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10.2.4 Conclusio, 13:11-13

11 Λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί, χαίρετε, καταρτίζεσθε, παρακαλεῖσθε, τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε, εἰρηνεύετε, καὶ ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ’ ὑμῶν. 12 Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν ἀγίῳ φιλήματι. Ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἅγιοι πάντες.

13 Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.*

11 Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. 12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

13 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,

Conclusio

13.11 Λοιπόν,
ἀδελφοί,
341 χαίρετε,
342 καταρτίζεσθε,
343 παρακαλεῖσθε,
344 τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε,
345 εἰρηνεύετε,
καὶ
346 ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εἰρήνης ἔσται
μεθ’ ὑμῶν.

347 13.12 Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους
ἐν ἀγίῳ φιλήματι.

348 Ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἅγιοι πάντες.

13.13 Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
καὶ
ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ
καὶ
349 ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (ἔστωσαν)
μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Of all the sections of ancient letter that could contain a huge variation of content, the [closing comments](#) of the letter writing is the most diverse.¹ Paul’s letters exhibit the huge diversity typical in the ancient world. Second Corinthians happens to be one of the shorter [expressions of this segment](#) for Paul’s letters. The let-

¹For a treatment of the history of interpretation of the letter Conclusio through 1991, see my lecture to PhD seminar students "Epistolary Research: Bibliographical Overview" at cranfordville.com.

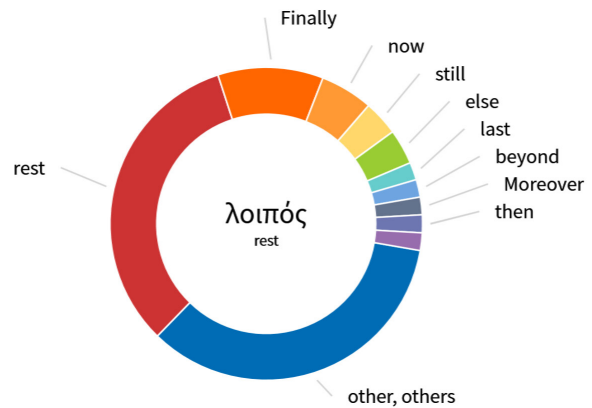
Some brief observations concerning major sources are in order. First, works on this tend to fall into two or three categories: (1) those which focus on the surrounding history of letter writing in the ancient world and on secondarily treat the New Testament phenomena; (2) those which reverse this focus usually with major attention on Paul; (3) also those which are in fact source books of non canonical documents without much treatment of methodology or research into this field.

The works which basically fall into the first category described above include those by Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*; Exler; Koskeniemi; Meecham; Stowers (a mixture of categories one and three); Thyn; White, *The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter, Studies in Ancient Letter Writing*; Winters. Those with major stress on the canonical letters include the publications by Aune; IBD, RLAC and ISBE articles; Doty’s writings; Mullins’ works; Roller; Schneider and Stenger; White, "NT Epistolary Literature in the Framework of Ancient Epistolography," CBQ article. The source book category is centered on the LCB four volume series, White’s *Light from Ancient Letters*; Malherbe’s *Moral Exhortation*; Winter’s book also falls here. A sort of fourth category will be those works which treat some subtopic in epistolary research either in ancient letters generally or more often in the canonical letters. These should be rather evident by title.

ter Conclusio was not a conclusion to a document in the modern sense of the term. The only point where the two terms intersect one another is that they both come at the end of a document. Otherwise, they have entirely different roles to play.

The letter Conclusio was generally important for most letter writers because it provided opportunity to close out a letter on positive terms with the targeted readers of the letter. Given the enormous importance of *φιλία* in Paul's world, maintaining positive friendship with one's readers was critical for maintaining one's status in society. Your value in Paul's world had nothing to do with innate worth, as it does in post-enlightenment western culture. Rather, it was solely determined by one's network of connections with people considered to be at you *στάσις* or above in society. Personal letter writing, outside of family communication, was an important part of maintaining and enhancing that status. Thus both the beginning *Praescriptio*, as well as the *Proem*, and the closing *Conclusio* served as critical bridges for enhancing that friendship connection. The body of the letter could, and often did, contain rebuke and criticism of the readers. But the positive tone of the beginning and ending segments of the letter helped make that possibly negative middle section acceptable to the designated readers. This because *φιλία*, *friendship*, was crucial to maintain. In a society as direct and as vigorously blunt as was Paul's world, people understood critical comments, but wanted to know that the one making them had ultimately their best interest in mind. The two segments of the letter fulfilled that role of affirming genuine interest in the readers.

For the letters of Paul, all of which have a *Conclusio*, an additional role for this ending segment was important. The Jewish Friday evening sabbath meeting both began and ended with formal prayers. From every NT and early Christian writings, the Christian community adopted this synagogogue structure for its gatherings during each week. Thus the *Proem* as a formal prayer of thanksgiving and intercession and the *Benedictio* as a part of the *Conclusio* imitated that meeting structure of opening and closing prayers. In early Judaism as well as in apostolic Christianity these were formal prayers rather than spontaneous prayers, as sometimes is the case in segments of modern Christianity. By so imitating this gathering structure, the letters of Paul gained increased enhance and acceptance among the designated readers. The person carrying the letter to its destination would meet with each of the house church gatherings and read the letter to the assembled group. This would be followed by discussion, mostly question and answer type discussion, so as to be sure that everyone understood the contents of the



letter sender.

The surrounding of the main contents of the letter with formal prayers invoked the presence and blessing of God upon the hearing of the letter as it was being read to the gathered meeting.

Consequently a few items are most always found in Paul's letter *Conclusio*. These are the Greetings and *Benedictio* segments, i.e., the personal hellos and the prayer of blessing upon the hearers of the letter. Thus *φιλία* both with one another and together with God are affirmed at the ending of the letter.

In Second Corinthians we discover both the *ἀσπασμός*, *greeting*, in v. 12, and the *εὐχή τοῦ μακαρισμοῦ*, *prayer of blessing*, in v. 13. But what about verse 11?

10.2.4.1 Concluding Admonitions, v. 11. *Λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί, χαίrete, καταρτίζεσθε, παρακαλεῖσθε, τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε, εἰρηνεύετε, καὶ ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν. Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.*

13.11
 Λοιπόν,
 ἀδελφοί,
 χαίrete,
 καταρτίζεσθε,
 παρακαλεῖσθε,
 τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε,
 εἰρηνεύετε,
 καὶ
 ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εἰρήνης ἔσται
 μεθ' ὑμῶν.

The beginning adverb, *λοιπόν*, *Finally*, has many possible meanings.² The adjective form *λοιπός*, -ή, -όν

²"With the phrase *λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί* (cf. Phil. 4:8) Paul introduces his concluding exhortations (v. 11a), greetings (v. 12), and benedictions (vv. 11b, 13). The adverbial expression (*τὸ λοιπόν*) is an accusative of respect, 'with respect to what remains,' 'as far as the rest is concerned,' and has a variety of meanings.¹ Here it points to concluding comments and means 'finally.'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:

also has an adverbial function in the neuter accusative singular spelling λοιπόν. Basically it specifies what remains or is left whether it is time, measurement etc. Of the 55 NT uses some 26 of them are found in the writings of Paul. Here it is best understood as signaling the transition into the letter Conclusio.³

The vocative case ἀδελφοί, brothers, represents the third instance of this in Second Corinthians: cf. 1:8 and 8:1 also. It is a pastoral reference affirming friendship toward the Corinthians. It functions very similar to ἀγαπητοί, beloved.⁴ Additionally, these vocative case forms also serve quite often as transition markers from one topic to another, which ἀδελφοί is doing here.

This subunit is built around a common ancient Jewish thought construct, *command and promise*. That is, if you practice these commands, the blessing of God will rest upon you. Five present tense imperative verbs in the second person plural are then followed by the promise of God's presence and blessing. This kind of brief and often loosely related series of admonitions is relatively common in both Jewish and non-Jewish ancient letters. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century scholars often labeled these units as the purist form of ancient paraenesis, i.e., moral admonition. Greek and Latin Stoic writings often contain such units of short, rapid fire admonitions. But the command/promise structure here has definite Jewish orientation. Together the admonitions summarize the basic duties of a believing community for living together in a manner that God can bless with His presence.

W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 931–932.]

³"That this is the point of transition to the letter-ending is signified by the initial λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί, an expression which 'typically serves in Paul's letters to introduce a closing hortatory section'.²⁵² Some of these sections are of a general nature. The present passage, however, as in Rom 16:17–20, has direct reference to what has been said in the letter-body.²⁵³ The initial τὸ λοιπόν means 'finally',²⁵⁴ and simply serves to mark the transition." [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), 905.]

⁴"This is the third use of the vocative ἀδελφοί in 2 Corinthians (see 1:8; 8:1; 12:19). Paul uses the term here in addressing the whole Corinthian congregation in order to remind them of the unity that believers have in Christ (note also μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν in v. 13) and of the parity of status between all the sons and daughters (cf. 6:18) within God's family. They are family, and Paul, an apostle, is also their ἀδελφός. Although he occasionally uses ἀδελφός of one's neighbor (1 Thess. 4:6) or of his own kindred by race (Rom. 9:3), the term usually refers to fellow Christians (e.g., 8:23; 11:9; Rom. 8:29), and its conjunction with ἀγαπητοί,³ or an expression such as ἠγαπημένοι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ,⁴ gives it overtones of family love or God's paternal love." [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), 932.]

χαίρετε. Literally, the meaning is **be rejoicing**. But coming here in the Conclusio the context may well signal this as a parting word closer to the English farewell, as many Bible translators assume.⁵ But culturally we are dealing with a situation where χαίρειν can serve both as a greeting or parting admonition to be happy. In Paul's world such was natural, but not in most modern western cultures. Thus to press a distinction between a parting word and its literal meaning is to set up a false dichotomy. As a parting word it has more meaning than the more common ἔρρωσθε as found in Acts 15:29. It also gives some distinctive to Paul just as his standard greeting does in the **Adscriptio** portion of all of his letters, which incidentally played off χαίρειν as well.

The encouragement to be rejoicing reflects a posture adopted by Paul and his associates as stated in v. 9, χαίρομεν γὰρ ὅταν ἡμεῖς ἀσθενῶμεν, ὑμεῖς δὲ δυνατοὶ ἦτε, **for we are rejoicing when we ourselves are weak but you are strong**. The secret of deep inner joy is not circumstances. Rather it comes in the acknowledgment of a personal weakness that is completely dependent upon God through Christ. An ongoing sense of joy is critical to a healthy spiritual life in Christ. The earlier promise of spiritual healing through self-examination in vv. 5-10 that leads to repentance is the path to **discovering this joy**. This Paul desired for the Corinthians as

⁵"With regard to the translation of χαίρετε, it is interesting to observe that most EVV render this imperative by 'farewell'¹⁵ or 'good-bye'¹⁶ while most commentators prefer the rendering 'rejoice.'¹⁷ Now it is incontestable that χαῖρε (singular) and χαίρετε (plural) are a form of greeting used at a time of leave taking as well as of meeting.⁸ But this is probably an instance where the commentaries are to be preferred over the translations. Several considerations support the rendering 'rejoice.'

1. χαίρετε heads a list of imperatives addressed to the readers/hearers, so it is likely that this is also an injunction directed to them (rather than Paul's saying 'I bid you farewell'), especially since in a similar place in another Pauline letter χαίρετε clearly means 'rejoice,' being qualified by πάντοτε (1 Thess. 5:16).

2. NT parallels for the use of χαίρετε (or χαῖρε) as a farewell greeting are lacking, whereas on six occasions these words are initial salutations.⁹

3. In three places χαίρειν ('greeting!') stands at the beginning of a letter (Acts 15:23; 23:26; Jas. 1:1),¹⁰ and in one of these cases the letter ends with ἔρρωσθε ('farewell') (Acts 15:29).

4. In 13:9 the verb χαίρω means 'rejoice.'

5. If χαίρετε meant 'good-bye,' one would expect it to be placed at, rather than near, the end of the letter.

"Although the content of the rejoicing or its reason is not stated, perhaps we should supply ἐν κυρίῳ (as in Phil. 3:1; 4:4a). Like boasting (10:17), rejoicing has its principal focus on who the Lord is and what he has accomplished. In spite of the Corinthians' need for restoration (13:9) and in spite of Paul's threat of discipline (13:2, 10), they can and must rejoice 'in the Lord!'"

[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), 932–933.]

well.

καταρτίζεσθε. The literal sense of καταρτίζω is to **put things in order**. It is close to the English idiom, **straighten up**. Here the idea of repenting comes clearly to the surface but more in the sense of not just a single action but rather as an ongoing process. The uncertainty here is via the use of the middle voice spelling -εσθε, which in the present tense is identical to the passive voice. This impacts the meaning from **put your lives in order** (middle) to **be put in order by paying attention to what I tell you** (passive).⁶ Either idea is possible. And either becomes an obligation for the Corinthians to make any needed changes in their lives once they conduct the self examination advocated in vv. 5-10.

παρακαλεῖσθε. The literal meaning of παρακαλέω is to **give assistance to**. The same ending -εσθε issue as with καταρτίζεσθε above exists here as well. As a middle voice plural the sense is **be encouraging one another**, but the passive voice is **be encouraged**. The present tense form here connotes this action as ongoing process rather than a single instance. The heart of a Christian community, as well as the essential requirement of being a part of it, is the mutual encouragement that comes from fellow believers. From the community should come encouragement, warnings, and help. And παρακαλέω covers all of these aspects with its literal sense of **calling alongside of**.

τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε. The verb φρονέω has an interesting background which helps in the understanding of this Greek idiom.⁷ The idea centers on using one's mind

⁶At 13:9 (where the noun κατάρτισις occurs) we saw that the basic sense of καταρτίζω is 'put in order,' 'restore.'¹¹ Accordingly, if καταρτίζεσθε is middle (with a reflexive sense) it will mean 'set yourselves in order,' 'aim for restoration' (Martin 490, 498–99), 'mend your ways,'¹² or 'put things in order' (NRSV). On the other hand, if this form is passive, the sense will be 'be restored [by God],' where the passive is permissive (Windisch 426; Furnish 585), 'let yourselves be restored,' 'cooperate in your restoration' (Thrall 904).¹³ Either way, the action of the Corinthians is being called for. Paul's prayer for their restoration (v. 9) would be answered in part by their work in setting right what was amiss." [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), 933.]

⁷φρήν, usually plur. φρένες 'diaphragm,'¹¹ 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 deviates 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

to think properly. And thus the idiom τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε carries an emphasis upon unity and like-mindedness.⁸ One should note in English an important distinction between 'unity' and 'uniformity.' The former is what is being stressed by Paul. As this expression is used by Paul in Phil. 2:1-11, the mind of Christ is the defining standard for the thinking of all in the community of believers: Τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, **Let this mind be in you which also was in Christ Jesus** (v. 5). As the community achieves the thinking of Christ on issues etc., it will achieve the unity it needs.

εἰρηνεύετε. This admonition naturally flows out of the previous emphasis upon unity with the sense of being at peace with one another.⁹ This is not merely encouragement to stop fussing with one another, but εἰρήνη, the noun form, stresses the positive aspect of

"The meaning 'mind' etc. occurs in many compounds such as ἄφρων,⁵ 'without understanding,' or εὖθρων '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.]

⁸"The fundamental demand of Pauline exhortation is a uniform direction, a common mind, and unity of thought and will. In Phil. 2:2 the apostle issues an urgent admonition that we are to seek the same goal with a like mind, establishing the given unity and maintaining a Christian disposition in all things, cf. R. 12:16. According to Phil. 2:5⁷⁵ the confession of Christ is itself the standard for the mind of believers whose fellowship is constituted by Christ. In Phil. 4:2 the same admonition occurs in relation to an individual case and with emphasis on fellowship with Christ. In Gl. 5:10⁷⁶ Paul expresses confidence that with a like mind the community will reject any other message. In 2 C. 13:11 the exhortation to unity of mind is given a place in the conclusion of the epistle. In R. 15:5 there is a prayerful desire to the same effect with common praise of God as the goal." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 0:233.]

⁹"But living in agreement with one another would pave the way for the fulfillment of the next imperative. εἰρηνεύετε, 'cultivate peace,' is an injunction to pursue peace as though it were a quarry (τὰ τῆς εἰρήνης διώκωμεν, Rom. 14:19),¹⁸ not only in relations within the church (Mark 9:50; 1 Thess. 5:13) but also in dealings with nonbelievers (Rom. 12:18)." [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), 933–934.]

cultivating everything that promotes peace and harmony. The opposite of εἰρήνη, *peace*, is ἀρῆσις, *division*, which is the impact of the false teachers on the community.

To be certain, these five admonitions will not be easy to achieve in a community as divided as Corinth was. But the apostle knows quite well that these five admonitions line out the critically essential path that will lead to spiritual health and productivity for the apostolic Gospel. The divisiveness of the influence of the outsider false teachers is a dead end path. The adoption of pagan ways of thinking by the insider critics of Paul in the believing community will lead to spiritual deadness and loss of dynamic life from the Holy Spirit. Together these five admonitions summarize the essence and thrust of the entire letter of Second Corinthians. On this basis of a call to obedience to Christ, Paul then moves to affirm the promised blessing of God in this very Jewish thought structure of command / promise.

καὶ ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν. The promise of God's presence in obedience to the preceding admonitions is both familiar and unique in Paul's writings. Much more common is ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν, *the God of peace will be with you*, as in Phil. 4:9¹⁰ (cf. Rom 15:33; 16:20; 1 Cor 14:33; Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 5:23; 2 Thess 3:16; cf. also Heb 13:20). The phrase ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης, *the God of love*, is not found anywhere else in the NT, nor the OT even in the LXX. Here we encounter the creativity of Paul and his writing secretary in closing out the letter.

The tone of this phrase ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν suggests a formal, liturgical blessing

¹⁰"The whole of v 11 parallels Paul's structure of Phil 4:8–9a (cf. 2 Cor 13:11a) and 4:9b (13:11b). Phil 4:8–9a is a command to think on things that are pure and good, as well as a command to practice what Paul does and says and teaches. In 4:9b (linked to Phil 4:8–9a by a καί, 'and') is the promise that the God of peace will be with the Philippians.

"A closer look reveals that these two passages have more in common. Both passages begin with λοιπόν, 'finally' (τὸ λοιπόν in Phil 4:8), though the use of this adverb in Philippians may not signal the end of the letter.¹² Also, the call for the people to have the same mind (τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν) is given by Paul in both contexts (see Phil 2:2, 5; 4:2; in the Philippian church the call was given specifically to Euodia and Syntyche). The admonitions (see above) in both letters are followed by the promise that 'the God of peace will be with you.' More than once (in the Aegean period of his correspondence) Paul has used the phrase 'the peace of God be with you' to cement his admonitions (possibly, in Philippians, the peace of God in 4:9b completes an inclusio started in 4:7).¹³ The connection between the two passages is more than a coincidence. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, the churches of Macedonia were on his mind (chaps. 8 and 9); and in both sets of correspondence his relations with the congregations were a prime factor."

[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), 692–693.]

pronounced upon those following the admonitions.¹¹

¹¹"The second question, however, is more complex. What kind of sentence is v. 11b? Furnish uses the term 'blessing',²⁹⁸ and Weima calls this element of the letter-ending a 'benediction', and regards its content as a 'wish'.²⁹⁹ But the verb ἔσται is in the future indicative. Can this tense and mood be used to express a wish? One would expect the optative εἴη. Further, if the discussion should suggest that v. 11b is simply an assertion, one would then have to ask what its logical relationship is to v. 11a.

"To begin with, what is the justification for treating v. 11b as a 'wish' or 'benediction'? Here we may refer to the work of Wiles.³⁰⁰ In the course of his investigation of Paul's prayers he asks whether there are some 'wish-prayers' which have the verb in the future indicative instead of in the optative, or (to put the question the other way round), whether there are some apparent 'declarations' in the future indicative which may or should be understood as wish-prayers. The texts under consideration are: Rom 16:20a; 1 Cor 1:8; 2 Cor 13:11b; Phil 4:7, 9b, 19; 1 Th 5:24b. Wiles observes that in some instances (Rom 16:20a; Phil 4:19; 1 Th 5:24b) the textual tradition alternates between the future indicative and the optative.³⁰¹ This could indicate that scribes understood the future indicative as the expression of a wish and substituted the optative, simply because 'the two forms could be used interchangeably in petitionary prayer'.³⁰² As further evidence of interchangeability Wiles draws attention to Ps 20:9–11 (LXX); in these verses there is an alternation between optative and future indicative, where the Hebrew text has imperfect jussive forms, 'which would imply a wish'.³⁰³ Having considered the Pauline texts individually, he then concludes that Rom 16:20 is a wish-prayer, that 1 Th 5:24b is a declaration,³⁰⁴ and that 2 Cor 13:11b and two of the Philippians texts are primarily statements, but could also be taken as 'surrogates for peace blessings or prayers near the end of the letter'.³⁰⁵ In the case of 2 Cor 13:11b, Wiles comments further that its situation 'points to its being a surrogate for a peace-prayer in the closing liturgical pattern, in preparation for the holy kiss'.³⁰⁶ This last point is of dubious value, since Wiles depends here on an article by J. A. T. Robinson which itself has come under criticism.³⁰⁷ He is in any case cautious about his conclusions. Weima and Furnish appear more confident that v. 11b is a blessing, though Furnish uses the term 'promise' also, which perhaps confuses the issue somewhat.³⁰⁸ In favour of the view that v. 11b constitutes a wish, we could refer to the possible influence on Paul of the Semitic peace-wish as an epistolary farewell.³⁰⁹ Against this interpretation, however, there is still the ambiguity of the indicative verb, and the fact that this so-called 'peace benediction' does not, either, follow the pattern of Paul's grace benedictions. A comparable peace benediction would run: ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εἰρήνης μεθ' ὑμῶν.

"Hence, the alternative interpretation of v. 11b clearly requires consideration. At face value this half-verse appears to be simply the declaration of a promise. It is what its form indicates: a statement. Why the elaborate argumentation designed to present it as a benediction? As we have briefly noted above, it is the logical relationship of 11b to 11a that is problematic. Although the connective is merely the comparatively neutral καί, this in itself allows space for conjecture as to the existence of some more specific logical link in Paul's mind.

"Is the relationship conditional? Windisch claims that v. 11b is an assurance that God will be with the Corinthians, provided that they pay attention to the exhortations of v. 11a. These imperatives function, logically, as the protasis of a conditional concept which has v. 11b as its apodosis. The notion is 'Pelagian'.³¹⁰ There is, of

Indeed, ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης clearly has this quality elsewhere in Paul's usage. This literary structure then argues for the descriptive genitive understanding of τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εἰρήνης, *of love and peace*. That is, God who Himself is the essence of love and peace. But as the promise segment of the command / promise structure established here by καὶ further asserts a subjective genitive role for τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εἰρήνης. That is, God who supplies love and peace. Most commentators present these as mutually exclusive alternative understandings, but nothing prevents one from seeing them as mutually complementary terms.¹² The location of the phrase both in the Conclusio and as the promise side of the Hebraistic thought construct argues strongly for

course, no explicit syntactical evidence for this interpretation. But it is probably rejected more because of its theological implications than on account of syntactical deficiency. Is God's presence (not a matter of grace but) something that has to be earned or deserved by amendment of conduct and attitudes? Another reading of the verse, supported by Barrett and Furnish, is that v. 11b gives the grounding for v. 11a. The fact that God is the supplier of love and peace will make it possible for the Corinthians to put Paul's exhortations into practice.³¹¹ But this would surely require something like ὁ γὰρ θεός ... Or perhaps Paul is simply juxtaposing separate syntactical items, i.e., a string of imperatives followed by the assertion of a promise, without intending to suggest any organic relationship between them.³¹² This is the simplest solution. It is obviously possible to promise, by implication, God's presence to help and support the Corinthians as they endeavour to respond to Paul's exhortations without making the support conditionally dependent upon the endeavour.³¹³

"A definite conclusion is difficult. On balance, however, we prefer to understand v. 11b as a promise, somewhat loosely connected in thought with v. 11a in the last of the various ways we have noted. The fact that the grace-benediction in v. 13 mentions God in addition to Christ (and the Spirit) might also tell against the interpretation of v. 11b as a benediction."

[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), 909–911.]

¹²"The imperatives are followed by and (καὶ) and the future indicative, the God of love and peace shall be with you. If this is a substitute for a conditional sentence ('If you pull yourselves together ... then the God of love and peace ...') it may rest upon a Semitic construction, but need not do so, since there are Greek parallels (Beyer, p. 253). But it is not certain that this form of conditional construction (plainly to be seen at 6:17) is used here. In his final words Paul, it may be, simply puts separate propositions together. Do this; do that; God will be with you. Curiously, the term the God of love does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. The God of peace occurs at Rom. 15:33; 16:20; (1 Cor. 14:33); Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23; (2 Thess. 3:16); Heb. 13:20. It was evidently a regular Pauline concluding formula. The meaning appears to be not only that God is himself characterized by love and peace, but that he supplies love (cf. Rom. 5:5) and peace (cf. Rom. 5:1; 14:17), thus making possible the fulfilment of the precepts Paul has just uttered." [C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Black's New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 1973), 342–343.]

the complementary perspective.

Clearly the promise presence of God, ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν, is collective oriented. That is, God will be present in your assembled gatherings.¹³ The divine presence becomes the promised blessing that supplies love and peace which enables the fivefold paths of obedience to God. Were the Corinthians to follow these paths their problems and failures would be resolved and turned into spiritual health.

10.2.4.2 Greetings, v. 12. Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν ἀγίῳ φιλήματι. Ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἅγιοι πάντες. *Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.*

347 ^{13.12} Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους
ἐν ἀγίῳ φιλήματι.

348 Ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἅγιοι πάντες.

In Paul's world the critical role of φιλία, friendship, play an enormously more important role than it typically does in western hemispheric Christianity. To be sure, it is more important in European culture than in the Americas, but still not at quite the same level in the ancient Mediterranean cultures. Friendship were formal and personal at the same time. One's individual worth was not inherent to the person, but determined overwhelmingly by the social connections established particularly among those of his own στάσις and especially with those at a higher status than his. Establishing those connections was critical. But maintaining and cultivating those connections along with expanding them were equally important. This stands in the background of the Greetings section of every ancient letter.

The twofold perspective on greetings often found in this section in Paul's letter surfaces here in Second Corinthians: |===> and <===|. ¹⁴

¹³"When εἶναι μετὰ ('be with') is used of God's or Christ's presence with humans, it signifies the divine favor and aid as supporting some human endeavor²⁶ or intervening in some human situation.²⁷ The particular form that this divine help would take in the present case was the granting of love and peace." [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), 934–935.]

¹⁴Note the following:

1 Thess. 5:26. Ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς πάντας ἐν φιλήματι ἀγίῳ. *Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.*

2 Thess. 3:17. Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῆ ἐμῆ χειρὶ Παύλου, ὃ ἐστὶν σημεῖον ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιτολῇ· οὕτως γράφω. *This greeting I write with my own hand, which is the sign in every letter; thusly I write.*

1 Cor. 16:19-22. 19 Ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῆς Ἀσίας, ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς ἐν κυρίῳ πολλὰ Ἀκύλας καὶ Πρίσκα σὺν τῇ κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίᾳ 20 ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἀδελφοὶ πάντες. Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγίῳ. 21 Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῆ ἐμῆ χειρὶ Παύλου. 19 *The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, greet you warmly in the Lord. 20 All the brothers and sisters send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. 21 I, Paul,*

|==>, Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν ἀγίῳ φιλήματι, **Greet one another with a holy kiss.** The aorist imperative is standard for this.¹⁵ This denotes a specific action during the community house church gatherings.¹⁶ The standard

write this greeting with my own hand.

Rom. 16:16, 21-23 16 ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγίῳ. ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς αἱ ἐκκλησίαι πᾶσαι τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

21 Ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Τιμόθεος ὁ συνεργός μου καὶ Λούκιος καὶ Ἰάσων καὶ Σωσίπατρος οἱ συγγενεῖς μου. 22 ἀσπάζομαι ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ Τέρτιος ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἐν κυρίῳ. 23 ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Γάιος ὁ ξένος μου καὶ ὅλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας. ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Ἐραστός ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως καὶ Κούαρτος ὁ ἀδελφός.

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

21 Timothy, my co-worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my relatives. 22 I Tertius, the writer of this letter, greet you in the Lord. 23 Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.

Philm. 23-24. 23 Ἀσπάζεται σε Ἐπαφρᾶς ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, 24 Μᾶρκος, Ἀρίσταρχος, Δημᾶς, Λουκάς, οἱ συνεργοί μου. 23 Eraphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, 24 and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

Col. 4:10-15. 10 Ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Ἀρίσταρχος ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου καὶ Μᾶρκος ὁ ἀνεπιὸς Βαρναβᾶ (περὶ οὗ ἐλάβετε ἐντολὰς, ἐὰν ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, δέξασθε αὐτόν) 11 καὶ Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰούστος, οἱ ὄντες ἐκ περιτομῆς, οὗτοι μόνον συνεργοί εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, οἵτινες ἐγένηθησάν μοι παρηγορία. 12 ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Ἐπαφρᾶς ὁ ἐξ ὑμῶν, δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, πάντοτε ἀγωνιζόμενος ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς, ἵνα σταθῆτε τέλειοι καὶ πεπληροφορημένοι ἐν παντὶ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ. 13 μαρτυρῶ γὰρ αὐτῷ ὅτι ἔχει πολὺν πόνον ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καὶ τῶν ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεραπόλει. 14 ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Λουκάς ὁ ἰατρός ὁ ἀγαπητός καὶ Δημᾶς. 15 Ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ ἀδελφούς καὶ Νύμφαν καὶ τὴν κατ' οἶκον αὐτῆς ἐκκλησίαν. 10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, as does Mark the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him. 11 And Jesus who is called Justus greets you. These are the only ones of the circumcision among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. 12 Eraphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you. He is always wrestling in his prayers on your behalf, so that you may stand mature and fully assured in everything that God wills. 13 For I testify for him that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. 14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you. 15 Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

Phil. 4:21-22. 21 Ἀσπάσασθε πάντα ἅγιον ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ σὺν ἐμοὶ ἀδελφοί. 22 ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι, μάλιστα δὲ οἱ ἐκ τῆς Καισαροῦ οἰκίας. 21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The friends who are with me greet you. 22 All the saints greet you, especially those of the emperor's household.

2 Tim. 4:19. Ἄσπασαι Πρίσκαν καὶ Ἀκύλαν καὶ τὸν Ὀνησιφόρου οἶκον. Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

Some of the personal letters of Paul do not contain greetings, and neither does the circular letter to the Ephesians. Nor does Galatians which was addressed to multiple churches.

¹⁵"It is always ἀσπάσασθε; also 3 Jn 15 ἄσπασαι according to S (ἀσπάζου also occasionally in the papyri)." [Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner, and Robert Walter Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 173.]

¹⁶ἀσπάζομαι fut. ptc. ἀσπασομένου 3 Macc. 1:8; 1 aor. ἠσπασάμην (s. next entry; Hom.+) 'greet'.

1. to engage in hospitable recognition of another (w. varying degrees of intimacy), *greet, welcome* τινά someone Just., A I, 65, 2

a. *through word or gesture or both*: of those entering a house **Mt 10:12; Lk 1:40; Ac 21:19**; Hv 5:1. Of those meeting others (Jos., Ant. 8, 321) **Lk 10:4**; welcome, greet someone (Philostrat., Vi. Apoll. 1, 12) **Mk 9:15**; Hv 1, 1, 4; 1, 2, 2; 4, 2, 2; AcPl Ha 7:38; 8:3. Of those departing take leave of (X., An. 7, 1, 8; Nicol. Dam.: 90 Fgm. 68, 7 Jac.; Plut., Aemil. P. 270 [29, 1] ἀσπασάμενος ἀνέξουξεν) **Ac 20:1, 12 D; 21:6** v.l.; AcPl Ha 5, 13.—**Mt 5:47** ἄ. here denotes more than a perfunctory salutation and requires some such rendering as spend time in warm exchange (cp. X., Cyr. 1, 4, 1; Ael. Aristid. 31, 6 K.=11 p. 128 D.; Aelian, VH 9, 4; Appian, Bell. Civ. 3, 79 §322 τ. ἐναντίους); w. ἀγαπάω (vs. 46), of which it is almost a synonym (as Plut., Mor. 143b; s. HAlmqvist, Plut. u. das NT, '46, 34; Ptolem., Apotel. 1, 3, 17.—W. φιλέω: Hierocles 19, 460; opp. μισέω: Simplicius in Epict. p. 31, 6). See FPorporato, Verb. Domini 11, '31, 15–22.—Freq. in written greetings (cp. the exx. in Ltzm., Griech. Papyri [Kleine Texte 14] 2 1910, nos. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13.—FZiemann, De Epistularum Graec. Formulæ Soll., diss. Halle 1911, 325ff; FXJexler, The Form of the Ancient Gk. Letter 1923; ORoller, D. Formular d. paul. Briefe '33, 67ff; HKoskenniemi, Studien z. Idee u. Phraseologie d. griech. Briefes '56, 148ff); the impv. may be transl. greetings to (someone) or remember me to (someone); other moods than impv. may be rendered wish to be remembered, greet, send greetings **Ro 16:3, 5ff; 1 Cor 16:19f; 2 Cor 13:12; Phil 4:21f; Col 4:10, 12, 14f; 2 Ti 4:19, 21; Tit 3:15; Phlm 23; Hb 13:24; 1 Pt 5:13f; 2 J 13; 3 J 15**; IMg ins; 15; ITr ins; 12:1; 13:1; IRO ins; 9:3; IPhd ins; 11:2; ISm 11:1; 12:1f; 13:1f; IPol 8:2f. Another person than the writer of the letter sometimes adds greetings of his own **Ro 16:22** (sim. POxy 1067, 25 κἀγὼ Ἀλέξανδρος ἀσπάζομαι ὑμᾶς πολλά). ἄ. πολλά (besides the pap just mentioned also PParis 18, 3 [Dssm., B 215]; POxy 930, 22; 935, 22; PGrenf II, 73, 4 [=Ltzm. Pap. nos. 13, 14, 15]) greet warmly **1 Cor 16:19**; ἄ. κατ' ὄνομα (PParis 18, 15 [Dssm., B 216]; POxy 930, 26 [=Ltzm. Pap. no. 13]) greet by name 3 J 15; ISm 13:2 (πάντας κατ' ὄνομα as PMich 206, 20ff [II A.D.]); ἄσπασαι τοὺς φιλοῦντας ἡμᾶς ἐν πίστει (PFay 119, 25ff ἀσπάζου τοὺς φιλοῦντες [sic] ἡμᾶς πρὸς ἀλήθειαν. Sim. BGU 814, 38) **Tit 3:15**. Among friends the greeting is accompanied by a kiss (Ps.-Lucian, De Asin. 17 φιλήμασιν ἠσπάζοντο ἀλλήλους; Helioid. 10, 6; φιλήματι Just., A I, 65, 2; cp. the apocryphal preface Ath. 32, 3 [Resch, Agrapha 137]), hence: ἄ. ἐν φιλήματι **Ro 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Th 5:26; 1 Pt 5:14**. Of homage to a king hail, acclaim (Dionys. Hal. 4, 39; Plut., Pomp. 624 [12, 4]; 13, 7; cp. Jos., Ant. 10, 211) **Mk 15:18** (cp. Philo, In Flacc. 38).

b. *of short friendly visits*, 'look in on' **Ac 18:22; 21:7**; IRO 1:1. Of official visits pay one's respects to (Sb 8247, 13; 15 [II A.D.]; BGU 248, 12; 347 I, 3 and II, 2; 376 I, 3; Jos., Ant. 1, 290; 6, 207) **Ac 25:13** (OGI 219, 43 [III B.C.]) s. Schwyzer II 301, also 297. Of the greeting given to a priest in a liturgical service τοῦ ἀσπάσασθαι αὐτὸν ἐν εὐχῇ to greet him with prayer GJs 24:1.

2. to express happiness about the arrival of some, wel-
come, greet, fig. ext. of I in ref. to someth. intangible (Eur., Ion 587; Chariton 6, 7, 12; Alciphron 1, 3, 3; Diog. L. σοφίαν ἀσπάζόμενος; POxy 41, 17 τὴν παρ' ὑμῶν τιμήν; CPR 30 II, 39; Philo, Det. Pot. Ins. 21; Jos., Ant. 6, 82; 7, 187; TestGad 3:3; Just.) τὰς ἐπαγγελίας the promises **Hb 11:13**.—DELG. M-M. 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,

first century verbal greeting was χαίρειν as 2 John 10-11 signals.

The greeting action of a kiss on the cheek, ἐν ἀγίῳ φιλήματι, is mentioned in 1 Thess., 1 Cor., 2 Cor., and Rom. Such was typical in the Greco-Roman world of Paul, just as it remains so today in Europe. The origin of kissing in the ancient world is interesting.¹⁷ It stands 2000), 144.]

174. φιλέω 'To Kiss,' καταφιλέω, φίλημα.

a. Usage.

As the use for sensual love shows (→ 116, 6 ff.), φιλέω, like ἀγαπάω (→ I, 36, 32 ff.; 37, 11 ff.), can have positive and palpable acts of love as its content, e.g., caressing, fondling,³⁵ and esp. kissing. ἀγαπάω³⁶ is hardly ever used for this, but from³⁷ Theogn.³⁸ φιλέω³⁹ is, and then, since its meaning is not clear,⁴⁰ from Xenoph.⁴¹ and increasingly we find καταφιλέω.⁴² From Aesch.⁴³ to the NT⁴⁴ the noun for 'kiss' is always φίλημα.⁴⁵

b. The Kiss in Antiquity outside the Bible.⁴⁶

(a) The origin of kissing is probably to be sought in animistic ideas. Both the kiss on the mouth and the equally widespread nose-kiss serve orig. to convey the soul, → 125, 17 ff.⁴⁷ Later the essence of kissing was often found in this transfer of breath, the 'soul,' inward living fellowship being set up by the transferring and intermingling of ψυχαί.⁴⁸ But another derivation finds the origin in the indrawing of breath with the twofold aim of 1. knowing the related person by scent and 2. the resultant pleasure,⁴⁹ for in the Vedic writings there is no word for kiss but there is ref. to 'sniffing' and 'scent.'⁵⁰

(b) Kisses are for relatives, rulers, and those we love. It is secondary that the kiss expresses erotic inclination,⁵¹ as one may see in relation to the Gk. world from the fact that Hom. does not mention the lovers' kiss and it is of no gt. importance in class. lit.⁵² At first we find only kissing by close relatives. Children are kissed by their parents, Hom. Il., 6, 474; Aristoph. Lys., 890, and parents, Eur. Andr., 416; Aristoph. Nu., 81 and grandparents, Xenoph. Cyrop., I, 3, 9 are kissed by children and grandchildren. Similarly brothers and sisters kiss, Eur. Phoen., 1671, friends⁵³ and hosts and guests, Apul. Met., IV, 1, 1; Ps.-Luc. Asin., 17, 54 and in Hom. at least servants and maids kiss their masters, Od., 16, 15, 21; 17, 35; 21, 224; 22, 499. In all these instances the kiss expresses close relationship⁵⁵ and the corresponding love.⁵⁶

In many cases the element of respect is present as well as love. This is predominant in a practice which comes from the East and which was orig. meant to honour the one kissed but then came to be regarded as an honour for the one who kisses, namely, the privilege of kissing the king, which was granted to those closest to him, not merely his relatives, but also the 'friends of the king' (→ 147, 14 ff.). This custom was adopted by Alexander the Gt., and on those elevated to be his 'relatives,' Arrian. Alexandri Anabasis,⁵⁷ VII, 11, 1, 6 f.,⁵⁸ as well as his Macedonian 'friends,' it was conferred as a right, although only together with obeisance (→ VI, 758, 15 ff.), cf. Plut. Alex., 54 (I, 696a). Then by way of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic empires it was introduced to Rome by Augustus, cf. Suet. Caes., III, 10, 2; Sen. De ira, II, 24, 1, abolished again as a daily custom by Tiberius, Suet. Caes., III, 34, 2, and then re-adopted.⁵⁹ The Younger Pliny in Panegyricus, 23, 1 lauds Trajan for granting the senate the right of kissing at the beginning and end of sessions. The kiss conferred by the emperor was regarded as a high honour, cf. Amm. Marc., 22, 9, 13 and also 29, 5, 16. but that demanded by the emperor was often a burdensome duty, cf. Thdrt., V, 16, 3. Many hoped to share the imperial power of healing through the kiss, cf. Script. Hist. Aug., 1, 25, 1 (→ 123, 6 f. with n. 94).⁶⁰

Like the emperors, Roman patrons allowed themselves to be kissed by their clients, cf. Mart., 8, 44, 5; 12, 26, 4; 59, 2–10.

Attestation of the erotic kiss is relatively late;⁶¹ it occurs in the Graeco-Roman world along with the kiss of love for the opposite sex, e.g., Theogn., 1, 265; Aristoph. Lys., 923; Av., 671 and 674, and is esp. common in bucolic poetry, e.g., Theocr. Idyll., 2, 126; 23, 9, in the elegy of love, e.g., Prop., I, 3, 16,⁶² and the novel, e.g., Heliodor. Aeth., I, 2, 6, but almost as common is the kiss of homosexual love, e.g., Plat. Resp., V, 468b; Ael Var. Hist., 13, 4; Catullus (→ n. 51), 99; Petronius Satyricon (→ n. 48), 74, 8; 75, 4.⁶³

(c) Kisses are on the mouth, hands and feet, along with substitute kisses. As the erotic kiss is secondary compared to kissing close relatives, so is the kiss on the mouth, at least in India and Greece.⁶⁴ It does not occur at all in Hom.,⁶⁵ but we find kissing on the cheeks, the forehead,⁶⁶ the eyes, Od., 16, 15; 17, 39,⁶⁷ the shoulders, 17, 35; 21, 224; 22, 499,⁶⁸ and the hands, 16, 15; 21, 225; 24, 398.⁶⁹ As the erotic kiss develops, the kiss on the mouth becomes predominant as the true kiss. But where the kiss is a mark of honour, it is usually on the hands,⁷⁰ Hom. Il., 24, 478; Menand. Epit., 97 f. (→ 119, n. 42), or the breast, Luc. Nec., 12; Nigrinus, 21; Petronius Satyricon, 91, 9,⁷¹ or the knee, as already in Egypt, cf. Hom. Od., 14, 279, and also the Gks., cf. Hom. Il., 8, 371,⁷² or the feet.⁷³ With direct kisses on some part of the body of those honoured or loved, we find various substitute kisses on things⁷⁴ connected with the ones who should really be kissed, e.g., when they are physically out of reach, Xenoph. Cyrop., VI, 4, 10,⁷⁵ or too exalted.⁷⁶ In the latter case the earth before their feet is kissed⁷⁷ or a hand kiss is blown towards them, Juv., 4, 118.⁷⁸

(d) Occasions of kissing are greeting, parting, making contracts, reconciliation, games etc. Kissing at meeting and salutation seems to have been general throughout the Orient.⁷⁹ We find it in Persia,⁸⁰ and there are many ref. to it among the Gks. and Romans, cf. Hom. Od., 16, 15, 21; 17, 35 etc., then much later (→ 126, 26 f.; 138, 17 ff.), e.g., Apul. Met., IV, 1, 1; Luc. Lucius, 17; Chrys. Hom. 2 C., 30, 1 on 13:12 (MPG, 61 [1862], 606). The *suprema oscula* in Tac. Hist., IV, 46 is an instance of the kiss at parting. The kissing of the dying or dead might also be mentioned in this connection, Soph. Trach., 938; Statius Silvae, 81 II, 1, 172 f.; Prop., II, 13, 29; Suet. Caes., II, 99; Theocr. Idyll., 23, 40 f.⁸² → 144, 23 ff. The kiss is a seal of fidelity when a pact of friendship is made, Aristoph. Ra., 755, or a contract, e.g., δεξιάς τέ σφισιν ἔδοσαν καὶ ἐφίλησαν ἀλλήλους,⁸³ Dio C., 48, 37, 1. On reception into a closed circle the kiss is a sign of brotherhood; thus the newly elected, chief of a robber band kisses each member, Apul. Met., VII, 9, 1.⁸⁴ Those received into a religious fraternity by a kiss are called οἱ ἐντὸς τοῦ φιλήματος.⁸⁵ The kiss is also a sign and pledge of reconciliation, e.g., in the ancient eastern myth of Nergal and Ereshkigal,⁸⁶ then among the Gks. and Romans, cf. διαλλάξεις με φιλάσας, Theocr. Idyll., 23, 42; ὁ δὲ πέννης ἰλάσατο τὸν θεὸν φιλήσας μόνον τὴν αὐτοῦ δεξιάν, De sacrificiis, 12; cf. Plaut. Poenulus, 404; Petronius Satyricon, 91, 9; 99, 4 → 139, 16 f.; on the conclusion of a treaty of peace, 109, 4.⁸⁷ In the mysteries the initiate kisses the mystagogue, Apul. Met., XI, 25, 7, linked here with the plea for pardon, cf. Lk. 7:38 → 139, 9 ff. Finally kissing is common in games; there are contests in kissing in which the one 'who kisses the sweetest' carries off the prize,⁸⁸ and there are games, esp. the cottabos,⁸⁹ in which kisses are the prizes.⁹⁰

(e) The effects of kisses (→ 119, n. 45)⁹¹ and their value were estimated very differently. With uninhibited pleasure in them we find serious warnings,⁹² esp. against the homoerotic kiss, Xe-

in the background of the early Christian practices mentioned here. The first century Jewish negative attitude toward kissing, which is somewhat different than in the OT, must not be overlooked since Jewish Christians made up an important segment of these Christian communities in Diaspora Judaism.¹⁸ For the Christian use noph. Mem., I, 3, 8–13, 93 but also against excess, Mart., 12, 59; Cl. Al. Paed., III, 81, 3. We even find prohibition on the ground that kisses can be the vehicle of demonic infection or cultic defilement, Hdt., II, 41, 3 → 127, 10 ff. with n. 137.

(f) Cultic kisses play a gt. part in antiquity and they are not just signs of religious reverence (→ 122, 16 f.) but also means to attain supernatural strength.⁹⁴ Images are kissed,⁹⁵ esp. the mouth, chin,⁹⁶ hands,⁹⁷ and feet.⁹⁸ A direct continuation of this pagan custom is kissing statues of the saints both in the West, cf. kissing the foot of the statue of Peter in Rome, and esp. too in the East.⁹⁹ The kisses that gods and heroes have themselves given (or give) when they appear to their favourites are a counterpart, e.g., Philostr. Heroic., 290 (II, 142, 22 f.). In the common practice of cultic incubation¹⁰⁰ these kisses of the gods are a means of healing, as in the temples of Aesculapius.¹⁰¹ In the cultic sphere, too, we find many substitute kisses; indeed, these are almost the rule, esp. kissing the earth at shrines (→ VI, 759, 15 ff.), or in front of idols, which is probably older than kissing the idols themselves,¹⁰² or altars (→ VI, 759, n. 13),¹⁰³ temple thresholds,¹⁰⁴ sacred trees,¹⁰⁵ amulets,¹⁰⁶ and urns of the dead.¹⁰⁷ Basically important here is that all these sacra share the sanctity and mana of the deities with which one is thus brought into direct contact.¹⁰⁸ One of these substitute kisses is the blown kiss (→ VI, 759, 8 ff.),¹⁰⁹ esp. for stellar deities which cannot be reached,¹¹⁰ but also as a hasty sign of reverence for other gods,¹¹¹ e.g., when passing sanctuaries¹¹² and graves.¹¹³

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:118–124.]

¹⁸II. The Kiss in the Old Testament and Judaism.

1. In some OT passages we may see traces of the animistic origin of the kiss (→ 119, 4 ff.), esp. Gn. 2:7: God breathes the breath of life into the nostrils of lifeless man,¹²³ cf. also Ez. 37:9 f. and Jn. 20:22, and also 4 Bασ. 4:34: “He (sc. Elisha) put his mouth upon his mouth” (sc. the dead boy at Shunem) to convey life to him.¹²⁴ One may see clearly here the idea of transmitting the soul-breath by the life-giving contact of the nose or mouth. The theme of conveying powers of soul by the kiss also plays a part in the consecration of the king, where we find a kiss along with the anointing, 1 Bασ. 10:1.125

2. The OT also tells us that parents and grandparents (→ 119, 14 ff.) kiss their children, Gn. 31:28; 32:1; 2 Bασ. 14:33; Tob. 10:12 Cod. AB, or grandchildren, Gn. 31:28; 32:1; 48:10. Even more frequently the OT ref. to children kissing their parents, Gn. 27:26 f.; 50:1; 3 Bασ. 19:20; Tob. 5:17 Cod. S. We also find brothers and sisters kissing one another, Gn. 33:4; 45:15; Ex. 4:27, cf. Cant. 8:1, and other close relatives kiss, Gn. 29:11, 13, as do parents-in-law and children-in-law, Ex. 18:7; Rt. 1:9, 14; Tob. 7:6; Joseph and Aseneth (→ n. 125), and also friends, 1 Bασ. 20:41 → 120, 7 ff.¹²⁶ Along with the kiss of relationship and friendship we find the kiss of respect in the OT, as when the king kisses an old and well-deserving subject, 2 Bασ. 19:40. In particular the kiss of respect plays no small role in later Judaism.¹²⁷

3. As outside the Bible the kiss on the lips in the service of Eros becomes the true kiss, so it is in the OT world. This may be seen clearly in Prv. 24:26: “As a kiss on the lips, so is a good answer.” Again it is mostly presupposed even when not expressly

of a kiss in greeting, these Jewish Christians at Corinth would have had to overcome their Jewish heritage. The role of the kiss generally in the NT is more limited than in the surrounding non-Jewish culture.¹⁹ The mentioned, cf. Gn. r., 70, 12 on 29:11. But when the ref. is to the kiss of honour → 121, 3 ff., in the OT too the hands are kissed, e.g., Sir. 29:5, 128 the knees,¹²⁹ and esp. the feet. In the first instance, however, the kissing of the feet, like the humiliating kissing of the earth,¹³⁰ is ascribed in the OT to the nations, cf. Ps. 2:12,¹³¹ but forbidden to the Israelites, since it cannot be separated from proskynesis,¹³² cf. Mordecai in relation to Haman in Έσθ. 4:17δ. In the course of further development, however, kissing the feet comes to be practised by the Jews too as mark of grateful respect, b. Ket., 63a; b. Sanh., 27b; j. Pea, 1, 1 (15d, 28).¹³³ The Rabb. also mention many substitute kisses (→ 121, 7 ff.; 123, 13 ff.) apart from kissing the earth.¹³⁴

4. Firmly rooted in custom, and hence not contested by the Rabb., was the kiss of greeting and salutation and also of parting. The early stories of the OT have many instances of the kiss of greeting, Gn. 29:11, 13; 33:4; Ex. 4:27; 18:7; 2 Bασ. 20:9c, n. 243,¹³⁵ and also the kiss of parting, Gn. 31:28; 32:1; 2 Bασ. 19:40; 3 Bασ. 19:20; Rt. 1:9, 14; Tob. 5:17; 10:12; 3 Macc. 5:49, and in the Rabb., e.g., b. Git., 57b. In particular circumstances the kiss may also be in the OT a sign and proof of reconciliation, Gn. 33:4; 45:15; 2 Bασ. 14:33.¹³⁶ It may ratify an adoption, Gn. 48:10, or be given in blessing, e.g., Gn. 27:26 f., and cf. Jos. and Aseneth, 22, 5, mutual here, cf. 20, 4 and 21, 5.

5. Apart from the circumstances mentioned, the kiss is judged critically and rejected, partly so in the OT and totally in Judaism. This applies not merely to the harlot's kiss, Prv. 7:13,¹³⁷ but to the kiss of Eros in gen.¹³⁸ Cant. sings this kiss; it begins: “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,” 1:2, cf. also 8:1. In the gen. view of the Rabb., however, Cant. was acceptable, and could have a place in the Canon, only on the basis of thoroughgoing allegorical interpretation. Similarly, for fear of demonic defilement, the kisses of impure Gentiles were avoided in Judaism, cf. Jos. and Aseneth, 8, 5–7.

6. The OT has nothing comparable to the cultic kissing of paganism mentioned earlier. In Jewish legend, however, we find the counterpart to one specific form of the cultic kiss, i.e., that which a god gives his worshippers → 123, 12 ff. This is the kiss of God. But in contrast to the positive nature of such kisses in paganism, Judaism, surprisingly, attributes to it for the most part¹³⁹ the very opposite effect; it kills. It might be that another widespread animistic idea lies behind this, namely, that one can catch with the mouth the soul of a dying man as he breathes his last → 122, n. 82.¹⁴⁰ Acc. to the Jewish Haggada God kissed Moses on the lonely mount “and took his soul with the kiss of the mouth,” Dt. r., 11, 10 on 31:14 (Wünsche, 117).¹⁴¹ This legend rested on a misunderstanding or more probably a deliberate reinterpretation of לָפֶה (הוֹדֵהוּ) in Dt. 34:5: “on the mouth” for “acc. to the word” of Yahweh.¹⁴² Acc. to b. BB, 17a Bar.¹⁴³ Aaron and Miriam¹⁴⁴ also died through God's kiss. Other legends say the same of Abraham,¹⁴⁵ Isaac and Jacob,¹⁴⁶ b. BB, 17a. Indeed, acc. to Rabb. expectation all the righteous of the Torah are made worthy of death through God's kiss.¹⁴⁷ For the Rabb. this kiss is the easiest of the 903 forms of death¹⁴⁸ that they distinguish, b. Ber., 8a.149

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:125–127.]

¹⁹II. The Kiss in the New Testament.

In the NT the kiss naturally plays a subordinate role. Its occurrence in some passages is thus of theological significance.

1. Manner and Occasion of Kissing.

Among the types of kisses mentioned we do not find the erotic kiss (→ 120, 21 ff.), just as we do not find φιλέω used for “to love” in the erotic sense (→ 128, 11 ff.; → n. 22). Nor do we find the kiss between close relatives (except at Lk. 15:20 → 139, 16 f.). On the other hand Lk. 7:45 presupposes the custom²²⁴ of a greeting kiss²²⁵ (→ 121, 12 ff.; 126, 25 ff.) and the father’s kiss in Lk. 15:20²²⁶ (but cf. → 139, 16 f.) and Judas’ kiss in Lk. 22:47 (→ 140, 15 f.) might well be put in this category.²²⁷ There is only one emphatic ref. to the parting kiss, Ac. 20:37 → 139, 17 ff. In many cases where one might expect greeting or parting kisses to be mentioned, they are perhaps implied in other words like ἀσπάζομαι (→ I, 496, 10 ff. cf. Ac. 21:5 f. with 20:36f.; R. 16:16 → 139, 21 ff.),²²⁸ → n. 37.²²⁹ The kisses of Lk. 22:47 f.; 7:38, 45 might be meant as marks of honour → 120, 3 ff.; 126, 16 f. If it was customary for a disciple to honour his master with a kiss when seeing him again or parting, the kiss of Judas (→ 140, 8 ff.) might have seemed completely natural to those present. Again the kiss which Jesus did not get from His host in Lk. 7:45, while it might have been the customary kiss at greeting (→ VII, 232, n. 219), was more likely the sign of special respect such as one finds among teachers, → n. 127; → 126, 21 ff.²³⁰ In any case kissing the feet of Jesus was a mark of unusual reverence, Lk. 7:38, 45.

The many kisses of the woman who sinned much are, of course, far more; they are signs of repentance. In the antithetical list²³¹ (Lk. 7:44–46) in which Jesus contrasts the lack of love and respect on the part of His Pharisaic host with the superabounding love and respect of the sinful woman, the kiss is the decisive embodiment of ἀγάπη, which for its part is the sign of accepted forgiveness, v. 47. If the woman cannot do enough in her repeated kissing of the feet (v. 45)—the imperfect κατεφίλει in v. 38 is already to the same effect—the significance of the whole event is here gathered up in the kiss. The kiss of the father in Lk. 15:20 is to be regarded as supremely a sign of reconciliation → 122, 12 ff. The parting kiss of the Ephesian elders in Ac. 20:37²³² is also an expression of their gratitude (→ 126, 21 ff.) for all that Paul had done for his churches. This kiss might also have a liturgical character, since it stands in direct relation to a common prayer, v. 36. We find the liturgical kiss²³³ five times. Four Pauline epistles (1 Th. 5:26; 1 C. 16:20; 2 C. 13:12; R. 16:16)²³⁴ close by asking the recipients to kiss one another, and cf. also 1 Pt. 5:14. The greeting demanded of the churches (→ I, 501, 14 ff.) with the φίλημα ἁγιον²³⁵ (→ I, 108, 28 ff.) or ἀγάπης (1 Pt. 5:14), along with the accompanying formulae Anathema and Maranatha (1 C. 16:22), might well be the introduction to the Supper that follows, → 136, 14 ff.²³⁶ The mutual kiss (→ 119, 14 ff.), found only here in the NT, is a sign and seal of the forgiveness granted to and gratefully received by the brother, this being the presupposition of proper observance of the Supper. Like the Supper itself, on each occasion it confirms and actualises the unity of the community as a brotherhood (→ 122, 9 ff.), i.e., as the eschatological family of God.²³⁷ The kiss and the Supper point forward to the eschatological consummation of salvation, to the future fellowship of the perfected.²³⁸

2. The Kiss of Judas.

The kiss of Judas is a problem on its own.²³⁹ It formed a difficult problem for early Christianity from the very outset, as is shown by the variations in the Synoptic accounts and its omission from the Fourth Gospel. In Mk. 14:44 f. the kiss has plainly a pragmatic meaning; it is the agreed sign of recognition leading on at once to the arrest.²⁴⁰ Mt. 26:50 puts before it the enigmatic saying

practice of kissing remained fairly common in post-apostolic Christianity for some time to come beginning in the second century.²⁰ One must distinguish among the

of Jesus: ἐταῖρε, ἐφ’ ὃ πάρει, probably: “Friend, for this then thou hast come!” or: “Friend, why thou hast come (I know)” — a kind of aposiopesis.²⁴¹ In Lk. 22:47 f. it is an open question whether the kiss is actually given. What the Synoptic Judas aims to do is done by Jesus Himself in Jn. 18:5 f. with His ἐγώ εἰμι.²⁴² The betrayal of the Master by a kiss²⁴³ of one of the Twelve, cf. Mk. 14:10 and par., 20, 43 and par.; Jn. 6:71 became an increasing offence that was hard to overcome. The difficulty was resolved by the proof from prophecy, cf. Jn. 13:18; 17:12, intimated already in Mk. 14:18, and by the prediction of the betrayal by Jesus Himself, cf. Jn. 6:70 f.; 13:18 f., 21, 26 f.

Not too easy to answer is what practice lies behind the kiss of Judas. Was it a routine kiss that would not surprise the other disciples who were with Jesus? Was it simply a kiss of greeting²⁴⁴ (→ 138, 19 f. with n. 227)? This is not likely after so short a time, cf. Mk. 14:17 ff. Was it usual for the disciples to kiss their Master as the pupils of the rabbis did²⁴⁵ → 139, 3 ff.? Or was the band of disciples, as the family of God gathered around Jesus cf. Mk. 3:34 f., already practising the kiss of brotherhood as the Pauline churches were very soon to do, cf. 1 Th. 5:26 → 139, 21 ff.; Ac. 20:37 → 139, 17 ff.²⁴⁶ Since, however, there are no other examples of the disciples kissing Jesus, it might also be that this was an unusual act undertaken ad hoc. It was thus, as a sign of feigned love and reverence, that early Christianity always interpreted the kiss of Judas,²⁴⁷ and it condemned as the shabbiest part of this betrayal this misuse of the sign of love as a “sign” (Mk. 14:44; Mt. 26:48) of παραδιδοῦναι.²⁴⁸

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 138–141.]

²⁰D. The Kiss in the Post-New Testament Period.

I. The Early Church.

1. In spite of growing ascetic tendencies in the early Church the kiss is still used a good deal among post-NT Christians. The kissing of relatives²⁴⁹ and married couples is taken for granted except that a husband should not kiss his wife in front of slaves, Cl. Al. Paed., III, 12, 84, 1. The erotic kiss plays a special part in a similitude in Herm. s., 9, 11, 4. In the love game (παίζειν) that the twelve virtues play with the seer in 9, 15, 2250 one after the other embraces and kisses him καταφιλεῖν καὶ περιπλέκεσθαι.

2. Most important, however, is the continuation and development²⁵¹ of the φίλημα ἁγιον → 139, 23 ff. The cultic kiss is carried much further than in its early beginnings in the NT, although with certain restrictions too. Because in the kiss *plenae caritatis fidelis exprimitur affectus*, and because it can thus be regarded as *pietatis et caritatis ... signum*, the kiss itself shares the high estimation of these supreme virtues, Ambr. Exameron, VI, 9, 68 (CSEL, 32 [1896], 256).

a. In the post-NT age the eucharistic kiss is rather oddly not mentioned in the post-apost. fathers but we find it in Just.: ἀλλήλους φιλήματι ἀσπαζόμεθα παυσάμενοι τῶν εὐχῶν, Apol., 65, 2. Because the place of the kiss in worship at the time came after the common prayer and before the eucharist,²⁵² Tert. De oratione, 18 (MPL, 1 [1879], 1280 f.) calls it a *signaculum* (“sealing”) orationis. Tert. is a strong champion of the *osculum pacis* even in times of private fasting apart from the pre-Easter fast, when all Christians should desist from the kiss of peace.²⁵³ Its gt. significance for the community is that it underscores the need for

reconciliation before receiving the holy Supper → 139, 26 ff.²⁵⁴ That the kiss of peace τὸ ... πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἡνωθῆαι ... δηλοῖ and leads on to τὴν πρὸς τὸν ἀδελφὸν ... σύμπνοιαν is also stressed by Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite De ecclesiast, hier. (Paraphrasis Pachymerae), 3, 3, 8 (MPG, 3 [1857], 464b), where between the creed and the presentation of the (still covered) elements.²⁵⁵ on the one side, and the reading of the diptycha, the lists of dead and living members of the community remembered at the mass. and the washing of the priests' hands on the other,²⁵⁶ ὁ θειότατος ἀσπασμὸς ἱερουργεῖται, 3, 3, 8 (p. 437a). Similarly Cyr. Cat. Myst. 5, 3 calls the φίλημα a σημεῖον τοῦ ἀνακραθῆναι τὰς ψυχὰς and Chrys. Hom. de proditione Judae, 2, 6 (MPG, 49 [1862], 391) calls it a φρικωδέστατος ἀσπασμὸς, a greeting woven around him who sees the mysterium tremendum, binding together senses and souls, and thus making all into one σῶμα.²⁵⁷

In the West, where the original place of the kiss of peace seems to have been between the prayers and the offertory, it comes to be put immediately before communion in connection with the development of sacrificial theory and esp. with regard to Mt. 5:23 f.,²⁵⁸ cf. Aug. Serm., 227 (MPL, 38 [1865], 1101). Terms used for the liturgical kiss alternate. It is often simply called εἰρήνη as well as φιλήμα εἰρήνης in the East, e.g., Ps.-Dion. De eccles, hier., 3, 3, 8 f. (MPG, 3 [1857], 437a–c), while in the West it is the osculum pacis in, e.g., Tert. De oratione, 18 (MPL, 1 [1879], 1280 f.), Aug. 259 Contra litteras Petiliani Donatistae, II, 23, 53 (MPL, 43 [1865], 277), but also the pax, e.g., several times in Tert. De oratione, 18 (p. 1281); 26 (p. 1301). The shorter designation is based on the close connection between the liturgical kiss and the greeting εἰρήνη σοι pax tibi.²⁶⁰ For the same reason ἀσπασμὸς is often used for the eucharistic kiss, e.g., Ps.-Dion. De eccles, hier., 3, 3, 8 (p. 437a). Because of a possible misunderstanding Athenag. Suppl., 32 can even prefer προσκύνημα τοῦ φίλημα.²⁶¹

Quite early we find objections to unrestricted use of the kiss in the cultus, partly by reason of the suspicions of non-Christians and partly by reason of the dangers of erotic perversions. Along these lines Athenag. Suppl., 32 quotes an agraphon (?)²⁶² against repetition of the kiss: εἴαν τις ... ἐκ δευτέρου καταφιλήσῃ, ὅτι ἤρρεσεν αὐτῷ, and he himself adds:²⁶³ οὕτως οὖν ἀκριβώσασθαι τὸ φίλημα ... δεῖ, “because it would mean our exclusion from eternal life if it (the kiss) were even a little to defile our mind.” Related is the discussion in Cl. Al. Paed., III, 81, 2–4, where Cl. scourges the emptiness of the cultic kiss and condemns those who οὐδὲν ἀλλ' ἢ φιλήματι κατασοφοῦσι τὰς ἐκκλησίας, τὸ φιλοῦν ἔνδον οὐκ ἔχοντες αὐτό (→ n. 39) because they arouse shameful suspicions and evil gossip with this undisciplined kissing. He thus demands the φίλημα μυστικόν in which, as he says with a play on words, the mouth remains closed. The prayers linked to the kiss of peace also show traces of these dangers and anxieties, e.g., the Liturgy of Mark (Brightman, 123, cf. Storf, 170 f.). On these grounds from the 3rd cent.²⁶⁴ at the latest the sexes were separated for the kiss of peace, Const. Ap., II, 57, 17; Const. Ecclesiae Aegypt., 13, 4, 265 and then the clergy and laity were separated, Const. Ap., VIII, 11, 9.

b. The liturgical kiss occurs in many other parts of the liturgy apart from the eucharist. It comes twice in baptism.²⁶⁶ There is first the kissing of the candidates by the bishop Hipp. Church Order, 46, 7 (Hennecke2, 580); Const. Ecclesiae Aegypt., 16, 20, whereby he pronounces their reconciliation with God and their acceptance into the community.²⁶⁷ This is compared to the kiss of greeting after a long absence abroad, Chrys. Hom. de utilitate lectionis scripturarum, 6 (MPG, 51 [1862], 98) and Hom. in 2 C., 30, 1 on 13:12 → n. 226.²⁶⁸ Then there is the kiss the baptised give their new brothers

and sisters, Hipp. Church Order, 46, 8 (Hennecke2, 580) in order to impart to them a share in the newly granted grace and power of peace.²⁶⁹

c. On the consecration of a bishop ἱεράρχης the kiss of peace has a firm place in many liturgies.²⁷⁰ Acc. to Const. Ap., VIII, 5, 9 f. the other bishops give the one newly consecrated a kiss in the Lord, cf. Canones Hipp.,²⁷¹ 3, 19; Hipp. Church Order, 31, 6 (Hennecke2, 575). The Didascalia Arabica, 36, 23²⁷² ref. to two kisses at episcopal consecration, the one by the consecrating bishops and the other by the whole congregation. Acc. to Ps.-Dion. De eccles, hier., 5, 2; 5, 3, 1 (MPG, 3 [1857], 509) the τελειωτικὸς ἀσπασμὸς was also given on the ordination of the priest ἱερεὺς and deacon λειτουργός, both by the ordaining bishop and also by all the presbyters present. At the consecration of monks, the highest of the three ranks, the kiss of peace is again given, acc. to Ps.-Dion. 6, 2 (p. 533b) and 6, 3, 4 (p. 536b), by the consecrating priests and by all the believers present; it comes at the end of the ceremony after clothing with the monastic habit and before the attached eucharist.

d. The kiss at the burial of the dead occurs in Ps.-Dion. De eccles, hier., 7, 2 (MPG, 3 [1857], 556d); 7, 3, 4 (p. 560a), 8 (p. 565a): the bishop and all the believers present kiss the dead person after prayers for him. This kiss,²⁷³ along with the giving of the eucharist to the deceased, was soon after forbidden, first by the Synod of Autissiodorum/Auxerre in 585 (?), Can. 12:274 non licet mortuis, nec eucharistiam, nec osculum tradi.

e. The kiss is also found in the early venerating of martyrs.²⁷⁵ The habit was to visit martyrs in prison and to kiss them, Eus. De martyribus Palaestinae, 11, 20 (GCS, 9, 2 [1908], 942), and esp. their wounds, Prud. Peristephanon, 5, 337–340 (CCh, 126 [1966], 305) and their chains, Tert. Ad uxorem, II, 4 (CSEL 70 [1942], 117). Bold spirits like Origen kiss martyrs on their way to the place of judgment, Eur. Hist. Eccl., VI, 3, 4, and also the corpses (→ 122, 4 ff. with n. 82) of those executed, Eus. De martyr. Palaest., 11, 25 (GCS, 9, 2 [1908], 944). Martyrs themselves kiss one another just before execution, as the Jewish martyrs did in 3 Macc. 5:49, ut martyrium per sollemnia pacis consummarant, Pass. Perp. et Fel., 21; Pass. Montani et Lucii, 23,²⁷⁶ and also in anticipation of the kiss of greeting in heaven → n. 238. Cultic veneration of martyrs in the strict sense focuses on their tombs, relics, and memorial churches. Kissing their graves (→ n. 82, 134) is mentioned, Prud. Peristephanon, 11 193 f. (CCh, 126 [1966], 376), cf. Greg. Nyss. Vita Macrinae, 996,²⁷⁷ also of relics, Paulinus of Nola Carmen, 18, 125–129 (CSEL, 30 [1894], 103), of relic containers, Hier. Contra Vigilantium 4 (MPL, 23 [1883], 375b), and of the thresholds of the churches of the martyrs (→ n. 104), Prud. Peristephanon, 2, 517–520 (CCh, 126 [1966], 275).

f. There are various substitute kisses in the early Church → 121, 7 ff. Here it seems in many details to inherit pagan practices → 123, 8 ff., as in the kissing of doorposts and thresholds in churches,²⁷⁸ e.g., Paulinus of Nola Carmen, 18, 249 (CSEL, 30 [1894], 108); Chrys. Hom. in 2 C., 30, 2 on 13:12 (MPG, 61 [1862], 606 f.) and also of altars,²⁷⁹ e.g., Ambr. Ep., I, 20, 26 (MPL, 16 [1880], 1044b): milites, irruentes in altaria, osculis significare pacis insigne; Prud. Peristeph., 9, 99 f. (CCh, 126 [1966], 329). Kissing the altar has a central place in the liturgy since the altar points to Christ. Hence the kiss of peace given just after derives its force from Christ and takes on sacramental significance.²⁸⁰ Something of the same idea may be seen in the eastern practice (still in force) of kissing icons and achiropoiita,²⁸¹ since the power of the heavenly original attaches to icons, which through the centuries have been faithful copies even in matters of detail. We find many

various types of kissing as defined by the occasion and setting. Religious kissing in the first century Christian world centered on the kiss of peace, which was a part of the greeting especially at the beginning of the gathered assembly. Seldom, if ever would this be a kissing on the lips of the other person. Instead, it was on the cheek.

Thus the ἀγίῳ φιλήματι here designates a religious kiss that took place in the gathered assembly of the Christian community.²¹ Behind it lay an expression of

other liturgical kisses in eastern liturgies, e.g., Chrys. Liturg., 355, 12. 37; 356, 1; 362, 1; 382, 26 f.; 385, 14 f.: the Gospel book, discos, cup, signs of the cross on the orarion (stola) etc.²⁸² These were adopted in the West²⁸³ along with the medieval osculatorium, the kissing tablet of precious metal, ivory, wood or marble which the priest hands communicants to kiss—a prime example of the substitute kiss.²⁸⁴ Originally common to all these liturgical kisses is their desire to give a share in the sacred force of that which is kissed.

II. Gnosticism.

In Gnostic mysticism the kiss is a favourite symbol for union with the redeemer and the reception of immortal life mediated thereby. Good examples may be found in O. Sol. in which the sacrament of the bridal chamber and the soul's marriage with the Lord are described as the present eschaton,²⁸⁵ cf. 3:2: "His body is by me; I cling to him and he kisses me"; 3:5: "I kiss the beloved and I am loved by him"; 28:6: "Immortal life caressed and kissed me."²⁸⁶ Acc. to Ev. Phil. (→ n. 173), 117, 14–28 the sacrament of the bridal chamber is for Gnostics the supreme sacrament, more highly regarded than baptism and the Lord's Supper. Here the mutual kiss is the means of mystic conception,²⁸⁷ 107, 2–6. The model of this Gnostic mysticism is the spiritual marriage, κοινωμία, between Jesus and Mary Magdalene (→ n. 173). Jesus kissed Mary, His κοινωνός, 107, 8 f.; 111, 32–34, often on the lips, naturally in an undefiled fellowship → n. 250.²⁸⁸ Another kiss of Jesus plays an important part in the Gnostic legend of Pist. Soph.; by it the earthly Jesus is united with His heavenly twin. Mary tells how "He (the twin-redeemer) embraced thee and kissed thee, and thou didst kiss Him and you were one," Pist. Soph., 61 (GCS, 13, 78).²⁸⁹ Finally³⁴⁹ a kiss is mentioned in the Manichaean myth of Mani's entry into the realm of light;²⁹⁰ this reminds us of the kiss of greeting on the entry of martyrs into the heavenly world → n. 238.²⁹¹

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:142–146.]

²¹"As well as expressing love and unity,³³ the 'holy kiss' signified reconciliation (cf. Gen. 33:4; 45:15; Luke 15:20) and forgiveness, and so naturally came to be associated in the post-NT period with the celebration of the Lord's Supper,³⁴ perhaps under the influence of Jesus' word in Matt. 5:23–24.³⁵ In addition, the 'holy kiss' exhibited Christian liberty, the transcending of divisions based on gender, race, and status, for the kiss was exchanged by male and female, Jew and Greek, slave and free (cf. Gal. 3:28). The initiative in giving the kiss could, apparently, rest with the female or the male believer.³⁶ Paul 'was certainly the first popular ethical teacher known to instruct members of a mixed social group to greet each other with a kiss.'³⁷ Paul's injunction was particularly relevant in Corinth where quarreling needed to be replaced by reconciliation, factionalism by unity, and arrogance by love (cf.

esteem and respect for fellow believers. Such is still practiced in most Christian gatherings in Europe, but in the western hemisphere it has been largely substituted with a handshake and/or a hug. Thus Paul's admonition communicates a desire that believers show their love for one another by both verbal and actionable greeting as they came together.

<===| Ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἅγιοι πάντες, *All the saints send you greetings*. Often the apostle includes greetings sent by people present where the letter originates from. Sometimes the names of specific individuals sending the greetings are included. At other times a group of individuals will be indicated, such as here. But usually the designation is not as inclusive as this one.²² The one exception is Phil. 4:22 ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι, μάλιστα δὲ οἱ ἐκ τῆς Καίσαρος οἰκίας, the first part of which is virtually identical to the one here. This re-enforces the concept of the local community of believers being the intended reference in οἱ ἅγιοι πάντες, *all the saints*. As the letter was read to the various house church groups this greeting would be acknowledged by the recipient groups.

Beyond the cultural tradition of affirming φιλία, this Christianized greeting reaffirmed the close sense of fellowship enjoyed inside the community of believers. The kiss across ethnic and gender lines affirmed unity and equality within the community.

10.2.4.3 *Benedictio*, v. 13. Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ κοινωμία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.*

^{13.13} Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

καὶ

ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ

καὶ

³⁴⁹ ἡ κοινωμία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (ἔστωσαν)

μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

12:20). As to the origin of the practice in Christian circles, perhaps it was the concept of the church as a brotherhood of believers or as the family of God that led to the transference of the kiss given among physical relatives to a kiss exchanged between spiritual relatives in the Christian community." [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), 936.]

²²**1 Cor. 16:20.** ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἀδελφοὶ πάντες. Ἀσπάσαθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγίῳ. *All the brothers and sisters send greetings.*

Rom. 16:16b. ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς αἱ ἐκκλησίαι πᾶσαι τοῦ Χριστοῦ. *All the churches of Christ greet you.*

Phil. 4:21b-22. 21b ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ σὺν ἐμοὶ ἀδελφοί. 22 ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι, μάλιστα δὲ οἱ ἐκ τῆς Καίσαρος οἰκίας. 21b *The friends who are with me greet you.* 22 *All the saints greet you, especially those of the emperor's household.*

In the Jewish synagogue the meeting both began and closed with formal prayers, normally taken from the psalms. But over time they evolved into their own formulation.²³ So did the early Christian assemblies. But the prayers were tailored to Christian focus rather than Jewish. And they differ considered from the standard Greek closing, ἔρρωσθαι ὑμᾶς εὖχομαι, "I pray you may fare well."²⁴

An analysis of these concluding prayers in Paul's letters reveals a similar pattern for all of them.²⁵ Most

²³"BENEDICTIONS (Heb. sing. בְּרַכָּה, berakhah; pl. בְּרַכּוֹת, berakhot), formulas of blessing or thanksgiving, in public and private services. The Hebrew noun berakhah is derived from the verb brk בָּרַךְ ('to fall on one's knees'). The Talmud ascribes the institution and formulation of the benedictions to 'the Men of the Great Synagogue' (Ber. 33a), to the sages of old (Sif. Deut. 33:2; Mid. Ps. 17:4), or to the '120 elders' at the head of the community in the time of 'Ezra (Meg. 17b; TJ, Ber. 2:4, 4d). These references, however, cannot be considered historically authentic, although they are indicative of the fact that benedictions were known to have been instituted in very ancient times. In the Bible, mention is made of a number of individual benedictions (Gen. 24:27; Ex. 18:10; Ruth 4:14; I Sam. 25:32; II Sam. 18:28; I Kings 1:48; 5:21; 8:15, 56; I Chron. 16:36; II Chron. 2:11; 6:4; Ps. 28:6; 31:22). After the victory of the Maccabees over Nicanor, the people exclaimed, 'Blessed be He who has kept His holy place undefiled' (II Macc. 15:34). According to the Book of Enoch (36:4), each time Enoch beheld some of the wonders of nature, he 'blessed the Lord of Glory, Who had made great and glorious wonders to show the greatness of His work to the angels and to spirits and to men, that they might praise His work and all His creation.

The Origin of the Berakhot

Elbogen and other scholars have shown that the various benedictions probably originated in different congregations and localities. The formulas ultimately adopted by all Jews were selections from, and combinations of, local customs and traditions. The attempts of other scholars to establish a definite date for the formulation of each benediction and to reconstruct an 'original' wording appear to lack foundation. There are indications which suggest that different formulas were known and used simultaneously. Similarities to the 18 benedictions which comprise the Amidah prayer are, for instance, to be found in various sources: the hymn recorded in Ecclesiasticus 51:12, and the prayer found in Ecclesiasticus 36:1ff. The latter contains a series of benedictions petitioning for the ingathering of the exiles and the salvation of Israel. It also expresses the hope that Zion and the Temple may be filled with God's glory. The 'eight benedictions,' recited by the high priest on the Day of Atonement (Yoma 7:1; TJ, Yoma 7:1, 44b), and the order of the morning service of the priests in the Temple (Tam. 5:1), are also examples of this procedure."

["Benedictions," *Encyclopedia Judaica* online, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/judaica/ejud_0002_0003_0_02441.html.]

²⁴Murray 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), 937.

²⁵Note the following Pauline use of the Benedictio:

Gal. 6:18. Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί· ἀμήν. *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*

invoke the grace of the Lord upon the readers. The benedictio of Second Corinthians is unique in that it contains a trinitarian based blessing.²⁶

Lord = grace, Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

God = love, ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ

Holy Spirit = fellowship, ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος

The details are important to understand here.

Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The benedictio begins with a typical Pauline expression in the benedictio emphasizing the grace that comes through Christ.²⁷ Note the formal *be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.*

1 Cor. 16:23-24. 23 ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν. 24 ἡ ἀγάπη μου μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. *23 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. 24 My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus.*

2 Cor. 13:13. Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.*

Rom. 16:20b. Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*

Philm. 25 Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν. *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.*

Col. 4:18c. ἡ χάρις μεθ' ὑμῶν. *Grace be with you.*

Eph. 6:24. ἡ χάρις μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἀγαπῶντων τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ. *Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Phil. 4:23. Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν. *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.*

1 Tim. 6:21b. Ἡ χάρις μεθ' ὑμῶν. *Grace be with you.*

2 Tim. 4:22. Ὁ κύριος μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματός σου. ἡ χάρις μεθ' ὑμῶν. *The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.*

Titus 3:15c. Ἡ χάρις μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. *Grace be with all of you.*

²⁶Paul closes with a benediction in the form of a wish.⁴⁴ Compared with his other closing benedictions, this verse contains two distinctives: (1) He refers not only to χάρις but also to ἀγάπη and κοινωνία; (2) he refers not only to the Lord Jesus Christ but also to God and the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵ [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), 937.]

²⁷The genitive in the first element of the triad is clearly subjective. Salvation and all its associated blessings (χάρις) were brought (8:9) and are being brought (12:9) by Christ. But although in Pauline benedictions Christ is the sole source of χάρις, in Pauline salutations (including 1:2) God the Father and Christ are generally mentioned as the joint source of χάρις.⁴⁶ This illustrates the point that the χάρις, ἀγάπη, and κοινωνία that are attached to the three persons mentioned in this verse should not be thought of as exclusive characteristics. Other examples of this fact would include the phrases ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ (1 Cor. 1:4), ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ (5:14; Rom. 8:35), ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πνεύματος (Rom. 15:30), and κοινωνία ... Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1 Cor. 1:9). But why, in this embryonic trinitarian formulation, do we find the unexpected order, Christ-God-Spirit? Three reasons may be suggested for the 'priority' of Christ in this triadic structure. (1) Paul began the benediction with his customary reference to 'the grace of (our) Lord Jesus (Christ)' and then expanded it. (2) Christ's grace is the means by which God's love reaches the believer. As Paul expresses it in Rom. 8:39, noth-

confessional label of τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ underscoring the confession of Christ as Lord, i.e., both divine and ruler.

καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ, and the love of God. Although it could mean 'love for God' (= Greek objective genitive), the parallelism of the context demands 'love that God expresses' (= Greek subjective genitive).²⁸ One must remember that ἡ ἀγάπη is not much linked to the English word 'love.' The Greek ἡ ἀγάπη specifies an active expression of self-sacrificing action for the benefit of others, while the English word 'love' mostly defines an attitude or warm feeling toward someone or something. ἡ ἀγάπη is centered in a person's will, not

ing can separate believers 'from the love of God that is revealed in [the grace of] Christ Jesus our Lord' (ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν). The third element of the triad also is dependent on the first. It was through the grace of Christ exhibited in the cross that God demonstrated his love (Rom. 5:8) and that believers came to participate in the Spirit's life and so form the community of the new Age. (3) The verse does not describe relationships within the Trinity but the chronological order (so to speak) of the believer's experience of God: we come to Christ and so encounter God and then receive his Spirit.

"Without embarrassment Paul has conjoined the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit with God in a benediction, just as God the Father and Christ are presented in 1:1 as forming a single source of divine grace and peace. In both cases parity of status between Christ and God is implied by the juxtaposition, for it would be blasphemous for a monotheistic Jew to associate a mere mortal with God in a formal, religious salutation or benediction. But these are not the only evidences in the Pauline epistles of a high christology. That Paul believed in the deity of Christ is also indicated by his description of Christ as sharing the divine nature (Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:6; Tit. 2:13) and attributes (Eph. 4:10; Col. 1:19; 2:9), as being the object of saving faith (Rom. 10:8–13) and of human and angelic worship (Phil. 2:9–11), as being the addressee in petitionary prayer (1 Cor. 1:2; 16:22; 2 Cor. 12:8), and as exercising exclusively divine functions, such as creational agency (1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16), the forgiveness of sins (Col. 3:13), and final judgment (1 Cor. 4:4–5; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Thess. 1:7–9).⁴⁷"

[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), 937–938.]

²⁸"Although ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ could mean 'love for God' (objective genitive),⁴⁸ parallelism with the preceding phrase and the appropriateness of expressing a divine blessing in a benediction favor taking τοῦ θεοῦ as a subjective genitive. Paul is expressing his wish and prayer that the love God has already poured out (Rom. 5:5) and demonstrated (Rom. 5:8) may continue to fortify his readers. He realized that only by fresh infusions of divine love would they be able to heed his appeals (παρακαλεῖσθε, v. 11a). This wish, therefore, functions in the same way as the assurance of the presence of ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης does in v. 11b in relation to the injunctions of v. 11a; the one enables the other.⁴⁹ As elsewhere in Paul (and the NT) (ὁ) θεός signifies the Father.⁵⁰" [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), 938–939.]

in feelings or emotions. With ἡ ἀγάπη, we deliberately choose to take sacrificial beneficial actions. This is precisely what God has done for sinful humanity. And this is seen most clearly in the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, as John 3:16 so eloquently portrays. Here Paul invokes this divine love upon his readers of this letter and the hearers of it being read at Corinth.

καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. The difficulty of this phrase centers on determining whether τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος is either objective or subjective genitive case function.²⁹

²⁹"The most difficult exegetical problem in this verse arises from the phrase ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος. If the genitive is subjective, the sense will be 'the fellowship with one another that is engendered by the Spirit' or 'the participation granted by the Spirit in himself' or 'the sense of community created by the Spirit.' Arguments adduced in support of such an interpretation are as follows.

"(1) Given the close parallelism between the three elements in the triad (viz. an articular abstract noun in the nominative followed by an articular personal noun in the genitive, with two cases of a conjunctive καί), it is antecedently probable that the third genitive will function in the same way as the first and second, that is, as a subjective genitive.⁵¹

"(2) Such a view accords well with the context. If the Spirit fostered fellowship between the Corinthian believers, the harmony, reconciliation, and unity that Paul longed for (v. 11a) would be achieved. Moreover, the activity of the Spirit is highlighted throughout 2 Corinthians.⁵²

"(3) The concept of believers' personal communion with the Spirit is an unparalleled Pauline notion, whereas the idea of the Spirit's creating unity among believers finds a close parallel in Eph. 4:3, '... making every effort to maintain the unity engendered by the Spirit (τὴν ἐνότητα τοῦ πνεύματος) by binding peace on yourselves.' Cf. also 1 Thess. 1:6, μετὰ χαρᾶς πνεύματος ἁγίου, 'with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit' (RSV, NRSV).

"On the other hand, if the genitive is objective⁵³ we could render the phrase 'participation in the Holy Spirit' (Barrett 341; Furnish 581), or 'communion with the Holy Spirit' (Thrall 904; cf. TCNT). How has this view been supported?

"1. Although κοινωνία has a wide range of meanings in the NT,⁵⁴ when it is followed by a genitive, it is usually synonymous with μετοχή or μετάληψις and means 'participation (in),' 'a partaking of,' and the genitive specifies the object in which one partakes.⁵⁵ Thus κοινωνία ... τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ... κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ (1 Cor. 10:16), 'participation in the blood of Christ ... in the body of Christ.'⁵⁶ Even when that 'object' is personal, κοινωνία can still signify a 'sharing in': ἐκλήθητε εἰς κοινωνίαν ... Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, 'you were called to share in [the life of] ... Jesus Christ' (cf. NEB, REB)/'to have fellowship with ... Jesus Christ' (GNB) (1 Cor. 1:9).

"2. 1 Cor. 12:13 affords a close conceptual parallel to this phrase. After speaking of an outward 'immersion in the Spirit,' the verse speaks of an inward participation in the Spirit. 'For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all given one Spirit to drink.'

"3. The closest verbal parallel to our phrase is in Phil. 2:1, εἴ τις κοινωνία πνεύματος, which in all probability means 'if any participation in the Spirit.'⁵⁷

"4. This view, too, suits the context. Common participation in the one Spirit would promote harmony and dispel factionalism (cf.

This is the difference between “community participation in the life of the Spirit” (= objective genitive) or “community participation engendered by the Spirit” (= subjective genitive). Ultimately not too much difference exists between the two understandings, although the subjective genitive maintains the consistency of case function among all three references. Being in the Spirit of God thus requires being an active participant in the community of believers. Disassociation from the local community of believers then means disconnecting from the Spirit’s leadership in one’s life. Given all the dysfunctionality of the Christian community at Corinth this could have proven very challenging for those sincerely seeking to honor Christ in their lives.

μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν, with all of you. This exact phrase is also found in the benedictio of 2 Thess. 3:18 and Titus 3:15.³⁰ Thus toward the beginning of his writing ministry, at the middle of that ministry, and then toward the end of his writing ministry we find the same inclusive expression. In this prayer structure this elliptical

12:20; 13:11), just as adherence to the one name of the Lord Jesus Christ prompted unity and banished dissensions (1 Cor. 1:10).

“Some argue that both the subjective and objective senses are implied or intended.⁵⁸ In his EDNT article on the κοιν- root, which draws on his earlier monograph (KOINONIA), J. Hainz argues for a unified structure in Pauline usage of the word group: ‘fellowship/partnership (with someone) through (common) participation (in something)’ (EDNT 2.304).⁵⁹ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ (ἁγίου) πνεύματος he renders by ‘the partnership [through common participation] of the (Holy) Spirit’ (EDNT 2.305). But it is not clear that the notions of fraternal fellowship created by the Spirit and common participation in the Spirit could be simultaneously present in our phrase. Schweizer seems to be on safer ground when he opts for the subjective sense—‘the ‘Spirit’s giving of a share (in Himself)’⁶⁰—but adds ‘which may well include brotherly fellowship too. Materially this amounts to the same thing as the exposition in terms of an obj[ective] gen[itiv]e’ (TDNT 6.434).⁶¹

“Clearly the evidence supporting the two main options⁶² is rather evenly balanced, although I believe the arguments for the objective sense are slightly stronger. Paul is expressing a wish that the Corinthians should continue (cf. 1 Cor. 1:7; 12:13) in their common participation in the Spirit’s life, power, and gifts (cf. 1 Cor. 12:7; 14:1). Yet this ‘participation in the Spirit’ inevitably results in an ever-deepening fellowship among believers.”

[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), 939–941.]

³⁰“The presence of πάντων in the phrase μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν (cf. 2 Thess. 3:18; Tit. 3:15) is significant. No sections of the Corinthian church—not even the rebellious elements—were excluded from Paul’s benediction.⁶³ Does it also suggest that he expected a positive response to his letter, as earlier to his ‘severe letter’ (cf. 7:14)? With this final phrase we should understand the optative εἴη⁶⁴ rather than the indicative ἐστίν or the imperative ἔστω.⁶⁵” [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), 941.]

expression should be supplied with the optative verb form εἴη, rather than either the indicative ἐστίν or the imperative ἔστω.³¹ Thus the prayer wish invokes divine blessings upon the entire community at Corinth including his critics there. One should remember the overwhelming nature of the divine Presence upon a community. God’s power in such a manifestation would burn out of the community all rebellious elements and purify the remaining segments.

The letter thus ends on a positive note that has a built in warning to any rebellious, sinful members. As Harris (NIGTC) observes, “It is a singular paradox that a letter so full of indignation, remonstrance, and gyrating emotions should conclude with the most elevated trinitarian affirmation in the NT⁶⁶ couched in the form of a benediction addressed to all the members of a factious church.”³² But properly understood the benedictio is not nearly as surprising as Harris seems to think. Paul’s ἀγάπη for the community at Corinth does not mean sentimentality over them whatsoever. Instead, it is a disciplined, determined commitment to push and cajole them toward new and deeper obedience to God through Christ. By the end of the reading of this letter in the house church groups in the city, those assembled in worship should begin to recognize this ἀγάπη from the apostle.

Did the letter help solve the problems at Corinth?³³ Although no direct information is available to give a definitive answer, the depiction of Paul’s third visit to Corinth in Acts 20:1–3 is essentially positive, even though Luke does mention a three month stay εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα, in Greece, rather than just at Corinth. The noun Ἑλλάς designated the region of Greece which basically corresponded to the Roman province of Achaia, of which Corinth was the capital city in the mid first century. Additionally, during this time the letter to the Romans was composed, thus indicating enough freedom and time to put together with Τέρτιος, Tertius, his writ-

³¹“The singular εἴη would agree with the nearest subject or with the three subjects regarded as a whole. The forms εἴησαν and εἴεν are not found in the NT.” [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. 941, fn. 64.]

³²Murray 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), 941.

³³“Carson asks, ‘Did these chapters turn the situation in Corinth around?’ (p. 191). He admits that this cannot be known for certain, but several factors point to at least some improvement: Paul found time to write Romans during his third visit; Paul’s plans to travel to Spain; and he took a collection for believers in Jerusalem (p. 192).” [Larry J. Waters, “Review of A Model of Christian Maturity: An Exposition of 2 Corinthians 10–13 by D. A. Carson,” ed. Matthew S. DeMoss, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 165 (2008): 117.]

ing secretary, the most eloquent expression of Paul's belief system found inside the NT.³⁴ Of course, by 96 AD the situation at Corinth has deteriorated back to many of the same problems that Paul was coping with in the mid-50s. We have a more detailed picture in the first letter of the Roman church leader Clement to the church at Corinth in [First Clement](#).

*******CONCLUSIONS*******

Whether or not the letter helped solve the problems at Corinth, millions of believers down through the centuries of Christian interpretation history have benefitted enormously from this letter. The letter as it stands is a masterful presentation of how to do ministry while in the midst of conflict and opposition. Several aspects speak to us today.

1. How to genuinely love a church needing discipline for its waywardness.

This is perhaps the most challenging part of Christian ministry. It is a modern difficulty largely due to the twisted perception of 'love' in western society. Due to the corrupting influence of Hollywood, love is largely defined as a 'warm, fuzzy feeling' toward another person. But biblical ἡ ἀγάπη never centered on emotions in the ancient world. This was ἡ ἔρος, which was devalued extensively in Paul's world, and thus never used in the New Testament. Biblical ἡ ἀγάπη, however, was volitional by definition and specified a deliberate choice to sacrificially reach out to others in help and assistance. It moved from will to action and without touching emotions. That means that within Christian perspective ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης, [the God of love](#), would take actions that benefitted His people, and even rotten sinners. Often this meant disciplinary actions. Remember Heb. 12:6, which is taken from Proverbs 3:12.³⁵ From the outset Judaism understood the nature of God's love.³⁶ Paul's

³⁴**Rom. 16:22.** ἀσπάζομαι ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ Τέρτιος ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἐν κυρίῳ. [I Tertius, the writer of this letter, greet you in the Lord.](#)

³⁵**Heb. 12:6.** ὃν γὰρ ἀγαπᾷ κύριος παιδεύει, μαστιγοῖ δὲ πάντα υἱὸν ὃν παραδέχεται. [for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises every child whom he accepts.](#)

Prov. 3:12. ὃν γὰρ ἀγαπᾷ κύριος παιδεύει, μαστιγοῖ δὲ πάντα υἱὸν ὃν παραδέχεται.† [for the Lord reproves the one he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.](#)

³⁶"This word, which is widely used in the LXX, is in the overwhelming majority of cases a rendering of כָּסַף and derivatives, being used only seldom for חָסַר (5 times), for חָפַץ (twice), for רָצַח (once) or for other roots which sometimes stand in partial connexion (e.g., חֵסֶת hi, פָּתַח pi, שָׁעַע pilp), sometimes in no connexion at all (e.g., בּוֹא 2 Bas. 7:18, 1 Ch. 17:16, where a theological interpretation is given, חָסַת and עֲשָׂה) with the thought expressed by the translation. The noun ἀγάπη occurs some 20 times along with ἀγάπησις (some 10 times), and the two are often interchanged in MSS. Both are renderings of כָּסַף except in Hab. 3:4, where ἀγάπησις is a theological or erroneous equivalent for חָפַץ "cover." A Hebrew equivalent is lacking in Wis. 3:9; 6:18; Sir. 48:11." [Gerhard Kittel,

non-Jewish Christian audience also had a pretty good idea about the volitional nature of ἡ ἀγάπη, which was used far less often than φιλέω. The focusing on sacrificing for others ran counter to a largely egocentric culture. Yet among the NT writers ἀγάπη is the dominating term describing both God and Christian duty toward others.

Paul's stance toward the Corinthians beautifully illustrates how God's love should work in our lives as His people. The apostle was deeply committed to the Corinthians in spite of their unruly behavior, and negativism toward him. Out of this commitment, which he had consistently demonstrated in personal sacrifice for their benefit, came an uncompromising demand for them to straighten up and get right with God. Out of this same love came his scorching condemnation of his critics and the false teachers in the community. Over and over he affirmed his love for them, but never once did he compromise his convictions just to curry their favor. This affirmation of love was not just verbal. Mostly it centered in reminders of how he had sacrificed himself for their sake in order to lead them to Christ. Such sacrifice was from the very beginning to the time of the writing of this letter. His opponents feigned a love for the church but it was false since it sought to enslave the church to its teachings and a loyalty to human leaders rather than to God. This reflected for Paul, the old Pharisee Paul rather than the now Christian Paul in his own life. This signaled a lack of divine love in the lives of his enemies at Corinth, just as it had in his own life before Christ took control of him on the road to Damascus. To be Christian means that God's love has taken over one's life in transforming power.³⁷

Now to be sure, it is far easier to talk about this than it is to practice it. In modern western culture the principle of 'live and let live' is far less demanding than genuine ἡ ἀγάπη, even for believers. We excuse our lack of true ἡ ἀγάπη by falling back on a perverted version of "don't judge one another," taken from Matt. 7:1. Seldom ever is the context of vv. 2-5 included. which reverses the meaning of verse one to clearly mean don't judge another before you thoroughly judge and clean up yourself. Otherwise, you won't be able to help your brother solve his problems. Jesus actually commands judging others in this teaching. Contextually, He was condemning the Pharisees who self righteously judged

Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), vol. 1, p. 21, fn. 1.]

³⁷Compare to 1 John 3:14, ἡμεῖς οἶδαμεν ὅτι μεταβεβήκαμεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν, ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τοὺς ἀδελφούς· ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν μένει ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ. [We know that we have passed out of death into life because we are loving our brothers; the one not loving remains in death.](#)

others while blind to their own faults -- an act of judging others itself.

Our problem mostly has to do with lack of ἀγάπη. And especially the lack of ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ. This was also the problem of the Corinthians, and they had sunk themselves into the sewer of divisiveness and pagan misbehavior. The false teachers, also lacking ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ, sought to affirm them in this moral sewer by currying their favor without demanding repentance. The apostle Paul wasn't about to sink down to such a level in his efforts to help the church find its way to genuine faith commitment to God. And neither must authentic Christian leaders in today's believing communities. He risked his entire relationship with the Corinthians in order to help them. That remains true today! A corrupted, watered down relationship provides no authentic spiritual help to wayward believers. Easy to accomplish? Not at all! Necessary for genuine help? Absolutely!

2. How to respond to different kinds of personal attacks on one's ministry.

What the apostle faced with the Corinthians was a multi pronged attack from two sets of opponents in the church. Although the identity of these groups is difficult to pin down with absolute certainty, it appears that he had his critics inside the church who were Corinthians and then later on outsiders from Judaea arrived in the city and began aligning themselves with the insider critics and others in opposition to Paul.³⁸ Chapter ten especially centers on the insider critics while chapters eleven through thirteen center primarily on the outsiders. The insider group reflects the lingering impact of divisiveness described in fair detail in First Corinthians, especially chapter one. The contrast between Greek and Jewish versions of σοφία in chapter

³⁸Modern scholarship is hopelessly divided on this issue and many different proposals will surface in the commentaries. Note Harrington's assessment particularly of the outsider group:

It seems preferable simply to admit that Paul's portrait of his opponents remains vague. Let us listen to what Paul himself says. The most pertinent text is 2 Cor 11:22–23a: "Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ?—I am talking as out of my mind—I am more." For Paul these people are decidedly Jewish Christians, even ministers of Christ. They should, however, be considered "false apostles" (11:13). They preach another Jesus, a different gospel from the one Paul preaches, a different Spirit (11:4–5). They are intruders coming from elsewhere (11:4). They accept support and are a burden to the community (11:7–12). They commend themselves and compare themselves with one another (10:11); they value letters of recommendation (3:1). They are well trained in speech and knowledge (11:6). Perhaps they also appeal to visions (5:13 and 12:1–4) and miracles (12:12).

[Daniel J. Harrington, *Second Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 8, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 7.]

two clearly points this direction. These individuals in the church were still plagued by their non-Christian set of values that had not been jettisoned at conversion. At any point in this debate with Paul, both groups never numbered a significant part of the Christian community and most of the members looked with favor toward Paul and his leadership.³⁹

How Paul approaches these individuals is not the same. This is the only plausible explanation for the differences between chapters 10 and 11–12, which have been unnecessarily confusing to most modern commentators through mixing up these two sets of depictions. The κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας, *living by human standards*, in 10:2 clearly alludes to Greco-Roman standards adopted by the insider critics who were still swayed by Greek and especially Roman standards for leaders, which clearly Paul did not measure up to. The tendency to compare leadership qualities by these man made standards meant comparing one leader against another human leader (10:12). Some in the Corinthian church viewed spiritual leaders against the standard of the Roman take-charge kind of aggressive leader who also represented the Greek idealized Atlas in physical appearance. Paul, in their opinion, failed to measure up on both accounts and thus was an illegitimate leader. As such, he possessed no credible message for the church. His sounding authoritative in his letters but appearing to be wear in his physical presence in the city seemed hypocritical.

Paul somewhat returns to the group of insider critics in chapter thirteen especially in vv. 1–4, although his rather blunt warning and call for repentance is more inclusive of the entire community rather than targeting just one small segment inside the community. Verse two comes very close to targeting a subgroup inside the community and may imply that these insider critics were in opposition to him due to his condemnation of their immoral lifestyle while claiming to be Chris-

³⁹"The opponents were probably not very numerous. It is, we think, not completely impossible that there were connections between them and the Jerusalem authorities (see our discussion of 10:12–18), nor, as most scholars hold, is it absolutely certain that they are wholly different from Paul's opponents in Galatia, those who compelled the Gentile Christians to live like Jews (Gal 2:14; see our discussion of 2 Cor 10:4–6; cf. Gal 1:7–9). Yet since Paul himself does not pay much attention to the religious origin and historical provenance of his opponents, identifying them may remain impossible. One could even ask whether this is really necessary in order to understand Paul's main concern. Many Christians of Corinth must have taken sides with the intruders and detached themselves from Paul, at least during a certain period of time. Second Corinthians shows us a Paul who, above all, wants to win them back." [Daniel J. Harrington, *Second Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 8, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 7.]

tian. What is made clear is that this targeted segment here had a longtime history in the church prior to his second “painful visit” to Corinth. Most likely it reaches back to the beginning of the church in the early 50s and comprised many of those he labeled ὡς σαρκίνοις, as fleshly (1 Cor. 3:1) and to whom the letter prior to First Corinthians was primarily targeting (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9). They had become arrogant in their sinning as a warped badge of super spirituality (1 Cor. 4:18-21), illustrated by the extreme example in 5:1-8. The strong / weak criticism in Second Corinthians had begun among these insider critics prior to the writing of First Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor. 4:18-21).

The other group who arrived in Corinth sometime after [the painful visit and probably before the sorrowful letter](#) reached Corinth came to the city from elsewhere (cf. 11:4). Less clear is whether they came from Judea or from Diaspora Jewish Christianity outside Palestine. But what is clear is their Jewish background (cf. 11:22). Plus their claim to be Christian apostles, even superior to Paul (cf. 11:5, 12). In reality, Paul asserts them to be false apostles and not even Christian (cf. 11:13-15). Their connection to the Judaizing false teachers condemned in Galatia by Paul in the Letter to the Galatians is debated among scholars. No firm conclusion on this aspect is possible with the very limited data. But at least some of the outsiders’ views was shared with the Galatian Judaizers, who clearly reflected the so-called Christian Pharisees’ perspectives depicted by Luke in Acts 15.

For the sake of clarity, I have consistently used the label of ‘insiders’ for the first group and ‘outsiders’ for the second group. I’ve not come across this labeling in existing commentaries, but the blurring of the distinction usually found in most commentaries is quite confusing. And probably reflects blurry perception in the mind of the commentators with their inability to harmonize both Greco-Roman and Jewish aspects in one group.

How does all of this relate to a modern church setting? Several aspects come to mind. First, today’s Christian leaders must realize they will have different kinds of opponents in trying to do ministry in the Christian community. Those who oppose you inside the church are not all alike. Therefore avoiding sweeping condemnations of all opponents. You will miss the mark and appear to not know what you are talking about. The religious fundamentalist trait of contending that if you disagree with my view you are either a ‘liberal’ or a ‘pagan’ must be avoided at all costs. Our task today with having written scripture in hand is much easier than that of Paul before a New Testament existed. His appeal had to rest either upon established oral tradition in early Christianity or upon his claim as a genuinely

called apostle with the superior authority this carried. Often he would appeal to both, as well as the written scriptures of the Old Testament.

The precise approach taken in responding by Paul differed in large part to who was criticizing him. **To the insiders at Corinth** he responded by answering their criticism of him not being a quality leader by cultural standards. This was as 10:1-6 signals by addressing the weak / strong criticism with pointing them to Christ’s leadership pattern that he was following. His goal was to help them understand the legitimacy of both these stances in an edifying ministry to the church at Corinth. He desired to recover these critics by bringing them to repentance to Christ. That could be best achieved through making the Christ centered nature of his ministry to the church clear. Ultimately Paul concludes in 10:18, οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἑαυτὸν συνιστάνων, ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος, ἀλλ’ ὃν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν. [For it is not those who commend themselves that are approved, but those whom the Lord commends.](#)

To the outsider group in chapters eleven and twelve, the response is different because the critics and their criticism is different. He recognizes the improbability of these individuals repenting in authentic conversion repentance to Christ. Thus his criticism is more blunt and condemnatory, since his main goal is to destroy their influence inside the church at Corinth. Their complete lack of authentic Christian orientation is vigorously exposed, and condemned. But he not appealing directly to these false teachers. Rather it is to the Corinthian church to reject the corrupting influence of these teachers. This more complex narrational slant must not be overlooked in these two chapters. Otherwise we cannot understand Paul.

This strategy was to engage in the “fools speech” in 11:1-12:13. In adopting the secular oriented guise of these outsiders, the apostle found a tool that would have particular appeal to many of the members of the Christian community in Corinth (11:20; 12:11). It was developed around the anchor point of καύχησις, [boasting](#). He characterizes it as ἀφροσύνη, [foolishness](#). But asks his readers to indulge him a bit (καὶ ἀνέχεσθέ μου, 11: 1) in resorting to such an approach (also 12:1).

Then brilliantly he turns the secular καύχησις of these outsiders (11:20-21) on its head with a personal recounting of how he diminishes himself in favor of exalting Christ who is the source of his calling and ministry (11:30; 12:9-10). This while his outsider opponents only compared themselves horizontally to others, and to Paul while drawing the conclusion of their own superiority. To be clear, he was in no way inferior to them and possessed equal credentials to what they claimed (11:22; 12:6-7). His weaknesses reflected in all his suf-

ferings thus became a badge of a Christ driven humbling of himself before the powerful Christ now exalted in heaven. These 'weaknesses' follow the model of Christ's sufferings that led to the Heavenly Father's exaltation of Christ in the resurrection and ascension. For Paul, his sufferings as signs of weakness confirm the divine calling upon his life for service and ministry. The Spirit based conversion of the Corinthians through Paul's preaching of the Gospel is exhibit A of this truth (12:12-13). Clearly Paul is not gifted in rhetoric, but does possess this profound knowledge of how God works (11:5). But the Corinthians need to cast aside the weak / strong assessment because his upcoming visit will be unrelenting punishment against both those still living in sin and the outsider opposition against him (12:20-21). Through his 'weakness' the strong power of God will explode against those rebelling against Christ at Corinth.

What application of this strategy of Paul can be made to church leaders in our day? For one thing, responding to criticism from people both inside and outside the congregation must be customized to the specific situation that prompts the criticism. No blanket formula for responding to criticism can be legitimately offered. What is the nature of the criticism? What is the spiritual situation of the critics? What are your critics seeking to accomplish? These and a myriad of additional questions must be given consideration in developing a strategy for responding to criticism.

Not the least of which should be the developing of specific strategies of your own in your response. Paul's dominating concern was to lead the entire church at Corinth back into spiritual health. And an important part of this was to win over his insider critics. Additionally, another important goal was to completely block the corrupting outsider false teacher influence on the community. He did not see personally defending himself on a similar basis of horizontal comparison to the self justification of his critics as a worthy objective. Neither should we. It's all about Christ and the church's authentic commitment to Him. And it has nothing to do with building a personal loyalty to oneself from the church.

Such a strategy taken from Paul will be willing to risk oneself and one's relation with the church in order to lead people into true repentance to Christ. We can't be afraid of offending people, but must speak truthfully and bluntly to the sinful misbehavior of people. Thus in following God's leading, the apostle responded appropriately to his critics both inside and outside the church.

3. How to utilize various literary skills in crafting together a strategy for responding to attack. One of the highly impressive aspects of chapters ten through thirteen especially in this letter is Paul's brilliant use of argumentation skills available to him in the cultural

worlds of his day. Such usage is clear throughout the entire letter, but especially prominent in this last section of the letter. His brilliance lies in knowing these tools and even more in knowing how to appropriately utilize them in making his case. Of course, his superior background training in both Hellenism and Judaism prior to becoming a Christian played a huge role in possessing such skills. But 'field experience' in standing up against both Judaism's and paganism's hostility after Christian conversion helped refine and polish these skills.

It is this feature of Second Corinthians that elevates the letter to one of the most difficult of all his letters to grasp deeply. I have struggled as never before with any of the other letters of Paul in trying to write this commentary for the BIC series. A major frustration of mine has been the inability of so many of the commentators to grasp clearly and correctly what Paul is saying in Second Corinthians. I'm so very grateful for the few commentators, mostly in the European scene, who have understood Paul's thinking in this letter. They have been invaluable to me in stimulating thought and provoking me to look more carefully at the literary aspects of this letter.

What can be taken away from this angle? At minimum, when we communicate the Gospel to a modern audience not only must we possess a profound understanding of the sacred text, but also we must deeply know our world and the people in it that we speak to. In Karl Barth's classic illustration of the role of the sermon and its preacher in building connecting bridges between the Bible and the newspaper, one cannot over stress the importance of knowing both quite well before construction work begins. Paul know well how to make a case just like a Jewish Pharisee would. But he also knew how to make a case for the same idea just like a Greek philosopher would. And he knew how to blend these two approaches when writing to a mixed audience. Just as for Paul, the kind of educational training we achieve will play a critically important role in developing these skills. A solid liberal arts university background is critically important here. When combined with seriously biblically grounded theological education, we stand a much better chance of having skills to effectively communicate the Gospel to a modern audience.⁴⁰

4. How to retain integrity in commitment to God and

⁴⁰What grieves me to no end in retirement is having to watch the diminishing of this perspective on proper education of religious leaders in the Americas. Few pastors in almost every Protestant denominational pulpit possess today the background training that I describe, and the percentage is shrinking rather than growing. Superficiality and heresy are exploding all across Protestant Christianity as a direct consequence. To my dismay, I found a similar trend in Europe during my last extended time in Germany 2008-2010.

oneself while being criticized. When hit by opposition and criticism our gut response is to respond in kind to our critics. But in so doing we lose and they win. The apostle Paul in his walk with Christ rose high above that human kind of reaction. The integrity of his commitment to Christ remained intact while the phoniness of his critics was dramatically exposed (10:3-6). That should always be our objective in responding to our enemies. Only in the approach can God be honored in our actions.

Paul knew how to communicate in terms clearly understandable to both his enemies and his Corinthian readers. The brilliance of his strategy in responding to his insider critics in chapter ten and to his outsider opponents in chapters eleven and twelve is undeniable.

With his concern for the insider critics, his approach was to remind the Corinthian readers of his divine authorization to build up and not tear down: *περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν ἧς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν ὑμῶν, οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι, our authorization, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it* (10:8b). His critics claimed personal authority to tear down the church in gaining loyal followers to themselves (10:12). His condemnation of the phony claims to being Christian by the outsider false teachers (11:12-15; 19-21a) reflects their orientation toward demagogic personal empire building in a manner similar to that of the Galatian Judaizers condemned also by Paul in Gal. 4: 17; 6:12-13. But Paul absolutely refused to sink down to their humanistic ways and masterfully utilized a communication tool of persuasion that his readers could well understand to point toward the huge difference between himself and both the insider critics and especially these outsider opponents (11:21b-23). Instead of boasting about superior personal achievements to these outsider critics, he instead boasted about his weakness reflected in massive suffering and humiliations in being faithful to Christ. The worldly orientation of both sets of his critics had adopted the prevailing secular standards that leaders gain praise, not suffering as genuine leaders. Paul's contention is that God's validation of authentic leaders is through the path of enormous suffering and personal sacrifice in obedience to the leadership of God, not in exemption from suffering (11:23-33). The spiritual principle at work here is that through human suffering the power and glory of God shines more brightly and clearer to a sinful humanity. Thus came his 'thorn in the flesh' as well as his many sufferings (12:7b-10).

The apostle was able to walk a difficult chalk line of utilizing human based tools of communication but without compromising the integrity of his commitment to Christ -- something enormously difficult to accomplish.

Thus his contention of being authentically validated by God to proclaim the Gospel of Christ took on powerful persuasive human tones while remaining completely spiritually authentic.

Such remains the continuing challenge of the today's genuinely called messenger of God. Always in the church will be critical voices judging us purely by human standards that lead to denial of divine calling. We will repeatedly be challenged by outsider false teachers who claim Christianity as their exclusive possession but in reality reflect nothing but pagan corruption of the true Gospel. Our calling from God is to rebut and challenge these opponents vigorously and persistently. But always for the sake of the Gospel and in order to build up the true people of God. No personality cult of loyal followers must be allowed to surface toward us. All eyes must constantly remain focused on Christ alone and never on us as spiritual leaders. That means following closely Paul's example of responding to criticism while maintaining his integrity in an uncompromising manner in which God is honored and can bless.

5. How to be God's faithful messenger. The final point that I would make is somewhat summary of all the previous ones. More than anything else Second Corinthians shows modern Christian leaders a way to remain faithful of God even while enduring and responding to criticism and having to work with a difficult group of Christian believers. When everything is flowing smoothly and harmoniously, doing ministry is easy and highly enjoyable. It's when tensions arise and parishioners engage in misbehavior that ministry becomes challenging. The ever present temptation to the spiritual leader in such times will be to adopt human standards and methods of responding, particularly when the criticism is leveled at you the spiritual leader. To take such as personal and to allow anger and frustration to define your reaction is a recipe for disaster in your ministry.

Paul shows us that risking yourself in the eyes of your opponents as being weak is key to God honoring reaction. Paul's motto must be yours: *ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατός εἰμι, for whenever I am weak then I am strong* (12:10b). Your ministry needs a history of personal sacrifice and faithfulness to God's calling. In God's grace you must adopt Paul's stance: *Ἥδιστα οὖν μᾶλλον καυχῆσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ, therefore all the more will I take pride in my weaknesses, so that Christ's power upon me may be all the more clear* (12:9b). Not easy to do until you learn to be content in your sufferings: *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*

ties for the sake of Christ (12:10a). Then and only then can your response be guided by the objective εις οικοδομην και ουκ εις καθαίρεσιν υμων, for building you up and not for tearing you down (10:8b). Additionally you recognize, even if your opponents don't, that ου γαρ ο εαυτον συνιστανων, εκεινος εστιν δοκιμος, αλλ' ον ο κυριος συνιστησιν, it is not those who commend themselves that are approved, but those whom the Lord commends (10:18).

May God help us all to learn these lessons from the ministry of the apostle Paul.