



**BIC Volume 11  
Second Corinthians**

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**Ministry Part FOUR:**

**Topic 10.2.3.4**

**2 Cor. 12:14-13:10**

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**OBSERVATIONS**

**10.2.3.4 Apostolic Visits, 12:14-13:10**

The really pastoral side of the apostle Paul surfaces as he anticipates another visit to the city and the Christian community. Both love and intense displeasure with the Corinthians are woven together in admonitions and assertions. In many ways, the discussions from 10:1-12:13 all lead up to this section of the anticipated visit. In them, the apostle demonstrates his powerful skills to defend the Gospel and his divine calling to proclaim it using a wide range of literary devices. The Corinthian readers have a dramatic reminder of how forceful he can be on the written page. In spite of the criticism that he is 'weak' in person (10:1-6), he warns them of the same forcefulness in person as one of his options in the upcoming visit. Whether they experience a blunt aggressive Paul or a compassionate Paul in this visit depends completely upon whether they 'get their act together' before God or not. His ministry is no popularity contest. Rather, it is passionate promoting of the apostolic Gospel, as he summarizes in 13:10, Διὰ τοῦτο ταῦτα ἀπὼν γράφω, ἵνα παρὼν μὴ ἀποτόμως χρήσωμαι κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἣν ὁ κύριος ἔδωκέν μοι εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν, *So I write these things while I am away from you, so that when I come, I may not have to be severe in using the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.*

The internal subunits of text material in 12:14-13:10 is in broadly defined strokes as follows in the subsequent outline. The topic sentence at the beginning of verse 14 defines the theme for the entire unit of 12:14-13:10, Ἰδοὺ τρίτον τοῦτο ἐτοίμως ἔχω ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ οὐ καταναρκήσω, *Here I am, ready to come to you this third time. And I will not be a burden.* The second main clause, καὶ οὐ καταναρκήσω, establishes the focus for the first subunit of vv. 14-18. In the second unit of vv. 19-21, the focus is established in v. 19c, τὰ δὲ πάντα,

ἀγαπητοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς, *and all things, beloved, are for building you up.* The third unit of 13:1-4 centers on a warning, ἐὰν ἔλθω εἰς τὸ πάλιν οὐ φείσομαι, *if I come to you again, I will not be lenient* (v. 2c). The final unit of vv. 5-10 is built off the topic sentence admonition in v. 5a, Ἐαυτοὺς πειράζετε εἰ ἐστὲ ἐν τῇ πίστει, εαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε, *test yourselves as to whether you are proven valid in the faith.* Thus this final unit follows a logical progression from informing to admonishing the Corinthians to be ready for his upcoming visit, which will be their examination day. He makes it very clear what he is after: not what they have but them in serious commitment to Christ. And he will not be compromising this expectation just to be popular with them. All of this stands as a sharp contrast to the outsider false teachers who arrived in the city to begin buttering up the Corinthians in order to gain inroads into swaying the church to follow their alternative teachings.

**10.2.3.4.1 Not a burden in the coming visit, 12:14-18**

14 Ἰδοὺ τρίτον τοῦτο ἐτοίμως ἔχω ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ οὐ καταναρκήσω· οὐ γὰρ ζητῶ τὰ ὑμῶν ἀλλ' ὑμᾶς, οὐ γὰρ ὀφείλει τὰ τέκνα τοῖς γονεῦσιν θησαυρίζειν ἀλλ' οἱ γονεῖς τοῖς τέκνοις. 15 ἐγὼ δὲ ἡδιστα δαπανήσω καὶ ἐκδαπανηθήσομαι ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν. εἰ περισσότερως ὑμᾶς ἀγαπῶν, ἥσσοι ἀγαπῶμαι; 16 Ἔστω δέ, ἐγὼ οὐ κατεβάρησα ὑμᾶς· ἀλλ' ὑπάρχων πανοῦργος δόλω ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον. 17 μὴ τινα ὧν ἀπέσταλκα πρὸς ὑμᾶς, δι' αὐτοῦ ἐπλεονέκτησα ὑμᾶς; 18 παρεκάλεσα Τίτον καὶ συναπέστειλα τὸν ἀδελφόν· μήτι ἐπλεονέκτησεν ὑμᾶς Τίτος; οὐ τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι περιεπατήσαμεν; οὐ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἴχνεσιν;

14 *Here I am, ready to come to you this third time. And I will not be a burden, because I do not want what is yours but you; for children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children.* 15 *I will most gladly spend and be*

spent for you. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? 16 Let it be assumed that I did not burden you. Nevertheless (you say) since I was crafty, I took you in by deceit. 17 Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you? 18 I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves with the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?

12.14 Ἴδοὺ  
τρίτον τοῦτο

300 ἑτοίμως ἔχω  
ἐλθεῖν  
πρὸς ὑμᾶς,  
καὶ

301 οὐ καταναρκήσω·  
γὰρ

302 οὐ ζητῶ τὰ ὑμῶν  
ἀλλ’

303 (ζητῶ) ὑμᾶς·

γὰρ

304 οὐ ὀφείλει τὰ τέκνα τοῖς γονεῦσιν θησαυρίζειν  
ἀλλ’

305 (ὀφειλῶσιν) οἱ γονεῖς τοῖς τέκνοις (θησαυρίζειν).

12.15 δὲ

306 ἐγὼ ἡδιστα δαπανήσω  
καὶ

307 ἐκδαπανηθήσομαι  
ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν.

εἰ περισσοτέρως ὑμᾶς ἀγαπῶν,

308 ἧσσον ἀγαπῶμαι;

12.16 δέ

309 Ἔστω  
(ὅτι) ἐγὼ οὐ κατεβάρησα ὑμᾶς·  
ἀλλ’  
ὑπάρχων πανοῦργος  
δόλω

310 ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον·

12.17 μὴ τινα ὧν ἀπέσταλκα πρὸς ὑμᾶς,  
δι’ αὐτοῦ

311 ἐπλεονέκτησα ὑμᾶς;

12.18

312 παρεκάλεσα Τίτον  
καὶ

313 συναπέστειλα τὸν ἀδελφόν·

314 μήτι ἐπλεονέκτησεν ὑμᾶς Τίτος;

315 οὐ τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι περιεπατήσαμεν;

316 οὐ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἰχνεσιν;

assertion τρίτον τοῦτο ἐτοίμως ἔχω ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, *this third time prepared I am to come to you*, clearly signals a third visit to Corinth, and not the third time he has gotten ready to make another visit.<sup>1</sup> When were *the other two visits*? Luke in his Acts narrative only records two visits of Paul to Corinth: one on the second missionary journey (18:1-18), and the visit alluded to here by Paul as the third visit (20:2-3). Between these two visits

came an additional one, which is alluded to by Paul as a ‘painful visit’ in *2 Cor. 2:1* (cf. 12:14; 13:1-2). This second visit of Paul to Corinth was made from Ephesus during his lengthy stay in the city on the third missionary journey, and is not described by Luke.

The background setting for this reference in 12:14 is the mid-50s when Paul is in Macedonia and has met up with Titus recently coming from Corinth to meet Paul with a report on the situation in the Corinthian church. Titus will return back to Corinth ahead of Paul in order to carry this letter, Second Corinthians, to the church and also to finalize the collection of the relief offering. Thus when Paul arrives some time afterwards, accompanied by a delegation of representatives of the churches from Asia and Macedonia, the Corinthian offering will be ready and gladly received by this group to be added to the offerings from their churches. Thus Paul’s visit has multiple objectives. Most importantly for this section of the letter is to mend relationships with the Corinthians through their correcting their wayward actions, especially against him. As chapters eight and nine underscore, another objective was to help the Corinthians ‘shine’ as enthusiastic participants in this large relief offering being taken up among all the churches established in the provinces of

<sup>1</sup>"Since τρίτον τοῦτο<sup>5</sup> precedes ἐτοίμως ἔχω,<sup>6</sup> it might seem that Paul is simply indicating a willingness, for a third time, to visit Corinth. But in fact he has coalesced two distinct thoughts into one: he is coming on a third visit, and he is now ready to come. That the reference is to a third coming, not a third willingness or readiness, is clear from 13:1 (τρίτον τοῦτο ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς) and from the next statement ('I will not be a burden')." [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), 882.]

Very clearly the apostle announces his intention of visiting the Corinthians a third time. To be clear, the

(Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 882.]

Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia, which included Corinth. The Corinthians had been early enthusiastic supporters of the idea of this offering, but their enthusiasm had waned in part at least to critics of Paul both from inside the Corinthian church and then lately by outsiders who came into the church highly critical of Paul.

Paul is raising money for this important cause, but it is being undermined by the critics as a deception to get at the Corinthians money for his own personal use. His dilemma is to stress the importance of the Corinthians contributing to help believers in Judea, and at the same time to avoid giving any appearance of being a money grabber. In Paul's world, traveling philosophers were notorious for promoting money grabbing schemes, and Paul's critics accused him of being like them. Thus a lot of what Paul says in 12:14-13:10 will both repeat and build off of previous statements and demands in this letter. He is coming to the end of this lengthy, complex letter and moves toward summing things up in anticipation of the upcoming visit.

His first point is clear: καὶ οὐ καταναρκήσω, and I will not be a burden.<sup>2</sup> In 11:9, Paul reminded the Corinthians that in his previous visit with them he had not been a burden to the church, καὶ παρῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑστερηθεῖς οὐ κατενάγκησα οὐθενός, And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone.<sup>3</sup> In 11:12,

<sup>2</sup>We should not overlook the intensely personal and highly emotive nature of these five verses, which makes them comparable to 6:11–13. First singular verbs occur thirteen times, ὑμᾶς eight times, and the emphatic ἐγὼ twice. We find no fewer than five rhetorical questions that betray Paul's pained bewilderment, one introduced by an interrogative εἰ (v. 15), two by μή(τι) (vv. 17–18) expecting the answer 'No!' and two by οὐ (v. 18) that assume a 'Yes!' response. Also, Paul actually reproduces the potent charge that he was by nature an unscrupulous trickster (ὑπάρχων πανουργός) who had victimized the Corinthians with his cunning (δόλω ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον) (v. 16). [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 880.]

<sup>3</sup>He is reaffirming that he will not deviate from his established policy regarding Corinth of being financially independent, of refusing to enter a client-patron relationship, of waiving his apostolic right to support. After his unambiguous statements on the matter in 11:9–10, 12, it may seem strange that he now returns to the same topic, but this is evidence of the sensitivity and centrality of the issue in Paul's relations with the church and is an indication of the influence of his opponents' strategy of seeking to discredit him in the eyes of the Corinthians by pointing to his waiver of an apostolic right as proof of his counterfeit apostleship. However, in reaffirming his position of independence he gives two additional justifications for his stance that we must now consider." [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), 882.]

he pledged himself to not ever take funds from the Corinthians for his own needs: "Ὁ δὲ ποιῶ, καὶ ποιήσω, ἵνα ἐκκόψω τὴν ἀφορμὴν τῶν θελόντων ἀφορμὴν, ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καυχῶνται εὐρεθῶσιν καθὼς καὶ ἡμεῖς, And what I do I will also continue to do, in order to deny an opportunity to those who want an opportunity to be recognized as our equals in what they boast about. The hypocritical irony of Paul's opponents was that they had charged him with robbing the church, as implied in his hyperbolic metaphor in 11:8, ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας ἐσύλησα λαβῶν ὀψώνιον πρὸς τὴν ὑμῶν διακονίαν, I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. Also 12:16 points this same direction.

Paul's summary repeating of this earlier discussion here with καὶ οὐ καταναρκήσω in 12:14 provides opportunity to develop the theme in a different direction as vv. 14b-18 illustrate. His refusal to accept support from them is an expression of his love for them. This is developed in several ways through a set of justifying statements introduced by γάρ. First, he is not interested in their possessions, but in them as people: οὐ γὰρ ζητῶ τὰ ὑμῶν ἀλλ' ὑμᾶς, for I don't seek your things but you.<sup>4</sup> He doesn't mean that he wants to enslave them as devotees to himself. His later letter to the Philippians throws light on Paul's meaning here (4:17): οὐχ ὅτι ἐπιζητῶ τὸ δόμα, ἀλλ' ἐπιζητῶ τὸν καρπὸν τὸν πλεονάζοντα εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that accumulates to your account. When Epaphroditus brought the generous love offering to Paul during his Roman imprisonment, the apostle was more interested in the Philippian believers reflecting well before God in commitment to Christ, than he was in the gift, even though

<sup>4</sup>When he visits, he will adhere to his policy of refusing maintenance. He wants the Corinthians themselves, not their financial assistance.<sup>564</sup> This sounds as though he believed he was under criticism on the grounds that (like the sophists, or some of them) he was only after their money.<sup>565</sup> There may be some hint of this in v. 16. Perhaps the original sense of injury on account of his refusal of a proffered benefaction<sup>566</sup> had turned into suspicion that the rejection of Corinthian funding could not be wholly genuine. He must be getting money from them in some other, devious, way, i.e., by soliciting donations ostensibly for the collection but in actuality for himself. Repudiating any such intention, Paul insists that the Corinthians themselves are his concern. Several commentators claim that his ultimate objective in all this is to restore the relationship between the Corinthians and Christ.<sup>567</sup> The implication of such exegesis would seem to be that any criticism of Paul as their apostle is at the same time a form of alienation from Christ himself. But he does not precisely say this, and such a total identification of himself with Christ would surely suggest some degree of egocentricity on his part.<sup>568</sup> It may simply be that the Corinthians' suspicions of him are inimical to their acceptance of the pastoral guidance which they so clearly need (vv. 20–21) from him, and which he would wish to provide in an affectionate manner." [[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), 843–844.]

it was greatly needed at that point. The same point is what Paul has in mind with the Corinthians. As he has made very clear all through this letter, his highest priority is building them up into spiritual maturity as a bright witness to the transforming power of Christ. Therefore, he will avoid any action that might somehow be perceived as diminishing that objective.

Second, he will not be a burden on them because as spiritual parent he should be caring for them, not the reverse: οὐ γὰρ ὀφείλει τὰ τέκνα τοῖς γονεῦσιν θησαυρίζειν ἀλλ' οἱ γονεῖς τοῖς τέκνοις, *for children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children*. The use of the parenting image serves a special purpose for Paul. <sup>5</sup>He alone -- and not the outsiders -- enjoys a unique relationship to the Corinthians. <sup>6</sup>The image is different but the point is virtually the same in Gal. 4:16-19 where point compares himself to a pregnant mother trying to give spiritual birth to the Galatians, while the Judaizing heretics are lovers seeking to tempt the Galatians to abandon home in order to move in with the heretics.

In v. 15, both a continuation of the parenting image continues but with a shift of emphasis to what the apos-

<sup>5</sup>But would Paul have regarded his statement that 'children are not responsible to save up for their parents' as universally applicable and without exceptions? Certainly not! He must have viewed this as a general principle (note the gnomic present ὀφείλει and the plurals τέκνα and γονεῦσιν) with obvious exceptions and not as a rigid law that was everywhere applicable, for the following reasons.<sup>17</sup> (1) He himself received financial support from some of his spiritual children (11:8-9; Phil. 4:15-16). (2) In 1 Cor. 9:14 he appeals to a dominical provision (see Luke 10:7) that allows for the support of Christian evangelists, presumably (among others) by those who have responded to the preaching of the gospel. (3) He knows of another 'natural law'—that of appropriate returns for labor expended (1 Cor. 9:3-9, 13)—that must stand alongside the 'natural law' of 12:14b.18 (4) In 1 Tim. 5:8 he requires believers to provide for the needs (προνοεῖ) of their own families, which would include, in certain circumstances (cf. Mark 7:9-13), the care of parents by children. So we conclude that, as is sometimes the case with Paul's οὐ(κ) ... ἀλλά contrasts,<sup>19</sup> the antithesis in v. 14b is not absolute but relative: 'it is not normally (or principally) that children must provide for their parents, but parents for their children.'<sup>20</sup> [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), 884-885.]

<sup>6</sup>What the apostle presupposes in using this parent-child imagery is his role of spiritual fatherhood and his role as the Corinthians' one and only father in Christ. They are his 'dearly loved children' (τέκνα μου ἀγαπητά, 1 Cor. 4:14).<sup>13</sup> 'For though you have countless tutors in Christ, you do not have multiple fathers. For I myself became your father in Christ Jesus, through preaching the gospel to you' (1 Cor. 4:15). His spiritual paternity (cf. 6:13; 11:2) gave him a distinctive right, which could not be claimed by his rivals, to care for his children's spiritual welfare, a right he was eager to exercise (ζητῶ).<sup>14</sup> [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), 883.]

tle was prepared to sacrifice for his children the Corinthians: ἐγὼ δὲ ἥδιστα δαπανήσω καὶ ἐκδαπανηθήσομαι ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν. εἰ περισσοτέρως ὑμᾶς ἀγαπῶν, ἥσσον ἀγαπῶμαι; *I will most gladly spend and be spent for you. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?* The emphasis here is as father caring for his children.<sup>7</sup> He was the preacher under whose Gospel proclamation the Corinthians had come to Christ.<sup>8</sup> The adverb ἥδιστα, most gladly, is used 3 times in 2 Corinthians out of its 5 NT uses. It underscores a generous and joyful posture by the apostle as father toward his children the Corinthians. How? δαπανήσω καὶ ἐκδαπανηθήσομαι ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν, *I will spend and be spent out completely for your lives*. Although the literal sense of δαπανᾶω is to spend money, Paul uses the verbs δαπανᾶω and ἐκδαπανᾶω figuratively to mean exhausting his time, energies etc. to help the Corinthians reach spiritual maturity.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup>In chs. 11 and 12, then, Paul justifies his inflexible policy of financial independence of the Corinthians on several grounds.<sup>15</sup>

"(1) He wanted to dramatize the fact that the gospel he preached was free of charge (11:7), and, by doing so, to avoid any accusation that his preaching was motivated by monetary gain (cf. 6:3; 1 Cor. 9:12b).

"(2) He wished never to be a financial 'dead-weight'<sup>16</sup> on the Corinthians, a millstone around their necks (11:9; 12:13-14, 16).

"(3) He was determined never to forfeit the advantage he enjoyed over the rival missionaries at Corinth who apparently (cf. 11:20) received remuneration from the church there (11:12).

"(4) He had no designs on their possessions or money, only on the good of their persons (12:14a).

"(5) Children are not expected to accumulate resources so that they can support their parents (12:14b)."

[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), 884.]

<sup>8</sup>The double reference to parenthood (οἱ γονεῖς) in v. 14b makes it clear that when Paul speaks of his expenditure and his love and uses the emphatic ἐγὼ in v. 15, he is thinking of his role as a spiritual father. His sense of fatherhood in relation to his converts originated in his role as the evangelist through whose preaching they had come to believe (cf. 1 Cor. 3:5; 4:15).<sup>21</sup> If δέ is adversative ('but'), he is contrasting his glad and lavish generosity in giving to his children with what might be expected of normal fathers; he outstrips ordinary expectations. 'I promise to do even more than natural fathers' (Theodoret).<sup>22</sup> This is certainly possible, but it is better to see v. 15a as an explanation (δέ = "for") or as a consequence (δέ = "so") of the axiom expressed in v. 14b. θησαυρίζειν in v. 14 does not refer to hoarding resources but to saving them up for use, so that v. 15a affords an illustration (ἐγὼ, 'for my part,' 'as for me' [NEB])<sup>23</sup> of the exuberant (ἥδιστα, 'very gladly'<sup>24</sup>) and liberal use of a father's resources." [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), 885.]

<sup>9</sup>In a literal sense δαπανᾶω refers to the spending of money or concrete resources. In Acts 21:24, for example, it is used of the

As sometimes happens when a father loves his children greatly, they love him less: εἰ περισσοτέρως ὑμᾶς ἀγαπῶν, ἥσσον ἀγαπῶμαι; *If I love you more, am I to be loved less?* The first class conditional sentence assumes Paul's greater love for the Corinthians in the protasis: εἰ περισσοτέρως ὑμᾶς ἀγαπῶν. Clearly this was the case for Paul.<sup>10</sup> Does Paul's greater love, περισσοτέρως, have to mean lesser love, ἥσσον, by the Corinthians. This rhetorical question pushes the Corinthians to reflect on how they are treating the apostle. In reality, greater love should beget greater love in response. But like spoiled, ungrateful children some of the Corinthians were return Paul's love with criticism and questioning of his motives.

But as vv. 16-18 assert, there was nothing in Paul's past experiences in Corinth to give the Corinthians a basis for criticizing him: 16 Ἔστω δέ, ἐγὼ οὐ κατεβάρησα ὑμᾶς· ἀλλ' ὑπάρχων πανοῦργος δόλω ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον. 17 μή τινα ὧν ἀπέσταλκα πρὸς ὑμᾶς, δι' αὐτοῦ ἐπλεονέκτησα ὑμᾶς; 18 παρεκάλεσα Τίτον καὶ συναπέστειλα τὸν

paying of expenses, the defraying of the cost of sacrifices. Figuratively, as here, it denotes the exertion of great effort (Louw and Nida §42.27). καὶ ἐκδαπανηθήσομαι intensifies the idea of expenditure, with ἐκ- used in a 'perfective' sense, 'spend out, spend wholly.'<sup>25</sup> 'I will expend myself and be utterly expended for your sake.' Both his energies and even his life<sup>26</sup> will be used up for the spiritual welfare of his converts. Although it is possible that the simplex verb refers to money and concrete resources, and the compound verb to personal resources ('all I have and all I am,' Goodspeed),<sup>27</sup> it is more likely that both verbs describe the willing sacrifice of personal resources such as physical and spiritual vigor. We could take ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν to mean little more than ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν,<sup>28</sup> but the use of ψυχὴ indicates that the benefit (implied by ὑπὲρ) to be felt by the Corinthians lay in the spiritual realm rather than in the physical or financial. Neither energy nor life itself would be spared by Paul as he worked for their salvation. He is not instituting a new policy that would take effect when he arrived on his third visit. Rather, he is reaffirming, with regard to that visit, what had always been true of his service to the Corinthians." [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), 885–886.]

<sup>10</sup>In 11:2 Paul presents himself as the protective father of the bride, the whole Corinthian congregation being his daughter 'in the Lord.' Here in 12:15a he presents himself as the devoted, self-giving father of his spiritual children at Corinth, bent on contributing energetically to their highest spiritual good. This shows that for Paul fatherhood involves a nurturing role, and not merely an educating and admonishing role (1 Cor. 4:14–15; 1 Thess. 2:11–12), a disciplinary role (1 Cor. 4:15, 21; cf. 2 Cor. 13:10), or a modeling role (1 Cor. 4:15–16). His aim was to bring each of his converts to maturity in faith and in the knowledge of God's will (Col. 1:9, 23, 28), and to achieve this goal he toiled and strove with the energy that Christ powerfully generated within him (Col. 1:29)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 886.]

ἀδελφόν· μήτι ἐπλεονέκτησεν ὑμᾶς Τίτος; οὐ τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι περιεπατήσαμεν; οὐ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἴχνεσιν; 16 Let it be assumed that I did not burden you. Nevertheless (you say) since I was crafty, I took you in by deceit. 17 Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you? 18 I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves with the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?

12.16 δέ  
 309 Ἔστω  
 (ὅτι) ἐγὼ οὐ κατεβάρησα ὑμᾶς·  
 ἀλλ'  
 ὑπάρχων πανοῦργος  
 δόλω  
 310 ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον.  
 12.17 μή τινα ὧν ἀπέσταλκα πρὸς ὑμᾶς,  
 δι' αὐτοῦ  
 311 ἐπλεονέκτησα ὑμᾶς;  
 12.18 παρεκάλεσα Τίτον  
 καὶ  
 313 συναπέστειλα τὸν ἀδελφόν·  
 314 μήτι ἐπλεονέκτησεν ὑμᾶς Τίτος;  
 315 οὐ τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι περιεπατήσαμεν;  
 316 οὐ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἴχνεσιν;

Here Paul proposes a scenario to the Corinthians: he did not burden him but they criticized him as being deceitful anyway. This seems to point in the direction of the criticism that the 'relief offering' was a scam in order to fill Paul's pockets with the money collected from the churches. He reminds them that neither he, when in Corinth, nor any of his associates ever took advantage of the Corinthians in any manner. The Corinthian criticism grows out of the pagan cultural scams carried out on people by the sophist itinerate philosophers. But for a church deeply embedded in cultural twisting of their Christian faith, that they would suspect the worst rather than the best is not overly surprising.

That his words propose a hypothetical scenario is signaled by the very unusual expression Ἔστω δέ, *let it be assumed that I....*<sup>11</sup> It is unclear precisely what this id-

<sup>11</sup>The focus now moves from Paul's future conduct (vv. 14–15a) to his past conduct (vv. 16–18). ἔστω (literally, 'let it be') may be prospective, introducing a point that all parties would agree on, viz. that Paul had never imposed on the congregation financially. 'Let it be assumed that I did not burden you' (NRSV).<sup>39</sup> But Robertson is probably right in observing that the unexpressed subject of ἔστω is the preceding sentence (v. 15b) (392). On this view ἔστω is retrospective, 'Be that as it may' (Weymouth, NIV).<sup>40</sup> 'Whatever is the answer to that question [v. 15b], the incontestable fact remains: I myself (ἐγὼ) was not an imposition on you.' What was contested was the significance of that fact: did it express love (as Paul ~~885~~ 5

iomatic expression alludes to. It probably reaches back to Paul's claim to not have been a burden on them in his previous visit as implied in vv. 14-15 and especially v. 13. αὐτὸς ἐγὼ οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν, **I did not myself burden you.** The Corinthians can at least agree with him on that point, in spite of being suspicious about the motives behind the relief offering.<sup>12</sup>

Paul depicts not burdening them somewhat differently with ἐγὼ οὐ κατεβάρησα ὑμᾶς. The verb καταβαρέω has the sense of loading down someone or some animal with excessive weight (βάρος). The figurative use here gets close to the English idiom **I did not personally lean on you.** Functionally the idea is indistinguishable in meaning from αὐτὸς ἐγὼ οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν in v. 13 (cf. also 11:9a, b).

The strong contrastive conjunction ἀλλ', but, sets in stark contrast what Paul thinks the Corinthians can agree with him on in v. 16a to the charges being circulated against him in v. 16b: ἀλλ' ὑπάρχων πανούργος δόλω ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον, **but being crafty, by deceit I took you.**<sup>13</sup> lieved) or lack of love (as the Corinthians seemed to think) (cf. v. 15b)? καταβαρέω means 'put pressure or weight (βάρος) on,' thus 'burden (someone, τινά),' so that οὐ κατεβάρησα ὑμᾶς is indistinguishable in meaning from οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν (v. 13; cf. 11:9a, b)." [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), 888.]

<sup>12</sup>Now Paul clearly alludes to the complaint that appears to lie (somewhat inconsistently) beneath his previous words in v. 14.<sup>598</sup> In some way or other he has taken financial advantage of the Corinthians, and in a cunning fashion. He assumes their agreement<sup>599</sup> that he himself<sup>600</sup> has not directly burdened<sup>601</sup> them, i.e., by openly requiring monetary assistance. But since he is crafty by nature,<sup>602</sup> he will have managed to get funds from them by some other means. Perhaps he is quoting what his opponents are actually saying about him, claiming such conduct to be a past fact.<sup>603</sup> Alternatively, he may simply be aware that suspicions of his financial probity were at least latent, if not already emerging, and may aim to forestall specific criticisms by answering them in advance. This, though, is less probable (see below).<sup>604</sup> [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), 849–850.]

<sup>13</sup>Standing over against (cf. ἀλλά) that incontrovertible fact was the view that Paul in his craftiness had ensnared the Corinthians by a trick. ὑπάρχων πανούργος means 'since I am crafty by nature,' where the causal participle<sup>41</sup> refers to an inherent characteristic (ὑπάρχων = ὢν φύσει).<sup>42</sup> The adjective πανούργος is formed on the analogy of κακοῦργος (= κακόν + ἔργον, 'carrying out an evil deed') and means, etymologically, 'capable of all work' (πᾶν + ἔργον),<sup>43</sup> 'ready to do anything,'<sup>44</sup> or, in a pejorative sense, 'up to every conceivable trick.' The dual sense of this word is represented in the LXX: positively, it means 'prudent,' 'wise,'<sup>45</sup> and negatively, 'crafty' (Job 5:12). In the NT, however, the word group πανουργία<sup>46</sup> and πανούργος (found only here)<sup>47</sup> always bears a negative sense. δόλω is an instrumental dative, 'by cunning,' 'through a trick.' As in 11:20, λαμβάνω introduces a metaphor drawn from fishing or hunting, where 'take' means 'catch' or 'snare,' although in reference to persons who are 'duped' or deceived the sense will be 'take in.'

The adjective πανούργος, -ov, only found here in the NT, normally had a negative meaning with the sense of ready to anything to scam someone. It was frequently used against the sophist philosophers for their scamming of naive people.<sup>14</sup> The sense contextually here becomes 'since being a religious charlatan, I took you in by deceit.' This was the essence of the charge against Paul floating around the Christian community at Corinth, with some of the members believing it. 'He

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"What was the origin of this view of Paul's past conduct? It is conceivable that he himself is anticipating a possible charge against him. 'Paul imagines to himself a dialog with the Corinthians and expresses it succinctly in the first person.'<sup>48</sup> Accordingly, some renderings of v. 16 add '(I suppose)' (Young and Ford 275) or 'someone will say' (GNB). But while Paul might have imagined or anticipated an accusation that he had ensnared the Corinthians by a cunning trick, it is difficult to believe that he would have prefaced it with ὑπάρχων πανούργος, 'unscrupulous trickster that I am.' Rather, he seems to be reproducing an actual charge, or at least a persistent rumor,<sup>49</sup> that originated with his opponents (Weymouth adds 'they say'; cf. φησὶν in 10:10) or with the Corinthians themselves (RSV adds 'you say'). Whichever group was responsible for the rumor or the charge, the other would have readily believed and perpetuated it."

[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), 888–889.]

<sup>14</sup>What, then, is implied by the criticism, actual or anticipated, that Paul is πανούργος?<sup>605</sup> The word was used in a bad sense quite generally,<sup>606</sup> and could be employed against opponents of any kind.<sup>607</sup> But it occurs more particularly, according to Betz, in polemic against the sophists<sup>608</sup> and against religious superstition. These two targets went together, since there was a tendency to identify religious charlatans with those regarded as fake philosophers. The dividing line was fluid. Furthermore, the charge of avarice was brought against both groups.<sup>609</sup> When Paul uses the term πανούργος in a context where he is defending his financial integrity, it is surely very likely, Betz suggests, that there is some connection with the polemics of the philosophical and religious milieu in which the apostle worked.<sup>610</sup> This may be so, but it is not very easy to see exactly what this connection would be. If we suppose Paul himself to be engaging in some way in anti-sophistic polemic,<sup>611</sup> he would apply the word to the rival missionaries, not to himself. Conversely, if it is a term used by his critics, to denigrate him, what would be the connection with the polemic against sophists? Paul is not a sophist (and the Corinthians seem to have favoured sophists). It would be better to suppose that it was simply religious charlatanism that he believed himself (in danger of being) charged with. But again, how plausible is this? Far from engineering really impressive displays of fake miracles, he seems to have produced little that was very memorable in the way of apostolic signs (12:12). He would scarcely have made much money, if any, as a γόης—a sorcerer,<sup>612</sup> or a (religious) cheat<sup>613</sup> (pretending to powers he did not possess). All in all, pace Betz, it seems more probable that the term πανούργος is used here in a quite general pejorative sense: '(craftily) clever'." [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), 850–851.]

didn't scam us while he was here, but look at this relief offering he now wants from us. His first visits just buttered us up for the really big scam now.'

Verses 17-18 serve to amplify the denial of the charge through the ministry of his associates. He uses four rhetorical questions to put the 'monkey' on the back of the Corinthians.<sup>15</sup>

**μή τινα ὧν ἀπέσταλκα πρὸς ὑμᾶς, δι' αὐτοῦ ἐπλεονέκτησα ὑμᾶς; Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you?**

The highly classical stylizing of this sentence gives greater stress to Paul's point. The block diagram highlights this unusual pattern clearly.

12.17                    μή τινα ὧν ἀπέσταλκα πρὸς ὑμᾶς,  
                                 δι' αὐτοῦ  
311                    ἐπλεονέκτησα ὑμᾶς;

The τινα pronoun with a relative pronoun heritage introduces a phrase that stands as the antecedent of the personal pronoun αὐτοῦ. Thus the *through him*, δι' αὐτοῦ, is defined by *not anyone whom I sent to you*, μή τινα ὧν ἀπέσταλκα πρὸς ὑμᾶς. With the μή negative, Paul expects the Corinthians to affirm that absolutely no one coming from Paul to Corinth was guilty of taking advantage of the Corinthians. The preposition of the prepositional phrase δι' αὐτοῦ in front of its verb and immediately following its antecedent in the opening clause heightens the linkage between pronoun and antecedent. One should note that many commentators take the unusual use of the perfect tense with ἀπέσταλκα in the midst of numerous aorist tense verbs to signal repeated sendings of associates from Ephesus to Corinth by Paul.

The core clause ἐπλεονέκτησα ὑμᾶς; *Did I take advantage*

<sup>15</sup>Something unique to ancient Greek surfaces in these four rhetorical questions, which by form are yes/no answer type questions. The different negatives used with the verbs carries different meanings. The a detailed background study of this see my LEARNING BIBLICAL KOINE GREEK, [lesson 07](#), pp. 1.7-2f.

Two core negatives in Greek are οὐ and μή. Derivative forms, such as μήτι used here, simply make the negation more emphatic. In declarative statements, i.e., with indicative mood verbs, only οὐ and its derivatives are used, but μή and its derivatives are used for all other mood forms of the regular verb as well as with infinitives and participles. BUT with interrogative statements using the regular verb special meanings come into play. With μή and its derivatives, the expected answer to the question signals a no answer. But with οὐ and its derivatives, the expected answer is yes.

Thus the first rhetorical questions in vv. 17-18a expect the Corinthians to respond with no, you/he didn't. The μήτι in the second question (v. 18a) emphatically expects the Corinthians to say that Titus in no way took advantage of the Corinthians while he was in Corinth. But the third and fourth questions with οὐ expect the Corinthians to agree with Paul's assertions of his functioning just like Titus did. How to bring out clearly these fine nuances of meaning into English translation is the dilemma of the Bible translator. Thus a widely diverse pattern of translations will surface in these verses.

*tage of you?* is the primary answer of Paul to the Corinthian charge in v. 16b, ἀλλ' ὑπάρχων πανοῦργος δόλω ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον, *but being crafty I scamed you by deceit*. With personal objects in the accusative case, i.e., ὑμᾶς, you, here, the verb πλεονεκτέω carries the idea of "to take advantage of, exploit, outwit, defraud, cheat."<sup>16</sup> Paul vigorously defends both his integrity and that of his associates.<sup>17</sup> Such charges were often leveled against the sophists and Paul employs familiar language to the Corinthians in forcefully rebutting the charge.<sup>18</sup> The apostle challenges the Corinthian readers to remember a single instance in which they were cheated by his associates. He assumes that they can't and thus are forced to agree with him that both his and his associates' ministries were carried out with highest integrity.

**παρεκάλεσα Τίτον καὶ συναπέστειλα τὸν ἀδελφόν· μήτι ἐπλεονέκτησεν ὑμᾶς Τίτος; I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he?**

312 <sup>12.18</sup> παρεκάλεσα Τίτον  
                                 καὶ  
313                    συναπέστειλα τὸν ἀδελφόν·  
314                    μήτι ἐπλεονέκτησεν ὑμᾶς Τίτος;

In similar eloquent style in v. 18a, Paul singles out Titus in particular as one of those associates: παρεκάλεσα

<sup>16</sup>William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 824.

<sup>17</sup>V. 16b has stated in broad outline the charge that had been leveled against Paul. His rebuttal in v. 17, also couched in general terms, is in effect an invitation to the Corinthians to adduce any evidence of exploitation through any of his deputies. As also in v. 18, πλεονεκτέω refers to Paul's alleged exploitation of the Corinthians by taking advantage of their willingness to contribute to the collection, all the time siphoning off funds for himself through financial intermediaries. There can be little doubt that the charge Paul is answering was particularly painful to him. It related to his collection for Jerusalem that symbolized the climax of his Aegean ministry and was the 'crown jewel' (Sampley 6) of his work. But even more distressing was the fact that the accusation involved his carefully chosen and trusted associates who had been dispatched by him to work on his behalf in Corinth; the principal was naturally jealous of his agents' reputations as well as his own." [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), 889–890.]

<sup>18</sup>The verb πλεονεκτέω was used as a pejorative term to describe the conduct of sophists and charlatans.<sup>628</sup> Paul's own rejection of financial assistance is evidence that he does not himself belong to this category, and neither do his assistants, who follow his own practice." [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), 853.]

Τίτον καὶ συναπέστειλα τὸν ἀδελφόν· μήτι ἐπλεονέκτησεν ὑμᾶς Τίτος; I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he? The prominent emphasis falls on Titus with the opening declaration παρεκάλεσα Τίτον, I urged Titus (to go).<sup>19</sup> Paul's framing of this indicates that he did not boss his associates around like slaves. Rather he had to convince Titus of the importance of making this trip from Ephesus to Corinth. It was Titus' report upon meeting up with Paul in Macedonia that prompted the writing of this entire letter, as mentioned in 7:13-15.<sup>20</sup>

Titus is mentioned 13 times in the NT with 9 of them in 2 Corinthians in chapters 2, 7, 8 and 12. He was one of Paul's most trusted associates and seemed to get the really hard assignments of dealing with the Corinthians and later on with the churches on Crete. We know very little about him. He surfaces first in Gal. 2:1, 3 as traveling with Paul from Tarsus to Jerusalem for the big meeting with the Twelve. At the very end of Paul's life, he mentions Titus as going to Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10).<sup>21</sup> Whether this was his home or a ministry

<sup>19</sup>Windisch, p. 403, notes that παρεκάλεσα Τίτον has to be supplemented by some such phrase as ἵνα ἔρχηται πρὸς ὑμᾶς. The meaning of παρακαλέω here is more likely 'request' (see BAGD s.v. 3., with this reference), 'ask' (so Barrett, p. 318), than 'urge' (BAGD s.v. 2.; both Furnish, p. 557, and Martin, p. 425, favour 'urge'). Titus and his colleague are instanced as a specific example of those whom, in v. 17, Paul has sent to the city. And note the implication of συναπέστειλα here." [

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), P. 853, fn. 631.]

<sup>20</sup>2 Cor. 7:13b-15. Ἐπὶ δὲ τῇ παρακλήσει ἡμῶν περισσοτέρως μᾶλλον ἐχάρημεν ἐπὶ τῇ χαρᾷ Τίτου, ὅτι ἀναπέπαυται τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ πάντων ὑμῶν· 14 ὅτι εἴ τι αὐτῷ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κεκαύχημαι, οὐ κατησχύνθη, ἀλλ' ὡς πάντα ἐν ἀληθείᾳ ἐλάλησαμεν ὑμῖν, οὕτως καὶ ἡ καύχησις ἡμῶν ἢ ἐπὶ Τίτου ἀλήθεια ἐγενήθη. 15 καὶ τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐστὶν ἀναμνησκομένου τὴν πάντων ὑμῶν ὑπακοήν, ὡς μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου ἐδέξασθε αὐτόν.

In addition to our own consolation, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his mind has been set at rest by all of you. 14 For if I have been somewhat boastful about you to him, I was not disgraced; but just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting to Titus has proved true as well. 15 And his heart goes out all the more to you, as he remembers the obedience of all of you, and how you welcomed him with fear and trembling.

<sup>21</sup>"A region along the modern Yugoslav coast of the Adriatic Sea which in apostolic times was the SW part of Illyricum. This ill-defined mountainous district was a nemesis to Rome. By the time of Paul's epistle to Timothy (ca. A.D. 67) the name denoted at least the region between the Macedonian frontier to the S and the river Titius (Kerka) and oftentimes the entire province of Illyricum (2 Tim 4:10). The broader definition was definitely used during the Flavian era. Main Dalmatian cities included Salona, Scodra, and Delminium—the capital." [Jerry A. Pattengale, "Dalmatia (Place)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4.]

assignment is not certain, although probably the latter.<sup>22</sup> An unnamed Christian brother is also sent along to accompany Titus: καὶ συναπέστειλα τὸν ἀδελφόν, and sent the brother with him.<sup>23</sup> Most likely this is the same unnamed brother mentioned in 8:16-24 as accompanying Titus to Corinth.<sup>24</sup> Note that two unnamed Christian

<sup>22</sup>Titus had gone to Dalmatia. Perhaps he wintered in Nicopolis on his return from Crete and then headed north (see discussion on v 9). Dalmatia was the southwestern part of Illyricum on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea (modern-day Yugoslavia, currently Croatia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina; cf. Pliny Hist. 3.26). Paul had gone as far as Illyricum in his journeys (Rom 15:19), so Titus may have been following up on Paul's missionary endeavors as he may have done in Crete." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 590.]

<sup>23</sup>συναποστέλλω means 'send off (ἀπό) in someone's company (σύν),' thus 'send with.' It implies that 'the brother' played a role subordinate to Titus, which would explain why Titus and not 'the brother' is referred to in the following three rhetorical questions.<sup>58</sup> The article with ἀδελφόν could be possessive ('his brother';<sup>59</sup> or 'our brother') but is more probably anaphoric ('the well-known brother' or 'the brother whom you know'); cf. 1:1." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 891.]

<sup>24</sup>2 Cor. 8:16-24. 16 Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ τῷ δόντι τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ Τίτου, 17 ὅτι τὴν μὲν παράκλησιν ἐδέξατο, σπουδαιότερος δὲ ὑπάρχων αὐθαίρετος ἐξῆλθεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς. 18 συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ μετ' αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀδελφόν οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, 19 οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ χειροτονηθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν συνέκδημος ἡμῶν σὺν τῇ χάριτι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένη ὑφ' ἡμῶν πρὸς τὴν αὐτοῦ τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν καὶ προθυμίαν ἡμῶν, 20 στελλόμενοι τοῦτο, μή τις ἡμᾶς μωμήσῃται ἐν τῇ ἀδρότητι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένη ὑφ' ἡμῶν· 21 προνοοῦμεν γὰρ καλὰ οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων. 22 συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ αὐτοῖς τὸν ἀδελφόν ἡμῶν ὃν ἐδοκιμάσαμεν ἐν πολλοῖς πολλαῖς σπουδαῖον ὄντα, σὺν δὲ πολλῷ σπουδαιότερον πεποιθήσει πολλῆ τῇ εἰς ὑμᾶς. 23 εἶτε ὑπὲρ Τίτου, κοινωνὸς ἐμὸς καὶ εἰς ὑμᾶς συνεργός· εἶτε ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν, ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, δόξα Χριστοῦ. 24 τὴν οὖν ἐνδειξιν τῆς ἀγάπης ὑμῶν καὶ ἡμῶν καυχήσεως ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν εἰς αὐτοὺς ἐνδεικνύμενοι εἰς πρόσωπον τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν.

16 But thanks be to God who put in the heart of Titus the same eagerness for you that I myself have. 17 For he not only accepted our appeal, but since he is more eager than ever, he is going to you of his own accord. 18 With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his proclaiming the good news; 19 and not only that, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us while we are administering this generous undertaking for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our goodwill. 20 We intend that no one should blame us about this generous gift that we are administering, 21 for we intend to do what is right not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of others. 22 And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found eager in many matters, but who is now more eager than ever because of his great confidence in you. 23 As for Titus, he is my partner and co-worker in your service; as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. 24 Therefore openly before the churches, show



brothers are mentioned in chapter eight, with the first one possibly being Timothy.

That Titus was the designated leader of the group becomes clear in the question posed: μήτι ἐπλεονέκτησεν ὑμᾶς Τίτος; *Titus did not take advantage of you, did he?* The emphatic μήτι strongly anticipates a resounding no way from the Corinthians. The unusual positioning of the verb subject Τίτος at the end of the sentence heightens even more the expected no. The μήτι... Τίτος at either end of the question creates the sense of “no way... Titus.” The verb ἐπλεονέκτησεν, *did he cheat*, repeats in the third person singular the first person singular ἐπλεονέκτησα, *did I cheat*, in v. 17. Titus as Paul’s representatives would reflect back on Paul in the conduct of their ministry.

**οὐ τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι περιεπατήσαμεν; οὐ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἵχνεσιν; *Did we not conduct ourselves with the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?***

315 οὐ τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι περιεπατήσαμεν;

316 οὐ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἵχνεσιν (περιεπατήσαμεν);

Paul then ties his integrity to that of Titus. Notice the switch from the first person singular “I” in vv. 15-16 to the first person “we” in these final two rhetorical questions. Paul here includes his associates in the claim of integrity in treating the Corinthians. The ministries of Titus and the other associates are a part of Paul’s ministry, which is promoting the apostolic Gospel. Also note the uniform use of the aorist verb form in all four of these rhetorical questions. This clearly signals past actions by Paul and his associates.

The synonymous parallelism of the two rhetorical questions is obvious, and leads to the necessity of an inner dependent understanding of both of them. Thus the verb περιεπατήσαμεν, *did we not walk*, and the noun ἵχνεσιν, *did we not march together in the same steps*, refer to the behavior of Paul and his associates while at Corinth. The common figurative use of περιπατέω as a reference to behavior in ancient Greek contributes the moral emphasis of their conduct in Corinth.<sup>25</sup> The second noun ἵχνεσιν alludes literally also to walking but refers to one’s footprints, here with the sense of marching in military formation with precise timing. This second statement (# 316) stresses the uniform conduct of Paul and his associates.

The two modifiers τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι, *in the same spirit*, and τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἵχνεσιν, *in the same steps*, define each them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

<sup>25</sup>“2. to conduct one’s life, *comport oneself, behave, live as habit of conduct*; fig. ext. of 1.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 803.]

other. Both inner posture and outward action becomes the clear point being made by Paul. Their actions were not phony and deceitful, because they flowed from the inner posture of sincere desire to help the Corinthians. A few commentators wrongly seek to make the argument for πνεύματι here to refer to the Holy Spirit.<sup>26</sup> This is based on Gal. 5:16, 18, 25, where Paul begins with πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε, *walk in the Spirit*, asserts πνεύματι ἄγεσθε, *being led by the Spirit* and concludes with πνεύματι καὶ στοιχώμεν, *let us march also in conformity to the Spirit*. But the context in 12:18 clearly argues against this viewpoint. To the Corinthians the emphasis is upon inner and outward. That is, the outward actions genuinely reflected the purity of inner motivation. And this was uniformly the case between Paul and his associates, and in particular with Titus. So if they concluded that Titus and those with him were genuine, they should draw the same conclusion about Paul, contrary to the accusations of the critics at Corinth.

#### 10.2.3.4.2 Fears about the Corinthians, 12:19-21

19 Πάλαι δοκεῖτε ὅτι ὑμῖν ἀπολογούμεθα. κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν· τὰ δὲ πάντα, ἀγαπητοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς. 20 φοβοῦμαι γὰρ μή πως ἐλθὼν οὐχ οἶους θέλω εὐρῶ ὑμᾶς κἀγὼ εὐρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἷον οὐ θέλετε· μή πως ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθειᾶι, καταλαλαί, ψιθυρισμοί, φυσιώσεις, ἀκαταστασίαι· 21 μή πάλιν ἐλθόντος μου ταπεινώσῃ με ὁ θεός μου πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ πενθήσω πολλοῦς

<sup>26</sup>Fee argues vigorously (357–59) that τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι should be rendered ‘in the same Spirit,’ an interpretation (we observe) that is reflected in several EVV.<sup>62</sup> Noting the comparable phrase πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε in Gal. 5:16, he suggests that ‘walking in/by the Spirit’ is the basic form of Paul’s ethical imperative (358), so that without the second question (οὐ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἵχνεσιν;) one would naturally understand πνεύματι as referring to the Holy Spirit. In fact, he argues, this second question is not an explanation of τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι but simply a development of the metaphor of ‘walking.’ He also points to the expression ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι in 1 Cor. 12:9 in a context that speaks of diversity of gifts yet the oneness of the giver (1 Cor. 12:11) (359). Although Gal. 5:16 and 1 Cor. 12:9 lend support to this view, the parallelism between τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι and τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἵχνεσιν<sup>63</sup> suggests that πνεύματι is being used anthropologically in reference to a ‘disposition of mind’ (Zerwick, *Analysis* 414) or attitude.<sup>64</sup> In all three NT uses of ἵχνος (‘footprint’) (Rom. 4:12; 2 Cor. 12:18; 1 Pet. 2:21) the word is figurative in meaning. ‘Did we not walk (supplying περιεπατήσαμεν) in the same footsteps?’ or ‘Were our footsteps not the same?’ refers to the identity of course or track followed by Titus and Paul that was the corollary of their identity of outlook. Between the two there was perfect harmony in both inward attitude and outward action. If the Corinthians knew Titus to be innocent of financial chicanery, so too Paul was innocent.” [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), 892.]

τῶν προημαρτηκῶτων καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ ἀσελγείᾳ ἧ ἔπραξαν.

19 Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves before you? We are speaking in Christ before God. Everything we do, beloved, is for the sake of building you up. 20 For I fear that when I come, I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish; I fear that there may perhaps be quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. 21 I fear that when I come again, my God may humble me before you, and that I may have to mourn over many who previously sinned and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and licentiousness that they have practiced.

12.19	Πάλαι	
317	δοκεῖτε	ὅτι ὑμῖν ἀπολογούμεθα.
		κατέναντι θεοῦ
		ἐν Χριστῷ
318	λαλοῦμεν	·
		δὲ
319	(εἰσὶ) τὰ πάντα,	ἀγαπητοί,
		ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς.
12.20	γὰρ	
320	φοβοῦμαι	ἐλθῶν
		μὴ πως...οὐχ οἶους θέλω εὐρω ὑμᾶς
		κάγῳ εὔρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἶον οὐ θέλετε
321	(φοβοῦμαι)	μὴ πως ἔρις,
		ζῆλος,
		θυμοί,
		ἐριθεΐαι,
		καταλαλιαί,
		ψιθυρισμοί,
		φυσιώσεις,
		ἀκαταστασίαι ·
12.21	μὴ	
	πάλιν	
	ἐλθόντος μου	
322	ταπεινώσῃ με ὁ θεός μου	
	πρὸς ὑμᾶς	
	καὶ	
323	πενθήσω πολλοὺς	
	τῶν προημαρτηκῶτων	
	καὶ	
	μὴ μετανοησάντων	
	ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ	
	καὶ	
	πορνείᾳ	
	καὶ	
	ἀσελγείᾳ ἧ ἔπραξαν.	

With this new unit of text material, the apostle turns a new direction that builds upon the previous unit. The

inner structure of vv. 19-21 that contains just two sentences in the Greek is clear. The statements (#s 317-319) lay out his basic point of motivation. Then a long set of justifying statements (introduced by γὰρ) play especially off the verb φοβοῦμαι in the compound sentence of vv. 20-21 (#s 320-323). This expresses Paul's uncertainty as to whether the Corinthians are measuring up to God's expectation of them. The temporal participle ἐλθῶν, when I come (v. 20), positions this apprehension in regard to what he will discover upon arrival in this third visit (cf. vv. 12:21, 13:1).

**Paul's desire to build up, v. 19.** Πάλαι δοκεῖτε ὅτι ὑμῖν ἀπολογούμεθα. κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν· τὰ δὲ πάντα, ἀγαπητοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς. Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves before you? We are speaking in Christ before God. Everything we do, beloved, is for the sake of building you up.

These two sentences amplify Paul's motivation for ministry to the Corinthians. The first one indirectly levels a charge against his critics, while the second sentence underscores his motivation to glorify God in a ministry that builds up the Corinthians spiritually.

The adverb πάλαι denotes "past time in contrast to the present."<sup>27</sup> Text critical wise, it is to be preferred over the alternative πάλιν, again.<sup>28</sup> The point is to signal with the present tense verb it modifies "up till now."<sup>29</sup> This

<sup>27</sup>William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 751.

<sup>28</sup>πάλαι ('for a long time,' 'all this time') is to be preferred over πάλιν (read by κ<sup>2</sup> D Ψ 0278 M g vg<sup>mass</sup> syr bo) because (i) it has superior attestation, with proto-Alexandrian (κ\* B 1739), later Alexandrian (A 0243 33 81 1175 1881), and Western (F G) textual representatives; and (ii) it is the more difficult reading, since πάλιν ('again') is a very common adverb (28 uses in Paul) and may be explained as an assimilation to its use in 3:1 and 5:12 in a similar context, while πάλαι is found only here in Paul and does not bear its usual sense of 'long ago.' Probably under the influence of 12:18, P46 reads οὐ πάλαι, which makes v. 19a a question that expects an affirmative answer." [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), 893.]

<sup>29</sup>"When πάλαι ('long ago,' 'formerly') is used with the present tense (δοκεῖτε), it has the meaning 'up to now,' 'for a long time now,' or 'all this time.'

The durative δοκεῖτε is 'the present of past action still in progress' (Robertson 879), so that past and present time are united in one

	12.19	Πάλαι
317	δοκεῖτε	ὅτι ὑμῖν ἀπολογούμεθα.
		κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ
318	λαλοῦμεν	·
	δὲ	
319	(εἰσὶ) τὰ πάντα,	ἀγαπητοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς.

triggers a special function of the present tense for the verb that gathers the past and the present into a single expression; it is labeled in most English language Greek grammars the Durative Present, and can only be rendered in English by the perfect tense, e.g., δοκεῖτε as “have you been supposing...?”.

The point of this rhetorical is to probe the thinking of his readers about how long they have been supposing unworthy motives by Paul for the relief offering. Evidently the possibility of such questioning began either with his second visit, i.e., the so-called painful visit in early 55 AD (cf. 2 Cor. 2:1, 12-14; 13:1-2), when emphasis was first given to raising funds to help the believers in Jerusalem and Judea. Now about a year later after Titus' visit to Corinth, he reported to Paul what was being said. Perhaps this questioning of Paul was intensified by the arrival of the outsiders from Judea who questioned Paul's credentials as an apostle before Titus arrived on his trip to Corinth. But this suspicion was festering as time passed, and Paul felt the need to address it. Indeed the entire letter of Second Corinthians is the apostle's response.

What was it that the Corinthians were supposing? The direct object ὅτι clause defines it: ὅτι ὑμῖν ἀπολογούμεθα, *that I am defending myself to you?* In the limited perspective of the Corinthians, they expected Paul to defend himself against these criticisms in a manner similar to the self-promotion of the outsiders. This Paul contends is false. He is not interested in promoting himself, as these false teachers were doing. This we saw laid out in detail in chapter ten. Self-promotion is not a part of the message of a true preach-

phrase (πάλαι δοκεῖτε) (Moulton 119).<sup>4</sup> English expresses this by the perfect tense ('Have you been thinking all this time ...?'), whereas some other languages reproduce the Greek idiom and use the present.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, ἀπολογούμεθα may also be a durative present ('we have been defending ourselves,' RSV, NRSV) and possibly λαλοῦμεν as well ('we have been speaking,' RSV, NJB), but it is not necessary to translate these two verbs this way. With the verb ἀπολογέομαι ('defend oneself'), used only here and in Rom. 2:15 in Paul, the dative (ὑμῖν) denotes the person before whom the defense is given (cf. Acts 19:33).<sup>6</sup> [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), 894–895.]

er of the Gospel. Even though an ἀπολογία, a *defense speech*, in Paul's world meant an effort to put oneself in a favorable light to his audience, usually in response to accusations of being unfavorable,<sup>30</sup> he had a different twist to its meaning. He was not defending himself either then or especially now in this letter. Yet, even a causal reading of this letter, especially chapters 10-13, suggests a vigorous self-defense by Paul.<sup>31</sup> The unusual use of ἀπολογέομαι just here and in Rom. 2:15 in Paul, follows a reflexive middle voice usage for this otherwise deponent verb. Perhaps this was done in order to catch the attention of the listeners at Corinth as this rather long letter was read in the various house church group meetings.

Who then is Paul defending to? The answer comes

<sup>30</sup>For more details see the Louw-Nida Greek Lexicon, topics 33:435-33.438, *Defend, Excuse*:

"33.435 ἀπολογέομαι; ἀπολογία<sup>a</sup>, ας f: to speak on behalf of oneself or of others against accusations presumed to be false—'to defend oneself.'

ἀπολογέομαι: ὁ δὲ Ἀλέξανδρος κατασεισας τὴν χεῖρα ἤθελεν ἀπολογεῖσθαι τῷ δήμῳ 'then Alexander motioned with his hand and tried to defend himself before the people' Ac 19:33.

ἀπολογία<sup>a</sup>: ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ μου ἀπολογία οὐδεὶς μοι παρεγένετο 'when I first defended myself, no one stood by me' 2 Tm 4:16.

"33.436 ἀπολογία<sup>b</sup>, ας f: (derivative of ἀπολογέομαι 'to defend oneself,' 33.435) the content of what is said in defense—'defense, what is said in defense, how one defends oneself.' ἡ ἐμὴ ἀπολογία τοῖς ἐμὲ ἀνακρίνουσιν ἐστιν αὕτη 'when people criticize me, this is my defense' 1 Cor 9:3.

"33.437 πρόφασις<sup>b</sup>, εως f: what is said in defense of a particular action, but without real justification—'excuse.' νῦν δὲ πρόφασιν οὐκ ἔχουσιν περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν 'they no longer have any excuse for their sin' Jn 15:22. In a number of languages 'to have no excuse' is rendered as 'to not be able to justify' or 'to not be able to give a good reason for.'

"33.438 ἀναπολόγητος, ον: pertaining to not being able to defend oneself or to justify one's actions—'to be without excuse, to have no excuse.' διὸ ἀναπολόγητος' Ro 2:1"

[Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 437.]

<sup>31</sup>"Skilled pastor that he was, Paul was always anticipating his converts' reactions to what he was saying. He knew the Corinthians' predilection for criticism well enough to know that as they heard this long letter being read aloud, some would be thinking that he had been conducting a prolonged self-defense that was motivated by personal resentment at the charges that had been directed against him and by a desire for personal vindication. So he poses a probing question (v. 19a).<sup>2</sup> Without any introductory interrogative particle such as οὐ or μή(τι) (cf. vv. 17–18), the question is open and is not in itself accusatory. If the sentence is read as a statement,<sup>3</sup> there is a sharper, accusatory tone that is less compatible with the warmth and sensitive indirectness of Paul's approach here (note ἀγαπητοί and see below on v. 20)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 894.]

in the following declarations (v. 19b): κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν· τὰ δὲ πάντα, ἀγαπητοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς, *We are speaking in Christ before God. Everything we do, beloved, is for the sake of building you up.*

κατέναντι θεοῦ  
ἐν Χριστῷ  
318 λαλοῦμεν·  
  
δὲ  
319 (εἰσὶ) τὰ πάντα,  
ἀγαπητοί,  
ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς.

In essence, Paul envisions his oral and written words of defense as being given *before God* (κατέναντι θεοῦ) while *by means of the presence of Christ* (ἐν Χριστῷ).<sup>32</sup> Even though speaking to the Corinthians (ὑμῖν), the setting is the tribunal of God. The adverbial preposition κατέναντι is unusual in the NT and stresses the sense of God being fully aware of everything spoken, as 2:17 makes even clearer. It is the full opposite of how Paul characterized his opponents in 11:3-4. Thus he would not dare to speak with hidden motive to the Corinthians.

The true motive behind Paul's speaking to the Corinthians out in #319: τὰ δὲ πάντα, ἀγαπητοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς, *Everything we do, beloved, is for the sake of building you up.*<sup>33</sup> The τὰ πάντα, *all things*, includes

<sup>32</sup>"The phrase κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν also occurs in 2:17. In both places the prepositional phrases probably bear the same sense: 'in the sight of God' presupposes God's 'all-knowingness' and refers to his role as the witness and assessor of everything Paul said and did (cf. Rom. 14:10);<sup>7</sup> 'in Christ' may be shorthand for 'in the name of Christ,' referring to Paul's role as a person commissioned and empowered by Christ and representing him.<sup>8</sup> But in 2:17 λαλοῦμεν primarily denotes Paul's proclamation of the good news, and perhaps also, by synecdoche, his whole apostolic life. Here in 12:19 λαλοῦμεν has a more specific sense, describing his self-defense throughout the present letter. It is therefore improbable that the first person plural is an instance of the apostolic 'we,' with Paul here associating Silvanus and Timothy (cf. 1:19) with himself, an apostle, in the apostolic task of proclaiming the gospel."<sup>9</sup> [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), 895.]

<sup>33</sup>"Another powerful contrast is that between ἀπολογοῦμεθα and ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς. At first hearing it might have appeared that Paul's 'apology' was motivated by an egotistic and self-ish desire for vindication and the protection of his reputation, but in reality (δέ) this 'apology' and all that he said and did (τὰ πάντα) was aimed at building up the Corinthians. In its attributive position, ὑμῶν is emphatic:<sup>11</sup> 'Your edification, not my self-justification, is my primary aim.' As Kitzberger expresses it, the antithesis and emphasis in v. 19 is 'Not I, but you!' (129) (cf. 1 Cor. 10:33). Yet, in the circumstances that were prevalent in Corinth, that main aim of upbuilding was achieved in part by self-defense (cf. 12:11); when circumstances required it, self-defense was part of Paul's strategy,

all of his ministry to the Corinthians from the very beginning. Thus everything done and said has but one motivation: ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς, *for the sake of your edification*. Some nine of the eighteen NT instances of οἰκοδομή surface in First and Second Corinthians. And this doesn't take into consideration the more common verb (128x NT) built off this same root stem: οἰκοδομέω. The literal meaning is that of constructing a building. Off of this foundational meaning the NT mostly uses both the noun and the verb figuratively to reference building up individuals spiritually into God's temple. Three of the four uses of οἰκοδομή in 2 Cor. reference Paul's commitment to building up the Corinthians: 10:8; 12:19; 13:10. The fourth in 5:1 defines that building against the backdrop of the heavenly temple as our eternal home. Thus Paul's ministry is designed to prepare the Corinthians for living eternally in the full presence of God from conversion on. As we are developed into the habitation of God on earth by His Spirit, we prepare ourselves for the culmination of that construction process when we enter Heaven.

The vocative ἀγαπητοί, *beloved*, is pastoral and is also used in 7:1 with admonitions to shed immoral behavior in preparation for encountering God. Thus the subsequent warnings in vv. 20-21 were not surprising to the listeners of the reading of this letter at Corinth.

***His fear of having to dismantle first, vv. 20-21.*** 20 φοβοῦμαι γὰρ μή πως ἐλθὼν οὐχ οἴους θέλω εὐρω ὑμᾶς κάγω εὐρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἶον οὐ θέλετε· μή πως ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθεΐαι, καταλαλαί, ψιθυρισμοί, φυσιώσεις, ἀκαταστασίαι· 21 μὴ πάλιν ἐλθόντος μου ταπεινώσῃ με ὁ θεός μου πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ πενήθῃσω πολλοὺς τῶν προημαρτηκῶτων καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ ἀσελγείᾳ ἣ ἔπραξαν. 20 For I fear that when as 1 Cor. 9:3 makes clear. οἰκοδομή here refers to more than benefit (as JB) or help (as GNB). It denotes progress in the Christian life (Zerwick, Analysis 414), in particular the strengthening of individual and corporate faith (cf. 1 Cor. 14:12, 26; 16:13; 1 Thess. 3:2). ὑπὲρ will here have a telic sense, 'with a view to' (Weymouth) or 'for the purpose of' (Barrett 326)<sup>12</sup> or simply 'for,' so that ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς is not materially different from εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ... ὑμῶν (10:8; cf. 13:10). As in 7:1, the direct address ἀγαπητοί reassures his converts of his tender affection for them (cf. τέκνα in 6:13; 12:14), even if his love is not adequately reciprocated by them (cf. 6:12-13; 12:15). 'Dear friends' is an adequate translation<sup>13</sup> although the archaic 'beloved'<sup>14</sup> has the advantage of possibly including an allusion to God's love for them as well as a reference to Paul's. As suggested above, τὰ πάντα has primary reference to what Paul had written up to that point, but it also includes all his words and actions in relation to the Corinthians.<sup>15</sup> Since the sentence in which τὰ πάντα occurs is verbless, this expression should be taken as the subject, with ἐστὶν supplied,<sup>16</sup> although it is not impossible that it is the object, with either λαλοῦμεν (from v. 19b)<sup>17</sup> or ποιοῦμεν<sup>18</sup> supplied." [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), 895-896.]

I come, I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish; I fear that there may perhaps be quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. 21 I fear that when I come again, my God may humble me before you, and that I may have to mourn over many who previously sinned and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and licentiousness that they have practiced.

will find things moving the proper way in Corinth upon his arrival. Thus by this he was giving his readers advanced notice to get their act together prior to his arrival. Plus, it provided Titus and his two companions with resources to encourage the Corinthians to straighten up in advance of his arrival. Paul was not seeking to build loyalty to himself, but rather to push the Corinthians to being at peak commitment to Christ by the time of his coming visit. This is genuine οἰκοδομή.

12.20 γὰρ  
**320 φοβοῦμαι**  
 ἐλθῶν  
 μή πως...οὐχ οἶους θέλω εὐρω ὑμᾶς  
 κάγω εὐρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἶον οὐ θέλετε ·

**321 (φοβοῦμαι)**  
 μή πως ἔρις,  
 ζῆλος,  
 θυμοί,  
 ἐριθειῖαι,  
 καταλαλιάι,  
 ψιθυρισμοί,  
 φυσιώσεις,  
 ἀκαταστασίαι ·

**322** 12.21 (φοβοῦμαι)  
 πάλιν  
 ἐλθόντος μου  
 μή...ταπεινώση με ὁ θεός μου  
 πρὸς ὑμᾶς  
 καὶ  
 -- πενήθσω πολλοὺς  
 τῶν προημαρτηκότων  
 καὶ  
 --- μὴ μετανοησάντων  
 ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ  
 καὶ  
 πορνείᾳ  
 καὶ  
 ἀσελγείᾳ  
 ἧ ἔπραξαν ·

*What were those warnings?* As the above diagram illustrates, three sets of fears are expressed by Paul to the Corinthians. These are governed grammatically by the beginning φοβοῦμαι followed first by μή πως... twice, and then by μή... the third time. The second and third instances are elliptical as signaled by the parentheses around φοβοῦμαι in the diagram. The repeating of the adverbial temporal particle ἐλθῶν, *when I come*, with the genitive absolute ἐλθόντος μου, *when I come*, sets off the third set as somewhat distinct from the first two.<sup>35</sup> Also Oed. R. 767; Thu. 4, 8, 7) φοβοῦμαι ὑμᾶς μήπως εἰκῆ κεκοπίακα εἰς ὑμᾶς I am afraid my work with you may be wasted **Gal 4:11** (B-D-F §476, 3; Rob. 423).—*W. inf. foll. be afraid to do or shrink from doing someth.* (B-D-F §392, 1b.—X., An. 1, 3, 17 al.; Gen 19:30; 26:7; ApcMos 10:18) **Mt 1:20; 2:22; Mk 9:32; Lk 9:45; 2 Cl 5:1.** [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1061.]

This subunit of vv. 20-21 -- in one Greek sentence -- provides justifying statements (γὰρ) about the Corinthians that validate Paul's explanation in v. 19. In particular, what does οἰκοδομή imply in regard to the Corinthians? Does it imply only positive admonitions to be given? Not in Paul's thinking.

Here at least, the situation called for warnings that are expressed by the Greek idiom φοβοῦμαι μή πως..., *I fear lest...*<sup>34</sup> Paul casts some doubt on whether or not he

<sup>34</sup>[φοβέω] *Foll. by μή and the aor. subj. to denote that which one fears* (Thu. 1, 36, 1; Aesop, Fab. 317 H.=356a P.; Alex. Aphr. 31, II/2 P. 203, 20 τὸν Ἀπόλλω φοβεῖσθαι μή τι παρελθῆ τούτων ἄπρακτον=Apollo is concerned [almost as much as 'sees to it'] that nothing of this remains undone; Jos., Ant. 10, 8, Vi. 252) **Ac 23:10; 27:17**; ITr 5:1; Hs 9, 20, 2. *Foll. by μήποτε* (Phlegon: 257 Fgm. 36, 2, 4 Jac. P. 1172, 30 φοβοῦμαι περὶ ὑμῶν, μήποτε; JosAs 7:3; ApcMos 16 al.): Hm 12, 5, 3. φοβηθῶμεν μήποτε δοκῆ τις Hb 4:1; μήπου (v.l. μήπως; ParJer 5:5) **Ac 27:29; 2 Cor 11:3; 12:20**. A notable feature is the prolepsis of the obj. (cp. Soph.,

<sup>35</sup>"The two fears expressed in v. 20 are introduced by μή πως, '(I fear) that ... perhaps.' This third fear (v. 21), with φοβοῦμαι to be supplied, is introduced by μή alone,<sup>51</sup> perhaps suggesting that Paul regarded the possibility of a humiliation at Corinth, leading to grief over unrepentant sinners, as even more real than the other two fears. If this further fear materialized, it would be after his arrival (ἐλθόντος μου, "when I come," a temporal use of the genitive absolute). Word order might suggest that πάλιν belongs to this phrase; thus "when I come again," "on my return."<sup>52</sup> But there are several compelling reasons for construing πάλιν with ταπεινώση,<sup>53</sup> or with the whole statement ἐλθόντος ... ὑμᾶς.<sup>54</sup> (1) By its position πάλιν is emphatic. Since v. 20 has already mentioned a "coming" (ἐλθῶν), the point emphasized is more likely to be the possibility of yet another humiliation. If πάλιν is taken with ἐλθόντος, it is superfluous, not emphatic.<sup>55</sup> (2) 2:1 speaks of the possibility of another painful visit (τὸ μὴ πάλιν ἐν λύπῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν). (3) Without an added πάλιν, ἔρχομαι can mean "come back," "return" (e.g., 1:15, 23; 2:3; 1 Cor. 4:18-19; 16:11) (4) As a genitive absolute ἐλθόντος μου is

the difference in meaning between μή πως and μή, used here with the aorist subjunctive verbs in a quasi-subordinate conjunctive role, is the difference in degree of certainty.<sup>36</sup> The first two sets with μή πως expresses more uncertainty and should be translated along the lines of 'lest...may perhaps...'. The third set with just μή reflects greater certainty and should be translated with just 'lest...may'. A final grammatical clarification needs to be explained regarding the first apprehension:<sup>37</sup>

**οὐχ οἴους θέλω εὐρω ὑμᾶς  
κάγῳ εὔρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἶον οὐ θέλετε**

The negatives οὐχ and οὐ both should taken with the relative clause verbs θέλω and θέλετε, rather than with εὐρω and εὔρεθῶ. The pre-position of οὐχ in front of the relative pronoun οἴους is stylistic for emphasis sake. The contrast is between "not the kind of people I wish you to be" and "not the kind of person you wish me to be."

**μή πως ἐλθῶν οὐχ οἴους θέλω εὐρω ὑμᾶς κάγῳ**

grammatically subordinate and therefore unlikely to be qualified by an emphatic πάλιν.<sup>56</sup>

"Paul's third fear about his approaching visit has two ingredients—apprehension that God may permit him to suffer another humbling experience while at Corinth, and fear that he may have cause to grieve over certain unrepentant Corinthians. These two aspects must be considered in more detail."

[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), 900–901.]

<sup>36</sup>"Although some EVV do not represent the enclitic particle πώς in translation,<sup>21</sup> perhaps assuming that it merely strengthens the sense of uncertainty implicit in φοβέομαι μή with the subjunctive,<sup>22</sup> it is important to see it as a qualification of Paul's fears and to render it by a word or phrase such as 'somehow,' 'perhaps,' or 'in some way or other.' While he entertained genuine fears that were based on information he had recently received and on his own knowledge of Corinthian proclivities, he still hoped that his fears would not materialize and that his friends at Corinth would set their house in order before his arrival.<sup>23</sup>" [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), 897.]

<sup>37</sup>"It is illegitimate to relate these negatives to εὐρω and εὔρεθῶ,<sup>24</sup> and it is unnecessary to relate the first negative to εὐρω.<sup>25</sup> If we take the word order as it stands (which produces a perfectly appropriate sense in the context), then (a) both uses of εὐρίσκω are positive, (b) οὐχ negates οἴους θέλω ('not the kind of people I wish [you to be]'),<sup>26</sup> and (c) οὐ negates θέλετε<sup>27</sup> ('the kind of person you do not wish [me to be]').<sup>28</sup> οἴους = τοιούτους οἴους and οἶον = τοιοῦτον οἶον, 'the kind of people/person such as...'. V. 20a sums up the remainder of the letter: vv. 20b–21 explicate οὐχ οἴους θέλω, and 13:1–10 develops οἶον οὐ θέλετε. What Paul wished for the Corinthians was the opposite of vv. 20b–21, namely their upbuilding (v. 19). What they would not wish would be for Paul to arrive 'rod in hand' (ἐν ῥάβδῳ, 1 Cor. 4:21) with a view to καθαίρεισις (cf. 10:8; 13:10)." [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), 897–898.]

**εὔρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἶον οὐ θέλετε** (v. 20a). Rather literalistically the statement reads, "lest perhaps in coming I may find you not to be the kind of people I wish, and also I may be found not the person you wish me to be." The central point of this warning is the possibility of mutual disappointment between Paul with his associates and the Corinthians. The higher level of uncertainty implicit in μή πως signals to the Corinthians that Paul hoped this would not be the case, in spite of it being a possibility. The second μή πως below spells out in greater detail the potential disappointment in the Corinthians that Paul is alluding to here with οὐχ οἴους θέλω. The third apprehension with μή then spells out the potential disappointment of the Corinthians with Paul assuming he discovers the lack of repentance among the Corinthians, as alluded to in 13:10. The second apprehension centers mostly on the relationship between the Corinthians and Paul, while the third apprehension is more on general sinning by the Corinthians.

The use of the qualitative relative pronouns οἴους and οἶον in the masculine accusative case from οἶος, -α, -οῦ stresses character as well as identity. A certain irony is present here. Paul hoped for a church unified and living by the high moral standards of Christian teaching, but he was fearful that he would not discover such upon his arrival at Corinth. Conversely, the Corinthians, in particular his critics, hoped to discover a corrupted, worldly Paul just as they had imagined him to be. Especially they expected a weak Paul in contrast to the 'strong' Paul that filtered through his letters. Paul's thought was that they would not find that kind of Paul upon his arrival in the city. Underneath the surface level apprehension about the Corinthians lies signals through the framing of the expression of a longing that both he and the Corinthians would discover the opposite of what they were fearful of.

**μή πως ἔρις, ζήλος, θυμοί, ἐριθειαι, καταλαλιαί, ψιθυρισμοί, φυσιώσεις, ἀκαταστασία** (v. 20b). What Paul was fearful of discovering at Corinth is detailed first in this vice listing of eight traits that speak of disunity and division in the church. The church in Corinth had experienced problems with divisions as he had some two to three years earlier noted in 1 Cor. 1:10-17. His painful visit later in an effort to bring healing had not solved the problems, but evidently had intensified it by making Paul a target of criticism. Now in the mid 50s the presence of the outsiders had compounded the problems rather than brought unity. These eight terms lay out the problem in greater detail.

The first two traits, ἔρις and ζήλος, **quarreling and jealousy**, lay out the problem in basic terms in the singular spelling.<sup>38</sup> These are foundational traits possibly in

<sup>38</sup>"ἔρις, 'discord,' 'strife,' or 'quarreling,' is found only in Paul's letters (9 instances) and is the opposite of εἰρήνη, 'peace,' 'undistur-

the church that Paul feared he might find upon coming there. The subsequent six traits are stated in the plural form. The shift over to the plural from the singular spotlights individual expressions of the different vices.<sup>39</sup> The first pair of plural traits is θυμοί and ἐριθειά, **anger, selfishness**, focus upon the individuals in the church.<sup>40</sup> The next pair, καταλαλιά and ψιθυρισμοί, **slander and gossip**, center on speech about one another.<sup>41</sup> The final

bedness' (cf. Gal. 5:20, 22; 1 Tim. 2:2). One aspect of this 'contentiousness' will have been disputes over the rival claims of Paul and his opponents. In 7:7, 11; 9:2 ζήλος has a positive sense, 'eagerness' or 'zeal,' but here its negative meaning is applicable, 'jealousy' or 'envy,' so that it is synonymous with φθόνος. Given the rife factionalism at Corinth and the association of ζήλος with ἔρις here and in Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 3:3; Gal. 5:20, ζήλος could bear the sense, 'party strife' (Wand), 'rivalry,' or 'party-attachment' (BAGD 337d). Common to the good and bad senses of ζήλος is the idea of strong emotion, which may be expressed positively in 'emulation' (a Classical Greek meaning) or 'enthusiasm,' or negatively in 'envy' or 'resentment.'" [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), 899.]

<sup>39</sup>"The next six terms are plural, pointing to individual instances of the vice in question; thus 'acts of ...' or 'expressions of.'<sup>39</sup>" [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), 899.]

<sup>40</sup>"Accordingly, θυμοί are 'outbursts of anger' (BAGD 365c) or 'angry outbursts' (Bruce, Paraphrase 157). If we render it 'explosive tempers' (Furnish 557), the reference is to tempers that do explode rather than might explode. 'As compared with ὀργή, θυμός denotes an outburst of passion, ὀργή a more settled indignation; in accordance with which distinction θυμός tends to be used of the reprehensible anger of men, ὀργή of the righteous wrath of God' (Burton, Galatians 307). Apart from two uses in Aristotle where it refers to 'intrigue aimed at obtaining an official post by suspect means,'<sup>40</sup> the word ἐριθειά is unknown in the Greek language before NT times, but it occurs seven times in the NT,<sup>41</sup> twice in lists of vices (12:20; Gal. 5:20). In spite of the superficial similarity, it is etymologically unrelated to ἔρις; in any case, the meaning 'strife' is unlikely since synonyms would be out of place in a brief list of sins. The term is derived from ἔριθος, 'a hired worker,' and ἐριθεύομαι, 'work for daily hire' or 'hire party agents,' so that ἐριθειά came to denote a 'party spirit' (Weymouth, Cassirer), 'the factious spirit' (Barclay) or 'factiousness' (Thrall 857), and thus 'intrigues' (JB),<sup>42</sup> 'personal rivalries' (NEB, REB)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 899.]

<sup>41</sup>"The next pair of words refers to verbal sins; Lambrecht renders the pair 'words of slander and gossip' (211). καταλαλία is 'evil-speaking' or 'slander,' with the plural referring to instances of slander, thus 'slandering.' ψιθυρισμός, 'whisper,' is 'an onomatopoeic word for the sibilant murmur of a snake charmer (Eccl. 10:11).'<sup>43</sup> The verb ψιθυρίζω means 'speak in a low voice,' 'mutter,' 'mumble,' and the cognate noun ψιθυριστής (Rom. 1:29) refers to a person who conducts 'secret attacks on a person's character as compared with κατάλαλος [Rom. 1:30], an open detractor' (MM 698b). ψιθυρισμός, then, is 'the clandestine speech of the detrac-

tor, two are not so inner connected as the preceding pairs. φυσιώσεις literally means 'puffed up' and in the plural form as here connotes the idea of expressions of arrogance.<sup>42</sup> The last trait, ἀκαταστασία, references disturbances of public order with the sense here of 'causing disorder.'<sup>43</sup>

One should resist trying to set up a set of pairs for these eight traits.<sup>44</sup> By using the singular for the first two traits, Paul clearly sets them forth as foundational. But the shift over to plural forms for the next six traits signals expressions of these two basic traits in differing concrete actions. This is as close to a grouping of these eight qualities as one can legitimately come to.

Most of these qualities are referenced in Paul's earlier letter in 1 Cor. 1:10-17. Thus they were present much before the arrival of the outsiders to Corinth. But the likelihood is that their presence at Corinth served to intensify this divisiveness in the community.<sup>45</sup> Again,

tor,<sup>44</sup> 'whispered gossip' (Thrall 857), with the plural pointing to instances of gossip, 'gossiping'." [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), 899-900.]

<sup>42</sup>"Literally, φυσιώσις means 'a puffing up' and so in medical usage referred to 'inflation' or 'swelling' (cf. our English word 'puffiness'). To have an inflated view of one's importance was to be filled with φυσιώσις, 'conceit,' 'pride' (= inflation of mind), so that φυσιώσεις could be rendered 'cases of arrogance' (Furnish 557).<sup>45</sup>" [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), 900.]

<sup>43</sup>"Finally, ἀκαταστασία are 'disturbances' of the public order, manifestations of 'disorder,' or general unruliness.<sup>46</sup>" [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), 900.]

<sup>44</sup>"Some have suggested that these eight vices form a series of four pairs.<sup>47</sup> But although ἔρις and ζήλος may be closely associated (as in Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 3:3; Gal. 5:20), quarreling as the result of jealousy, and καταλαλιά could be linked to ψιθυρισμοί, both being sins of the tongue, a comparable link cannot be easily found for the second and fourth pairs." [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), 900.]

<sup>45</sup>"Since 1 Corinthians shows that most if not all of the sins in this vice-catalogue were present in the congregation eighteen or so months previously,<sup>48</sup> there is no reason to assume that their presence at the time 2 Corinthians was written should be attributed to the adverse influence of Paul's rivals. However, the persistence and intensity of these congregational sins were doubtless the result of their influence.<sup>49</sup> There may have been rivalry not only between those Corinthians who championed Paul's adversaries and those who supported Paul himself,<sup>50</sup> but perhaps also within the anti-Pauline group as some sided with one of the Judaizing intruders and





ment to Christ.

The second part of this third fear is expressed in v. 21c: καὶ πενθήσω πολλοὺς τῶν προημαρτηκότων καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ ἀσελγείᾳ ἣ ἔπραξαν, and that I may have to mourn over many who previously sinned and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and licentiousness that they have practiced.

καὶ  
-- πενθήσω πολλοὺς  
τῶν προημαρτηκότων  
καὶ  
--- μὴ μετανοησάντων  
ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ  
καὶ  
πορνείᾳ  
καὶ  
ἀσελγείᾳ  
ἣ ἔπραξαν.

The core verb πενθήσω should be taken as aorist subjunctive in matching its parallel ταπεινώσει, even though the future active indicative is the same spelling. Thus the translation *I may have to mourn*, as opposed to *I will mourn*. To grieve over someone is expressed by Paul one other time in 1 Cor. 5:2, where the member was living in sinful relationship to his mother. It was a part of Paul's anxious concern for the churches, cf. 11:28. This verb often depicts the mourning that took place at ancient funerals. It's doubtful that Paul went through some kind of mourning ritual pointed at those living in sinfulness. But his graphic language here points to failure of professing believers to be sensitive to sinful conduct. As their spiritual leader he would show grief and sorrow in a public manner about them.<sup>49</sup>

Those whom Paul might have to grieve over are described as πολλοὺς τῶν προημαρτηκότων καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ ἀσελγείᾳ ἣ ἔπραξαν, over many who previously sinned and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and licentious-

<sup>49</sup>"Second, the fear of having to mourn. After the implied φοβοῦμαι before μή, πενθήσω is more probably aorist subjunctive ('I fear ... that I may grieve') than future indicative ('and I shall grieve'<sup>62</sup>). In the former case, a second fear is specified. On either view the grieving may be the result of the humbling. After discovering that his converts were still entwined in obvious sin, Paul would naturally react by 'mourning' over them,<sup>63</sup> as if they were spiritually dead, that is, unresponsive to God.<sup>64</sup> Such mourning was one aspect of his 'anxious concern' (μέριμνα) for all the churches (11:28). Paul's only other use of πενθέω is in 1 Cor. 5:2 where, as here, the grief is over the believer who continues in sin without repentance, not over the excommunication that would result." [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), 902.]

ness that they have practiced. The reference is complex but seems to move along the following lines.<sup>50</sup> The two participles προημαρτηκότων, sinned earlier, and μὴ μετανοησάντων, have not repented, are both governed by the single article τῶν (cf. above diagram). The means one group of people who have sinned but not repented. The substantival use of these two infinitives in the genitive case is best understood as appositional. This

results in the translation many, those who have sinned and not repented. The adjective πολλοὺς designates a significant number of the church members at Corinth. Whether it implies a majority or a minority segment of the church can't be determined, although the latter is more likely. The combining of the perfect tense προημαρτηκότων with the aorist tense μετανοησάντων creates a picture of repeated consequential action but without applying the necessary solution. That is, they were deeply involved in sinful action with severe consequences but had expressed no willingness to turn away from it. The prefix προ- on προημαρτηκότων suggests an earlier pattern of this activity at least going back to his second visit and the subsequent 'severe letter' right up to the time of the writing of Second Corinthians. This is more likely than the alternative view that this segment of the church had never truly repented and thus were Christians in name only.

Whom Paul is referencing here most likely are his critics inside the Corinthian community of believers (cf. 11:1-11). If so, this would explain their negativism

<sup>50</sup>Those Paul would grieve over are described as πολλοὺς τῶν προημαρτηκότων καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων κτλ. With regard to this difficult expression, we may make four observations.

"(1) Paul is clearly not suggesting that there are some sinners who failed to repent over whom he would not mourn. This being so, τῶν προημαρτηκότων should be taken as an exegetical genitive, 'many who have sinned earlier/previously,'<sup>65</sup> not as a partitive genitive, 'many of those who have sinned before.'<sup>66</sup> Cassirer renders 'many of your number, sinners of long standing.'

"(2) Since a single article modifies both participles, those who sinned previously are not to be distinguished from those who did not repent.

"(3) Because the two participles are juxtaposed, we should differentiate between the perfect tense and the aorist. τῶν προημαρτηκότων (cf. 13:2) refers to 'those who have persisted in their former sins'<sup>67</sup> right up to the present time, whereas (τῶν ...) μὴ μετανοησάντων are 'those who did not repent' after Paul called them to repentance during his second visit (the 'painful visit'), or after they had received the 'severe letter.'

"(4) προ- in the participle προημαρτηκότων refers to some earlier period up to the time of writing, perhaps the period after their conversion (during Paul's first visit),<sup>68</sup> but certainly including the period during and after his 'painful visit'."

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 902-903.]

against Paul. He demanded that they clean up their moral living but they had no interest in adopting standards of holy living as taught by the apostle. They had clashed with Paul during his “painful” visit and then rejected his “severe” letter that came shortly afterward.

What did they clash over? The answer comes in ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ ἀσελγείᾳ ἣ ἔπραξαν, in regard to their uncleanness, sexual immorality, and licentiousness which they practiced. Again from the above diagram not that the one article τῇ governs all three nouns ἀκαθαρσία καὶ πορνεία καὶ ἀσελγεία. Thus one sin is defined three different ways.<sup>51</sup> These Corinthians were deeply involved in the very depraved sexual culture of the city of Corinth and didn’t want to turn loose of it, even as professing Christians. Such is not overly surprising given the reputation of the city for its immorality.

In First Corinthians five and six the apostle had to address serious sexual perversion that existed in the church membership. Of course, Paul’s first century world was enveloped with sexual immorality at a level largely unknown in the modern world, as Rom. 1:24 and Eph. 4:19 imply. His earlier admonitions in 1 Cor. 6:18 and 7:1 to keep away from immorality as Christians had been pretty much ignored.

Paul addresses then two distinct problems in the church by expressing fear that he will still find them existing in the church by the time of his impending visit with the delegation of representatives of the other churches. One the first hand in v. 20 there was the fear of lingering divisiveness, probably egged on by the arrival of the outsider false teachers. Then in v. 21 there was the problem of sexual immorality by some of the church members that had not be resolved by repentance. If these two fears materialized at his arrival, then

<sup>51</sup>ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ κτλ. belongs with μετανοησάντων ('repent of,' BAGD 512a), not with the more remote πενθήσω ('mourn ... because of'). Now it is true that elsewhere in the NT, when μετανοέω is followed by a preposition, that preposition is ἀπό or ἐκ.<sup>69</sup> But this is the only use of μετανοέω in the epistles, and in the LXX μετανοέω ἐπὶ is not uncommon.<sup>70</sup> The sins of which 'many' Corinthians refused to repent were three, all sexual sins, which would account for the single article that binds them together in a conceptual unity. All three are mentioned in Gal. 5:19 (in a different order), as the first three of the 'deeds of the flesh.' ἀκαθαρσία is 'impurity,' especially of a sexual nature (e.g., Rom. 1:24; Eph. 4:19). πορνεία, 'immorality,' 'sexual vice,' refers to illicit sexual activity of any sort, especially prostitution and fornication. The third term, ἀσελγεία, describes sexual conduct that lacks any moral restraint, unbridled and shameless sexual activity comparable to that of animals, 'licentiousness,' 'gross sensuality,' 'debauchery.' Between them, the three terms depict impure, immoral, and dissolute sexual behavior<sup>71</sup> and testify to the rampant depravity in the city of Corinth and the clinging pagan background of some of the Corinthian converts (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9–11)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 903–904.]

what should have been a happy occasion of celebration of God’s blessings in the relief offering would turn into a tense scene of Paul having to take blunt and forceful action against these at Corinth who were out of line. The warning of this possibility is given in detail in the following unit of 13:1-10.

#### 10.2.3.4.3 Anticipated disciplinary actions, 13:1-4

13 Τρίτον τοῦτο ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς· ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων καὶ τριῶν σταθίσειται πᾶν ῥῆμα. 2 προεῖρηκα καὶ προλέγω, ὡς παρὼν τὸ δεύτερον καὶ ἀπὼν νῦν, τοῖς προημαρτηκόσιν καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν, ὅτι ἐὰν ἔλθω εἰς τὸ πάλιν οὐ φείσομαι, 3 ἐπεὶ δοκιμὴν ζητεῖτε τοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ λαλοῦντος Χριστοῦ, ὃς εἰς ὑμᾶς οὐκ ἀσθενεῖ ἀλλὰ δυνατεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν. 4 καὶ γὰρ ἐσταυρώθη ἐξ ἀσθενείας, ἀλλὰ ζῆ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ. καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἀσθενοῦμεν ἐν αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ ζήσομεν σὺν αὐτῷ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς.

13 This is the third time I am coming to you. “Any charge must be sustained by the evidence of two or three witnesses.” 2 I warned those who sinned previously and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again, I will not be lenient— 3 since you desire proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful in you. 4 For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God.

The linkage of 13:1-4 to 12:19-21 is clear from the content of both units of text.<sup>52</sup> The warning in vv. 1-4 builds off Paul’s explanation in 12:19-21 of why he is defending himself the way he does. Then 13:5-10 follows very naturally off of 13:1-4 as an admonition to remedy the problems prior to Paul’s arrival. As such it stands as a culmination of the longer discussion in

<sup>52</sup>We have seen that what Paul hoped not to find at Corinth on his third visit is described in 12:20b–21, namely factionalism and immorality. What he surmised the Corinthians would not want him to be on that visit is stated in 13:1–4, namely someone who administers punishment. That is, 12:20b–21 explains the expression φοβοῦμαι ... μὴ πως ... οὐχ οἴους θέλω εὔρω ὑμᾶς (12:20a), while 13:1–4 explains φοβοῦμαι ... μὴ πως ... κἀγὼ εὐρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἷον οὐ θέλετε (12:20a). His purpose in expressing those fears about his forthcoming visit was to encourage a change of behavior prior to his arrival. But he sensed that the mere expression of his personal forebodings would not be sufficient to shake the Corinthians from their lethargy about their sins. So he repeats a warning that he had given as he departed from Corinth after his second visit: “On my return I will not spare you” (v. 2). This punitive action would give the Corinthians the proof they were demanding that he was Christ’s spokesman and agent (v. 3a). He then develops a comparison between the two states of Christ (weakness-power) and his own dual approach in dealing with the Corinthians (vv. 3b–4)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 904–905.]

13.1	<i>Τρίτον τοῦτο</i>	
323	<b>ἔρχομαι</b> πρὸς ὑμᾶς·	
	ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων καὶ τριῶν	
324	<b>σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα.</b>	
325	<sup>13.2</sup> <b>προείρηκα</b> καὶ	
326	<b>προλέγω, _____</b> ὡς παρῶ ν τὸ δεύτερον  καὶ ἀπῶν νῦν, <b>τοῖς προημαρτηκόσιν</b> <b>καὶ</b> <b>τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν,</b>	
	ἐὰν ἔλθω εἰς τὸ πάλιν	
13.3	<b>ὄτι...οὐ φείσομαι,</b> ἐπεὶ δοκιμὴν ζητεῖτε τοῦ ἐν ἔμοι λαλοῦντος Χριστοῦ, /-----    εἰς ὑμᾶς ὅς...οὐκ ἀσθενεῖ   ἀλλὰ -- δυνατεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν.	
13.4	γὰρ καὶ	
327	<b>ἐσταυρώθη</b> ἐξ ἀσθενείας, ἀλλὰ	
328	<b>ζῆ</b> ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ. γὰρ καὶ	
329	<b>ἡμεῖς ἀσθενοῦμεν</b> ἐν αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ	
330	<b>ζήσομεν</b> σὺν αὐτῷ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς.	

12:14 - 13:10.

The internal thought structure of 13:1-4 is as follows. The core structure is the warning boiled down to two Greek words in v. 2: οὐ φείσομαι, *I will not be lenient*. This is followed by justifying statements in v. 4. The warning is prefaced by allusion to the OT principle of two or three witnesses (v. 1). The justifying statements in v. 4 emerge out of the expansion of the warning in v. 3 that Paul's sternness will come not from himself but from Christ whose example Paul is following. It will reflect Christ's stern attitude toward the Corinthian offenders. The theme of weakness / strength is used and then becomes the basis of the admonition in vv. 5-10

In the beginning declarations of this subunit in vv. 1-4, Paul sets up the discussion with the announce-

ment *Τρίτον τοῦτο ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς, this third time I am coming to you*. This, although in shorter form in effect repeats 12:14, ἴδου τρίτον τοῦτο ἐτοίμως ἔχω ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, *behold this third time I am prepared to come to you*. The two previous visits are described first in Acts 18:1-18, i.e., the founding of the church, and the second in 2 Cor. 2:1, i.e., the 'painful visit.' The apostle from the early 50s to the mid-50s had given considerable attention to the Christian church at Corinth.<sup>53</sup> The hugely cor-

<sup>53</sup>"Paul's first visit was the time when he introduced the Corinthians to the good news; his second, when he found the Corinthians at odds with the aims and purposes of the gospel. Now he contemplates a third visit, which he hopes will be pleasant. Just as chaps. 8-9 were designed to help the Corinthians prepare for the final stages of their pledged collection, so chaps. 10-13 are designed to

rupt atmosphere of the city made establishing a strong and stable congregation there much more challenging.

The tone of that impending visit is next established from a reference to Deut. 19:15, ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων καὶ τριῶν σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα, "Any charge must be sustained by the evidence of two or three witnesses."<sup>54</sup> The surface level meaning signals that every action taken during this visit will be appropriate according to divine revelation. The subsurface level meaning is a warning to the critics and outsider false teachers with Jewish heritage that they had better be ready to sustain their criticisms 'biblically' or else face disciplinary actions against them.<sup>55</sup> Whether Paul additionally saw some symbolism in the three witnesses linked to his three visits is but speculation with no real evidence.<sup>56</sup>

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prepare the congregation for this third visit." [Frederick W. Danker, *II Corinthians*, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1989), 208.]

<sup>54</sup>"Paul chooses to cite Deut. 19:15 at this point (13:1), 12 probably because Deuteronomy goes on (v. 16) to speak of malicious witnesses, in this case surely the false apostoloi, and (v. 19) to conclude that if malicious witnesses are shown to have testified falsely, then 'You shall do to the false witness what the false witness meant to do to the accused. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.' Those who knew the Hebrew Scriptures would likely catch a hint here of upcoming legal action against the offenders in Corinth.<sup>131</sup> [Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 469.]

<sup>55</sup>"Very abruptly, without any connecting particle and without any introductory formula (cf. 10:17) *suchuch* as καθὼς γέγραπται (cf. 8:15; 9:9), Paul introduces a citation of Deut. 19:15. His thought has moved swiftly from his arrival in Corinth (ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς) to the urgent church business he may have to conduct there. Deut. 19:15–21 deals with the law regarding witnesses, which aimed to protect the person accused of a crime against inadequate witness (v. 15) and against malicious witness (vv. 16–21; cf. Exod. 20:16). The requirement (v. 15) of multiple witnesses—three, or at least two<sup>5</sup>—to establish the case against the accused was a distinctive of OT legal procedure and of rabbinic jurisprudence (see van Vliet *passim*);<sup>6</sup> neither Roman nor Greek law in the first century rejected the validity of the testimony of a single witness (van Vliet 11–25)." [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), 906.]

<sup>56</sup>"Are the 'three witnesses' Paul's three visits? Is Paul saying that by his third visit he will establish his case? The context favors this view:<sup>14</sup> Paul is probably suggesting that he will hold court when he arrives.<sup>15</sup> He is turning the tables on his audience and preparing to put them on trial, just as he has been judged by them and has had to defend himself in this letter. Roman judicial proceedings included a preliminary hearing in which the facts of the case were determined and agreed on as the basis for the trial.<sup>16</sup> Paul may then be threatening to take forensic, but in-house, action against various Corinthians, perhaps the ones supporting the false apostoloi, unless they get their house in order.<sup>17</sup> The point is that when Paul comes he will not spare them, because he has warned them previously about their former sins and is warning them now in this letter as well (v. 2)." [Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and*

Paul reference follows closely the Greek text of the LXX for Deut. 19:15.<sup>57</sup> It is unclear whether Paul's use of this OT principle was a threat to convene a formal court proceeding within the church to force disciplinary action against his critics. Or, whether he merely is indicating that he will come prepared to validate his ministry according to OT principle.<sup>58</sup> At any rate, he anticipated *Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 469.]

<sup>57</sup>"Paul's citation is essentially the same as the LXX of Deut. 19:15, the only differences being that the LXX repeats ἐπὶ στόματος between καὶ and τριῶν and repeats μαρτύρων after τριῶν.<sup>7</sup> Several matters in the citation require clarification. ἐπὶ here means 'on the basis of' or simply 'on,' while στόμα ('mouth'), by metonymy, refers to what the mouth utters, 'testimony' (cf. Luke 19:22), so that ἐπὶ στόματος means 'on the basis of the testimony' = 'on the evidence' (BAGD 286c) or 'on the testimony.'<sup>8</sup> The καὶ that joins δύο (μαρτύρων) and τριῶν is equivalent to ἢ ('or'),<sup>9</sup> with 'two or three' meaning 'two or more' (no upper limit!) or 'three, or at least two' (JB). σταθήσεται, 'shall be established/decided/substantiated/settled,' is an instance of the use of the future indicative in OT legal language to render a 'categorical injunction' (BDF §362) and so is equivalent to an imperative. Generally ῥῆμα denotes a spoken word, but here it represents the Hebrew term *dāḥār* and refers to a subject spoken about (πρᾶγμα), thus 'matter,' 'issue,'<sup>10</sup> or in a specifically legal sense, 'case,' 'charge.' As a phrase σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα may therefore be rendered in a variety of ways, such as:

Every matter must be established (NIV)

Every case is to be decided (Moffatt)

Any accusation must be upheld (GNB)

Every issue ... shall be settled (Cassirer)"

[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), 906–907.]

<sup>58</sup>"But who or what are the 'two or three witnesses'? Three main answers have been given to this question.

"(1) The witnesses cannot be identified, for Paul is speaking in general terms of the legal stringency that would apply during his formal inquiry into the charges made against him<sup>11</sup> or into the offenses (cf. 12:20–21) that required discipline.<sup>12</sup> Charges not substantiated by at least two witnesses would be ruled out of court.

"Now it is true that Matt. 18:16 and 1 Tim. 5:19 refer to this OT stipulation in the context of church discipline, which would suggest that such an application of the OT principle was recognized and approved within the early church. Nevertheless, in the present case we may question whether a judicial investigation would be necessary to identify offenses that were already common knowledge among the Corinthians and whether Paul would initiate quasi-legal proceedings in which the Corinthians would bring or support charges against one another (cf. Plummer 372). The only form in which this view could be countenanced would be to suppose that in responding to accusations against himself Paul envisaged bringing forward multiple witnesses—such as Timothy and Titus<sup>13</sup>—who would be able to vouch for his personal integrity in any 'issues' under consideration. But any form of this view has the not inconsiderable disadvantage of ignoring any association between τρίτον and τριῶν or between δύο (v. 1) and δεύτερον (v. 2), links which would seem to be the natural starting point for identifying the 'witnesses.'

some tense exchanges to occur with his visit to Corinth.

In vv. 2-4, he gets down to the business at hand of issuing a strong warning to the wayward members of the church. The emphatic nature of this warning is heightened with the introductory reminder: προείρηκα καὶ προλέγω, ὡς παρῶν τὸ δεύτερον καὶ ἀπῶν νῦν, I told you earlier and tell you in advance, while being present the second time and now being absent. He pointedly reminds the Corinthians that on his 'painful second visit' he had given them this warning about coming back and not showing leniency to the offenders. Now prior to his third visit he issues a repeating of the same warning. This is the best way of understanding the Greek expression.<sup>59</sup>

Who is the apostle addressing with this warning? Of course, by putting it in the letter he is implicitly addressing the entire Christian community at Corinth. But he specifically names two groups that he issues this warn-

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"It is preferable to identify the witnesses as warnings and/or visits.

"(2) The two witnesses are the two warnings (προείρηκα καὶ προλέγω) in v. 2 that 'attest Paul will make concrete his οὐ φείσομαι' ('I shall not spare'),<sup>14</sup> or the reference to 'two or three witnesses' has a general import, reminding the Corinthians 'You have had due warning, as prescribed; I am now about to take action.'<sup>15</sup>

"(3) The three witnesses are Paul's three visits to Corinth, two past (founding visit and 'painful' visit) and one future.<sup>16</sup> Often these visits are linked with warnings. Klauck, for example, believes that the witnesses are the three visits and the two warnings (of v. 2) given on different occasions (100). But there may have been three warnings, the first being 1 Cor. 4:21.

"So we conclude that if it is appropriate to identify the witnesses, they are both visits and warnings, or, rather, warnings that are associated with visits.<sup>17</sup> This does justice to the τρίτον-τριῶν and δύο-δεύτερον associations in vv. 1-2 and to the notion of warning that dominates v. 2. The visits and warnings were multiple even though only one person was doing the visiting and warning. Paul is applying the Deuteronomic legal principle in a way that was typical of contemporary Judaism—to forewarn those suspected of an offense that they were liable to punishment. Paul is saying in effect, 'Sufficient and statutory warning has been given to you Corinthians; punitive action is imminent!'"

[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), 907-908.]

<sup>59</sup>"*Those who have continued in their former sins and all the rest I have already warned, and now, when absent, I am forewarning you just as when I was present on my second visit, that on my return I will not spare you.*' In this complicated verse the differing tenses of the verb προλέγω (perfect and present) support a linking of προείρηκα with ὡς παρῶν τὸ δεύτερον and of προλέγω with ἀπῶν νῦν, but there is no reason, in spite of the three apparently parallel instances of καὶ, to relate τοῖς προημαρτηκόσιν only to προείρηκα, and τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν only to προλέγω.<sup>18</sup> That is to say, the warning introduced by ὅτι was spoken twice (προείρηκα and προλέγω), on each occasion to two groups, τοῖς προημαρτηκόσιν and τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν." [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), 909.]

ing to: τοῖς προημαρτηκόσιν καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν, those who sinned previously and all the others. The first group, τοῖς προημαρτηκόσιν καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων, to those who sinned previously, alludes back to τῶν προημαρτηκότων καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων, those who sinned previously and have not repented in 12:21. Clearly he means the church members still engaging in sexual immorality as is made clear.

The second group, καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν, and to all the rest, is less clear. Does he mean All the rest of the church members? Or, all those in the first group? Or, does it mean All those who have lapsed into sin after the first warning? Opinion among commentators is divided over this choice.<sup>60</sup> The honest truth is that the ambiguity of the statement precludes any certain decision. Any conclusion on this is sheer guess work. Clearly all of the church members at Corinth heard the letter read in at least one of the house church gatherings across the city. For some then it would not apply, except to bolster their avoidance of sinful activity.

One important note: the perfect tense use of προλέγω in προείρηκα combined with the present tense προλέγω, is set up in colloration with ὡς παρῶν τὸ δεύτερον καὶ ἀπῶν νῦν, while being present the second time and now being absent, so that παρῶν τὸ δεύτερον modifies προείρηκα, while ἀπῶν νῦν modifies προλέγω. The prefix προ- indicates something happening in advance of something else. Thus προείρηκα with ὡς παρῶν τὸ δεύτερον denotes the time of the second visit (cf. 2:1. But προλέγω with ἀπῶν νῦν references the time of the writing of this letter. Both times are in advance of

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<sup>60</sup>"As for the two sets of people addressed in Paul's warning, there is general agreement that τοῖς προημαρτηκόσιν refers to the same unrepentant sinners who are mentioned in 12:21 (πολλοὺς τῶν προημαρτηκότων καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων κτλ.).<sup>22</sup> As in 12:21, so in 13:2, the perfect tense of the participle indicates that their sinning persists to the time of writing; thus, 'those who have continued in their former sins,' people we have called 'proto-gnostic libertines' (see on 12:21). There is, however, no unanimity about the identity of τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν, 'all the others/rest.' They have been seen as all those who had lapsed into sin since Paul's last (= second) visit and needed his warning (Plummer 366, 373); as 'anyone else' at Corinth who may have been sinning by sexual immorality or by strife but was unknown to Paul (Martin 451, 455, 471); as those adversely affected by the false apostles and guilty of the sins listed in 12:20b (Barrett 333; "Opponents" 248); or as all the other members of the congregation, 'the rest of you as well' (Moffatt), those not guilty of the particular sins committed by οἱ προημαρτηκότες (see 12:21b)<sup>23</sup> but who nevertheless needed a warning for the sake of deterrence.<sup>24</sup> On this last view, which is to be preferred, the two groups mentioned in 13:2 embrace the whole church, just as 12:20-21 does.<sup>25</sup> It is no difficulty that Paul did not write πᾶσιν ὑμῶν or ὑμῖν πᾶσιν after τοῖς λοιποῖς." [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), 909-910.]



the impending visit of the apostle (v. 1). So by the time of Paul's arrival in the city, these folks in the church will have been forewarned twice to get their act together.

The warning itself is couched in strong terms with the so-called recitative ὅτι usage: ἐὰν ἔλθω εἰς τὸ πάλιν οὐ φείσομαι, *when I come I will not spare anyone*. The likelihood is that he repeats here his exact words from the second visit warning.<sup>61</sup> The uncertainty implicit in the third class protasis ἐὰν ἔλθω εἰς τὸ πάλιν, *when I come again*, first implied uncertainty about the timing of the next visit, while now it connotes uncertainty about the tone of the visit. Thus ἐὰν is more appropriate than ὅτε would have been.

The precise meaning of οὐ φείσομαι is important. Its core meaning is to abstain from doing something.<sup>62</sup> In its very common military setting it denoted refrain from killing an enemy soldier, and thus also took on the meaning of showing mercy.<sup>63</sup> Clearly the verb with

<sup>61</sup>"The content of the warning is introduced by a 'declarative' ὅτι and indirect speech (Robertson 1035), although Paul may be reproducing the actual words (recitative ὅτι) he used on his departure after the 'painful visit.'<sup>28</sup> When he departed at that time, ἐὰν may have expressed his uncertainty, not about the likelihood of a return, but about its timing: 'whenever I return.' But now, having announced his imminent return (12:14; 13:1), ἐὰν must mean 'when.'<sup>29</sup> The forthcoming visit is certain, although its character remains uncertain, given Paul's deep fears (12:20–21). Perhaps we can reproduce this latent ambiguity of ἐὰν by rendering ἐὰν ἔλθω εἰς τὸ πάλιν with 'on my return' (NIV) or 'the next time I come' (GNB). This assumes (rightly) that εἰς τὸ πάλιν = πάλιν<sup>30</sup> and that this phrase belongs with ἔλθω, not with οὐ φείσομαι.<sup>31</sup>" [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), 910.]

<sup>62</sup>William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1051.

<sup>63</sup>"Originally φείδομαι ('spare,' 'refrain') referred to refraining from killing (= sparing) a defeated enemy and thus could also mean 'be merciful towards,'<sup>32</sup> meanings also found in the LXX.<sup>33</sup> Here in 13:2 it is used absolutely, and some EVV reflect this: 'I shall have no mercy' (JB, NJB), 'I shall not spare' (Thrall 871), 'I will show no leniency' (NEB, REB, Cassirer). But it is perfectly legitimate to supply an object, such as οὐδενός ('anyone,' BAGD 854d), αὐτῶν ('them'), or ὑμῶν ('you').<sup>34</sup> If the two groups mentioned in v. 2a incorporate the whole church, 'I will not spare you' is the preferable

the negative suggests severe punishment upon the offending individuals in the church. What was that? Here one has to be very careful since the definition of severe is hugely cultural. Paul's options were somewhat limited. No ecclesiastical courts existed inside the Christian community, as did in Judaism. He certainly could not have used the Roman court system as would Christianity from the fifth century on. Authority was essentially moral authority flowing out of the individual's own personal righteous living. Plus, the sense of divine authorization for the leader to take action played a role. But the apostle vowed to make use of his leadership influence to punish these offenders should they not repent.<sup>64</sup> It's also important to understand this warning against the more detailed expression of it in v. 10, Διὰ τοῦτο ταῦτα ἀπὼν γράφω, ἵνα παρὼν μὴ ἀποτόμως χρήσωμαι κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἣν ὁ κύριος ἔδωκέν μοι εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν, *So I write these things while I am away from you, so that when I come, I may not have to be severe in using the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down*. The adverb ἀποτόμως is key for this statement. It stresses sharp verbal rebuke.<sup>65</sup> The contextual idea is of driving out the corrupting influences both from the individual's life and from the community at Corinth. To have to do take such harsh action was not Paul's objective, but he was fully willing to do this

translation." [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), 911.]

<sup>64</sup>"The punishment Paul was threatening to inflict was obviously severe (cf. 13:10), which would seem to rule out public censure, or, as Barrett proposes (334), the declaration that those who were denying the gospel by their behavior had alienated themselves from God and fallen back into Satan's realm.<sup>35</sup> So the options would appear to be (1) removal from the church (cf. 1 Cor. 5:13), provided Paul had the support of the majority (cf. 2:6; 10:6) for such drastic action; or (2) handing the offenders over to Satan 'for the destruction of the flesh' (1 Cor. 5:5; cf. 1 Tim. 1:20), a penalty which probably refers to the suffering of an illness that may lead to death (cf. 1 Cor. 11:30) unless there was repentance. Certainly Paul longed that the wrongdoers would repent, but in the absence of repentance no mercy would be shown. It would be a case of καθαίρεσις (10:8; 13:10) or ἀποτόμως χρῆσθαι (13:10) or ἐν ῥάβδῳ ἐλθεῖν (1 Cor. 4:21)." [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), 911.]

<sup>65</sup>ἀποτόμως adv. fr. ἀπότομος (Isocr. et al.; Polyb. 18, 11, 2; Plut., Mor. 131c; Cic., Att. 10, 11, 5; Wsd 5:22) *severely, rigorously* ἔλεγε αὐτοὺς ἄ. correct them rigorously **Tit 1:13**. ἵνα μὴ ἄ. χρήσωμαι = ἀποτομία χρ. that I may not have to deal sharply **2 Cor 13:10**.—DELG s.v. τέμνω. M-M. [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 124.]

13.3 ἄν ἔλθω εἰς τὸ πάλιν  
 ὅτι...οὐ φείσομαι,  
 ἐπεὶ δοκιμὴν ζητεῖτε  
 τοῦ ἐν ἑμοὶ λαλοῦντος Χριστοῦ,  
 /-----|  
 | εἰς ὑμᾶς  
 ὅς...οὐκ ἄσθενεῖ  
 | ἀλλὰ  
 -- δυνατεῖ  
 ἐν ὑμῖν.

ἐπεὶ δοκιμὴν ζητεῖτε τοῦ ἐν ἑμοὶ λαλοῦντος Χριστοῦ, *since you seek validation of Christ speaking in me*, both supports the main clause declaration οὐ φείσομαι and signals with the subsequent relative clause modifier how it supports Paul's warning, as illustrated in the diagram.

The core issue of criticism against Paul is identified as δοκιμὴν ζητεῖτε τοῦ ἐν ἑμοὶ λαλοῦντος Χριστοῦ, *validation you seek of Christ speaking in/by me*. That is,

if circumstances warranted it.<sup>66</sup> It could include public rebuke of individuals and/or having them removed from participation in the life of the church.<sup>67</sup>

The causal clause in v. 3 probably was not a part of the original warning delivered verbally while in Corinth. Instead, it is now added on in order to explain the nature and basis of Paul's authority.<sup>68</sup> The causal expression

<sup>66</sup>"The adverb ἀποτόμως ('sharply,'<sup>61</sup> 'severely,' 'rigorously'; cf. Tit. 1:13) points to 'unsparing severity' (Barrett 340), 'thoroughgoing sternness' (Meyer 709), or 'inflexibly sharp judgment' (H. Koester, TDNT 8.108), so that ἀποτόμως χρῆσθαι may be translated 'deal ... severely' (Cassirer) or 'act drastically' (Young and Ford 276). It was summary punishment of this sort that Paul longed to avoid. He had no desire to exercise his divinely given ἐξουσία in drastic, punitive action, but if circumstances demanded such action he would not shrink from it (οὐ φείσομαι, 13:2). The choice lay with his converts and depended on their responsiveness to his injunctions.<sup>62</sup>" [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), 929.]

<sup>67</sup>In modern western culture, although a public rebuke is embarrassing to most individuals, it does not begin to carry the sense of negativism that it has in a communal or collective culture such as in Paul's world as well as in the rural Africa and Asia of today's world.

<sup>68</sup>In Paul's eyes a disposition of meekness (cf. 10:1) and a display of strength (cf. 13:2, 10) were not incompatible. If, as the adage puts it, 'meekness is not weakness but harnessed strength,' the use of power when occasion warrants it is no contradiction of meekness. Paul would have known that Moses, described as the meekest man on the earth,<sup>63</sup> was nevertheless capable of great anger and a display of his God-given authority (Num. 16:15–33). And Danker notes that ;from a Jewish perspective, the conjunction [of meekness and vehemence] is in harmony with God's own display of wrath and power while engaged in the salvation of Israel.<sup>64</sup>

"If in fact Paul found it necessary to act harshly against the Corinthians, he knew that such action would still be in keeping with his apostolic authority and its primary aim of οἰκοδομή. This assumes that κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν κτλ. qualifies ἀποτόμως χρῆσθαι.<sup>65</sup> Here the apostle is repeating almost verbatim what he said in 10:8.<sup>66</sup> Our discussion of these two passages at 10:8 arrived at the following conclusions: the ἐξουσία is apostolic authority given to Paul personally at the time of his conversion; ὁ κύριος is the Lord Jesus; οἰκοδομή refers to the act or process of building, involving individuals as well as churches; and—a conclusion particularly relevant in the present context—καθαίρεσις sometimes necessarily precedes οἰκοδομή, so that 'destruction' and 'upbuilding' are not mutually exclusive categories. But Kitzberger is correct to infer from εἰς οἰκοδομὴν that οἰκοδομή describes 'the content

and goal of apostolic activity' (137).  
 were Paul's teaching and preaching of the Gospel coming from Christ or not?<sup>69</sup> The critics inside the Corinthian church were questioning the authenticity of Paul as a spokesman for Christ. They had demanded δοκιμὴν of his claim to speak for Christ. What was that? Most likely his critics expected some miracle or ecstatic experience done by Paul in order to prove that he was a genuine apostle of Christ. But he went a different direction that was both unexpected and non culturally conditioned.<sup>70</sup> His willingness to be very stern with them

and goal of apostolic activity' (137).

<sup>69</sup>From 13:5–10, then, we sense that as Paul writes the present letter and anticipates his next visit to Corinth, he experiences the same two emotions he felt when he wrote the 'severe letter,' sent it off to Corinth with Titus, and anticipated Titus's report on the situation—hope for the Corinthians' repentance and restoration (cf. 7:9–11), yet fear that they would not respond favorably to his pleas for action (cf. 7:5, 14)."

[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), 929–930.]

<sup>69</sup>One reason Paul planned to exercise uncompromising discipline (οὐ φείσομαι, v. 2) on his next visit was the prolonged refusal of certain members of the congregation (οἱ προημαρτηκότες, 12:21; 13:2) to repent of their immorality. But he believed this disciplinary action would achieve a further purpose — it would satisfy the demand of some or all of the Corinthians for specific, visible proof that he was indeed Christ's spokesman, one of Christ's genuine apostles. Those who had issued this demand (cf. ζητεῖτε) for convincing evidence (δοκιμή) would not have expected their challenge to be met by painful punitive measures. Their expectation, perhaps, was for additional miraculous signs (cf. 12:12) or specialized ecstatic experiences (cf. 12:6) or aggressive authoritarianism (cf. 11:20) or polished rhetoric (cf. 10:10). Once more we see the radical difference between the criteria for determining genuine apostleship that the Corinthians were using and those espoused by Paul." [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), 911.]

<sup>70</sup>The causal ἐπεὶ looks back to οὐ φείσομαι, not to the remote προλέγω, and introduces a supplementary reason Paul would not be merciful toward any impenitent Corinthians. The δοκιμή is the οὐ φείσομαι. But proof of what? '(Of the fact) that Christ speaks through me.' This rendering assumes that (1) τοῦ ... Χριστοῦ is an objective genitive, indicating what was to be proved,<sup>36</sup> (2) τοῦ ...

was his validation of being commissioned by Christ. His outsider opponents at Corinth were ‘buttering up’ the church members in order to get financial support, and thus would not dare to offend individuals in the church. But Paul’s willingness to risk breaking ties with the congregation in order to motivate them to repentance to Christ was indeed proof that Christ meant more to him than gaining their support.

The signal of this was an interesting play off of weakness and strength. The earlier criticism in 10:1-5 of being ‘weak’ while in their presence signaled to him a contradiction to Christ’s strength, whom they evidently saw as heroic power for a leader along the lines of traditional Greco-Roman models of leadership. Some in the church wanted strong, forceful leaders, and Paul did not fit that mold, at least when he was present with them. His ‘strength’ came in his blunt, demanding letters but that was suspiciously seen as being a coward, and therefore ‘weak.’ From all indication when the outsider false teachers arrived in Corinth, they quickly picked up on this negativism against Paul and exploited it to attempt to drive a wedge between Paul and the Corinthians. How to successfully challenge both the insider criticism and the outsider criticism properly in a Christ honoring manner was Paul’s challenge.

The apostle linked himself to Christ through the weakness / strength image. The Corinthians viewed Christ as a symbol of power and strength, but overlooked the ‘weakness’ side of Christ. In the modifying relative clause, *ὃς εἰς ὑμᾶς οὐκ ἀσθενεῖ ἀλλὰ δυνατεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν*, **who to you is not weak but is powerful among you, reminds them of Christ’s strength through weakness.**<sup>71</sup>

*λαλοῦντος* Χριστοῦ is equivalent to *ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς λαλεῖ*,<sup>37</sup> and (3) *ἐν* is instrumental<sup>38</sup> rather than local in meaning (‘through’ rather than ‘in’). The question at issue was not whether Paul enjoyed personal communion with Christ or received messages directly from Christ (‘that Christ speaks in me’), but whether he was, as he claimed to be (5:20), an ambassador who reliably represented the intent of Christ in his words and deeds,<sup>39</sup> whether the message he had delivered to the Corinthians by word and deed accurately reflected the mind of Christ. It was the validity of his apostleship that was being questioned.” [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), 911–912.]

<sup>71</sup>Interestingly, he does this in a chiasmic format that made it easier to memorize and remember:

A εἰς ὑμᾶς  
 B οὐκ ἀσθενεῖ ἀλλὰ  
 B' δυνατεῖ  
 A' ἐν ὑμῖν

With this widely used Jewish literary device in the ancient world, the central point, in this usage, becomes B / B'. Not weak but strong. But with the second person pronoun for ‘you’ in A / A', the point becomes centered on the Corinthians perspective. The

13.4 γὰρ  
 καὶ  
 327 ἐσταυρώθη  
 ἐξ ἀσθενείας,  
 ἀλλὰ  
 328 ζῆ  
 ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ.

γὰρ  
 καὶ  
 329 ἡμεῖς ἀσθενοῦμεν  
 ἐν αὐτῷ,  
 ἀλλὰ  
 330 ζήσομεν  
 σὺν αὐτῷ  
 ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ  
 εἰς ὑμᾶς.

In verse four, a pair of justifying statements (γὰρ) both defend and amplify the central point made in the relative clause especially: *καὶ γὰρ ἐσταυρώθη ἐξ ἀσθενείας, ἀλλὰ ζῆ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ. καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἀσθενοῦμεν ἐν αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ ζήσομεν σὺν αὐτῷ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς*, **For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God.**<sup>72</sup>

Note the parallelism between these two declarations. It is a contrast between *ἀσθενείας*, **weakness / ἀσθενοῦμεν**, **we are weak and live, with ζῆ**, **he lives /** difference between *εἰς ὑμᾶς* and *ἐν ὑμῖν* is minimal while the common plural forms stress the entirety of the believing community at Corinth. Note Harris' depiction:

*εἰς ὑμᾶς* (A) *οὐκ ἀσθενεῖ* (B) *ἀλλὰ δυνατεῖ* (B') *ἐν ὑμῖν* (A') forms a chiasmus that has the effect of highlighting items A and A', that is, the personal relationship of Christ to the Corinthians, just as at the end of the next verse (v. 4) *εἰς ὑμᾶς* focuses attention on Paul's relation to them. The prepositions *εἰς* and *ἐν*, “toward” and “among,” are themselves not antithetical; indeed, one could argue that *ἐν ὑμῖν* is simply a stylistic variant of *εἰς ὑμᾶς*, “in relation to you,” “in dealing with you,” since Paul concludes v. 4 with *εἰς ὑμᾶς*. Both *ὑμᾶς* and *ὑμῖν* will refer to the whole church, not to any particular section within it, and *ὑμῖν* will bear a corporate rather than an individual sense, “in your midst,” “among you,” rather than “within each of you.” *ἀσθενέω* (“be weak”) and *δυνατέω* (“be strong”)<sup>40</sup> are clearly antonyms, with *οὐκ ἀσθενεῖ* serving to emphasize its positive counterpart, *δυνατεῖ*. Both are gnomic presents, matching the preceding *λαλοῦντος* and referring to all the benefits of salvation, but in the immediate context where we find references to a future visit (*ἔρχομαι*, v. 1; *ἐὰν ἔλθω*, v. 2) and to future action (*οὐ φείσομαι*, v. 2), the particular time when Christ will be seen to be not weak but strong is Paul's imminent visit. “When I come, Christ's word to you through me will be powerful—and painful!” *δυνατεῖ* is not a calm reassurance but a forbidding promise.<sup>41</sup>

[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), 912–913.]

<sup>72</sup>In these three sentences the common feature is the weakness-power motif: *οὐκ ἀσθενεῖ-δυνατεῖ* (v. 3b), *ἐξ ἀσθενείας-ἐν δυνάμεως θεοῦ* (v. 4a), *ἀσθενοῦμεν-ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ* (v. 4b). V. 4 develops this motif of v. 3b by adding to it the death-life antithesis (*ἐσταυρώθη-ζῆ*, v. 4a) and the union with Christ theme (*ἐν αὐτῷ-σὺν αὐτῷ*, v. 4b).” [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), 913.]



ζησομεν, *we will live*. Christ's crucifixion, ἐσταυρώθη, *He was crucified* signals weakness, ἐξ ἀσθενείας, *out of weakness*. But his resurrection in which He now lives, ζῆ, *He lives*, signals *God's power*, ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ. Christ as a meek person discovered God's power through being resurrected after being crucified. The Corinthians identified themselves with perceived divine power but without realizing how this power was put into effect in Christ. Remember his earlier accusation against them in 11:20-21:

20 ἀνέχεσθε γὰρ εἴ τις ὑμᾶς καταδουλοῖ, εἴ τις κατεσθίει, εἴ τις λαμβάνει, εἴ τις ἐπαίρειται, εἴ τις εἰς πρόσωπον ὑμᾶς δέρει. 21 κατὰ ἀτιμίαν λέγω, ὡς ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἡσθενήκαμεν. 20 *For you put up with it when someone makes slaves of you, or preys upon you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or gives you a slap in the face.* 21 *To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that!*

What they failed to recognize is the identification of Paul's life with that of Christ. Paul also was weak: καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἀσθενοῦμεν ἐν αὐτῷ, *for we also are weak in Him*. Several aspects of this are important to understand clearly. Remember that the 'we' includes Paul and his assistants. Paul's weakness corresponds to Christ's weakness in that obedience to God is more important than defending oneself, even if it leads to martyrdom. As he declared in 12:9b-10, "Ἠδιστα οὖν μᾶλλον καυχῆσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ ἐπ' ἐμέ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ. διὸ εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὕβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις, ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ· ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατός εἰμι, *So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.* Real *δυνατός* is not human based. Instead it is God's power working through humans. This happens best when human weakness is acknowledged. The 'thorn in the flesh' experience brought this truth home to Paul in dramatic fashion. Thus Paul's weakness was validation of God speaking through him, since out of that weakness came the divine power in his ministry. What a contrast to Paul's opponents in Corinth who depended upon human power via rhetoric, special ecstatic experience etc. for their validation. This reflected their cultural enslavement to human standards rather than spiritual insight from God. If Paul was forced to deal harshly with the unrepentant upon his visit, the Corinthians would dramatically see this divine power at work.

#### 10.2.3.4.4 Straighten yourselves up! 13:5-10

5 Ἐαυτοὺς πειράζετε εἰ ἐστὲ ἐν τῇ πίστει, ἑαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε· ἢ οὐκ ἐπιγινώσκετε ἑαυτοὺς ὅτι Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς

ἐν ὑμῖν; εἰ μήτι ἀδόκιμοὶ ἐστέ. 6 ἐλπίζω δὲ ὅτι γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐσμέν ἀδόκιμοι. 7 εὐχόμεθα δὲ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν μὴ ποιῆσαι ὑμᾶς κακὸν μηδέν, οὐχ ἵνα ἡμεῖς δόκιμοι φανῶμεν, ἀλλ' ἵνα ὑμεῖς τὸ καλὸν ποιῆτε, ἡμεῖς δὲ ὡς ἀδόκιμοι ὦμεν. 8 οὐ γὰρ δυνάμεθά τι κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀληθείας. 9 χαίρομεν γὰρ ὅταν ἡμεῖς ἀσθενῶμεν, ὑμεῖς δὲ δυνατοὶ ᾗτε· τοῦτο καὶ εὐχόμεθα, τὴν ὑμῶν κατάρτισιν. 10 Διὰ τοῦτο ταῦτα ἀπὼν γράφω, ἵνα παρῶν μὴ ἀποτόμως χρῆσωμαι κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἣν ὁ κύριος ἔδωκεν μοι εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεισιν.

5 *Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless, indeed, you fail to meet the test!* 6 *I hope you will find out that we have not failed.* 7 *But we pray to God that you may not do anything wrong—not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed.* 8 *For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.* 9 *For we rejoice when we are weak and you are strong. This is what we pray for, that you may become perfect.* 10 *So I write these things while I am away from you, so that when I come, I may not have to be severe in using the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.*

Thus what is the best course of action for the Corinthians in anticipation of Paul's visit? Verses 5-10 outline the contours of that response. The first two admonitions (#s 331-332) sum up the bottom line responsibility: Ἐαυτοὺς πειράζετε εἰ ἐστὲ ἐν τῇ πίστει, ἑαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε, *Be examining yourselves as to whether you are in faith; be testing yourselves!* The emphatic preposition of the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτοὺς, *yourselves*, highlights the point dramatically that the Corinthians needed to be checking themselves rather than Paul. This pronoun most likely implies the entire church needing to test itself, and not just the unrepentants (cf. 12:21; 13:2). The two verbs πειράζετε and δοκιμάζετε are very close in meaning, with πειράζω having the sense of testing to determine the nature of something or someone, while δοκιμάζω has the sense of testing to establish the genuineness of something or someone.<sup>73</sup> The present tense imperative mood of both verbs underscores an ongoing process rather than a single point of time examination.

<sup>73</sup>Clearly πειράζω here bears a neutral sense, 'put to the test,' not its pejorative sense of 'entice to evil,' 'tempt' (as in 1 Cor. 7:5; Gal. 6:1). πειράζω and δοκιμάζω could be treated as synonymous (Wolff 263) or as 'virtually' so (Furnish 571), but perhaps there is a slight difference of emphasis, with πειράζω signifying 'determine the nature of something by submitting it to testing' (cf. Louw and Nida §27.46), and δοκιμάζω, 'test the genuineness of something with a view to approving it.'" [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), 919.]

331<sup>13.5</sup> Ἐαυτοὺς πειράζετε  
 εἰ ἔστέ  
 ἐν τῇ πίστει,  
 332 ἑαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε

The impersonal direct object role of εἰ ἔστέ ἐν τῇ πίστει, positioned between the two verbs, applies to both verbal commands, as illustrated in the following diagram. What is it that the Corinthians need to determine? They need to determine whether they are living the life of faith commitment to Christ.<sup>74</sup> The sense of ἔστέ ἐν τῇ πίστει with the verb πειράζετε is to determine if one's conduct matches his profession of faith commitment to Christ. With δοκιμάζετε the genuineness of this faith commitment is determined by their obedience. And this revolves around the apostolic Gospel message that Paul had brought to them.

The rhetorical question that follows in v. 5c (# 333 in the diagram) begins an amplification of the implications contained in these admonitions at the beginning.

<sup>74</sup>"After πειράζετε, the interrogative particle εἰ could introduce a direct question<sup>8</sup>: 'Examine yourselves: are you living the life of faith?' (NEB, REB). Bultmann believes the parallelism with ἑαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε supports construing the εἰ clause separately (377). But most EVV rightly regard εἰ ('whether,' 'if') as introducing an indirect question<sup>9</sup> and supply a verb such as 'to find out'<sup>10</sup> or simply 'to see' (NIV) with εἰ. The precise significance of the combination εἶναι ἐν is uncertain. It may mean 'adhere/conform to' or 'continue/live in,'<sup>11</sup> or this construction could be a periphrasis for an adjective, so that ἔστέ ἐν τῇ πίστει = ἔστέ πιστοί, 'you are believing/true believers.'<sup>12</sup> ἡ πίστις may refer to the core of apostolic teaching as epitomized in the gospel (Gal. 1:23), the gospel that had been delivered to the Corinthians in its purity (1 Cor. 15:1–5) and was under attack in Corinth (11:4). On this view Paul is requesting self-examination regarding their adherence to an unadulterated form of the gospel.<sup>13</sup> 'Put yourselves to the proof, to see whether you are holding to the Faith' (TCNT). Alternatively, ἡ πίστις may here denote personal trust in Christ as a *modus vivendi*: 'whether you are living in faith' (GNB), 'are you living the life of faith?' (NEB, REB), 'whether you are controlled by faith' (Danker 210). But in a context that emphasizes the need for proper Christian action (12:20–21; 13:7, ἵνα ὑμεῖς τὸ καλὸν ποιῆτε) the most satisfactory option is to take ἡ πίστις in a broad sense as referring to Christian conduct that accords with Christian doctrine. That is, 'being in the faith' means continuing true to the faith in conduct as well as in belief.<sup>14</sup> An emphasis on conduct is suggested by the following unqualified ἑαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε when it is read in the light of Gal. 6:4, τὸ ... ἔργον ἑαυτοῦ δοκιμαζέτω ἕκαστος. For the Corinthian believers the main 'work' that would demonstrate their true πίστις was obedience (cf. ὑπακοή πίστεως, 'the obedience that springs from faith,' Rom. 1:5; 16:26), obedience to Paul and to the gospel he proclaimed (2:9; 10:6). So then, εἰ ἔστέ ἐν τῇ πίστει in 13:5 should not be equated with τῇ ... πίστει ἐστήκατε in 1:24 where there is a contrast between the Corinthians' firm standing in their own πίστις (= personal trust) and any domineering control of their faith that Paul might be thought to exercise.<sup>15</sup>" [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), 919–920.]

This runs through verse nine. Then verse ten contains a general summarizing declaration the gathers up the entire discussion of 10:1-13:9 into a short summation.

The rhetorical question poses the most crucial aspect: ἢ οὐκ ἐπιγινώσκετε ἑαυτοὺς ὅτι Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν; Or you do fully recognize for yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you, don't you? An affirmative answer is ex-

ἢ  
 οὐκ ἐπιγινώσκετε ἑαυτοὺς  
 ὅτι Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν;  
 εἰ μήτι ἀδόκιμοί ἐστε.

pected by Paul in his expression of confidence.<sup>75</sup> This is signaled by addition the negative adverb οὐκ before the verb. The verb ἐπιγινώσκετε with the prefix ἐπι- stresses thorough understanding, rather than superficial or even usual understanding. The double accusative -- personal and impersonal objects -- ἑαυτοὺς ὅτι, stresses the conclusion of a careful self examination looking for validation of the principle stated in the ὅτι clause. This principle is simply Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, *Jesus Christ is in you*. The elliptical expression heightens the emphasis along the lines of *Jesus Christ -- in you*. The prepositional phrase ἐν ὑμῖν carries an intended double meaning. In you, i.e., in each of you. And in you, i.e., in your community of believers.

This question has an elliptical addendum attached to it: εἰ μήτι ἀδόκιμοί ἐστε, *unless you are disqualified*.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup>As in 11:7 the particle ἢ introduces a rhetorical question, here a question that Paul expects will be answered affirmatively,<sup>16</sup> as is shown by the presence of οὐ(κ) (BDF §427[2]). After his twofold invitation to the Corinthians to scrutinize their conduct and attitudes (v. 5a), Paul now appeals with confidence to their theological self-awareness. ἐπιγινώσκετε need mean no more than 'you realize/recognize' (γινώσκετε), but in a rhetorical question that expects the answer 'Yes, indeed!' the intensifying prefix ἐπι- may well prompt the sense 'you know for sure.' ἑαυτοὺς is probably an accusative of respect, 'about yourselves' (TCNT, NASB), 'about your state' (Plummer 366), although it could be construed as a direct object with the ὅτι clause providing further definition.<sup>17</sup> What Paul assumed that his Corinthian converts knew for certain was the fact that (ὅτι) Jesus Christ was indwelling each of them (cf. Rom. 8:9–10) and was also active corporately in their congregation (ἐν ὑμῖν; cf. 13:3). Through his Spirit the risen Christ was both 'within' and 'among' (ἐν) the Corinthians.<sup>18</sup> But it was not only this bare fact that they needed to be reminded of, but in particular what that fact implied for their present Christian living,<sup>19</sup> namely their need to continue true to the faith (v. 5a) as it was embodied in Paul and his gospel, by turning from their divisive and immoral ways and altering their attitude to their spiritual father." [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), 920–921.]

<sup>76</sup>The motif of self-defence will recur in v. 6. First, however, Paul follows his exhortations with a question and an apparent qualification. The point of the question is not altogether easy to determine. Do they not know, he asks, that Jesus Christ<sup>152</sup> is 'within'

The heightened emphasis of μήτι over the simple μή is almost untranslatable into English. When coupled with εἰ, unless becomes **UNLESS**. The adjective ἀδόκιμοί, from ἀδόκιμος, -ον with the alpha privative prefix, denotes those tested who have miserably failed the test and have thus become disqualified. What Paul does with this additional qualification is signal to the Corinthi-

them?<sup>153</sup> There are various ways of understanding this.

"(i) The question really relates to the Corinthians' judgement of Paul himself. Chrysostom supposes that Paul is pointing out to the Corinthians that, since, through self-examination, they are able to verify that Christ is in them, it must be still more certainly true that Christ is in him, as their teacher.<sup>154</sup> Hughes takes the same line. If the Corinthians have experienced divine grace through receiving the gospel, this provides clear proof that it is Christ who speaks through Paul since it was through his ministry that the gospel came to them.<sup>155</sup> Whilst, however, Paul could certainly have this thought in mind, the question of his own authentication does not occur explicitly until v. 6. There it is introduced as an additional point, and the emphatic ἡμεῖς suggests some contrast with those to whom v. 5 refers.

"(ii) Windisch suggests that Paul may be reproducing the Corinthians' own self-conscious judgement: 'Jesus Christ is within us.' In quoting them he would wish to remind them that their self-examination must turn out well.<sup>156</sup> But this does not quite fit the way Paul uses this same formula ([ἦ] οὐ[κ] + verb of knowing) elsewhere. Windisch himself refers to 1 Cor 3:16: οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ναὸς θεοῦ ἐστέ ; But here the formula is used to remind the readers of what they appear to have forgotten, not to introduce an allusion to what they are themselves (rightly or wrongly) certain about. The same use occurs in 1 Cor 6:19.

"(iii) According to Bultmann, the point is this. The Corinthians assume that Christ is 'in them' (cf. Windisch), but have failed to understand what this means. They have failed to realise that the indwelling Christ is the Lord, who critically assesses them and makes demands upon them.<sup>157</sup> Further, there is an implicit allusion to Paul's authentication. If the Corinthians are recalled to the realisation of the indwelling Christ as Lord, they will recognise that Christ demands what Paul is demanding, and should therefore conclude that he is Christ's spokesman.<sup>158</sup> Whether this further nuance of meaning is present is debatable, as we have noted under (i) above. But the basic point is valid. Paul expresses himself elliptically, but he seems to be saying something like this. His readers must remember that the presence of the indwelling Christ<sup>159</sup> requires that they should conform to the standards of behaviour that Christian faith demands, and therefore that they should themselves critically test the quality of their Christian life. This will be at the same time a test of the reality of their new Christian existence in the fullest sense.<sup>160</sup>

[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), 890–891.]

13.6	δὲ ἐλπίζω ὅτι γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐσμὲν ἀδόκιμοι.
13.7	δὲ εὐχόμεθα . . . μὴ ποιῆσαι ὑμᾶς κακὸν μηδέν, πρὸς τὸν θεὸν οὐχ ἵνα ἡμεῖς δόκιμοι φανῶμεν, ἀλλ' ἵνα ὑμεῖς τὸ καλὸν ποιῆτε, δὲ ἡμεῖς ὡς ἀδόκιμοι ᾧμεν.
13.8	γὰρ οὐ δύναμεθά τι κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας ἀλλ' (δυναμέθα τι) ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀληθείας.
13.9	γὰρ χαίρομεν ὅταν ἡμεῖς ἀσθενῶμεν, δὲ ὑμεῖς δυνατοὶ ᾗτε· τοῦτο καὶ εὐχόμεθα, τὴν ὑμῶν κατάρτισιν.

an readers that he expects some to not pass the self examination test. And this includes some individuals and some of the house church groups in the believing community at Corinth. Whom he is targeting are some of his critics inside the church. He would ideally desire that everyone be validated as authentically Christian, but given what he knows about that is going on in the community at Corinth he is honest enough to realize that not everyone or every group will pass an honest self-examination test.<sup>77</sup>

Then Paul turns to himself and his associates in vv. 6-9.

First in v. 6 comes: ἐλπίζω δὲ ὅτι γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐσμὲν ἀδόκιμοι, **but I expect that you understand that we are not 'test failers.'** When it comes to the Corinthians, Paul asserts his expectation (ἐλπίζω) that they will clearly understand that he and his associates are **authentic believers**, in contrast to some in their com-

<sup>77</sup>Harris' view (NIGTC, 920-921) that εἰ μήτι ἀδόκιμοί ἐστε is ironical and thus a greater affirmation of Paul's confidence is unconvincing. The most natural understanding of the Greek text is the one given above. "I. H. Marshall, however, rendering εἰ μήτι by 'except if,' maintains that Paul here momentarily admits the possibility that some Corinthian believers may prove failures in the test (Power 111–12, 119 n. 73)." [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), fn. 24, P. 921.]

munity.<sup>78</sup> The future tense verb γνώσεσθε projects this discovery to the time of his anticipated visit. The double negative οὐκ...ἀδόκιμοι, *not...unauthorized*, is a litotes equaling δόκιμοι, *approved*, with heightened emphasis to contrast this with the Corinthians: *some of them are unapproved by God but not anyone associated with Paul*.

Second, and why is this so? Three aspects of his response in vv. 7-9 answer this question. He begins with a prayer wish in verse 7, then affirms the basis for this prayer wish with two reasons (γάρ) in vv. 8 and 9.

The prayer wish: εὐχόμεθα δὲ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν μὴ ποιῆσαι ὑμᾶς κακὸν μηδὲν, οὐχ ἵνα ἡμεῖς δόκιμοι φανῶμεν, ἀλλ' ἵνα ὑμεῖς τὸ καλὸν ποιῆτε, ἡμεῖς δὲ ὡς ἀδόκιμοι ὦμεν, *But we pray to God that you may not do anything wrong—not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed*.

Paul's deep desire in the ὅτι clause is couched as a prayer wish reflecting that it is a desire voiced to God (πρὸς τὸν θεόν) and not just to the Corinthians: εὐχόμεθα, *we are praying*. This refocuses the thrust upward and not just horizontally as did ἐλπίζω ὅτι, *I expect that*. The contrast is heightened further with the direct object of each verb shifting from the ὅτι-clause to the infinitive phrase μὴ ποιῆσαι as direct object. The concern expressed to God regarding the Corinthians is μὴ ποιῆσαι ὑμᾶς κακὸν μηδὲν, *that you would do absolutely nothing wrong*.<sup>79</sup> The double negative use here of μὴ and μηδὲν, particularly as inclusio boundary markers for the phrase, heightens the negation considerably. Even though he suspects that some in the church may not be authentic Christians, he prayer to God is that the entire community may not misstep in their service to God. Every experienced pastor understands this kind of concern for his / her congregation.

Both the humility and the details of this prayer wish are defined by the two adverbial purpose ἵνα clauses in contrast to each other: not this...but that. Negatively he does not pray for the Corinthians so that it may become clear that he and his associates are authentic believers: οὐχ ἵνα ἡμεῖς δόκιμοι φανῶμεν, *not that we may become clearly authorized by God*. Implicit in this is a 'dig' at those who were questioning Paul's authenticity as God's messenger. Instead of responding by saying we ask God to validate us to you, rather Paul indicates

<sup>78</sup>One must note that although ἐλπίζω implies substantial confidence -- far more than its English counterpart 'I hope' normally does -- it is not full confidence. Otherwise, he would have used οἶδα, *I know*, instead.

<sup>79</sup>The Greek infinitival phrase has a much wider range of uses than is true of the English infinitival phrase. When the Greek is doing something grammatically beyond what its English counterpart can do, the translator has to reach out to a English grammar construction that has a similar function capability. Here the best English grammar option is the subordinate clause with the conjunction 'that' with a finite verb. Of course, the intended distinction of the Greek infinitival phrase is lost in the process.

that this is not his first concern. On the contrary, his opponents at Corinth were claiming divine validation for themselves and denying it to Paul.

Paul's first prayer concern, however (ἀλλ'), was ἵνα ὑμεῖς τὸ καλὸν ποιῆτε, ἡμεῖς δὲ ὡς ἀδόκιμοι ὦμεν, *that you may do what is good and we may be as though unqualified*. Was Paul then saying that his hope was for the criticism of his opponents to be proven true? Not at all! Very skillfully the apostle makes two critical points here with this second ἵνα clause. Most importantly his prayer to God for the Corinthians was that they might do the right thing by him especially. "God open their eyes to see who we really are, and then judge us accordingly." The second point was simply phrased "Let them see us as unqualified weak ones."

What does this imply? The first justifying statement in verse eight makes it clear: οὐ γὰρ δυνάμεθά τι κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀληθείας, *for we cannot do anything against the truth, but only in behalf of the truth*.<sup>80</sup> Don't forget the significance of the motifs of weakness and strength vv. 1-4. They define Paul's meaning here in vv. 8-9. As 'weak,' Paul and his associates functioned in complete surrender to Christ, in contrast to his opponents at Corinth. This meant total commitment to truth, which biblically means what corresponds to God and His character (cf. Jhn 14:6). Nothing they would say or do would contradict God.

Also a second reason is (v. 9): χαίρομεν γὰρ ὅταν ἡμεῖς ἀσθενῶμεν, ὑμεῖς δὲ δυνατοὶ ᾗτε· τοῦτο καὶ εὐχόμεθα, τὴν ὑμῶν κατάρτισιν, *For we rejoice when we are weak and you are strong. This is what we pray for, that you may become mature*. Underneath this lays the previously declared principle of God's strength shining through Paul's weakness in the preaching of the Gospel. Paul's preaching to the Corinthians in his 'weakness' meant God's power free to transform the converts to Christ. The Corinthians being δυνατοὶ equals moving toward them becoming κατάρτισιν, *spiritual mature*. Note Jesus' declaration in Matt. 5:48, ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν, *therefore you must become grownups to the degree of the adulthood of your Heavenly Father*. The Corinthians needed to grow up spiritually where they could recognize the presence of Christ both in their lives and especially in the ministry of Paul and his associates (v. 6a). This was Paul's fervent prayer, as τοῦτο καὶ εὐχόμεθα asserts.

This warning to be harsh with them in his visit is

<sup>80</sup>A play on words exists in the Greek that is lost in translation. Paul's rejoiced in the Corinthians being δυνατοὶ (v. 9) but he and his associates had no strength (οὐ δυνάμεθά τι κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας, *we have no strength to do anything against the truth*) to waver from the truth (v. 8), since their weakness left them without it. But ironically it was their weakness that strengthened them to work in behalf of the truth (ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀληθείας).

entirely consistent with his divine commission to build up and not tear down (vv. 2-3). Those in the church with sufficient spiritual maturity would recognize this as God's leadership in Paul's ministry (v. 5b). Those who didn't would feel Paul's harsh hand of discipline in the prayerful hope that it would become clear to them in a way that would lead to their repenting of their sins. But only God could accomplish such. Should Paul adopt the human based strategy and methods of disciplining from his opponents at Corinth, it would only close the door to their actually repenting and turning to God. Critical to opening up this opportunity for transformation then was the self-examination of the Corinthians (v. 5a). Central to this examining procedure was to take a close look at their faith (v. 5a). Not to see whether it was orthodox or not. But rather to see whether it was authentic or not, as determined by how they lived out their obedience to Christ day by day (cf. Jas. 2:14-26). Validation is functional, not theoretical!

In verse 10, the apostle sums up the discussion of 10:1 - 13:9, Διὰ τοῦτο ταῦτα ἀπῶν γράφω, ἵνα παρῶν μὴ ἀποτόμως χρήσωμαι κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἣν ὁ κύριος ἔδωκέν μοι εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν, *So I write these things while I am away from you, so that when I come, I may not have to be severe in using the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.*

Ordinarily in ancient Greek the antecedent of pronouns looked backwards to a previous reference. The neuter singular τοῦτο, this, from Διὰ τοῦτο, is used when the antecedent is a multi-word block of expression, like a phrase. On occasion, however, this prepositional phrase Διὰ τοῦτο, *for this reason*, can look forward to an antecedent clause at the end of the sentence, especially when it is a ἵνα clause.<sup>81</sup> This is what we have

ἵνα...μὴ ἀποτόμως χρήσωμαι

παρῶν  
κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν

ἣν ὁ κύριος ἔδωκέν μοι  
εἰς οἰκοδομὴν  
καὶ

οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν.

<sup>81</sup>διὰ τοῦτο ('this is why') may look back to ὑμεῖς ... δυνατοὶ and τὴν ὑμῶν κατάρτισιν in v. 9. In this case Paul is writing in order to bring about the spiritual health and restoration of his correspondents. But in the other two places in Paul where διὰ τοῦτο is followed by a ἵνα clause (Phlm. 15; 1 Tim. 1:16), this phrase is

here. Most likely then, τοῦτο anticipates the purpose ἵνα statement and additionally frames it as a reason. Thus Paul's objective of not having to be severe in his upcoming visit is also the reason for writing.

The second form of the demonstrative pronoun is ταῦτα, in the neuter accusative plural from the same root as τοῦτο: οὗτος, αὕτη, τοῦτο. The neuter plural ταῦτα, *these things*, reaches backward for its antecedent most likely the entire discussion of 10:1-13:10. And quite possibly it means the entire letter of Second Corinthians, although commentators differ on what is included.<sup>82</sup>

The use of γράφω, I write, does not mean that Paul did the actual writing of this letter. He dictated the letter to a writing secretary, probably Timothy, who did the actual composition of the words of the letter. Typically, when a second person is included in the Adscriptio of one of Paul's letters, as Timothy is here (cf. 1:1), it implies the writing secretary and often the one carrying the letter to its intended readers.

Most of the sentence in v. 10 is devoted to the ἵνα clause expression of his intention for writing to the Corinthians: ἵνα παρῶν μὴ ἀποτόμως χρήσωμαι κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἣν ὁ κύριος ἔδωκέν μοι εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν, *so that when I come, I may not have to be se-* prospective, 'for this reason, (namely) that,' so this understanding is preferable here.<sup>57</sup> That is, his aim in writing<sup>58</sup> is to avoid having to exercise stern discipline." [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), 928.]

<sup>82</sup>"But if διὰ τοῦτο is prospective, ταῦτα may refer to a more restricted section within chs. 10–13 such as 12:19–13:4 or 10:1–11 (so Bultmann 249), although a wider reference to the whole canonical letter is possible (so also Barnett 614), provided his desire to avoid another painful visit is seen as part of his overall purpose to pave the way for a mutually pleasant and profitable visit.<sup>60</sup>" [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), 929.]

vere in using the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.

As concluded above, this expression serves two objectives. First, it states what Paul hopes this letter will accomplish prior to his arrival in the city: ἵνα. Second, this is then the reason for writing the letter to them: Διὰ τοῦτο.

Note the play on ἀπὼν, *while not present*, and παρῶν, *upon arrival*. Both are compound forms built off the εἰμι root, *to be*. The first is ἄπειμι with the meaning of *not present*, while the second is παρέμι meaning *I am present*. They establish that the letter was written prior to Paul's arrival on his third visit (13:1) to the church in Corinth. But how much prior to this trip is not specified, and must be estimated from examination of the larger scenario of his relations with Corinth from the available evidence.<sup>83</sup>

The core idea is that Paul will not be forced to act severely upon his arrival (παρῶν) at Corinth: μὴ ἀποτόμως χρῆσθαι. The sense of χρᾶσθαι here in the aorist subjunctive mood spelling has the sense of proceeding or functioning in its use here.<sup>84</sup> Slightly different meanings are found in its use in 1:17 and 3:12. It is the negative adverb ἀποτόμως that defines clearly the action that Paul hopes to avoid. The adverb only shows up here and in Titus 1:13 with Paul's admonition to Titus to rebuke the Cretins sharply. Paul most likely picked it up from the LXX usage.<sup>85</sup> The etymological background of

<sup>83</sup>For a helpful detailed assessment see Murray J. Harris, "C. Chronology of the Relations of Paul, Timothy, and Titus with the Corinthian church," *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), pp. 102-105. Twenty-three points of contact are listed, with the writing of this letter beginning in the summer of 56 AD and finishes it in the fall of 56 AD. He then arrives in Corinth at the beginning of winter in 56 AD for his three month stay in the city through the winter months of 56/57 AD.

<sup>84</sup>"2. *act, proceed* (Hdt. et al.; POxy 474, 38 et al.) w. dat. of characteristic shown (Aelian, VH 2, 15; Jos., Ant. 10, 25; Just., D. 79, 2; Tat. 40, 1; Mel., HE 4, 26, 13) τῇ ἐλαφρίᾳ **2 Cor 1:17**. πολλῇ παρρησίᾳ **3:12**. ὑποταγῇ 1 Cl 37:5.—W. adv. (PMagd 6, 12 [III B.C.] et al.) ἀποτόμως **2 Cor 13:10**." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1088.]

<sup>85</sup>"Only ἀπότομος and ἀποτόμως occur in the LXX, and even these only in Wis. They are used for the unbending 'severity' of God in His judgment of the wicked and the mighty: ὅτι κρίσις ἀπότομος ἐν τοῖς ὑπερέχουσιν γίνεται, Wis. 6:5. The means of divine judgment are also called ἀπότομος, e.g., His wrath in 5:20, His word which mercilessly executes judgment in 12:9, cf. 18:15,11 the water of the sea in 5:22. The context of these expressions makes it plain that God is represented here as a sovereign monarch who judges justly but does not have to give account to any for His acts, cf. 12:12–14. If on the one side He is a father admonishing the righteous, on the other side his penal judgment is like that of a Greek tyrant (→ lines

cutting something provides the basis for the figurative sense of 'cutting rebuke' in verbal attack on an enemy. With the negative μὴ...χρῆσθαι, *I might not have to act*, the apostle forcefully expresses his desire that the coming visit be pleasant and affirming.

The prepositional phrase modifier κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν poses the most interesting part of Paul's expression. Clearly this plays off of what Paul said earlier in 10:8, ἐάν τε γὰρ περισσώτερόν τι καυχῆσθαι περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν ἧς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθάρεισιν ὑμῶν, οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι, *Now, even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it*. The Lord had called Paul into ministry to nourish and help new believers grow into maturity spiritually. This point Paul wanted to get across to the Corinthians clearly and emphatically.<sup>86</sup> His calling was

25 ff.): τούτους μὲν γὰρ ὡς πατὴρ νοουθετῶν ἐδοκίμασας, ἐκείνους δὲ ὡς ἀπότομος βασιλεὺς καταδικάζων ἐξήτασας, 11:10. It is thus evident that in this one LXX book which uses ἀπότομος the word describes the 'unrelenting severity' of the divine judgment in the same way as it is used in Gk. lit. for the inexorability of the law, the pitilessness of ananke, or the unyielding hardness of the tyrant (→ 107, 15 ff.), a quality which in neither area is befitting in man." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:107–108.]

<sup>86</sup>In 12:19 Paul states 'Everything (τὰ ... πάντα), dear friends, is for your upbuilding (ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς).' The 'everything' includes all that Paul said and did in his relationship with the Corinthians, but the primary reference is to all he was writing in the present letter. ὑπὲρ here means 'with a view to achieving,' so we may deduce that the apostle's general purpose in writing was to promote his converts' οἰκοδομή (cf. 10:8; 13:10), that is, to strengthen and stabilize their individual and corporate faith and to promote their advance and maturation in the Christian life. This deduction is supported by Paul's statement in 13:9 that he was praying for their 'restoration' (κατάρτισις), their return to proper relations with God, with himself, and with one another, which all are aspects of their progress in appropriate Christian living (οἰκοδομή). Such a prayer presumably corresponds to his aim in writing. Similarly, his prayer-report in 13:7 must reflect his purpose: he was asking God that they would reject all wrongdoing (κακόν) and espouse right conduct (τὸ καλόν).

"If the letter was written in stages during Paul's ministry in Macedonia (see above, A.3.e.[3]), it is not surprising that the three main divisions of the canonical letter (chs. 1–7, 8–9, and 10–13) should have different although complementary specific purposes. In chs. 1–7 Paul seeks to express his great relief and delight at the Corinthians' positive response to his 'severe letter,' which had been delivered and reinforced by Titus (2:6, 9, 12–14; 7:5–16). In chs. 8–9 he aims to exhort the Corinthians to complete their promised collection for the saints at Jerusalem before his arrival on the next visit (8:6–7, 10–11; 9:3–5). Finally, in the last four chapters (10–13) his intent is (a) to help them recognize the proper criteria for distinguishing among rival apostles (10:1–5, 7, 12–18; 11:7–15, 22–30; 12:6, 9–10, 12, 14–15; 13:3–4, 10) and thus become convinced of the genuineness of his own apostleship (10:7–8, 14–15; 11:2, 5–6; 12:11–12; 13:6–7, 10) and (b) to encourage them to engage

in self-examination with a view to mending their ways (12:2–21; 13:2, 5, 7, 9, 11). In a nutshell he is saying first 'I rejoice over you and have complete confidence in you' (cf. 7:4, 16), then 'I urge you to finish what you have commendably begun' (cf. 8:10–11), and lastly 'I am about to come, so get ready' (cf. 12:14; 13:1, 11). Each major section of the letter prepares for the next. Once Paul had reestablished a favorable relationship with his converts (reflected in chs. 1–7), he could confidently appeal to them to complete the collection project before his arrival (chs. 8–9). Then, having mentioned his coming (in 9:4), he could announce its imminence and indicate how they should prepare for it (chs. 10–13).

"In addition to the three primary specific purposes outlined above, we may infer several secondary specific purposes. Paul wanted

to inform the Corinthians of the severity of his affliction in Asia and solicit their prayer for future deliverance from similar trouble (1:8–11),

to answer the charge that he had acted insincerely, and with disregard for promises made, in altering his travel plans (1:12–2:4),

to encourage them to end the punishment of the repentant wrongdoer and reaffirm their love for him (2:5–11),

to describe the true nature and high calling of the Christian ministry (2:14–7:4),

to have the Corinthians renew their pride in him (1:14, 5:12) and reciprocate his warm love for them (2:4; 6:11–13; 11:11; 12:15), and

to highlight their need to make a decisive break with all idolatrous associations and pursue personal holiness (6:14–7:1).

"These specific purposes in writing, whether regarded as primary or secondary in significance, all serve, we suggest, one overriding purpose. Paul is seeking to prepare the way for an enjoyable third visit to Corinth by removing any obstacles that might prevent that visit from being pleasing and beneficial to all. That Paul always hoped his visits to his converts would be free of distress, enjoyable, and mutually beneficial is clear from 2:3 and Rom. 1:11–12. How all the material in the letter relates to this single purpose has been shown above (in the discussion of the unity of the letter, A.3.e.[4]). For their part, if the Corinthians engaged in self-examination that led to repentance (6:14–7:1; 12:20–21; 13:2, 5), Paul would be spared the pain of having to exercise discipline (13:2, 7, 9–10) and suffer another 'painful visit' like his second visit (2:1). If, by the time he arrived in Corinth, they had finally repudiated the rival apostles, had fully endorsed their apostle and his gospel, and had completed their offering for Jerusalem with generous gifts, the reunion would be pleasurable and free of embarrassment. Paul's wish was that the wholehearted welcome the Corinthians had accorded Titus on his visit with the 'severe letter' should now also be given to the apostle himself on his forthcoming visit. Titus had been greatly relieved and refreshed in spirit by the welcome they had all given him (7:13). They all had shown him ready obedience in receiving him with fear and trembling, knowing they were accountable to God for their conduct (7:15). If Paul was accepted in a similar way, the visit would prove peaceful, joyful, and profitable for one and all.

"This overarching specific purpose is wholly compatible with the general purpose suggested above. If the letter sought to pave the way for a trouble-free and mutually advantageous visit, that visit, if successful, would promote the Corinthians' upbuilding as their Christian life was enriched.

"In this matter of purpose and how it was achieved, there is a remarkable similarity between 2 Corinthians and Romans, a letter written about four or five months later (early A.D. 57). Paul sent

not to destroy the churches established in the Gospel. Thus the apostle longed for his visit to be uplifting and pleasant. Yet, as he made clear in 13:1–4 especially, that could mean some tearing down of sinful behavior before proper behavior could be set up. The significance of the preposition κατὰ is to designate what the possible verbal action lined up with. Even sharp rebuke was intended to be a building up action (εἰς οἰκοδομήν), and not a tearing down action (οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν). Thus the sharp rebuke could be a part of God's calling upon Paul. Of course, in the background stands the assumption that the outsider false teachers were engaged in καθαίρεσιν, [tearing down](#), of the community of believers. This would heighten the contrast between his ministry and that of these false teachers.

Is there any way of knowing whether Paul succeeded in his objective for writing this letter? Nothing directly is so stated inside the New Testament. But Luke's account in Acts 20:2–3 along with the positive tone of Romans written from Corinth on this three month long visit would suggest that it was successful.<sup>87</sup> Unfortunately both letters to prepare Christians for a forthcoming visit (2 Cor. 9:4; 10:2; 12:14, 20–21; 13:1–2, 10; Rom. 1:10–13, 15; 15:22–24, 28–29, 32). In each case the principal ingredient in that preparation is an *apologia*—in 2 Corinthians, an *apologia* for his apostolic conduct and ministry (chs. 1–7) and his apostolic authority (chs. 10–13); in Romans, an *apologia* for his gospel (1:16b–15:13). Such a defense served to remove possible obstacles to an enjoyable visit (see A.3.e.[3] above for 2 Corinthians; Rom. 15:24b, 32).<sup>122</sup>"

[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), 51–53.]

<sup>87</sup>" Was 2 Corinthians successful where 1 Corinthians had been only partially so? Apparently it was, because Paul made the promised visit (Acts 20:2–3) and during this three-month stay in 'Greece' (primarily Corinth, in the winter of 56–57) he wrote or completed his letter to the Romans. This letter seems to betray some apprehension for the future (15:30–31) but none for the present, and Paul would hardly have contemplated implementing his long-standing desire to visit Rome (Rom. 1:10–11, 13, 15; 15:22–24, 28–29, 32; cf. Acts 19:21) and to prosecute pioneer evangelism in the west (Rom. 15:20–21, 23–24, 28) if the congregation in the city from which he was writing was not only harboring his opponents but was also so opposed to him (2 Cor. 11:4, 20) that they were actually being seduced from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ (cf. 11:3). Also, the use of ἠδδόκησαν in Rom. 15:26–27 with reference to the spirit which prevailed among the Corinthians (and their neighbors [= Ἀχαῖα; cf. 2 Cor. 1:1; 9:2; 10:11] together with the Macedonians) in making their contribution to the collection would scarcely have been appropriate unless the church in Corinth were in harmony with the promoter of that collection. Moreover, the very preservation of 2 Corinthians is evidence that Paul's contest with his adversaries turned out successfully (cf. Windisch 432). But it is sadly true that when Clement of Rome wrote to the church at Corinth in 96 he had to rebuke the same internal strife (1 Clement 46:5–7; 47:3–4) and rebellion against authority (44:3, 6; 54:1–2; 57:2) that had plagued the church forty years earlier." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on*

nately, the positive spirit which prevailed in this visit did not last. Clement of Rome writes some forty years later to the church at Corinth in 96 AD and indicates that many of the same problems which Paul addressed were present in the church at the end of the century: cf. 1 Clement 46:5-7; 47:3-4 (internal strife); 1 Clem. 44:3, 6; 54:1-2; 57:2 (rebellion against authority). A new generation of members brought back some old problems.

**\*\*\*\*\*OBSERVATIONS\*\*\*\*\***

Here is a level of spiritual insight largely absent from modern church life in our world. So often down through the centuries of Christian history especially in western cultures, church groups have responded to criticisms by using human based reaction strategies. Mostly, I suspect, in order to extract revenge. But this has only worsened the issues and caused greater conflicts. Paul's example warns us against taking such approaches in two ways. First, our ministry even to our critics must be targeted εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν, for building up and not tearing down (v. 10). And second, we must be spiritually mature enough to recognize the powerful spiritual dynamic of 'divine strength through human weakness.' Our human nature craves equating human strength with divine strength, i.e., thus making the same mistake of Paul's critics at Corinth. But this is false. And it takes deep spiritual maturity to realize it. Perhaps we haven't leaned much insight from our 'thorns in the flesh' like Paul did. The dark shadow of cultural influences stands too heavily over us and leads to corruption of Gospel principle in favor of human based principles. This was Corinth's on-going problem. Probably ours as well.