statements close together. This connection is defined directly by οὖν, the inferential coordinate conjunction. Verse 15 makes explicit something considered implicit in verse 14.

The idea connection here then becomes that it should not be surprising that Satan's servants disguise themselves given his tendency to use deceit. And verse 14 comes back to identify the Corinthian outsiders labeled in v. 13 as servants of Satan as well. The deceitful tendency to pretend to be someone one isn't (μετασχηματιζόμενοι, v. 13; μετασχηματίζεται, v. 14; μετασχηματίζονται, v. 15) flows through all three verses. Their pretense was centered on being ἀποστόλους Χριστοῦ, apostles of Christ, and διάκονοι δικαιοσύνης, servants of righteousness. But the reality was that they were ψευδαπόστολοι, false apostles, and οἱ διάκονοι αὐτοῦ, servants of Satan.

As Satan's servants, they will suffer the same eternal fate of Satan, eternal damnation: ὧν τὸ τέλος ἐστὶν κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν, whose end will be according to their works. The apostle makes it very clear by this declaration that he does not consider these outsiders at Corinth

ment to accept the consequences of his involvement with humanity has made him a tempter of a diabolical sort, who might thwart the divine plan of salvation. This metaph. usage relates to the striking verdict **Rv 2:9; 3:9** above (cp. διάβολος J 6:70; 8:44).—BNoack, Satanás u. Sotería '48. 1369–80 (lit.). DBS XII 1–47. DNP III 269. DELG. M-M. EDNT. TRE III 608f. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 916–917.]

⁷²“As with οὐ θαῦμα in v. 14, ἐστὶν is to be supplied with οὐ μέγα, which is litotes for ‘a simple thing’ (NEB) or ‘easy enough’ (REB).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 775.]

cy is the lowest common denominator for entrance into heaven, there exists a great need to hear Paul's stinging condemnation of those who in the name of Christ twist and pervert the Gospel of Christ. Change the Gospel and you show yourself to be a false teacher and phony Christian who is serving Satan and will suffer his fate in eternity. Of course in our situation, changing the Gospel means changing the biblical presentation of the Gospel rather than changing some man made theological version of it. Most of these are sufficiently off course to qualify as perversions of the Gospel to begin with, and desperately need to be changed.

Paul knew well that only in obedience to the apostolic Gospel can one discover eternal life and God's acceptance. Other messages may promise this but none can deliver it. Thus one's eternal destiny is at stake, not to mention the rich relationship with God through Christ in this world. The lost, pagan world needs to hear the correct message. These outsiders at Corinth were not bringing it, despise their claims of validity. The same holds true in our day as well.

10.2.3.3.2.4 Boasting from suffering, 11:16-33

16 Πάλιν λέγω, μή τις με δόξη ἄφρονα εἶναι· εἰ δὲ μή γε, κἂν ὡς ἄφρονα δέξασθέ με, ἵνα κἀγὼ μικρόν τι

⁷³“Having outlined the charges against his opponents (vv. 13–15a), Paul concludes with an oblique indication of their sentence (v. 15b).²⁷ Three comparable statements from later Pauline letters shed light on his meaning.

Rom. 3:8 ὧν τὸ κρίμα ἔνδικόν ἐστιν (“Their condemnation is just”) (concerning his slanderers).

Phil. 3:19 ὧν τὸ τέλος ἀπώλεια (“Their end is destruction”) (concerning the enemies of the cross of Christ).

2 Tim. 4:14 ἀποδώσει αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (“The Lord will repay him according to his deeds”) (concerning Alexander the coppersmith).

“From a comparison of these passages with 11:15b it becomes clear that at the future Great Unmasking of disguises it is the Lord Jesus himself (cf. 1 Cor. 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:6; 2 Thess. 1:8) who will preside and pass a sentence that determines the ‘end’ or ‘final destiny’ (τέλος) of Satan's agents. That sentence will involve their ‘destruction’ just as they themselves were destroying the temple of God at Corinth (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16–17), and it will be ‘just’ since the recompense meted out will accord with actual deeds performed (cf. 5:10),²⁸ not with false external appearances (cf. μετασχηματίζομαι in vv. 13, 15).”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 776.]

καυχήσωμαι. 17 ὁ λαλῶ, οὐ κατὰ κύριον λαλῶ ἀλλ' ὡς ἐν ἀφροσύνη, ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ὑποστάσει τῆς καυχήσεως. 18 ἐπεὶ πολλοὶ καυχῶνται κατὰ σάρκα, κἀγὼ καυχήσομαι. 19 ἡδέως γὰρ ἀνέχεσθε τῶν ἀφρόνων φρόνιμοι ὄντες· 20 ἀνέχεσθε γὰρ εἴ τις ὑμᾶς καταδουλοῖ, εἴ τις κατεσθίει, εἴ τις λαμβάνει, εἴ τις ἐπαίρεται, εἴ τις εἰς πρόσωπον ὑμᾶς δέρει. 21 κατὰ ἀτιμίαν λέγω, ὡς ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἡσθενήκαμεν.

Ἐν ᾧ δ' ἂν τις τολμᾷ, ἐν ἀφροσύνη λέγω, τολμῶ κἀγώ. 22 Ἑβραῖοι εἰσιν; κἀγώ. Ἰσραηλιταὶ εἰσιν; κἀγώ. σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ εἰσιν; κἀγώ. 23 διάκονοι Χριστοῦ εἰσιν; παραφρονῶν λαλῶ, ὑπὲρ ἐγώ· ἐν κόποις περισσοτέρως, ἐν φυλακαῖς περισσοτέρως, ἐν πληγαῖς υπερβαλλόντως, ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις. 24 Ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων πεντάκις τεσσαράκοντα παρὰ μίαν ἔλαβον, 25 τρις ἔρραβδίσθη, ἅπαξ ἐλιθάσθη, τρις ἐναυάγησα, νυχθήμερον ἐν τῷ βυθῷ πεποίηκα· 26 ὁδοιπορίαις πολλάκις, κινδύνοις ποταμῶν, κινδύνοις ληστῶν, κινδύνοις ἐκ γένους, κινδύνοις ἐξ ἐθνῶν, κινδύνοις ἐν πόλει, κινδύνοις ἐν ἐρημίᾳ, κινδύνοις ἐν θαλάσῃ, κινδύνοις ἐν ψευδαδέλφοις, 27 κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ, ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις πολλάκις, ἐν λιμῷ καὶ δίψει, ἐν νηστείαις πολλάκις, ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι· 28 χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτὸς ἢ ἐπίστασίς μοι ἢ καθ' ἡμέραν, ἢ μέριμνα πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν. 29 τίς ἀσθενεῖ καὶ οὐκ ἀσθενῶ; τίς σκανδαλίζεται καὶ οὐκ ἐγὼ πυροῦμαι; 30 εἰ καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, τὰ τῆς ἀσθενείας μου καυχήσομαι. 31 ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ οἶδεν, ὁ ὢν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι. 32 ἐν Δαμασκῷ ὁ ἐθνάρχης Ἀρέτα τοῦ βασιλέως ἐφρούρει τὴν πόλιν Δαμασκηνῶν πιάσαι με, 33 καὶ διὰ θυρίδος ἐν σαργάνῃ ἐχαλάσθη διὰ τοῦ τείχους καὶ ἐξέφυγον τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ.

16 I repeat, let no one think that I am a fool; but if you do, then accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little. 17 What I am saying in regard to this boastful confidence, I am saying not with the Lord's authority, but as a fool; 18 since many boast according to human standards, I will also boast. 19 For you gladly put up with fools, being wise yourselves! 20 For you put up with it when someone makes slaves of you, or preys upon you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or gives you a slap in the face. 21 To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that!

But whatever anyone dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they ministers of Christ? I am talking like a madman—I am a better one: with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless floggings, and often near death. 24 Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning.

Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; 26 on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers and sisters;e 27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked. 28 And, besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I am not indignant?

30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus (blessed be he forever!) knows that I do not lie. 32 In Damascus, the governor under King Aretas guarded the city of Damascus in order to seize me, 33 but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

This subunit continues the discussion but with a more central focus on Paul's own experience. The initial statement (# 241) sets up the discussion. Then amplification follows in statement #s 242-244. Then a pair of justifying statements (#s 245-246) support these declarations. An acknowledgement of weakness in # 247 finishes up the first unit of vv. 16-20. The second small unit of thought expression begins in v. 21b (#248). This topic sentence sets up the following discussion of

241 11.16 **Πάλιν λέγω,**
μή τις με δόξη ἀφρονα εἶναι·
δὲ
εἰ μή γε,
κἂν ὡς ἀφρονα
δέξασθέ με,
ἵνα κἀγὼ μικρὸν τι καυχήσωμαι.

242 11.17 **ὁ λαλῶ,**
οὐ κατὰ κύριον
λαλῶ
ἀλλ'

243 - ---- **(λαλῶ)**
ὡς ἐν ἀφροσύνη,
ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ὑποστάσει τῆς καυχήσεως.

244 11.18 **κἀγὼ καυχήσομαι.**
ἐπεὶ πολλοὶ καυχῶνται
κατὰ σάρκα,

245 11.19 **ἀνέχεσθε τῶν ἀφρόνων**
γὰρ
ἡδέως
φρόνιμοι ὄντες·

246 11.20 **ἀνέχεσθε**
εἰ τις ὑμᾶς καταδουλοῖ,
εἰ τις κατεσθίει,
εἰ τις λαμβάνει,
εἰ τις ἐπαίρεται,
εἰ τις εἰς πρόσωπον ὑμᾶς δέρει.

11.21 κατὰ ἀτιμίαν
247 λέγω,
ὡς ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἠσθενήκαμεν.

Ἐν ᾧ δ' ἂν τις τολμᾷ,
248 τολμῶ κάγώ.

249 11.22 Ἑβραῖοί εἰσιν;
250 κάγώ.

251 Ἰσραηλῖται εἰσιν;
252 κάγώ.

253 σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ εἰσιν;
254 κάγώ.

255 11.23 δῖακονοὶ Χριστοῦ εἰσιν;
παρὰ φρονῶν
256 λαλῶ,
257 ὑπὲρ ἐγώ (εἰμί) ·
ἐν κόποις
περισσοτέρως,
ἐν φυλακαῖς
περισσοτέρως,
ἐν πληγαῖς
ὑπερβαλλόντως,
ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις.

11.24 Ἐπὶ Τουδαίων
258 πεντάκις τεσσεράκοντα
παρὰ μίαν
ἔλαβον,

259 11.25 τρὶς
ἔρραβδίσθην,
ἄπαξ
260 ἐλιθάσθην,
τρὶς
261 ἐναυάγησα,
νυχθήμερον
ἐν τῷ βυθῷ
262 πεποίηκα ·
263 11.26 (ἡμῶν)
ὁδοιπορίαις πολλάκις,
κινδύνοις ποταμῶν,
κινδύνοις ληστῶν,
κινδύνοις ἐκ γένους,
κινδύνοις ἐξ ἐθνῶν,
κινδύνοις ἐν πόλει,
κινδύνοις ἐν ἐρημίᾳ,
κινδύνοις ἐν θαλάσσει,
κινδύνοις ἐν ψευδαδέλφοις,
11.27 κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ,
ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις πολλάκις,
ἐν λιμῷ καὶ δίψει,
ἐν νηστείαις πολλάκις,
ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι ·

boasting in weakness in statements #s 249-274 (vv. 22-33).

Thus statement #s 241-247 (vv.16-21a) rather apologetically set up this section (vv. 16-33) on boasting, while #s 248-274 (vv. 21b-33) take the boasting in an unexpected direction, contrary to that of the outsiders: boasting about weaknesses. Ultimately this contributes further to Paul's distancing of himself from the outsiders. With minimal reflection the Corinthian readers should then be able to distinguish between the authentic and false messengers of God.

The literary character of 11:1-12:10 has been investigated extensively again the backdrop of classical Greek patterns of rhetorical argumentation.⁷⁴

⁷⁴“The form of this section of the letter has been the subject of some investigation as part of a wider interest in Paul's use of Greek rhetorical patterns and devices. The features we are concerned with are chiefly irony, invective, parody, diatribe, antithesis, paradox, lists of trials, and expostulation. Chaps. 10–13 contain several examples of these, but it is in 11:1–12:11 that Paul's writing takes on the cast of an extended appeal, best described as a ‘Fool's Speech’ (Narrenrede; the limits of the passage are set by the catchword ἀφροσύνη, ‘foolishness,’ in 11:1 and 12:11 [ἄφρων], and so an example of *inclusio*). Zmijewski has offered the latest and most detailed treatment, providing a useful overview of study,⁴¹⁴ since Weiss.⁴¹⁵ The landmark contributions may be set down as these:

“(1) Weiss's own work, which noted the sentence structures in Paul's controversial letters, was a ground breaking enterprise. He perceived that rhetorical forms could be more easily appreciated by the ear than the eye, since they were essentially a style of the spoken word (*Sprechstil*). Formal characteristics such as poetic couplets (*parallelismus membrorum*), stanzas,⁴¹⁶ and Cynic-Stoic diatribe, or debating style, in Paul were first recognized by Weiss.

“(2) Norden's equally pioneering works explored the evidence in Paul's letters of indebtedness to the background of classical Greek forms,⁴¹⁷ and the apostle was firmly set in the milieu of Greek antiquity as far as some features of his letter-writing habits were concerned.

“(3) Bultmann explored Paul's use of the argumentative feature of diatribe, especially with reference to Epictetus,⁴¹⁸ whose works had been the study of Bonhöffer.⁴¹⁹ In particular, Bultmann noted that diatribe is a considerable feature of rhetorical antithesis,⁴²⁰ but it was left to later investigators⁴²¹ to develop the theological purpose served by this rhetorical figura, ‘form.’

“(4) Paul's rhetoric as a theme of his letter was popularized by Deissmann,⁴²² and his Jewish-Hellenistic background was brought out as a key to his thought, but at the expense of understanding his corporate relationships with the churches and his polemics.

“(5) Paul's role as a child of the Jewish-Hellenistic synagogue has been more recently investigated in the work by Thyen,⁴²³ where the use of LXX in the synagogue was shown to have influenced the apostle's way of composition and argument.

“(6) Bujard offered to explore a threefold step into Paul's spiritual and literary background:⁴²⁴ the likenesses and differences seen when his career was influenced by (a) his ancestral home, (b) his synagogue training and experience, and (c) his life in Tarsus. The author's hope was to secure a ‘unified perspec-

11.28 χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτὸς
264 (εἰμί) ἢ ἐπίστασίς μοι
ἢ καθ' ἡμέραν,
265 (εἰμί) ἢ μέριμνα πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν.

266 11.29 τίς ἀσθενεῖ
καὶ
267 οὐκ ἀσθενῶ;
268 τίς σκανδαλίζεται
καὶ
269 οὐκ ἐγὼ πυροῦμαι;

11.30 Εἰ καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ,
270 τὰ τῆς ἀσθενείας μου καυχῆσομαι.

271 11.31 ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ οἶδεν,
ὁ ὧν εὐλόγητος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας,
ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι.

11.32 ἐν Δαμασκῷ
272 ὁ ἐθνάρχης Ἀρέτα τοῦ βασιλέως ἐφρούρει τὴν πόλιν Δαμασκηνῶν
πιάσαι με,
καὶ
διὰ θυρίδος
ἐν σαργάνῃ
273 ἐχαλάσθη
διὰ τοῦ τείχους
καὶ
274 ἐξέφυγον τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ.

This exploration is helpful up

part of the 'wise fool' to answer the charge that he is a false apostle.

"In Hellenistic debate between the sophist and the philosopher (typified in Socrates), the latter is often caricatured as 'a fool' because he was believed to have lost the measure (μέτρον) of himself and his world. This appears to be the charge against Paul, who replies in the style of the philosopher responding to the sophist. He will not boast of himself; but if he does, it is to show up his opponents who claimed ecstatic experiences, including an 'ascent to heaven,' as part of their special equipment. Paul recalls that he too can 'boast' of this experience, but he argues that even this paranormal event proves nothing regarding his credibility as an apostle, and in any case he refuses to divulge the mystic secrets he overheard (12:4). Only in his weakness will he glory; and that becomes the criterion of his apostolate. His adopting the language and thought-forms of his opponents serves only to undercut the value they gave to the sophists' role (12:1; regarding καυχᾶσθαι, 'boast': 'there is nothing

to be gained by it').⁴³²

“(7) Five special features have been fruitfully considered in more recent times, and they are especially deserving of notice since they bear directly on the exegesis and understanding of 2 Cor 10–13.

“(a) N. Schneider gave special attention to one important feature of Paul’s style, ‘antithesis.’⁴²⁶ He sought to show that, in contrast to ancient rhetorical forms in the classical Greek writers, Paul’s debt was more in the direction of Koine Greek and the OT-late Jewish texts, and has a strong theological interest.⁴²⁷

“(b) H. D. Betz’s is a monograph devoted to the last four chapters of 2 Corinthians, which section he finds best designated ‘an apology in letter-form,’ sharing the literary features of ‘anti-sophist tendency.’⁴²⁸ The opponents of Paul are cast in the role of sophists, while Paul himself is portrayed as the philosopher in this debate.⁴²⁹ As far as the setting and interpretation of 2 Cor 10–13 are concerned, Betz makes three points central: (i) the entire ‘praise speech,’ where Paul is ‘boasting,’ is conformed to the rhetorical model of περιαιτολογία, ‘speaking about oneself,’ known from Plutarch;⁴³⁰ (ii) the ‘catalogue of trials’ (περιστάσεις; see on 6:4) in 11:23–33 shares in the literary form of the Cynic-Stoic diatribe; (iii) the section 12:2–4 is a parody on a ‘journey to heaven’ motif, portrayed in highly ironic tones, while 12:7b–10 is a parodied ‘aretalogy,’ an encomium of praise devoted to gods, heroes, and illustrious people in Greco-Roman society by extolling their virtues and powers.⁴³¹ Paul uses the form of this topos only to offset it by the ‘signs of the apostle’ in 12:12 (see Comment on 12:1–10), a verse which highlights his ‘endurance’ and leads to his ‘weaknesses’ (13:1–3). This is the ‘proof’ (δοκιμή) or evidence he brings out to refute their appeal to their ‘signs’ or credentials. He plays the

ing to be gained by it’).⁴³²

“(c) The strictly autobiographical dimension of Paul gets only a minor place in Betz’s appeal to rhetorical patterns such as apology and parody. On the contrary, Zmijewski seeks to emphasize the part played by ‘boasting in weakness’ (11:30; 12:9) in Paul’s own life experience.⁴³³ The key to his use of rhetorical forms is biography, since he is at pains always to point out that the ‘Narrenrede,’ ‘fool’s speech,’ is after all only one ingredient in a letter written by Paul to a specific congregation facing specific trials. Hence the dialogue element must be coupled with the rhetorical parallels.

“(d) Zmijewski’s chief contention (against Betz) is reinforced by Kleinknecht, the latest writer on the style of 2 Cor 10–13.⁴³⁴ He stresses the epistolary, autobiographical, and apologetic elements, but he also introduces a wider concern to establish a theological setting for those four chapters. This he finds in the role of the suffering apostle who sides with God in the struggle against his foes.⁴³⁵ The Denkrahen, ‘frame of thought,’ of Paul is basically Jewish, and what moves him primarily is a desire to stress the notion of ‘glorying in weakness’ as a way of understanding his own life and ministry; hence the biographical dimension is the key.⁴³⁶

“(e) Judge, with Forbes and P. Marshall, has set Paul’s boasting on the background of his appeal to a sophisticated, rhetorically trained congregation at Corinth. Paul’s use of set forms is no accident since he is one of them (in spite of 10:10), and his adopting the role of a fool is explained as a tactic of ‘non-conformity’ (Marshall’s term). When he disavows rhetoric, he does so self-consciously since he believes such display would be incongruent with his gospel and his idea of apostleship. But he is at heart a Hellenist who differs from his opponents and the Corinthians only on the single point that he is moderate in the claims he makes, while they

to a point, so long as Paul is not pigeon-holed into a set form and limited in his creative ability to express himself in unique ways without being chained to some particular set form. At minimal what should emerge from such an investigation is an awareness that Paul was no fool when it comes to presenting one's viewpoint in opposition to the outsiders at Corinth. His arguing here from 'a fool's perspective' merely reflects his exceptional skills to be able to adopt such a perspective and make a persuasive case through it.

In v. 16, Paul begins with Πάλιν λέγω, *again I say*. The adverb Πάλιν most likely reaches back to the opening statement in v. 1, "Ὁφελον ἀνείχεσθέ μου μικρόν τι ἀφροσύνης· ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνέχεσθέ μου, *I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me!* Thus vv. 16-33 pick up the discussion of boasting again of vv. 1-15 but with a different twist.

This opening statement is qualified by μή τις με δόξη ἄφρονα εἶναι, *let no one consider me to be foolish*. Key to the sense of this statement is Paul's use of the aorist prohibitive subjunctive verb δόξη and the precise meaning of ἄφρονα from ἄφρων. English is severely limited in conveying clearly what Paul actually said here.

The verb phrase μή δόξη is the rare *third person* usage of the prohibitive subjunctive mood verb in the ingressive aorist function. This very intense express conveys in English something close to *Don't let anyone even start to consider...* The verb δοκέω posses two perspectives on forming an opinion. First, others form an opinion about someone (transitive verb usage): to consider. Second, the subject forms his own opinion that is projected to others (intransitive verb usage): to seem to be. Here contextually the first meaning is clearly the intended meaning by Paul. Although in reality Paul's critics in the Corinthian church did consider him to be foolish, his demand is that no one even consider thinking this way about him.

The English words *foolish, fool*, are quite misleading as translations of ἄφρονα.⁷⁵ Interestingly φρήν literally specifies the body part diaphragm, which in Paul's world

(the opponents in 11:6; 12:11) are men of ὕβρις, 'pride' (but they accepted this character since for them it was a virtue).⁴³⁷ The rivals of Paul are 'hybrids'—but this is not a pejorative term so much as a tribute to the self-praise that was native to Greek self-esteem. Marshall questions whether or not Paul knew how to handle them. Yet his self-chosen response to exclude Paul's theology is a weakness in an otherwise illuminating study."

[Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 543–546.]

⁷⁵Part of the word group † φρήν, † ἄφρων, † ἀφροσύνη, φρονέω, φρόνημα, † φρόνησις, † φρόνιμος [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:220.]

was considered to be the location of mental activity for humans. The diaphragm controlled the breath and thus was understood to control mental activities along with the breath. The derivative meaning of φρήν then came to be mind.⁷⁶ The concept evolves into probes of sick minds or sound minds and how the φρήν functions either positively or negatively. By the time of the classical philosophers pure intellectual thinking shifts to σοφία, while φρήν and its cognates define less intellectual and more 'practical' thinking. This is not inherently bad thinking, but neither is it intellectual thinking which is the ultimate virtue to seek. The derivative noun φρόνησις comes to be used dominantly in reference to this.

In the Greek speaking Jewish background of the LXX and other writings μωρός occurs more often as human intellect over against God's understanding. Several negative formations of φρήν, such as ἄφρων, ἀφροσύνη, ἄφρονες et als., surface in designating those who deny God and are called scoffers. Thus φρόνησις and its positive cognates comes to be associated with God and the knowledge of Him.⁷⁷ It is the divine gift produced by σοφία

⁷⁶“ φρήν, usually plur. φρένες ‘diaphragm,’¹ was early regarded as the seat of intellectual and spiritual activity. The diaphragm determines the nature and strength of the breath and hence also the human spirit and its emotions. In Hom. φρένες² means ‘inner part,’ ‘mind,’ ‘consciousness,’ ‘understanding’ etc. and like the other terms for inner organs it is the agent of spiritual and intellectual experiences. φρένες and derivatives soon lost altogether (or almost so) their physical sense. In Hom.³ the group is nearly always used for purely intellectual activity: θυμός ref. to emotion or impulse with no rational components, and ἦτορ or καρδιά to the disposition. Expressions like κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν, Il., 1, 193; 11, 411; Od., 1, 294; 4, 117 etc. are for Hom. typical means of denoting clearly intellectual and emotional involvement.⁴

“The meaning ‘mind’ etc. occurs in many compounds such as ἄφρων,⁵ ‘without understanding,’ or εὐθρων ‘with a good or cheerful mind,’ ‘in a friendly or well-disposed way,’ cf. the abstract ἀφροσύνη, εὐφροσύνη and the verbs ἀφρονέω ‘to be irrational,’ εὐφρονέω ‘to be well-disposed.’ We also find the simple φρονέω,⁶ which is already common in Hom. esp. in the part. and which usually means ‘to think’ and can also describe the inner attitude. One also finds the sense ‘to plan’ in Hom., but the real development of this is later. In class. times we find the adj. φρόνιμος ‘understanding,’ and the two verbal nouns φρόνημα ‘thought,’ also ‘disposition,’ and φρόνησις ‘thinking,’ ‘reason,’ ‘cleverness’ etc. φρένες retains for the most part the less precise sense of ‘inner attitude.’ In large measure later development is influenced by Hom.”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:220–221.]

⁷⁷“ As true φρόνησις is from God, God's φρόνησις is unsearchable, Is. 40:28, cf. Is. 40:14 ἈΣΘ (LXX σύνεσις). In His power (ισχύς) God has established the earth, in His ‘wisdom’ (σοφία) He has set up the inhabited world, in His ‘understanding’ (φρόνησις) He has spread out heaven, Jer. 10:12. The three terms are to be seen as a unity in view of the Hbr. parallelism. At Prv. 3:19 f. we have σοφία, φρόνησις, αἴσθησις, ‘wisdom,’ ‘understanding’ and ‘knowledge,’³⁶ three virtues which in their theoretically intellectual and

that can be rendered ‘understanding’ in English. In the Hellenistic Judaism of Paul’s day, φρόνησις is perceived as a gift from God that is to be exercised in making correct decisions to live by God’s Law. Its opposite ἀφροσύνη defines failure to use this divine endowment and thus making bad decisions leading into drunkenness, sickness etc. Religiously it can lead to denial of God and adoption of paganism.

The negative terms ἄφρων and ἀφροσύνη then in Paul’s writings in the NT take on the idea of failure to use the divine gift of φρόνησις for making correct, helpful decisions.⁷⁸

practically ethical character cannot be separated conceptually in the OT, or systematically integrated into a doctrine of virtues, even though the Gk. reader or translator might be inclined to do this under philosophical influence. Rather, the heaping up of terms is an indication of the many-sidedness of aspects. Thus φρόνησις and σοφία and many synon. finally constitute a unity as a depiction of the religiously determined practical wisdom of the OT. The same applies correspondingly to their negative counterparts. φρόνησις is the principle of creation; God gives man a share in the wisdom of the divine Creator, cf. esp. Prv. 1–9. When חָכְמָה is transl. by φρόνησις, emphasis on practical reason seems to be in view. Even proverbs which have in the first instance a profane character, e.g., Prv. 10:20 Σ; 12:8 Σ; 11:12; 14:6, 29; 17:27; 18:15; 19:8 etc. acquire in the religiously stressed context their true and definitive significance, for acc. to Prv. 10:23 LXX (HT different) eternal σοφία produces ‘understanding’ φρόνησις in man, cf. 9:6b. Acc. to 8:14 wisdom claims ‘understanding’ as its possession, while the HT sees the two to be identical, cf. 8:1.37 In both cases LXX subordinates φρόνησις to σοφία.

“Sir. 1:4 takes up the wisdom speculations of Prv. 8:22 and posits σοφία and σύνεσις φρονήσεως as eternal values. The macarisms of the numbers sayings in Sir. 25:9–11 have an immanent character, but φρόνησις and σοφία are still subordinate to the fear of God, cf. 19:22, 24. Proverbs like Sir. 20:1, 27; 21:17, 21, 24 f.; 38:4 etc. belong to the sphere of secular practical wisdom.³⁸ Wis. 7:16, 22, 25 regards σοφία and φρόνησις as hypostases.³⁹ φρόνησις is under σοφία but retains its metaphysical character. In 8:5f. it is the architect of creation like wisdom. In 8:7 σωφροσύνη, φρόνησις, ἀνδρεία and δικαιοσύνη are the four chief virtues. In 4 Macc. 1:2 φρόνησις is the supreme virtue; the other three are interpolated in 1:6.⁴⁰ Acc. to Wis. 8:8–21 φρόνησις is in v. 21 the presupposition of the ruler recognising as such the divine gift of φρόνησις (v. 18) which is imparted to him in intercourse with wisdom and which as political sagacity determines all his actions.⁴¹”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:225–226.]

⁷⁸“In R. 2:17–20 Paul enumerates the religious and moral claims of Judaism so that he can test the reality by them.⁶⁵ Thus the phrase παιδευτῆς ἀφρόνων is not in the first instance Pauline usage. Rather, ἄφρονες along with νήπιτοι (→ IV, 919, 31 ff.) contains from the standpoint of the pious Jew a judgment on the pagan world around which is designed to express the accusation of ungodliness → IV, 845, 20 ff.; V, 619, 35 ff. In 1 Cor. 15:36 Paul is not pronouncing a definitive judgment with his ἄφρων. It is a rhetorical appeal for true understanding. To cling to the negative view is to adopt the position of the ἄφρων which is close to that of ungodliness, cf. R. 1:22; 1 C. 1:18 ff.; → IV, 845, 12 ff.

“In 2 C. 11 and 12 ἄφρων and ἀφροσύνη are used in self-criticism. The apostle’s ἀφροσύνη is that in the difficult conflicts with the church or congregation he apparently or provisionally sets him-

The ἄφρων and ἀφροσύνη of individuals means they make incredibly bad decisions.

When Paul then indicates his intention to play the role of ἄφρων, it is against this background that his words have meaning. The modern English word fool normally conveys the idea of being ignorant or dumb, i.e., having no understanding. But ἄφρων conveys something very different. One clearly possesses φρόνησις as a divine gift, but has chosen to misuse it to make bad decisions which then becomes ἀφροσύνη (11:1, 17) and ἄφρων (11:16). Paul momentarily ‘plays the fool’ here not out of ignorance but out of making dumb decisions following the example of the Corinthian outsiders. The deliberate rejection of God’s gift of φρόνησις in the background Jewish heritage adds a jab and harshness of tone to what Paul says.

This lays underneath Paul’s reluctance to venture into playing the roll of the fool (v. 16b): εἰ δὲ μή γε, κἂν ὡς ἄφρονα δέξασθέ με, ἵνα κἀγὼ μικρόν τι καυχῆσωμαι, **But if indeed someone does, receive me as though I were foolish, so that I may do a little bit of boasting.** He asks for their momentary indulgence of him to boast like the Corinthian outsiders. He will quickly move beyond this as 12:11 asserts: Γέγονα ἄφρων, ὑμεῖς με ἠναγκάσατε. ἐγὼ γὰρ ὠφέλιον ὑφ’ ὑμῶν συνίστασθαι· οὐδὲν γὰρ ὑστέρησα τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων εἰ καὶ οὐδὲν εἰμι, **I have been a fool! You forced me to it. Indeed you should have been the ones commending me, for I am not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing.** But between 11:16 and 12:11 the fool’s role centers on two things:

self on the carnal plane of self-boasting rather than on the spiritual plane. This is what Paul has in view when he speaks of his ἀφροσύνη in 2 C. 11:1.⁶⁶ In the situation at Corinth foolish boasting (→ III, 652 13 ff.) before God and men has become necessary for him, 11:16f. The ‘clever’ Corinthians φρόνιμοι ὄντες have submitted to the reckless claims of fools ἄφρονες, 11:19.⁶⁷ But Paul—speaking again in human folly, and hence improperly—will surpass them all, 11:21; 12:11. He does this by pointing to his sufferings. Hence it is no folly, but the truth, 12:6. He thus rejects the term ἄφρων as applicable to himself, though without developing the same dialectical use of the term as he does in relation to the μωρία (→ IV, 846, 23 ff.; VII, 354, 6 ff.) of the Gospel and of himself in 1 C. 1:18 ff.

“The reference in Eph. 5:17 is to the walk of the community. ἀφροσύνη as foolish or careless conduct is contrasted with σύνεσις as prudent observance of the will of God. Even members of the community can still become ἄφρονες again. ἄφρονες is parallel to ἄσοφοι, which occurs as a hapax legomenon in the NT at 5:15. ἄφρονες, as a warning against an impious or ungodly mind, catches up the ἄσοφοι, just as the exhortation to walk as σοφοί is theologically interpreted by the συνίετε τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου. According to 1 Pt. 2:15 it is God’s will that the community should silence by good acts the ignorance of men who are without understanding. Faith in God is to bear witness to itself and to overcome ungodliness by good works.”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:231–232.]

boasting about his weakness (11:17-33) and about extraordinary spiritual experiences (12:1-10). Very importantly this material is Paul 'playing the fool's role' and not something he ordinarily would do. He saw this a deliberately rejecting the divinely given φρόνησις like his opponents the Corinthian outsiders. The words μικρόν τι, a little bit of, underscore his intention to only barely play the fool's role. He has no intention to get deeply into boasting like the outsiders were. Plus this tactic enables him to take a surprising direction in boasting that was opposite to that of his opponents: to boast about his weaknesses, rather than his strengths.

Verses 17-21 continue the point of verse 16 by amplification of what was meant in the request to indulge him a little.

First, Paul disconnects what he is saying from the guidance of the Lord (v. 17): ὁ λαλῶ, οὐ κατὰ κύριον λαλῶ ἀλλ' ὡς ἐν ἀφροσύνη, ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ὑποστάσει τῆς καυχήσεως, *What I speak, not by the Lord do I speak, but as in foolishness, that is, in this satirical situation of boasting.* The final phrase, ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ὑποστάσει τῆς καυχήσεως, helps define the contextual setting for Paul's words. The demonstrative pronoun ταύτῃ, although a predicate adjective modifier of ὑποστάσει, goes back to the relative pronoun ὃ by way of antecedency.

the situation of boasting (= τῆς καυχήσεως) as seen supporting one's viewpoint. In the obviously satirical setting established in v. 16b especially, the expression defines what Paul is saying in this unit of material (ὁ λαλῶ) as speaking ἐν ἀφροσύνη, in foolishness, which then is labeled ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ὑποστάσει τῆς καυχήσεως, in this situation of boasting. The genitive of identity function of τῆς καυχήσεως further defines the situation as that of boasting, thus linking this to the larger topic of boasting throughout chapter eleven.⁸⁰ His outsider Corinthian opponents are boasting of their accomplishments and supposedly superior status. Now it's Paul turn to respond. But he does so in satire and without seriousness, almost mocking them.

His beginning qualification οὐ κατὰ κύριον λαλῶ, *not according to the Lord do I speak*, evidently anticipates misunderstanding of his words by his Corinthian read-

'to conjecture,' 'to agree,' 'to undertake,' 'to offer' etc., the noun corresponds only to the following senses, which can involve independent derivations of the noun from the verb: 1. 'to stand under (as a support),' 2. 'to place oneself under (concealment),' 3. 'to stand off from,' 'to deposit oneself as sediment on the ground,' and hence 'to be,' 'to exist,' 4. 'to promise.' From these meanings we get the following meanings of the noun: 1. 'support,' 2. 'ambush,' 3. 'deposit,' 'sediment,' trans. everything that settles, hence the philosophical sense 'existence,' 'reality,' Lat. *substantia*,³ 4.



confidence | 2 of 5

2 Co 11:17 What I am saying in regard to this boastful confidence, I am saying not with the Lord's authority, but as a fool;

Heb 3:14 For we have become partners of Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end.

undertaking | 1 of 5

2 Co 9:4 otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—in this undertaking.

very being | 1 of 5

Heb 1:3 He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

assurance | 1 of 5

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Thus what Paul is saying here is labeled as ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ὑποστάσει, in this situation. The noun ὑπόστασις, used some five times in the NT, has an unusual background in ancient Greek that throws a lot of light onto its meaning here.⁷⁹ The sense contextually here is references

⁷⁹“The word ὑπόστασις is a verbal subst. of ὑπίστημι. Yet it has hardly any senses corresponding to the act. ὑπίστημι. It is almost always to be understood in the light of the intr. and mid. ὑπίσταμαι.¹ But it reflects only one part of the varied meaning of ὑπίσταμαι.² Whereas the verb in the mid. and pass. can mean also

'lease,' a technical meaning found already in early Hell. pap. and arising independently from the verb in the 4th cent. B.C. → 579, 33 ff.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:572.]

⁸⁰Cf. the references of καύχησις in 11:10 and 11:17 (5 uses in 2 Cor.) along with the verb καυχάομαι in 11:12, 16, 18, 30 (2x) out of the 20 uses in Second Corinthians. Also see καύχημα in 2 Cor. 1:14; 5:12; and 9:3. For the larger picture see Louw-Nida, *Greek Lexicon*, topics 33:368-33.363.

ers.⁸¹ The present tense λαλῶ limits the content to the immediate words of Paul in this document. Although the phrase κατὰ κύριον, *according to the Lord*, is subject to differing nuanced understandings, it essentially denies a connection of the Lord to the boasting that Paul is about to do here in this setting.⁸² He certainly does not want to give the impression that he is stooping to

⁸¹“As in v. 16, Paul is here anticipating a possible misinterpretation of the boasting he will shortly undertake. There the misconception that might arise was that he was actually foolish; here, that he was boasting at the Lord’s direction or on his authority. In both verses his recognition that boasting is essentially foolish finds unambiguous expression. ὁ λαλῶ refers specifically to what Paul is about to utter in his foolish boasting, not to whatever he says at any time; Paul did not write ὁ τι ἂν λέγω and the present tense λαλῶ is futuristic, not gnomic. Although λαλῶ is repeated, the emphasis is on the content of what Paul says (ὁ λαλῶ), not on the fact of his speaking.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 780.]

⁸²“The abbreviated phrase κατὰ κύριον (“according to the Lord [Jesus]”) has been understood in several ways:

1. ‘after the Lord’ (RV), ‘as the Lord would’ (NASB, NIV), ‘following the Lord’s way’ (NJB), which probably means ‘in accordance with the character or example of Christ,’¹⁶ or marked by the meekness and gentleness of Christ (10:1).

2. ‘as a Christian’ (NEB; Héring 81), ‘in a Christian way’ (Thrall 713). Support for this view may be found in the occasional NT use of prepositional phrases with κύριος or Χριστός as substitutes for the adjective or noun Χριστιανός (‘Christian’).¹⁷

3. ‘inspired by the Lord’ (Moffatt, Barclay). This sense is possible, provided we do not conclude that Paul is ‘uninspired’ in his boasting in the sense that it is παρὰ κύριον, ‘contrary to the Lord (’s will).’

4. ‘with the Lord’s authority’ (RSV, NRSV).

5. ‘prompted by the Lord’ (JB), ‘at the Lord’s direction.’¹⁸

“There is not a great difference between these options. Boasting ὡς ἐν ἀφροσύνη (v. 17) or κατὰ σάρκα (v. 18), with self-promotion and invidious comparisons, could never be said to accord with Christ’s example, to be the Christian way, to be inspired by the Lord, or to be with his authority or at his direction. But #5 is perhaps to be preferred. Paul’s use of boasting as a manner of argumentation against those who employed this technique (v. 18) was the result of his own choice and not at the specific prompting or direction of the Lord Jesus. We find a comparable situation in 1 Corinthians 7. Confronted with pressing pastoral problems where he knew of no definitive word of Christ that would settle the issue, Paul simply confesses, ‘I say, not the Lord’ (λέγω ἐγὼ οὐχ ὁ κύριος, 1 Cor. 7:12) or ‘I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion’ (ἐπιταγὴν κυρίου οὐκ ἔχω, γνώμην δὲ δίδωμι, 1 Cor. 7:25), while still retaining his awareness of having the Spirit of God enlighten his mind (1 Cor. 7:40).¹⁹ Similarly here in 11:17 he freely admits that in employing his rivals’ worldly tactics he is not following some specific dominical direction; but we may assume he would equally confidently say, ‘I think I have the Spirit of Christ.’”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 780–781.]

the base level of boasting that his opponent operated from. All of this ‘disqualification’ of what he is about to do should set the listener to these words up to expect something different in Paul’s boasting from that repeatedly heard from the outsiders at Corinth. This is the point in the causal clause introduced by ἐπεὶ (v. 18): ἐπεὶ πολλοὶ καυχῶνται κατὰ σάρκα, κἀγὼ καυχῆσομαι, *since many are boasting according to fleshly (standards), I will also boast*. Still Paul builds anticipation in the minds of the readers and listeners to these words at Corinth.⁸³ “Is he really going to do some bragging?” The answer is both yes and no. Bragging yes, but by human standards, no!

⁸³“This verse looks back to δέξασθέ με in v. 16 (Bultmann 211) and supplies one reason for Paul’s request that the Corinthians accept him in his boasting. If πολλοὶ refers only to Paul’s rivals, it is a derogatory ‘overstatement,’ but more probably it focuses attention on them within a wider group of boasters (including some Corinthians) who sought human adulation through self-praise. κατὰ σάρκα stands in contrast to κατὰ κύριον (v. 17) and in parallelism to ἐν ἀφροσύνη (v. 17).²⁵ As with οἱ καυχώμενοι mentioned in 5:12, who boasted ‘about appearance and not character’ (ἐν προσώπῳ καὶ μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ), these boasters evaluated themselves and others from a purely human and worldly viewpoint, without due regard for the divine perspective, and so prided themselves on outward and natural advantages of ancestry and privilege (cf. v. 22). κατὰ σάρκα, then, describes both the type of boasting (foolish, worldly) and its content (outward appearances, human advantages).

“When Paul affirms κἀγὼ καυχῆσομαι, he is not simply indicating that he, like his opponents, would engage in boasting. He is giving notice that, like them, he will be boasting κατὰ σάρκα—as extraordinary as that sounds. ‘I also will boast that way.’ Such boasting may be unprofitable, but it was necessary (12:1) and inevitable (12:11) without being sinful, although for Paul the phrase κατὰ σάρκα often has connotations of sinfulness (e.g., Rom. 8:4–8, 10, 12–13). But why would Paul have omitted this crucial qualifying phrase? Perhaps he could not bring himself to say he was acting κατὰ σάρκα when some had accused him of making plans κατὰ σάρκα (1:17); the Corinthians were not adept at making fine distinctions. Whatever the reason, Paul realized that if he was to boast ‘as the world does,’ he could not simultaneously claim to be speaking ‘at the Lord’s direction’ (v. 17): κατὰ σάρκα καυχᾶσθαι and κατὰ κύριον λαλεῖν were mutually exclusive.²⁶ But such carefully calculated adaptability (cf. 1 Cor. 9:19–23) in making temporary use of his opponents’ worldly techniques seemed justified to Paul, not simply because ‘many others’ were bragging (v. 18) but also because this appeared to be the most effective way, given the spiritual immaturity and the gullibility of the Corinthians, to bring them to their senses and thus prevent their spiritual defilement (11:2–3). ‘My rivals make a practice of boasting in the way people of the world do, and you are dazzled into meek compliance with them (11:20), so I in turn will employ the same techniques to bring about your restoration (κατάρτισις, 13:9) and edification (οἰκοδομή, 12:19).’ An additional justification for Paul’s ‘foolish boasting’ is given at 12:11 (see the commentary there).”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 782–783.]

One basis pushing him to engage in this ‘foolish boasting’ is the Corinthians themselves as vv. 19-20 asserts: 19 ἡδέως γὰρ ἀνέχεσθε τῶν ἀφρόνων φρόνιμοι ὄντες. 20 ἀνέχεσθε γὰρ εἴ τις ὑμᾶς καταδουλοῖ, εἴ τις κατεσθίει, εἴ τις λαμβάνει, εἴ τις ἐπαίρεται, εἴ τις εἰς πρόσωπον ὑμᾶς δέρει, 19 For you gladly put up with fools, being wise yourselves! 20 For you put up with it when someone makes slaves of you, or preys upon you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or gives you a slap in the face. The sarcasm really comes out with his calling the Corinthians φρόνιμοι, wise, but naively getting trapped by false teachers in numerous ridiculous ways (v. 20). In part this is a ‘shaming technique’ intended to get his readers to admit that they are not nearly as smart as they suppose themselves to be.

Note how he puts this. First, ἡδέως γὰρ ἀνέχεσθε τῶν ἀφρόνων φρόνιμοι ὄντες, for gladly you put up with the foolish ones while being wise yourselves. At this point the ἀφρόνων are the Corinthian outsiders primarily. The φρόνιμοι ὄντες goes back to the Corinthian readers identified in the second person plural of ἀνέχεσθε, you put up with, as the nominative case ὄντες requires. The Corinthians are gladly welcoming these outsiders into their midst even though they come as ἀφρόνων, fools. This especially targets Paul’s critics inside the church at Corinth. Their presumed wisdom, φρόνιμοι ὄντες, however, turns out not to be very smart after all, in light of what happens (cf. v. 20).

In v. 20 given as a second causal declaration (γὰρ) the verb ἀνέχεσθε, you put up with, is repeated from v. 19, and this pair of uses matches the two uses of the same verb in verse one: Ὁφελον ἀνείχεσθέ μου μικρόν τι ἀφροσύνης· ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνέχεσθέ μου. I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! The intent of Paul is to demand ‘equal time’ for himself that the Corinthians were giving to the outsiders. Their ‘enduring’ the outsiders was producing chaos inside the church. The least they could do was to hear Paul who would offer a solution to clean up the mess created by these outsiders. The mess is alluded to with ἀνέχεσθε γὰρ εἴ τις ὑμᾶς καταδουλοῖ*, εἴ τις κατεσθίει, εἴ τις λαμβάνει, εἴ τις ἐπαίρεται, εἴ τις εἰς πρόσωπον ὑμᾶς δέρει. for since someone re-enslaves you, since someone preys on you, since someone takes advantage of you, since someone puts on the airs around you, since someone slaps you in the face. In this first class conditional sentence structure five different assumed scenarios are presented by εἴ τις.... In each of them, the response of the Corinthians in the apodosis is ἀνέχεσθε, you put up with.⁸⁴ Close ex-

⁸⁴“In the five examples of this abuse that Paul proceeds to document, the reader or hearer is struck by the fivefold repetition of εἴ τις (‘if someone’) (cf. 1 Tim. 5:10). This has the effect of letting each item stand on its own, thus increasing the paradox step by step and hammering home the message, ‘You are in the habit of tolerating anything from anyone.’³⁶ But in spite of this unexpect-

amination of these five patterns of actions against the Corinthians paints a more clear picture of the outsider opponents at Corinth.

Murray Harris (NIGTC) does a good job in summarizing the traits of the outsiders:

1. *Domination* (καταδουλοῖ) The uncompounded (or simplex) form δουλόω also means “enslave” (e.g., 1 Cor. 9:19), so that in the compounded form καταδουλόω the prefix κατα- may be “perfective” (thus Robertson 606) in the sense that the servitude was total, “reduce to abject slavery” (Plummer 316; Barclay), but the point cannot be pressed, given the general preference in Hellenistic Greek for compound forms.³⁸ Although Paul does not use the middle voice, it is implied that Paul’s rivals were making the Corinthians slaves to themselves. In the only other NT use of this verb (Gal. 2:4), the intruders in Galatia are said to have infiltrated the ranks of Paul and his party in order to spy out their freedom in Christ and bring them into bondage or make them slaves (ἡμᾶς καταδουλώσουσιν), not to themselves but to the Mosaic law.³⁹ But apart from this difference, the two verses are identical in being in the active voice with a direct object. What was involved in the despotism of these κύριοι at Corinth and the subjection of their δοῦλοι is not indicated, but we may surmise that the intruders assumed control of the Corinthians’ souls (cf. Moffatt) or ordered them about (cf. GNB). In effect the Corinthians had forfeited their freedom.

2. *Exploitation* (κατεσθίει) Once again, the prefix κατα- may have a “perfective” sense; thus “eat something till it is finished,”⁴⁰ “eat up.” Paul’s only other use of this verb is in Gal. 5:15 in reference to the in-fighting and party strife of the Galatians. “If you persist in biting one another and tearing one another to pieces (κατεσθίετε), watch out that you are not annihilated by one another.” Jesus denounced the scribes as “those who devour (οἱ κατεσθίοντες) widows’ houses” (Mark 12:40), referring to illegal appropriation of property (BAGD 422b). When Paul uses this verb of his rivals’ actions, he is probably not referring to their creating or fostering party strife, but to their parasitical attachment to the Corinthians, their living “on” or “off” them (cf. Goodspeed), that is, at the Corinthians’ expense (cf. Weymouth), demanding and receiving payment for “services rendered,” eating them “out of house and home.”⁴¹ Against the back-

ed repetition, the focus of the verse is not on the abusers³⁷ with their arrogance and systematic exploitation but on the Corinthians (ἀνέχεσθε) with their naivety and shocking tolerance. As in 11:4, the present indicative after εἰ (five instances) points to an actual current situation, not a hypothetical future possibility; nor are these indicatives conative, ‘if someone tries to...’ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 784.]

ground of 11:7–12, it is hard not to discern in κατεσθίει an allusion to the intruders' financial dependence on believers at Corinth.

3. *Entrapment* (λαμβάνει) One of the meanings of λαμβάνω in Classical Greek was “take by violence, carry off as prize or booty.”⁴² Consequently Lattey suggests the sense, “if anyone lays hands upon you,” with the implication of violence leading to the climactic “strikes you in the face” (148). But there is no reason to think that physical violence is in mind, far less sexual violation. The ὑμᾶς found with καταδουλοῖ is to be understood with both κατεσθίει and λαμβάνει, so that ὀψώνιον (“provisions,” “wages”) need not be supplied as an object on the basis of the earlier expression λαβὼν ὀψώνιον (v. 8). Rather, the exegetical key is found in 12:16, where Paul states a charge leveled against him: δόλω ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον, “I entrapped you by trickery.” In 11:20, then, λαμβάνω denotes bringing someone under one’s sway by craftiness—not simply getting someone in one’s clutches (cf. NEB, REB) or power (cf. TCNT; Barrett 288), but “taking someone in” (BAGD 464c; Goodspeed), trapping (cf. GNB) or ensnaring someone (Barclay). Support for this interpretation may be found in the use of λαμβάνω in connection with hunting or fishing (e.g., Luke 5:5).

4. *Haughtiness* (ἐπαίρεται) Of the 19 NT uses of ἐπαίρω (“lift up”), only in 10:5 and 11:20 is the verb used figuratively.⁴³ Here the passive is reflexive, “if someone exalts himself,”⁴⁴ that is, “gives himself airs,”⁴⁵ “puts on airs.”⁴⁶ But the intruders not only had an attitude of superciliousness; they exalted themselves over the Corinthians, so that ἐπαίρεται takes on the connotation of arrogant behavior toward the Corinthians (cf. Barclay; Héring 82).⁴⁷

5. *Insult* (εἰς πρόσωπον ὑμᾶς δέρει) In this expression πρόσωπον probably refers to the cheek (σιαγῶν),⁴⁸ for among the Jews—and the intruders were Jews (11:20)—a slap or blow on the cheek, especially the right cheek (with the back of the hand),⁴⁹ was a way to humiliate a person (cf. Job 16:10; Lam. 3:30). Now it is possible that the expression is figurative, referring to outrageous verbal attacks, but a literal sense cannot be deemed unlikely when we remember that (1) religious authorities sometimes expressed their strong disapproval of what seemed to them to be flagrant verbal disrespect by striking the offender or ordering him struck (John 18:22; Acts 23:2), perhaps, as Zerwick (Analysis 411) suggests, to reduce him to silence; (2) religious leaders were prone to be tempted to assert their authority by bullying their subordinates (note the use of μὴ πλήκτην, “not violent,” “not/nor given to blows” [Weymouth] in the qualifications for overseers, 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7). But if we adopt a literal interpretation, there is no need to suppose that all the Corinthians were subject to such indignities or that there were many such incidents. All that we must

assume is that those who were insulted this way meekly tolerated the indignity (ἀνέχεσθε).⁸⁵

The collective picture painted here by Paul is that these Corinthian outsiders had come into the church with the clear intent of taking complete control of the various house church groups, and then using the groups as a source of financial support for their arrogant, lavish lifestyle.⁸⁶ These false teachers stood for everything destructive to the spiritual life and well being of the church, as well as totally opposite of Paul’s self-sacrificing care for the church.

At this point, ‘boasting’ was the key issue and Paul needed the chance to do some himself to them at Corinth. But he signals in v. 21 a totally opposite direction in his boasting: κατὰ ἀτιμίαν λέγω, ὡς ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἡσθενήκαμεν, *To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that!* His boasting was not in a quest for power and control over the church at Corinth. Not at all. Just the opposite. His boasting is going to be about him being ‘dishonored’ (ἀτιμίαν) in the eyes of the world as validation of God’s approval of him and his approach to ministry.⁸⁷ Paul’s use of the perfect tense verb ἡσθενήκαμεν

⁸⁵Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 784–786.

⁸⁶“Looking back over these five indictments, we notice, first of all, their similarity—all represent actions or attitudes of domineering, callous κύριοι (cf. καταδουλοῖ), bent on having their own way, with this end justifying any means used. Indeed, the last four indictments could be regarded as elucidations of the first (Barrett 291). Someone who has been reduced to slavery (καταδουλοῖ) would expect to be exploited (κατεσθίει), taken advantage of (λαμβάνει), treated arrogantly (ἐπαίρεται), and physically abused (δέρει). Second, the conduct of the intruders is the antithesis of pastoral service; it was not πρὸς τὴν ὑμῶν διακονίαν (11:8). Paul doubtless hoped that his converts would make the obvious comparison between his way of operating and that of the rival missionaries. He was their δοῦλος, not their κύριος (4:5); he had remained financially independent (11:7–12); he had refused to act with unscrupulous cunning (4:2); he did not lord it over them and their faith (1:24); he was committed to protecting them from spiritual violation (11:2).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 786–787.]

⁸⁷“After recounting the misguided tolerance that the Corinthians in their ‘wisdom’ (v. 19) had shown toward the imperious interlopers (v. 20), Paul makes an ironical contrast between his own conduct toward the Corinthians and the behavior of his rivals.

“Sometimes the ἀτιμία is thought to be the shame of the Corinthians. They ought to feel ashamed that they so readily tolerated the despotism and exploitation of the intruders,⁵⁰ or ashamed that Paul had shown such weakness in comparison.⁵¹ In the former case the shame is defined by v. 20; in the latter, the shame explained by ὡς κτλ., and the statement is intensely ironical. But if Paul was referring to the Corinthians’ shame, we would expect κατὰ τὴν

conveys ideas not easily expressed in English, since the perfect tense in Greek functioned completely different than its English counter point.⁸⁸ The stinging irony of ‘weak’ signals that he was to ‘weak’ to exploit and take over control of the Corinthians, as these outsiders were desiring to do. That is, he had integrity and they didn’t.

In vv. 21b - 29 (general patterns) and 30-33 (specific instance), Paul does his boasting about being weak. This he makes very clear in v. 30, Εἰ καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, τὰ τῆς ἀσθενείας μου καυχῆσομαι, *since it seems necessary to boast, I will boast about my weakness*. The pattern that is followed begins with some similar claims being made by his outsider opponents: vv. 22-23a. The mentioning of being δῆκονοι Χριστοῦ, ministers of Christ, prompts the listing of various sufferings as the validation of his claim, none of which his opponents could claim: vv. 23b-29.

The single episode appealed to in vv. 30-33, the escape at Damascus after conversion, is provided as a sign of his weakness (v. 30). What lies behind Paul’s emphasis upon his human weakness and suffering as validation of being a minister of Christ? Given several grammatical constructions signaling divisions, the material can be divided naturally into two units with some subdivisions.⁸⁹ This division combines the grammatical ἀτιμίαν ὑμῶν or κατὰ τὴν ἀτιμίαν or ὑμῖν λέγω (cf. 1 Cor. 6:5; 15:34).⁵² With ἀτιμία or λέγω unqualified in one of these ways, it is more natural to relate κατὰ ἀτιμίαν to Paul’s own ‘shame.’⁵³

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 787.]

⁸⁸ἡσθενήκαμεν may be treated as an aoristic perfect (so Turner 70), ‘we were weak’;⁶⁰ or as a ‘perfect of resulting state’ (so Fanning 291–92), with the emphasis on the present condition rather than on the implied anterior action, ‘we are weak’;⁶¹ or, preferably, as a perfect that encompasses both past and present, with the emphasis in the context falling on the past, ‘we have been weak.’⁶² That is, from his first contact with the Corinthians right up to the time of writing, Paul had shown himself to be ‘weak,’⁶³ not merely in the sense of being ‘timid’ (cf. ταπεινός, 10:1) or having an ‘unimpressive’ (ἀσθενής) personal ‘presence’ (10:10) but mainly in the sense that he had been too ‘weak’ to dominate and exploit the Corinthians as his rivals had been doing (11:20). The contrast with his rivals is made clear by the emphatic ἡμεῖς. Accordingly, ἡσθενήκαμεν will mean ‘we have been too weak (for that)’ (Lambrecht 187)⁶⁴ or ‘we seem to have been weaklings in comparison’ (Furnish 485). This stinging irony⁶⁵ is made all the more potent by the stark brevity of ἡσθενήκαμεν.⁶⁶ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 788–789.]

⁸⁹Analysis of 11:21b–29 by Construction

1. Repetition of τολμᾶω (v. 21b)

ἐν ᾧ δ’ ἂν τις	τολμᾶ, ...	BOLD CLAIMS
τολμῶ	κάγώ.	
2. Four questions (εἰσίν; vv. 22–23a)

structure and the content of the text into two logical divisions.⁹⁰ These are structured around claims to equality

- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------|-----------|----------|
| Ἑβραῖοί | εἰσιν; | κάγώ. | PEDIGREE |
| Ἰσραηλιταί | εἰσιν; | κάγώ. | |
| σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ | εἰσιν; | κάγώ. | |
| δῆκονοι Χριστοῦ | εἰσιν; | ὑπὲρ ἐγώ. | |
3. ἐν + dative plural + adverb (v. 23b)

ἐν	κόποισ	περισσότερως,	GENERAL
ἐν	φυλακαῖς	περισσότερως,	SUFFERING
ἐν	πληγαῖς	ὑπερβαλλόντως,	
ἐν	θανάτοις	πολλάκις.	
 4. Numeral adverb + aorist (vv. 24–25), illustrating ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις (v. 23b)

ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων	πεντάκις ...	ἔλαβον,	REPEATED
	τρὶς	ἐραβδίσθην,	EXPOSURE
	ἅπαξ	ἐλιθάσθην,	TO
	τρὶς	ἐναυάγησα,	DEATH
	[ἅπαξ] ...	πεποιήκα· (perfect)	
 5. Κινδύνοις (“dangers”), illustrating ὁδοιπορίας πολλάκις (v. 26)
 - (a) followed by genitive plural (source)

κινδύνοις ποταμῶν,			
κινδύνοις ληστῶν,			SPECIFIC
 - (b) followed by ἐκ (source)

κινδύνοις ἐκ γένους,			DANGERS
κινδύνοις ἐξ ἔθνῶν,			associated
			with
 - (c) followed by ἐν (location)

κινδύνοις ἐν πόλει,			TRAVEL
κινδύνοις ἐν ἐρημίᾳ			
κινδύνοις ἐν θαλάσῃ,			
κινδύνοις ἐν ψευδαδέλφοις,			
 6. Pairs of dative singular, separated by ἐν + dative plural + adverb (v. 27; cf. v. 23b)

κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ,			
ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις	πολλάκις,		TOIL
ἐν λιμῷ καὶ δίψει,			and
ἐν νηστείαις	πολλάκις,		DEPRIVATION
ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι·			
 7. Two substantival phrases in exegetical apposition (v. 28)

... ἡ ἐπίστασις μοι	ἡ καθ’ ἡμέραν,	ANXIOUS
ἡ μέριμνα	πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν.	CONCERN
		for churches
 8. Two rhetorical questions (τίς ... καὶ οὐκ ...) (v. 29)

τίς ἀσθενεῖ,	καὶ	οὐκ	ἀσθενῶ;	ANXIOUS
τίς σκανδαλίζεται,	καὶ	οὐκ	ἐγὼ	πυροῦμαι
				CONCERN
				for individuals

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 789–790.]

⁹⁰“In this whole section there is an extended comparison between Paul and his rivals at Corinth. The two key expressions are κάγώ (‘I too’; four uses in vv. 21b–22) and ὑπὲρ ἐγώ (‘I more’; v. 23a), the former pointing to his equality with his rivals in certain limited respects, the latter to his vast superiority.¹ From this perspective we may divide 11:21b–29 into three sections of unequal length.

1. *Equality in bold boasting* (v. 21b)

^{21b} Yet in whatever way any of them is bold—I speak in pure folly—I am just as bold myself.
2. *Equality in nationality and heritage* (v. 22)

(vv. 21b-22) and claims to superiority (vv. 23-29). These are based primarily on comparisons to the outsiders, a principle Paul rejected in 10:12. But one must remember the contextual setting of chapter eleven in which Paul is giving the ‘fool’s speech’ in a satirical manner (cf. 11:1, 16-18, 21b, 30; 12:1, 6, 9-b10, 11). His uncomfatableness with doing this is clearly evident.

a) Claims to equality, vv. 21b-22. Ἐν ᾧ δ’ ἂν τις τολμᾷ, ἐν ἀφροσύνη λέγω, τολμῶ κάγω. 22 Ἑβραῖοί εἰσιν; κάγω. Ἰσραηλιταί εἰσιν; κάγω. σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ εἰσιν; κάγω. But whatever anyone dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I.

Statement #248 introduces the section and the following three pairs of question/answer follow. The diagram graphically illustrates this.

V. 21b, # 248 sets up the challenge to make com-

22	Are they Hebrews?	So am I.
	Are they Israelites?	So am I.
	Are they descendants of Abraham?	So am I.
3.	<i>Superiority in service and suffering (vv. 23–29)</i>	
23	Are they “servants of Christ”? I am out of my mind when I speak this way—but I am a better servant: with far more labors, with far more imprisonments, with far worse floggings, often at death’s door;	
24	five times	I received from the Jews the “forty lashes minus one,”
25	three times	I was beaten with rods,
	once	I was pelted with stones,
	three times	I was shipwrecked,
	a night and a day	I have spent adrift at sea;
26	on frequent journeys, exposed to dangers	from rivers,
	dangers	from bandits,
	dangers	from my people,
	dangers	from Gentiles,
	dangers	in the city,
	dangers	in the desert,
	dangers	on the sea,
	dangers	among false brothers;
27	with ^b	labor and toil,
	in	with frequent sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, frequently going without food, cold and virtually naked.

28 Not to mention other things, there is what presses^c on me^d every day—my anxiety for all the churches.

29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is led astray into sin, and I am not ablaze with anger?

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 790–792.]

	Ἐν ᾧ δ’ ἂν τις τολμᾷ, ἐν ἀφροσύνη λέγω,
248	τολμῶ κάγω.
249	Ἑβραῖοί εἰσιν;
250	κάγω.
251	Ἰσραηλιταί εἰσιν;
252	κάγω.
253	σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ εἰσιν;
254	κάγω.

parisons between the outsiders and himself.⁹¹ The complex structure of this is complicated by the parenthetical insertion of ἐν ἀφροσύνη λέγω, in foolishness I am talking. This repeats the use of ἀφροσύνη in vv. 1 and 17, as a reminder of the perspective here that Paul is using. It is the satirical ‘fool’s perspective’ rather than the proper viewpoint coming from the Lord (v. 17). The use of this rhetorical device, though considered valid in Greek and Roman rhetoric, played off human based standards in Paul’s minds and thus had very questionable value. But a little of it seemed required in order to communicate to the Corinthian readers in a manner that they could comprehend with their secularized mind-set, and particularly was this the case of Paul’s critics inside the church.

The adverbial function of the relative clause Ἐν ᾧ ἂν τις τολμᾷ, in whatever one may dare (to speak), sets up the challenge to the outsiders. Notice the typical shift back to the singular verb, τις τολμᾷ, one may dare, when referring to the opposition at Corinth (cf. v. 20 5x use of τις). This helps to focus on individual false teachers who are creating the chaos at Corinth, but avoids the need to name them. Paul is more concerned with what each one is doing.

The idea behind τολμᾷ and τολμῶ from τολμάω is defined as “to show boldness or resolution in the face of danger, opposition, or a problem, **dare, bring oneself to** (do someth.)”⁹² The motivation behind the action can be legitimate or very improper, depending on the circum-

⁹¹Older printed Greek texts inserted a Greek semicolon after ἡσθενήκαμεν and before Ἐν ᾧ thus implying a continuation of the sentence begun in the first half of verse 21. This was based upon the connecting nature of the relative pronoun ᾧ, but ignored the literal role of λέγω in vv. 16 and 21a as *inclusios* that indicate subject boundaries for text units, over against the repeated use λαλῶ inside this unit of vv. 16-21a. The shift to the verb τολμῶ in v. 21b clearly signals the beginning of a new text unit. The connecting role of the relative is maintained in the realization that the neuter singular ᾧ reaches back to all of vv. 16-21a, and not to v. 21a only. Thus the insertion of a period, a major break, after ἡσθενήκαμεν is entirely appropriate and correctly reflects the thought flow of this passage.

⁹²William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1010.

stance. Here both are played off of by Paul, speaking in 'the fool's speech.'

The abbreviated *κἀγώ* from *καὶ* plus *ἐγώ* becomes Paul's answer to the following three rhetorical questions (v. 22):

Ἑβραῖοί εἰσιν;	κἀγώ.
Are they Hebrews?	I too.
Ἰσραηλιταὶ εἰσιν;	κἀγώ.
Are they Israelites?	I too.
σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ εἰσιν;	κἀγώ
Are they seed of Abraham?	I too.

These initial rhetorical questions collectively claim a Jewish heritage for these outsiders. How could their claiming to be Jewish be an advantage over Paul who obviously was Jewish himself? The most likely historical answer in Acts 6:1, *Ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις πληθυνόντων τῶν μαθητῶν ἐγένετο γογγυσμὸς τῶν Ἑλληνιστῶν πρὸς τοὺς Ἑβραίους, ὅτι παρεθεωροῦντο ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ τῇ καθημερινῇ αἱ χῆραι αὐτῶν*, *Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food.* In the Judaism of this era there existed a long standing bitter dispute over superiority between the Jews living in Judea and rigidly adhering to the Torah and the Diaspora Jews who had freely adopted many Greco-Roman customs etc. in their practice of Judaism.⁹³ To be sure, in the Diaspora, one would find pockets of Hebraistic Jews, but the overwhelming majority were Hellenistic Jews. Add to that, he had not known Jesus during his earthly life, and to their mind this gave him second class status.

The term *Ἑβραῖοί*, *Hebraists*, is found only here, Phil. 3:5, and Acts 6:1 inside the NT. The claim to be a *Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων*, *Hebrew of the Hebrews*, in Phil. 3:5 represents a claim of descent from a Palestinian Jewish family. Thus his family roots reach to Palestine,

⁹³“Since vv. 22–23a are a set of comparisons between Paul and his rivals, it is fair to assume that Paul’s repeated claim (*κἀγώ*) is in fact a counterclaim; he can match their claims at every point. If so, *εἰσιν*; has the sense ‘Are they, in their claims, ...?’ His opponents would have known that they could not deny that Paul was Jewish by birth¹⁵ and spoke both Hebrew and Aramaic,¹⁶ but, if we may hypothesize about their claims concerning themselves and their observations regarding Paul, they may have pointed to their own ‘pure’ Jewish descent and to Paul’s less than pure lineage as a Diaspora ‘Hellenist’—he was not born in Israel, but outside the borders of the ‘holy land’; he was not normally resident in Judea, and so more affected by Hellenistic influences; he had not been a companion or early disciple of Jesus, and so had been denied the benefits of firsthand acquaintance with Jesus.¹⁷ That is, they may have defined ‘pure’ lineage in reference to birth and residence in Israel and personal knowledge of the earthly Jesus.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 794.]

and nullify the outsiders assumption of superiority with their claim of being *Ἑβραῖοί*.⁹⁴ If anything he could have claimed superiority to them with his credentials as a Pharisee who had been trained by Gamaliel, one of the legendary scribes of first century Judaism.

The emphasis found in the label *Ἰσραηλιταί*, *Israelites*, is that of belonging to Covenant Israel.⁹⁵ This is a much more exclusivistic term than the much more common *Ἰουδαῖος*, *Jew*, in NT usage. It carries with it the assumption of belonging to the chosen of God as His unique people.

The third label *σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ*, *seed of Abraham*, is closely linked to *Ἰσραηλιταί* in meaning and signifi-

⁹⁴“Ἑβραῖοι. This term is found only here and in Phil. 3:5 (twice) and Acts 6:1.18 In the latter passage it is contrasted with *Ἑλληνισταί* (‘Hellenists,’ ‘Grecian Jews’) and therefore probably points to both linguistic and cultural distinctiveness, referring to Aramaic-speaking Jews of the Jerusalem church who attended synagogues where Hebrew was used and yet could converse in Greek. Both by inclination and by training their affinities lay with Palestinian orthodoxy. The Hellenists, on the other hand, spoke only Greek and attended a separate synagogue where Greek was used (such as ‘the Synagogue of the Freedmen,’ Acts 6:9).¹⁹ Their intellectual and cultural roots lay in the Diaspora.²⁰ In Phil. 3:5 there is no explicit contrast between *Ἑβραῖος* and *Ἑλληνιστής* so that the linguistic associations of the term *Ἑβραῖος* are not to the fore. When Paul asserts he is ‘a Hebrew with Hebrew parents’ (*Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων*), he ‘is claiming, not merely Jewish nationality, but descent from a Palestinian family. This factor, along with the Pharisaic orientation of the family (Ac. 22:3), is the reason why Aramaic is his mother tongue; it is not because he speaks Aramaic that he calls himself *Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων*.’²¹ Similarly, in 11:22 *κἀγώ [εἰμι Ἑβραῖος]* should be given a geographical sense. Paul is affirming his status as ‘a Jew of Palestinian descent.’²² But not only were Paul’s family roots in Palestine. According to Acts 22:3 he had spent his formative years in Jerusalem, receiving both his elementary and his higher education there.²³ He begins his address to the Jerusalem Jews with the words, ‘I am a Jew, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city [= Jerusalem], educated under the teaching of Gamaliel according to the strict interpretation of our ancestral law.’” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 794–795.]

⁹⁵“Ἰσραηλιταί. Like *Ἑβραῖοι*, this is an archaizing term with a nuance of special solemnity. It denotes those who belong to Israel, the chosen, covenant people of Yahweh.²⁴ Israelites are citizens of ‘the commonwealth of Israel’ (Eph. 2:12). ‘Israel’ was the name God gave to Jacob that was also applied to his descendants (Gen. 32:28, 32). As opposed to the more general term for Jews, namely *Ἰουδαῖος* (195 NT uses, including v. 24 in the present context),²⁵ *Ἰσραηλίτης* is used rarely in the NT (nine uses), of which three are in Paul (Rom. 9:4; 11:1; 2 Cor. 11:22) and in two of these (Rom. 11:1; 2 Cor. 11:22) this term is associated with the expression *σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ*.²⁶” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 795.]

cance.⁹⁶ As descendents of Abraham, the divine promises made to Abraham would be claimed as their exclusive possession.

Is there any particular significance to the threefold claims made by the outsiders and answered by Paul?⁹⁷ Many commentators would say no. A few would see the threefold expression as an intense affirmation of Jewishness by both the outsiders and Paul. Still a few others see a progressive intensity in the sequencing of the threefold set of claims. It is not clear which of these stand behind Paul's threefold listing. But it is clear that the claims of these outsiders to superiority to Paul on the basis of Jewish heritage were exceedingly false and could be easily matched by the apostle. Whether they made these claims in ignorance or Paul's background, or in intentional efforts to deceive a perceived ignorance on the part of the Corinthians, is not clear. In either case, Paul calls their hand on this deception.

b) *Claims to superiority, vv. 23-29*

23 διάκονοι Χριστοῦ εἰσιν; παραφρονῶν λαλῶ, ὑπὲρ ἐγώ· ἐν κόποις περισσοτέρως, ἐν φυλακαῖς περισσοτέρως, ἐν πληγαῖς ὑπερβαλλόντως, ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις. 24 Ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων πεντάκις τεσσαράκοντα παρὰ μίαν ἔλαβον, 25 τρίς ἐρραβδίσθην, ἅπαξ ἐλιθάσθην, τρίς ἐναυάγησα, νυχθήμερον ἐν τῷ βυθῷ πεποίηκα· 26 ὁδοιπορίαις πολλάκις, κινδύνοις ποταμῶν, κινδύνοις ληστῶν, κινδύνοις ἐκ γένους, κινδύνοις ἐξ ἔθνῶν, κινδύνοις ἐν πόλει, κινδύνοις ἐν ἐρημίᾳ,

⁹⁶“σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ (literally ‘seed of Abraham’).²⁷ Elsewhere Paul applies this concept to Jesus as the promised Messiah (Gal. 3:16, 19), but as used here in v. 22 it refers to Jews as heirs of the promises that God made to Abraham—the promise of an everlasting covenant in which he would be Abraham’s God and the God of his descendants (Gen. 17:7), and the promise of blessing to all nations through his descendants (Gen. 22:18). There is no reason to think that Paul’s adversaries were using this expression in a distinctly Christian sense to refer to those who belong to Christ as ‘Abraham’s seed’ (Gal. 3:29)²⁸ or were impressing on the Corinthians Paul’s point that ‘not all of Abraham’s children are his true descendants’ (Rom. 9:7, NRSV). In all three designations in 11:22, genuine Jewishness is the point under consideration in the mind of Paul’s rivals and of Paul himself.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 795–796.]

⁹⁷“Even if we allow, with Lietzmann (150), that we have in v. 22 ‘three descriptions of the same idea of ‘full-blooded Jew,’ ’ we need not agree with Bultmann that ‘any differentiation is scarcely intended’ (214). There seems to be a progression of privilege,²⁹ whether we express this as a movement of thought from nationality to theocracy to messianic privilege (so Meyer 658), or from racial to religious/salvation-historical to theological categories (so Lambrecht 190, 197), or from descent to citizenship to heritage.³⁰” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 796.]

κινδύνοις ἐν θαλάσῃ, κινδύνοις ἐν ψευδαδέλφοις, 27 κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ, ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις πολλάκις, ἐν λιμῷ καὶ δίψει, ἐν νηστείαις πολλάκις, ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι· 28 χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτὸς ἢ ἐπίστασις μοι ἢ καθ’ ἡμέραν, ἢ μέριμνα πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν. 29 τίς ἀσθενεῖ καὶ οὐκ ἀσθενῶ; τίς σκανδαλίζεται καὶ οὐκ ἐγὼ πυροῦμαι;

23 Are they ministers of Christ? I am talking like a madman—I am a better one: with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless floggings, and often near death. 24 Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; 26 on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers and sisters;e 27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked. 28 And, besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I am not indignant?

In this second subunit, vv. 23-29, the emphasis is upon Christian credentials. The central credential here for seeking validation is seen in the rhetorical question διάκονοι Χριστοῦ εἰσιν; *Are they ministers of Christ?* Paul’s twofold answer (#s 256 & 257) set the stage for a series of ‘proofs’ of his superiority to the outsiders at Corinth.

The fourth rhetorical question -- διάκονοι Χριστοῦ εἰσιν; *Are they ministers of Christ?* (v. 23) -- shifts direction with Paul’s answer by moving from Jewish credentials to Christian credentials: διάκονοι Χριστοῦ εἰσιν; παραφρονῶν λαλῶ, ὑπὲρ ἐγώ· ἐν κόποις περισσοτέρως, ἐν φυλακαῖς περισσοτέρως, ἐν πληγαῖς ὑπερβαλλόντως, ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις, *Are they ministers of Christ? Although I speak like a madman, I am better than they are: in labor, much greater; in imprisonments, far more often; in floggings, far greater numbers; in death encounters, many times more.*

One should note other listings of sufferings in Second Corinthians as well. These listings contain some overlap to the among these four listings.⁹⁸ The twen-

⁹⁸“That no distinction is intended is clear from the fact that five items are common to the two lists: ἐν κόποις, ἐν φυλακαῖς, ἐν πληγαῖς (11:22 and 6:5), ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις, ἐν νηστείαις (11:27 and 6:5). Vv. 23b–29 are an avalanche of hardships that sweeps the reader along in dazed disbelief. Yet Paul’s focus is not on any stoical indifference to suffering or even patient endurance of affliction but on Christ’s grace in upholding him in the midst of his weakness (11:30; 12:9–10; cf. 1 Cor. 15:10), or, as he has expressed it earlier, on God’s power in leading him in triumphal procession through his union with Christ (2:14). What must have surprised the Corinthians was that Paul seeks to establish his superiority in Christ’s service by tabulating his adversities rather than by appealing to his success in founding congregations in strategically important centers around

255 ^{11.23} **δίακονοι Χριστοῦ εἰσιν;**
παραφρονῶν

256 **λαλῶ,**

257 **ὑπὲρ ἐγὼ (εἰμί) ·**
ἐν κόποις
περισσοτέρως,
ἐν φυλακαῖς
περισσοτέρως,
ἐν πληγαῖς
ὑπερβαλλόντως,
ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις.

^{11.24} **πεντάκις τεσσεράκοντα**
Υπὸ Τουδαίων
παρὰ μίαν
ἔλαβον,

258

^{11.25} **τρὶς**

259 **ἐρραβδίσθην,**
ἄπαξ

260 **ἐλιθάσθην,**
τρὶς

261 **ἐναυάγησα,**
νυχθήμερον
ἐν τῷ βυθῷ

262 **πεποίηκα ·**

263 ^{11.26} **(ἡμῶν)**
ὁδοιπορίαις πολλάκις,
κινδύνοις ποταμῶν,
κινδύνοις ληστῶν,
κινδύνοις ἐκ γένους,
κινδύνοις ἐξ ἐθνῶν,
κινδύνοις ἐν πόλει,
κινδύνοις ἐν ἐρημίᾳ,
κινδύνοις ἐν θαλάσσει,
κινδύνοις ἐν ψευδαδέλφοις,

^{11.27} κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ,
ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις πολλάκις,
ἐν λιμῷ καὶ δίψει,
ἐν νηστείαις πολλάκις,
ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι ·

^{11.28} χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτὸς

264 **(εἰμί) ἢ ἐπίστασίς μοι**
ἢ καθ' ἡμέραν,

265 **(εἰμί) ἢ μέριμνα πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν.**

266 ^{11.29} **τίς ἀσθενεῖ**
καὶ

267 **οὐκ ἀσθενῶ;**

268 **τίς σκανδαλίζεται**
καὶ

269 **οὐκ ἐγὼ πυροῦμαι;**

the Aegean, or by referring to the number of converts won, or by citing miracles performed. Rather, appeal is made to evidence of his shame and dishonor. ‘What he has endured is the seal of his Apostleship’ (Plummer 322). ‘He ... does not view his suffering as an apostle as a tedious detour; it is rather the main highway’ (Garland 307).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek

ty-six items here clearly is the longest and most detailed of any of them.⁹⁹

The elliptical idiomatic phrase ὑπὲρ ἐγὼ, I more,¹⁰⁰ sets up the series of references that follow.¹⁰¹ First are those introduced by the location-

Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 798.]

⁹⁹“Each of the twenty-six items in the catalogue contributes to the evidence for Paul’s ‘superiority,’ so the meaning is not substantially altered whether we render the four instances of ἐν by ‘in (the midst of)’ (local ἐν; cf. 6:4b–5; 11:26), ‘with’ (circumstantial or causal), ‘with respect to’ (referential), or ‘because of’ (causal). κόπος (‘toil,’ ‘labor’) was the tradesman’s term for the strenuous exertions of those engaged in manual labor and the word may refer to this in 6:5 (see the commentary there), but here too it probably also describes Paul’s evangelistic and pastoral work (cf. its use in 10:15),⁴¹ with the same connotation of rigorous and exhausting toil, toil that could prove a burden (11:28), even if it was prompted by love (1 Thess. 1:3).⁴² The plural κόποις may be generalizing (“labor”) or may refer to individual acts (BAGD 443d). The adverb περισσοτέρως is the comparative of περισσῶς (‘exceedingly’). After ὑπὲρ ἐγὼ (‘I more’), it probably retains a comparative force, with the sense ‘far more (labors),’⁴³ just as in the following phrase it seems to mean ‘far more (imprisonments).’⁴⁴ Now it is true that we have no knowledge that Paul’s rivals had ever been imprisoned (or flogged or shipwrecked!), so that the comparison cannot involve numeration.⁴⁵ Moreover, the next two adverbs, ὑπερβαλλόντως and πολλάκις, need not involve a comparison. But that is not to say that any notion of comparison after ὑπὲρ ἐγὼ is irrelevant or that the comparison is simply with the majority of Christ’s servants. The implications of ὑπὲρ ἐγὼ must be taken seriously even if we acknowledge that Paul is not engaged in specific comparisons but is establishing his general credentials as a διάκονος Χριστοῦ over against the groundless claim to that title made by his opponents. A title beneath the picture of Paul’s hardships found in vv. 23b–29 would read διάκονος Χριστοῦ γέγονα.⁴⁶” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 798–799.]

¹⁰⁰“ὑπὲρ is here used adverbially (see Moulton and Howard 326), ‘more,’ reflecting the fact that prepositions were originally adjuncts to verbs, ‘ad-verbs.’³³ ‘I more,’ ‘I, to a higher degree’ (cf. BDF §230) (= ἐγὼ μᾶλλον; cf. Phil. 3:4) is an abbreviated form of ‘I am so even more (than they)’ (BAGD 839c), or ‘I am/have been a better servant of Christ than they claim to have been.’³⁴ For the sake of the comparison that follows, Paul is allowing his rivals’ estimate of themselves as διάκονοι Χριστοῦ and claiming to be vastly superior to them in that role.³⁵” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 797.]

¹⁰¹In such an elliptical listing as this one is not surprised by a variety of alternative readings for portions of vv. 24–29, as Murray

ἐν κόποις
περισσοτέρως,
ἐν φυλακαῖς
περισσοτέρως,
ἐν πληγαῖς
ὑπερβαλλόντως,
ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις.

al preposition ἐν... in verse twenty-three b. Then comes the listing emphasizing how many times various things happened to Paul in vv. 24-26a. He next shifts over to the key word κινδύνοις, *dangers*, for the third series in vv. 26b. In v. 27 is a mixture grammatically of several items that he suffered. All these signal different kinds of hardships that the apostle had experienced in doing ministry as a διάκονος Χριστοῦ. Absolutely none of the outsiders either could or would admit to such difficulties serving (NIGTC) outlines:

“a. In these last two phrases, there are five variations in word order:

(1) ἐν φυλακαῖς περισσοτέρως, ἐν πληγαῖς ὑπερβαλλόντως (P 46 B D*² [0243] 33 629 630 [1739 1881] pc lat Ambrosiaster)

(2) ἐν πληγαῖς περισσοτέρως, ἐν φυλακαῖς ὑπερβαλλόντως (κ* F G Origen)

(3) ἐν φυλακαῖς ὑπερβαλλόντως, ἐν πληγαῖς περισσοτέρως (P)

(4) ἐν πληγαῖς ὑπερβαλλόντως, ἐν φυλακαῖς περισσοτέρως (κ2 D1 H Ψ 0121 M syr^{pl})

(5) ἐν πληγαῖς ὑπερβαλλόντως (Clement)

“On the basis of their very weak (readings [3] and [5]) or comparatively weak (reading [4]) external support, these three readings can be regarded as secondary. Readings (1) and (2) both have strong proto-Alexandrian and Western support, but (1) seems to be original since (2) represents a *prima facie* natural gradation of severity of suffering (labors-floggings-imprisonments-brushes with death). Both περισσοτέρως and ὑπερβαλλόντως may mean ‘to a much greater degree’ (BAGD 651d, 840b).

“b. Under the influence of the following four cases of ἐν, some witnesses (κ2 H 0121 33 1881 M lat Ambrosiaster) read ἐν κόπῳ. The reading without ἐν (as in P⁴⁶ κ* B D F G Ψ 0243 1739 pc) is to be preferred as *lectio difficilior* and as having superior attestation.

“c. External evidence supports ἐπίστασις (P⁴⁶ κ B D F G H* 0243 0278 33 81 326 1175 1739 1881 pc) over ἐπισύστασις (Hc I^{vid} Ψ 0121 M). On the possible meanings of ἐπίστασις, see the commentary at 11:28. Etymologically, ἐπισύστασις is ‘a being gathered (-στασις) together (-συ(v)-) against (ἐπι-),’ thus ‘disturbance,’ ‘insurrection.’ In Acts 24:12 it also appears as a variant (supported by M) of ἐπίστασις in the phrase ἐπίστασιν ποιοῦντα ὄχλου, ‘provoking a collecting of a crowd’ = ‘stirring up a crowd’ (RSV, NRSV). It is difficult to make any sense of ἐπισύστασις in 11:28 (unless it refers to the combined opposition of Paul’s adversaries—see Field 185); it may have arisen by dittography of the first σ in ἐπίστασις and a subsequent correction by the insertion of υ.

“d. If, following κ2 D Ψ 0121 0243 1739 1881 M lat Ambrosiaster, we read ἡ ἐπίστασις μου, the reference will be to the ‘oversight’ or ‘attention’ given by Paul (subjective genitive); but μοι has stronger attestation (P⁴⁶ κ* B F G H 0278 33 81 1175 pc b d) and produces the meaning ‘the pressure on me,’ ‘what presses on me,’ where μοι naturally follows an ἐπί compound.”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 792.

Christ. To them, these were signals of inferiority, rather than superiority. This listing leads up to the climatic declaration in v. 30 which both sums up vv. 23b-29 and introduces vv. 31-33: Εἰ καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, τὰ τῆς ἀσθενείας μου καυχῆσομαι, *since it is necessary to boast, I will boast in those things connected to my weakness*.

First comes those experiences defined locationally with ἐν.¹⁰² The two adverbs περισσοτέρως and ὑπερβαλλόντως are functional synonyms although περισσοτέρως is quantitative in the sense of “a much greater degree, for more, far greater” and ὑπερβαλλόντως as the adverbial form of the present participle of ὑπερβάλλω has the sense of *exceedingly, immeasurably* but also can be used comparatively as here with the sense of *surpassingly*. The comparative aspect is stronger with περισσοτέρως, as the comparative suffix -τέρω- signals. Thus the outsiders are more in the picture with ἐν κόποις, *in labors*, and ἐν φυλακαῖς, *in imprisonments*. The comparative element begins to fade with ἐν πληγαῖς ὑπερβαλλόντως, *in floggings far more often*. It fades out of the picture with ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις, *many times facing death*. The cycle of difficulties begins with hard work situations, κόποις. It moves to persecution with φυλακαῖς and πληγαῖς. It concludes with facing death in many situations, θανάτοις. These are situations basically coming at Paul from the outside of the Christian communities.

Regarding ἐν φυλακαῖς περισσοτέρως, *in imprisonments far more*, we know of only one account up to the time of the writing of this letter. It is the imprisonment at Philippi of Paul and Silas in Acts 16:23-40. This plu-

¹⁰²“At this point Paul begins the third and longest of his four lists of sufferings found in 2 Corinthians.³⁶ Whereas in 6:4b-5, 8-10 the sufferings befall him as θεοῦ διάκονος (cf. 6:4b), in 11:23b-29 they come to him as διάκονος Χριστοῦ (cf. 11:23a).³⁷ That no distinction is intended is clear from the fact that five items are common to the two lists: ἐν κόποις, ἐν φυλακαῖς, ἐν πληγαῖς (11:22 and 6:5), ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις, ἐν νηστείαις (11:27 and 6:5). Vv. 23b-29 are an avalanche of hardships that sweeps the reader along in dazed disbelief. Yet Paul’s focus is not on any stoical indifference to suffering or even patient endurance of affliction but on Christ’s grace in upholding him in the midst of his weakness (11:30; 12:9-10; cf. 1 Cor. 15:10), or, as he has expressed it earlier, on God’s power in leading him in triumphal procession through his union with Christ (2:14). What must have surprised the Corinthians was that Paul seeks to establish his superiority in Christ’s service by tabulating his adversities rather than by appealing to his success in founding congregations in strategically important centers around the Aegean, or by referring to the number of converts won, or by citing miracles performed. Rather, appeal is made to evidence of his shame and dishonor. ‘What he has endured is the seal of his Apostleship’ (Plummer 322). ‘He ... does not view his suffering as an apostle as a tedious detour; it is rather the main highway’ (Garland 307).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 797-798.]

ral reference by Paul here of multiple instances is a good reminder of how very selective Luke is in his historical account in Acts.¹⁰³ The designation ἐν πληγαῖς ὑπερβαλλόντως designates numerous beatings and could well include the stoning described at Lystra in Acts 14:19 (cf. 2 Cor. 11:25).¹⁰⁴ “The competitor in boxing (ἀγωνιστής) boasted of injuries inflicted on his opponent; Paul, of wounds received in his own body.”¹⁰⁵

Paul as spoken of encounters with death several times in 1:8-11 and 4:11, as well as earlier in 1 Cor. 15:31. A little later writing from Corinth to the Romans he will speak of death as his daily companion (Rom. 8:36).

This listing of four items suggests a gradual increase in severity, although one should be cautious about drawing this conclusion too strongly.¹⁰⁶

The second set of experiences that are numbered (vv. 24-26a)¹⁰⁷ and then those introduced by κινδύνους,

¹⁰³The second century church father Clement mentions seven imprisonments of Paul in 1 Clement 5:6,

After that he had been seven times in bonds, had been driven into exile, had been stoned, had preached in the East and in the West, he won the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness unto the whole world, and having reached the farthest bounds of the West; and when he had borne his testimony before the rulers, so he departed from the world and went unto the holy place, having been found a notable pattern of patient endurance.

[George A. Jackson, *The Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists of the Second Century*, ed. George P. Fisher, Early Christian Literature Primers (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1879), 30–31.]

¹⁰⁴**Acts 14:19.** Ἐπῆλθαν δὲ ἀπὸ Ἀντιοχείας καὶ Ἰκονίου Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ πείσαντες τοὺς ὄχλους καὶ λιθάσαντες τὸν Παῦλον ἔσυρον ἔξω τῆς πόλεως νομίζοντες αὐτὸν τεθνηκέαι. *But Jews came there from Antioch and Iconium and won over the crowds. Then they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.*

¹⁰⁵Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 800.

¹⁰⁶“It is possible that the apostle has mentioned these four general categories of hardship in a progression of increasing severity of suffering: toil-imprisonment-beatings-encounters with death. But if so, the categories are not mutually exclusive, for a beating could be linked with an imprisonment (as at Philippi, Acts 16:22–23), and exposure to death could be the result of a beating (see on vv. 24–25). With more confidence we may argue that the phrase ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις is illustrated in vv. 24–25, just as ὁδοιπορίας πολλάκις (v. 26a) is illustrated in the remainder of v. 26.52 See above, ‘Analysis of 11:21b–29 by Construction.’” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 800.]

¹⁰⁷**Note the numbered experiences:**

often at death’s door;

²⁴ five times I received from the Jews the “forty lashes minus one,”

in dangers (v. 26b),¹⁰⁸ seem to amplify the reference to ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις, *near death many times* (v. 23c). Clearly they reference the various near death experiences that Paul had experience through the mid-50s of the first century. The detectable pattern is that the last item in one listing sets up the following listing. Once again the hugely selective history of Luke in Acts does not include the vast majority of these experiences of Paul.

First comes the numbered experiences in vv. 24-26a that begin the amplification of ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις:

24 Ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων πεντάκις τεσσαράκοντα παρὰ μίαν ἔλαβον,

24 Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.

25 τρίς ἔραβδίσθην,

25 Three times I was beaten with rods.

ἅπαξ ἐλιθάσθην,

Once I received a stoning.

τρὶς ἐναυάγησα,

Three times I was shipwrecked;

νυχθήμερον ἐν τῷ βυθῷ πεποίηκα·

for a night and a day I was adrift at sea;

26 ὁδοιπορίας πολλάκις,

26 on frequent journeys,....

Notice the post positioning of πολλάκις twice in signaling a header shift:

23b ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις

26 ὁδοιπορίας πολλάκις,

Those items that follow served to amplify the individual headers.

What kind of frequent near death experiences did Paul have then? The 39 stripes beating was the official Jewish synagogue flogging for various offenses.¹⁰⁹The

²⁵ three times	I was beaten with rods,
once	I was pelted with stones,
three times	I was shipwrecked,
a night and a day	I have spent adrift at sea;

¹⁰⁸**Note the specific dangers mainly from traveling:**

²⁶ on frequent journeys, exposed to

dangers	from rivers,
dangers	from bandits,
dangers	from my people,
dangers	from Gentiles,
dangers	in the city,
dangers	in the desert,
dangers	on the sea,
dangers	among false brothers;

¹⁰⁹“The thirty-nine stripes’ was the official punishment of the synagogue, alluded to by Jesus when he warned his disciples that some of them would be handed over to local Jewish councils (συνέδρια) and scourged ‘in their synagogues’ (ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν, Matt. 10:17; cf. 23:34). This punishment has its origin in the regulations of Deut. 25:2–3 concerning the penalty to be meted out to the guilty person who deserved a flogging. The number of lashes was to correspond to the gravity of the offense, but in no case was it to exceed forty lest the offender should suffer gross public humiliation. We may explain the change from forty to thir-

phrasing of the number 39 here is rather rare and unusual for first century Koine Greek.¹¹⁰ The expression should not be taken as a general indictment of the Jewish people of all time for abusing the apostle on these five separate instances (πεντάκις), as much of Catholic interpretation understood until our day. Not one of these synagogue floggings is mentioned in Acts, but it's not difficult from Paul's lifestyle to deduce why these are imposed on him.¹¹¹ The acknowledgement of these beatings has significance for Paul's ministry.¹¹² It

ty-nine strokes as the maximum permissible penalty as resulting from (1) a concern to avoid a miscount that would infringe a commandment; or (2) the fact that the instrument of punishment had three straps, so that thirteen strokes was the maximum permitted; or (3) an interpretation of the juxtaposed words bemispār 'arbā 'im (LXX, ἀριθμῶ τεσσαράκοντα), literally, 'by number forty,' in Deut. 25:2–3 to mean 'a number near to forty' (m. Makkot 3:10). Josephus also refers to the 'forty stripes minus one' (*Antiquities* 4:238, 248); clearly the later comparable reference in the Mishnaic tractate Makkot ("Stripes") reflects practice that dates back at least to the first century A.D.⁵⁴ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 801.]

¹¹⁰“In the expression τεσσεράκοντα παρά μίαν, we note that the preposition παρά has the unusual sense of 'less' (BDF §236[4]) or 'minus'; that πληγάς ('strokes') must be supplied (as in Luke 12:47) with τεσσεράκοντα, or πληγῆν with μίαν; that τεσσεράκοντα was more often spelled τεσσαράκοντα until the Byzantine period.⁵⁵” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 801.]

¹¹¹“None of the floggings is mentioned in Acts, and where and when they occurred is unknown.⁵⁸ Nor can we know precisely why Paul was given these synagogal punishments;⁵⁹ but possible reasons are not difficult to find, such as disregard of food laws by eating unclean food (cf. m. Makkot 3:2) and encouraging other Jews to do so (cf. 1 Cor. 10:25, 27),⁶⁰ or the rejection of the need for circumcision by male Gentiles as a sign of inclusion within the people of God (cf. Gal. 5:11). But an even more probable reason would have been a charge of blasphemy, understood either as 'defiant sin,'⁶¹ which could involve the two offenses already mentioned, or as the dishonoring of God and his people by promulgating a messianism that focused on a crucified Jesus of Nazareth and affirmed his deity.⁶² The punishment for blasphemy was removal from the community (Num. 15:30–31, and at a later period m. Keritot 1:1), but from the Mishnah we learn that scourging could be a substitute for 'extirpation' (m. Makkot 3:15). If this was true also in the first century, Paul's 'blasphemy' that merited permanent removal from the synagogue could have been punished instead by flogging.⁶³ Nor should we forget that he may have been punished for more than one reason on each of the five occasions. We may gauge the seriousness with which Paul's offense was viewed on each occasion from the fact that he incurred the maximum penalty each time.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 801–802.]

¹¹²“Paul's testimony regarding his five beatings is significant

ironically validates beyond question his Jewishness, for no non-Jew would have ever put up with such abuse. The full brunt of the Roman system would have been brought down on the synagogue and the punishers for such.

But Paul suffered Roman punishment three times by being beaten with a rod: τρις ἔρραβδίσθην.¹¹³ The episode with the slave girl in Philippi recorded in Acts 16:19–24 is one example of this kind of beating.¹¹⁴

in several ways.

“1. There is irony in the fact that as a Christian Paul repeatedly received the very punishment—synagogal floggings—that he, as a ruthless persecutor of Christians, had repeatedly caused to be meted out to them or himself had inflicted on them (Acts 22:19; 26:11).

“2. Paul must have been robust to survive all five floggings and resilient to face the last four. In m. Makkot 3.14 the possibility of a person's dying during or after the thirty-nine strokes is envisaged, and the judgment is made that 'the scourger is not culpable.' Josephus calls this punishment 'most ignominious' (αἰσχίστη) for a free man (*Antiquities* 4:238).

“3. This testimony affords further evidence of Paul's Jewishness (cf. v. 22). Not only by lineage but also in practice he was a Jew, attending the synagogue⁶⁴ and being subject to its discipline.

“4. His ongoing submission to the authority of the synagogue was doubtless prompted by his desire to maintain an open door for evangelism among his fellow Jews (cf. Rom. 9:1–3; 10:1) as well among the Gentiles who attended synagogue services.”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 802–803.]

¹¹³“If the thirty-nine stripes, a Jewish punishment, was one example of πληγαί (v. 23), being beaten with rods, a Roman punishment, was another. ῥαβδίω (Latin *virgis caedere*) means 'beat with a rod (ῥάβδος) (or rods).' ῥαβδοῦχοι (Latin *lictores*), literally 'rod-carriers' (EVV '*lictors*'), were officials who attended Roman magistrates and carried as symbols of authority bundles of rods (Latin *fasces*) of elm or birch wood with an axe (Latin *securis*) inserted among them, signifying magistrates' right to inflict either corporal or capital punishment. One of the three times Paul was beaten with the lictors' rods was at Philippi in about A.D. 50 (Acts 16:19–24). After Paul had exorcised a divining spirit from a certain slave girl there, the girl's owners brought Paul and Silas before the two local magistrates (ἄρχοντες) or 'praetors' (στρατηγοί), who summarily stripped them and ordered the lictors 'to beat them with rods' (ῥαβδίσειν, Acts 16:22). Nothing is known from Acts of the other two comparable beatings; Paul's catalogue of trials provides significant biographical data that complement and supplement the information found in Acts.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 803.]

¹¹⁴“Generally a Roman citizen such as Paul⁶⁵ was exempt from this punishment, but this right was not always upheld in the provinces,⁶⁶ and the local magistrates involved in the three cases in question might have considered Paul's behavior to be a minor offense, in which case a public flogging was not illegal.⁶⁷ With this said, the question remains why, at least in the case at Philippi, Paul did not inform the authorities of his Roman citizenship before he



The single stoning of Paul, ἅπαξ ἐλιθάσθην, is recorded in Acts 14:19-20. It happened at Lystra and was administered by locals who had been stirred up to do it by neighboring Jewish synagogue leaders.¹¹⁵

Paul mentions being shipwrecked three times, τρις ἐναυάγησα, and having spent a night and a day in the sea, νυχθήμερον ἐν τῷ βυθῷ πεποιήκα. The shipwreck that is described in Acts 27:30-44 happened some years after the writing of Second Corinthians and thus is not a part of Paul's reference here. But some nine sea voyages are referenced prior to Acts 20 which provide abundant occasion for these wrecks to have taken

was flogged. Perhaps he wished to be identified with Christ in his suffering (cf. 1:5; 4:7-11; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24). Perhaps he wanted to provide his converts who would face persecution with an example of patient suffering (cf. 2 Tim. 3:10-11); at least he would not want to be seen to be using a convenient escape-hatch that was unavailable to some or most of his converts.⁶⁸ And is it possible that at Philippi, caught up in a rapid succession of events (Acts 16:18-22), Paul and Silas judged that it would be to the advantage of the infant church if they remained silent about their Roman citizenship until the incident was over, so that the praetors, obliged to give an official apology yet fearing a complaint to Rome about their conduct (cf. Acts 16:38-39), would be less willing to persecute the new converts?⁶⁹ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 803-804.]

¹¹⁵“The single instance of stoning referred to by ἅπαξ ἐλιθάσθην occurred at Lystra (Acts 14:19-20).⁷⁰ That this stoning was not a carefully calculated penalty for alleged blasphemy (cf. Lev. 24:16) inflicted by the Jews of Antioch and Iconium but rather a spontaneous action of an incited crowd (Acts 14:19) seems clear from: (1) the rapid reversal of the Lystrans’ attitude to Paul and Barnabas, from adoration (Acts 14:11-13) to animosity; and (2) the fact that Paul survived the pelting with stones (Acts 14:20), which would not have been the case if it were a judicial penalty (cf. Lev. 24:16).⁷¹” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 804.]

place.¹¹⁶

In listening to the reading of these episodes being listed by Paul, the original Corinthians hearers in the various church groups should have gasped at how much and how often the apostle had put his life into serious jeopardy just to bring them the Gospel message. Clearly the outsider false teachers had no such story to appeal to. But Paul is just getting started with the listing of his experiences in ministry.

The last item, as noted above, functions to transition to the subsequent listing and sets these items in the context of wide spread traveling by Paul: ὁδοιπορίαὶς πολλάκις, *in journeys often*. It must never be forgotten that traveling around in the first century world bears

¹¹⁶“Acts makes no mention of the three shipwrecks Paul refers to. The shipwreck described in Acts 27:39-44 occurred after 2 Corinthians was written (that is, at the time represented by Acts 20:2a). Hughes (411) lists some nine sea voyages mentioned in Acts that Paul undertook before Acts 20, to which we may add the return journey of Ephesus-Corinth-Ephesus that is called the ‘painful visit’ (see on 1:16; 2:1), and probably a coastal voyage from Troas to Neapolis (2:13; 7:5), journeys not recorded in Acts.⁷² The sailing vessels Paul traveled in were probably not renowned for their seaworthiness, being wooden, leaky, and without life rafts. In the ancient world all sea voyages, including coastal journeys, were viewed with trepidation and as potentially life-threatening.⁷³ Inscriptions and votive tablets that are addressed to various deities (e.g., ‘to Pan of the Successful Journey,’ Πανὶ Εὐδόφῳ), thanking them for deliverance from the dangers of the sea, bear eloquent testimony to this fear and to the relief felt upon reaching harbor safely.⁷⁴

“The night and day Paul spent adrift at sea may have been during yet another shipwreck, but more probably it occurred in the course of one of the three shipwrecks already mentioned. νυχθήμερον has been understood in various ways.

1. As an adverb: ‘by night and day’ (Moulton in Moulton and Howard 269 and n. 2).
2. As an adverbial accusative of the adjective νυχθήμερος, ‘lasting a night and a day’ (cf. BAGD 547a; Moulton and Howard 283).
3. As a neuter noun (LSJ 1186 s.v. II.) and the direct object of πεποιήκα (Hughes 412 n. 77; cf. BDF §121).
4. As a neuter noun and an accusative of extent of time with ποιέω, ‘spend,’ ‘stay’ (BAGD 682c).⁷⁵

“This last explanation is to be preferred although the sense is not materially altered however the form is explained. ἐν τῷ βυθῷ means ‘on the open sea,’ ‘in the deep,’ or (so BAGD 148c) ‘adrift at sea.’ That is, the terrifying twenty-four hours was spent at the mercy of the waves, presumably clinging to some of the ship’s wreckage (cf. Acts 27:44) but always in danger of drowning. Quite often πεποιήκα is treated as an aoristic perfect equivalent to ἐποίησα,⁷⁶ but following four aorists in vv. 24-25 this perfect is unlikely to be merely a stylistic change. Rather, in his mind’s eye Paul is vividly recalling a harrowing (and possibly recent) experience of prolonged exposure to imminent death⁷⁷: ‘a night and a day I have spent adrift at sea.’”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 804-805.]

hardly any resemblance to traveling in the modern twenty-first century. Ancient travelers faced all kinds of dangers and risks. To be sure, the Romans built a system of well designed roads across the empire, but they were strictly for military and government courier usage. Others faced severe penalties for attempted use of these roads. Many, however, did risk penalty by using them but always would duck out of sight at the appearance of any government official or traveling group. Mountains, rivers with no bridges, unsea worthy boats, bandits, pirates, little or no places to stay along the way -- all these were but a few of the hazards of first century travel. Yet Paul and his associates were 'on the road' almost all the time apart from short stays in some of the major cities of ministry like Corinth.

Paul lists eight κινδύνοις, *dangers*, encountered in connection to his travels. The identifying header κινδύνοις from κίνδυνος, only used here and in Rom. 8:35 inside the NT, denotes a situation that poses something of risk to the individual. The genitive (ablative of source) noun following it, especially with ἐκ, defines the source or the danger. But with ἐν, the location of the danger is noted. This pattern below suggests a two fold division of 4 + 4 dangers. Different organizing structures have been proposed by commentators.¹¹⁷ Yet the grammar arrangement into two sets of four seem most natural.

κινδύνοις ποταμῶν, *dangers from rivers.*

κινδύνοις ληστῶν, *dangers from bandits.*

The connection between rivers and bandits most likely had to do with river crossings as one of the favorite places of attack by bandits of land travelers.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷“At first sight the eight dangers seem to be arranged neatly in four pairs: rivers-robbers, Jews-Gentiles, city-wilderness, sea-false brothers.⁷⁸ The second and third pairs form natural contrasts, and the two items in the first pair would be naturally associated in Paul’s mind as he recalled the perils of crossing the Taurus mountain range between Perga and Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14; 14:24), a journey notorious for cascading torrents and hidden bandits. Because the last pair (sea-false brothers) seem oddly matched, some have suggested an alternative arrangement of the eight pairs. Windisch envisages that ἐν ψευδαδέλφοις has been accidentally displaced, so that the original order was rivers-robbers, Jews-Gentiles-false brothers, city-wilderness-sea (= the whole world); that is, one pair and two triplets (358). More satisfactory is Thrall’s proposed arrangement: two pairs (rivers-bandits, Jews-Gentiles), a triplet (city-desert-sea), and a climactic ‘amongst pseudo-Christians’ (722, 742–43).⁷⁹” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 805–806.]

¹¹⁸“Both ποταμῶν and ληστῶν are genitives of source: ‘(dangers) from rivers ... from bandits.’⁸⁴ These ‘dangers from rivers’ are those encountered while trying to cross rivers (bridges being uncommon in remote areas) or while seeking to avoid being swept away by the sudden flooding of rivers.⁸⁵ Plummer notes (326) that Frederick I (Barbarossa) was drowned in the river Calycadnus in

Particularly across the region now known as Turkey where virtually all of Paul’s ministry outside Palestine had occurred up to this point, robbers were notorious and especially in the coastal regions despite Roman efforts to root it out. Most of the territory that Paul traveled in, including Macedonia and Achaia, was mountainous and travel overland was very hazardous.

κινδύνοις ἐκ γένους, *dangers from my own people.*

κινδύνοις ἐξ ἔθνῶν, *dangers from Gentiles.*

The connection of Jews and non-Jews both opposing Paul and his work is easy to understand. From his conversion to his death some 35 years later, he faced persecution from Jewish leaders and Roman governmental leaders.¹¹⁹ Outside of Jerusalem, the Jewish opposition came from the Diaspora synagogues. Yet Paul did manage to convince some of these leaders to become Christians. Also there were isolated successes at winning regional Roman government leaders, such as Sergius Paulus, the proconsul over Cyprus (Acts 13: 4-12). The intent of most of this was to kill Paul and at Cilicia, not far from Tarsus, in 1190 during the Third Crusade. λησταί (from ληίζομαι, ‘seize as booty’) are ‘bandits,’ ‘brigands,’ or even ‘pirates,’⁸⁶ not light-fingered thieves but strong-arm thugs. Although the *Pax Romana* greatly reduced brigandage, ‘in Asia Minor, brigandage was never eliminated; not only were the mountainous regions particularly conducive to it, but its coastline provided choice sites for piracy, ‘brigandage at sea.’⁸⁷” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 806–807.]

¹¹⁹“Acts is replete with examples of the dangers Paul faced from his fellow countrymen (ἐκ γένους, ‘at the hands of the people/my countrymen’ = Jews; cf. BAGD 156c).⁸⁸ Even after his initial preaching in the synagogues of Damascus following his conversion (Acts 9:20–22), ‘the Jews conspired to kill him’ (Acts 9:23). Such persecution, although not always murderous in intent, was to become the pattern of his ministry.⁸⁹ It was not only his message of a crucified and exalted Messiah who fulfilled OT promises that provoked intense opposition from his fellow Jews. There was also his ‘success’ in luring away from Judaism to ‘the Nazarene sect’ (Acts 24:7) many Gentile ‘God-fearers’ (e.g., Acts 13:26; 14:16; 17:4), who, attracted by the monotheism of the Jewish faith and its rigorous ethical demands, regularly attended the synagogue. Such converts formed the nucleus of Paul’s churches. But opposition to Paul was not restricted to his fellow countrymen; there were perils ‘at the hands of Gentiles’ (ἐξ ἔθνῶν). Acts records two notable examples, the disturbance at Philippi that led to his flogging and imprisonment (along with Silas) (Acts 16:16–24) and the Demetrius riot at Ephesus that prompted his departure from that city (Acts 19:23–20:1). On one occasion, in Iconium, Jews and Gentiles acted in unison in endangering Paul’s life (Acts 14:5). That Paul did not court persecution is clear from his action on this occasion, for as soon as he and Barnabas heard of the plot to mistreat them and stone them, ‘they made their escape’ (κατέφυγον, Acts 14:6).⁹⁰” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 807.]

minimum to beat him into unconsciousness.

κινδύνους ἐν πόλει, dangers in the city.

κινδύνους ἐν ἐρημίᾳ, dangers in the wilderness.

κινδύνους ἐν θαλάσῃ, dangers in the sea.

These three sets seem to go together due to the natural locations of city, countryside, and sea.¹²⁰ The effect of these is to assert that Paul was not free from danger any where that he traveled.

κινδύνους ἐν ψευδαδέλφοις, dangers among false brothers.

Does this final set of dangers represent the most challenging set of all eight? Perhaps so, because these came from inside the Christian communities rather than from outside it.¹²¹ They sought to tear down the churches established by the apostolic Gospel, to compromise that Gospel message in order to avoid opposition from the Jewish synagogues, to destroy everything positive

¹²⁰“The next three perils belong together, as places where Paul met danger. Just as ‘Jews’ and ‘Gentiles’ encompass all people, so ‘city,’ ‘desert,’ and ‘sea’ incorporate every area on earth. Paul was unsafe wherever he went. The contrast between ἐν πόλει and ἐν ἐρημίᾳ is that between inhabited and largely uninhabited regions, between ‘the crowded city’ and ‘the lonely desert’ (A. P. Stanley), between city streets and the open country. ‘Dangers on the sea’ is not simply a repetition of v. 25b. ‘There are other κίνδυνοι ἐν θαλάσῃ besides shipwreck and exposure in the sea, such as bodily injury, fire, loss of property’ (Plummer [CGT] 182).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 807–808.]

¹²¹“Dangers among false brothers’ stands alone at the end of Paul’s list (see Thrall’s structural analysis [742–43] mentioned above), probably because he viewed it as the most hurtful and insidious peril of all. External dangers that threatened his own life were one thing; treacherous opposition that undermined his work was quite another thing. He could cope with life-threatening hazards from without more easily than with work-undermining perils from within. ψευδάδελφοι are ‘false brothers,’ ‘counterfeit Christians,’ ‘people masquerading as brothers’ (NJB). The only other use of the term is in Gal. 2:4 in reference to Judaizers who had been ‘smuggled in’ (παρεισάκτους) and then had ‘infiltrated’ (παρεισήλθον) into Paul’s company ‘in order to spy out’ (κατασκοπήσαι) the freedom Paul and others enjoyed ‘in the fellowship of Christ Jesus.’ Their ultimate aim was to impose on Gentile converts the obligation to observe the Mosaic Law, and in particular, the rite of circumcision. Apparently, connotations of furtive action and treachery attached to the term ψευδάδελφος in Paul’s mind. Héring suggests that these ‘false brothers’ may have been traitors who denounced Paul before civic or religious authorities (86). By writing ἐν ψευδαδέλφοις, not ἐκ ψευδαδέλφων (which would be parallel to ἐκ γένους and ἐξ ἔθνῶν), Paul may be indicating that while other perils came and went, the danger of having his ministry compromised by the machinations of false Christians was ever present. Since he terms his rivals at Corinth ψευδαπόστολοι (11:13), he may include them within these ψευδάδελφοι, but the latter has a wider reference in this context.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 808.]

that Paul had accomplished. Fighting battles with outside enemies is to be expected, but not having a second battle line from inside the Christian communities against these false brothers.

Perhaps also the literary function of this last set is to transition into the final grouping of hardships that Paul faced in his ministry (vv. 27–28): 27 κόπω καὶ μόχθῳ, ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις πολλάκις, ἐν λιμῷ καὶ δίψει, ἐν νηστείαις πολλάκις, ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι. 28 χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτὸς ἢ ἐπίστασις μοι ἢ καθ’ ἡμέραν, ἢ μέριμνα πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, 27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked. 28 And, besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the churches.¹²² While

¹²²“On the expression ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις, see 6:5, where the same phrase occurs. I argued there that these ‘sleepless nights’ (ἀγρυπνία; BAGD 14b) were voluntary,⁹⁴ as Paul pursued his missionary tasks and engaged in manual labor to support himself. The tasks that led to ‘many a sleepless night’ (TCNT) may have included prayer vigils as well as preaching engagements (cf. Acts 20:7, 9, 11, 31). All the instances of ἐν in this verse should be seen as circumstantial (‘with’) or locative (‘in,’ ‘in conditions of’), comparable to the significance of the two datives κόπω and μόχθῳ.

“It is improbable that ἐν λιμῷ καὶ δίψει means ‘in famine and drought,’⁹⁵ for while λιμός often means ‘famine,’ there is no evidence that δίψος can bear the sense of ‘drought.’ Given the hundreds of miles that Paul traveled on foot, often across uninhabited terrain, it is not surprising to learn of the unavailability of food and water at least on some occasions, if not frequently.⁹⁶ Also, his unwillingness to accept payment for spiritual ‘services rendered’ could have sometimes led to ‘hunger and thirst’ when his own resources dried up (cf. ὑστερηθεῖς, 11:9).

“Although the phrase ἐν νηστείαις πολλάκις is often taken to refer to lack of food,⁹⁷ reasons for understanding it of voluntary abstinence from food (‘often fasting,’ Barrett 288; ‘frequently going without food’)⁹⁸ are not lacking. First, ἐν λιμῷ has just referred to involuntary ‘fasting,’ and a repetition of this thought is therefore unlikely. Second, self-imposed hardships (cf. ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις above) should not be deemed inappropriate in a list of trials if those hardships were imposed in fulfillment of one’s mission; going without sleep and food in order to support or further one’s ministry would certainly fit that category. Third, structurally the two phrases ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις πολλάκις and ἐν νηστείαις πολλάκις are identical. If the former describes voluntary sleeplessness (see above), the latter may depict voluntary ‘fasting.’ Fourth, νηστεία need not refer to formal religious rites associated with self-discipline or prayer, but may here denote merely going without meals⁹⁹ in order to achieve a particular goal, such as earning sufficient money to enable financial independence (cf. 1 Cor. 9:12b, 18; 2 Cor. 11:7–12) or engaging in conversation about the gospel or preparing for special ministry opportunities.¹⁰⁰

“ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι, literally, ‘with/in cold and nakedness,’ ‘cold and virtually naked,’ refers to conditions Paul faced as a craftsman,¹⁰¹ or, more probably, as a regular traveler and occasional prisoner. As Paul dictated this phrase, memories of being drenched in rivers or at sea, of being assailed by bandits, or of languishing in freezing prisons may have arisen in his mind. It is possible that the phrase is a case of hendiadys, ‘frozen from want of clothing’ (Wand), ‘cold because of near-nakedness.’ Also, γυμνότης may stand for ‘destitution’ (Martin 367) or ‘exposure’

the false brothers lived well off the support demanded from the churches, Paul and his associates struggled to get by on the most modest of means.¹²³ They worked long and hard, and often had little, if any, food and shelter.¹²⁴ Add to that the burden of young churches going through all kinds of ‘growing crises’ in learning how to be truly Christian. But the expression *χωρίς τῶν παρεκτός ἢ ἐπίστασις μοι ἢ καθ’ ἡμέραν, ἢ μέριμνα πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν* (v. 28) is subject to diverse understand-
ing.¹²⁵ Yet the richness of his expression reveals a deep

(NEB, REB) by metonymy.”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 809–810.]

¹²³The repetition of *πολλάκις* in *ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις πολλάκις* and *ἐν νηστείαις πολλάκις* (v. 27), although containing the same meaning of ‘often’ does not function literary wise as a header, as it did earlier.

¹²⁴V. 26 has specified eight dangers Paul encountered on his ‘frequent travels.’ Now he mentions six hardships or deprivations that result from the ‘labor and toil’ he expends in his missionary endeavors. In this general sense *κόπω καὶ μόχθῳ* stands as a heading for what follows (Peterson 120). Whereas *κόπος* occurs eighteen times in the NT (eleven in Paul), *μόχθος* is found only three times, always in conjunction with *κόπος* and always standing second (11:27; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8). Both words can mean ‘exertion’ or ‘effort,’ referring to arduous toil, but only *κόπος* can also denote the ‘weariness’ or ‘exhaustion’ that results from this profound strenuous labor.⁹¹ But if it were Paul’s intent to allude to this ‘exhaustion’ in his three uses of this phrase, we would expect the order *μόχθος καὶ κόπος*. So we should assume that the words are used here as virtual synonyms,⁹² signifying the ‘labor and toil’ that Paul expended in supporting himself by plying his trade and in fulfilling his missionary vocation (see the comments on *κόπος* at 6:5; 11:23). The assonance of *ο-φ* may be reproduced in the archaic English phrase ‘toil and moil’ (Plummer 327). The two datives denote accompanying circumstances (‘with’), as in the case of *ὁδοιπορίαίς* and *κινδύνοις* in v. 26.⁹³ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 808–809.]

¹²⁵There are five main exegetical issues in this verse and each issue may be conveniently raised by means of a question.

“How is this verse related to what precedes? That is, does *χωρίς τῶν παρεκτός* mean ‘Apart from what is external’ or ‘Apart from what I leave unmentioned’?¹⁰² As an improper preposition *παρεκτός* means ‘besides,’ ‘apart from,’ ‘except for.’¹⁰³ But here it is an adverb meaning ‘besides,’ ‘outside’ (BAGD 625a) and is used adjectivally with the article. If Paul had wanted to speak of ‘things outside,’ ‘external matters,’¹⁰⁴ we might have expected him to write *χωρίς τῶν ἔξω* or *χωρίς τῶν ἔξωθεν*.¹⁰⁵ We follow those exegetes and EVV that take *τῶν παρεκτός* to mean ‘things besides,’ that is, ‘other things, which I pass over’ (Weymouth), ‘what I leave unmentioned’ (Bultmann 217, supplying *γινόμενων*),¹⁰⁶ or simply ‘other things’¹⁰⁷ or ‘other matters.’¹⁰⁸ On this understanding, ‘the things omitted’ (*τὰ παραλειφθέντα*, Chrysostom) would refer to additional examples of suffering,¹⁰⁹ while the ‘other things’ could be either further instances of suffering or (as Thrall 749) things other than the pressure of anxiety. If, then, Paul has chosen not to

mention any more trials, we may infer that he saw vv. 23b–27 as an illustrative and not an exhaustive list of his apostolic afflictions. As we move from vv. 23b–27 to vv. 28–29 we are not merely progressing from external to internal hardships but from various intermittent physical hardships that lay in the past to a single constant spiritual burden of the present.

“Does *ἡ ἐπίστασις μοι* refer to the ‘pressure’ that Paul feels, or to the ‘responsibility’ that weighs on him? We should note, first of all, that *ἐστίν* (‘there is’) is understood before *ἡ ἐπίστασις* (so most EVV); that the dative *μοι* ‘is dependent on the verb [*ἐπίστασθαι* τι] implicit in *ἐπίστασις*’ (Bultmann 217); and that the qualifying prepositional phrase *ἢ καθ’ ἡμέραν* stands in the emphatic predicate position, with *κατά* being distributive (BAGD 406d), ‘every day,’ ‘from day to day,’ ‘day in and day out.’ A bewildering variety of renderings for *ἐπίστασις* has been proposed, each with proponents and lexicographical support.¹¹⁰ They include: attention/care/preoccupation, supervision/oversight, onset/concourse, interruption/delay/hindrance(s), caballing/conspiring against, pressure. BAGD 300b and the majority of commentators (rightly) prefer ‘pressure.’¹¹¹ The NEB and REB opt for ‘responsibility,’ probably because this term embraces the ideas in the first two sets of proposals.

“How is *ἡ μέριμνα* related to *ἡ ἐπίστασις*? Since both terms can mean ‘care,’ they could be virtual synonyms, although *μέριμνα* denotes ‘anxious care.’ Alternatively, they could be related as cause (*ἡ μέριμνα* κτλ.) and effect (*ἡ ἐπίστασις*): ‘the daily pressure upon me imposed by my anxious care for all the churches’ (Thrall 722; similarly NRSV).¹¹² But such a relation would be more normally expressed by the subjective genitive; in this case, *τῆς μερίμνης*. It seems preferable to regard *ἡ μέριμνα* as standing in epexegetic apposition.¹¹³ ‘what presses on me every day—my anxiety for all the churches’ (*τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν* is an objective genitive). Paul’s anxious concern for all his congregations and all of the individuals within them (v. 29) was shown in his intense jealousy (cf. *ζῆλῶ*) for their constant purity (11:2) and his fear (cf. *φοβοῦμαι*) that they might lose their original single-mindedness and pure devotion to Christ (11:3) and be characterized by discord and factiousness (12:20). If *μέριμνα* defines *ἐπίστασις*, we may assume that Paul’s anxiety or anxious care was ‘day in and day out,’ like the pressure. What the psalmist said of the Lord, ‘he daily bears our burdens’ (Ps. 68:19), Paul’s converts could say of their spiritual father—if they realized it!¹¹⁴

“Does Paul’s confession to having *μέριμνα* fly in the face of Jesus’ admonitions about avoiding *μέριμνα* in Matt. 6:25–34?¹¹⁵ Whether Paul knew of this teaching of Jesus, we cannot ascertain. But even if he did, he would not have sensed any discrepancy between his conduct and Jesus’ instructions. His anxious concern arose from his single-minded pursuit of the kingdom of God (cf. Matt. 6:33). On a daily basis he was grappling with present problems involving others, not with future uncertainties concerning himself (cf. Matt. 6:25, 31, 34). Finally, his anxiety related to the lasting and substantial matters of the spirit, not to the fleeting and relatively insignificant issues of food and clothing (cf. 11:27; Matt. 6:25, 28, 31).

“Does *πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν* refer only to the churches Paul founded (so Wolff 236)?¹¹⁶ It is possible that the article is possessive, so that the sense is ‘all our congregations’ (NEB). 1 Cor. 7:17 might seem to support this view: *οὕτως ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις πάσαις διατάσσομαι*. But there it is clearly a matter of Paul’s own pastoral rule (*διατάσσομαι*) and therefore his own churches. Certainly Paul’s primary concern was always with his own congre-

266 ^{11.29} τίς ἀσθενεῖ
καὶ
267 οὐκ ἀσθενῶ;
268 τίς σκανδαλίζεται
καὶ
269 οὐκ ἐγὼ πυροῦμαι;

pastoral concern for the Christian communities, not just that he had established, but for others as well.

In light of all this listing of challenges to ministry, the rhetorical questions in v. 29 are very understandable: τίς ἀσθενεῖ καὶ οὐκ ἀσθενῶ; τίς σκανδαλίζεται καὶ οὐκ ἐγὼ πυροῦμαι; **Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I am not indignant?**

The two pairs of questions play off the lengthy listing of sufferings and hardship that preceded. The evident implicit assertion is simply, “if anyone is weak, it is I,” and “if anyone is offended it is I.” Yet, many questions arise from these questions.¹²⁶ Clearly a contrast is be-

gations—their unity, their adherence to the apostolic gospel, their Christian behavior—and he was preoccupied with pioneer evangelism (Rom. 15:20), not with visiting various churches. But his deep pastoral concern for churches other than those he had personally founded seems undeniable. He wrote letters to such churches (Colossae, Laodicea [Col. 4:16], Rome); he reports that he ‘struggled earnestly’ (perhaps principally through intercessory prayer) for believers whom he did not know personally (Col. 2:1–2); he arranged for the exchange of his pastoral letters between Colossae and Laodicea (Col. 4:16); he visited the Jerusalem church several times after his conversion,¹¹⁷ sometimes visiting other Christian groups on his way (e.g., Acts 15:3); among his own churches he organized a collection to relieve need among destitute believers in the Jerusalem church (Rom. 15:25–26). Also, it would be an anomaly if Paul had ‘great sorrow and unceasing anguish’ (λύπη ... μεγάλη καὶ ἀδιάλειπτος ὀδύνη) for all his fellow Jews, his kindred by race (Rom. 9:1–3), but lacked μέριμνα for all his fellow believers in Christ, his kindred by faith, wherever they were found. Knowledge of the situation of believers outside his immediate orbit would reach him through Christian travelers.¹¹⁸ We conclude that although the primary reference in πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν is to churches in which Paul exercised pastoral care, a wider reference to other Christian congregations should not be excluded.¹¹⁹

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 810–813.]

¹²⁶“There is certainly no unanimity among commentators and others concerning the meaning of the three verbs in this verse. ἀσθενεῖ could be given a physical sense, describing the weakness that results from illness (cf. Phil. 2:26–27) or from persecution. If it is given a moral or psychological meaning, it could depict a person who was faint-hearted and fearful (BAGD 115c) or burdened down with the ‘anxieties of the world’ (αἱ μέριμναι τοῦ αἰῶνος, Mark 4:19; cf. 1 Cor. 7:33). Some find sociological overtones in the verb, a reference to those who lack power and status.¹²³ Again, if ἀσθενεῖ bears a religious sense, it may mean ‘weak in conscience’ (so Bruce 244) or ‘weak in faith or life’ (Plummer 313). σκανδαλίζεται has been taken to mean ‘is offended’ (Barrett 288), ‘is tripped up’ (Martin 367), ‘(Whose conscience) is hurt’ (Goodspeed), or ‘is led into sin’ (Thrall 722). Finally, we may find in πυροῦμαι (literally, ‘I

ing set up by each pair, but who is being contrasted? The outsiders and Paul? Doesn’t seem likely. Instead, is it Paul’s opposition inside the church and Paul? More likely. When the immediate context of v. 28 is given serious consideration, one aspect becomes clear: Paul’s

am on fire’) an allusion to burning with shame (Barclay) that Christ was dishonored or as if the sin were one’s own, or with distress (GNB, Cassirer) at the fall of a fellow believer, or with a longing to restore the person whose faith has been ‘upset’ (Phillips), or with anger (REB) or indignation (TCNT, Weymouth, Moffatt, RSV, NEB, NAB¹, NAB², NRSV) at the person who caused another to sin.

“How are we to find our way through this maze of options? One clue to the meaning of ἀσθενεῖ and σκανδαλίζεται is found in 1 Cor. 8:7–13, where the two notions are juxtaposed and the only other Pauline uses of the verb σκανδαλίζω occur.¹²⁴ There Paul is encouraging certain ‘knowledgeable’ Corinthians to avoid exercising their Christian liberty regarding the eating of ‘food sacrificed to idols’ in such a way that the weak conscience of fellow believers was wounded (by their disregarding the dictates of their conscience) and they be thus caused to fall into sin. The apostle concludes, ‘Therefore, if what I eat (βρῶμα) causes my fellow believer to sin (σκανδαλίζει), I will never eat meat again, so that I may not cause them to sin (σκανδαλίσω)’ (1 Cor. 8:13). But since in 2 Cor. 11:29 ἀσθενεῖ stands unqualified, it would be unwise to restrict its application to weakness in conscience or faith (cf. Rom. 14:1), although Paul may particularly have in mind immaturity in understanding the implications of Christian freedom. His emphasis in v. 29a is on his empathetic identification with his fellow believers in their weakness, whatever its precise nature—physical, psychological, social, or spiritual.¹²⁵

“Against the backdrop of 1 Cor. 8:7–13, τις σκανδαλίζεται; is more likely to mean ‘Who is led into sin?’ than ‘Who is offended?’ especially if ‘offend’ is given a psychological sense of ‘cause resentment’ or ‘make angry.’¹²⁶ The idea of one person’s causing another to sin is most dramatically presented in Matt. 18:6–7 (ὁς ... ἂν σκανδαλίση ἓνα ... οὐαὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ δι’ οὗ τὸ σκάνδαλον ἔρχεται).

“Although Barré alleges that in the NT πυρόω always occurs in an eschatological context (as in Dan. 11:35; 12:10, Θ) and never refers to burning with emotion (512, 518), his effort in an earlier article¹²⁷ to exclude the meaning ‘burn with passion’ for πυρόω in 1 Cor. 7:9 is less than convincing.¹²⁸ BAGD (731 s.v.) cites three passages in 2 Maccabees (namely, 4:38; 10:35; 14:45) where πυρόω refers to being inflamed with anger.¹²⁹ The emotions that consumed Paul when he saw or heard that a fellow Christian had been led into sin were distress at that person’s fall and anger at those responsible for the ‘ruining’ of a brother or sister for whom Christ died (cf. 1 Cor. 8:11). To give πυροῦμαι a muted sense such as ‘sympathetic sorrow’¹³⁰ or ‘sympathy and a desire to help’¹³¹ does less than justice to the intensity of emotion expressed by this verb when it is used figuratively.¹³²

“Verse 29 flows on naturally from v. 28. The pastoral care that involved the ‘pressure’ of ‘anxiety’ for the welfare of churches (v. 28) also involved empathetic identification with individuals in their weakness, whatever its nature (v. 29a), and intense and jealous protection of their spiritual welfare (v. 29b).”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 813–815.]

reactions to the two specified situations of ἀσθενεῖ and σκανδαλίζεται is a pastoral concern type of response.

This means that ἀσθενεῖ in the first pair takes one a double meaning: *who is vulnerable to sinning and I don't feel a helplessness to prevent it?* Then the play between σκανδαλίζεται and πυροῦμαι takes on the sense of *Who is being led into sin and I am not enraged by it?* The previous play on ἀσθενεῖ and σκανδαλίζεται in 1 Cor. 8:7-13 clearly points this usage here in the above direction of meaning.¹²⁷ Paul's burden of caring for the churches means that he hurts (οὐκ ἀσθενῶ) every time one of the members falls into sin, and especially if he is led into sin by false teachers, this angers (οὐκ ἐγὼ πυροῦμαι)¹²⁸ the apostle greatly. The wording of both pairs of questions assumes a positive agreement with Paul in his responses. Not only should Paul have these responses, but the Corinthian readers should respond the same way.

¹²⁷1 Cor. 8:7-13. 7 Ἄλλ' οὐκ ἐν πᾶσιν ἡ γνώσις· τινὲς δὲ τῆ συνηθεία ἕως ἄρτι τοῦ εἰδώλου ὡς εἰδωλόθυτον ἐσθίουσιν, καὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν ἀσθενῆς οὕσα μολύνεται. 8 βρῶμα δὲ ἡμᾶς οὐ παραστήσει τῷ θεῷ· οὔτε ἐάν μὴ φάγωμεν ὑστερούμεθα, οὔτε ἐάν φάγωμεν περισσεύομεν. 9 βλέπετε δὲ μή πως ἡ ἐξουσία ὑμῶν αὕτη πρόσκομμα γένηται τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν. 10 ἐάν γάρ τις ἴδῃ σὲ τὸν ἔχοντα γνώσιν ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον, οὐχὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτοῦ ἀσθενοῦς ὄντος οἰκοδομηθήσεται εἰς τὸ τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα ἐσθίειν; 11 ἀπόλλυται γὰρ ὁ ἀσθενῶν ἐν τῇ σῆ γνώσει, ὁ ἀδελφὸς δὲ ὃν Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν. 12 οὕτως δὲ ἀμαρτάνοντες εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφούς καὶ τύπτοντες αὐτῶν τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενοῦσαν εἰς Χριστὸν ἀμαρτάνετε. 13 διόπερ εἰ βρῶμα σκανδαλίζει τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, οὐ μὴ φάγω κρέα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἵνα μὴ τὸν ἀδελφόν μου σκανδαλίσω.

7 It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being *weak*, is defiled. 8 "Food will not bring us close to God." We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. 9 But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to *the weak*. 10 For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is *weak*, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? 11 So by your knowledge those *weak* believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. 12 But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is *weak*, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food is *a cause of their falling*, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them *to fall*.

¹²⁸The literal meaning of πυρόω is to burn, and to cause to burn. At the figurative level of meaning here it denotes to burn with anger. To see one of the Corinthians led into sin by the false teachers infuriates the apostle.

Verses 30-33 shift to a specific episode at the beginning of Paul's ministry when he was in Damascus: 30 Εἰ καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, τὰ τῆς ἀσθενείας μου καυχῆσομαι. 31 ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ οἶδεν, ὁ ὢν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι. 32 ἐν Δαμασκῷ ὁ ἐθνάρχης Ἀρέτα τοῦ βασιλέως ἐφρούρει τὴν πόλιν Δαμασκηνῶν πιάσαι με, 33 καὶ διὰ θυρίδος ἐν σαργάνῃ ἐχαλάσθην διὰ τοῦ τείχους καὶ ἐξέφυγον τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ. 30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus (blessed be he forever!) knows that I do not lie. 32 In Damascus, the governor under King Aretas guarded the city of Damascus in order to seize me, 33 but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

Contextually the escape episode in vv. 30-33 makes good sense despite some commentators treating it as an illogical interruption to Paul's thought.¹²⁹ It provides

11.30 Εἰ καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ,
τὰ τῆς ἀσθενείας μου καυχῆσομαι.
11.31 ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ οἶδεν,
ὁ ὢν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας,
ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι.
11.32 ἐν Δαμασκῷ
ὁ ἐθνάρχης Ἀρέτα τοῦ βασιλέως ἐφρούρει τὴν πόλιν Δαμασκηνῶν
πιάσαι με,
11.33 καὶ
διὰ θυρίδος
ἐν σαργάνῃ
ἐχαλάσθην
διὰ τοῦ τείχους
καὶ
ἐξέφυγον τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ.

¹²⁹"Sometimes the account of Paul's escape from the clutches of Aretas (in vv. 32-33) is seen as being 'out of context, out of style, quite out of connexion.'²⁷ But if the position of this pericope is so inappropriate, it is difficult to imagine what prompted Paul's amanuensis or a scribe to insert the story at this point. It is decidedly more satisfactory to regard this pericope as an instance of Paul's weakness and humiliation (v. 30),²⁸ and as a demonstration of God's intervention (through Paul's friends in Damascus) to preserve his chosen instrument (cf. Acts 9:15) from danger, that is, as an evidence of God's or Christ's power operating in the midst of human weakness (4:7; 12:9-10). Paul may have had additional reasons for including this episode. Because it was probably the first attempt on his life, it had been indelibly impressed on his memory. Also, his detractors may have pointed to it as unassailable proof of his cowardice (cf. 10:1, 10). Whatever the reasons for its inclusion at this point, the episode, narrated here with remarkable economy of language, forms a striking literary backdrop for what follows: first, an embarrassing descent to escape the hands of men, then an exhilarating ascent into the presence of God (12:2-4)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 820-821.]

an early example of Paul's own weakness and necessary dependence on God to use newly established Christian friends to avoid execution. These friends risked their life to help Paul escape and thus reflected true Christian commitment. Few, if any, non Christian Jewish friends of Paul would have done so in such a situation of personal danger. It stands as a dramatic illustration of how God used Paul's weakness to accomplish something wonderfully glorious for the sake of the Gospel and as confirmation of the divine calling upon Paul to preach the Gospel.

The internal thought flow is simple. Statement # 270 in the first class conditional sentence structure links the discussion to the larger them of *καυχᾶσθαι*, *to boast*, that occupies chapter eleven. The next statement # 271 expresses a solemn oath by Paul to the correctness of what he is about to relate. Then statement #s 272-274 relate the episode of his escape from the authorities at Damascus after his conversion. This is the first of two illustrations of his weaknesses, *τὰ τῆς ἀσθενείας μου*, solemnly recounted as a point of boasting by the apostle. The second one is his 'thorn in the flesh' in 12:1-10. But it centers on superior spiritual experiences, which is a new emphasis in the boasting done as a part of Paul's 'fool's speech.' Note how the *καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ*, *it is necessary to boast*, in 11:30 is repeated in 12:1, thus linking the two text units together.

The literary role of 11:30-31 in particular is transitional. It both summarizes the previous discussion in vv. 21b-29 and introduces the following two pronged section of 11:32-33 and 12:1-10. The boasting of hardships was indeed necessary due to the Corinthian outsiders and was the only way to demonstrate Paul's superior ministry over theirs. He is not comfortable doing this but feels that it is necessary. The second part in 11:32-33 and 12:1-10 is likewise necessary because both accounts unmistakably demonstrate his weakness and thus dependency completely upon God's help and strength. The first one, a narrow escape from death at Damascus, and the second 'his thorn in the flesh' to keep him appropriately humble in light of the special spiritual revelations connected to him.

The expression *καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ*, here as the protasis of the first class conditional sentence (#270), assumes the reality of boasting happening. But more than this, it asserts the evident necessity of it happening, with the use of *δεῖ*. Was this due to the attitude of the Corinthians who felt that such boasting was necessary to one's credentializing of himself? It seems thusly.¹³⁰

¹³⁰BAGD (172b) classify this use of *δεῖ* as denoting 'an inner necessity, growing out of a given situation.' In the present case the 'given situation' that necessitated Paul's use of boasting was not merely the Corinthians' ready acceptance of boasters (cf. 10:12-18; 11:12, 18), but in particular his recognition that they would regain their original undivided allegiance to Christ (cf. 11:3) only

Paul responds to the acknowledgement of the Corinthians insistence on boasting by saying that he will continue boasting, but only now *in the things pertaining to his weakness*, *τὰ τῆς ἀσθενείας μου καυχῆσομαι*. Two of those aspects are his escape from arrest at Damascus and his spiritual revelations connected to his 'thorn in the flesh.'

What follows in # 271 in v. 31 is a traditional *oath formula* combined with elements of a *doxological formula*: *ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ οἶδεν, ὃ ὧν εὐλόγητος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι*.¹³¹

by his own skilled use of his rivals' successful but worldly technique of boasting. So strong was the Corinthians' own penchant for boasting (1 Cor. 1:26-29; 4:6-7)⁴ that *καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ*, 'boasting is a necessity,' may have been one of their watchwords.⁵ *εἰ* points to an assumption ('if, as is the case'), not a mere possibility, so that it bears the sense of *ἐπεὶ*, 'since.' In the context the present tense of *καυχᾶσθαι* and the future tense of *καυχῆσομαι* are probably of special significance, as indicating durative and punctiliar action (respectively): 'If I must go on boasting, then I shall change tack and boast no longer of my hardships (11:21b-29) but of my weakness.'⁶ Boasting *κατὰ σάρκα* (11:18) gives place to boasting *κατὰ πνεῦμα*, so to speak, for boasting about one's weakness amounts to 'boasting in the Lord' (10:17) since acknowledged human weakness is the scene of Christ's power (12:9).⁷ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 817.]

¹³¹Here we have a traditional oath formula combined with a traditional doxological formula. Given this formal combination, it is not altogether adequate to explain this oath as 'an example of horkou schema [ὄρκου σχῆμα] or *figura iusiurandi*, a recognized rhetorical ornament' (Judge 47). At 11:10 we defined a biblical 'oath of confirmation' in broad terms as 'a direct or indirect appeal to the deity as the guarantor of the truth of a statement, especially one that the readers cannot verify for themselves.' Here, as opposed to 1:23 (*Εγὼ ... μάρτυρα τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλοῦμαι*), the appeal is indirect; here, as opposed to 11:11, the fuller form of the abbreviated formula, *ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν*, is found. 'God ... knows that I am not lying' is equivalent to 'God ... is witness to the truth of what I say' (Wand). The negative and positive are combined in Rom. 9:1 (*Ἀλήθειαν λέγω ἐν Χριστῷ, οὐ ψεύδομαι*) and 1 Tim. 2:7 (*ἀλήθειαν λέγω οὐ ψεύδομαι*). What is it that Paul has said or will say that has divine validation as to its truthfulness? Some refer the oath to Paul's litany of trials (11:23b-29),⁹ others to the preceding verse (11:30) with its paradoxical claim that he will boast only about his weaknesses,¹⁰ while yet others discover a forward reference to 11:32-33.¹¹ Hughes is probably right in applying the oath both to v. 30 and to the instances of Paul's weakness cited in 11:32-33 (his escape from Damascus) and 12:7-8 (his 'thorn in the flesh') (419-20).¹² To Paul, an oath seemed demanded because of the extraordinary circumstances that gave rise to these two incidents (the animosity of King Aretas and the ascent into paradise) and because the trustworthiness of his word had been impugned (cf. 1:17-18). This solemn appeal to God's knowledge of his truthfulness (cf. 11:11) was not, of course, a repudiation of Christ's ban on unnecessary or frivolous oath-taking (cf. Matt. 5:33-37; cf. Jas. 5:12). [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testa-

The fuller oath expression here, ὁ θεός...οἶδεν ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι, *God knows...that I am not lying*, completes the shorter elliptical version in v. 11, ὁ θεός οἶδεν, *God knows*. The greater solemnity of the oath here comes with the added formula expression, καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, *and Father of the Lord Jesus*.¹³² It reflects the more solemn expression ὁ θεός καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, in 1:3 with the letter Proem formula. This was no frivolous oath forbidden by Christ in Mt. 5:33-37 or in James 5:12.

The doxological element has two parallels in Paul's writings:¹³³

2 Cor. 11:31 ὁ θεός ..., ὁ ὢν εὐλογητός εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ...

Rom. 1:25 ... τὸν κτίσαντα, ὃς ἐστὶν εὐλογητός εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.

Rom. 9:5 ... ὁ Χριστὸς ..., ὁ ὢν... εὐλογητός εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.

The nominative masculine participle ὁ ὢν can be taken either as adjective, *who is*, or substantival apposition, *the One being*. Either is possible and the meaning remains the same only with the substantival function giving more emphasis on God. The continual praising of God as being worthy of such is the essential point made here.¹³⁴

ment Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 818.]

¹³²4The expression ὁ θεός καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ also occurs in 1:3 (with the addition of ἡμῶν and Χριστοῦ). As coordinated personal nouns standing under the nexus of a single article, θεός and πατὴρ have a single referent; 'God' is none other than 'the Father of the Lord Jesus.' This identity of person is also made clear by the phrase ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρός ἡμῶν in 1:2 where πατρός stands in exegetical apposition to θεοῦ, 'from God (who is) our Father.' If, then, θεός and πατὴρ are linked together by a single article yet separated by καί, the probability is that the dependent genitive τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ is related as much to θεός as to πατὴρ. That is, God is not only the Father of the Lord Jesus but also the God of the Lord Jesus.¹³ So it is preferable to render the whole expression by 'the God and Father of the Lord Jesus,'¹⁴ rather than by 'God, the Father of the Lord Jesus.'¹⁵ To express this latter sense we would expect ὁ θεός ὁ πατὴρ κτλ. or ὁ θεός πατὴρ κτλ.¹⁶ It is true that the unambiguous statement 'the God of our Lord Jesus Christ' (ὁ θεός τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) is found only in Eph. 1:17, but for the grammatical reason given above we may legitimately infer from the expression ὁ θεός καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου (ἡμῶν) Ἰησοῦ (Χριστοῦ) found in Rom. 15:6; 2 Cor. 1:3; 11:31; Eph. 1:3 (also 1 Pet. 1:3) that the Father is the 'God of Jesus.'¹⁷ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 818–819.]

¹³³Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 819.

¹³⁴4This articular participle should be seen as introducing a descriptive, not a volitive, doxology;²² it means '(he) who is,' not '(blessed) be he' (NRSV²³). εὐλογητός, 'blessed,' has the sense 'worthy and entitled to receive worship and praise from every

The escape from Damascus in vv. 32-33 is also recounted by Luke in Acts 23-25 but in a very different manner than in Paul's account here:

23 Ὡς δὲ ἐπληροῦντο ἡμέραι ἱκαναί, συνεβουλεύσαντο οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀνελεῖν αὐτόν· 24 ἐγνώσθη δὲ τῷ Σαύλ ἡ ἐπιβουλὴ αὐτῶν· παρετηροῦντο δὲ καὶ τὰς πύλας ἡμέρας τε καὶ νυκτὸς ὅπως αὐτὸν ἀνέλωσιν· 25 λαβόντες δὲ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ νυκτὸς διὰ τοῦ τείχους καθῆκαν αὐτὸν χαλάσαντες ἐν σπιρίδι.

23 After some time had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, 24 but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night so that they might kill him; 25 but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.



Luke's narrative emphasizes the Jewish hostility to Paul's conversion and preaching of the Gospel. They

sentient being, whether angelic, human, or demonic.²⁴ Being an epithet that is applied only to God or Christ, it may (with the article) stand as a periphrasis for the divine name (Mark 14:61). It scarcely does justice to the phrase εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας to render it 'ever (-blessed)' (Martin 367), for it is an abbreviation of εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων (Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Tim. 4:18) and may be rendered 'to all eternity' (BAGD 27c; cf. BDF §141[1]).²⁵ As H. Sasse observes (TDNT 1.199), this plural use of αἰών in doxologies 'is simply designed to emphasize the idea of eternity which is contained but often blurred in the sing[ular] αἰών.' Paul has inserted this doxology in the middle of the sentence (thus no ἀμήν; cf. Rom. 1:25; 9:5) perhaps because he is about to appeal boldly and once more (cf. 11:11) to the divine omniscience (οἶδεν). Some EVV reflect this unusual position of the doxology between subject and verb by making it a parenthesis, using either brackets or dashes.²⁶ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 819–820.]

perceived him as a traitor to everything Jewish. But Paul's account emphasizes the governmental hostility to Paul as a criminal troublemaker. No contradiction exists between the two accounts since they both play off common objective facts: 1) Paul's conversion produced controversy and thus opposition; 2) this hostility took place in the ancient city of Damascus; 3) he made his escape at night with the help of Christian friends through an opening in the city wall. That one account stresses the Jewish efforts to seize him and another governmental authority efforts only heightens the danger that Paul found himself in. Luke evidently wanted to stress Jewish hostility,¹³⁵ while Paul perceived the really serious danger to his life as coming from the governmental authorities.

The details of Paul's brief summary are quite interesting. The ancient city of Damascus, Δαμασκός / τὴν πόλιν Δαμασκηῶν, Heb. variations: *dammešeq* (דַּמְשֶׁק), *dūmmešeq* (דַּמְשֶׁק־ד), *darmešeq* (דַּרְמְשֶׁק־ד), is "a city of S Syria, which is not only the capital of modern Syria, but was the capital of the nation of Aram during the 10th through 8th centuries B.C.E. Aram was a constant rival to, and sometimes an ally of Israel, until it was incorporated in the Assyrian Empire in 732 B.C.E. See ARAM (PLACE). It is the city to which Paul went after his encounter with the risen Christ, and it is where he became converted to Christianity (Acts 9)."¹³⁶

"The city fluctuated between Seleucid and Ptolemaic control until the Nabateans took advantage of the growing weakness of the Seleucids and moved into Syria about 85 B.C. and took control of Damascus. In 63 B.C. Rome entered the arena of conflict with Pompey mounting an expedition against the kingdom of the Nabateans to restore order to Syria's perpetual anarchy and to the civil war in Judea. He allowed the king of the Nabateans to remain in control of Damascus, but after the victory of Octavian and Mark Antony over Cassius and Brutus, Antony gave Damascus to Cleopatra (34 B.C.). After the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra, the city, along with all of Syria and Palestine, remained under the control of Rome."¹³⁷

The Nabateans had dominated the region east of the Jordan and northeast of the Sea of Galilee for some centuries before Paul came along. The Ναβᾶταιοι were a "people from the Arab kingdom of Nabatea, which played an important role in the history of Palestine as early as the 2d century B.C., supporting the Maccabees Judas and Jonathan (1 Macc 5:24–28; 9:35). The Nabatean king Aretas

¹³⁵The underlying theme of Jewish hostility to Christianity permeates the entire account of Paul's conversion in chapter nine of Acts. Thus Luke is consistent to his theme in this episodic narrative.

¹³⁶David Noel Freedman, ed., "Damascus (Place)," *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:5..

¹³⁷John McRay, "Damascus (Place): The Greco-Roman Period," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:8.

IV is mentioned in 2 Cor 11:32–33. This kingdom, with its capital at Petra, flourished during the late Hellenistic and early Roman imperial periods. The Nabateans (or 'Nabataeans') designated themselves as the Nabaṭû (*nbṭw*), and are known either as the Nabataioi or as 'Arabs' by Greek writers. Their territory embraced parts of modern S Syria, Jordan, the Negev of Israel, the Sinai, portions of the E deserts of Egypt, and the NW region of Saudi Arabia. Within this region, over 1,000 archaeological sites have been cataloged as being Nabatean or containing remains described as Nabatean (Wenning 1987; Gatier and Salles 1988). The expanding corpus of Nabatean Aramaic inscriptions has also reached over 4,000, although most of these are merely graffiti and the longer ones consist mainly of stereotyped funerary phrases. The reconstruction of their history is dependent on Greek, Latin, and Jewish classical sources (Starcky DBSup 7: 886–1017; Hammond 1973; and Bowersock 1983 are fundamental).¹³⁸ The name Aretas is more a title than an individual's name.¹³⁹ The Aretas in power at Paul's conversion in 33 AD was Aretas IV (9-8 B.C. -- AD 40-41).¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸David F. Graf, "Nabateans," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:970.

¹³⁹"Dynastic name of at least four kings of the royal house of Nabatea located at Petra. The earliest Nabatean Aramaic inscription from Elusa on the Petra-Gaza road in the Negev mentions an 'Aretas, King of the Nabateans.' Proposals for a date of the inscription vary from the beginning to the end of the 2d century B.C. (see Wenning 1987: 141). The Aramaic spelling of the name, *hrtt*, occurs rarely and is of disputed etymology, but it does appear as a personal name occasionally in *Safaitic* (Harding 1971: 282). It has been associated with the common Arabic name of *ḥarīṭa*, 'ploughman' (al-Khraysheh 1986: 93) and it is interesting that the name *ḥarīṭat*, king of Hagar' appears in Aramaic on coins of the mid-2d century B.C. found at Susa (Robin 1974: 110). Hagar has been connected with the Agraioi of Greek sources, a people who controlled the E sector of the caravan route leading from Babylon through Dumat al-Jandal (Jauf) to Petra and the Mediterranean port at Gaza (Eratosthenes apud Strabo 16.4.2). The proposal that the original homeland of the Nabateans was located in this same region of the Persian Gulf (Milik 1982) offers some support to these connections and may help explain other features of Nabatean culture, e.g., the use of Aramaic and the name of 'Hagiru' for the queens and princesses of the Nabatean royal house (as known from coins; see Meshorer 1975: 79)." [David F. Graf, "Aretas," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 373–1:374.]

¹⁴⁰*Aretas IV (9–8 B.C.–A.D. 40–41)*. The zenith of Nabatean political and economic fortunes took place during the almost half-century of his lengthy reign. After the death of Obodas III in 9 B.C., Syllaeus, 'the brother of the king' and chief administrator of the kingdom, assumed control of the state and even issued coinage depicting him as the monarch (Meshorer 1975: 36–40). Augustus recognized him as the official ruler, but an Aeneas assumed control of the throne at Petra under the name of Aretas (IV) and sent an embassy to Rome to plead his case and condemn Syllaeus. Although not a direct descendant of Obodas III, Aeneas appears to have been from a collateral line of the royal house, related to Malichus I (58–30 B.C.). However, the Roman emperor dismissed Aretas' claims,

sending his envoys and their gifts back to Nabatea, as he had failed to request the emperor's permission before assuming rule. In spite of his initial rejection of Aretas' petition, Augustus found other complaints about Syllaeus more persuasive. These were issued by Herod the Great through his agent Nicolaus of Damascus. As a result, Syllaeus was condemned and later executed by Augustus, who reluctantly recognized Aretas as the legitimate ruler of Nabatea (Jos. Ant 16.9.1–4 §271–99 and 12.8–9 §335–55).

"The lengthy reign of Aretas is the best documented of any Nabatean monarch. The coinage issued in his reign is immense, representing an estimated 80 percent of all Nabatean coinage. It has been found at scattered sites throughout the Levant (including Cyrus, Dura-Europos, and Susa) and even in Europe (Aventicum, Switzerland). It is also important for the portraiture of the monarch, who is depicted with a mustache after A.D. 18. A gap in the issues and inscriptions of his reign between 4–1 B.C. and a cryptic comment by Strabo (16.4.21) has led to the suggestion that the Nabatean kingdom had been annexed briefly, then transformed again to the status of a client state (Bowersock 1983: 54–55). The motive may be associated with Herod's death in 4 B.C., when Aretas provided auxiliaries to assist the Syrian legate Varus in quelling political unrest in Judea (Ant 17.10.9 §287; JW 2.68). Their disobedience of the Roman commander's orders during the affair prompted their dismissal and perhaps Roman intervention in Nabatea (Ant 17.10.10 §296). Nevertheless, other chronological gaps in the coinage and inscriptions of Aretas' reign exist, rendering this interpretation inconclusive. Moreover, the standard epithet 'lover of his people' (*rahem 'anmeh*) that appears on Aretas' coinage has been interpreted as an implicit rejection of such titles as *philoromaïos* and *philokaisar* used by other Roman client kings and a protest against any suggestion of servility (HJP² 1: 582). The epithet appears on his coins and inscriptions from the beginning to the end of his reign.

"Under Aretas, the formative stage of Nabatean material culture took place. Their distinctive art, architecture, pottery, and peculiar Aramaic script all developed their classical style during his reign. Many of the monumental structures at Petra have been assigned to his time, such as the construction of the theater and Qaşr al-Bint; the famous Khazneh at the terminus of the Siq has also been proposed as the great king's final resting place. The development of the Negev cities at the time—Oboda, Mampsis, Nessana, Elusa, and Sobata—further reflects the economic prosperity of the period. In addition, Madā' in ṣaliḥ (ancient Hegra) appears to have been founded early in his reign, serving as an important emporium for the caravan trade in aromatics from South Arabia. Nabatean merchants in A.D. 3–6 even erected a sanctuary at the port of Puteoli in Italy (CIS II 158). The administrative and military organization of Aretas' realm reflect these foreign contacts; his officers bear titles adopted from the Hellenistic and Roman overlords: strategoi, hipparchoi, chiliarchoi, and even a centurion appear in inscriptions during his reign. In many respects, the cultural achievements of Aretas IV represent a fitting parallel to those of his contemporary in Judea, Herod the Great.

"Aretas had at least two wives during his lengthy reign: Huldu (from 9 B.C.–A.D. 16) and Shuqailat (from A.D. 18). They are not designated his 'sisters' (*'ht*) on coins during his reign, in contrast to the wives of his royal successors Malichus II (A.D. 40–70) and Rabbel II (A.D. 71–106), but inscriptions indicate that both Huldu (CIS II 158) and Shuqailat (CIS II 354; Khairy 1981) were entitled his 'sister.' The 'title' has been taken literally, but it may only represent an important rank in the hierarchy of the royal court of Nabatea (Meshorer 1975: 61). Syllaeus was also called the 'brother

His actual name was Syllaeus. In the thirtys when this event took place the Nabatean influence was at its peak. Whether they controlled Damascus or not is hugely debated. The phrase used by Paul ὁ ἔθναρχης Ἀρέτα τοῦ βασιλέως seems best translated as the ethnarch of Aretas the King.¹⁴¹ This signals a common phrase of the king [i.e., Obodas II], although he was the son of Teimu, not Obodas II. The members of the royal family of Aretas IV late in his reign are listed in a recent inscription found at Wadi Musa (Khairy 1981). It names four sons (Malichus II, Obodas, Rabbel, and Phasael) and four daughters (Sha'dat, Shaqilat II, Gamilat, and Hageru); the latter princess was also the mother of a child named Aretas, the grandson of Aretas IV. Inter-marriages between the royal families of the various monarchies were common in the East and existed in the relations of the Petraean royal house with the Herodian dynasty: one of Aretas' daughters — perhaps Sha'udat (Starcky DBSup 7: 914) — was married to the tetrarch Herod Antipas before he divorced her to marry Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Herod Philip. John the Baptist condemned the action and was imprisoned and finally executed by Antipas around A.D. 29 (Matt 14:3–12 and par.). Aretas' anger found revenge only later, in A.D. 36, when he attacked and defeated the army of Antipas. Tiberius sent Vitellius the governor of Syria to punish Aretas for his action, but the Roman emperor's death in A.D. 36–37 canceled the expedition (Ant 18.5.1–3 §109–25).

"The only specific biblical reference to Aretas IV appears in Paul's letter of 2 Corinthians in which he refers to his escape in a basket lowered from a window in the city wall that was guarded by the 'governor [ethnarch] under king Aretas' (11:32–33). The circumstances remain obscure, but the Jewish and Nabatean Arab community appear to have acted in concert against Paul (cf. Acts 9:24). The ethnarch of Aretas has been taken to be a royal official charged with oversight of the Nabatean commercial colony established at Damascus (DBSup 7: 915; Rey-Coquais 1978: 50; Knauf 1983), rather than an indication the city constituted part of the Nabatean realm. A parallel has been found in an official with the title of 'ethnarch' who was responsible for the Jewish community at Alexandria (Jos. Ant 14.117). But others feel that Paul's description of the incident seems to place the Syrian city clearly under Nabatean control, however briefly (Bowersock 1983: 68). Since the episode appears to have occurred in the reign of the emperor Caligula (A.D. 37–41), it has been associated with his general policy of extending the territories of the client kings in the East (Jewett 1979: 30–33, 99). No coinage from Damascus appears to have been struck during his reign or that of Claudius. Paul's prior contacts with Nabatea (Gal 1:17) may also account for the animosity of Aretas' official in Damascus, but the sources are silent about his Arabian sojourn. The odd inclusion of the incident in his list of hardships (see Fitzgerald 1988: 18–19) has been explained as an inversion of Roman military imagery, emphasizing the apostle's humiliation in retreating over a wall, in contrast to the distinguished award (*corona muralis*) given to the first courageous Roman soldier to scale the wall of the enemy (Judge 1968: 47; cf. Furnish 2 Corinthians AB, 542). As such, it illustrates again the 'weakness' of Paul." [David F. Graf, "Aretas," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:374–375.]

¹⁴¹"There are three main ways of understanding the historical background to v. 32, and they correspond to the three possible meanings of ἔθναρχης.

"1. Tribal chief. On this view the 'ethnarch' was a Bedouin sheikh of some Nabatean tribe, lying in wait outside the walls of Damascus to arrest Paul when he exited.³⁰ But there are two dif-

facilities: Paul's escape down the city wall (v. 32) implies that the danger lay within the city, not outside; at this stage in their history the Nabateans were no longer nomadic (Riesner 85).

"2. Governor (many EVV) or viceroy (Ogg 19, 22) or prefect (Meyer 666). In this case the assumption is that the whole city of Damascus was under Nabatean rule at the time and that the ethnarch was Aretas's representative in that city.³¹ In support of this view it is argued (1) that ἐφρούρει τὴν πόλιν suggests that the ethnarch exercised authority over the entire city, with ἐφρούρει meaning 'kept (the city of the Damascenes) with a garrison' (KJV);³² (2) that the absence of Roman coins in Damascus dating from A.D. 34–62 (including the reigns of Caligula [Gaius] and Claudius, A.D. 37–41 and A.D. 41–54 respectively) indicates non-Roman rule in Damascus during those years;³³ and (3) that Damascus may have been handed over to Nabatean sovereignty by Caligula between A.D. 37 and A.D. 40 to placate Aretas after the abortive campaign of Tiberius against Aretas.³⁴

"Regarding these three points: (1) ἐφρούρει τὴν πόλιν need mean nothing more than 'kept the city under observation' (NEB, REB) or 'was keeping a close watch on the city' (NAB1) or 'had patrols out in the city' (Moffatt). But the Lukan parallel passage (Acts 9:24, 'they were watching the gates') suggests that Paul's meaning may be 'kept guards at the city gates' (NLT).³⁵ In any case, Paul did not say τὴν πᾶσαν πόλιν, and if the ethnarch controlled the city one wonders why an immediate arrest was not possible once Paul was found, without garrisoning the whole city. (2) The gap in the numismatic record is negative, and therefore indecisive, evidence. Moreover, Roman coins from Damascus are extremely rare even under Augustus, Tiberius, and Nero.³⁶ (3) If Damascus was in Nabatean hands at the time of Paul's escape, it is uncertain how and when it ceased to be under Roman control.³⁷

"3. Head of an ethnic community (cf. ἔθνος, 'race,' 'people' + ἄρχων, 'ruler'). On this interpretation, the ethnarch was the head of a colony of Nabateans in Damascus, and in this capacity the representative of King Aretas in that city.³⁸ Several considerations support this view.

- (a) The Jewish ἐθνάρχης in Alexandria performed a similar role, representing Jewish interests there (Josephus, Antiquities 14.117; Strabo 17.798).
- (b) Nabatean governors bore the title στρατηγός, not ἐθνάρχης (Knauf 146 n. 6).
- (c) Archaeology and topography have established the existence of a Nabatean quarter in the northeast sector of Damascus before the first century A.D.³⁹
- (d) Gal. 1:17 speaks of Paul's return to Damascus from Arabia, which indicates that at least either at the time of his return (c. A.D. 35) or at the time of writing (c. A.D. 48 if early, c. A.D. 55 if late) Damascus was not under Nabatean control.⁴⁰
- (e) Just as ἐφρούρει need not indicate a formal garrisoning of the whole city of Damascus (see above under [2]), πιάσαι need not point to a formal arrest by a military commander, as if ἐθνάρχης were equivalent to στρατηγός. It may refer to a simple 'seizing' by those guarding the city exits.⁴¹

"If, with many EVV,⁴² we translate the genitive Ἀρέτα τοῦ βασιλέως by 'under King Aretas,' 'under' may have the sense 'at the time of' or 'appointed by' (Wand). But probably more is implied: the ethnarch was 'acting for' Aretas (Isaacs) or even 'acting by King Aretas' order' (Phillips).⁴³ However that be, some reason must be given for the virulent opposition of Aretas or his ethnarch. It could have been prompted by Paul's evangelistic activity in Damascus itself, but it seems more likely, in the light of Paul's

nomena in the ancient world that may seem strange in our world. Powerful neighboring rulers often worked out agreements with their counter parts where large ethnic enclaves of their people existed in the neighboring rulership. In such agreements a 'governor,' i.e., ἐθνάρχης would be appointed administrator and representative of the king from the homeland of those in the enclave. He

argument in Galatians 1, that his visit to Arabia (Gal. 1:17) was undertaken to begin fulfilling his commission to 'preach him [the Son of God] among the Gentiles' (Gal. 1:16). Commenting on Gal. 1:16–17, Lake observes that 'the antithesis is not between conferring with flesh and blood in Jerusalem, and conferring with God in the desert, but between obeying immediately the commission of God to preach to the Gentiles, and going to some human source in Jerusalem in order to obtain authority or additional instruction. St. Paul's argument seems to me to require the sense 'As soon as I received my divine commission, I acted upon it at once, without consulting any one, and began to preach in Arabia' ' (320–21).⁴⁴

"11:33 καὶ διὰ θυρίδος ἐν σαργάνῃ ἐχάλασθην διὰ τοῦ τείχους καὶ ἐξέφυγον τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ. 'But I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and so [consecutive καὶ] escaped out of his hands.' In spite of the ongoing precautions (ἐφρούρει, linear imperfect) taken by the ethnarch, his desire to have Paul seized (v. 32) was frustrated by a stratagem carried out by Paul's supporters in Damascus. The escape was made διὰ θυρίδος ... διὰ τοῦ τείχους. To reflect these two uses of διὰ + genitive, the phrases are sometimes rendered 'through a window ... through the wall' (Thrall 722). Clearly Paul escaped by passing 'through' both the window and the wall, but English idiom prefers to say 'through a window in the wall' (RSV, NRSV). 'Along the wall' (BDF §223[5]) is a dubious rendering of διὰ τοῦ τείχους in 11:33, however one translates the same phrase in Acts 9:25 (where there is no διὰ θυρίδος).⁴⁵ This θυρίς should not be thought of as a rectangular opening enclosed with glass or shutters but as a narrow vertical opening in the wall to admit light and air and to enable people to see out (= the technical term 'loophole,' used by Moffatt and Wand).⁴⁶

"The agents implied by the passive ἐχάλασθην ('I was let down') must have been at least sympathizers of Paul who were concerned for his safety. Luke's parallel account calls them 'his disciples' (οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ, Acts 9:25), which perhaps means simply "his converts" (NEB). Evidently his Damascene preaching of Jesus as the Son of God and the Messiah (Acts 9:20, 22) had proved fruitful. If, then, Paul left Damascus with the help of his Christian friends, and perhaps at their urging, his departure can scarcely be deemed a desertion of the infant Damascus church⁴⁷ or the action of a 'runaway.'⁴⁸

"It has become commonplace for commentators to mention the novel suggestion of Judge that in recounting his humiliating descent down the Damascene wall Paul is parodying the Roman award — the *corona muralis*, the 'wall crown' — given to the first soldier to scale a fortified city wall under enemy attack. So far from being 'first up,' Paul was 'first down.'⁴⁹ Now there can be little doubt that the residents of Roman Corinth — Paul's addressees — would have known of this military award (στέφανος τείχιος in Greek), but it is less than certain that they would have recognized an allusion to this in the phrase ἐχάλασθην διὰ τοῦ τείχους, for in the supposed reversal of imagery the crucial element of 'firstness' is missing."

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 821–824.]

reported back to this ruler, not to the ruler over the city or region where he was located. Individuals perceived as criminals or troublemakers 'back home' could not flee to such an enclave and escape the hand of the ruler.

Guess what? According to Gal. 1:17, Paul spent up to three years in Arabia, εἰς Ἀραβίαν, before returning back to Damascus after his conversion. This was the territory that Aretas did control as an iron-fisted ruler. What did Paul do during that time in Arabia? It's virtually certain that Paul preached the Gospel among the Jewish people living in the Decapolis region of Arabia. Controversy and trouble erupted in these small cities just as it did in Damascus. Aretas determined to catch this trouble maker and be rid of him in spite of his having left Arabia to return to Damascus. Word was sent to the Nabatean governor in Damascus to catch this fellow and dispose of him. This they sought to do, and perhaps in consort with the similar ἐθνάρχης over the Jews in the city (cf. Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.117; Strabo 17.798 for references to the Jewish ἐθνάρχης at Damascus).

The statement (v. 33) καὶ διὰ θυρίδος ἐν σαργάνῃ ἐχαλάσθην διὰ τοῦ τείχους καὶ ἐξέφυγον τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ, and through an opening with a basket I was let down through the wall and escaped his hands, depicts the dramatic action. It compares with the similar Acts 9:25 depiction: λαβόντες δὲ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ νυκτὸς διὰ τοῦ τείχους καθῆκαν αὐτὸν χαλάσαντες ἐν σπυρίδι, and taking him his disciples during night they let him down by lowering him with a basket. Some of his converts in Damascus facilitated Paul's escape from the city in this account.¹⁴²

This is the illustration of Paul's weakness: his life was not in his own hands but rather in the hands of newly established friends who were committed to God and willing to risk themselves to help Paul. And very likely those desiring his death were provoked by his preaching the Gospel to Jews, both in Damascus and in Arabia. The Jews in Damascus had been prepared before his conversion outside the city to enthusiastically welcome him into their midst as the great protector of the Jewish traditions. Now they wanted him dead.

The 'strong' Pharisee had become the 'weak' Christian. But in his newly discovered weakness Paul discovered a brand new strength never before experienced: God taking care of him by using others around him. In the 'fool's speech' context here, this constitutes part of his 'boasting.' But in a very different manner from what the outsider false teachers were putting forth about themselves.

Modern American church life far too often reflects the American cultural mentality of the heroic. The dramatic touch down catch in the Super Bowl that succeeds against all odds is the stuff of the heroic. So the

¹⁴²If this narrative was intended by Paul as a parody of the Roman *corona muralis*, the 'wall crown' award, given to the first soldier to scale a wall of the enemy during an attack, then Paul's point was to denigrate worldly boasting by being the first 'wall downer' rather than 'wall climber.' But this ironic twist is not clearly signaled in the text.

modern pastor must dramatically build churches big and rapidly if he is to be a super preacher. The making of heroes in our culture today knows little or nothing about a preacher running for his life to escape the clutches of his opponents out to kill him. This is the making of a despicable coward in our world. But the real heroes in God's eyes are those whose own weakness is readily apparent and who gladly allow God to use others for their deliverance from danger and harm. It is fascinating to see how quickly Christian leaders in the ancient world lost sight of Paul's insight and by the middle of the second century the Greco-Roman secular god-man image became the filter through which Christian heroes had to be shaped. The Corinthian outsiders in the middle of the first century evidently formed a pre-cursor to this later development. And that image still dominates our western religious culture today.

10.2.3.3.2.5 Boasting from visions etc., 12:1-10

12 Καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, οὐ συμφέρον μὲν, ἐλεύσομαι δὲ εἰς ὄπτασις καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου. 2 οἶδα ἄνθρωπον ἐν Χριστῷ πρὸ ἐτῶν δεκατεσσάρων, εἴτε ἐν σώματι οὐκ οἶδα, εἴτε ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα, ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, ἀρπαγέντα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ. 3 καὶ οἶδα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον, εἴτε ἐν σώματι εἴτε χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα, ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, 4 ὅτι ἤρπαγην εἰς τὸν παράδεισον καὶ ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι. 5 ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιούτου καυχῆσομαι, ὑπὲρ δὲ ἑμαυτοῦ οὐ καυχῆσομαι εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις. 6 Ἐὰν γὰρ θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι, οὐκ ἔσομαι ἄφρων, ἀλήθειαν γὰρ ἐρῶ· φείδομαι δέ, μὴ τις εἰς ἐμὲ λογίσσῃται ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με ἢ ἀκούει τι ἐξ ἐμοῦ 7 καὶ τῆ ὑπερβολῆ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων. διὸ ἵνα μὴ υπεραίρωμαι, ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί, ἄγγελος σατανᾶ, ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, ἵνα μὴ υπεραίρωμαι. 8 ὑπὲρ τούτου τρίς τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα ἵνα ἀποστῆ ἀπ' ἐμοῦ. 9 καὶ εἰρηκέν μοι ἄρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου, ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται. Ἥδιστα οὖν μᾶλλον καυχῆσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ. 10 διὸ εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὕβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις, ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ· ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατὸς εἰμι.

12 It is necessary to boast; nothing is to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. 3 And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows— 4 was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. 5 On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. 6 But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than

what is seen in me or heard from me, 7 even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. 8 Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, 9 but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

This continues the boasting in weakness begun in 11:21b, as Paul asserts in 12:5. Here is the strange juxtapositioning of exceptional spiritual opportunities against severe physical limitations. The weakness of the physical limitation opened the door for unusual spiritual blessing to Paul. First, Paul mentions knowing a person who experienced unusual spiritual experiences. This he sees as a privilege but he quickly disavows talking about any such experiences personally. Instead, he will only focus on his personal weaknesses so that others may not elevate him to some super saint spiritual level. That would cast him in an impossible situa-

275 ^{12.1} **Καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ,**
 276 **οὐ συμφέρον**
 μέν,
 δὲ
 277 **ἐλεύσομαι**
 εἰς ὀπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου.
 278 ^{12.2} **οἶδα ἄνθρωπον**
 ἐν Χριστῷ
 πρὸ ἐπιτῶν δεκατεσσάρων,
 εἴτε ἐν σώματι οὐκ οἶδα,
 εἴτε ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα,
 (279) **ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν,**
 ἀρπαγέντα τὸν τοιοῦτον
 ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ.
 ^{12.3} καὶ
 280 **οἶδα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον,**
 εἴτε ἐν σώματι
 εἴτε χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα,
 (281) **ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν,**
 ^{12.4} ὅτι ἠρπάγη
 εἰς τὸν παράδεισον
 καὶ
 --- ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα
 ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι.
 282 ^{12.5} **ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιοῦτου καυχῆσομαι,**
 δὲ
 283 **ὑπὲρ ἑμαυτοῦ οὐ καυχῆσομαι**
 εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις.

tion to be a messenger of Christ. Then he talks about an illness as a ‘thorn in the flesh’ to keep him properly humble before God. Lots of questions arise from his brief description of this contrary situation in his ministry.

The coordinate conjunctions help give structure to this subunit. No conjunction in v. 1 tying the subunit back to the preceding, but the repetition of Καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, along with οὐ συμφέρον μὲν, establishes unquestionable links back to vv. 21b-33 and 16-21a. The contrastive

δὲ in v. 1b sets the third assertion in contrast to the second one and thus links them together as a pair. In the next two sentences in vv. 2-4, the preposition of οἶδα ἄνθρωπον, I know a man (v. 2a), and then καὶ οἶδα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον, and I know such a man, connects up these two sentences. Then τοῦ τοιοῦτου, of such a one, in the next sentence (v. 5) links back to the unnamed individual in vv. 2-4. The third class protasis with καυχῆσθαι in vv. 6-7 reaches back to καυχῆσομαι in v. 5 and this connection is defined by γὰρ repeated twice in the longer sentence of vv. 6-7.¹⁴³ Through the neuter gender antecedent of τούτου, this, in v. 8 a link is established to the entire thought in vv. 6-7. In verse 9a καὶ links this sentence back to v. 8 as God’s response to

Paul’s prayer prayed three times. The inferential conjunction οὖν in the v. 9b sentence makes explicit a point considered implicit in v. 9a. Also the stronger inferential conjunction διὸ in v. 10 draws out conclusions to the entire discussion of vv.

¹⁴³Differences of viewpoint will surface in the commentaries over where to place the externally imposed paragraph points. Does the γὰρ in v. 6 signal a new subunit as understood by the editors of the N-A Greek testament 28th edition? Or does διὸ in the middle of v. 7 signal a new unit? Arguments can be made both directions. The omission of διὸ in B 6. 1175*. 1739 sy^h bo; Ir urges some caution with this option, although very strong support for including it exists: Ⲛ A D F G K L P Ψ 0278. 33. 81. 104. 365. 630. 1175^c. 1241. 1505. 1881. 2464 M latt sy^p sa. [Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 575.]

12.6 γὰρ
 Ἐὰν θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι,
284 οὐκ ἔσομαι ἄφρων,
 γὰρ
285 ἀλήθειαν ἔρω·
 δέ
286 φείδομαι,
 μή τις εἰς ἐμὲ λογίσηται
 ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με
 ἢ
 ἀκούει τι ἐξ ἐμοῦ
 12.7 καὶ
 τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων.
 διὸ
 ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι,
287 ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί,
 ἄγγελος σατανᾶ,
 ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ,
 ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι.
 12.8 ὑπὲρ τούτου
 τρίς
288 τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα
 ἵνα ἀποστῆ
 ἀπ' ἐμοῦ.
 12.9 καὶ
289 εἶρηκέν μοι·
 ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου,
 γὰρ
 ἡ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται.
 οὖν
 Ἡδιστα
 μᾶλλον
290 καυχῆσομαι
 ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου,
 ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ... ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ.
 ἐπ' ἐμὲ
 12.10 διὸ
291 εὐδοκῶ
 ἐν ἀσθενείαις,
 ἐν ὑβρεσιν,
 ἐν ἀνάγκαις,
 ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις,
 ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ·
 γὰρ
 ὅταν ἀσθενῶ,
 τότε
292 δυνατός εἰμι.

Christ. Instead, his boasting will center on his weaknesses, and the one mentioned is some kind of serious illness simply labeled a thorn in the flesh. The humility and dependency on Christ's strength for ministry is highlighted by this. And this is what Paul rejoices about. This clearly illustrates his superiority to the Corinthian outsiders who depended on human accomplishments and recommendations for their claims. His concluding assertion in v. 10 is one of the most profound declarations of ministry commitment in the entire Bible!

Now for a close inspection of this discussion.

a) Awareness of special spiritual blessings, 12:1-7a.

12 Καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, οὐ συμφέρον μὲν, ἐλεύσομαι δὲ εἰς ὄπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου. 2 οἶδα ἄνθρωπον ἐν Χριστῷ πρὸ ἐτῶν δεκατεσσάρων, εἴτε ἐν σώματι οὐκ οἶδα, εἴτε ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα, ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, ἀρπαγέντα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ. 3 καὶ οἶδα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον, εἴτε ἐν σώματι εἴτε χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα, ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, 4 ὅτι ἠρπάγη εἰς τὸν παράδεισον καὶ ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι. 5 ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιοῦτου καυχῆσομαι, ὑπὲρ δὲ ἐμαυτοῦ οὐ καυχῆσομαι εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις. 6 Ἐὰν γὰρ θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι, οὐκ ἔσομαι ἄφρων, ἀλήθειαν γὰρ ἔρω· φείδομαι δέ, μή τις εἰς ἐμὲ λογίσηται ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με ἢ ἀκούει τι ἐξ ἐμοῦ 7 καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων.

12 It is necessary to boast; nothing is to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. 3 And I know that such a person— whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows — 4 was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. 5 On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. 6 But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, 7 even considering the exceptional character of the revelations.

1-9.

A discussion of boasting, punctuated by hesitations to boast, begins by pointing to someone that Paul knows with unusual spiritual experiences. The apostle refuses to discuss such experiences of his own since it would cast him in the wrong light and limit ministry to

The initial declaration, Καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ (#275), repeats the identical expression in 11:30. This both links 12:1-10 back to 11:30-33 and signals a new angle on the topic of boasting. Boasting, even in a 'fool's speech,' has become necessary in order to communicate with

not equal one another. One can have a ἀποκάλυψις, **revelation**, without having a ὄπτασία, **vision**, but not the other way, since all ὄπτασίαι, **visions**, are ἀποκαλύψεις, **revelations**. Visions are visual disclosures of God, while revelations include all disclosures of God and His will, whether visually or not. Although κυρίου is theoretically possible to understand as ‘about the Lord,’ the context here favors the alternative ‘from the Lord.’ And via context most likely κυρίου refers to Christ rather than God the Father.

Why does Paul use the plural forms here, ὄπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις, and then only give one experience in vv. 2-4? Although different possible reasons can be given, more likely ὄπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου is intended as a quasi-header to introduce a discussion. The single instance of this that follows is intended as an illustration of the topic of visions and revelations.

What the original listeners to the reading of this letter in their house church groups most likely expected to hear next was the apostle talking about his having more visions and revelations than did his opponents. But he goes an entirely different unexpected direction. But what is that direction? Understandings differ.¹⁴⁵

In vv. 2-4, Paul refers to ἄνθρωπον, a man, who was caught up ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ, **into a third heaven**, some **14 years earlier**, **πρὸ ἐτῶν δεκατεσσάρων**. He knew, οἶδα, simply adduced a ‘selected example’ (TDNT 5.353), while Lincoln opines that Paul originally intended to relate several visionary experiences but decided to refrain (72, 76). It is certainly inappropriate to deduce that Paul is here referring to ‘his *many* ‘visions and revelations’ ’ (Tabor 21, 36; italics his), although the book of Acts mentions numerous visions Paul had.¹³ The plurals may be generalizing or categorical (see Zerwick §7), a view supported by the anarthrous state of these two nouns in v. 1. Paul is proceeding to discuss the topic, ‘visions and revelations granted by the Lord,’ not moving on to treat ‘the various visions and revelations granted to me by the Lord.’¹⁴ Paul’s discussion of this topic was probably prompted by his opponents’ claims to spiritual experiences of this type in response to a Corinthian ‘insistence on ‘spiritual’ and ecstatic phenomena as the marks of apostleship.’¹⁵ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 831–832.]

¹⁴⁵“In apologetic form 12:1–6a appears as an aretology, i.e., a tribute of praise in honor of a great man as well as of a Hellenistic deity. Paul seems to be building up this person only to point out that such a self-commendation is not the sign of a true apostle. Paul’s picture here of a spectacular or even semi-divine worker is reminiscent of the sophists.⁶⁵⁶ Paul seems to be attacking this way of promoting the gospel, for 12:7–10 will lead the reader to see that expressing one’s weakness is the only acceptable way to follow Christ in his service.⁶⁵⁷ This final point is not confined only to the last part of 12:1–10. But in an opening irony, Paul introduces the thought in 12:1 that while he must continue boasting, there is nothing to be gained by it.⁶⁵⁸” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 581–582.]

this man ἐν Χριστῷ, **in Christ**. But he didn’t know whether the being caught included his body or just his mind: εἶτε ἐν σώματι οὐκ οἶδα, εἶτε ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα, **whether in body I do not know, whether out of the body I do not know**. In v. 3, he essentially repeats the first depiction: καὶ οἶδα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον, εἶτε ἐν σώματι εἶτε χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα, ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, **and I know such a man -- whether in body, whether out of the body I do not know; God knows...**¹⁴⁶ This is done to set up the epegetical functioning ὅτι clause (v. 4) that introduces explanation of ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ, **into a third heaven** from the first depiction (v. 2). The core structure then becomes: καὶ οἶδα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον... ὅτι ἥρπᾳγη εἰς τὸν παράδεισον καὶ ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι, **And I know such a man ... that was snatched into Paradise and heard unutterable words which are not permitted for a person to speak**.

The identity of this individual that Paul describes is hotly debated among interpreters. Is this a literary shift narrationally to a third person depiction as describing what he himself had experienced? Or, is this merely another individual who was an acquaintance with Paul? This is the interpretive uncertainty here. The described event took place some 14 years before the writing of this letter, which would place it around 41-42 AD. During that period Paul was back home in Tarsus, from the Acts narrative in 9:30-31, or else in Antioch of Syria (Acts 13:1-3; 14:26-30). In Gal. 2:1, Paul mentions going to Jerusalem κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν, **according to revelation**, some **14 years**, **διὰ δεκατεσσάρων ἐτῶν**, after his conversion. But this would be around 47 AD. In Acts 11:27-30, Luke describes ‘prophets’ coming from Jerusalem to Antioch with Agabus speaking of a coming famine in Jerusalem through the help of the Holy Spirit. This was some years prior to the Jerusalem conference in 47-48 AD. Could Paul be referring to Agabus here as **the man he knew about?** If so, then prior to speaking

¹⁴⁶“The relationship of vv. 3–4 to v. 2 is most clearly seen in tabular form. Differences are indicated by italics.

<i>First Description (v. 2)</i>	<i>Second Description (vv. 3–4)</i>
οἶδα	καὶ οἶδα
ἄνθρωπον ἐν Χριστῷ	τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον—
πρὸ ἐτῶν δεκατεσσάρων—	----
εἶτε ἐν σώματι	εἶτε ἐν σώματι
οὐκ οἶδα,	----
εἶτε ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος	εἶτε χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος
οὐκ οἶδα,	οὐκ οἶδα,
ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν—	ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν—
ἄρπαγέντα τὸν τοιοῦτον	ὅτι ἥρπᾳγη
ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ.	εἰς τὸν παράδεισον καὶ
	ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα
	ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι.

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 840.]

to the church, this Christian ‘prophet’ had some kind of revelatory experience with God in which understanding of the coming famine was given to him. One potential weakness here is that Paul describes this individual as hearing unutterable words not permitted to speak to others, ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα ἃ οὐκ ἔξον ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι (v. 4b). Of course, these forbidden words may well refer to other aspects of the revelation beyond the instruction to warn the church in Antioch that they needed to help their brothers in Jerusalem. And this explanation assumes that Paul is talking about someone else rather than about himself.

But a large number of modern commentators take the position that Paul is indirectly describing one of his own experiences.¹⁴⁷ The appeal is made to a literary device or devices known in the secular Greco-Roman world of rhetoric, as well as in some Jewish circles of that era.¹⁴⁸ The intent of these possible devices was

¹⁴⁷“To show the Corinthians that he was not at all deficient in ecstatic experiences, as some imagined, Paul now begins to describe an ascent to heaven that occurred many years previously. First, he identifies the person who ascended, then successively the time, the circumstances, and the destination of the ascent.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 833.]

¹⁴⁸“In 12:2–4 Paul reveals autobiographical information known before only to him and God. Fourteen years earlier (see Comment for a discussion of the date of this vision) Paul was taken up into the third heaven, namely, paradise. The apostle relates twice that he is yet unsure as to whether this experience took place in the body or outside of it, i.e., with or without sensory perception. All the time he is describing this experience (though his description is vague and mysterious) he uses the third person. This may reflect Paul’s Jewish background, or it may simply suggest that he wants his readers to see that though he experiences visions and revelations like his opponents, nevertheless the man about whom Paul speaks is not the one he desires to emulate. Windisch describes the pericope as Bescheidenheitsstil, a ‘style’ that trades on the speaker’s ‘modesty,’⁶⁵⁹ but this is to be questioned.⁶⁶⁰ It is doubtful too that Paul is engaged in “the objectifying of the I,”⁶⁶¹ nor is he employing the convention of the pseudonymity of the apocalyptic, in which an anonymous seer transfers his personal experience to a well-known figure.⁶⁶² Paul is neither one who sells his teaching for profit nor one who baffles his hearers with mystical language simply for pride (like the sophists). Rather, in polemical fashion, 12:4 speaks of the things he knows as an apostle. He has heard inexpressible words. This paradoxical statement could not be verified by the Corinthians. The point is that Paul wants his readers to evaluate him on the basis of nothing except what they can see and hear of him (12:6; i.e., the demonstrable evidence of his wretched experiences; see above). If Paul can convince them that this is the correct way, then, in turn, they should ask his opponents to provide similar tangible evidence. This is the challenge first posed in 11:21–23. And he trusts that his contest will lead the Corinthians to see that these opponents are indeed false in the sight of God.” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 582.]

self-praise without seeming arrogant in so doing.¹⁴⁹ It’s much like the fictional person who supposedly commits the bad deeds that the child is accused of doing. That is, Paul sees a vision but can’t say what he heard. When his opponents claimed visionary experience, they communicated what they saw and heard, thus appearing superior to Paul. This version of Paul’s response, in which what he saw and heard is an unrepeatable secret, seems to me to be rather questionable.

A closer look at some of the details of the depiction may help us better understand what Paul is attempting to communicate in vv. 2–4. οἶδα, **I know**, is repeated four times, plus twice as ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, **God knows**. Paul knows of a person (2x) but doesn’t know whether his spiritual experience was in or out of his body (2x), although God knows (2x). The use of οἶδα rather than γινώσκω for **I know** signals that this is not experiential understanding but mental awareness most like coming from a depiction given to him by a second party. ἀνθρώπων (v. 2) / τὸν τοιοῦτον ἀνθρώπων (v. 3): these refer clearly to the same individual with the demonstrative adjective τοιοῦτον linking the second reference back to the first. The identity of this individual is the chief issue in this text unit in vv. 2–4. Somewhat debatable is whether ἐν Χριστῷ, in Christ, modifies ἀνθρώπων adjectivally or οἶδα the more natural adverbial role. The clear adjectival function of an inherently adverbial role for prepositional phrases would necessitate ἀνθρώπων τὸν ἐν Χριστῷ, but typically adverbs in Greek precede what they modify rather than follow it. The difference in meaning is between saying, “**In Christ I knew a man,**” and “**I knew a man in Christ.**” Had either the direct object ἀνθρώπων or the prepositional phrase ἐν Χριστῷ been placed in the prefield in front of the verb, no question of modification would arise. Most modern commentators will assume the adjectival role.

But Paul’s strategy is to place the verb οἶδα at the front but the two οὐκ οἶδα, **I don’t know**, at the end of their clauses. This was more important for him to say that he knew a man but didn’t know whether he had an in or out of the body spiritual experience. Both negative constructions are immediately followed with the same expression: ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, **God knows**. This adds dramatic contrast between Paul’s knowledge and that of God.

πρὸ ἐτῶν δεκατεσσάρων, **fourteen years ago**, gives specific dating to this man’s experience. Assuming with reasonable certainty that Second Corinthians was written in late 56 to early 57 AD, this would place the experience around 43 – 44 AD. Where was Paul then?

¹⁴⁹Harris, NIGTC, p. 834, gives five reasons to conclude that Paul is talking about himself rather than some other person. But everyone of these five reasons has a counter explanation equally plausible, if not more so, that suggests he was talking about someone else.

Still in Tarsus? Or, in Antioch of Syria? This time frame rules out either the Damascus Road experience or the Jerusalem temple experience that Paul mentions in his defense before the Sanhedrin in Acts 22:6-21 (cf. also 26:12-18). The best that can be deduced from available data is that this happened sometime prior to the first missionary journey, when Paul was either still in Tarsus or after he arrived in Antioch to help Barnabas. The leaves open the Agabus association mentioned above, but does not prove it.

εἴτε ἐν σώματι...εἴτε ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος / εἴτε ἐν σώματι εἴτε χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος; *whether in body...whether out of the body / whether in body, whether apart from the body.* This terminology, although strange to us, was normal in Paul's world to describe ecstatic experiences.¹⁵⁰ These expressions contextually are intended to

¹⁵⁰Modern science plays a powerfully shaping role in western culture's defining and understanding of ecstasy. It will always lay a foundational perspective for how the ancient world along with the biblical text, is understood. But the ancient world must be understood on its own terms, and the biblical text must be viewed against that ancient self-understanding. Otherwise, incorrect modern terms will be used in translation leading to false and misleading conclusions.

The article below lays a helpful foundation for viewing the modern perspective, but miserably fails to give consideration to the ancient world's self understandings.

ECSTASY [ἔκστασις *ekstasis*]. From the verb *existēmi* (ἐξίστημι, "to change or displace"). This English word does not occur in the NRSV, RSV, or KJV, which prefer the word *trance*. It is, however, reported in the Kleist-Lilly translation of the NT at Acts 10:10; 11:5; 22:17 (where that Gk. word does occur) and in the NJB at Rev 1:10 (where the Gk. word does not occur). Though not synonymous, the English words are legitimately interchangeable (see alternate states of consciousness below). Philo distinguished four meanings for: 1) alienation; 2) astonishment and fear (see 2 Chr 14:13; 15:5; 17:10, all LXX); 3) perfect rest, sleep, stupor (the first creature in Gen 2:21); and 4) the context of God's self-disclosure (Abraham in Gen 15:12). His first meaning is etymologically correct, and the next three meanings concur with the contemporary understanding of the human experiences of ecstasy and trance.

Anthropologists and cognitive neuroscientists agree that human beings are capable of experiencing many different levels of awareness or consciousness other than "ordinary waking consciousness," which serves as the foundation for measuring and describing alternate (preferable to altered) states of consciousness. Ordinary waking consciousness is characterized by "rational" thought and controlled perception. Alternate states of consciousness (ASC) experiences are subjectively felt departures from ordinary waking consciousness characterized by nonsequential thought and uncontrolled perception. The human ability to experience ASC has existed at least since the upper paleolithic period (40,000 BCE) at which time the human nervous system was presumably no different from the nervous system we know today. Though Freud postulated more than 1,000 ASC, contemporary scientists are more conservative but identify more than thirty-five, which include ecstasy and trance.

Ecstasy often, though not necessarily always, includes rapture, frenzy, euphoria, extremely strong emotion, and sometimes appears to imply the loss of "rational" thought and self-control. Trance, on the other hand, suggests a hypnotic or dazed state. While the pro-

describe ὄπτασις καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου, *visions and revelations from the Lord* (v. 1) and ἀποκαλύψεων, *revelations* (v. 7). Why would the body be connected to such an experience? The Greek word for trance is ἔκστασις,

posed characteristics are present in some experiences of ecstasy and trance, respectively, they are not always present. Thus each case needs to be examined on its own merits. Since each is an ASC, ecstasy and trance can be considered interchangeable though not synonymous terms.

Based on her cross-cultural investigations, Goodman has identified four elements in the cultural patterning of a trance experience: 1) the visionary initially experiences fright; 2) the visionary does not clearly recognize what is being seen; 3) the figure appearing in a vision offers calming assurance; and 4) the figure identifies itself. Moreover, all trance experiences are reinterpreted by the visionary with each review of and reflection upon the ASC experience. This is very likely the case with the prophets. Goodman's elements subsume three of Philo's meanings: alienation from ordinary reality; emotional reaction; and an ASC. (His fourth meaning is explained in 1 Sam 3:1: God discloses self in ASC—*khazon* (ἡπῖ))—in this case a dream).

While ecstasy, or preferably trance (an ASC), would certainly describe the experience of the first creature (Gen 2:21) and Abraham (Gen 15:12), it also aptly describes the experiences of prophets, especially in hearing God's call even though those words are not used (e.g., Isa 6; Jer 1; Ezek 1–3; Amos 7–9, etc.). In these cases, God initiates the experience in the visionary. On other occasions, prophets themselves induced the ecstasy or trance (1 Sam 10:5).

Ecstasy occurs but seven times in the NT. Some instances reflect astonishment or terror with no connection to an ASC (e.g., Mark 5:42; Luke 5:16; Acts 3:10) yet nevertheless as a response to an insight into the power of God. The other occurrences are explicitly related to an ASC. The women respond to their vision of a young man at Jesus' tomb with "terror and amazement" (*ekstasis*, Mark 16:8), a typical response to an ASC experience. While the remaining three occurrences of ecstasy appear in Acts (10:10; 11:5; 22:17), there are actually more than twenty reports of ASC experiences in that book of the Bible alone. Anthropologists would describe these as religious ecstatic experiences. The ascension (Acts 1:3–11), the descent of Spirit (2:1–4), glossolalia (2:5–13), and Paul's call to be an apostle (9:1–9; 22:5–26; 26:9–18) are just a few. The fact that the word *ecstasy* or *trance* does not occur in the majority of these instances offers a salutary caution against limiting one's search of the Bible about any topic to specific words whether in Greek, Hebrew, or English (e.g., *ecstasy*; *trance*). Stephen is said to have gazed into heaven and to have seen the glory of God (7:55–56). This is certainly a trance experience, a religious ecstatic trance to be precise. In most instances where the word *gaze* or *stare* occurs, it signals an ASC experience. The disciples gazed into the sky at Jesus' ascension (Acts 1:10). Peter gazed at the sheet descending from the sky (Acts 10:4). Peter also gazed at the paralyzed man before healing him (Acts 3:4) indicating—as medical and cultural anthropology confirm—that a folk healer routinely goes into trance in order to heal a client. Similarly in the book of Revelation, John specifies four times that he was "in spirit" (Rev 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10), but that phrase is more properly translated "in trance" or "in ecstatic trance." It was in trance that John took journeys to the sky and gained God's perspective on the world as well as God's will that he saw played out in the past and his present.

[John J. Pilch, "Ecstasy," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 2:185.]

which literally means ‘standing outside the body.’¹⁵¹ In the 7 NT uses in the gospels (3x) and Acts (4x) it is translated as either ‘amazement’ (4x) or ‘trance’ (3x). It is related to Paul only in Acts 22:17 when Luke uses ἔκστασις in Paul’s sermon to describe his temple vision in Jerusalem. Paul alludes to this in his single use of the verb ἐξίστημι in 2 Cor. 5:13, εἶτε γὰρ ἐξέστημεν, θεῶ· εἶτε σωφρονοῦμεν, ὑμῖν, for whether we are out of body, to God; whether we are in our mind, for you. Thus for Paul, σωφρονέω represents the opposite of ἐξίστημι. Etymologically, ἐξίστημι denotes, in a derivative meaning in Greek, the soul standing outside the body in some kind of trance based on its etymological origins,¹⁵² while

¹⁵¹“TRANSE [נִרְדַּם; ἐκστασις ekstasis]. To be outside or beside oneself, implying dissociation. The Greek words used for trance are also translated ‘confused,’ ‘amazed,’ or ‘outside of oneself’ (Mark 5:42; compare Gen 27:33 [LXX]; Ezek 26:16 [LXX]; 27:35 [LXX]; Mark 16:8; Luke 5:26; Acts 3:10). The trances of Peter and Paul (Acts 10:10; 11:5; 22:17) are described as ecstasies or receptive states for visions (compare 2 Cor 12:1–4).

“Trance states (anything from frenzy to light hypnosis to meditative states to deep unconsciousness) are usually dictated by the cultural group promoting them and esoterically taught to novices. The adept—usually a prophet or seer in the Bible—valorizes a report by saying that he or she has entered a special, religiously interpreted state of consciousness. Therefore, the SONS OF PROPHETS refers to prophetic guilds that teach new apprentices how to achieve and use this religiously interpreted state of consciousness (1 Kgs 20:35; 2 Kgs 2:1–25; 4:1, 38; 5:22; 6:1; Amos 2:11).

“Biblical prophecy, associated with the outpouring of the ‘spirit of the Lord,’ sometimes is trance-like. Joel refers to God pouring out the divine spirit so that both old and young will prophesy through ‘dreams’ and ‘visions’ (Joel 2:28 [Heb. 3:1]). The wilderness is a prime place to meet with the Lord in a trance (Exod 19–24; Num 14:22; 1 Kgs 19:12; compare Isa 40:3; Matt 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23). Indeed the stillness and majesty of the desert may aid in the production of religious consciousness.

“The story of Micaiah ben Imlah illustrates the political as well as ecstatic roles of the prophet (1 Kgs 22). The book of Daniel suggests that a vision could be received with appropriate preparation. Daniel had been mourning for three weeks (compare 4 Ezra 5:20), possibly lamenting in appropriate ascetic states: he had eaten no rich food, no meat or wine. On the twenty-fourth day of his regimen, Daniel received a vision; he grew weak and pale, heard a voice, and fell to his face in a trance (Dan 10:2–11).

“In the Second Temple period, dreams were considered prophetic; Philo and Josephus use many different instances in which religiously interpreted states of consciousness and trance were respected as sources of religious information. The authority of Paul’s apostleship depends on his receiving a vision of the risen Jesus (Acts 9:1–19). See DREAM; ECSTASY; TONGUES, GIFT OF; VISION.”

[Alan F. Segal, “Trance,” ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 5:650.]

¹⁵²“Literally ‘change of place,’ Aristot. An., I, 3, p. 406b, 13: κίνησις ἐκστασις ἐστὶ τοῦ κινουμένου; Hippocr. De Articulis, 56: faulty position of the thigh, b. Figur. ‘renunciation of goods’ (cesio bonorum), a techn. term in the pap. (BGU, III, 914, 6; P. Oxy., III, 472, 43); c. Figur. ‘degeneration’; Theophr. De Causis Plantarum, III, 1, 6: ἐκστασις τῆς φύσεως, esp. ‘confusion of spirit,’

σωφρονέω¹⁵³ denotes the thinking process coming together with some idea or event properly and understandably. But these are only accurate in a limited manner.¹⁵⁴ No literal translation of these terms is possible without seriously misleading the reader.

In Paul’s world “exceptional states of soul attributed

νοῦ, Plot., V, 3, 7 (opp. ἡσυχία); abs. Hippocr. Aphorismi, VII, 5; in astonishment or fear: τὰ μὴδὲ προσδοκώμεν’ ἐκστασιν φέρει, Menand. Fr., 149 (CAF, III, 44); in envy, Test. S. 4:8; ‘alienation,’ ἐκστασις μανική, Aristot. Cat., 8, p. 10a, 1; not always, but often in the sense of almost convulsive, transitory excitement: ἐκστασις φύσεως καὶ εἰκὼν θανάτου, Test. R. 3:1; ‘transport,’ Cornut. De Natura Deorum, 30, cf. Philo Ebr., 15: μέθην, τὴν ἐκστάσεως καὶ παραφροσύνης αἰτίαν. To the extent that the one alienated or transported is full of God, or inspired, or gifted with power, it thus means d. ‘ecstasy.’ Plato in Phaedr., 244a speaks of μανία, θεία δόσει διδομένη, and in 256b of θεία μανία Philo distinguishes 4 senses of ἐκστασις: 1. alienation (cf. Spec. Leg. III, 99, Cher., 69); 2. astonishment and fear (Israel at Sinai); 3. perfect rest, sleep, stupor (Adam in Gn. 2:21, cf. Leg. All. II 31, Plant., 147); and 4. Ἡ δὲ πασῶν ἀρίστη ἐνθεος κατοκωχή (inspiration) τε καὶ μανία, ἣ τὸ προφητικὸν γένος χρῆται (Abraham, Gn. 15:12), ἐνθουσιῶντος καὶ θεοφορήτου τὸ πάθος (Rer. Div. Her., 258, cf. 264). There is originally no idea of the soul being outside the body for a period. This comes in later, Rer. Div. Her., 69. Cf. Leg. All. III, 40 f.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:449–450.]

¹⁵³The word group is † σώφρων, † σωφρονέω, † σωφρονίζω, † σωφρονισμός, † σωφροσύνη. [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 7:1097.]

¹⁵⁴“σώφρων, contracted from Hom. σαόφρων (so also later in poets, cf. IG, II/III 2 3, 1 [1935], 3632, 11; 3753), means first ‘of sound (σάος, σῶς, σωός) mind’ (φρένες). Hom. Od., 23, 13. 30 has the abstract σαοφροσύνη = σωφροσύνη² and from the 5th cent. B.C. we find the verb σωφρονέω, Aesch. Prom., 982; Pers., 829; Hdt., III, 35, 2. Etym. is no gt. help and can easily lead to misunderstanding of the group. It should be noted that transl. of this group which is so characteristic of Gk. thought is almost impossible. Lexicographically one can only describe its meaning by certain catchwords. It denotes a. ‘the rational’ in the sense of what is intellectually sound (opp. μανία), Xenoph. Mem., I, 1, 16; Plat. Prot., 323b; Phaedr., 244a; Plat. Resp., I, 331c.3 It then denotes b. ‘rational’ without illusion, Thuc., I, 80, 2; III, 43, 5. It can also mean c. ‘rational’ in the sense of purposeful, Thuc., VI, 6, 2. Another sense is d. ‘discretion’ in the sense of moderation and self-control, Thrasymachus Fr., 1 (Diels, II. 323, 7); Plat. Resp., IV, 430e; Plat. Phaed., 68c; Plat. Symp., 196c; Diog. L., III, 91; cf. 4 Macc. 1:3. Again, it may mean e. ‘discretion’ as prudent reserve, Thuc., I, 32, 4. Another sense is f. ‘modesty’ and decorum, Eur. Iph. Aul., 1159; Plat. Leg., VI, 784e; Dio Chrys. Or., 15, 4; Stob. Ecl., IV, 588, 17–593, 11.4 Then there is g. ‘discretion’ as discipline and order politically, Thuc., III, 37, 3; VIII, 64, 5, also h. as ‘wisdom’ as opp. to, e.g., ἄβουλος, Hdt., III, 71, 3, cf. esp. σοφίην ... σωφρόνως, IV, 77, 1, also Thuc., I, 79, 2; IV, 18, 4. The σώφρων is also contrasted with the ἄφρων and νήπιος in Theogn., 431, 483, 497, 665.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 7:1097–1098.]

to supernatural causes are widespread throughout the whole race."¹⁵⁵ States of ecstasy in the ancient world were commonly understood to happen when contact with certain deities was made.¹⁵⁶ The Greek tradition links ecstasy as frenzied excitement to the god Dionysus who was something of an outsider to the Olympian tradition. But in the Anthesteria festival in the Ionian Delphi celebration Dionysus competes with Apollo for the loyalty of the people, but they both need each other for complete comprehension of existence.¹⁵⁷ The idea of ecstasy as an 'out of body' experience is derived from later evolving of these early concepts. In the Greek dichotomy between **soul and body**, ψυχή καὶ σῶμα, where the eternal abhors contact with the contaminate material body, the soul must then temporarily leave the body for contacts with the divine to be made.¹⁵⁸ In such en-

¹⁵⁵Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:450.

¹⁵⁶“ Though the boundary between ecstasy and illusion may seem to us to be very tenuous, the same distinction, as also between ecstasy and possession, was made at an early period.² Ecstasy in the narrower sense involves beneficial apprehension and infilling by a higher power which may sometimes be experienced as an impersonal substance and sometimes as a personal being. Indeed, the two may be combined, as when a god puts man in a state of ecstasy, not by entering into him, but by breathing upon him.

“Already in the earliest stages there are attempts to induce ecstasy by narcotics, music (esp. by percussion instruments), dancing, rhythmic cries and self-mutilation.³ Higher forms of mysticism find the goal rather in an absorption associated with visions and auditions. Here, too, we have the development of a definite method which reaches its climax in Yoga, Neo-Platonism and the German Mystics.⁴”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:450–451.]

¹⁵⁷“Historically known forms are thought to have come from the Orient at the very earliest in the 8th cent. More recently, however, this has been contested in the case of Dionysus.⁶ He is known to Homer.⁷ But he does not fit into the Olympic system and therefore he is largely ignored in the chivalrous epic. The Anthesteria festival common to the Ionians seems to prove that Dionysus was at home in the Gk. world from at least the end of the second millennium. The location of his grave in Delphi seems to indicate a long tradition. We thus cannot assume a cultic union of two deities in which Apollo sought his own advantage when threatened by a usurper. We are rather dealing with a basic factor in Gk. religion. The distant Olympian and the god of frenzy complement and seek out one another. Together they comprehend the totality of the world as the Gks. experienced it.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:451.]

¹⁵⁸“The idea that God is in man (χωρεῖν τὸν θεόν, Iambl. Myst., III, 11) alternates with that of the ἐνθεον γίνεσθαι or ἐνθουσιασμός (Plat. Tim., 71e). The apparent contradiction was not felt in view of the more neutral conception of ἐν and the more fluid and less personal view of god. To both ideas there corresponds a third, that of the temporary separation of the soul from the body. A place must be found for the entering deity. But the soul itself, liberated from

counters can come visions as well as auditions. Thus prophecy becomes in the Greek tradition the communication of what was received in these ecstatic encounters with the gods.¹⁵⁹

But the Jewish heritage plays a formative role in

the body, can also attain to vision. It may thus be a hindrance to ecstasy, as the body always is. But it may also be an organ.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:453.]

¹⁵⁹“ Different views follow in rapid succession in the Mithras Lit. The ἀνθρωπίνη ψυχική δύναμις must give place for a short time (ὑπεξεσταναι, Preis. Zaub., IV, 523 f.). There follows rapture with a view to the vision of God, primarily in the body divested of the weight of earth (ibid., 538 ff.). Yet cf. 725 f.: ὑπέκλυτος δὲ ἔσει τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ οὐκ ἐν σεαυτῷ ἔσει. (Cf. also 2 C. 12:2 f., → ἀναβαῖνο, I, 521). The power of God is mystically portrayed as the true being of man: ‘First becoming of my becoming, first beginning of my beginning, spirit of the spirit, first of the spirit in me’ (488 ff.). But it is also drawn in with the breath: ‘Breathe in the breath (πνεῦμα) of the rays, drawing in three times to thy fullest extent’ (537 ff.; cf. 628 f.: ἔλκε ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ... εἰς σεαυτὸν τὸ πνεῦμα). It finally confronts the ecstatic in personal and bodily form (635 ff.; 695 ff.). Cic. Divin., I, 50, 114: *Ergo et ii, quorum animi spreitis corporibus evolant atque excurrunt foras, ardore aliquo inflammati atque incitati cernunt illis profecto, quae vaticinantes pronuntiant, multisque rebus inflammantur tales animi, qui corporibus non inhaerent, ut ii, qui song quodam vocum et Phrygiis cantibus excitantur* (cf. 51, 115). Chrys. Hom. in Ac. XXII, 1 (MPG, 60, 172): τί ἐστιν ἔκστασις; πνευματική, φησί, θεωρία γέγονεν αὐτῷ τοῦ σώματος, ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις, ἐξέστη ἡ ψυχή. The word ἔκστασις, originally understood of holy frenzy, seems later to have taken on the sense of rapture.²³

“So far as we know, Philo was the first to use the term in this technical sense. Yet he did not coin the meaning.²⁴ Rational and mystical-ecstatic knowledge are for him complementary, not identical. But the emphasis is on the latter. On the basis of Gn. 15:12 he gives the following picture of ecstasy (Rer. Div. Her., 263 ff.): ‘So long as our rational thinking streams around, pouring mid-day light, as it were, into the whole soul, we remain alone and do not experience any divine indwelling (οὐ κατεχόμεθα) ... For when the divine light dawns, the human sets (and vice versa) ... The Νοῦς in us departs (ἐξοικίζεται) at the coming of the divine spirit, and returns (πάλιν εισοικίζεται) at His departing. For it is a law that the mortal cannot dwell with the immortal.’ A higher force controls the tools of language (the ecstatic becomes an ὄργανον θεοῦ ἡχεῖον, κρουόμενον καὶ πληττόμενον ἀοράτως ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ, Rer. Div. Her., 259, cf. 68ff.; Leg. All., III, 40 f., 44, 48, 82, 84; Ebr., 146 ff.; Op. Mund., 71 etc.).

“In Hellenism the ecstatic theology of revelation reaches a final climax in Neo-Platonism. The important statements are found in Plot. Enn., IV, 8, 1; VI, 7, 22; 9, 11. Like Plutarch, Iamblichus seeks to support the value of ecstasy and to explain its nature on rational grounds, sometimes almost materialistic.²⁵ The point is to try to do greater justice to the human factor and yet at the same time to ensure continued interest in ecstasy. Iamblichus, too, calls the ecstatic the ὄργανον of deity (Myst., III, 11).”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:453–454.]

understanding ecstasy in the ancient world as well. Apostolic Christian perceptions, especially in regard to the role of the body, in ecstasy cannot be grasped without awareness of the Jewish influences. In the era of the OT, the early prophetic traditions stressed ecstasy strongly.¹⁶⁰ In this background then stands a de-empha-

¹⁶⁰“The unusual and eccentric aspect forms the starting-point. Pathological features are not uncommon (Nu. 24:15 ff.; Ez. 3:25 f.; 4:4 ff.). The root נבא seems to have the original sense of ‘to speak with frenzy.’ Prophets are repeatedly described as mad (2 K. 9:11; Jer. 29:26; Hos. 9:7), and though this comes from opponents we cannot fail to see the connection.

“In the OT, so far as we can see, we have at the beginning the man of God who disposes of supernatural power, and the seer who is gifted with supernatural knowledge, the latter being a seer rather than an ecstatic (Nu. 24:3; 1 S. 2:27; 9:6 ff.; 2 S. 24:11; 1 K. 13:1; 17:18; 2 K. 4:7 etc.). He can pass on his gifts etc. to others (2 K. 6:15 ff.). There are also true ecstasies like Deborah (Ju. 4:4). These are the givers of oracles both for everyday occasions (1 S. 9:6 ff.; 1 K. 14:1 ff.) and for more important, including political (2 S. 24:11), like the soothsayers of the Philistines (1 S. 6:2) and the Aramic חזן of the inscription of King Zakir of Hamath (8th cent. B.C.). This does not exhaust their work, however, for increasingly they come to declare the will of Yahweh and to enforce His ethical demands. Nor are we dealing only with great figures like Samuel (1 S. 15:22) and Nathan (2 S. 12:1 ff.), but also with lesser figures (1 S. 2:27). At the beginning of the monarchy there arises the new phenomenon of group ecstasy.²⁷ Renouncing everyday life, swarms of nebiim wander through the land to the sound of the harp, cymbal, flute and zither. Unasked, they announce the future, often in the form of judgment and disaster. Their ecstasy is infectious, and grips even those who stand aloof (1 S. 10:5 ff.; 19:20 ff.). Men like Elisha stand out from the rest (2 K. 2:5; 4:38). If there are primitive features and a certain amount of corruption, nebiism cannot simply be interpreted and dismissed as a Canaanitish intrusion into Yahweh religion. The sacred dance of the Yahweh cult left room for it, and in the main the nebiim are opposed to cultural degeneration. They represent the strict ethical majesty of the wilderness God (1 K. 18; 21:17 ff.; 2 K. 5:26 f.; for the connection of Elijah with nebiism, cf. 2 K. 2:5, and of Elisha apart from the passages already mentioned, cf. 2 K. 6:1 ff.; 9:1 ff.). They have a constant sense of the historical leading of the people by Yahweh. It is not improbable that their proclamation also has eschatological features. The feeling of distance in relation to the Godhead is characteristic. Yahweh Himself does not enter into men; He works in them through His Spirit (רוח).

“Classical prophecy holds aloof from institutionalised nebiism (Am. 7:14; Is. 28:7 ff.; 29:9 f.; Jer. 23:9 ff.; Ez. 13). Yet this should not prevent us seeing the points of connection. What is attacked is the corruption of nebiism. Even Amos allows that the nebiim are one of God’s valuable gifts to His people (2:11f.). In clothes and manner of life, in the whole reception of revelation and even in the message, there are broad areas of agreement. Many of the prophets accept the designation nabi (Is. 8:3; Hos. 9:7). Some of them come from the prophetic schools, and ecstatic experiences, visions and auditions are indispensable, especially in calling (Is. 6:1 ff.; Jer. 1:4ff.; Ez. 1:1 ff. etc.; Amos 7–9; Zech. 1–6). On the whole, however, there is an unmistakable decline in the ecstatic element. We no longer have the attempt to induce ecstasy by artificial means. This comes upon the instrument of Yahweh with irresistible force, causing perhaps more pain than pleasure to the frail human vessel. Renunciation of ecstatic methodology is characteristic of

sis upon out of body ecstatic communication with God. But in the Judaism of Paul’s day the perceptions were mixed. The apocalyptic traditions, mostly of Diaspora Hellenistic Judaism, de-emphasized strongly the ecstatic element as necessary for receiving visions etc. But the developing scribal and then rabbinic Judaism went the opposite direction with lots of emphasis upon out of body experiences to transport one momentarily into the presence of Yaweh.¹⁶¹ But as the ancient primary sources suggest the views were not cleanly

OT piety from now on. The formula נאם יהוה does not normally imply the reception of the word by ecstatic audition. Visions may be a deception (Is. 28:7 ff.; Jer. 23:9 ff.; Ez. 13). The decisive point is the moral will of Yahweh. The absolutely indispensable instrument of prophetic proclamation is understandable speech, i.e., the word.

“On the borders of apocalyptic the visionary and ecstatic element seems at a first glance to resume its importance. This is especially true of Ez., Zech. and Daniel. On the other hand, the visions here are literary artifices and we do not have to suppose that they all took place exactly as narrated.”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:454–455.]

¹⁶¹“For all the abundance of visions, developed apocalyptic really attests a decline in ecstatic experiences. The visions of the pseudepigraphical writers are artificial products of the study. This does not mean, however, that the ecstatic element had completely vanished. Later Judaism certainly places inspiration in the past and in the Messianic future (dramatically so in 1 Macc. 4:46; 9:27; 14:41). Yet descriptions of Messianic experiences show that they still take place (→ I, 724). The apocalyptic writer does not reject all such experiences as false. Philo continually claims to be an ecstatic, and we have no reason to distrust his statements.²⁸ For all his Hellenism, he is a true Jew in the sense that he does not think of God entering into man, but rather of the injection of divine powers and intermediaries.

“In Rabbinic circles there is frequent reference to visions, fiery appearances²⁹ and auditions.³⁰ Four Rabbis are supposed to have seen Paradise while still in the body,³¹ though it is not certain that this is an ecstatic experience. In general, the Rabbis engaged in cosmological speculation for which Ez. 1 (cf. j Chag., 77b, 8 ff.) provided the basis, as sometimes in modern Judaism. The fiery phenomena seem to indicate approach to the spheres in which God dwells.³² In b. Chag., 14b Bar. they occur in the story of a discussion between R. Aqiba and his disciple R. Eleazar b. Arak on the מְרַכְבֵּה of Ez. 1, and they are here a legendary accretion along with the singing of the trees and the voice of an angel from the fire. The older but still legendary account is to be found in j Chag., 77a, 51 ff. Often the fiery phenomena have a purely symbolical sense.³³ They occur in discussions of Scripture, a special role being again played by the מְרַכְבֵּה. It is also characteristic of the Bath Qol that ratio still has its place. Sometimes it denotes a voice of unknown origin, as in the anecdotes in Jeb., 16, 6; b. Ber., 3a (a heavenly voice like a dove and coming from a ruin) etc.³⁴ One of the earliest examples of ecstasy in Judaism is the dance of the old rabbis in the forecourt of the temple at the feast of the tabernacles (Sukka, 5, 4; cf. b. Sukka, 53a), though here, too, a rational element is discernible.”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:455–456.]

divided between Hellenistic and Hebraistic Judaism. Multiplicity of viewpoints existed throughout first century Judaism.

Against this diverse backdrop in the ancient world, the following conclusions about in body / out of body references in vv. 2-4 are possible.

Paul's consistent denial of knowing whether the individual had his experience εἴτε ἐν σώματι εἴτε χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος, **whether in body, whether apart from the body** (v. 3; also cf. v. 2), should be understood as avoiding an unsolvable debate over validity of the revelation depending upon the role of the individual's physical body in this experience. The Greek mind-set in the Corinthian church would have seen the out of body experience as necessary to a valid experience. The Jewish Christian members, and potentially the outsiders at Corinth with a strong Hebraistic Jewish heritage, would have potentially been on the opposite side of the fence in the in/out of body experience view. In recounting the experience Paul simply denies knowing what role the body played in the experience. He insists that God knew but absolutely denies that he knew. Thus a major source of debate over whether this person had a valid experience or not is shut off before it can get started. Then the body played no role in the validity of the experience. What counted with the encounter with God in Paradise.

Additionally, the significance of the audition is de-emphasized as well by remaining uncommunicated: ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι, **he heard unrecountable words which are not allow to be spoken to a person.**¹⁶² Many are persuaded that these

¹⁶²“The second part of v. 4, καὶ ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι, contains four exegetical ambiguities. First, ῥήματα may bear its usual sense of ‘words,’ or, under the influence of its Hebrew equivalent (*deḇārīm*) which may mean ‘words’ or ‘things’/‘matters,’ it may mean ‘things.’⁷² Second, like the English adjective ‘ineffable,’ ἄρρητος can mean either ‘that cannot be expressed’ or ‘that must not be expressed’ (see BAGD 109 s.v.). That is, it may refer to either impossibility or impermissibility, or, as Spittler (264) expresses it, the term may describe what is ‘inexpressible by nature’ or what is ‘inexpressible by prohibition.’⁷³ Third, the relative clause introduced by ἃ may define what is meant by ἄρρητα ῥήματα, or it may give a second characterization of the ῥήματα (in addition to ἄρρητα). Fourth, ἐξὸν, the participle of ἐξεστί, is used only twice in the NT, both times in the nominative (Robertson 491), once with ἦν (Matt. 12:4) and here with ἐστίν understood.⁷⁴ Like ἐξεστί, ἐξὸν [ἐστίν] may mean ‘it is permitted’ or (less commonly) ‘it is possible.’

“These ambiguities give rise, of course, to a variety of possible meanings. Three representative categories of translation may be mentioned.

1. Referring both ἄρρητα and οὐκ ἐξὸν to impermissibility, with ἃ κτλ. virtually exegetical.
 - ‘things that must not be divulged, which it is forbidden a human being to repeat’ (Furnish 513).⁷⁵
 - ‘things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat’ (NRSV).
2. Referring ἄρρητα to impermissibility and οὐκ ἐξὸν to im-

possibility. ἄρρητα ῥήματα, **unspeakable words**, denote the prohibited names of God in Hebrew that are not to be orally spoken. The single use here of the adjective ἄρρητος, -ov denotes either what is beyond human ability to be verbalized or what is expressly forbidden to humans to verbalize. Most take the relative clause modifier of ῥήματα, **orally spoken words**, to favor the second understanding of ἄρρητα. Clearly the unspeakable names of God in Hebrew stand as a possible meaning of Paul's statement. But this may not be what Paul had in mind with this expression.

Since this is a vision experience, other factors may very well influence Paul here. Typically in visionary experience, the recipient of the vision is instructed to write down what he sees and hears so it can be communicated to others later after the end of the vision as Rev. 1:3 asserts: Μακάριος ὁ ἀναγινώσκων καὶ οἱ ἀκούοντες τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας καὶ τηροῦντες τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ γεγραμμένα, ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς, **Blessed is the one who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep the things written in it, for the time is near.** This was John's experience at Patmos: cf. 1:11, 19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 14:13; 19:9; 21:5 with the aorist imperative γράψον, **write.** Yet on one occasion John was forbidden to write down what he had heard: καὶ μὴ αὐτὰ γράψῃς, **and do not write these things** (10:4).

But Paul's ἄρρητα ῥήματα, unrecountable words, are presented differently here.¹⁶³ Some isolated later

possibility.

- ‘things which must not and cannot be put into human language’ (JB).
3. Referring ἄρρητα to impossibility and οὐκ ἐξὸν to impermissibility.⁷⁶
 - ‘things which cannot be put into words, things that human lips may not speak’ (GNB).⁷⁷
 - ‘words said that cannot and may not be spoken by any human being’ (NJB).⁷⁸
 - “‘inexpressible’⁷⁹ words that a human is not permitted to utter.”⁸⁰

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 843–844.]

¹⁶³“There is an advantage in retaining ‘words’ for ῥήματα, since Paul probably intended ἄρρητα ῥήματα to be oxymoronic, ‘unutterable utterances’ (Young and Ford 274) or ‘utterances unutterable’ (Cassirer), that is, divine words that cannot be expressed in human language. The relative clause ἃ κτλ. adds a second characteristic of the ῥήματα. They were not only beyond the reaches of human language; God does not, in any case, permit human beings to clothe these transcendent heavenly utterances in the puny garb of earthly language.⁸¹ Paul gives no indication of the content of these ‘unutterable utterances’ that he was privileged to hear. Tentative proposals include angelic praise,⁸² perhaps expressed in ‘the tongues of angels’ (1 Cor. 13:1), the mysteries of God's person (1 Cor. 2:10–11),⁸³ unutterable divine names,⁸⁴ and disclosures about the end of the world,⁸⁵ including the blessings of the Age to Come.

copies attempt to answer the dilemma here with text emendations.¹⁶⁴ The truth of the matter, the mystery of what was heard remains a mystery, since Paul makes no effort to disclose the content of these words. And also left unanswered is assessment of why mention was made to the Corinthians of the hearing of words that could not be communicated to mortals, either because of the nature of the words or/and because of divine prohibition against telling about them.

One aspect that may be important is the likelihood that in his vision he saw the risen Christ and heard Him speak directly.¹⁶⁵ On the Damascus Road, the Risen

But in the final analysis, we must be content with Theodoret's conclusion: 'the person [Paul] who has seen these things—he knows.'¹⁶⁶ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 844.]

¹⁶⁴“αὐτὸς οἶδεν ὁ ταῦτα τεθεαμένος (cited by Meyer 677, without reference). Paul's 'failure' to disclose the content of the ῥήματα was remedied (!) by a second-century Coptic Apocalypse of Paul (*Nag Hammadi Gnostic Codices* V.2), on which see Klauck, "Himmelfahrt" 151–90; and a fourth-century Latin *Apocalypse of Paul* (found in Hennecke and Schneemelcher 755–98), on which see Young 95–103. In the latter work the author overcomes the difficulty of the ἄρρητα ῥήματα by distinguishing (in ch. 12) between what Paul was permitted to relate and what he could not disclose." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), p. 884, fn. 86.]

¹⁶⁵“We conclude, then, that in 12:4 Paul refers to his visit to the 'hidden' paradise, the dwelling place of the righteous dead, which is located within the third (= the highest) heaven, the abode of God.

“If this conclusion is right, it might seem inevitable that on his visit to paradise Paul saw the exalted Christ, for he believed that the righteous dead were 'with the Lord' (5:8) or 'with Christ' (Phil. 1:23), and that Christ was now at God's right hand in heaven (Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1).⁹⁴ The difficulty, however, is that Paul refers only to what he heard (ἤκουσεν), not to anything he saw. True, he must have seen something that indicated he was in paradise, unless this too was announced to him. But it would be extraordinary if he had actually seen Christ at this time and yet not have mentioned the fact (cf. 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8), for such an experience would have been unique for him. At Damascus he had been confronted by the risen Christ who spoke from heaven (Acts 9:3–6; 22:6–8, 10; 26:13–18), while Paul himself was on earth. In the present case he would have seen the exalted Lord while he too was in heaven, an experience that anticipated the final destiny of believers (1 Thess. 4:17).⁹⁵ In view of Paul's silence about what he saw during his time in paradise,⁹⁶ and his silence about the identity of the speaker of the ῥήματα, it is not inappropriate to assume that he heard the sound of words which he understood but did not see the form of the speaker or speakers (cf. Deut. 4:12). But this is not to suggest that the experience had a minimal impact on him. On the contrary, after his conversion encounter with the living Christ, probably no event had a greater influence in strengthening his motivation for serving and pleasing Christ (5:9, 15) and his fortitude for enduring suffering (cf. Acts 9:16; Rom. 8:18).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI;

Christ had spoken to Paul from Heaven while Paul remained on earth (Acts 9:3–6; 22:6–8, 10; 26:13–18). But this time this man, possibly Paul, was snatched from earth and taken into Heaven in visionary experience: ἀρπαγέντα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ, / ἠρπάγη εἰς τὸν παράδεισον; such a person having been snatch up to the third heaven / he was snatched into Paradise. The aorist passive forms used here of ἀρπάζω denote *quick grabbing of something or someone to take control over them*. It often in ancient literature referred to the quick arrest of someone in taking them prisoner before resistance could be put up. Typically in Jewish visionary language, the recipient always remains on earth and is permitted to look into Heaven while remaining on earth. For an individual to be transported to heaven for a vision is quite unusual. In fact, only this individual here and John in Revelation are recorded to have had such an experience in the entire Bible. This may well be a very significant undertone meaning behind being 'snatched up' to/into heaven.

One of the interpretive issues is whether ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ, up to the third heaven, equals εἰς τὸν παράδεισον, into Paradise.¹⁶⁶ Most likely they refer to the same location, *the abode of God*. Perhaps, what was experienced here relates to what John saw at the opening of the fifth seal, ὑποκάτω τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἐσφαγμένων διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἣν εἶχον, under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered for the word of God and for the testimony they had given (Rev. 6:9). If so, Paul wasn't permitted to talk about it, but John was. Clearly ἄ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι, which are not permitted for a person to speak, denotes a divinely mandated prohibition against talking about the words which were heard. The impersonal verb with the negative οὐκ ἐξὸν denotes the lack of permission for some action, here λαλῆσαι, to speak.

Thus evidently for some fourteen years the apostle

Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 845–846.]

¹⁶⁶“As for the relation of παράδεισος and τρίτος οὐρανός, there are three possibilities. For those who discern two stages in Paul's ascent to paradise, the two expressions are, of course, distinct.⁹⁰ But we have argued above (under v. 3) in favor of seeing a single event in vv. 2–4. Accordingly, paradise may be seen as a synonym for the third (highest) heaven,⁹¹ or, as in 2 Enoch (A) 8:1; Apocalypse of Moses 40:1 and probably 37:5, it can be regarded as within the third heaven.⁹² Perhaps the different prepositions used in vv. 2 and 4 support this latter option, 'as far as (ἕως) the third heaven,' indicating the 'height' of Paul's rapture, and 'into (εἰς) paradise,' specifying its 'depth.'⁹³ We conclude, then, that in 12:4 Paul refers to his visit to the 'hidden' paradise, the dwelling place of the righteous dead, which is located within the third (= the highest) heaven, the abode of God.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 845.

had not mentioned this experience to anyone until now. The pressure from the outsiders who claimed superior visions and revelations in some kind of frenzied religious experience pushed the apostle to speak of this earlier experience. Whether a description of someone he knew or a third person portrayal of his own earlier experience, Paul was hugely reluctant to go into any meaningful details about the experience.

While vv. 2-4 describe the incident, vv. 5-7 give Paul's interpretation of the event. Verse 5 essentially states his position, which is then justified (γάρ) in elaboration in vv. 6-7a.

5 ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιούτου καυχῆσομαι, ὑπὲρ δὲ ἑμαυτοῦ οὐ καυχῆσομαι εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις. 6 Ἐὰν γὰρ θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι, οὐκ ἔσομαι ἄφρων, ἀλήθειαν γὰρ ἐρῶ· φείδομαι δέ, μὴ τις εἰς ἐμὲ λογίσηται ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με ἢ ἀκούει τι ἐξ ἑμοῦ 7 καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων. 5 *On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. 6 But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, 7 even considering the exceptional character of the revelations.*

The twofold assertion (#s 282-283) position the apostle as boasting about this person's experience but refusing to boast about his own experiences, except for his weaknesses. Precisely how this is taken depends upon who the other person is that is described in vv. 2-4. If this individual is another individual just known by Paul, then the natural meanings of the statements in verse five are the correct way to understand them. He would talk about other people's experiences to what ever degree was appropriate. But regarding himself, he would only take pride in his weaknesses, not perceived strengths.

But if Paul is speaking indirectly of himself in the experience in vv. 2-4 -- as most commentators be-

282 ^{12.5} ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιούτου καυχῆσομαι,
δὲ
283 ὑπὲρ ἑμαυτοῦ οὐ καυχῆσομαι
εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις.

12.6 γὰρ
Ἐὰν θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι,
284 οὐκ ἔσομαι ἄφρων,
γὰρ
285 ἀλήθειαν ἐρῶ·

δὲ
286 φείδομαι,
μὴ τις εἰς ἐμὲ λογίσηται
ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με
ἢ
ἀκούει τι ἐξ ἑμοῦ

12.7 καὶ
τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων.

lieve -- then the words in v. 5 assume a more complex meaning. The first assertion (#282), ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιούτου καυχῆσομαι, *in behalf of such a person I will boast*, reflects accuracy only to the extent that the 'fools speech' can reflect accuracy. The understood literary device thus used by the apostle distances Paul from this previous experience as something he takes pride in. It only signals that his 'spiritual' experiences are in no way inferior to those claimed by the Corinthian outsiders. But it's not something that Paul actually takes pride in.

What he actually relishes in comes in the second assertion (#283): ὑπὲρ δὲ ἑμαυτοῦ οὐ καυχῆσομαι εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις, *but in my own behalf I will not boast, except in the weaknesses*. Notice carefully how he words this expression. He contrasts this statement with the preceding one appropriately using δὲ, *but*. Just as the interests of the other person were placed in the sentence prefield, ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιούτου, so also his direct interests are listed in the prefield parallel to the first: ὑπὲρ ἑμαυτοῦ. That is, when it comes to his personal accomplishments the apostle says emphatically that he will not take pride in them. Even his boasting in behalf of the other person actually stresses not what this person actually did, but what happened to him through divine action.¹⁶⁷ If Paul is going to talk about himself, he will not talk about his accomplishments. Instead, οὐ καυχῆσομαι εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις, *I will not boast except in regard to the weaknesses*.¹⁶⁸ The most natural meaning of the plural ταῖς ἀσθενείαις, *the weaknesses*, is a signalling of events, situations, conditions etc. that point to absolute dependency needed upon God's presence and intervening power. The Damascus escape was one kind of example (11:30-33). The upcoming reference to his 'thorn in the flesh' (12:7b-10) will be another. Nothing in the context necessitates alternative understandings.

¹⁶⁷Both ἀρπαγέντα and ἡρπάγη as aorist passive forms stress that the snatching up action was a divinely accomplished activity that happened to the individual. Not something the individual planned and accomplished on his own initiative.

¹⁶⁸"After καυχῆσομαι, the preposition ἐν introduces the object of the boasting, 'about,' 'of,' in which case it is synonymous with the two preceding cases of ὑπὲρ (= περί).¹⁰⁰ In the expression ταῖς ἀσθενείαις the article is possessive, 'my weaknesses' (so most EVV; see Textual Note h.), and the plural may be generalizing ('weakness,' Lang 346; cf. v. 9a) or may refer to 'times of weakness' (cf. BAGD 115b) or simply 'weaknesses' (as in vv. 9b, 10), that is, 'the things that show how weak I am' (GNB). The Damascus escape was one such instance (11:32-33); the debilitating 'thorn' (vv. 7-8) was another. Black regards καυχῆσθαι ἐν ἀσθενείαις as the general theme of chs. 10-13, with δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ (12:9) forming the specific theme (147)." [[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 847-848.]

The causal γάρ statements in vv. 6-7a both justify and amplify the point of οὐ καυχῆσομαι εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις, *I will not boast except in regard to the weaknesses* in v. 5b. 6 Ἐὰν γὰρ θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι, οὐκ ἔσομαι ἄφρων, ἀλήθειαν γὰρ ἐρῶ· φείδομαι δέ, μὴ τις εἰς ἐμέ λογίσται ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με ἢ ἀκούει τι ἐξ ἐμοῦ 7 καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων. 6 *But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, 7 even considering the exceptional character of the revelations.*

	12.6	γάρ	
		Ἐὰν θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι,	
284		οὐκ ἔσομαι ἄφρων,	
		γάρ	
285		ἀλήθειαν ἐρῶ·	
		δέ	
286		φείδομαι,	
		μὴ τις εἰς ἐμέ λογίσται	
		ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με	
		ἢ	
		ἀκούει τι ἐξ ἐμοῦ	
	12.7	καὶ	
		τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων.	

The foundational statement (# 284) sets up the justifying declaration as a third class conditional statement. This plays off the previous οὐ καυχῆσομαι (v. 5b) in the protasis clause Ἐὰν θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι, with a qualifying scenario: *I won't boast. But in the unlikely situation that I decided to boast, I wouldn't do it as a fool.* Note that ἄφρων here contextually carries both a popular meaning and a technical meaning. These are defined in large part by the second γάρ statement: ἀλήθειαν γὰρ ἐρῶ, *for I would be speaking the truth.* At the popular level ἄφρων would carry the level of foolishness or foolishly. At the technical level ἄφρων would have the sense of *I would not be continuing the fool's speech.* Everything would be spoken ἀλήθειαν, that is, accurately and directly so as to compare with God's assessment. Thus Paul injects a 'what if' scenario here probably to avoid any misunderstanding. Boasting by him certainly would be possible to do, even along the pagan lines of the Corinthian outsiders. That is, boasting about their religious accomplishments and credentials. And that he opted for emphasizing weaknesses not because he had no 'strengths' to talk about. Nothing of the sort should enter their minds!

But Paul goes on to declare (#286): φείδομαι δέ, μὴ τις εἰς ἐμέ λογίσται ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με ἢ ἀκούει τι ἐξ ἐμοῦ, *But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me.* The present tense verb φείδομαι carries both the sense of sparing others from someone or something distasteful, and

of refraining from doing something distasteful. The second meaning is most likely dominate here, although 1:23 uses it clearly with the first meaning. Most likely the ideas of both meanings are present in the usage here. Yet, it is mainly Paul who finds bragging about oneself to be distasteful. So he will not do it. The implicit object of the verb here is καυχῆσασθαι, the aorist infinitive in the first part of the sentence.

The reason for refraining from bragging is given in the negative purpose clause: μὴ τις εἰς ἐμέ λογίσται ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με ἢ ἀκούει τι ἐξ ἐμοῦ, *lest someone evaluate me beyond what he sees in me or something he hears from me.* The apostle fully realizes that the Corinthians are 'sizing him up' (λογίσται), and he wants the calculations to be based on reality rather than abstract claims.¹⁶⁹ That means, they know what he looks like and that he is no 'prized specimen' physically, as he mentioning the 'thorn in the flesh' implies. Not only how they saw him at a human being but also what they had heard directly from him were to be the two criteria for evaluating him. No rumor or second hand information was to be considered in this evaluation. Probably implied in these expressions is the actions of the opponents both inflating their sense of importance and trying to deflate the importance of Paul to the Corinthians.

The additional expression καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων (v. 7a) poses some punctuation issues which will determine the sense of meaning that it contains.¹⁷⁰ Most printed Greek texts place a period after ἀποκαλύψεων indicating that the phrase καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων belongs with what precedes it. Note the NRSV translation following this pattern. A few commentators, however, put the period after ἐμοῦ in v. 6b

¹⁶⁹“λογίζομαι τινί τι is a commercial expression meaning ‘set something down to someone’s account,’¹¹⁰ ‘to credit something to someone.’ But in the present instance there is no dative or accusative with λογίσται. We could treat εἰς ἐμέ as equivalent to ἐμοί (cf. Turner 253) and ὑπὲρ κτλ. as the direct object of λογίσται. This would produce a sense such as ‘lest anyone should credit me with a reputation that exceeds what he sees me to be or anything that he hears from me.’¹¹¹ But if we surrender the possible commercial sense of λογίζομαι and give this verb the intransitive of meaning of ‘make an evaluation,’ ‘form a judgment,’ render εἰς ἐμέ by ‘with respect to me,’¹¹² and perhaps supply τό before ὑπὲρ κτλ., a rendering such as Barclay’s would result: ‘I forbear to boast in case anyone forms a judgment about me beyond what he sees in me and hears from me.’¹¹³ Either way, ὑπὲρ means ‘beyond’ or ‘in excess of,’ and points to a crediting or an evaluation that outstrips what is warranted by the evidence.¹¹⁴ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 849–850.]

¹⁷⁰“7 NO C: TR M RSV TEV Seg^{mg} FC NIV Lu TOB REB // Different text: AD VP? // P: Seg NJB” [Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

with καὶ τῆ ὑπερβολῆ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων beginning a new sentence. This latter approach definitely is a minority view point, but is appealing because it simplifies the grammar understanding. Yet, this is no basis for adopting it.

As the above diagram illustrates, καὶ τῆ ὑπερβολῆ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων simply adds another modifier to φείδομαι δέ, *but I refrain*.¹⁷¹ The apostle refrained from boasting (about his visions) in spite of their extraordinary character. He anxious to convey the sense that his experiences were subpar and thus he refrains, due to not having anything worth sharing. This assumes the qualitative side of the noun ὑπερβολή. If the other quantitative meaning is intended for ὑπερβολή, then Paul's concern was a criticism that he didn't have enough visions to match those of the outsiders at Corinth. This statement would then counter such a criticism. Clearly the plural τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων refers to multiple revelations from God.

¹⁷¹“The modern interpreter may wonder, after reading the Greek text of 12:7, if Paul set this text down the way he had intended.⁸⁴⁸ We have already examined the textual questions surrounding the verse and have opted to view the above phrase as completing the sentence in v 6 (see Note h on 12:7). V 6 had closed with Paul saying that he refrained from boasting about what was unseen. He wished the people to evaluate him on what was tangible, by something they could see, i.e., his trials. But we may wonder if Paul was convinced that after telling them of his vision, his Corinthian readers would heed his concern (12:2–4; and we must remember that some may have known of Paul's other visions, especially the one in Corinth [Acts 18:9–10]). There could possibly have been some who, with good intentions, would consider Paul to be an exceptional person because of his ecstatic experience. After all, Paul had his followers at Corinth (1 Cor 1:12: ‘I follow Paul’). Moreover, he had won a majority back to him, as recorded in 7:8–16. In spite of new and recurring problems, there were some who would take this new piece of information and place Paul high in their estimation. Paul's choice of ὑπερβολῆ, ‘extraordinary,’ here a dativus causae, ‘dative of cause,’ is somewhat ambiguous. The composite noun can mean either ‘excess’ (ὑπέρ- of quantity) or ‘extraordinary’ (ὑπέρ- of quality). Paul's use of the word in 2 Corinthians (1:8; 4:17; cf. also 4:7; Rom 7:13; Gal 1:13; 1 Cor 12:31) might tip the scales in favor of the qualitative aspect,⁸⁴⁹ but perhaps we should not draw too sharp a distinction here.⁸⁵⁰ The fact that ἀποκαλύψεις, ‘revelations,’ is plural has led Plummer to raise again the idea that 12:2–4 speaks of two separate revelations.⁸⁵¹ But we have already judged this position to be doubtful.⁸⁵² Moreover, as has been stated before, the Corinthians were probably aware that Paul had some visions (but not nearly enough to satisfy the opponents). He had been accused of being out of his mind (5:13). But the significance of the vision in 12:2–4 is its dimension in terms of ‘revelation.’ In short, it probably fell as a bombshell on some, though ignored or scoffed at by others. There was no way on Paul's part that he would become too proud or conceited over this incident (he will presently explain to the Corinthians why this is so). But there was always the possibility that some at Corinth would treat his mystical experience in a way that Paul himself would disown.” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 604–605.]

One of the lessons from this particular section of Paul's words to the Corinthians points to the futility of getting into a ‘numbers game’ with your opponents, especially in religious life. “My church is better than your because it is bigger!” Or, “It's better because it baptizes more people than yours!” These kinds of futile games are loose - loose situations. Turn the table on such criticisms with “we in our church really suffer a lot of hardships,” and see whether your opponents will follow suit. In a materialistic culture such as ours today, respond with “We really suffer a lot of persecution and hardships in order for God to work more clearly in our world.” The likely reaction of puzzlement to such claims most likely reflects an identical puzzlement to Paul's boasting about his weakness to the Corinthians.

b) Boasting in weakness, 12:7b-10.

διὸ ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί, ἄγγελος σατανᾶ, ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι. 8 ὑπὲρ τούτου τρίς τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα ἵνα ἀποστῆ ἀπ' ἐμοῦ. 9 καὶ εἶρηκέν μοι· ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου, ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται. Ἡδιστα οὖν μᾶλλον καυχῆσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ. 10 διὸ εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὕβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις, ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ· ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατός εἰμι.

Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. 8 Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, 9 but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Next, coming out of this assertion in v. 5 about boasting in weaknesses, with the amplification in vv. 6-7a, is the explicit declaration beginning in v. 7b that is introduced by διὸ,¹⁷² here functioning as a coordinate inferential conjunction with the sense of ‘implied in that is this.’ Note that it is repeated again in v. 10, and there is used in succession with the other inferential coordinate

¹⁷²“διὸ is omitted by many witnesses (*P*⁴⁶ *D* *Ψ* 1881 *M* *lat* *sa* *Irenaeus*¹⁸¹) but should be retained as the probable original reading (preferred by WH, NA²⁷, and UBS^{1, 2, 3} with a {D} rating [= very high degree of doubt], and by UBS⁴ with a {C} rating [= uncertain]) on the basis of (i) strong external attestation (⊗ A B F G 0243 33 81 1175 1739 pc syr^b bo); (ii) its being the more difficult reading (assuming that v. 7a begins a new sentence—see the commentary there); (iii) the frequency of διὸ in Paul (27 of 53 NT uses, of which nine are in 2 Corinthians, including this instance).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 829.]

12.7b	διὸ ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, 287 ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί, ἄγγελος σατανᾶ, ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι.
12.8	ὑπὲρ τούτου τῖς 288 τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα ἵνα ἀποστῆ ἀπ' ἐμοῦ.
12.9	καὶ 289 εἶρηκέν μοι· ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου, γὰρ ἡ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται.
	οὖν ἠδιστα μᾶλλον 290 καυχῆσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ... ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ. ἐπ' ἐμὲ
12.10	διὸ 291 εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὑβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις, ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ· γὰρ ὅταν ἀσθενῶ, τότε 292 δυνατός εἰμι.

conjunction οὖν in v. 9b so that it reaches a climatic point in the discussion of vv. 7b-10.

The topic sentence in v. 7 (# 287) sets up the description of something implicit in the preceding section of vv. 1-7a. The core statement, ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί, *was given to me a thorn in the flesh*, makes the primary point. The two adverbial purpose ἵνα clauses qualify the core statement with why expressions. The appositional ἄγγελος σατανᾶ, *a messenger of Satan*, defines from a spiritual view the physical reference σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί, *thorn in the flesh*. The further explanation in vv. 8-10 expand the idea presented in v. 7b.

The unanswered question down through the centuries centers on what was Paul's thorn in the flesh. In truth we are no closer to a certain answer nearly two thousand later than folks were fifty years after the writing of these words. Educated guesses are the closest that is possible to come to answering this question, although some of the guesses down through history don't

have much 'education' behind them.¹⁷³ Nothing

¹⁷³“The first interpretation was offered by Tertullian (Modesty 13.17), who took the thorn to mean that Paul had a pain in the ear or head (also see Jerome and Pelagius).

“John Chrysostom (Hom. 2 Cor. 26) understood σατανᾶς, ‘Satan,’ in the general sense of adversary, and he concluded that Paul's thorn was his opponents (specifically, Alexander the coppersmith). Recently this argument has been revived.⁸⁷² The support of this position is well worth noting, and there are four basic points that endorse the position that the thorn refers to Paul's opponents.

“First, the phrase ἄγγελος σατανᾶ, ‘messenger of Satan’ (note σατανᾶ is a Doric genitive of σατανᾶς, which is of irregular declension), could refer to a person, for this is the normal use of ἄγγελος, ‘messenger’ (it is not likely that as yet ‘angel’ was a technical term). It appears that Paul does not use ἄγγελος, ‘messenger,’ except to refer to a person.

“Second, one must not forget that chaps. 10–13 describe Paul's fight against his adversaries. We see in 12:12 that Paul is in conflict with those who would question his apostleship. Moreover, in 11:13–15 Paul understands his conflict with his opponents as a conflict between God and Satan.⁸⁷³ Paul sees himself as a representative of God and the false apostles as representing Satan. In this conflict Paul views Satan as a (false) messenger of light (11:14). It follows that the use of messenger is in reference to a person, not an illness. If this is so, then the use of σκόλοψ, ‘thorn,’ in 12:7 should not be understood as referring to some physical malady.

“A third point is seen in the clause ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, ‘in order to batter me.’ The verb κολαφίζω, ‘batter’ (see the uses in Mark 14:65; Matt 26:67; cf. 1 Cor 4:11), speaks of one who is beaten or battered about, especially by blows to the head.⁸⁷⁴ This has led some to conclude that the choice of σκόλοψ, ‘thorn,’ refers specifically to a person, thus pointing to Paul's opponents.

“A fourth item is that in the LXX we find thorn associated with opponents of Israel. The Canaanites, who are permitted to remain in Israel, are ‘thorns’ (Num 33:55). In Ezek 23:24 the foes of Israel are described as ‘thorns.’ These four points show that a case can be made for considering Paul's thorn as the adversaries that dog him at Corinth (see also patristic support in Augustine, Theodoret, and Theophylact).

“However, there is much support for the view of the thorn as referring to something other than the opponents of Paul. The medieval thinkers (from Gregory the Great to Aquinas) understood the Vulgate rendering⁸⁷⁵ of *stimulus carnis*, ‘goat of the flesh,’ to imply sexual temptation.

“The Reformers (such as Calvin and Luther) viewed Paul's thorn in the flesh as spiritual temptation. Few modern commentators adopt this view.⁸⁷⁶

“Rather, the majority opt for some form of physical ailment.⁸⁷⁷ One common ailment suggested was a severe form of ophthalmia. This is inferred from the colorful language of Galatians. In Gal 4:13 Paul speaks of a weakness of the flesh (σάρξ) and proceeds to acknowledge the willingness of the Galatians to pluck out their eyes and give them to him (4:15). Also, Paul is seen as closing the Galatian epistle by noting that the handwriting is his own, for this writing is in large letters (6:11). Also, appeal is made to the (hypo-

12.7b δὶδ
 ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι,
 287 ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί,
 ἄγγελος σατανᾶ,
 ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ,
 ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι.

is stated about his physical appearance inside the NT, although church tradition has numerous portrayals of his physical appearance.¹⁷⁴ But these are highly legendary and thus of little value for determining his actual appearance.

First, consider the context carefully in trying to narrow down the possibilities. Clearly the σκόλοψ was connected to Paul's physical existence as τῆ σαρκί, in flesh, indicates. The noun σκόλοψ was "not a very common word¹ but its possibilities of use are clearly defined. Lit. (thetical) case of Acts 23:5, where Paul fails to recognize the high priest. This defective eyesight may stem from, as the theory goes, the scales that fell from Paul's eyes after his conversion experience (Acts 9:9, 18). This theory, though interesting, has received little support in recent times.⁸⁷⁸

"Another ailment suggested is epilepsy,⁸⁷⁹ possibly as a result of the experience Paul had at his conversion. That is, the fact that Paul fell down on the road to Damascus has been seen as evidence that Paul was epileptic; but this is doubtful.⁸⁸⁰

"One of the more attractive hypotheses is that of Ramsay.⁸⁸¹ Paul, it is said, suffered from a form of recurring malarial fever. It has been suggested that he contracted this disease in Pamphylia.⁸⁸² For Ramsay, this theory covers all the symptoms Paul seems to exhibit. Accordingly, Paul was incapacitated by the attacks of this fever. If the fever seared the head, one can appreciate how Paul felt battered about."

[Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 607–609.]

^{174c}The New Testament offers little if any information about the physical appearance of Paul, but several descriptions can be found in apocryphal texts. In the *Acts of Paul*^[191] he is described as 'A man of small stature, with a bald head and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with eyebrows meeting and nose somewhat hooked' and in the Latin version of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* it is added that he had a red, florid face.^[192] In *The History of the Contending of Saint Paul* his countenance is actually described as 'ruddy with the ruddiness of the skin of the pomegranate'^[193] and *The Acts of Saint Peter* confirms that Paul had a bald and shining head, with red hair.^[194] As summarised by Barnes,^[195] Chrysostom records that Paul's stature was low, his body crooked and his head bald. Lucian, in his *Philopatris*, describes Paul as '*corpore erat parvo* (he was small), *contracto* (contracted), *incurvo* (crooked), *tricubitali* (of three cubits, or four feet six)', while Nicephorus claims that Paul was a little man, crooked, and almost bent like a bow, with a pale countenance, long and wrinkled, and a bald head. Pseudo-Chrysostom echoes Lucian's height of Paul, referring to him as 'the man of three cubits'.^[196] Paul himself admits to having been 'abnormally born',^[197] perhaps suggesting some kind of deformity such as being crooked or hunch-backed, that tormented him.^[198]" ["Paul the Apostle: 11. Physical Appearance," *Wikipedia.org*: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_the_Apostle#Physical_appearance

it means 'what is pointed,' and it is related to σκάλλω 'hack.'¹²¹⁷⁵ The possibilities of ancient reference include a pointed stake, which could be used on occasion as an instrument of execution; and also a splinter or thorn, e.g., one stuck in the finger or foot. The ancient idea of σκόλοψ as a stake was mostly linked to execution of criminals. But σκόλοψ as a splinter or thorn focused on the causing of pain and discomfort. Interestingly the 3 uses of σκόλοψ in the LXX uniformly use it for thorn in translation of three separate Hebrew words: שֵׁשׁ (śēḵ) in Num. 33:55; סִי־רָא (sî-rā(h)) in Hos. 2:6; and סִיל־לֹדָן (sil-lōḏn) in Ezek. 28:24. The idea of thorn as a source of pain seems more appropriate to 2 Cor. 12:7. Thus as a figurative reference the point of emphasis would fall on something causing ongoing pain physically to the apostle.

Clearly from the reference in v. 9b, it belonged to Paul's ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, in my weaknesses. These, however, are distinct from other difficulties mentioned in v. 10: διὸ εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὕβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις, ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ.

Was this some kind of debilitating disease? Not likely, since the physical abuse described in 11:23-27 would not have been survivable by one whose body was weakened down with some kind of severe disabling disease. But some kind of problem such as an eye disease would be in the realm of possibility, such as alluded to in Gal. 4:15, ποῦ οὖν ὁ μακαρισμὸς ὑμῶν; μαρτυρῶ γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰ δυνατόν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὑμῶν ἐξορύξαντες ἐδώκατέ μοι, What has become of the goodwill you felt? For I testify that, had it been possible, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. This assumes, of course, that Paul is speaking literally here, rather than figuratively.¹⁷⁶ The later statement in Gal. 6:11, "Ἴδετε πηλίκους ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῆ ἐμῆ χειρί, See what large letters I make when I am writing in my own hand!, properly corresponds to the understanding of somekind of problem with Paul's eyes. Sir William Ramsay in *St. Paul the Traveler*, pp. 94-97, was a pro-

¹⁷⁵Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 7:409.

^{176c}The statement 'you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me,' while often popularly taken to suggest ophthalmia on Paul's part (see Comment on v 13), is probably an idiom that speaks of going to the extreme to provide for another's needs. The eyes in antiquity were considered the most precious of the body's parts (cf. 'the apple of his eye' in Deut 32:10; Ps 17:8; Zech 2:8), and so 'to tear out one's eyes for someone' is a graphic and significant idiom for going to the extreme for another's welfare. Certainly it is more telling than our modern idiom of 'giving the shirt off one's back'!" [Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, vol. 41, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 193.]

ponent of malaria based problems.¹⁷⁷ Yet, elements of uncertainty remain with such a perspective.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷“2. THE ‘THORN IN THE FLESH’. The character of the Pamphylian country, not merely in its modern half-cultivated condition, but at all times, must have been enervating and calculated to bring out any latent weakness of constitution. Now it is a probable and generally accepted view that the ‘physical weakness,’ which was the occasion why Paul preached to the Galatians, was the same malady which tormented him at frequent intervals. I have suggested that this malady was a species of chronic malaria fever; and, in view of criticisms, it is necessary to dwell on this point; for I have incurred the blame of exaggerating an ephemeral attack. The question is put whether such an illness ‘could reasonably have called forth their contempt and loathing.’

“A physical weakness, which recurs regularly in some situation that one is regularly required by duty to face, produces strong and peculiar effect on our human nature. An attentive student of mankind has caught this trait and described it clearly in one of the characters whom his genius has created. I quote from Charles Reade’s description of a clergyman engaged in warfare against the barbarity of prison discipline, upon whom every scene of cruelty which he had often to witness produced a distressing physical effect, sickness and trembling. ‘His high-tuned nature gave way. He locked the door that no one might see his weakness; and, then, succumbing to nature, he fell first into a sickness and then into a trembling, and more than once hysterical tears gushed from his eyes in the temporary prostration of his spirit and his powers. Such are the great. Men know their feats, but not their struggles.’ The feeling of shame at this weakness is several times described in the course of the narrative (It is Never too Late to Mend); and, when at last nature, on the verge of a more serious physical prostration, ceased to relieve itself in this painful way, ‘he thanked Heaven for curing him of that contemptible infirmity, so he called it’. Yet that weakness did not prevent the sufferer from facing his duty, but only came on as a consequence; and it could be hidden within the privacy of his chamber. Let the reader conceive the distress and shame of the sufferer, if the weakness had prostrated him before his duty was finished, and laid him helpless before them all when he required his whole strength. Surely he would have ‘besought the Lord that it might depart from’ him, and regarded it as ‘a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him’ (2 Cor. 12:7–8).

“Now, in some constitutions malaria fever tends to recur in very distressing and prostrating paroxysms, whenever one’s energies are taxed for a great effort. Such an attack is for the time absolutely incapacitating: the sufferer can only lie and feel himself a shaking and helpless weakling, when he ought to be at work. He feels a contempt and loathing for self, and believes that others feel equal contempt and loathing.

“Charles Reade’s hero could at least retire to his room, and lock the door, and conceal his weakness from others; but, in the publicity of Oriental life, Paul could have no privacy. In every paroxysm, and they might recur daily, he would lie exposed to the pity or the contempt of strangers. If he were first seen in a Galatian village, or house, lying in the mud on the shady side of a wall for two hours shaking like an aspen leaf, the gratitude that he expresses to the Galatians, because they ‘did not despise nor reject his infirmity,’ was natural and deserved.

“Fresh light is thrown on this subject by an observation of Mr. Hogarth, my companion in many journeys. In publishing a series of inscriptions recording examples of punishment inflicted by the God on those who had approached the sanctuary in impurity, he suggests that malarial fever was often the penalty sent by the God. The paroxysms, recurring suddenly with overpowering strength,

and then passing off, seemed to be due to the direct visitation of God. This gives a striking effect to Paul’s words in Gal. 4:14, ‘you did not despise nor reject my physical infirmity, but received me as an angel of God’: though the Galatians might have turned him away from their door as a person accursed and afflicted by God, they received him as God’s messenger. The obvious implication of this passage has led many to the view that Paul’s malady was epilepsy, which was also attributed to the direct visitation of God.

“A strong corroboration is found in the phrase: ‘a stake in the flesh,’ which Paul uses about his malady (2 Cor. 12:7). That is the peculiar headache which accompanies the paroxysms: within my experience several persons, innocent of Pauline theorising, have described it as ‘like a red-hot bar thrust through the forehead’. As soon as fever connected itself with Paul in my mind, the ‘stake in the flesh’ impressed me as a strikingly illustrative metaphor; and the oldest tradition on the subject, quoted by Tertullian and others, explains the ‘stake in the flesh’ as headache.

“The malady was a ‘messenger of Satan’. Satan seems to represent in Pauline language any overpowering obstacle to his work, an obstacle which it was impossible to struggle against: so Satan prevented him from returning to Thessalonica, in the form of an ingenious obstacle, which made his return impossible for the time (p. 230). The words ‘messenger sent to buffet me,’ imply that it came frequently and unexpectedly, striking him down with the power of the Enemy.

“The idea that the malady was an affection of the eyes, resulting from blinding at his conversion, seems inadequate in itself, unsuitable to his own words, and contradicted by the evidence as to the power of his eyes (p. 38).

“Paul describes the malady as sent to prevent him from ‘being exalted overmuch by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations’ which had been granted to him; and he clearly implies that it came later than the great revelation, when ‘he was caught up even to the third heaven’ about 43 A.D. (p. 60). The malady certainly did not begin long before this journey; and the attack in Pamphylia may perhaps have been the first.”

[William Mitchell Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1907), 94–97.]

¹⁷⁸“The proposed identifications, legion in number, may be classified under three main headings.¹⁶⁰ Some representative proponents will be listed under each category.

A. Spiritual or psychological anxiety

(1) pangs of conscience about his earlier misdeeds in Jerusalem as a persecutor, which gave him a sense of unworthiness (Schlatter ⁶⁶⁷)

(2) anguish over Israel’s stubborn disbelief (Menoud, “Thorn” 24–26)

B. Opposition to Paul

(1) Opponents in general (Andriessen 462–68; Barré, “Qumran” 225–27; Woods 50–51; Murphy-O’Connor 119; Paul 321–22; Barnett 570 (“the rise of the Judaizing, anti-Paul movement”))

(2) A single opponent (Mullins 301–2; Forbes 21; NAB2 513, note on 12:7b)

(3) Opposition at Corinth
• the opposition and insults of the “false apostles” (11:14) (Bieder 332; Binder 10–11)

• the accusation of Paul’s detractors at Corinth that he was an ἄγγελος Σατανᾶ, having been a persecutor of the church (Thierry 309)

• the rejection of the legitimacy of Paul’s apostolate

12.7b δὶδὸ
 ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι,
 287 ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί,
 ἄγγελος σατανᾶ,
 ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ,
 ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι.

The appositional ἄγγελος σατανᾶ, messenger of Satan, which redefines σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί, thorn in the flesh, poses some interpretive issues of its own. Clearly Satan is associated with physical illness many times in the biblical text.¹⁷⁹ Thus the thorn becomes the messenger.

by a minority in the “sick” Corinthian church (McCant 149–50; “Thorn” 550–72)

C. Physical malady

(1) Unspecified as to its nature (BAGD 441b, 743b, 756c; K. L. Schmidt, TDNT 3.820; Dodd 68; Bruce, Paraphrase 155; History 245; Bultmann 116, 224; Black 146; Fee, Presence 352–53; Thomas 45–47)

(2) Specified

- Fever: (a) malarial (Ramsay 94–97; Allo 311, 320–21; Prumm 1.664–65) (b) Malta (Alexander 547–48)
- Defective vision (Nisbet 126; Leary 520–22)
- Migraine headaches (Uhle-Wettler 161; Heckel, “Dorn” 76; Thrall 818).

“The present writer believes that some kind of physical ailment most easily accommodates the seven characteristics of the σκόλοψ outlined above.”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 858–859.

¹⁷⁹“It is worth noting that Satan is associated with physical illness in the biblical tradition. We see this in Job 2:5, where Satan is allowed (by God’s permission) to inflict sickness. Also in Luke 13:16 Satan is credited as the one responsible for the woman being bent over for eighteen years. There is nothing to suggest that a ‘literal’ messenger (ἄγγελος) was the agent for these respective illnesses. In addition, the term ‘angel of Satan’ was not necessarily a common phrase.⁸⁸⁸ Contrary to those who see ἄγγελος, ‘messenger,’ as signifying a ‘person’ (specifically, adversaries), Paul may have simply been attributing his ailment to satanic origin,⁸⁸⁹ but always with the conviction that God was in control.⁸⁹⁰ Probably the most telling argument against the position that Paul was referring to human opponents as the thorn in the flesh (and by now it should be apparent that the possibilities offered concerning the thorn roughly fall into two categories, namely, human opponents and physical ailment) is found in 12:8. This verse relates that Paul prayed that God would remove the thorn. Would the apostle pray to be spared persecution? This is doubtful, since persecution was the fuel on which Paul seemed to thrive. The more he was persecuted the more he seemed determined to press the claims of his apostolate. Moreover, if this thorn was given to Paul near the time of his revelation of 12:2–4, then it is doubtful that Paul was speaking of the opponents in 11:13–15,⁸⁹¹ for he had yet to confront them. Yet we must honestly recognize⁸⁹² that a chronically ill Paul does not fit well with the picture of Paul found in the NT. Rather, Paul is one who must be seen as in robust health and with a strong constitution. On the other side, at Corinth where his apostolic role was under fire, any physical weakness would have seemed a liability; then Paul could not deny that the estimate of his person in 10:10,

This is the most natural function of the use of appositional constructions in ancient Greek. Assuming it is some kind of physical problem, the thorn becomes the physical tool used by Satan¹⁸⁰ for tempting and harassing the apostle.

The three purpose clauses define intent; two are identical in wording: ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, so that I might not be bloated up; and then ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, so that it might beat me up. All three are interconnected to one another conceptually. The first two speak of God’s intent with the thorn, while the third one speak’s of Satan’s intent with the thorn. The divine intent ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι surround the entire statement as the first and last expressions. Graphically they portray the different desires between God and Satan around the same thorn.

Satan’s intent ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, so that it might beat me up, speaks to hurting and destroying a person. But one must not overlook an important connection visually affirmed in the above diagram. The clause ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ modifies the aorist passive verb ἐδόθη. The meaning?¹⁸¹ The thorn was given by God to Paul, while Satan merely sought to use it for destructive intent. His desire was to turn it into his ἄγγελος, messenger, so that through the thorn Satan could get to Paul in order ‘to

11:21, and 12:10 is valid, however much it was exploited by his traducers.” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 609–610.]

¹⁸⁰“In place of the form Σατανᾶ, read by P⁴⁶ κ* A* B D* F G 0243 1739 pc, some witnesses read the indeclinable form Σατάν (κ² A^c D1 Ψ 33 1881 M syr^b). Σατάν transliterates the Hebrew *šāṭān* while Σατανᾶς represents the Aramaic *sāṭānā*’.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 829.]

¹⁸¹“Paul confesses that he is not the agent responsible for this thorn. He reports that the thorn ἐδόθη μοι, ‘was given to me.’ It is doubtful that Satan is the giver, even if σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί, ‘thorn in the flesh,’ is the grammatical subject of ἐδόθη, ‘was given.’⁸⁵⁶ If Paul had intended to convey such information, he most likely would have chosen a word other than δίδωμι, ‘give.’ This word was usually employed to denote that God’s favor had been bestowed (cf. Gal 3:21; Eph 3:8; 5:19; 1 Tim 4:14). Plummer⁸⁵⁷ suggests that if Satan was the agent, ἐπιτίθημι, ‘lay upon’ (Luke 10:30; 23:26; Acts 16:23), or βάλω, ‘cast’ (Rev 2:24), or ἐπιβάλλω, ‘put on’ (1 Cor 7:35), would have been more appropriate. As mentioned earlier, we have an example of the *passivum divinum*, ‘divine passive.’ This ‘divine passive,’ speaking of God as the hidden agent behind events and experiences in human lives, fits well into Paul’s thinking. He sees both the revelation and the thorn as from God.⁸⁵⁸ Hence Zmijewski is correct when he writes that though ‘thorn’ can be assumed to be the grammatical subject of ‘was given,’ in reality ‘the evidence points to God being the essential acting subject.’⁸⁵⁹” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 606.]

beat him up,' ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, with the thorn. Assuming the thorn to be some kind of illness that impacted Paul's eyes, how Satan could seek to 'beat Paul up' with limited vision is very easy to understand.

The attacking of Paul, κολαφίζῃ, is described in present tense active voice terms, i.e., as ongoing striking of Paul over the duration of his ministry. It was not a one time event, only connected to his special vision just described in vv. 2-5. The gaining of the thorn from every signal in the context here came early on in the apostle's ministry, and just possibly even prior to the Damascus road experience with Christ. But it is highly doubtful that it had anything to do with the scales that came off Paul's eyes through the touch of Ananias in Damascus (cf. Acts 9:8-9, 17-19). Such a connection would mean the end of the thorn through the miraculous touch of Ananias just three days after the blinding encounter with Christ. Clearly this won't fit Paul's depiction in Second Corinthians.

The divine intent, ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, stated twice at the beginning and the end of the sentence, dramatically highlights God's intention for giving Paul this thorn. The present tense passive voice used signals ongoing intention to blunt continuously the temptation toward developing a huge ego by Paul. The verb ὑπεραίρω denotes here having "an undue sense of one's self-importance,"¹⁸² with its roots in ὑπερ + αἴρω, I rise up. The passive, with a figurative meaning linked to one's sense of self-importance like here, gets very close to the English idiom, to be bloated up.

The point in the repeat of the clause is that the thorn was given in order to keep Paul from being bloated up in pride and arrogance. To remind him that extraordinary actions connected to his life had absolutely nothing to do with Paul and his actions. They came exclusively from God. Paul was to be the vehicle that God desired to use to show Himself to the world. The thorn came so that Paul's human pride and arrogance would never blossom and get in God's way of showing Himself through Paul to the world. And, as would be expected, Satan comes into the picture as the committed spoiler who sought to turn this thorn into defeating God and Paul both by making the thorn his messenger.

That Paul did not want the thorn is indicated in v. 8 through his praying: ὑπὲρ τούτου τρίς τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα ἵνα ἀποστῆ ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, **Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me.** On three separation occasions (τρὶς) Paul sought the Lord's assistance (τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα) regarding the thorn (ὑπὲρ τούτου) with the desire that God might remove it (ἵνα ἀποστῆ ἀπ' ἐμοῦ). Most likely the depiction in v. 7

¹⁸²William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1031.

represents a perspective that evolved in Paul's thinking over time, rather than something he recognized immediately. His early response was simply to seek relief from the negative consequences of his 'thorn.' Thus petitions made in prayer to the Lord were lifted up by Paul on three separate occasions.¹⁸³ Another possible meaning of τρίς is a threefold petition made in a single prayer. I suspect the former is the more likely intent of the number three.¹⁸⁴ In either meaning the symbolical

¹⁸³At all events, what he is here concerned with is to describe his reaction in such a way as to lead up to the dominical word in v. 9a, by which, since that time, his whole attitude to his apostolic existence has been shaped. This calls for some detail in respect of his prayer. It was threefold: τρίς ... παρεκάλεσα. For Chrysostom, the τρίς is simply the equivalent of πολλάκις, 'often',³⁷² and for Barrett, similarly, it is not strictly numerical, but indicates 'earnest and repeated prayer'.³⁷³ If so, however, why did Paul not use πολλάκις itself,³⁷⁴ perhaps with some such adverb as σπουδαίως? Furthermore, his general cultural background, both Jewish and Greek,³⁷⁵ would support the ordinary numerical meaning of τρίς. In Judaism the number three is associated with prayer in various ways. Windisch draws attention to the three-member Aaronic blessing (Num 6:24-26), to Elijah's threefold breathing upon the widow's son with the prayer that he might be restored to life (3 Kgdms 17:21), and to the Jewish custom of praying three times a day.³⁷⁶ The threefold prayer was known in Greek religion similarly, as Windisch, again, observes. He cites a clause from Euripides: μηδὲν μάταιον εἰς τρίς εὔξασθαι θεῶν.³⁷⁷ Furnish³⁷⁸ and Betz³⁷⁹ note that threefold prayers are to be found also in hellenistic healing stories. (The number three has no significance, however, for the records of healings at Epidauros, according to Delling.³⁸⁰) The underlying idea in both cultural spheres may be that a prayer can be efficacious only if it has been uttered three times.³⁸¹ Within the Christian tradition the most obvious example of the threefold petition is the prayer of Jesus in the Gethsemane narrative (Mt 26:39-44 and parallels).³⁸² This is recounted as a thrice-spoken prayer uttered on one specific occasion. Was the same true of Paul's prayer?³⁸³ A few commentators prefer to think of three separate occasions,³⁸⁴ perhaps the first few times he experienced the onslaught of the 'thorn'.³⁸⁵ Others are indeterminate. But the connotations which Heckel sees attached to τρίς strongly suggest that the apostle's prayer was a repeated petition made at one particular time. The number three allows an action to be seen as complete, since it includes beginning, middle and end, and it serves to effect decision: success or failure. Thus, with the complexive aorist παρεκάλεσα, the τρίς sums up the threefold prayer as a 'rounded-off' event.³⁸⁶ [Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 818-819.

¹⁸⁴But what is the significance of the adverb τρίς ('three times') that stands, in an emphatic position,¹⁷⁵ before the phrase τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα? If Paul had wished to indicate simply that his request to the Lord was made 'often',¹⁷⁶ one wonders why πολλάκις (8:22; 11:23, 26-27) was not used (Plummer 353). If τρίς was intended to emphasize the intensity of Paul's desire,¹⁷⁷ would not that emphasis have been expressed by a word such as πολλά (Mark 5:10, 23) or σπουδαίως (Luke 7:5) with παρεκάλεσα?¹⁷⁸ Again, it seems improbable that the threefold request was prompted by Paul's awareness of Christ's threefold petition in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:44; Mark 14:41),¹⁷⁹ or that τρίς signifies the completed

significance would be that of completeness. That is, Paul prayed until the divine answer came that say no to his request. Then he stopped praying for deliverance from the thorn.

Interestingly the use of τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα, *I sought the Lord's help*, as a part of prayer language in Paul's day had Greek tones rather than Jewish tones.¹⁸⁵ With its common use, however, for requests for aid from the earthly Jesus in the four gospels, it takes on another interesting tone. In a way that would clearly resonate with his Corinthian readers with both Greek and Jewish backgrounds, Paul frames his petitions to the Lord for deliverance from the thorn.¹⁸⁶

nature of the entreaty¹⁸⁰ or means 'three times in succession on one occasion' as though only a prayer offered three times was effective.¹⁸¹ There is no compelling reason to resist the natural sense of τρίς, 'Three different times' (NLT). If so, this adverb could point either to repeated requests soon after the first onset of the σκόλοψ (Bruce 249) or to three separate occasions when a particularly severe attack of the σκόλοψ prompted an especially fervent request for its removal.¹⁸² On the basis of this latter view we may cautiously proceed to use other data in 2 Corinthians (1:8–11; 2:12–13; 12:2) and Acts (13:13–14) to try to identify these three occasions—an effort tentatively made in section B.5. of an Excursus after 1:11 on "Paul's Affliction in Asia (2 Corinthians 1:8–11): Paul's Personal Background to 2 Corinthians."

"We may see τρίς ... παρεκάλεσα, then, as precisely parallel to τρίς ἐραβδίσθην (11:25). In both cases three separate events are in mind and a constative aorist views these events in their similarity or identity as constituting a unified whole. It is not the tense of the verbs but the accompanying adverb that indicates the repetition of the action; the constative aorist can also depict single or protracted action. Similarly, in the case of τρίς ... παρεκάλεσα it is not the tense but the context (vv. 9–10) that shows that additional requests of the same kind are not contemplated (cf. Turner 72)."

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 860–861.]

¹⁸⁵"In secular Greek παρακαλέω is a common word for invoking a deity for aid.¹⁶⁷ In the Gospels it is regularly used to describe requests made to Jesus for his help, whether in healing (e.g., Matt. 8:5; Mark 8:22) or in granting a favor (e.g., Mark 5:17–18)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 859.]

¹⁸⁶"It is scarcely open to question that the person addressed in Paul's plea for relief from the battering of the ἄγγελος Σατανᾶ was the Lord Jesus. (1) ὁ κύριος from v. 8 is the implicit subject of εἶρηκεν in v. 9, so that μου in the expression ἡ χάρις μου must also refer to 'the Lord.' But the closely related δύναμις in v. 9a (note γάρ and the possessive article ἡ¹⁷⁰) is defined in v. 9b as ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ. (2) The articular κύριος normally refers to Christ in Paul.¹⁷¹ (3) In 13:7 prayer addressed to God the Father is expressed by εὐχόμεθα ... πρὸς τὸν θεόν. Now it is clear that in the early church prayers both of thanksgiving and of petition were normally directed to God the Father (e.g., Phil. 1:3; 4:6). Eph. 2:18 expresses the norm: Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, enjoy access to the Father, through Christ, in one Spirit (πρὸς-διὰ-ἐν). But on occasion an individual believer (Acts 7:59–60; 9:10–17; 22:16, 19; 2 Cor.

καὶ
εἶρηκέν μοι ·
ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου,
γάρ
ἡ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται.

The divine response to this petition for deliverance is given in v. 9a: καὶ εἶρηκέν μοι ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου, ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται, *but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness."*

Not the answer a modern prosperity gospel preacher would have given for certain. Nor is it the answer a pleasure driven western society would want to hear. Nor was it anywhere close to the answer that Paul's critics at Corinth would have wanted to give to Paul. But, instead, it is the answer of God whose wisdom far exceeds that of all mankind put together. And it is the answer that one as committed to Christ as the apostle Paul can find joy and encouragement in hearing.

Note a literary strategy given here that is important but easy to miss.¹⁸⁷ Paul's request is framed in indirect

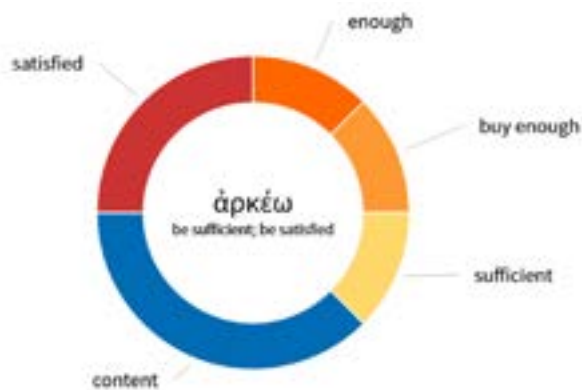
12:8) or a group of believers (Acts 1:24; 9:21; 1 Cor. 1:2; 16:22; Rev. 22:20) seems to have invoked the Lord Jesus directly.¹⁷² Such a practice occasions no surprise, given the early Christian belief in the deity of Christ.¹⁷³ Paul addressed his earnest request to the risen Lord, not merely because Christ is the chief antagonist of Satan and his agents (cf. 1 Cor. 15:24; Eph. 6:10, 12; Col. 2:15) such as the ἄγγελος Σατανᾶ,¹⁷⁴ or because, as the early Jesus, he was the healer of illness, but perhaps also because the extraordinary revelations that occasioned the giving of the σκόλοψ (v. 7) emanated from the Lord Jesus (v. 1)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 860.]

¹⁸⁷"Whereas Paul's request was reported in indirect speech (v. 8), Christ's response is given in direct speech. Also, καὶ εἶρηκεν (perfect) stands in stark contrast to τρίς τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα (aorist): 'Three times I made an urgent appeal to the Lord.... But his answer has been....' The petition had been made three times, but now, with an explicit answer received, the act of petitioning the Lord lay totally in the past and would not be repeated. On the other hand, the Lord's reply, although given only once (after the third petition), was permanently valid,¹⁸⁴ a point also made by the two timeless or durative presents, ἀρκεῖ and τελεῖται, that form part of that reply. For Paul, his urgent requests were a memory of the past, but Christ's reassuring answer was a reality of the present. Another contrast between v. 9 and what has preceded relates to the ἄρρητα ῥήματα of v. 4. Whereas the things Paul heard in paradise were both impossible and impermissible to express in human language, Christ's reply to Paul's plea was both possible and permissible to describe. How Christ communicated his response is not stated. It may have been in a vision (cf. Acts 18:9), or when Paul had fallen into a trance during prayer (cf. Acts 22:17–18, 21), or through the testimony of the Spirit (cf. Acts 20:23), or simply during meditation on the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, events which epitomize the three central concepts in Christ's message to Paul (v. 9a)—grace, weakness, and power." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI;

discourse thus de-emphasizing it. But God's response is framed in direct discourse, thus dramatically highlighting it as by far the most important part of this dialogue between Paul and the risen Christ.

How Christ spoke to Paul is not given; just the simple verbal statement καὶ εἶρηκέν μοι, *and He said to me*. The καὶ connects this divine speaking to the preceding request made by the apostle as a response. The response was made μοι, *to me*, indicating a personal, direct communication by Christ to the apostle Paul. It was private, not public. It was simple, not sensational. The perfect tense active voice εἶρηκέν from λέγω denotes a speaking with consequence. That is, when God said no it was a permanent no, not a temporary one.

The content of what was spoken to Paul is twofold: a promise based on ongoing reality and a claim that also is ongoing. Note the two verbs, ἀρκεῖ, *is sufficient*, at the beginning of the compound sentence, and τελεῖται, *is being made complete*, coming at the very end of the sentence. They both are present tense thus denoting ongoing sufficiency and completing of work.



Promise: ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου, *sufficient for you is My grace*. The pre-position of the verb ἀρκεῖ at the beginning of the sentence elevates emphasis upon the verbal concept. Used 8 times inside the NT (cf. graphic below) it contains a wide range of meanings built around the core idea of adequacy. It is part of a word group -- ἀρκέω, ἀρκετός, αὐτάρκεια, αὐτάρκης¹⁸⁸ -- that speaks of satisfaction or contentment.¹⁸⁹ Although directly

Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 861–862.]

¹⁸⁸Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:464.

¹⁸⁹ ἀρκέω, ἀρκετός.*

"In the first instance this is an external¹ expression of 'satisfaction' or 'contentment'. In philosophical and religious reflection, however, it has within itself the tendency to become a radical demand or admonition. This can take place in various ways.

"1. The demand is that man should be content with the goods allotted to him by fate or by God; that he should exercise ἀρκεῖσθαι τοῖς παροῦσι; that he should ask no more than he is given. Such statements may be either Christian or non-Christian maxims. The difference lies in the general view which gives rise to them. Thus we

linked to Paul's particular situation, the axiomatic framing of the saying from God extends clearly its reach to a universal principle. Divine grace, ἡ χάρις μου, Christ promises, is adequate to bring you contentment. Thus coping with bouts brought on by the σκόλοψ, *thorn*, would become possible through the abundant supply of divine grace. Thus God's grace would block the voice of Satan seeking to use the σκόλοψ as his ἄγγελος, *messenger*. That didn't not in any way mean diminishing of

may have merely the prudent suppression of passion and desire, as when Josephus, to avoid bloodshed, warns the rebels: ἀρκουμένους τοῖς ἑαυτῶν ἐφοδίοις, Vit., 244. Or we may have the freedom from want of the philosopher to whom external goods are incidental. A favourite expression is as follows: ἀρκεῖσθαι τοῖς παροῦσι (e.g., Teles, p. 11, 5; 38, 10; 41, 12, Hense; M. Ant., VI, 30, 9: ὡς ὀλίγοις ἀρκούμενος, οἷον οἰκήσει, στρωμνῆ, ἐσθῆτι, τροφῆ, ὑπηρεσία. Stob. Ecl., III, 273, 2: (Epaminondas) ὁ τοῦτοις ἀρκούμενος.

"For the NT this freedom from want is grounded in God; His provision is sufficient. Hb. 13:5: ἀρκούμενοι τοῖς παροῦσιν (→ supra), 'for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee'; 1 Tm. 6:8; cf. also Mt. 6:34: ἀρκετὸν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἡ κακία αὐτῆς (on the basis of v. 32: οἶδεν γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ὅμων ...). The thought of content is underlined by reference to imminent retribution, as in the preaching of the Baptist in Lk. 3:14.

"Between the philosopher and the eschatological believer of the NT stands the teacher of the Torah who from Sabbath to Sabbath is satisfied with a carob-bean, b. Ta'an, 24b.: R. Jehuda in the name of Rab: 'Every day a voice (לְהַקְרִיב) rings out and says: the whole world is nourished for the sake of my son Chanina, and my son Chanina is satisfied (לֵי יָד) with a carob-bean from the evening before the Sabbath to the next evening before the Sabbath.'

"2. The admonition to be content can easily change into a warning against becoming secure and complacent in the illusion of sufficiency. Epict. Diss., I, 6, 14: ἐκείνοις μὲν ἀρκεῖ τὸ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν ... ἡμῖν δ' ... οὐκέτι ταῦτ' ἀπαρκεῖ. Biblical statements are numerous but for the most part they do not use the stem ἀρκ-. Cf. Hos. 12:8 f.; 13:6; Sir. 5:1 (→ αὐτάρκης); Lk. 6:25; 12:19; Rev. 3:17 (→ ἐμπεπλησμένος, πλούσιος etc.).

"3. The religious connection is brought out when contentment is linked with a supreme philosophical or religious good. For here the statement concerning what suffices expresses particularly clearly the profoundest character of the underlying view of life. For the philosopher supreme content is to fashion his life in accordance with his φύσις or δαίμων. M. Ant., II, 13, 1: ὅτι ἀρκεῖ πρὸς μόνῳ τῷ ἔνδον ἑαυτοῦ δαίμονι εἶναι καὶ τοῦτον γνησίως θεραπεύειν. VIII, 1, 3: ἀρκέσθητι δέ, εἰ κὰν τὸ λοιπὸν τοῦ βίου ..., ὡς ἡ φύσις σου θέλει, βίωσι, IX, 26: ἀρκεῖσθαι τῷ σῶ ἡγεμονικῷ. To the degree that the force working in the philosopher is regarded as a gift of deity, the ἀρκεῖ μοι is related to it and the statement of content becomes a concentrated expression of religious union with God and the spirituality implanted in man by Him. Epict. Diss., I, 1, 12 f. (Zeus speaking to the philosopher): ἐδώκαμέν σοι μέρος τι ἡμέτερον, τὴν δύναμιν ταύτην τὴν ὀρμητικὴν τε καὶ ἀφορμητικὴν ... ἀρκῆ σὺν αὐτοῖς, IV, 10, 14 ff.: ἄς ἔλαβον ἀφορμὰς παρὰ σου ... ἐφ' ὅσον ἐχρησάμην τοῖσσοις, ἀρκεῖ μοι ... σὰ γὰρ ἦν πάντα, σὺ μοι αὐτὰ δέδωκας, οὐκ ἀρκεῖ οὕτως ἔχοντα ἐξελεθεῖν. Iamb. Vit. Pyth., I: ἐξαρκεῖ ἡμῖν ἡ τῶν θεῶν βούλησις."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:464–465.]

the pain and discomfort caused by the σκόλοψ. Rather, the dynamism of God's grace closes off any opportunity for Satan to use the σκόλοψ as a channel of temptation to Paul, as well as to other believers. Paul, to be sure, continued to struggle with bouts of discomfort produced by his σκόλοψ. But God assured him of divine assistance during those moments that would enable the apostle to endure and bring witness to God's presence in his life and ministry.

The foundation underneath this promise is ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται, **for My power is being brought to completion in your weakness.** A chiasmic structure seems to be incorporated into the sequencing of these two statements:

A	ἀρκεῖ,	is sufficient
B	σοι,	for you
C	ἡ χάρις μου,	My grace
C'	ἡ δύναμις,	My power
B'	ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ,	in weakness
A'	τελεῖται,	is being completed

In such structures the middle pair form the core point of emphasis.¹⁹⁰ Here God's grace and power are central. And grace equals power, in this defining of grace as power.¹⁹¹ The sphere of operation of this divine grace/

¹⁹⁰"This structure makes it improbable that the second statement (C' B' A') is merely aphoristic, expressing a universally valid principle that is applicable to believer and unbeliever alike. Similarly, this chiasmic or concentric structure makes it probable that the second statement relates principally to Christ's δύναμις and Paul's ἀσθένεια. Now it is true that at first sight the second affirmation seems to be an aphorism, given its brevity, the anarthrous ἀσθενείᾳ, and present tense of τελεῖται.¹⁸⁶ But we should not overlook (1) the (possessive) article with δύναμις¹⁸⁷ which matches ἡ χάρις (μου), (2) the subsequent ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ (v. 9b), and (3) Paul's restatement of ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ by the phrase ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου (v. 9b). As Paul heard and now recounts this second affirmation of Christ, his primary thought would have been of Christ's power reaching its zenith in his own weakness." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 862–863.]

¹⁹¹"In the present context it seems impossible to posit a precise distinction between δύναμις and χάρις; here they are essentially synonymous.¹⁸⁸ Both denote divine gifts of enablement, the power for Paul to fulfill his apostolic calling of service and suffering (4:7; 6:7; 13:4; 1 Cor. 15:10). What is more, both are renewable endowments, not once-for-all acquisitions; the constancy of the supply of χάρις and δύναμις is implied by the presents ἀρκεῖ and τελεῖται. The basic meaning of τελέω is 'bring something to its τέλος,' whether that 'end' be a termination or a goal. There is a colorful array of possible renderings or paraphrases for the passive τελεῖται:¹⁸⁹ 'finds its consummation' (BAGD 811a), 'attains its perfection' (TCNT), 'is most fully seen' (REB), 'is at full stretch' (NJB), 'is made fully present' (Furnish 513), 'realizes its full potential' (Carrez 226), 'is truly efficacious' (G. Dellings, TDNT 8.59), 'has unhindered scope' (Meyer 684), 'reaches its zenith.' If this second dominical statement in v. 9a is not a general maxim (see above), ἀσθένεια here will not refer to generic human weakness. First and foremost it will refer to

power is referenced by B / B' as σοι which equals ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ. In this divine contradiction of things, one can discern best divine grace at work in human weaknesses, such as Paul's thorn. The operating activity of the divine grace / power is then referenced by A / A' as ἀρκεῖ, is sufficient, which means τελεῖται, is being brought to completion. The connecting link between the two strophes is γὰρ which defines the second strophe as validating the first line. For example, the sufficiency of God's grace is possible because of the dynamic power of God infused into it.

Verse 10a, with the inferential conjunction διὸ introducing it, defines Paul's response to what Christ had communicated to him about his σκόλοψ: διὸ εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὕβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις, ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ· ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατός εἰμι, **Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.** It makes explicit what is considered implicit in the preceding statement(s).

12.10 διὸ
291 εὐδοκῶ
ἐν ἀσθενείαις,
ἐν ὕβρεσιν,
ἐν ἀνάγκαις,
ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις,
ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ·

Thus with Christ's assurance of the sufficiency of divine grace for his thorn problem, coupled also with the claim that God's power is better completed in Paul's weaknesses, the apostle then indicates complete contentment with his thorn along with other hardships.

The verb εὐδοκῶ, from εὐδοκέω, and the derivative noun εὐδοκία, has an etymological origin from δέχεσθαι, **to welcome.** The adverb εὐ, attached as a prefix, denotes **good or well.** The translation challenge is correctly putting together this concept embedded in εὐδοκέω. It is not quite the sense of receiving someone or something well. The mental emphasis of δοκέω, **I think, consider, comes into the picture somewhat. The idea moves to-** the weakness Paul felt during and after an assault of his σκόλοψ, then more generally to his weakness as 'a slave of Christ Jesus' (Rom. 1:1) who, in obedience to his apostolic calling, suffered as a slave would, being 'hard-pressed at every turn' (4:8), an object of dishonor and scorn (6:8; 1 Cor. 4:9–10), economically poor (6:10; 1 Cor. 4:11), and constantly exposed to death (6:9; 11:23; 1 Cor. 15:30–31).¹⁹⁰ But we should probably find a still broader reference in ἀσθένεια, a reference to attitudinal weakness, the acknowledgment of one's creatureliness and of one's impotence to render effective service to God without his empowering." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 863.]

ward forming a positive view point with the content creating this stance usually defined by the preposition ἐν. Thus the idea *I take pleasure in...* commonly expresses the sense of the verb.

Therefore Paul indicates, through a listing of negatives, what he takes pleasure in. They are introduced by the preposition ἐν with the last pair linked together by καὶ. Via Christ's response to Paul (v. 9), these negatives are turned into positives through the working of God's dynamitic grace. These are as follows:

ἐν ἀσθενείαις, in weaknesses. The noun ἀσθένεια stresses physical and mental weakness, usually related to some kind of illness or sickness. Note: the English word 'disease' should be avoided since Paul's world did not think in terms implied by this modern western medical word. Literally the word denotes lack of strength, and such may be produced by some type of physical malady.

Some commentators see ἐν ἀσθενείαις as an inclusive header label with those that follow designating specific kinds of weaknesses. But absolutely no grammar signal of this is provided. It is better to treat it as a separate category in a listing of four items, with the final listing paired via καὶ.

ἐν ὕβρεσιν, in insults.¹⁹² As a member of the word group -- † ὕβρις, † ὑβρίζω, † ἐνουβρίζω, † ὑβριστής¹⁹³ -- the central idea is 'an invasion of another's sphere of existence.'¹⁹⁴ The action can be verbal in the form of insults,

¹⁹² ὕβρις is etym. obscure. The second syllable is originally connected with βριαρός 'weighty,' βριθῶ 'heavily laden.'¹ Popular etym., as already in Hom., derives it from ὑπέρ along the lines of 'beyond measure.'² This is linguistically impossible but important historically.³ With both noun and verb the range of meaning is very large. The noun means originally an act which invades the sphere of another to his hurt, a 'trespass,' a 'transgression' of the true norm in violation of divine and human right. Arrogance of disposition is often implied, Hom. Od., 14, 262; 17, 431; cf. also Il., 1, 203. Thus ὕβρις stands contrasted with εὐνομία, δίκη (→ II, 178, 18 ff.) and σωφροσύνη (→ VII, 1097, 5 ff.) and calls for nemesis.⁴ The ref. is to a wicked act, also insult, scorn, contempt, often accompanied by violence, rape, and mistreatment of all kinds. More rarely and later the noun also means something endured, e.g., Plut. Pericl., 12 (I, 158). [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:295.]

¹⁹³ Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:295.

¹⁹⁴ "Since hubris is so broad and can denote disposition, attitude and conduct, sinful turning from or provocation of God, secularism,⁴⁹ as well as vainglorious arrogance, encroachments and tyranny against one's fellows, it is very hard to fix the limits of signification whether over against synon. or related Gk. words or with ref. to the equivalent Hbr. roots. In fact many Hbr. roots stand close in sense to hubris or are in context an expression of it." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:301.]

expressions of contempt, scorn etc. Or it may refer to violent actions such as rape, hitting etc. The attitude of arrogance behind such is embedded in the concept. The noun ὕβρις in the locative case plural ὕβρεσιν, is only used here in Paul's writings, but Luke uses it twice for Paul's warning to the ship captain about the looming danger in leaving the harbor in the winter time (Acts. 27:10, 21). Both the verbal and physical meanings are found for the verb ὑβρίζω in the 6 NT uses outside of Paul's writings.

The general trend of commentators is to take ὕβρεσιν here in 2 Corinthians as verbal based on the assumption that it refers to insults hurled at Paul by both his opponents in the church and also by the outsiders at Corinth. But Paul's experiences alluded to here in v. 10 go way beyond what he had experienced just at Corinth. It is better to include both verbal and physical mistreatment included by ὕβρεσιν. Unfortunately no English word exists that closely captures the sense of ὕβρις.

ἐν ἀνάγκαις, in hardships. The noun ἀνάγκη denotes necessity as a part of the word group ἀναγκάζω, ἀναγκαῖος, ἀνάγκη.¹⁹⁵ This curious pattern of meanings, denoting either what is essential to life, or that which constricts and opposes what is essential, here flows here toward the latter meaning which contains the negative perspective. Thus here ἐν ἀνάγκαις will match the similar context of usage in 6:4 to denote the experiences in life that 'squeeze the dickens out of us.' Its usage in the listing as validations of being servants of Christ in 6:4b-5 is instructive: ἐν ὑπομονῇ πολλῇ, ἐν θλιψεσιν, **ἐν ἀνάγκαις**, ἐν στενοχωρίαις, ἐν πληγαῖς, ἐν φυλακαῖς, ἐν ἀκαταστασίαις, ἐν κόποις, ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις, ἐν νηστείαις, **through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger.** The generalized nature of ἀνάγκαις suggests a variety of life experiences that put great pressure on individuals.

¹⁹⁵ "The question bound up with the root ἀναγκ-¹ is pursued by Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* when he explains what is meant by τὸ ἀναγκαῖον. It is ... οὐ ἄνευ οὐκ ἐνδέχεται ζῆν ... and therefore 'all that which is part of the *conditio sine qua non* of being and life'; it is ἐναντίον ... τῇ κατὰ τὴν προαίρεσιν κινήσει καὶ κατὰ τὸν λογισμόν, and therefore all that which is apart from the true fashioning of life and which constricts and opposes it.² Both these meanings are rooted in a third and general meaning: τὸ μὴ ἐνδεχόμενον ἄλλως ἔχειν ἀναγκαῖον φαμεν οὕτως ἔχειν, *Metaph.*, IV, 5, p. 1015a, 20 ff.

"Thus the different meanings of the terms are given, ἀνάγκη is compulsion or necessity and therefore the means of compulsion or oppression; ἀναγκαῖος is that which compels or makes necessary; ἀναγκάζω is to cause or compel someone in all the varying degrees from friendly pressure to forceful compulsion.³"

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:344–345.]

ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις, in persecutions and calamities. This final listing is a pair of evidently closely related kinds of experiences, as signaled by joining them together with καὶ. The noun διωγμός is much more focused on religious based persecution of individuals that includes physical violence against them. The word group includes διώκω, ἐκδιώκω, διωγμός, and διώκτης. The literal meaning of pursue or chase mostly shifts to the idea of chasing someone with intent to do physical harm to them. The noun διωγμός is only used here in 2 Corinthians in the plural form.

Closely related to διωγμός is στενοχωρία which is only used here and in 6:4. Against the etymological background comes the idea of 'squeezings' for στενοχωρία.¹⁹⁶ Thus chasing to do harm by squeezing the victim hard brings the two ideas together in a cohesive manner. This easily produces the idea of squeezing the life out of someone in persecution.

Note that these words list categories of abuses that Paul experienced. Note the plural form used uniformly through the listing which stresses multiple individualized instances of each type of abuse. Elsewhere in 2 Corinthians he provides more specific instances of

¹⁹⁶Attic στενός, Ionic σταινός (στενρός) mean 'narrow,' 'thin,' 'paltry,' 'poor,' 'wretched.' We find τὸ στεῖνος 'narrow place' in Hom. Il., 8, 476; 12, 66, "press" in battle 15, 426, 'narrow pass' 23, 419 etc. From Thuc. we find the noun στενοχωρία 'narrow place,' and later the verb στενοχωρέω 'to be squeezed, pressed,' more commonly 'to confine,' 'to compress.' In the lit. sense the word is often used in topographical descriptions, Thuc., VII, 51, 2; 70, 6; Plat. Tim., 25a; Aesch. Pers., 413. In a transf. sense it is found from the Hell. period, medically in Hippocr. Praecepta, 8 (Littré, IX, 262) and in astrological¹ texts, and as a value concept it can denote the paltriness of a question or narrow-mindedness of exposition.² Finally it is used for the 'straits' or 'stresses' of inner or outer problems and difficulties. The exact meaning cannot always be given. Thus in Ps.-Plat. Ep., III, 319c it is not clear whether the ref. is to an external threat to the author on his departure or whether he feared the inner stress of a relation disrupted by his utterance.³ Sometimes we find θλίψις, θλίβω with στενοχωρία, στενοχωρέω. Antonyms are πλατύς, εὐρύς εὐρυχωρία, ἄνεσις etc., Aesch. Pers., 875; Hdt., II, 8, 3; VIII, 60, 2; Plat. Leg., V, 737a; Plut. Quaest. Conv. V, 6 (II, 679e-f).

¹Materially important here are esp. the statements of Hell. philosophy, namely. Stoicism, e.g., Ceb. Tab.,⁴ a work of morality from the 1st cent. A.D. wrongly ascribed to a Pythagorean of the 4th cent. B.C. Ceb. Tab., 15, 1-3 speaks of a narrow door, a little trodden way and a difficult ascent to true culture, ἀνάβασις στενή πάνυ ... πρὸς τὴν ἀληθινὴν παιδείαν.⁵ The idea that Chr. preaching is a means and way to such paideia finds a basis in the Gk. OT⁶ and was adopted quite early in Chr. theology.⁷ The obstacles, which are not always clearly perceived, are set forth in a fundamental statement in Epict. which is wholly in the spirit of the autarky of the sage: It is we ourselves who create inner and outer problems for ourselves by nurturing wrong ideas about fortune and misfortune and by building our lives on this false foundation.⁸

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 7:604.]

these kinds of abuses. One should especially check the listings in 11:23-27. For ἀσθένεια see 11:30; 12:5, 9 (2x); 13:4 (Christ) for the six instances in this letter. His σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί, **thorn in the flesh**, is the primary one mentioned. For ὕβρις, it is only used here in Paul's writings in an inclusive way without specific instances being given elsewhere in the letter. Yet many of the items included in 11:23-27 could be included under this label. For ἀνάγκη, it is a 2 Corinthians term with three uses in 6:4; 9:7, and here in 12:10. Again the term is inclusive of many different kinds of life difficulties. For διωγμός, this is the only use inside 2 Corinthians. For στενοχωρία, its exclusive use is here and in the similar listing in 6:4. The squeezings referred to are human produced by opponents intending physical harm. This easily captures the gist of many of the items listed in 11:23-27.

What one should conclude here is that Paul through this short listing alludes to the previous more inclusive lists of difficulties he experienced as Christ's servant, especially that found in 11:23-27. The items in chapter 12 characterize those experiences in different ways, but collectively stress the intensity of difficulty faced by Paul. But here in the discovery of Christ's promised grace for such, the apostle learned how to feel joy and contentment in the midst of these abuses.

The prepositional phrase ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, **for Christ's sake**, best goes back to the verb εὐδοκῶ, creating the sense of taking pleasure in the many abuses due to Christ being in his life. An alternative possibility is to see ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ modifying each of the nouns in the prepositional phrase, thus yielding the idea of each of the abuses being endured for the sake of Christ. Ultimately the meanings for the two options is very close to one another.

The justifying statement in v. 10b, introduced by γὰρ, is ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατός εἰμι, **for whenever I may be weak, then strong I am**.¹⁹⁷ Paul's ability to

¹⁹⁷"ὅταν (γὰρ²²⁵) ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατός εἰμι has aptly been called Paul's 'personal motto' (Spittler 266). This paradoxical principle, which lay at the center of Paul's life and ministry, is an explicitly and intensely personal application of v. 9b, 'power reaches perfection in weakness.' There the explicit contrast was between δύναμις and ἀσθένεια, although there was an implicit contrast between Christ's power and Paul's weakness (see on v. 9). Here, however, the explicit antithesis is between two concurrent states of Paul himself, with no explicit reference to Christ, although such a reference is clearly implicit. When Paul acknowledged his weakness and expressed his dependence on Christ, he became simultaneously 'powerful' with Christ's resurrection power.²²⁶

¹Behind ἀσθενῶ we should probably see an allusion to the physical debility brought about by assaults of Paul's σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί, but also to the external afflictions encountered during his service for Christ, circumstances such as 'insults, calamities, persecutions and difficulties' (cf. v. 10a) that prompted a sense of helplessness and drove him to turn to Christ in prayer. The Paul

take pleasure in abuse rests upon his discovery of the spiritual principle that his moments of weakness allow Christ's strength to come to full expression in his life, thus making him strong.

10.2.3.3.2.6 Boasting from compassion, 12:11-13

11 Γέγονα ἄφρων, ὑμεῖς με ἠναγκάσατε. ἐγὼ γὰρ ὄφειλον ὑφ' ὑμῶν συνίστασθαι· οὐδὲν γὰρ ὑστέρησα τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων εἰ καὶ οὐδὲν εἰμι. 12 τὰ μὲν σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου κατειργάσθη ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ, σημεῖοις τε καὶ τέρασιν καὶ δυνάμεσιν. 13 τί γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ who was ταπεινός (10:1) and ἀσθενής (10:10) was the true Paul; lowliness and weakness were the hallmarks of his ministry. Yet it was precisely this ἀσθένεια, whether physical, psychological, or spiritual, that caused him to rely wholly on Christ and so occasioned his strength. Behind δυνατός εἰμι we should see an allusion, not to Paul's own ability to cope with adversity by harnessing all his personal resources, but to his experience of Christ's power, sometimes in delivering him from adversity, sometimes in granting him strength to endure hardship, but always in equipping him for effective service. There is grammatical justification for translating ὅταν with the present subjunctive²²⁷ by 'whenever'²²⁸ rather than by 'when,' but the rendering 'whenever I am weak, then I am strong' (NRSV)²²⁹ could suggest that there were only isolated occasions when Paul felt 'weak' and so was 'strong' through Christ. Isaacs's paraphrase illustrates the point: 'for my moments of weakness are the moments of my greatest power.' If, however, 'weakness' was Paul's conscious attitude of humble dependence on Christ in all circumstances but especially in adverse situations, then correspondingly the experience of having Christ's power resting on him would be a constant reality. 'When I am weak, then I am strong' (RSV)²³⁰ leaves open this interpretation."

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 867–868.]

293 ^{12.11} Γέγονα ἄφρων,

294 ὑμεῖς με ἠναγκάσατε.

γὰρ

ὑφ' ὑμῶν

295 ἐγὼ ὄφειλον... συνίστασθαι·

γὰρ

296 οὐδὲν ὑστέρησα

τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων

εἰ καὶ οὐδὲν εἰμι.

297 ^{12.12} τὰ μὲν σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου κατειργάσθη

| ἐν ὑμῖν

| ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ,

| τε

σημείοις καὶ τέρασιν καὶ δυνάμεσιν.

^{12.13}

γὰρ

298 τί ἐστὶν ὁ ἠσώθητε

ὑπὲρ τὰς λοιπὰς ἐκκλησίας,

εἰ μὴ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν;

299 χαρίσασθέ μοι τὴν ἀδικίαν ταύτην.

ἠσώθητε ὑπὲρ τὰς λοιπὰς ἐκκλησίας, εἰ μὴ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν; χαρίσασθέ μοι τὴν ἀδικίαν ταύτην.

11 I have been a fool! You forced me to it. Indeed you should have been the ones commending me, for I am not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing. 12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, signs and wonders and mighty works. 13 How have you been worse off than the other churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!

This subunit or pericope of text clearly brings to a close his 'fool's speech' as the opening statement # 293 signals. Additionally, it helps set up the next segment found in 12:14-13:10 detailing the proposed 'third visit' of Paul to the church in Corinth. With both these literary roles modern Bible translators using a combination of paragraphing and topic headers face the dilemma of an either/or choice in formatting, e.g., the NRSV.

Internally the thought structure is relatively easy to discern, especially with the visual help of the above block diagram of the text. The two beginning declarations (#s 293 & 294) are defended by three sets of justifying statements signaled by the casual conjunction γὰρ (#s 295-298). These possibly imply the charges being leveled against him by his opponents, although hard and fast conclusions here can't be made.¹⁹⁸ A rather sarcastic appeal concludes the unit (#299). The sarcastic tone of #299 sets up the discussion of the proposed third visit in 12:14-13:10 along the lines of "if you were offended that I didn't burden you on my previous visits, then we will make sure that doesn't happen again!"

The first two declarations (#s 293 & 294) are linked closely together: Γέγονα ἄφρων, ὑμεῖς με ἠναγκάσατε, I

have been a fool! You forced me to it. The label ἄφρων, foolish, shows up again as a closing reminder of the continuous genre form being used from 11:16 to here: cf. 11:16 (2x), 19;

¹⁹⁸Behind these verses there probably lie three charges against Paul made by his adversaries at Corinth, whether the intruders or some native Corinthians:

(1) that he was inferior to the twelve, 'the superlative apostles' (v. 11), and in fact was 'nothing' or 'a nobody' (οὐδέν) (v. 11);

(2) that he had not exhibited 'the characteristics of a true apostle' (v. 12);

(3) that, as a result of his ministry, the Corinthians were 'worse off' than other Christian churches (v. 13)."

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 870.]

12:6, 11.¹⁹⁹ The use of another related noun ἀφροσύνη in 11:1, 17, 21 may very well mark the beginning of the 'fool's speech.' Remember that this label signals Paul's momentary adoption of the position of his opponents, whose stance he views as foolish, for the sake of making a point in his rebuttal of their criticisms of him.

The context for Γέγονα ἄφρων makes it clear that the sense is not at all, "I have become a fool." But rather the sense of "I have been playing the fool." This is clearly signaled by the content of the γὰρ statements. Also remember the above [discussion on ἄφρων](#) in 11:16 where the idea of ἄφρων has more a technical meaning than a merely popular sense of fool. As a rhetorical device in Paul's world, making an argument from the perspective of a ἄφρων meant adopting the assumptions etc. of one's opponent and then proceeding to destroy his arguments with counter arguments within the framework of the opponent's viewpoint. The label ἄφρων suggested that one's view of his opponents was that they and their arguments were pure foolishness without any credibility. Therefore their viewpoint could easily be turned against them.

Why would Paul resort to this kind of argumentation? ὑμεῖς με ἤναγκάσατε, *you forced me into it* -- this is his answer. That is, you Corinthians -- his readers -- compelled him to adopt the viewpoint of his opponents in order to expose the foolishness of what they were claiming about Paul. Such patterns of argumentation are not Paul's normal or preferred way of presenting and defending the Gospel message. Thus any criticism of Paul for using this device of the 'fool's speech' falls on the shoulders of the Corinthians themselves, since they insisted on Paul defending himself and his Gospel ministry using secular arguments, like his opponents were.

How did the Corinthians 'compel' Paul? Did representatives tell him verbally that this was the only way to rebut these opponents? Not likely! Primarily, as [statement #295](#) suggests, the Corinthians, who should have

¹⁹⁹"These three verses form the conclusion to the 'Fool's Speech' (11:1–12:13) although some regard them as an epilogue to that speech seen as running from 11:1 to 12:10.² Paul chides the Corinthians for failing to champion him against the intruders from Palestine and for forcing him thereby to use the disagreeable tactic of foolish boasting in remonstrating with the Corinthians (v. 11a). Once again (cf. 11:5) he asserts his equality with the 'superlative apostles' in Jerusalem (v. 11b), an equality shown by his patiently exhibiting at Corinth the marks of true apostleship by means of signs, wonders, and miracles (v. 12). He reminds them also that he remained financially independent of them at that time—an 'injury' for which he playfully asks forgiveness (v. 13). This last verse serves as a transition to vv. 14–18 where he promises not to be a financial burden on them during his forthcoming visit." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 869.]

defended Paul against the criticisms of these opponents, did absolutely nothing to defend Paul. No one in the church stood up for Paul against these criticisms.

(1) ἐγὼ γὰρ ὠφειλον ὑφ' ὑμῶν συνίστασθαι, for I ought to have been commended by you. You whom I led to Christ and nurtured in the faith should have been my defenders asserts the apostle. Several times in this letter -- 3:1; 4:2; 5:12; 6:4; 10:12, 18 -- Paul 'commended' himself and his associates to the Corinthians in their failure to affirm him and his ministry to them. Several times he asserts their duty to affirm him when criticisms are leveled against him. This assertion here in 12:11 is the bluntest and most direct of all. But they failed to do so, and this forced him to have to defend himself. And one of the best ways to do this was through the 'fool's speech' device commonly employed in the Greco-Roman cultural world of the first century.

The defense of his Gospel ministry through the 'fool's speech' device in 11:1–12:10 is now summarized in the second and third sets of γὰρ statements in vv. 11b–13a. Plus it seems to imply three specific groups of criticisms being leveled against Paul by the outsider opponents at Corinth.²⁰⁰

(2) οὐδὲν γὰρ ὑστέρησα τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων εἰ καὶ οὐδὲν εἰμι. τὰ μὲν σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου κατειργάσθη ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ, σημεῖοις τε καὶ τέρασιν καὶ δυνάμεσιν, for I am not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing. The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, signs and wonders and mighty works.

The pressure to adopt the 'fool's speech' mode comes off the foundation of Paul not being inferior in any way to and of these 'so-called super apostles.' If the Corinthians won't defend him, then he will defend himself.²⁰¹ Here the focus goes to Paul's situation, whereas

²⁰⁰"Behind these verses there probably lie three charges against Paul made by his adversaries at Corinth, whether the intruders or some native Corinthians:

(1) that he was inferior to the twelve, 'the superlative apostles' (v. 11), and in fact was 'nothing' or 'a nobody' (οὐδὲν) (v. 11);

(2) that he had not exhibited 'the characteristics of a true apostle' (v. 12);

(3) that, as a result of his ministry, the Corinthians were 'worse off' than other Christian churches (v. 13)."

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 870.]

²⁰¹"It was his correspondents who should have⁴⁸³ commended him and spoken in his defence over against the hostile criticism of the rival apostles. It was to him that they owed their existence as Christians, and this in itself was sufficient proof of his apostolic status as Paul himself saw it (1 Cor 9:2; 2 Cor 3:2–3).⁴⁸⁴ Why, then, had they failed to give him the support he obviously feels was owing to him? Barrett suggests that it was because they were

in the third justifying set it will shift to the situation of the Corinthians.

The concessive structured sentence has a protasis εἰ καὶ οὐδέν εἰμι, *even if I am nothing*, that comes at the end of the statement. The main clause apodosis, οὐδέν ὑστέρησα τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων, *I lack nothing in comparison to these superlative apostles*. One should not the prominent emphasis on the demonstrative pronoun οὐδέν, *nothing*, in both the apodosis and the protasis. It comes as a strong play on denial of inferiority to these outsiders in spite of the reality that no good thing rests in Paul, or in them and everyone else for that matter. The apostle in no way is deficient to these outsiders in spiritual credentials and divine validation, yet this does not rest upon him being an accomplished servant of God. It totally comes from divine grace operating in his life. The concessive structure here puts his denial of inferiority in contrast to and having overcome the barrier of himself being nothing.²⁰² The placing of this pronoun

ashamed of him on two counts: first, because they had got him as their apostle on the cheap (since he did not accept maintenance from them), and secondly, because of his lack of eloquence. In both respects he came off badly by comparison with the rival missionaries.⁴⁸⁵ In addition, both Barrett and Martin claim that the Corinthians' basic fault lay in their apathy.⁴⁸⁶ But perhaps we should consider whether there might be something to be said in defence of the Corinthians. For in Paul's first canonical letter to them, had he not appeared, at one point, somewhat to play down the importance of his own role in the creation of their Christian community? Yes, he had planted the seed, and Apollos had later watered it, but it was God who caused the growth. Neither the planter nor the one who waters the seed is of any consequence (1 Cor 3:6–7). Certainly his continuous efforts to retain pastoral control of the church might suggest that he did not quite mean exactly what he had said, but he had said it. Why, then, should the Corinthians feel under any special obligation to produce a testimonial for him, when these other, apparently more professional, ecclesiastical gardeners arrived in the city?" [Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 833–834.]

²⁰²A concessive sentence differs from a conditional sentence at one particularly key point. Both use the protasis (dependent) and the apodosis (independent) clause structure. With the conditional sentence the core idea is that the apodosis depends upon the protasis happening. Otherwise, the apodosis does not occur, or is not correct.

But with the concessive sentence, the occurring of the apodosis happens in spite of the existence of the protasis. The protasis sets up a barrier that the apodosis must overcome, not a required situation necessary for the occurrence of the apodosis, as with the conditional sentence.

As one might well expect, different ways of setting up the connections between the apodosis and protasis existed in ancient Greek. The conditional sentence has four distinct patterns with each carrying different nuances of connection between the apodosis and protasis. The concessive sentence has three distinct patterns of construction, each with distinctive definitions of meaning between the apodosis and protasis.

Concessive protasis constructions:

in both the apodosis and protasis with slightly different meanings highlights his point, and probably with a sarcastic tone.

The main clause verb ὑστέρησα from ὑστερέω denotes *inferiority, lacking something, missing out on something*. The aorist active form here conveys the sense with the negative pronoun οὐδέν of *not having missed out on anything*. The statement here is virtually identical to the one in 11:5, Λογίζομαι γὰρ μηδέν ὑστερηκέαι τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων, *for I have calculated that I have missed out on nothing in comparison to these superlative apostles*. One should note, however, that in 11:5 the perfect active infinitive ὑστερηκέαι is used, while here the aorist indicative finite verb ὑστέρησα is used. Although not certain this may very well signal some difference of perspective with the aorist verb referencing past comparisons to the outsiders. But more likely the difference is more along the lines of "I am lacking nothing" (Perfect Intensive) to "I have missed out on nothing" (Aorist Culminative). The phrase τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων is the genitive of reference use with the sense of "in regard to these superlative apostles." A deliberate play off of the verb ὑστέρησα is made with the adjective ὑπερλίαν. That is, Paul lacks nothing that is claimed by these 'apostles' who have abundantly more than ordinary apostles. Sarcasm is dripping off the words here.

This lack of deficiency by Paul comes in spite of his being 'nothing': εἰ καὶ οὐδέν εἰμι. Note that he declares "am nothing," and not "have nothing." Contextually it is a clear allusion to these outsiders with their claims to superiority. Their superiority claim grows out of their own inflated sense of individual accomplishment and status. But Paul's sense of adequacy grows out of realizing his total dependence upon God's sufficient grace more than meeting his weaknesses which represent no human accomplishments to boast about.²⁰³ He -- and

Conj.	εἰ καὶ	(Logical concession)
	ἐὰν καὶ	(Doubtful concession)
	καὶ ἐάν; καὶ εἰ	(Emphatic concession)

As can be detected from the above chart (from Lorin Cranford, *Understanding Biblical Koine Greek, Appendix 6*, page A6-2), The Logical concession type assumes that the barrier to be overcome actually exists. The Doubtful concession type assumes uncertainty over the actual existence of the barrier. The Emphatic concession assumes that the protasis barrier is very unlikely to exist. See Lesson 10, pp. L10_2-5, of the grammar for more details.

The particular category of concessive sentence is functionally determined by the position of καὶ in relationship to the subordinate conjunctions εἰ and ἐὰν. The εἰ καὶ pattern in 2 Cor. 12:11 signals that Paul assumes his 'nothingness,' but it has been overcome so that he then lacks nothing that these super apostles claim to have. One can detect a tone of sarcasm with the effect of him saying that even in 'nothingness' he lacks nothing that they claim to have.

²⁰³Another remotely possible interpretive direction is that εἰ καὶ οὐδέν εἰμι represents a taunt thrown at Paul by these outsiders. Paul is nothing, they claimed, in comparison to us who are superi-

he alone in comparison to these outsiders -- recognized the total dependence on God's grace along side the depraved rottenness of human accomplishments.²⁰⁴ The view came after his Damascus road encounter with the risen Christ.

What is needed by an apostle? Verse 12 signals basic validation indicators of genuine apostleship for the Twelve in the first century: τὰ μὲν σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου κατειργάσθη ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ, σημεῖος τε καὶ τέρασι καὶ δυνάμεσιν, *The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, signs and wonders and mighty works.* Paul names three indicators of true apostleship here: σημεῖος τε καὶ τέρασι καὶ δυνάμεσιν, *signs and wonders and mighty works.* Is this intended as an exhaustive list? Not by any stretch of the imagination. Acts 1:21-22 proposes a different list of qualifications.²⁰⁵

or. The problem here is that this interpretation seems too modern and shows Paul sinking down to the low level of his Corinthians critics.

If Paul had been dismissed by some at Corinth as being οὐδέν, "nothing," "a non-entity," "a nobody" (cf. 6:9), the expression εἰ καὶ οὐδέν εἰμι¹³ could be an ironical reference to that taunt.¹⁴ "If, as some of you say (cf. 10:10, φησὶν, ... ὁ λόγος ἐξουθεν ἡμέρος), I amount to nothing, then those whom you regard so highly and who are my equals, must also be nobodies, not worthy of consideration!" Given the fact that other derogatory terms such as ἔκτρωμα (1 Cor. 15:8) or ταπεινός (10:1) seem to have been used of Paul at Corinth, and that he could use such a term for his own purposes (see 1 Cor. 15:8-9), this understanding of οὐδέν is perfectly legitimate

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 872-873.]

²⁰⁴"On the other hand, in saying 'even though I am nothing,' Paul may be intensely serious. In spite of being not one whit inferior to the Twelve with respect to faith and service, he was, in his own estimation, 'nothing,' the least important of the apostles and not worthy to bear the title 'apostle' because he once persecuted God's church (1 Cor. 15:9).¹⁵ Whatever he was in relation to the Twelve and whatever had been accomplished at Corinth were due solely to God's grace that was with him (1 Cor. 15:10; cf. 2 Cor. 3:5; 4:7). Perhaps we need not choose between the 'ironical'/'serious' alternatives. Even if Paul's primary intent was irony, he would gladly have acknowledged the truth that apart from God's prospering of his service he amounted to nothing (1 Cor. 3:6-7).¹⁶" [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 873.]

²⁰⁵**Acts 1:21-22.** 21 δεῖ οὖν τῶν συνελθόντων ἡμῖν ἀνδρῶν ἐν παντὶ χρόνῳ ὧς εἰσηλθεν καὶ ἐξηλθεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς, 22 ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τοῦ βαπτίσματος Ἰωάννου ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἧς ἀνελήμφθη ἀφ' ἡμῶν, μάρτυρα τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ σὺν ἡμῖν γενέσθαι ἓνα τούτων.

12 *So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken*

More basically, who is an apostle? What was Paul alluding to in the use of τοῦ ἀποστόλου, *of an apostle*? The word ἀπόστολος enjoyed extensive use in the secular Greek literature of Paul's world.²⁰⁶ The core idea of one being commissioned for some specific task provided the needed background for the adoption of ἀπόστολος to designate the Twelve Apostles whom Jesus commissioned to carry on His work after he ascended back into heaven.²⁰⁷ To be clear, a variety of meanings does exist inside the NT usage.²⁰⁸ The declaration in Eph. up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection."

²⁰⁶"In older Gk. (Lysias, Demosth.) and later (e.g. Posidon.: 87 Fgm. 53 p. 257, 21 Jac. [Strabo 3, 5, 5]) ὁ ἄ. is a naval expedition, prob. also its commander (Anecd. Gr. 217, 26). τὸ ἀπόστολον with (Pla., Ep. 7, 346a) or without (Vi. Hom. 19) πλοῖον means a ship ready for departure. In its single occurrence in Jos. (Ant. 17, 300; it is not found elsewh. in Jewish-Gk. lit.) it prob. means 'sending out'; in pap mostly 'bill of lading' (s. Preisigke, Fachwörter 1915), less freq. 'certificate of clearance (at a port)' (BGU V §64 [II A.D.] = Gnomon des Idios Logos). It can also be 'letter of authorization (relating to shipping)': Mitt-Wilck. I/2, 443, 10 (15 A.D.); PHerm 6, 11f (cp. Dig. 49, 6, 1 litteras dimissorias sive apostolos). In contrast, in isolated cases it refers to persons who are dispatched for a specific purpose, and the context determines the status or function expressed in such Eng. terms as 'ambassador, delegate, messenger' (Hdt. 1, 21; 5, 38; Synesius, Providence 2, 3 p. 122a ἀπόστολοι of ordinary messengers; Sb 7241, 48; BGU 1741, 6 [64 B.C.]; 3 Km 14:6A; Is 18:2 Sym.). Cp. KLake, *The Word A.: Beginn.* I 5, '33, 46-52. It is this isolated usage that is preferred in the NT w. nuances peculiar to its lit. But the extensive use of ἀποστέλλω in documents relating to pers. of merit engaged in administrative service prob. encouraged NT use of the noun, thus in effect disavowing assoc. w. the type of itinerant philosophers that evoked the kind of pejorative term applied by Paul's audience **Ac 17:18.**" [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 122.]

²⁰⁷**Luke 6:12-13.** 12 Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις ἐξελεῖν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι, καὶ ἦν διανυκτερεύων ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ . 13 Καὶ ὅτε ἐγένετο ἡμέρα, προσεφώνησεν τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐκλεξάμενος ἀπ' αὐτῶν δώδεκα, οὓς καὶ ἀποστόλους ὠνόμασεν.

12 *Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. 13 And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles:*

²⁰⁸1. of messengers without extraordinary status *delegate, envoy, messenger* (opp. ὁ πέμψας) **J 13:16.** Of Epaphroditus, messenger of the Philippians **Phil 2:25.**—**2 Cor 8:23.**

2. of messengers with extraordinary status, esp. of God's *messenger, envoy* (cp. Epict. 3, 22, 23 of Cynic wise men: ἄγγελος ἀπὸ τ. Διὸς ἀπέσταλται).

a. of prophets **Lk 11:49; Rv 18:20; cp. 2:2; Eph 3:5.**

b. of Christ (w. ἀρχιερεὺς) **Hb 3:1** (cp. ApcEsdr 2:1 p. 25, 29 T.; Just., A I, 12, 9; the extra-Christian firman Sb 7240, 4f οὐκ ἔστιν θεὸς εἰ μὴ ὁ θεὸς μόνος. Μασμετ ἀπόστολος θεοῦ). G.Wetter, 'D. Sohn Gottes' 1916, 26ff.

c. but predominately in the NT (of the apologists, only Just.) of

a group of highly honored believers w. a special function as God's **envoys**. Also Judaism had a figure known as apostle (ἄποστολος; Schürer III 124f w. sources and lit.; Billerb. III 1926, 2–4; JTruron, Theology 51, '48, 166–70; 341–43; GDix, *ibid.* 249–56; 385f; JBühner, art. ἄ. in EDNT I 142–46). In Christian circles, at first ἄ. denoted one who proclaimed the gospel, and was not strictly limited: Paul freq. calls himself an ἄ.: **Ro 1:1; 11:13; 1 Cor 1:1; 9:1f; 15:9; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Ti 1:1; 2:7; 2 Ti 1:1; Tit 1:1.**—1 Cl 47:1. Of Barnabas **Ac 14:14; 15:2.** Of Andronicus and Junia (less prob. Junias, s. *Ἰουνία*) **Ro 16:7.** Of James, the Lord's brother **Gal 1:19.** Of Peter **1 Pt 1:1; 2 Pt 1:1.** *Then esp. of the 12 apostles oi δώδεκα ἄ.* (cp. ParJer 9:20; AscIs 3:21; 4:3) **Mt 10:2; Mk 3:14; Lk 22:14** (v.l. *οἱ δώδεκα*); **cp. 6:13; 9:10; 17:5; Ac 1:26** (P-HMenoud, RHPR 37 '57, 71–80); **Rv 21:14; PtK 3 p. 15, 18.** Peter and the apostles **Ac 2:37; 5:29.** Paul and apostles Pol 9:1 (cp. AcPITh Aa I, 235 app. of Thecla). Gener. the apostles **Mk 6:30; Lk 24:10; 1 Cor 4:9; 9:5; 15:7; 2 Cor 11:13; 1 Th 2:7; Ac 1:2; 2:42f; 4:33, 35, 37; 5:2, 12, 18, 34 v.l., 40; 6:6; 8:1, 14, 18; 9:27; 11:1; 14:4; 2 Pt 3:2; Jd 17; IEph 11:2; IMg 7:1; 13:2; ITr 2:2; 3:1; 7:1; IPhd 5:1; ISm 8:1; D ins; 11:3, 6.** As a governing board, w. the elders **Ac 15:2, 4, 6, 22f; 16:4.** As possessors of the most important spiritual gift **1 Cor 12:28f.** Proclaimers of the gospel 1 Cl 42:1f; B 5:9; Hs 9, 17, 1. Prophesying strife 1 Cl 44:1. Working miracles **2 Cor 12:12.** W. overseers, teachers and attendants Hv 3, 5, 1; Hs 9, 15, 4; w. teachers Hs 9, 25, 2; w. teachers, preaching to those who had fallen asleep Hs 9, 16, 5; w. var. Christian officials IMg 6:1; w. prophets **Eph 2:20; D 11:3; Pol 6:3.** Christ and the apostles as the foundation of the church IMg 13:1; ITr 12; 2; cp. **Eph 2:20.** *οἱ ἄ. and ἡ ἐκκλησία* w. the three patriarchs and the prophets IPhd 9:1. The Holy Scriptures named w. the ap. 2 Cl 14:2 (sim. ApcSed 14:10 p. 136, 17 Ja.). Paul ironically refers to his opponents (or the original apostles; s. s.v. *ὑπερλίαν*) as *οἱ ὑπερλίαν ἄ.* the super-apostles **2 Cor 11:5; 12:11.** The orig. apostles he calls *οἱ πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἄ.* **Gal 1:17; AcPICor 2:4.**—Harnack, *Mission 4 I* 1923, 332ff (Eng. tr. I 319–31). WSeufert, D. Urspr. u. d. Bed. d. Apostolates 1887; EHaupt, Z. Verständnis d. Apostolates im NT 1896; EMonnier, La notion de l'Apostolat des origines à Irénée 1903; PBatiffol, RB n.s. 3, 1906, 520–32; Wlh., *Einleitung* 2, 1911, 138–47; EBurton, AJT 16, 1912, 561–88, Gal comm. 1921, 363–84; RSchütz, *Apostel u. Jünger* 1921; EMeyer I 265ff; III 255ff. HVogelstein, *Development of the Apostolate in Judaism, etc.*: HUCA 2, 1925, 99–123; JWagenmann, D. Stellg. d. Ap. Pls neben den Zwölf 1926; WMundle, D. Apostelbild der AG: ZNW 27, 1928, 36–54; KReingstorff, TW I 406–46 (s. critique by HConzelmann, *The Theol. of St. Luke* '60, 216, n. 1), *Apost. u. Predigtamt* '34; J-LLeuba, *Rech. exégét. rel. à l'apostolat dans le NT*, diss. Neuchâtel '36; PSaintyves, *Deux mythes évangéliques, Les 12 apôtres et les 72 disciples* '38; GSass, *Apostelamt u. Kirche ... paulin. Apostelbegr.* '39; EKäsemann, ZNW 40, '41, 33–71; RLiechtenhan, D. urchr. Mission '46; ESchweizer, D. Leben d. Herrn in d. Gemeinde u. ihren Diensten '46; AFridrichsen, *The Apostle and His Message* '47; HvCampenhansen, D. urchristl. Apostelbegr.: StTh 1, '47, 96–130; HMosbech, *ibid.* 2, '48, 166–200; ELohse, *Ursprung u. Prägung des christl. Apostolates*: TZ 9, '53, 259–75; GKlein, *Die 12 Apostel*, '60; FHahn, *Mission in the NT*, tr. FClarke, '65; WSchmithals, *The Office of the Apostle*, tr. JSteeley, '69; KKertelge, *Das Apostelamt des Paulus*, BZ 14, '70, 161–81. S. also *ἐκκλησία* end, esp. Holl and Kattenbusch; also HBetz, *Hermeneia: Gal* '79, 74f (w. additional lit.); FAGnew, *On the Origin of the Term ἀπόστολος*: CBQ 38, '76, 49–53 (survey of debate); KHaacker, *NovT* 30, '88, 9–38 (Acts). Ins evidence (s. e.g. SIG index) relating to the verb *ἀποστέλλω* is almost gener. ignored in debate about the meaning of the noun.—

2:20 sets forth the conceptual role of the apostles, along side that of the OT prophets, as the foundation for the Christian communities.²⁰⁹ It is their preaching of the Gospel that establishes genuine Christian communities. Those then trained in this apostolic Gospel help spread this message. Ultimately, our NT becomes the deposit of that apostolic Gospel with each of the 27 documents having either a direct or indirect link back to either the Twelve or Paul as the authentic founders of Christianity. They possess unique, exclusive commissioning from God through Christ to preserve and promote His message and teachings. This definition of 'apostle' is the one Paul has in mind here in 12:12, and the opponents are seeking to corrupt this meaning by claiming it for themselves and denying it to Paul (cf. 11:5; 12:11).

Paul's response in v. 12 is that, through his ministry to the Corinthians, *τὰ μὲν σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου κατειργάσθη ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ*, **the signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience**,²¹⁰ The verb *κατειργάζομαι*, here in the Aorist passive voice with *τὰ σημεῖα* as the subject, designates the doing or achieving of these 'signs' earlier in Corinth. The role of the particle of emphasis *μὲν*, without the customary counter point *δὲ* (not this...but that), causes *μὲν* to take on either a concessive or restrictive role, which takes on the sense of 'at least.' This then conveys the sense

DELG s.v. *στέλλω* A. EDNT. M-M. TW. Spicq."

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 122.]

²⁰⁹**Eph. 2:19-20.** 19 Ἴσρα ὄν οὐκ ἐστὶ ξένοι καὶ πάροικοι ἀλλ' ἐστὶ συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ, 20 ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν, ὄντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ,

9 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, 20 built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.

²¹⁰*τὰ μὲν σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου κατειργάσθη ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ, σημεῖοις τε καὶ τέρασιν καὶ δυνάμεσιν.* 'At least, the signs of an apostle were produced in your midst with the utmost endurance, through signs and marvels and through powerful deeds.' Here Paul reminds his converts of certain distinguishing features of his work at Corinth that showed he was a genuine apostle who was in no way inferior to the Twelve and therefore was worthy of their full endorsement (cf. v. 11). He appeals to what his converts had themselves seen and heard during his founding visit (*σημεῖα ... κατειργάσθη ἐν ὑμῖν*). He wanted their opinion of him and their assessment of his apostleship to correspond to reality as they had experienced it and not outstrip the evidence of their physical and spiritual senses (12:6)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 873.]

of at least these were done in your presence but you have paid no attention. Other signals of authenticity were given to you regarding my ministry (cf. chaps 11 & 12), but you have ignored these very basic signals. The prepositional phrase ἐν ὑμῖν, *among you*, limits the verb action to Corinth.

The next prepositional phrase ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ, *with complete patience*, affirms the manner in which these τὰ σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου, *signs of apostleship*, were done among the Corinthians. The sense of ὑπομονή comes from the etymological meaning of 'standing underneath.' The English word 'endurance' is popular among Bible translators into English, with *Ausdauer*, *Standhaftigkeit*, *Standfestigkeit*, being more popular in German.²¹¹ The Greek philosopher Plato described the idea quite interestingly, with the sense of the inner self remaining calm in the face of pressure along with the individual staying steadfast in commitments, actions etc.²¹² It was in this manner that God worked the miracles through the consistent commitment of Paul as he ministered to the Corinthians.²¹³

The three items set forth define the signs of an apostle:

τὰ μὲν σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου
σημεῖοις τε
καὶ τέρασιν
καὶ δυνάμεσιν

The appeal of Harris' proposal is the use of the dative / instrumental case for these three items which match the dative / instrumental of manner for ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ, just in front of these three items. The shift of these three items to the dative / instrumental / locative case op-

²¹¹Rudolf Kassühlke and Barclay M. Newman, *Kleines Wörterbuch Zum Neuen Testament: Griechisch-Deutsch* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997), 198.

²¹²Plato and Aristotle analyzed *hypomonē* and established the conception of it that would hold for the entire Greek tradition. Plato asked, 'In what does courage (andreia) consist?' and answered that it is 'a certain endurance of soul (*karteria tēs psychēs*) ... one of the noblest things.... It is endurance (*karteria*) accompanied by wisdom that is noble' (Lach. 192 b–d). Regarding this, Socrates observes, 'In war, a man endures (*karterounta andra*) and is ready to fight because he calculates reasonably that others will help him, that the enemy is less numerous ... that he has a positional advantage. Would you say that this man, whose endurance of soul relies so much on reason and preparation, is more courageous than the man on the other side who sustains his attack and endures (*hypomenein te kai karterein*)?' — to which Laches replies that the latter is braver.¹ To be courageous, then, is to be manly, to face difficulties without expecting help or putting one's confidence in others; one endures alone, as Aristotle notes.² He makes *hypomonē* a virtue, because it is a noble thing to keep to the mean in difficult circumstances: 'one endures (*hypomenōn*) despite the fear that one feels ... for the beauty of the deed.'³ [Ceslas Spicq and James D. Ernest, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 414–415.]

²¹³It is doubtful, as Harris proposes (NIGTC, p. 874), that ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ should be taken as another σημεῖον of an apostle.

tions rather than the normal genitive of apposition or the matching Yet the slight shift in meaning from τὰ μὲν σημεῖα to σημεῖοις in the listing argues against Harris' view. The first σημεῖα has the more general sense of 'signals' of apostleship, especially indicated by the presence and action of God in the ministry of an apostle. But the second use in σημεῖοις, which is bound together in σημεῖοις τε καὶ τέρασιν καὶ δυνάμεσιν through the postpositive conjunction τε identifying the first of the three elements defining supernatural actions that are visibly observed by people. Such actions are described here -- and elsewhere inside the NT as well -- from three angles. First they are σημεῖα, as John so commonly defines. As signs the supernatural actions point beyond themselves to the power of God overcoming mostly illness and sicknesses common in first century Jewish Palestine. As τέρατα, these supernatural actions evoke wonder and awe by those observing them. People immediately recognize that they are witnessing something far beyond human abilities and powers. And finally as δυνάμεις, these supernatural actions represent clearly a demonstration of divine power rather than human power. Luke's favorite expression is σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα, *signs and wonders*, and originates out of several Greek writers. The focus here is on the impact upon humans by the supernatural actions. Matthew and Mark prefer δυνάμεις for describing the miracles of Jesus. Note that typically the plural δυνάμεις references what we label as miracles, while the singular δύναμις more broadly designates power of a general nature.

From the contextual background, especially that in First Corinthians, it seems as though the Corinthian church had a segment of members who put high value on charismatic evidence of ministry through miracles being done in their midst. Evidently the Corinthian outsiders had played up this unhealthy trend by these members and then twisted it to raise questions about Paul's credentials, in a ministry obviously focused on changing people's lives far more than doing sensational miracles. Here Paul reminds the Corinthians that God's supernatural working through his ministry was indeed present, and had been consistently from the beginning of ministry at Corinth.²¹⁴ I suspect that Paul seeks to re-

²¹⁴"Since Luke does not mention any miracles performed in Corinth during Paul's initial visit of about eighteen months (Acts 18:1–18), we can only guess at their nature (cf. 1 Cor. 2:4). Perhaps they included healings,³⁹ exorcisms, and divinely orchestrated circumstances accompanying conversions.⁴⁰ Miracles were a concomitant of Paul's preaching in Galatia (Gal. 3:5; cf. Acts 14:3, 8–10), Macedonia (1 Thess. 1:5; cf. Acts 16:16–18), Corinth (1 Cor. 2:4; 2 Cor. 12:12), and Asia (Acts 19:11–12) and are highlighted more in Luke's record in Acts than by Paul himself in his letters. Clearly miracles occurred regularly during the founding of Paul's churches." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International

mind that Corinthians of God's divine power at work in his ministry at Corinth in ways that may have required spiritual wisdom and insight to observe. Lives changed by the Gospel, the thriving and blossoming Christian community in spite of both synagogue and governmental opposition et als. -- these represent divine miracles just as certainly as exorcisms, healing miracles etc.

One important background assumption behind this statement in v. 12 comes from what Paul wrote in Corinth a few months after the writing of Second Corinthians in the mid fiftys (Rom. 15:17-19):

17 ἔχω οὖν τὴν καύχησιν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν· 18 οὐ γὰρ τολμήσω τι λαλεῖν ὧν οὐ κατειργάσατο Χριστὸς δι' ἐμοῦ εἰς ὑπακοὴν ἐθνῶν, λόγῳ καὶ ἔργῳ, 19 ἐν δυνάμει σημείων καὶ τεράτων, ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος θεοῦ· ὥστε με ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ κύκλῳ μέχρι τοῦ Ἰλλυρικοῦ πεπληρωκέναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

17 In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to boast of my work for God. 18 For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, 19 by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ.

The validating signs of apostleship accomplished through Paul's life in ministry do not point to any personal accomplishment of the apostle himself. Rather these signs, as the term σημεῖον basically references, point to a spiritual reality existing beyond Paul, that of God's presence and power, using Paul as a channel for expression in ministry to the needs of others. The clear way Paul presents this validation should lead the Corinthians to acknowledge God's presence in Paul verses the self-boasting of personal status by the outsiders at Corinth.

(3) τί γάρ ἐστιν ὃ ἡσώθητε ὑπὲρ τὰς λοιπὰς ἐκκλησίας, εἰ μὴ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν; How have you been worse off than the other churches, except that I myself did not burden you?

This then leads to the question posed in v. 13a with its answer in v. 13b (#s 298 - 299). This pair serves as a further justifying expression (γάρ) of the previous statements beginning with v. 11a. This set of statements pushes the issue more personal and more narrowly focused on the Corinthians rather than on Paul.

Most likely in the background here stands outsider criticism of Paul as inferior to them and not able to pres-

ent to the Corinthians a full gospel message.²¹⁵ Perhaps also from the preceding assertion in v. 12, this criticism claimed superior charismatic 'gifts' to those of Paul as validation of their charge against him. He utterly shreds any such objection to his ministry in his response.

The question is framed brilliantly. The main clause τί γάρ ἐστιν ὃ ἡσώθητε ὑπὲρ τὰς λοιπὰς ἐκκλησίας, for in what way does there exist that which has made you worse off rather than the rest of the churches? In other words, show me where I have snubbed you in comparison to how I ministered to the other churches. The inclusive expression τὰς λοιπὰς ἐκκλησίας, the rest of the churches, probably references the other churches established by Paul

298 τί ἐστιν ὃ ἡσώθητε
 299 χάρισσασθέ μοι τὴν ἀδικίαν ταύτην.
 ὑπὲρ τὰς λοιπὰς ἐκκλησίας,
 εἰ μὴ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν;

and his associates in missionary actions up to this point in the mid-fifties, which is essentially all the churches founded by Paul according to Acts. But it could include churches beyond the Pauline evangelizing ministry, particularly like those he would visit later on his trip from Corinth to Jerusalem, e.g., Tyre, Caesarea in Acts 21:1-16. The verb ἐσσομαι²¹⁶ plus the preposition ὑπὲρ carries the idea of being placed in an inferior status to (ὑπὲρ) someone else. Has then Paul treated the Corinthians as somehow inferior to the other churches?

The one exception which is stated very sarcastically is εἰ μὴ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν; **except**

²¹⁵In this verse, as also in the previous two verses, Paul seems to be addressing a complaint made against him (see the introduction to this section). Here the grievance appears to have been that in comparison with 'the other churches' the Corinthians had been disadvantaged by some action or actions of Paul. If, as Thrall maintains (841), Paul is now giving a further reason why the Corinthians should have commended him (cf. vv. 11-12), he is giving that reason in a very negative cast. Rather, he is questioning how they can feel slighted when they had witnessed miracles and other evidence of his apostolic status⁵⁰ and when he had patiently toiled for their benefit (cf. 12:19b) amid opposition (v. 12). Literally, 'What is there, then (γάρ),⁵¹ with respect to which (ὃ, accusative of respect⁵²) you came off worse in comparison with (ὑπὲρ)⁵³ the other churches ...?'⁵⁴ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 877-878.]

²¹⁶The spelling ἡσώθητε is from the Ionic dialect for the regular koine spelling ἡσάομαι. This reflects some Ephesian influence on Paul's writing, since Ephesus was a center for Ionic Greek usage. It would have particularly caught the attention of the Corinthian listeners to the reading of this letter. And probably this was Paul's reason for using this alternative spelling.

that I didn't shake you down?²¹⁷ Paul's satire here is very obvious, but mostly ignored by English translators. The English expression *I did not burden you* falsely carries the implication of Paul demanding financial support from the churches, except for Corinth. The Greek *καταναρκάω* does not carry such an idea, in spite of the Latin Vulgate using *gravare* meaning to *weigh down* to translate *καταναρκάω*. The verb comes as a compound of *κατα* + *ναρκάω*, with the core verb having the sense of *grow stiff / numb*. The prefix *κατα* here has the intensifying impact on the core verb idea, this to cause someone to *fully become stiff or numb*. A sarcastic cut at his opponents in Corinth is clearly in view with this statement: *What is your inferiority to the rest of the churches, unless I failed to dumb you down to the level of the outsiders? These critics assert this is what I'm doing to all the other churches*. If you reflect carefully on the logic here, Paul brilliantly leaves a small crack open. In Paul's 'mistreatment' of the Corinthians they got the full Gospel message while according to his critics the other churches didn't. Interestingly, the church fathers Chrysostom and Theodoret understand Paul's words along the lines of the above proposed interpretation.

Then in biting sarcasm he answers his own rhetorical question with *χαρίσασθέ μοι τὴν ἀδικίαν ταύτην, forgive me of this abuse!* That is, *don't hold it against me that I gave you the full Gospel message!* They should be rejoicing, not criticizing!

And with this, the so-called 'fool's speech' comes to a close, thus simplifying the exegetical task enormously. In 11:1-12:13, Paul has put on different clothes in order to answer his critics at Corinth, both those inside the church as well as the outsider false teachers who came to Corinth. In adopting the perspective of *ἀφροσύνης* by an *ἄφρων*, Paul slips into a mind-set outside early Christianity and very popular in first century Greek culture. In so doing he adopts the argumentative framework of his Corinthian critics who made Jewish based claims against Paul to a dominantly Greek thinking congregation. Although a brilliant tactic for Paul to his initial audience in mid first century Corinth, it poses an interpretive nightmare to modern twenty-first century readers completely unfamiliar with what a *ἀφροσύνης* perspective by an *ἄφρων* in first century Greece was.

The above interpretation of 11:1-12:13 represents a very serious effort to probe the background Greek literature etc. sufficiently to grasp such an argumentative strategy in first century Corinth. And then to trace carefully how Paul both used and modified this framework to turn the tables on his critics, and to make a persuasive case to his Greek minded Corinthian readers. Once insight here begins to emerge, then amazement accompanies it at how ingenious Paul was in approaching the issue as he did. Although Paul's core mind-set

was Jewish, he was deeply knowledgeable of both the Greek and Latin mindsets and could draw upon them for ministry witness. If any lesson can be learned here, it is the essential point of Prof. Karl Barth's analogy of a sermon. The sermon should represent building a clearly understood bridge between the Bible and the newspaper. To do this effectively, the preacher must thoroughly understand both the Bible and the newspaper. Paul models this image well with his 'fool's speech,' and thereby challenges us moderns to follow his example. But a certain caution is present as well. Paul's example reminds us of the essential nature of thorough training and experience in using rhetorical models to make our case for the Gospel. From every indication out of the contemporary discussions in Greek and Latin philosophical circles in Paul's world, he knew well the technique of the fool's speech in both oral and written versions. The modern preacher or teacher should not try to follow Paul's example in highly exotic strategies of argumentation unless he or she knows such strategies well and is quite comfortable in using them. Hopefully the exegesis of these two chapters has sufficiently highlighted the complexity of this ancient strategy for making one's case on some topic. In our world the case for the Gospel must be laid out within the limitations of the skills of the presenter and under the guidance of God's Spirit.

Additionally, Paul's example urges caution out of the often expressed uncomfortableness of Paul in defending his ministry in this manner. This is expressed at the very outset in 11:1, *Ὁφελον ἀνείχεσθέ μου μικρόν τι ἀφροσύνης, Please endure from me a little foolishness*. It resurfaces again in 11:16, *Πάλιν λέγω, μή τις με δόξη ἄφρονα εἶναι, Again I say, Let no one think me a fool*. Once again in 12:1, *Καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, οὐ συμφέρον μὲν, to boast is necessary, but it produces no advantage*. Finally at the end in 12:11, *Γέγονα ἄφρων, ὑμεῖς με ἠναγκάσατε, I have become a fool, you forced me into it!* The pressures from the Corinthians to make his case with thinking they were familiar with was the pressure behind Paul's approach. What Paul teaches us methodologically here is to occasionally step outside our comfort zone, but not to become comfortable in doing it.

An additional caution is to maintain our integrity and values while using exotic methods of presenting our views. The very nature of the fool's speech was to brag on oneself and accomplishments while not appearing arrogant about it. The easiest and most common tactic for this was comparisons with one's opponents. But Paul's values and beliefs asserted that such comparisons were not really possible. Although his opponents had built themselves up as super apostles, the apostle knew that only God's working at Corinth through his ministry had produced the solid Gospel foundation that

existed. Thus his challenge was to compare the self-made false apostles to the working of God through his ministry. A much more complicated challenge. So he had to present himself as a genuinely called apostle, but also as an empty vessel for God to use. Both overt assertion and profound humility had to be presented.

All this became necessary because at stake was not the reputation of two groups of Christian ministers in a 'who is best' competition. Rather the integrity of the true Gospel was at stake. Their self-help version represented spiritual disaster for the Corinthians. The church had been launched on a Gospel stressing humility and self surrender to God. It must continue on that same foundation if it were to flourish and reach greater numbers of people for Christ.

Paul's approach in these two chapters represents a brilliant approach. He communicated with his readership effectively within the framework of their way of thinking. But at the same time he maintained both his integrity and that of the Gospel. That is our challenge today.