



## **BIC Volume 11** **Second Corinthians** **Lorin L Cranford** **Ministry Part One A:** **Topic 10.2.3 - 10.2.3.1.4.2.2** **2 Cor. 1:12-2:17**

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### **10.2.3 Letter Body**

Outlining the letter body is about as challenging in Second Corinthians as it is for most of the other letters in the NT. No secret key exists to unlock how it is put together. The one constant is the idea of ministry, especially that of the apostle Paul. But this is approached in different ways through chapters 1 to 13.

Typically commentators tend to see three large sections in the letter body: 1) 1:12-7:16; 2) 8:1-9:15; and 3) 10:1-13:10. The first and the third sections focus on Paul's ministry, with 10:1-13:10 being especially a defense of his apostleship. Chapters eight and nine center on the relief offering that Paul was promoting on the third missionary journey. But again, one should be careful about drawing sharp boundaries. No one in the ancient world writing in Greek, Latin etc. thought in such terms for topic development.<sup>1</sup> And the Jewish literature of this early period clearly has even less tendency to think this way. The Jewish mind of Paul simply moved a topic forward unfolding it into the next topic usually interconnected to the preceding one. Thus we will follow the generally identifiable threefold listing but with the caution clearly in view.

#### **10.2.3.1 Ministry part one, 1:13-7:16.**

This segment is perhaps the most positive and upbeat of the three parts of the letter body. The first subunit in 1:12-14 sets the tone for much of what follows in

<sup>1</sup>The only place in ancient literature where sharp distinctions would sometimes surface was in stating miscellaneous paraenesis in the moral tractates. But often this literary form resembles a listing more than an explanation of various moral duties.

a series of unit expressions.

#### **10.2.3.1.1 Mutual confidence, 1:12-14.**

12 Ἡ γὰρ καύχησις ἡμῶν αὕτη ἐστίν, τὸ μαρτύριον τῆς συνειδήσεως ἡμῶν, ὅτι ἐν ἀπλότῃ καὶ εἰλικρινείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, [καὶ] οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ σαρκικῇ ἀλλ' ἐν χάριτι θεοῦ, ἀνεστράφημεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, περισσοτέρως δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς. 13 οὐ γὰρ ἄλλα γράφομεν ὑμῖν ἀλλ' ἢ ἃ ἀναγινώσκετε ἢ καὶ ἐπιγινώσκετε· ἐλπίζω δὲ ὅτι ἕως τέλους ἐπιγνώσεσθε, 14 καθὼς καὶ ἐπέγνωτε ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ μέρους, ὅτι καύχημα ὑμῶν ἐσμεν καθάπερ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] Ἰησοῦ.

12 Indeed, this is our boast, the testimony of our conscience: we have behaved in the world with frankness and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God — and all the more toward you. 13 For we write you nothing other than what you can read and also understand; I hope you will understand until the end — 14 as you have already understood us in part — that on the day of the Lord Jesus we are your boast even as you are our boast.

These two sentences in Greek stand together in part linked by καύχησις (v. 12) and καύχημα (v. 14). Note the block diagram below. The two forms are largely interchangeable in meaning and Paul links καύχησις to his feelings toward the Corinthians while καύχημα references the Corinthians' feeling toward him.<sup>2</sup> This unit

<sup>2</sup>If there be a distinction between the καύχησις of v. 12 and the καύχημα of v. 14 (which together form an *inclusio*), the former word will denote the act of boasting and the latter the ground or content of boasting, reflecting the general distinction between -σις and -μα substantival endings.<sup>4</sup> However, such a distinction seems

1.12 γὰρ  
**8 Ἡ καύχησις ἡμῶν αὕτη ἐστίν,**  
 τὸ μαρτύριον τῆς συνειδήσεως ἡμῶν,  
 ἐν ἀπλότητι καὶ εἰλικρινεΐα τοῦ θεοῦ,  
 [καὶ]  
 οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ σαρκικῇ  
 ἀλλ'  
 ἐν χάριτι θεοῦ,  
 ὅτι...ἀνεστράφημεν  
 ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ,  
 δὲ  
 περισσοτέρως  
 πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

1.13 γὰρ  
**9 οὐ ἄλλα γράφομεν ὑμῖν**  
 ἀλλ'  
**10 (γράφομεν ὑμῖν)**  
 ἣ ἂ ἀναγινώσκετε  
 ἣ καὶ ἐπιγινώσκετε·  
 δὲ  
**11 ἐλπίζω**  
 | ὅτι ἕως τέλους ἐπιγνώσεσθε,  
 1.14 | καθὼς καὶ ἐπέγνωτε ἡμᾶς  
 | ἀπὸ μέρους,  
 ὅτι καύχημα ὑμῶν ἐσμεν  
 καθάπερ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἡμῶν  
 ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] Ἰησοῦ.

μαρτύριον τῆς  
 συνειδήσεως ἡμῶν, **the  
 witness of our conscience.**  
 Although often a geni-  
 tive case noun modifying  
 μαρτύριον defines the  
 content of the witness  
 in the objective genitive  
 case function, here the  
 context argues instead  
 for τῆς συνειδήσεως  
 as what produces the  
 witness in the sub-  
 jective case function.  
 What Paul means by  
 συνειδήσις bears hardly  
 any resemblance to the  
 modern western idea of  
 ‘conscience.’ Instead, in  
 Paul, consistent with the  
 Greek world which only  
 began using this term  
 to any real extent at the  
 end of the first Christian  
 century, is a referenc-  
 ing of the divinely given

begins the amplification of the proem (cf. γὰρ in v. 12) on the positive note of καύχησις, which is almost untranslatable into English. It denotes a deep inward sense of something really satisfying and positive. This inner feeling can be verbalized as the verb derivative καυχάομαι reflects. Whether καύχησις is good or bad depends upon the legitimacy of the inner feeling. Paul severely criticizes the καυχάομαι of his Judaizing opponents at Galatia in 6:12-14, while stressing the only legitimate grounds for boasting are ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, **in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.** Here in 1:12 Paul’s inner positive feeling is put simply as Ἡ γὰρ καύχησις ἡμῶν αὕτη ἐστίν, **Now our deep satisfaction is this:** And what does the demonstrative pronoun αὕτη reference?<sup>3</sup> First is the phrase τὸ

inapplicable here, for καύχησις in v. 12 signifies the ground or basis for boasting (‘the reason for our exultation,’ Berkeley),<sup>5</sup> or, better, the content or object of boasting (‘what we boast about/are proud of’).<sup>7</sup> Following the prospective αὕτη, the phrase τὸ μαρτύριον τῆς συνειδήσεως ἡμῶν defines what Paul is proud of,<sup>8</sup> ‘the testimony that our conscience gives’ (BAGD 494a), or simply, ‘what my conscience tells me’ (Goodspeed).<sup>9</sup> Sometimes an objective genitive follows μαρτύριον and refers, for example, to testimony about the resurrection (Acts 4:33) or Christ (1 Cor. 1:6), but here the genitive τῆς συνειδήσεως is subjective.” [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), 184.]

<sup>3</sup>One should note that the feminine gender αὕτη is reaching back to the feminine καύχησις, rather than a neuter gender form

skills of rational thinking that can look at evidence and draw conclusions.<sup>4</sup> And Paul is clear that the guidance of the Holy Spirit is the source of information and decision making in this process.

Here the apostle sets forth that the result of the analysis of his pattern of ministry commitment led him to the single conclusion of καύχησις. That is, a really positive feeling about how he had done ministry over the years of Christian service.

What that μαρτύριον means which gave him καύχησις is spelled out in the ὅτι clause. The block diagram visualizes clearly the details:

ἐν ἀπλότητι καὶ εἰλικρινεΐα  
 τοῦ θεοῦ,  
 [καὶ]  
 οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ σαρκικῇ  
 ἀλλ'  
 ἐν χάριτι θεοῦ,  
**ὅτι...ἀνεστράφημεν**  
 ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ,

determined by the phrase τὸ μαρτύριον τῆς συνειδήσεως ἡμῶν which stands as the first defining of καύχησις. The complexity of the syntax here is heightened since the ὅτι clause that follows spells out the details of the μαρτύριον. This in effect becomes a second amplification of αὕτη.

<sup>4</sup>For an indepth analysis of συνειδήσις in the ancient world see my article **“THE WESTERN INTROSPECTIVE CONSCIENCE: A Biblical Perspective on Decision Making”** in vol. 37 of the **Biblical Insights Commentary** at cranfordville.com.

δὲ  
περισσοτέρως  
πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

The core expression ἀνεστράφημεν lays out the essential point that **we have behaved ourselves** in a specific manner.<sup>5</sup> The verb ἀναστρέφω, at the figurative level of meaning, defines moral conduct guided by specific principles of behavior. This central point is then qualified numerous ways by Paul as the diagram above illustrates. In the prefield position before the verb stand three moral and spiritual qualifiers. In the postfield position after the verb stand locational modifiers identifying where and especially to whom this conduct was pointed. If you desire to feel good legitimately about your Christian service, then careful noting of what Paul says here should be given. This is a basic declaration of how proper Christian ministry should be done.

First Paul conducts himself ἐν ἀπλότητι καὶ εἰλικρινείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, **with transparency and honesty from God**. First, considerable text variation exist over whether the first word was ἀπλότητι or ἀγιότητι.<sup>6</sup> ἀπλότητι comes from ἀπλότης with the core meaning of ‘singleness.’ Mostly in the NT it is used in connection to personal integrity where what is observed in outward actions is a clear reflection of what lies down inside the individual. The second word ἀγιότητι, however, comes from ἀγιότης with the meaning of ‘holiness.’ Textual evidence is divided between the two readings, but the former seems more **likely to be the original reading** from contextual factors.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup>“Of the three principal NT verbs referring to general human behavior, περιπατέω (‘walk’) and πορεύομαι (‘live’) reflect Hebrew usage (*hālak*), while ἀναστρέφομαι (‘behave’) is a natural Greek idiom.<sup>14</sup> As a constative aorist, ἀνεστράφημεν looks back over the entirety of Paul’s life as a Christian in a single, comprehensive glance.” [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), 186.]

<sup>6</sup>αγιότητι P<sup>46</sup> \* A B C K P Ψ 0121. 0243. 33. 81. 365. 630. 1175. 1739. 1881. 2464 r co; CI Or Did

‡ txt \*<sup>2</sup> D F G L 104. 1241. 1505 M lat sy

[Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 555.]

<sup>7</sup>“It is difficult to decide between ἀγιότητι (in holiness) and ἀπλότητι (in frankness), either of which could be easily confused with the other (ΑΓΙΟΤΗΤΙ and ΑΠΛΟΤΗΤΙ). The reading ἀγιότητι, followed by RSV, NIV, REB, NJB, and Seg, has strong and early manuscript support. But the noun ἀπλότητι (followed by NRSV, TEV, TOB, FC), which is read by Western and Byzantine witnesses, seems more likely to be original for the following reasons: (a) the context seems to require a word meaning ‘simplicity’ rather than ‘holiness,’ if Paul is responding to charges against his integrity, (b) the word ἀπλότης occurs a number of times in 2 Corinthians (8:2; 9:11, 13; 11:3), and (c) the word ἀγιότης is never used elsewhere by Paul.

“Thrall (*The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 130) indicates the difference in meaning as follows: ‘If we read ἐν ἀπλότητι, he is saying that he has behaved in a manner characterised by can-

Thus the apostle asserts that in no way has he been manipulative or deceitful in how he has conducted himself in ministry. Thus the translation ‘transparency’ best signals this idea.

Next his ministry has been carried out εἰλικρινείᾳ, **in honesty**. A companion term to ἀπλότης, εἰλικρινεία stresses purity of motivation for actions. This is a ‘Corinthian word’ which is only used 3 times in the NT: 1 Cor. 5:8; 2 Cor. 1:12; 2:17. The last usage graphically highlights its meaning: οὐ γὰρ ἔσμεν ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἔξ εἰλικρινείας, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν. **For we are not peddlers of God’s word like so many; but in Christ we speak as persons of sincerity, as persons sent from God and standing in his presence.**

The modifier τοῦ θεοῦ, **from God**, should be understood to qualify both ἀπλότητι καὶ εἰλικρινείᾳ.<sup>8</sup> Contextually the source of these two qualities is God, and not human. The following minus/plus declarations make this exceedingly clear.

The second and third spiritual modifiers of ἀνεστράφημεν form a couplet of negative/positive affirmations: [καὶ] οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ σαρκικῇ ἀλλ’ ἐν χάριτι θεοῦ, **and not by fleshly wisdom but rather by God’s grace**. Paul continues his use of the prepositional phrase introduced by ἐν. The translation challenge is that ἐν viewed from a purely Greek view denotes the idea of instrumentality, i.e., the means by which the verb action of ἀνεστράφημεν takes place. But as a Hebrew shaped idea in Greek it denotes a broader concept of location either concrete or abstract. Thus the occurrence of the verb action ἀνεστράφημεν takes place in the sphere or ‘atmosphere’ of these qualities defined in the preposi-

dour, straightforwardness, singleness of heart, integrity, and the like ... If, however, we read ἀγιότητι, he would be defending his ‘holiness’, in the sense of moral purity’.

[Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 356–357.]

<sup>8</sup>“Both ‘holiness’ and ‘sincerity’ are qualified by τοῦ θεοῦ, a genitive that may be construed in three ways, although the third option seems preferable: (1) objective,<sup>13</sup> ‘before God,’ ‘in the sight of God,’ equivalent to κατέναντι θεοῦ (2:17; 12:19) or ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ (4:2; 7:12); (2) subjective, ‘God-given’ (Plummer 25), ‘inspired by God’ (TCNT); (3) adjectival, ‘godly,’ ‘like that of God’ (Martin 18). Although ἐν could denote attendant circumstances (‘[our conduct was] marked by’), more probably it is either instrumental, depicting the impelling force or governing principles behind Paul’s pastoral ministry (‘[our conduct was] guided by,’ Cassirer; ‘prompted by,’ NAB1; ‘governed by,’ NEB) or local, describing the sphere in which Paul operated (‘we have conducted ourselves in ...’).” [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), 185.]

tional phrases. Paul most likely is using ἐν intentionally to cover both senses of the preposition.

What οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ σαρκικῇ... ἀνεστράφημεν asserts is that his behavior is not derived from human cleverness. If you have read First Corinthians, and especially [our commentary](#) on it, you well remember that the foundational problem earlier at Corinth was the inability of many in the church to shed their Greek way of thinking and replace it with God's way of thinking in the Gospel. Of the seven uses of the adjective σαρκικός, -ή, -όν in the NT, five of them come in either First or Second Corinthians. The central idea of this adjective is of pure flesh, and for Paul the flesh as the base of operations for depraved human nature. Anything having this quality has no connection to God whatsoever! Thus σοφία σαρκικῇ plays absolutely no role in defining or guiding Paul's conduct in ministry.

Instead what does motivate and define Paul's conduct is ἐν χάριτι θεοῦ, [in God's grace](#). Now grace as χάρις is not some abstract etherial concept. For the apostle Paul χάρις is the unleashing of God's powerful presence in our lives through the Holy Spirit. Divine grace is the dynamic force of God at work in the believer's life. To limit χάρις to an attitude of God is to completely miss its meaning, particularly in the use of the word by Paul throughout his writings. Eph. 2:8-10 provides the best summary depiction in the NT.<sup>9</sup> It is the powerful impact of divine grace upon Paul's life that both defines the framework and gives him the needed spiritual resources to behave himself in ministry in the way depicted here in v. 12b.

In the postfield of the core statement comes two additional modifiers of ἀνεστράφημεν: ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, περισσοτέρως δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, [in the world, and especially toward you](#). ἀνεστράφημεν as a relationship oriented term cannot be done in secret or outside of relating to other people. Paul defines this relationship both generally and specifically in these two modifiers.

Thus ἀνεστράφημεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, [we have behaved ourselves in the world](#), simply means his conduct toward people in general. The locational sense of ἐν dominates here. In the three uses of κόσμος in Second Corinthians -- 1:12; 5:19; 7:10 -- the sense of human beings inclusively is how Paul uses the term. Thus Paul asserts that he has consistently sought to relate to people -- [both lost and saved](#) -- with integrity and honesty under

<sup>9</sup>**Eph. 2:8-10.** 8 Τῇ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι διὰ πίστεως· καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν, θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον· 9 οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων, ἵνα μή τις καυχῆσθαι. 10 αὐτοῦ γὰρ ἔσμεν ποίημα, κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς οἷς προητοίμασεν ὁ θεός, ἵνα ἐν αὐτοῖς περιπατήσωμεν.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— 9 not the result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

the guidance of God's grace.

The second locational modifier is specific: περισσοτέρως δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, [and especially toward you](#). The comparative adverb περισσοτέρως stresses extra attention and effort being put forth. Perhaps in the background are criticisms being raised against Paul, as 1:15-24 suggest.<sup>10</sup> His words here should not be taken to imply one set of standards for relating to the Corinthians and another for relating to the world.<sup>11</sup> The [background](#) of the enormous amount of time and effort expended by Paul toward the Corinthians over the years should mean that of any folks who would recognize his integrity in ministry it should have been the Corinthians. People who did not know him might raise questions, but not those who knew him well as did the Corinthians.

The second sentence of vv. 13-14 provides justifying amplification (γὰρ) of his contention in v. 12: 13 οὐ γὰρ ἄλλα γράφομεν ὑμῖν ἀλλ' ἢ ἃ ἀναγινώσκετε ἢ καὶ ἐπιγινώσκετε· ἐλπίζω δὲ ὅτι ἕως τέλους ἐπιγνώσεσθε, 14 καθὼς καὶ ἐπέγνωτε ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ μέρους, ὅτι καύχημα ὑμῶν ἔσμεν καθάπερ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] Ἰησοῦ. 13 [For we write you nothing other than what you can read and also understand; I hope you will understand until the end — 14 as you have already understood us in part — that on the day of the Lord Jesus we are your boast even as you are our boast.](#)

As the block diagram below illustrates, three core expressions are set forth. The first constitute a couplet expression of not this but that (#s 9-10) and the third builds off this an expression of confidence for the future (# 11). The common theme throughout is ἐπιγνώσκω: ἐπιγινώσκετε, v. 13a; ἐπιγνώσεσθε, v. 13b; ἐπέγνωτε, v.

<sup>10</sup>What seems to have been true of Paul's connection to the church at Corinth holds true still in today's Christian world, as I have observed it since the 1950s at least. Criticisms of lack of integrity seem to most always come from professing Christians with little or no integrity themselves.

<sup>11</sup>“Whether περισσοτέρως is a comparative adverb meaning ‘even more,’ or is equivalent to an elative superlative, ‘above all,’ ‘most of all,’<sup>15</sup> ‘especially’ (NIV), there is no contrast between Paul's conduct ‘in the (outside) world’ and his behavior toward the Corinthians. Rather, πρὸς ὑμᾶς (‘in our dealings with you’) specifies one group within the category of ‘people’ (κόσμος), so that περισσοτέρως δὲ means ‘and especially,’ not ‘but particularly.’ Certainly the apostle is not suggesting that he operated on different principles of conduct depending on his observers, being scrupulous in his relations with believers and less scrupulous before unbelievers. It was because Paul had poured his energy into his pastoral work at Corinth over a prolonged period (Acts 18:11, 18) that the Corinthians had more opportunity than others to observe the integrity of his conduct and way of life. So it is that Paul's appeal to his own conscience in this verse indirectly becomes an appeal to the Corinthians' conscience.” [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), 186.]

1.13 γὰρ  
**9 οὐ ἄλλα γράφομεν ὑμῖν**  
 ἄλλ’  
**10 (γράφομεν ὑμῖν)**  
 ἢ ἃ ἀναγινώσκετε  
 ἢ καὶ ἐπιγινώσκετε·  
 δὲ  
**11 ἐλπίζω**  
 | ὅτι ἕως τέλους ἐπιγνώσεσθε,  
 1.14 | καθὼς καὶ ἐπέγνωτε ἡμᾶς  
 | ἀπὸ μέρους,  
 ὅτι καύχημα ὑμῶν ἐσμεν  
 καθάπερ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἡμῶν  
 ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] Ἰησοῦ.

included in the designated recipients. In the case of Second Corinthians this was most likely done by Timothy as a letter carrier -- along with Titus -- in the house church groups at Corinth. Thus full understanding of Paul's words were guaranteed in the explanations given by these two close associates of Paul to the assembled groups in the city. The very first letter

14.<sup>12</sup> The core meaning of this verb is **to fully understand a person or some idea**. Paul's argument in vv. 12-14 is a written declaration of his integrity (v. 12) that he expects the Corinthians to fully grasp and accept (vv. 13-14). Thus his ἀναστροφή (v. 12) should be easy for them to understand (ἐπίγνωσις; vv. 13-14), especially as he spelled it out in this letter. Thus what comes from him in the written expression of this letter is the basic appeal made here. Note the emphasis on writing with γράφομεν (v. 13) that includes both him and Timothy in the plural 'we.'

First comes the declaration οὐ γὰρ ἄλλα γράφομεν ὑμῖν, for we do not write to you other things. The very complex grammar construction here ties the οὐ ἄλλα γράφομεν ὑμῖν to the ἄλλ’ ἢ... in the next clause. The sense of ἄλλα then becomes **other things beyond that which....**<sup>13</sup> The reverse perspective is a declaration of **"we are writing only what..."**. The apostle disallows any idea expression about his integrity beyond what is contained in his letters to them (present tense γράφομεν implies on going writing). Implicit here are criticisms being leveled against the apostle with different content. Titus has alerted him to these when they met in Macedonia in advance of the composition of this letter. Some of Paul's comments in chapters ten through thirteen will shed some light on this, as well as 1:15-2:4.

Paul's written emphasis centers on two things: ἄλλ’ ἢ ἃ ἀναγινώσκετε ἢ καὶ ἐπιγινώσκετε, **than what you can read and also fully comprehend**. Behind this stands the customary practice of each of Paul's letters being publicly **read and explained** to each of the house church groups

<sup>12</sup>The middle voice form ἐπιγνώσεσθε is due to the future tense sixth principle part form of the verb is deponent in form.

<sup>13</sup>"The combination ἄλλ’ ἢ following a negative and some form of ἄλλος is classical (Denniston, *Particles*, pp. 24-7), and means 'except' (BAGD s.v. ἀλλά 1. a.; BDR 448 (8)). It may be a combination of οὐκ ἄλλος ἀλλά ('no other but') and οὐκ ἄλλος ἢ ('no other than'). It is fairly unusual, and has caused textual disturbance: A omits ἢ ἃ; ἢ is omitted in P<sup>46</sup> 33:945. 2495<sup>pe</sup> sy; FG omit ἄλλ’; ἃ is omitted in D\* 0243:1739 pc. The full text is read in κ BCD<sup>2</sup> Ψ<sup>M</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).]

prior to First Corinthians had not been correctly understood according to 1 Cor. 5:9, but this letter called Second Corinthians should not fall prey to any misunderstanding.

The apostle fully expects that the Corinthians will understand his integrity and recognize that it is genuine: ἐλπίζω δὲ ὅτι ἕως τέλους ἐπιγνώσεσθε, **and I am confident that you will fully understand to the end**. The exact meaning of the prepositional phrase ἕως τέλους is not absolutely certain. If intended by Paul in a temporal sense, then τέλους is defined by ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] Ἰησοῦ, **at the day of our Lord Jesus Christ**. Thus Paul is asserting his confidence that the Corinthians will always recognize his integrity to the very day of Christ. Although somewhat unusual an idea, it is technically possible. The alternative view which is more logical from the context is that ἕως τέλους has the sense of complete understanding as opposed to partial understanding. His confidence that his written explanation of the integrity of his ministry will be completely understood by the Corinthians. Thus ἕως τέλους serves to reinforce the meaning of ἐπι- as a prefix intensifying the action of the root stem verb meaning.

The comparative clause καθὼς καὶ ἐπέγνωτε ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ μέρους attached to ἐπιγνώσεσθε in the ὅτι clause (see above diagram) sets up a base for comparing the anticipated understanding to past understanding by the Corinthians. They have understood Paul's integrity in the past as ἀπὸ μέρους, but now he anticipates an understanding as ἕως τέλους. The two prepositional phrase modifiers clearly define the heart of the comparison. That is, in the past they possessed limited access to Paul's integrity, while he anticipates fully understanding in the future. But the limited perspective they fully understood. Thus he anticipates the full perspective now available to them will be also fully understood. Note the same verb in the past tense of the aorist ἐπέγνωτε along with ἐπιγνώσεσθε in the future tense. The adverbial use of καὶ, **also**, links the two verbs closely together in a continuum of fully understanding Paul's integrity. In the past it was based on limited information available,

but now it is based on full information.

What then is foundational to Paul's confidence in the Corinthian's continued grasping of his integrity? It is set forth in the adverbial causal ὅτι clause at the end of v. 14: ὅτι καύχημα ὑμῶν ἔσμεν καθάπερ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] Ἰησοῦ, *because we are your 'good feeling' just as you also are ours at the day of our Lord Jesus*. On most every issue the ultimate criteria for evaluation is the parousia of Christ and the day of judgment that accompanies it. Thus when measured against the this eschatological backdrop, Paul has good reason for καύχησις (v. 12). A mutual καύχημα exists between him and Timothy with the Corinthians. The shift in spelling is most likely due to καύχημα denoting the basis for this deeply held positive attitude while καύχησις lends itself more to the expressing of such. What the apostle envisions is that the day of Christ in divine judgment will bring clear and divine enlightenment on the issue of integrity as a follower of Christ. The apostle confidently believes that there is a mutual expression of integrity between the Corinthians and him and Timothy now, and that will be eternally validated in final judgment.

What then is the larger literary function of vv. 12-14? Much in the same manner as Gal. 1:11-12 serves as a conceptual basis for the narration of Paul's defense of his apostleship in 1:11-2:21, 2 Cor. 1:12-14 functions as the conceptual foundation for at least the first major segment of 1:12-7:16. This material does have something an ancient narratio defense of ministry although it is presented differently than the narratio of Gal. 1:11-2:21. For Paul the foundation of his Gospel ministry, yea his entire spiritual life, is set forth in 1:12-14 here. Integrity in faithful and consistent commitment to God and His calling is everything. Every day must be lived out in transparency and honesty (ἐν ἀπλότητι καὶ εἰλικρινείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ) before both God and others. An effective witness to the Gospel depends upon the integrity of the one giving the witness. Such integrity MUST be lived out before all people, not just a select few. Plus the spiritual resources enabling one to so live out his/her Christian life come exclusively from God alone. Human effort and determination will miserably fail us in such a commitment to God. This Paul makes abundantly clear.

Now upon this conceptual foundation of integrity in ministry the apostle will proceed to elaboration different aspects of his ministry, especially toward the Corinthians beginning in 1:15.

#### **10.2.3.1.2 Decision to not visit Corinth, 1:15-2:4.**

15 Καὶ ταύτη τῇ πεποιθήσει ἐβουλόμην πρότερον πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν, ἵνα δευτέραν χάριν σχῆτε, 16 καὶ δι' ὑμῶν διελθεῖν εἰς Μακεδονίαν καὶ πάλιν ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑφ' ὑμῶν προπεμφθῆναι εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν.

17 τοῦτο οὖν βουλόμενος μήτι ἄρα τῇ ἐλαφρίᾳ ἐχρησάμην; ἢ ἄ βουλευόμεναι κατὰ σάρκα βουλευόμεναι, ἵνα ἢ παρ' ἐμοὶ τὸ ναὶ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ; 18 πιστὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ὁ λόγος ἡμῶν ὁ πρὸς ὑμᾶς οὐκ ἔστιν ναὶ καὶ οὐ. 19 ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ γὰρ υἱὸς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ ἐν ὑμῖν δι' ἡμῶν κηρυχθεὶς, δι' ἐμοῦ καὶ Σιλουανοῦ καὶ Τιμοθέου, οὐκ ἐγένετο ναὶ καὶ οὐ ἀλλὰ ναὶ ἐν αὐτῷ γέγονεν. 20 ὅσαι γὰρ ἐπαγγελίαι θεοῦ, ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ ναί· διὸ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ τὸ ἀμὴν τῷ θεῷ πρὸς δόξαν δι' ἡμῶν. 21 ὁ δὲ βεβαιῶν ἡμᾶς σὺν ὑμῖν εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ χρίσας ἡμᾶς θεός, 22 ὁ καὶ σφραγισάμενος ἡμᾶς καὶ δούς τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν.

23 Ἐγὼ δὲ μάρτυρα τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλοῦμαι ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν, ὅτι φειδόμενος ὑμῶν οὐκέτι ἦλθον εἰς Κόρινθον. 24 οὐχ ὅτι κυριεύομεν ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως ἀλλὰ συνεργοὶ ἔσμεν τῆς χαρᾶς ὑμῶν· τῇ γὰρ πίστει ἐστήκατε. 2.1 Ἐκρίνα γὰρ ἐμαυτῷ τοῦτο τὸ μὴ πάλιν ἐν λύπῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν. 2 εἰ γὰρ ἐγὼ λυπῶ ὑμᾶς, καὶ τίς ὁ εὐφραίνων με εἰ μὴ ὁ λυπούμενος ἐξ ἐμοῦ; 3 καὶ ἔγραψα τοῦτο αὐτό, ἵνα μὴ ἐλθὼν λύπην σχῶ ἀφ' ὧν ἔδει με χαίρειν, πεποιθὼς ἐπὶ πάντας ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἡ ἐμὴ χαρὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἔστιν. 4 ἐκ γὰρ πολλῆς θλίψεως καὶ συνοχῆς καρδίας ἔγραψα ὑμῖν διὰ πολλῶν δακρῶν, οὐχ ἵνα λυπηθῆτε ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀγάπην ἵνα γνῶτε ἣν ἔχω περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς.

15 Since I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a double favor; 16 I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on to Judea. 17 Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to ordinary human standards, ready to say "Yes, yes" and "No, no" at the same time? 18 As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been "Yes and No." 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not "Yes and No"; but in him it is always "Yes." 20 For in him every one of God's promises is a "Yes." For this reason it is through him that we say the "Amen," to the glory of God. 21 But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, 22 by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first installment.

23 But I call on God as witness against me: it was to spare you that I did not come again to Corinth. 24 I do not mean to imply that we lord it over your faith; rather, we are workers with you for your joy, because you stand firm in the faith. 2.1 So I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit. 2 For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? 3 And I wrote as I did, so that when I came, I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice; for I am confident about all of you, that my joy would be the joy of all of you. 4 For I wrote you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain, but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

The first elaboration of specific ministry actions off the foundation of 1:12-14 is the change of plans for



Paul visiting Corinth from Ephesus. This evidently led to some at Corinth criticizing Paul as unreliable in what he says he is going to do.

The original plan is laid out in v. 16: travel from Ephesus to Corinth; then from Corinth to Macedonia; next return to Corinth and from there travel to Judea. These projections assume the completion of the ministry in Ephesus which happened around 55-56 AD. But the schedule did not work out the way Paul had planned for it to unfold. Instead, as Acts 20:1-3 make clear, Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia by way of Troas and from there came to Corinth which would become a launch pad for Judea. But after the writing of this letter from Macedonia prior to his arrival in Corinth, circumstances in Corinth (namely an assassination plot, cf. Acts 20:3) forced him to go back through Macedonia again on his way to Judea. But included in 1: 23-2:4 is reference to an earlier visit to Corinth from Ephesus in which Paul returned back to Ephesus to complete his mission there. This is the so-called 'painful visit' mentioned in 2:1, that was followed by a 'sorrowful letter' (2:3). Evidently this was a 'stinger' of a letter that greatly upset some at Corinth. But the prior visit was not a pleasant one for Paul either, and he returned to Ephesus in tense relationships with many in the Corinthian church. Thus the ministry of Titus emerges here as he was then sent to Corinth by Paul to see whether he could calm things down in advance of Paul traveling to the city from Macedonia. Titus was successful and when he met up with Paul in Macedonia the situation at Corinth was conducive for Paul to make another visit. Second Corinthians

is the advance letter to let the Corinthians know how Paul felt toward them prior to arriving in the city. This stands behind the special emphasis upon Paul's ministry that is central to the entire letter.

All these change of plans are behind what Paul addresses in 1:15-2:4. But the apostle lays out the claim of consistency not against the backdrop of human planning. Rather his travels unfolded through consistently following the leadership of God prompted by some dangerous situations that arose. The criticisms of unreliability leveled against him were based on human planning. But Paul's higher priority was following the leadership of God in his travels. And that meant flexibility and fluidity in planning out his travels, along with acknowledging that he did not always know what God had in store very far in advance.

This pericope of 1:15-2:4 falls into two natural sub-units. First, 1:15-22 is dominantly conceptual, while 1:23-2:4 is narrating a situation.

### 10.2.3.1.2.1 Priority of God's leadership, vv. 15-22.

15 Καὶ ταύτη τῇ πεποιθήσει ἐβουλόμην πρότερον πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν, ἵνα δευτέραν χάριν σχῆτε, 16 καὶ δι' ὑμῶν διελθεῖν εἰς Μακεδονίαν καὶ πάλιν ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑφ' ὑμῶν προπεμφθῆναι εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν. 17 τοῦτο οὖν βουλόμενος μήτι ἄρα τῇ ἐλαφρίᾳ ἐχρησάμην; ἢ ἃ βουλευόμεαι κατὰ σάρκα βουλευόμεαι, ἵνα ἢ παρ' ἐμοὶ τὸ ναὶ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ; 18 πιστὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ὁ λόγος ἡμῶν ὁ πρὸς ὑμᾶς οὐκ ἔστιν ναὶ καὶ οὐ. 19 ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ γὰρ υἱὸς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ ἐν ὑμῖν δι' ἡμῶν κηρυχθεὶς, δι' ἐμοῦ καὶ Σιλουανοῦ καὶ Τιμοθέου, οὐκ ἐγένετο ναὶ καὶ οὐ ἀλλὰ ναὶ ἐν αὐτῷ γέγονεν. 20 ὅσα γὰρ ἐπαγγελίαί θεοῦ, ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ ναί· διὸ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ τὸ ἀμὴν τῷ θεῷ πρὸς δόξαν δι' ἡμῶν. 21 ὁ δὲ βεβαιῶν ἡμᾶς σὺν ὑμῖν εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ χρίσας ἡμᾶς θεός, 22 ὁ καὶ σφραγισάμενος ἡμᾶς καὶ δοὺς τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν.

15 Since I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a double favor;d 16 I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on to Judea. 17 Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to ordinary human standards,e ready to say "Yes, yes" and "No, no" at the same time? 18 As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been "Yes and No." 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not "Yes and No"; but in him it is always "Yes." 20 For in him every one

1.15	Καὶ	
	ταύτη τῇ πεποιθήσει	
12	ἐβουλόμην	
	πρότερον	
		πρὸς ὑμᾶς
		ἐλθεῖν,
	ἵνα δευτέραν	χάριν σχῆτε,
1.16		καὶ
		δι' ὑμῶν
		διελθεῖν

		εἰς Μακεδονίαν	
		καὶ	
		πάλιν	
		ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας	
		<b>ἔλθεῖν</b>	
		πρὸς ὑμᾶς	
		καὶ	
		ὑφ' ὑμῶν	
		<b>προπεμφθῆναι</b>	
		εἰς τὴν Τουδαίαν.	
1.17		οὖν	
		τοῦτο βουλόμενος	
		μήτι ἄρα	
		τῆ ἑλαφρίᾳ	
13		<b>ἔχρησάμην;</b>	
		ἢ	
		<b>ἂ βουλευόμαι</b>	
		κατὰ σάρκα	
14		<b>βουλευόμαι,</b>	
		ἵνα ἦ παρ' ἐμοὶ τὸ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ;	
1.18		δὲ	
15		<b>πιστὸς ὁ θεὸς (ἐστίν)</b>	
		ὅτι ὁ λόγος ἡμῶν . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ναὶ καὶ	
οὐ		ὁ πρὸς ὑμᾶς .	
1.19		γὰρ	
		δι' ἡμῶν	
16		<b>ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ υἱὸς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς... κηρυχθεὶς,</b>	
		ὁ ἐν ὑμῖν	
		δι' ἐμοῦ καὶ Σιλουανοῦ καὶ Τιμοθέου,	
17		<b>οὐκ ἐγένετο ναὶ καὶ οὐ</b>	
		ἀλλὰ	
		ἐν αὐτῷ	
18		<b>ναὶ . . . γέγονεν.</b>	
1.20		γὰρ	
		<b>ὄσαι ἐπαγγελίαι θεοῦ,</b>	
		ἐν αὐτῷ	
19		<b>(ἐστίν) τὸ ναί·</b>	
		διὸ	
		καὶ	
		δι' αὐτοῦ	
20		<b>(ἐστίν) τὸ ἀμὴν τῷ θεῷ</b>	
		πρὸς δόξαν	
		δι' ἡμῶν.	
1.21		δὲ	
21		<b>ὁ βεβαιῶν ἡμᾶς . . . (ἐστίν) θεός</b>	
		σὺν ὑμῖν	
		εἰς Χριστὸν,	
		καὶ	
		<b>- χρίσας ἡμᾶς</b>	
1.22		ὁ καὶ σφραγισάμενος ἡμᾶς	
		καὶ	
		- δοῦς τὸν ἄρραβῶνα	
		τοῦ πνεύματος	
		ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν.	

of God's promises is a "Yes." For this reason it is through him that we say the "Amen," to the glory of God. 21 But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, 22 by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first installment.

In 1:15-22, the coordinate conjunctions give structure of the idea expression. In statement # 12 (vv. 15-16), Paul lays out his original travel plan to the Corinthians that ended up not being followed. The inference drawn (οὖν) in statements #s 13-14 raises the issue of unreliability in his promises. evidently stating the criticism from some in the Corinthian church. In statement # 15, Paul denies the charge and then proceeds to defend (γὰρ) his denial in statements #s 16-21. The two coordinate causal γὰρ clauses of #s 16-19 build off the subordinate causal ὅτι clause at the end of statement # 15. Then application to the Corinthians in #s 20-21 is signaled by διὸ, a strong inferential conjunction making explicit what was perceived as implicit in the preceding statements. As the above diagram illustrates, the syntax of vv. 15-22 is complex in part through repeated ellipsis which adds intensity to the Greek expression. But the clever use of coordinate conjunctions provides a foundational, organizing structure to the ideas expressed. This must be understood if we are to grasp the content of the ideas correctly.

(1) Paul begins in # 12 (vv. 15-16) by reiterating the earlier travel plans that did not work out. In trying to understand this, one must remember that Paul speaks only of what he

anticipated doing after the lengthy ministry in Ephesus was concluded. Prior to this point [a rather extended set of visits and letters](#) to the church at Corinth during the three plus years at Ephesus had taken place. Evidently these particular plans, which are different from the ones laid out in 1 Cor. 16:5-9, were discussed with the Corinthians on the so-called 'painful visit' mentioned in 2:1. In 1 Cor. 16:5-9, the apostle projects travel at the end of the Ephesian ministry from Ephesus to Macedonia and then to Corinth. But the anticipated conclusion to the ministry is left open since many advances of the Gospel were being made in the city in spite of the opposition present in the city as well. He will not leave Ephesus at least until the Jewish festival of Pentecost which comes in late May to early June of the year.<sup>14</sup> But when he is able to leave Ephesus he hopes to arrive at Corinth before the last autumn storms make travel dangerous in that part of the world.

But after the writing of First Corinthians, Paul did make a trip directly from Ephesus to Corinth in a futile effort to solve tensions between the church and himself (cf. 2:1). Either in that trip or in the so-called 'sorrowful letter' (cf. 2:4) that followed, he indicated to the Corinthians the plans described in 1:15-16, which are significantly different from those in 1 Cor. 16:5-9. At the time of the writing of Second Corinthians at least a year or so later, the plans have changed again so that after leaving Ephesus Paul went to Macedonia and then to Corinth. In Macedonia, Second Corinthians is written to help prepare the way for his arrival in Corinth.<sup>15</sup> He

<sup>14</sup>**1 Cor. 16:5-9.** 5 Ἐλεύσομαι δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὅταν Μακεδονίαν διέλθω· Μακεδονίαν γὰρ διέρχομαι, 6 πρὸς ὑμᾶς δὲ τυχὸν παραμεινῶ ἢ καὶ παραχειμάσω, ἵνα ὑμεῖς με προπέμψητε οὐ ἐὰν πορεύωμαι. 7 οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἄρτι ἐν παρόδῳ ἰδεῖν, ἐλπίζω γὰρ χρόνον τινὰ ἐπιμεῖναι πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐὰν ὁ κύριος ἐπιτρέψῃ. 8 ἐπιμεινῶ δὲ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἕως τῆς πεντηκοστῆς· 9 θύρα γὰρ μοι ἀνέωγεν μεγάλη καὶ ἐνεργής, καὶ ἀντικείμενοι πολλοί.

5 I will visit you after passing through Macedonia — for I intend to pass through Macedonia — 6 and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way, wherever I go. 7 I do not want to see you now just in passing, for I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, 9 for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

<sup>15</sup>The 'rest of the story' that unfolds after the writing of Second Corinthians is very interesting also and reflects the fluidity of making plans on Paul's part. As Acts 20:1-3 describes, Paul arrived in Corinth from Macedonia and spent three months in the city, perhaps the winter months of 55-56 AD. His intention was to go from Corinth ultimately back to Antioch in Syria, via Jerusalem first, as he had done on the second missionary journey. But upon the discovery of a plot by Jews to kill him once aboard ship headed to Judea, a change of plans was made necessary. Instead, he headed back to Macedonia where he spent the Passover season (late March to early April) at Philippi in Macedonia (20:6). This got him out of the heavy Diaspora Jewish traffic heading to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. Literally thousands of Jews made this trip annually from all over the Roman empire. Thus during the 50 days

wanted it to be a positive visit without the tensions of the previous visit. Thus a lot of emphasis is given to the positive aspects of his long time relationship with the church. But, as chapters ten through thirteen will illustrate, the apostle did not sweep the problems at Corinth under the rug and ignore them, nor the lingering opposition to him by some in the Corinthian church.

One aspect mentioned in these plans is important to note: ἐβουλόμην πρότερον<sup>16</sup> πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν, ἵνα δευτέραν χάριν σχῆτε, [I intended first to come to you so that you might have a twofold blessing of God.](#)<sup>17</sup> The ambiguo-

between Passover and Pentecost when Jews were returning home from Jerusalem -- or else were staying in Judea for both festivals 50 days apart from each other -- Paul made his way to Jerusalem in a much safer atmosphere.

Interpreting God's leadership always means being aware of the various dynamics of the situation one is in. As will be mentioned repeatedly in Acts, the apostle anticipated serious trouble ahead for him in Jerusalem. But he was prepared to die there if need be, because of being convinced that God wanted him to travel to the city (Acts 20:22-24), and also in part to lead the delegation from the churches in presenting the massive love offering to the Jewish Christians of Judea. Thus in no way was changing the plans to go directly from Corinth to Judea a reflection of cowardise and self-serving preservation of his life. Had that been the case, he would never have gone to Jerusalem. This he had already recognized by the time of the writing of Romans while in Corinth during the three month stay (Rom. 15:30-33).

<sup>16</sup>Two possibilities of meaning exist here depending on whether πρότερον is taken with the verb ἐβουλόμην or with the infinitive ἐλθεῖν: "I formerly intended..." or "I intended to first come to you." Strong arguments can be made either direction, although the core meaning of Paul's intention to come to Corinth remains the same. The simplest meaning is to connect it to the verb. The adverb πρώτον would better fit the second view.

<sup>17</sup>"The purpose of Paul's plan was to provide the Corinthians with a second benefit (or a second occasion for joy).<sup>58</sup> This second χάρις has been variously interpreted.

"(i) The least likely option is that χάρις is here the equivalent of χαρά, 'joy'.<sup>59</sup> Had Paul meant χαρά, this is what he would have written.

"(ii) It denotes the divine grace mediated by the apostle, who gives other a share in the grace he has himself received.<sup>60</sup> This full theological sense is supported by several commentators.<sup>61</sup> There are parallels to this understanding of an apostolic visit in Rom 1:11; 15:29.<sup>62</sup> The allusion in Rom 1:11 to the impartation of a 'spiritual gift' might support the idea of passing on something already received, but the thought in the present verse could be more direct, i.e., that God's grace is operative in an immediate fashion when the apostle speaks and acts.<sup>63</sup> At any rate, a 'spiritual advantage' of some kind would be the product of the visit.<sup>64</sup> This is possible, although it could be argued that such an interpretation may be 'too theological', and inappropriate to a brief visit on the way to Macedonia.<sup>65</sup>

"(iii) Perhaps χάρις means 'sign of favour', 'mark of goodwill', 'gracious kindness', and the like.<sup>66</sup> Against this view it is suggested that it would imply an attitude of 'egotism and condescension'.<sup>67</sup> But this is putting it too strongly, perhaps. And if the Corinthians were complaining about Paul's failure to visit them, he might feel justified in speaking as though they regarded his visits

ity lies in the combination of δευτέραν with χάριν. The adjective δεύτερος, -α, -ον clearly mean ‘second’ time or occurrence in a series. And it is clearly used elsewhere in Second Corinthians with this meaning: 13:2. The noun χάρις normally means ‘grace’ in specifying a divine expression of favor. Most likely it is not an earlier expression meaning what the church father Chrysostom, *Patrologia Graeca* 61 col. 408, wrote using διπλήν: ἵνα διπλήν χάριν ἔχητε, καὶ τὴν διὰ τῶν γραμμάτων, καὶ τὴν διὰ τῆς παρουσίας, “That ye might have a double benefit both that from my writings, and that from my presence,” (NPNF XII, p. 288).<sup>18</sup> The most natural meaning is that Paul envisioned this visit as another opportunity for the grace of God to impact the Corinthians through their interaction with one another. This he had assumed that this next visit (prior to the painful visit) would be as positive as the initial visit had been when the church was established in the city. But, as he will narrate in 2:1-4, the second actual visit did not work out that way.<sup>19</sup> It was tense and left his relationship with the church under severe strain. But Paul’s openness with the church now at the much later writing of Second Cor-

as signs of goodwill.

“(iv) A quite different interpretation would take χάρις to mean a gracious deed on the part of the Corinthians, i.e., the travel assistance they would have a double opportunity to provide for Paul.<sup>68</sup> The order of words suggests, however, that the χάρις is connected with the fact of the visit, rather than what the Corinthians will do on the occasion of it, and were this the meaning, we should expect v. 16 to begin not with καί but with, e.g., τοῦτ’ ἔστιν, ‘that is’.

“The better options are (ii) and (iii). Perhaps the two ideas could be combined. Paul’s visit would occasion some demonstration of divine grace, but he would also be showing the Corinthians a personal kindness.<sup>69</sup> If so, however, the thought of the personal kindness would probably be dominant. In fact this third possibility by itself seems preferable, since the δευτέραν is strange in relation to grace, as though it were a ‘quantity’ received in instalments.<sup>70</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), 137–138.]

<sup>18</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), 139.

<sup>19</sup>What is absolutely essential for correct understanding of 1:15-2:4 is to always keep in mind the correct time frame for each expression of Paul. Loosing a sense of this adds nothing but confusion to the text statements.

The time frame behind the laying out of these plans in vv. 15-16 is after the writing of First Corinthians and most likely just after his actual second visit to Corinth (2:1) that was anything but δευτέραν χάριν. This in spite of Paul’s desire for this visit to have been such a positive visit. Now in the time frame of the writing of Second Corinthians he holds out hope for the third visit to be positive just like the first visit to the city was which would make it a δευτέραν χάριν. The entire letter reflects such anticipation in spite of some lingering hostility to him in a few of the house church groups. .

inthians signals that such a positive meeting with the church has been behind his efforts to travel to Corinth all along. The report given to him by Titus in Macedonia about the current situation in the church (7:6-7) gives him confidence that such a positive meeting may be possible after all. Later we will explore the hints at what wasn’t working between the church and Paul.

(2) In statements #s 13-14 (v. 17), Paul raises the issue of unreliability implicit in the depiction of his earlier plans that weren’t carried out: τοῦτο οὖν βουλόμενος μήτι ἄρα τῇ ἐλαφρία ἐχρησάμην; ἢ ἄ βουλευόμεναι κατὰ σάρκα βουλευόμεναι, ἵνα ἢ παρ’ ἐμοὶ τὸ ναὶ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ; *Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to ordinary human standards, ready to say “Yes, yes” and “No, no” at the same time?* The first rhetorical question deals with ἐλαφρία. This is the only instance of this noun in the NT but is related to the adjective ἐλαφρός, -ά, -όν used in Mt. 11:30 and 2 Cor. 4:17. The sense is that of shallowness to the point of being fickle and frivolous as a negative character trait behind one’s actions. It stands in contrast to something being heavy in the sense of being serious.

Used here with the verb τῇ ἐλαφρία ἐχρησάμην, the sense becomes to function in a vacillating manner. Adding the negative particle μήτι structures the question to expected the answer of “No, I was not....”. Also the temporal adverb ἄρα adds the time reference of ‘then,’ i.e., at the earlier time of making these plans, which is referenced by the adverbial participle phrase τοῦτο βουλόμενος, *when expressing these intentions.*

But the issue is more than just this one occasion as marked by the aorist verb ἐχρησάμην. It is an ongoing question mark about Paul as his second rhetorical question poses with the present tense verb βουλευόμεναι: ἢ ἄ βουλευόμεναι κατὰ σάρκα βουλευόμεναι,...; Or what I plan do I plan it according to human standards,...? Frivolous character leads to deceptive planning among humans.<sup>20</sup> Paul recognizes this. And most likely he is here rephrasing criticisms being raised against him by some at Corinth.

The outcome of such frivolous character is ἵνα ἢ παρ’ ἐμοὶ τὸ ναὶ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ; *so that with me there may be a yes, yes and a no, no?* The meaning of the twin double expressions τὸ ναὶ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ is contested among interpreters,<sup>21</sup> but the NRSV reflects the more likely cor-

<sup>20</sup>“Behaviour κατὰ σάρκα is conduct motivated by human nature bereft of God’s Spirit, and operating according to (purely) human criteria.” [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), 140.]

<sup>21</sup>“Precisely what is meant here depends on the interpretation of the following ἵνα-clause: it may refer to behaviour conditioned by obstinate self-will, or to conduct motivated by momentary expediency and self-interest. In either case, self-centred (rather than Spirit-directed) motivation is at the root of the attitude.<sup>89</sup> Which,

rect understanding, ready to say “Yes, yes” and “No, no” at the same time, with the double form expressing emphatic declaration in a Hebraistic manner. This translation implies the charge of frivolous, deceptive behavior. The alternative translation, *My yes is yes and my no is no*,<sup>22</sup> assumes a rigid obstinate self-will, which is nowhere in the contextual picture here and doesn't fit at all.<sup>23</sup>

(3) Such would reflect frivolous human promising to others. But for Paul another dynamic controls what he intends to do as expressed in v. 18 and then defended in vv. 19-20a. What God wants must always take priority over human planning. And what God wants cannot be boxed into a rigid set of plans extending over one's life. Instead, God functions as a dynamic, living being who moves in the lives of His people from situation to situation.<sup>24</sup>

The axiomatic principle comes in formal expression in v. 18: πιστός δὲ ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ὁ λόγος ἡμῶν ὁ πρὸς ὑμᾶς οὐκ ἔστιν ναὶ καὶ οὐ. *But God is faithful because our word to you is not yes and not.*

Although some interpreters see πιστός ὁ θεός as an oath formula assuring the validity of the content of the ὅτι clause, this elliptical expression is never used in oath making elsewhere in Paul when it shows up: 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13 (cf. the related Πιστός δὲ ἔστιν ὁ κύριος, in 2 Thess. 3:3). Instead, this main clause declaration of God's faithfulness is then linked to the reliability of Paul's word in the ὅτι clause connected adverbially to the elliptical main clause.<sup>25</sup> What Paul says is legiti-

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then, of these two possible consequences<sup>90</sup> of self-centred motivation is the more likely to be in Paul's mind?" [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), 140–141.]

<sup>22</sup>That is, My oral yes really means yes, and my oral no really means no.

<sup>23</sup>This view goes back to Chrysostom who falsely understood this phrase here in Paul to have the same meaning as ἦτο δὲ ὑμῶν τὸ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ, in James 5:12. But the contextual settings are vastly different between the two texts and thus different meanings exist in two similar statements.

<sup>24</sup>A retort that God has all knowledge even foreknowledge is not legitimate when foreknowledge is defined by post-enlightenment rationalistic determinism. Knowing in advance in the ancient Jewish mind of Paul meant that God knew better how to lead His people through every circumstance that life threw at them. Thus a huge fluidity exists in how God leads. This greater knowledge gives Him insights not possible to humans who can never know the future with certainty. Only in pagan rationalism does foreknowledge become determinism in advance. Thus what we must do in each situation must be directed by God's vastly superior knowledge that understands the best decision and route to be followed in every situation.

<sup>25</sup>“Having rejected the charge of inconsistency by means of rhetorical questions expecting a negative answer, Paul proceeds<sup>114</sup> to argue in a more positive way. Opinions differ as to whether the initial πιστός ... ὁ θεός is a plain statement or whether it is to be understood as an oath-formula. If the former, Paul is saying, ‘God

mate because it grows out of God's character as πιστός, trustworthy. In truth, the interpretation comes out pretty close to the same point, however, if πιστός ὁ θεός is taken as an oath formula.

But the amplification of the principle in v. 18 that follows in vv. 19-20a centers on the faithfulness of God: 19 ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ γὰρ υἱὸς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ ἐν ὑμῖν δι' ἡμῶν κηρυχθεὶς, δι' ἐμοῦ καὶ Σιλουανοῦ καὶ Τιμοθέου, οὐκ ἐγένετο ναὶ καὶ οὐ ἀλλὰ ναὶ ἐν αὐτῷ γέγονεν. 20a ὅσαι γὰρ ἐπαγγελίαι θεοῦ, ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ ναί. 19 *For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not “Yes and No”; but in him it is always “Yes.”* 20a *For in him every one of God's promises is a “Yes.”*

God's reliability is centered on Christ, the heart of Paul's preaching to the Corinthians, as the sign that God always keeps His promise to deliver His people from their sin. God in Christ never ‘speaks out of both sides of His mouth at the same time.’ In the apostolic Gospel centered in Christ comes the totality of all spiritual needs for the repenting sinner. From the beginning this was the Gospel message proclaimed to the Corinthians. Note that the mentioning of Paul, Silas, and Timothy goes clearly back to the second missionary journey when the church in Corinth was established (cf. Acts 18:1-18).<sup>26</sup> Thus out of Christ comes confidence in the reliability of all of God's promises to His people: ὅσαι γὰρ ἐπαγγελίαι θεοῦ, ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ ναί.

(4) How this applies to Corinth, vv. 20b-22. διὸ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ τὸ ἀμὴν τῷ θεῷ πρὸς δόξαν δι' ἡμῶν. 21 ὁ δὲ βεβαιῶν ἡμᾶς σὺν ὑμῖν εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ χρίσας ἡμᾶς θεός, 22 ὁ καὶ σφραγισάμενος ἡμᾶς καὶ δούς τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν. *For this reason it is through him that we say the “Amen,” to the glory of God. 21 But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has*

is faithful, in respect of the fact that (ὅτι)’. He is not simply reinforcing the truth of what he says in the ὅτι-clause (as an oath-formula would do), but rather wishes to affirm the integral connection between his own reliability and God's: God's reliability assures his own.<sup>115</sup> In favour of this interpretation it is argued that nowhere else in the NT is the expression used as an oath-formula,<sup>116</sup> that Paul's adjurations are phrased quite differently,<sup>117</sup> and that in 1 Cor 1:9 and 10:13 πιστός ὁ θεός is not such,<sup>118</sup> i.e. it makes a plain statement. There is something to be said, however, against this line of argument. The structure of these other instances of the phrase is not the same as in the present verse.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, the following ὅτι-clause found here is characteristic of some of the oath-formulae Paul does use,<sup>120</sup> and this could justify the same interpretation here.<sup>121</sup> And this is the way it sounds.<sup>122</sup> As surely as God is faithful,<sup>123</sup> Paul's word is<sup>124</sup> reliable: it is not Yes and No. With some hesitation, we prefer to take πιστός ... ὁ θεός as an oath-formula.” [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), 143–144.]

<sup>26</sup>The basis for this is that Silas drops out of the picture in Paul's ministry after the second missionary journey. He did not accompany Paul on the third missionary journey. Silas remains active in ministry as 1 Peter 5 indicates but just not with Paul.

1.21 δὲ  
 21 ὁ βεβαιῶν ἡμᾶς . . . (ἐστίν) θεός  
 σὺν ὑμῖν |  
 εἰς Χριστὸν, |  
 καὶ |  
 - χρίσας ἡμᾶς |  
 1.22 ὁ καὶ σφραγισάμενος ἡμᾶς  
 καὶ |  
 - δοῦς τὸν ἄρραβῶνα |  
 τοῦ πνεύματος |  
 ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν.

some very important spiritual actions in the lives and ministry of Paul and his associates. The syntax of this sentence is complex but fairly easy to understand in Greek, as the diagram illustrates:

First, ὁ δὲ βεβαιῶν ἡμᾶς σὺν ὑμῖν εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ χρίσας ἡμᾶς θεός (v. 21). God has confirmed the legitimacy of

anointed us, 22 by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first installment. The coordinate conjunction διὸ draws a strong implication -- stronger than οὖν used in v. 17 -- from the preceding statements into the explicit declaration that follows.<sup>27</sup>

Two central points are made with the second one building off the first one. Paul begins with an assertion that he and his associates, the 'we' here, lift their voices in praise to God with the Amen response. This is the only proper response to everything being a 'yes' from God through Christ (= διὸ καὶ). Without question τὸ ἀμὴν τῷ θεῷ πρὸς δόξαν represents a liturgical oriented expression. But it cannot be justified to claim that Paul either quotes or alludes to a Christian worship liturgy of the first century. Paul's simple of the τὸ ἀμὴν, from the LXX translation for מַח, found in the psalms as a congregational response to the greatness of God being expressed in praise, fully explains the use here in the context of vv. 15-22. Its rather frequent use elsewhere inside the NT (121 times) follows this background pattern as well. With the realization of the marvelous τὸ ναὶ from God through Christ (v. 20a), only one response is appropriate, that of τὸ ἀμὴν (v. 20b). Paul and his associates gladly shouted out 'Amen!' to God (τῷ θεῷ) as praise (πρὸς δόξαν) through Christ (δι' αὐτοῦ). In so doing he affirms the reliability of his ministry as reflecting God's presence, blessing, and leadership.

He goes on to assert that the Corinthians can recognize this only through the working of God in their lives (vv. 21-22): 21 ὁ δὲ βεβαιῶν ἡμᾶς σὺν ὑμῖν εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ χρίσας ἡμᾶς θεός, 22 ὁ καὶ σφραγισάμενος ἡμᾶς καὶ δοῦς τὸν ἄρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν. 21 But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, 22 by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first installment. If the Corinthians fail to see this then they need to do a careful spiritual inventory of their lives because they are blind to

<sup>27</sup>"It is also through Christ,<sup>156</sup> moreover, that there comes about the 'Amen' to God, to God's glory 'through us'.<sup>157</sup> This second half of the verse requires consideration of several points; the meaning of 'the Amen', the identification of the 'us', and the precise force of 'through him'. Since they are inter-related, the second and third will be considered as we discuss the first." [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), 149.]

the ministry of Paul and his associates with the Corinthians. To reject that ministry is to reject an action of God, not just the ministry of Paul. This establishing of the men (βεβαιῶν,<sup>28</sup> notice the ongoing action of the present tense participle) stands also as God's χρίσας them. The aorist participle χρίσας from χρίω expresses the prior divine action of having dedicated these men to this ministry at the calling. The the five uses of χρίω in the NT four of them refers to God's anointing of Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb of God. In the background stands the divinely authorized anointing of individuals with olive oil beginning with Saul as king by the prophet Samuel. Out of this earlier 'being set apart to ministry' of Saul and his associates comes the ongoing divine confirmation of this (βεβαιῶν) in the way these men do ministry. This the Corinthians should recognize.

But also this divine establishing of ministry by Paul and his associates carries with it a second pair of rich expressions (v. 22), also structured as linked participles:<sup>29</sup> The images are both in aorist participles referring back to the same point in time as χρίσας in the first set. Thus, the divine anointing (χρίσας) also means a divine sealing σφραγισάμενος which is established by

<sup>28</sup>The verb and the cognate noun βεβαίωσις are used also as legal terms. In Attic law, a buyer who had obtained a guarantee from the seller could require the latter to confirm (βεβαιῶσαι) that he had purchased the goods, if his right to what he had bought was challenged. If the seller refused, the buyer could bring a court action (δίκη βεβαιώσεως) against him. This could be done even when it was only the deposit (ἄρραβῶν) that had been paid over and accepted. In the papyri βεβαίωσις occurs as a technical term for a guarantee.<sup>182</sup> For a combination of the religious and the legal senses see, Wisd. 6:18: προσοχή δὲ νόμων βεβαίωσις ἀφθαρσίας. Deissmann comments: 'here νόμων suggests very plainly the juristic conception of the word: he who keeps the laws of wisdom has the legal guarantee of incorruption; he need have no fear that his ἀφθαρσία will be disputed by another'.<sup>183</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), 153.]

<sup>29</sup>Note the structure for both sets of participle phrases.

**Article + participle + participle:** one entity views two ways:  
 ὁ βεβαιῶν ἡμᾶς σὺν ὑμῖν εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ χρίσας ἡμᾶς θεός,  
 ὁ καὶ σφραγισάμενος ἡμᾶς καὶ δοῦς τὸν ἄρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν.

it being a giving of the Holy Spirit as a divine pledge (δοῦς τὸν ἄρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος).

The setting of a seal on a written agreement was a guarantee of the agreement. Add to that the giving of an ἄρραβῶν as the first installment of the agreement reinforced the guarantee of full payment of the agreement. What God gave to Paul and his associates in anointing them for ministry was His promise of blessing on their work, which was solidified in the bestowal of the Holy Spirit within them (ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν) to enable that ministry to be carried out properly and fully.

The employment of a range of legal terms here to assert God's calling of Paul and his associates to preach the apostolic Gospel serves to heighten the obviousness of that divine blessing which the Corinthians should be able to recognize easily.<sup>30</sup>

In vv. 12-22, Paul sets forth a rich, spiritually profound picture of Christian service to the Gospel in ministry to others. From the servant's perspective the essential key is integrity. One MUST be consistently faithful to God and His leadership. Open transparency is critical. The people must be able to see the sincerity and genuineness of God's servant both in his personal life as well as in his ministry. When ministry is carried out in this manner, the people will be able to see the hand of God upon the minister both in divine calling and ongoing blessing. They can then put confidence in what the minister says and out of respect for God's working in his/her life will hear and heed the instructions given to them. In 1:23-2:4, that will sometimes mean hearing things they don't particularly like and instructions that demand actions they may not want to make.

### 10.2.3.1.2.2 *Recounting the painful experiences*, 1:23-2:4.

23 Ἐγὼ δὲ μάρτυρα τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλοῦμαι ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν, ὅτι φειδόμενος ὑμῶν οὐκέτι ἦλθον εἰς Κόρινθον. 24 οὐχ ὅτι κυριεύομεν ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως ἀλλὰ συνεργοὶ ἐσμεν τῆς χαρᾶς ὑμῶν· τῇ γὰρ πίστει ἐστήκατε. 2.1 Ἐκρίνα γὰρ ἑμαυτῷ τοῦτο τὸ μὴ πάλιν ἐν λύπῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν. 2 εἰ γὰρ ἐγὼ λυπῶ ὑμᾶς, καὶ τίς ὁ εὐφραίνων με εἰ μὴ ὁ λυπούμενος ἐξ ἐμοῦ; 3 καὶ ἔγραψα τοῦτο αὐτό, ἵνα μὴ ἐλθὼν λύπην σχῶ ἀφ' ὧν ἔδει με χαίρειν, πεποιθῶς ἐπὶ πάντας ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἡ ἐμὴ χαρὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐστίν. 4 ἐκ γὰρ πολλῆς θλίψεως καὶ συνοχῆς καρδίας ἔγραψα ὑμῖν διὰ

<sup>30</sup>The attempts to switch back and forth with the consistent plural 'we' in vv. 18-22 so as to include Paul, his associate, and his readers ultimately fails because it is contradictory to the context and misses the essential point of Paul's defense of his ministry in vv. 18-22. The switch from the singular "I" in vv. 15-17 to the plural "we" in 18-22 is to make certain of the Corinthian acknowledgement of the ministry of his associates, as well as that of his. He will appropriate switch back to the singular "I" in v. 23 in order to depict his own personal decisions and actions. The singular "I" was appropriate in vv. 15-17 because he was describing his personal travel plans in regard to Corinth.

πολλῶν δακρύων, οὐχ ἵνα λυπηθῆτε ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀγάπην ἵνα γνῶτε ἣν ἔχω περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς. 23 *But I call on God as witness against me: it was to spare you that I did not come again to Corinth.* 24 *I do not mean to imply that we lord it over your faith; rather, we are workers with you for your joy, because you stand firm in the faith.* 2.1 *So I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit.* 2 *For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained?* 3 *And I wrote as I did, so that when I came, I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice; for I am confident about all of you, that my joy would be the joy of all of you.* 4 *For I wrote you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain, but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.*

Whereas the language of Jewish oath making is highly questionable with πιστὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς in v. 18, it is unquestionably present in Ἐγὼ δὲ μάρτυρα τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλοῦμαι ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν in v. 23.

Two sets of key terms shape the orientation of this unit of text: οὐκέτι ἦλθον εἰς Κόρινθον / μὴ ἐλθὼν and ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, i.e., his not coming to Corinth when he had promised to and his writing of a painful letter to them. The rhetorical structure, as illustrated in the diagram above, is statement or statements (#s 22-24; 28) followed by one or more justifying declarations (#s 25-27; 29).

- a) not coming to Corinth (#s. 22-24)
  - i) Justifying declarations (#s 25-27)
- b) writing of painful letter (# 28)
  - ii) Justifying declaration (# 29)

These sets of declarations are made under a Jewish oath of consistency with the leadership of God.<sup>31</sup> An ancient Jewish oath meant asserting that one's plans or actions -- either past or for the future -- represented something consistent with the character and leadership of God. This is very different from modern oaths which assert that plans or promises made in the past were indeed carried out in actuality. This Jewish religious orientation is the reason God was always brought into the oath formula in some way or another. In the first century Jewish practice the more directly the name of God was brought into the oath the stronger the declaration became as reflecting God's leadership over the one making the oath.

The core oath expression in v. 23 is an exceedingly strong oath formula with Ἐγὼ δὲ μάρτυρα τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλοῦμαι ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν, *And I call upon God as witness against my life....* It's difficult to see how God could have been brought more directly into the oath. When

<sup>31</sup>Oath making inside the Bible is common all the way from God making oath to individuals among His people making oaths. The problem area dealt with by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount centered on frivolous making of oaths which had become commonplace by the beginning of the Christian era among Jews. ,

1.23 δὲ  
**22** **Ἐγὼ μάρτυρα τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλοῦμαι**  
 ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν,  
 φειδόμενος ὑμῶν  
 ὅτι...οὐκέτι ἤλθον  
 εἰς Κόρινθον.

1.24 (ἐστίν) οὐχ ὅτι κυριεύομεν ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως  
 ἀλλὰ  
**24** **συνεργοὶ ἐσμεν τῆς χαρᾶς ὑμῶν·**  
 γὰρ  
**25** **τῇ πίστει ἐστήκατε.**

2.1 γὰρ  
**26** **Ἐκρίνα ἑμαυτῷ τοῦτο**  
 | πάλιν  
 | ἐν λύπῃ  
 | πρὸς ὑμᾶς  
 τὸ μὴ...ἐλθεῖν.

2.2 γὰρ  
 εἰ ἐγὼ λυπῶ ὑμᾶς,  
 καὶ  
**27** **τίς (ἐστίν) ὁ εὐφραίνων με**  
 εἰ μὴ ὁ λυπούμενος  
 ἐξ ἐμοῦ;

2.3 καὶ  
**28** **ἔγραψα τοῦτο αὐτό,**  
 ἵνα μὴ ἐλθὼν λύπην σχῶ  
 ἀφ' ὧν ἔδει με χαίρειν,  
 πεποιθὼς \_\_\_\_\_  
 ἐπὶ πάντας ὑμᾶς |  
 ὅτι ἡ ἐμὴ χαρὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐστίν.

2.4 γὰρ  
 ἐκ πολλῆς θλίψεως  
 καὶ  
 συνοχῆς καρδίας  
**29** **ἔγραψα ὑμῖν**  
 διὰ πολλῶν δακρύων,  
 οὐχ ἵνα λυπηθῆτε ἀλλὰ  
 τὴν ἀγάπην ἵνα γνῶτε  
 ἣν ἔχω περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς.

But not all take the phrase this way.<sup>33</sup> The more literal meaning of ἐπὶ with an accusative case object is ‘on top of’ something. The context actually favors this sense in which Paul calls upon God as exclusively qualified to examine his life and then bear witness to what He has found. Thus the validation of whether Paul’s actions of not coming to Corinth as promised depend upon the testimony of God and not whether some punishment is

could be the loss of spiritual life (that is, the forfeiture of salvation; cf. Rom. 9:3) but is more probably the loss of physical life. Either way, that Paul expresses here a formal oath and invokes a formal curse indicates the seriousness of the charges leveled against him:<sup>8</sup> his own integrity as a minister of the gospel, and also, ultimately, the integrity of the gospel itself, were at stake.” [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), 212–213.]

Jesus discussed frivolous oath making in Mt. 5:33-37, the strongest oath formula he mentioned brought God into the oath via referencing Heaven. One question that does arise from the formula is that of the prepositional phrase ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν. Does the accusative case use of the preposition ἐπὶ imply an oath with a penalty? Most translations assume so with the translation pattern along the lines of ‘against my life.’<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup>“ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν is a Hebraism (*‘al-napsī*) meaning ‘against my soul’ (= ‘against me,’ RSV, NRSV<sup>3</sup>) or ‘on my own life’<sup>4</sup> (= ‘with my life as the forfeit,’ or ‘I stake my life on it,’ NEB). So sure is Paul of his own truthfulness at this point that he can say, in effect, ‘Let God destroy me if I am lying.’<sup>5</sup> By implication, God is presented here as the judge or divine assessor to whom all persons are ultimately accountable.<sup>6</sup> The destruction Paul has in mind

<sup>33</sup>“As the order shows, ἐπὶ τ. ἐμ. ψ. belongs to ἐπικαλοῦμαι, ‘I invoke upon my soul God as a witness’: not, ‘against my soul, on which will come the penalty if I lie.’ He appeals to God, τὸν τῶν ἐννοιῶν ἐπόπτην (Theodoret), to investigate his soul, and see whether he is not true in what he says, as in Esth. 5:1, ἐπικαλεσαμένη τὸν πάντων ἐπόπτην θεόν. The middle voice shows that God is invoked as a witness on his side (Antipho 114, 32; Plato, Laws 664 c). Comp. ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸν κύριον or τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου (Acts 22:16; Rom. 10:13; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Pet. 1:17, where we have a similar predicate), and Καίσαρα ἐπικαλοῦμαι (Acts 25:11, 26:32, 28:19). ‘As my life shall answer for it’ is as incorrect as ‘against my soul.’” [A. Plummer, ed., *The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 39]

imposed upon the apostle for lying about it. The giving of such a witness would come through the actions of the Holy Spirit in the lives of God's people, which the apostle just alluded to in v. 22. The Corinthians should be able to understand Paul's action as led of God through the Spirit, and thus find validation of what Paul claims here in the ὅτι clause.

The ὅτι clause defines the content of what Paul 'swears': ὅτι φειδόμενος ὑμῶν οὐκέτι ἦλθον εἰς Κόρινθον, **that to spare you I have not yet come to Corinth.** The negative οὐκέτι goes beyond the simple οὐκ as 'not.' The aorist ἦλθον becomes the consummative function 'have not yet come.' The somewhat rare purpose function -- possibly causal -- of the present participle φειδόμενος defines the intention, or possibly the reason, for not yet coming to Corinth.<sup>34</sup> He wanted to spare them the very tense situation that characterized the last visit as described in 2:1-3. There were very serious moral problems in the church that left unsolved would have necessitated a severe rebuke of the Corinthians face to face with a visit (cf. 2:5-11 for at least one of them).<sup>35</sup> The earlier visit had necessitated a harsh rebuke of them, possibly based upon what he had written to them in First Corinthians. It was not pleasant for either the Corinthians or for Paul. Now Paul wanted to avoid another visit like that if at all possible. But he did promised to return when he was there before, but with the passing of time that had not happened and so some in the church became critical of Paul. This criticism was not based on wanting him to return, but simply represented a way to try to undermine the apostle's credibility so as to more easily ignore his rebukes for their actions.

Also a part of the issue here is defined by v. 24a as illustrated in the diagram:

23 <sup>1,24</sup> (ἐστίν) οὐχ ὅτι κυριεύομεν ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως  
 ἄλλὰ  
 24 συνεργοί ἐσμεν τῆς χαρᾶς ὑμῶν ·

Paul's approach to ministry is defined in these two statements. He did not 'lord it over' the folks he ministered to.<sup>36</sup> Persuasion to follow Christ, not ecclesiasti-

<sup>34</sup>“Although the present participle φειδόμενος could be causal ('because I was sparing you'),<sup>9</sup> it is more naturally taken as telic “in order to spare you,” NIV).<sup>10</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), 213.]

<sup>35</sup>What becomes clear from 2:5-11 is that the severe letter that Paul wrote to them after this 'painful' visit of 2:1 did provoke them to address the issue with one of the problems at least. Chapters 10-13 will make it clear that lingering problems did remain in the church that the apostle addresses with strong rebuke in Second Corinthians in advance of this 'next' visit which he hoped would be pleasant.

<sup>36</sup>The verb κυριεύομεν from κυριεύω, with 7 uses in the NT,

cal authority, was foundational to his ministry. He could and sometimes did speak in demanding tones but this in no way reflected some kind of structural religious authority that had been given him. When commentators read such into Paul's strong language of exhortation they are falsely importing their denominational world into Paul's world along with failing to understand the blunt, direct way in Paul's world of orally addressing serious issues.<sup>37</sup>

Thus the apostle had no interest in controlling the faith commitment to Christ of the Corinthian believers. That wasn't God's calling upon his ministry! Rather, he understood ministry as a partnership of equals as # 24 asserts: συνεργοί ἐσμεν τῆς χαρᾶς ὑμῶν, **we are fellow workers promoting your joy.** The apostle was most interested in the Corinthians finding enthusiasm in their commitment to Christ. Coercion of commitment never leads to authentic faith. This statement of his ministry approach provides the necessary backdrop to the historical appeal in 1:28-2:4, because his last visit did not entail much joy for either the Corinthians or him.

The foundation (γὰρ) for joy in Christian commitment is given in τῇ γὰρ πίστει ἐστήκατε, **for you stand firm in the faith,** at the end of v. 24. This positive affirmation sounds contradictory to Paul's mentioning of problems in the church, when interpreted as a broad, sweeping statement. But in the larger context it highlights an aspect often overlooked in commentaries. A solid core, and likely a majority, of the Corinthian believers stood squarely with Paul and reflected authentic commitment to Christ within the framework of the apostolic Gospel he preached. The wayward members and the oppo-

carries the idea of exercising control or power over others, with a negative meaning when used of humans so functioning. The clear example of this comes in Luke 22:25-26, 25 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· οἱ βασιλεῖς τῶν ἐθνῶν κυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ ἐξουσιάζοντες αὐτῶν εὐεργέται καλοῦνται. 26 ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ οὕτως, ἀλλ' ὁ μείζων ἐν ὑμῖν γινέσθω ὡς ὁ νεώτερος καὶ ὁ ἡγούμενος ὡς ὁ διακωνῶν. 25 **But he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. 26 But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves.**

<sup>37</sup>As a side note: many in our day, including Christians, are puzzled at Pope Francis. This in part, because never in our life time has someone occupied the papacy in Rome with the spiritual insights of the present pope. He understands that the limited ecclesiastical authority the Roman Catholic pope has been given over the centuries has no real ability to coerce people into doing what the RC church teaches. On the other hand, more than any other pope in centuries, he understands the power of moral persuasion by example of holy living and compassionate words to the 'sinners.' It is via such example in word and deed by the Lord's servants that God can touch hearts and bring them to Christ. Protestant pastors could learn much from this. The power culture of being CEO in contemporary western society has blinded far too many pastors about how to be genuinely persuasive in ministry.

nents at Corinth always represented a minority element in the house churches that made up the Christian community. It is that faithful segment that the apostle here commends and thus enables him to work with them as συνεργοί.

23 <sup>1,24</sup> (ἐστίν) οὐχ ὅτι κυριεύομεν ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως  
 ἀλλὰ  
 24 συνεργοί ἐσμεν τῆς χαρᾶς ὑμῶν·  
 γὰρ  
 25 τῇ πίστει ἐστήκατε.  
 2.1 γὰρ  
 26 Ἐκρίνα ἑμαυτῷ τοῦτο  
 | πάλιν  
 | ἐν λύπῃ  
 | πρὸς ὑμᾶς  
 τὸ μὴ...ἐλθεῖν.

Also the decision not to come immediately to cause pain was another foundation (γὰρ) for his approach to ministry (v. 24, #s 23-24), as expressed in 2:1 (# 26). This decision to wait about returning to Corinth was reflected in his ministry principles: Ἐκρίνα γὰρ ἑμαυτῷ τοῦτο τὸ μὴ πάλιν ἐν λύπῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν, *For I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit.* The aorist Ἐκρίνα alludes to a decision made after the painful visit which is alluded to by the adverb πάλιν, *again.*

The idiom ἐν λύπῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν, *in sorrow to you to come*, highlights a visit made where the atmosphere of the visit is dominated ἐν λύπῃ, *in pain*, rather than τῆς χαρᾶς, *with joy*. Does this imply cowardess on Paul's part? Was he afraid of another tense confrontation with the wayword members of the church? Evidently some in the church took it this way. But the larger context of chapters 1-7 and especially 10-13 make an abundantly clear case that such was not the case with the apostle. In no way would he compromise principles of Christian commitment just to get along better with the church.

Why then did he delay his return? From that same larger context it becomes clear that the decision to delay returning to Corinth was made in the hope that given some time the church itself would resolve most if not all these problems. That would be far better, and additionally a quick return producing another confrontation would indeed seem like Paul was attempting to control the members of the Corinthian community.

Thus as further reason for delaying his return he offers a scenario (1st class assumption of reality) in v. 2 in the form of a rhetorical question expecting agreement with his view: εἰ γὰρ ἐγὼ λυπῶ ὑμᾶς, καὶ τίς ὁ εὐφραίνων με εἰ μὴ ὁ λυπούμενος ἐξ ἐμοῦ; *For since I cause you pain, who indeed would there be to give me joy except the one pained by me?* The expected answer is no one. The one having been caused pain by Paul would be the only possible candidate to bring Paul joy upon his visit, and

that was not likely to happen.

Important for correct understanding of Paul's words here is knowing what εὐφραίνων and especially λυπούμενος mean in this context. The first participle ὁ εὐφραίνων is present tense and comes from εὐφραίνω with the sense of causing gladness or cheering up another person. The apostle wants his visit to Corinth to cheer him up about the church and their spiritual progress. The second participle ὁ λυπούμενος from λυπέω is present tense passive voice and denotes severe mental or emotional distress resulting in deep sorrow. The present tense of both participles emphasis ongoing rather than momentary actions. A quick return to Corinth soon after the last visit would not have allowed the λύπη, *distress* (cf. v. 1), enough time to produce the desired spiritual impact intended

by Paul in his rebuke of them at the last visit. With tensions still high, another visit too soon would only 'rub salt into the wound' and would not produce the intended positive spiritual impact of repentance and return to obedient faith commitment.<sup>38</sup>

What Paul did very quickly after the painful visit was to write a stern letter to the Corinthians laying out the issues in writing that he had given them orally during his visit (vv. 3-4): 3 καὶ ἔγραψα τοῦτο αὐτό, ἵνα μὴ ἐλθὼν λύπην σχῶ ἀφ' ὧν ἔδει με χαίρειν, πεποιθῶς ἐπὶ πάντας ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἡ ἐμὴ χαρὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐστίν. 4 ἐκ γὰρ πολλῆς θλίψεως καὶ συνοχῆς καρδίας ἔγραψα ὑμῖν διὰ πολλῶν δακρῶν, οὐχ ἵνα λυπηθῆτε ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀγάπην ἵνα γνῶτε ἦν ἔχω περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς. 3 *And I wrote as I did, so that when I came, I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice; for I am confident about all of you, that my joy would be the joy of all of you.* 4 *For I wrote you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain, but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.*

His letter reflected the same tones and content as his visit had: καὶ ἔγραψα τοῦτο αὐτό And I wrote this same

<sup>38</sup>Every wise pastor understands what Paul was doing to best handle this situation. In the 'quick fix' mentality of modern western society, the urge is to jump in immediately and solve the problems, especially in church life. But the deeper spiritual reality of such urges is the false thinking that God calls preachers to be problem solvers in His church. Nothing could be further from the truth. What God calls spiritual leaders to do is to give wise guidance in laying out correctly the biblical principles relevant to a problem, and to encourage those caught up in the problem to seek the leadership of Christ. And MOST IMPORTANTLY to be wise enough then to back off and allow the Holy Spirit to do the work of convicting and producing repentance. Bringing healing is God's work, not the preacher's work. And God works on His time table in doing this, not on ours! Quick fixes are man made and not authentic. Also Paul did not let the criticism of being afraid to confront the Corinthians keep him from following the Lord's leadership in this situation. Neither should we today!

2.3 καὶ  
**28 ἔγραψα τοῦτο αὐτό,**  
 ἵνα μὴ ἐλθὼν λύπην σχῶ  
 ἀφ’ ὧν ἔδει με χαίρειν,  
 πεποιθὼς \_\_\_\_\_  
 ἐπὶ πάντας ὑμᾶς |  
 ὅτι ἡ ἐμὴ χαρὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐστίν.

2.4 γὰρ  
 ἐκ πολλῆς θλίψεως  
 καὶ  
 συνοχῆς καρδίας  
**29 ἔγραψα ὑμῖν**  
 διὰ πολλῶν δακρύων,  
 οὐχ ἵνα λυπηθῆτε ἀλλὰ  
 τὴν ἀγάπην ἵνα γνῶτε  
 ἣν ἔχω περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς.

ἔγραψα but following up also on the ἀφ’ ὧν ἔδει με χαίρειν relative clause: πεποιθὼς ἐπὶ πάντας ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἡ ἐμὴ χαρὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐστίν, being confident regarding all of you that my joy extends to all of you. That is, his writing of the letter was done in the persuasion that his joy extended to all of the members of the community, and not just to his supporters in Corinth. The perfect tense participle πεποιθὼς from πείθω defines in the fourth principle part forms of the perfect and pluperfect tenses a sense of being deeply convinced of something. Paul wants the Corinthians

thing. Was this a mistake on Paul’s part? Not at all. By putting into writing what he had said to them verbally, he gave them a permanent reference point to his assessment of their problems. Unfortunately, this letter is lost and we thus don’t know the precise contents beyond the very general characterization given here. The older and once somewhat popular partition theory about Second Corinthians that claimed that most of this lost letter is contained in chapters ten through thirteen of Second Corinthians has few followers today among serious scholars. Its heavy dependence upon a much too aggressive Form Critical analysis of texts popular in the middle of the last century has been exposed and the weaknesses of such conclusions thoroughly laid open.

His intention for this letter is stated first by ἵνα μὴ ἐλθὼν λύπην σχῶ ἀφ’ ὧν ἔδει με χαίρειν, πεποιθὼς ἐπὶ πάντας ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἡ ἐμὴ χαρὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐστίν. so that when I came, I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice; for I am confident about all of you, that my joy would be the joy of all of you. The syntax of this ἵνα clause is complex, and thus has lent itself to multiple interpretations.

This diagram presents what I consider to be the most natural and best syntactical understanding possible. The core statement in the subordinate purpose clause is ἵνα μὴ...λύπην σχῶ, so that I might not have pain. Thus Paul’s intention in writing the ‘painful letter’ is to avoid pain in his next visit, which is referenced in the participle ἐλθὼν, upon coming. This letter closely following the painful visit was designed to help the Corinthians solve their problems along with reaffirming the apostle’s deep care for them and their spiritual health. If that happened, then he could make a joyful visit with the Corinthians. This avoidance of pain in the anticipated visit should come from those in the church who should be sources of joy to him: ἀφ’ ὧν ἔδει με χαίρειν, from those who should bring me joy. Finally the participle phrase is added primarily to the main clause verb

to know that his concern is for all of the members of the community there, not just some of them. He seeks the enthusiastic joy of Christian commitment on the part of every last member of the church. Only that will make his joy complete.

2.4 γὰρ  
 ἐκ πολλῆς θλίψεως  
 καὶ  
 συνοχῆς καρδίας  
**29 ἔγραψα ὑμῖν**  
 διὰ πολλῶν δακρύων,  
 οὐχ ἵνα λυπηθῆτε  
 ἀλλὰ  
 τὴν ἀγάπην ἵνα γνῶτε  
 ἣν ἔχω περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς.

The justifying statement (γὰρ) in v. 4 amplifies the circumstances of the composition of this painful letter that was sent: ἐκ γὰρ πολλῆς θλίψεως καὶ συνοχῆς καρδίας ἔγραψα ὑμῖν διὰ πολλῶν δακρύων, οὐχ ἵνα λυπηθῆτε ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀγάπην ἵνα γνῶτε ἣν ἔχω περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς. For I wrote you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain, but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

This provides another foundation for his declaration in v. 3a hoping that the painful letter would help resolve the tensions so as to allow for a joyful visit to Corinth. The core ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, I wrote to you, is qualified by internal and external references depicting the situation of the writing. First, it was written ἐκ πολλῆς θλίψεως καὶ συνοχῆς καρδίας, out of much affliction and anguish of heart.<sup>39</sup> The parallel terms πολλῆς θλίψεως and

<sup>39</sup>“The term θλίψις, used elsewhere in the letter with some theological weight (1:4–5: 4. 17 ), is here simply a general word for acute distress. Windisch, p. 82, distinguishes between the use of ἐκ to indicate the state of mind which produced the letter and the use of διὰ to the circumstances accompanying its writing.” [Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Sec-*

συναγωγῆς καρδίας highlight deep inward struggle within Paul in the writing of this painful letter. He was hurting deeply inside in the writing of the letter. The outward expression of this inner struggle is διὰ πολλῶν δακρύων, through many tears. It's very clear that this was not an easy letter to write. It shows us the true heart of Paul. As a side note: any spiritual leader who enjoys rebuking others proves by his joy that he is no 'man of God.' His actions are prompted by the devil, not by God.<sup>40</sup> Paul sets the standard here for godly leadership.

Two very intensive ἵνα clauses linked together by οὐχ... ἀλλὰ define his intent in writing the letter. Together these re-enforce the ἵνα clause in v. 3 that defines his intent for writing the letter also:

ἵνα μὴ ἐλθῶν λύπην σχῶ ἀφ' ὧν ἔδει με χαίρειν (v. 3)

οὐχ ἵνα λυπηθῆτε (v. 4b)

ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀγάπην ἵνα γνῶτε ἣν ἔχω περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς. (v. 4c)

In the first ἵνα clause in v. 3b, the intention was that the letter enable him to avoid being pained at the anticipated visit. In the two amplifications in v. 4b - c the intention is that the letter would not actually cause them more pain but rather that it would reveal the true depth of Paul's love for the Corinthians. Here the nature of true ἀγάπη surfaces. Paul wanted to let them know that his rebuke of their waywardness was not an expression of frustrated anger. Rather, it came out of his deep love for them. This they needed to γνῶτε, i.e., know experientially, and not

theoretically. Thus he hoped that even this rebuke would not distress them further but instead would lead to the necessary repentance where joy then could prevail when he arrived in the city. Thus ἀγάπη means that you care enough to do all within your power to compassionately help others avoid spiritual disaster. The more classical style of placing a direct object of a verb in a subordinate class

and Epistle of the Corinthians, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 170.]

<sup>40</sup>As an example, any preacher who enjoys preaching on hell -- which faithfulness to the Gospel does require -- is not qualified to stand in the pulpit and preach on that topic. Only with sadness and tears must one warn of the disaster ahead for those rejecting God. The same is true regarding the waywardness of professing Christians. To address such important topics is absolutely mandatory, but they must be addressed out of compassion and sadness rather than out of enjoyment and satisfaction.

in front of the subordinate conjunction places unusually high emphasis upon the verb object: τὴν ἀγάπην ἵνα γνῶτε....

### 10.2.3.1.3 Mercy for the Offender, 2:5-11.

5 Εἰ δέ τις λελύπηκεν, οὐκ ἐμὲ λελύπηκεν, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ μέρους, ἵνα μὴ ἐπιβαρῶ, πάντας ὑμᾶς. 6 ἱκανὸν τῷ τοιοῦτῳ ἡ ἐπιτιμία αὕτη ἢ ὑπὸ τῶν πλειόνων, 7 ὥστε τούναντίον μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς χαρίσασθαι καὶ παρακαλέσαι, μὴ πως τῇ περισσοτέρῃ λύπῃ καταποθῆ ὁ τοιοῦτος. 8 διὸ παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς κυρῶσαι εἰς αὐτὸν ἀγάπην· 9 εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ ἔγραψα, ἵνα γνῶ τὴν δοκιμὴν ὑμῶν, εἰ εἰς πάντα ὑπήκοοί ἐστε. 10 ὧ δέ τι χαρίζεσθε, κἀγὼ· καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ὁ κεχάρισμαι, εἴ τι κεχάρισμαι, δι' ὑμᾶς ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ, 11 ἵνα μὴ πλεονεκτηθῶμεν ὑπὸ τοῦ σατανᾶ· οὐ γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὰ νοήματα ἀγνοοῦμεν.

5 But if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but to some extent—not to exaggerate it—to all of you. 6 This punishment by the majority is enough for such a person; 7 so now instead you should forgive and console him, so that he may not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 So I urge you to reaffirm your love for him. 9 I wrote for this reason: to test you and to know whether you are obedient in everything. 10 Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ. 11 And we do this so that we may not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

2.5	δὲ	Εἰ τις λελύπηκεν, οὐκ ἐμὲ λελύπηκεν, ἀλλ' (λελύπηκεν)... πάντας ὑμᾶς. ἀπὸ μέρους, ἵνα μὴ ἐπιβαρῶ,
30		
31		
32	2.6	ἱκανὸν (ἐστίν) τῷ τοιοῦτῳ ἡ ἐπιτιμία αὕτη   ἢ ὑπὸ τῶν πλειόνων, 2.7 ὥστε τούναντίον μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς χαρίσασθαι καὶ παρακαλέσαι, μὴ πως τῇ περισσοτέρῃ λύπῃ καταποθῆ ὁ τοιοῦτος.
33	2.8	διὸ παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς κυρῶσαι εἰς αὐτὸν ἀγάπην·

This third pericope in the letter body continues the foundational theme established in 1:12-14. Plus it builds off the previous discussion of the painful visit and letter in 2:1-4. From 2:5-11, we discover part of the situation that encouraged the apostle to make another visit to the city. The postpositive coordinate conjunction δὲ signals a continuation of the discussion but with a slightly different thrust. The first class conditional protasis Εἰ τις λελύπηκεν, linked to the first main clause οὐκ ἐμὲ λελύπηκεν, further links this section back to the previous one by the repetition of λυπέω, here in the perfect

2.9 γὰρ  
εἰς τοῦτο  
καὶ  
34 ἔγραψα,  
ἵνα γινῶ τὴν δοκιμὴν ὑμῶν,  
εἰ εἰς πάντα ὑπήκοοί ἐστε.

2.10 δέ  
ᾧ τι χαρίζεσθε,  
35 κἀγὼ (χαρίζομαι) ·  
γὰρ  
καὶ  
ἐγὼ ὁ κεχάρισμαι,  
| εἰ τι κεχάρισμαι,  
36 (κεχάρισμαι) |  
δι' ὑμᾶς  
ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ,  
2.11 ἵνα μὴ πλεονεκτηθῶμεν  
ὑπὸ τοῦ σατανᾶ ·  
γὰρ  
37 οὐ αὐτοῦ τὰ νοήματα ἀγνοοῦμεν.

tense active voice λελύπηκεν.

Thus the issue of causing grief or distress is continued and with the use of εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ ἔγραψα, for I wrote regarding this (v. 9), references the painful letter in vv. 3-4. This discussion in vv. 5-11 is developed in two subunits of #s 30-32 (vv. 5-7) encouraging acceptance of the repentance of the offending person. The conjunction διὸ in v. 8 draws two basic implications from the previous emphasis beginning with an admonition (# 33) with a justifying statement (# 34). Two declarations follow in #s 35-36 followed by a justifying statement (# 37). In this Paul reveals his deep pastoral love for the Corinthians, including this unidentified offending member.<sup>41</sup>

But the unanswered -- and ultimately unanswerable -- question remains the identity of τις, someone in v. 5.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup>I hope that by this point you the reader are noticing a common thought pattern typical of Paul, especially in Second Corinthians: a statement of some kind followed by a justifying statement (s). The coordinate causal conjunction γὰρ is a favorite with Paul.

<sup>42</sup>“It used to be assumed that this referred to the incestuous person, whom the Apostle sentenced to excommunication (1 Cor. 5:1–8); and this passage fits that one well in some respects. But there are difficulties which seem to be insuperable. (1) It is scarcely credible that S. Paul should speak of so heinous an offence as that of 1 Cor. 5:1 in the gentle way in which he speaks here. This is vehemently urged by Tertullian (De Pudic. XIII.), and it is hard to find an answer. (2) If this passage refers to it, its heinousness was even greater than appears from 1 Cor. 5:1. For 7:12 refers to the same case as this passage; and if this and 1 Cor. 5:1 refer to the same case, then the incestuous man married his father’s wife while his father was still living. In 7:12, if τοῦ ἀδικήσαντος is the incestuous person, τοῦ ἀδικηθέντος must be the lawful husband of the woman; and the latter is spoken of as alive when S. Paul wrote. Could the Apostle write as he does here of such an offender as that? (3) Would he speak of such a sin from the point of view of injuring an individual? In 1 Cor. 5 it is the pollution of the whole Church which appals him. For these reasons the time-honoured and attractive ref-

From all indications, Paul alludes to this same situation again in 7:11-13a.

11 ἰδοὺ γὰρ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ κατὰ θεὸν λυπηθῆναι πόσῃν κατειργάσατο ὑμῖν σπουδὴν, ἀλλ’ ἀπολογία, ἀλλ’ ἀγανάκτησιν, ἀλλὰ φόβον, ἀλλ’ ἐπιτόθησιν, ἀλλὰ ζῆλον, ἀλλ’ ἐκδίκησιν. ἐν παντὶ συνεστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς ἀγνοῦς εἶναι τῷ πράγματι. 12 ἄρα εἰ καὶ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, οὐχ ἕνεκεν τοῦ ἀδικήσαντος οὐδὲ ἕνεκεν τοῦ ἀδικηθέντος ἀλλ’ ἕνεκεν τοῦ φανερωθῆναι τὴν σπουδὴν ὑμῶν τὴν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. 13 διὰ τοῦτο παρακεκλήμεθα.

11 For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves guiltless in the matter. 12 So although I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong, nor on account of the one who was wronged, but in order that your zeal for us might be made known to you before God. 13 In this we find comfort.

That these two passages do not refer to the moral problem at Corinth mentioned in First Corinthians 5:1-8 has been acknowledged now by a majority of commentators, although linking the situation in Second Corinthians to that in First Corinthians was rather common in the interpretive history until the mid-twentieth century.

What does seem to be the situation is that in the painful visit to the church a member, probably a house church leader, tore into Paul in a completely inappropriate manner that negatively impacted the entire community at Corinth.<sup>43</sup> And initially the church did nothing

erence of this passage to the incestuous person must be abandoned, and both this and 7:8–12 must be interpreted of an offender about whom we know no more than is told us in this letter (see A. Robertson in Hastings’ DB. i. p. 493, and Sanday in Cheyne’s Enc. Bib. I. 902). He may have been a ringleader in the revolt against the Apostle’s authority; and in that case ὁ ἀδικηθεὶς may be either S. Paul himself or (less probably) Timothy. Or he may have been the one who was in the wrong in some outrageous quarrel, about which nothing is said. Everything is uncertain, except that (1) in some particulars this passage fits the incestuous person very badly, and that (2) the case is treated with the utmost gentleness and reserve. No names are mentioned, and no needless particulars are given; and hence our perplexity. S. Paul says just enough to make the Corinthians understand, and then leaves τὸ πρᾶγμα (7:11).” [A. Plummer, ed., *The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 44–45.]

<sup>43</sup>“A single individual (2 Cor 2:5; 7:7, 8, 10, 12) had acted in a way to injure Paul and, by derivation, the whole community (2:5; cf. 1 Cor 12:26a). Its gravity had not been recognized by a part of the Corinthian church (2:5–6). Because of the dissident minority, Paul wrote the ‘letter of tears’ (2 Cor 10–13) to test the obedience of the whole group (2:9; cf. 10:6). Apparently, as a result of the painful letter the majority had disciplined the offender (2:6). A similar situation earlier (1 Cor 5) had involved excommunication. It may

in response to the actions of this person. But after Paul wrote the painful letter shortly after his visit, the Corinthian community did take severe action against this individual. These actions had produced the necessary repentance on the part of this offending person, but the church was still punishing him, or at least greatly wanting to continue the punishment. Now Paul in vv. 5-11 urges them to complete the process of community punishment and restoration of an offending member.

Lots of unanswered questions remain, however. What exactly did this person do or say? Was he just targeting Paul, or perhaps Timothy as well? What was the exact punishment, ἡ ἐπιτιμία αὕτη, that the majority of the members imposed on the individual? In the 1 Cor. 5 situation the apostle demanded that the church kick the incestuous individual out of the community in order to push him to repentance. Was that what was invoked here on this other person? Why was the church still hesitating to accept this person back after he had repented? In truth, we have no certain answers for these questions, only speculation. Yet, modern curiosity tends to push commentators to devote extra space in such speculation. The danger of this is that we miss the essential point of Paul's discussion of this incident: that of Christian reconciliation.

Now let's take a close look at exactly what Paul does say. The first class conditional protasis of Εἰ δέ τις λελύπηκεν, *but since someone has caused grief*, makes it clear that such an incident did occur. The context here makes it clear that the perfect tense λελύπηκεν means to cause grief rather than to experience grief. This becomes clear in the second use in the first main clause with οὐκ ἔμε λελύπηκεν, *he has not caused me grief*. In 2:1-11 the apostle plays with the idea of grief through the noun λύπη and the verb λυπέω. His earlier visit and subsequent letter produced grief for both him and the Corinthians. A part of the problem behind this seems to have been the actions of this one individual who caused grief in the church in his attack on Paul. Now Paul asserts that even though he caused grief λελύπηκεν that grief did not significantly impact Paul:

have been the punishment here. At Qumran we hear that one who has slandered his companion shall be excluded from the congregation's meal for a year and do penance; whoever has murmured against the authority of the community shall be expelled from the group and shall not return (1 QS 7.15–18). Unlike Qumran, however, Paul did not call for permanent expulsion. He now asked for forgiveness (2:7) and love (2:8) to be shown to the offender, lest the punishment be only punitive and not redemptive (Gal 6:1). "Anyone whom you forgive, I forgive.... to keep Satan [4:4, the god of this age; 6:15, Beliar; 11:3, the serpent] from gaining the advantage over us" (2:10–11) (Barrett, 1982, 108–17, heavily dependent on Allo)." [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2002), 167–168.]

οὐκ ἔμε λελύπηκεν. Rather, the thrust of the distress created by this person hit the Corinthians more than it did the apostle: ἀλλ' ἀπὸ μέρους, ἵνα μὴ ἐπιβαρῶ, πάντας ὑμᾶς.

The apodosis main clause οὐκ ἔμε λελύπηκεν, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ μέρους, ἵνα μὴ ἐπιβαρῶ, πάντας ὑμᾶς is very difficult to translate clearly due to its complexity in Greek.<sup>44</sup> The especially difficult challenge is what Paul means by ἵνα μὴ ἐπιβαρῶ. This so-called 'exceptive clause' limits the extent of the action of λελύπηκεν upon the Christian community at Corinth in the elipsis of ἀλλ' ἀπὸ μέρους, ἵνα μὴ ἐπιβαρῶ, (λελύπηκεν) πάντας ὑμᾶς. The essential idea moves along the lines of "but to some extent -- lest I over describe it -- (he grieved) all of you." The verb ἐπιβαρῶ literally means *to put a burden on top of*. But at the figurative level the idea becomes to talk too much or give out too many burdensome words. This idea fits here since the apostle is trying to carefully choose his words to the Corinthians to not criticize them for taking disciplinary action but now to encourage them to-

<sup>44</sup>Even in respect of this aspect of the situation, however, Paul does not wish to say too much.<sup>296</sup> It is only ἀπὸ μέρους, *in part*,<sup>297</sup> that his readers have been grieved. Does this mean that some have been pained by the offender's conduct but not all of them? Was there a lenient minority who did not find it distressing?<sup>298</sup> This is less likely, since a numerical restriction of those who had been grieved would conflict with the πάντας.<sup>299</sup> It is better to suppose that the ἀπὸ μέρους qualifies the extent of the distress. A certain measure of grief was felt by all the church members.<sup>300</sup>

"Various other ways of dividing the apodosis οὐκ ἔμε λελύπηκεν ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ μέρους ἵνα μὴ ἐπιβαρῶ πάντας ὑμᾶς have been adopted.

"(i) The οὐκ ἔμε λελύπηκεν is seen as a question expecting an affirmative answer, and the ἀλλὰ then begins a fresh sentence which is completed in v. 6.

"(a) The ἀπὸ μέρους means 'for a time', and the sense is: '... has he not grieved me? Yes. Nevertheless, for a time, so that I may not burden you all, it is sufficient for such a person ...'<sup>301</sup>

"(b) The ἀπὸ μέρους is given its more natural sense but transferred to the ἵνα-clause: '... has he not grieved me? Yes. Nevertheless, so as not in some measure to burden you all, it is sufficient for such a person...'<sup>302</sup> This destroys the contrast between the two personal objects ἐμέ and ὑμᾶς, and ignores Paul's favourite οὐκ ... ἀλλὰ correlation which sets them over against each other.<sup>303</sup>

"(ii) In the ἀλλὰ-clause commas are placed after μέρους and after πάντας: '... he has not grieved me, but in part, so that I may not burden all, you'.<sup>304</sup> Not all the Corinthians have been deficient in their duty to Paul. This is highly unnatural, and in addition would require ὑμᾶς to come immediately after ἀπὸ μέρους.<sup>305</sup> The juxtaposition of πάντας and ὑμᾶς indicates that they form a single sense-unit.

"(iii) There is a break after ἀπὸ μέρους: '... he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all'.<sup>306</sup> Paul would be concerned to minimise his own personal distress. But the οὐκ ἐμέ and the ἀπὸ μέρους do not constitute an antithesis.<sup>307</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), 172–173.]

ward reconciliation to this now repenting individual. The 'tough love' that Paul is advocating here is much easier to talk about than to implement. But it's also sometimes hard to describe in maintaining the proper balance between discipline and compassion.

32 <sup>2,6</sup> ἰκανὸν (ἐστίν) τῷ τοιοῦτῳ ἢ ἐπιτιμία αὕτη

In the third core declaration (# 32) in v. 6a, Paul urges a let up on the punishment of the offending individual. Exactly what that ἐπιτιμία of the individual was is not explained. This is the only use of noun ἐπιτιμία in the entire NT, although the verb ἐπιτιμάω is used 31 times mostly in the sense of an oral rebuke of someone. Although it can specify to punish someone it is never used with this meaning in the NT. Thus many commentators take the position of the meaning of the noun ἐπιτιμία should be taken from the use of its verb form ἐπιτιμάω suggesting that a stern public rebuking of this offending individual was what the church did. But this is not certain.<sup>45</sup> The related noun ἐπιτίμιον is much more commonly used to refer to an oral rebuke, while ἐπιτιμία in the secular literature mostly refers to disciplinary action of some kind. Probably whatever action that was taken against this individual centered on a ban from participating in the life of the community. In a collective oriented society such as the ancient world

<sup>45</sup>“This is the only occurrence of ἐπιτιμία in the NT. According to BAGD s.v., its meaning here is ‘punishment’, as in Wisd 3:10: οἱ δὲ ἀσεβεῖς καθὰ ἐλογίσαντο ἔξουσιν ἐπιτιμίαν (‘But the ungodly will be punished as their reasoning deserves’. RSV). But the supporting evidence is not strong, and it is the cognate ἐπιτίμιον which is more common in this sense.<sup>308</sup> Consequently, it is suggested that ἐπιτιμία derives from ἐπιτιμάω, common in the NT and usually connected with reproof,<sup>309</sup> and so may have the meaning ‘reprimand’, ‘verbal censure’.<sup>310</sup> But the case for this second possibility is not as convincing as it might seem.<sup>311</sup> In the NT the verb ἐπιτιμάω, with two exceptions only (2 Tim 4:2; Jude 9), is wholly confined to the synoptic tradition, and (with the exception of Lk 17:3) to the narrative sections within the tradition. It is doubtful whether Paul was sufficiently acquainted with this tradition to have been linguistically influenced by it. Moreover, it is possibly more likely that ἐπιτιμία derived its meaning from ἐπιτίμιον (was the neuter plural taken as a feminine singular?) than that it was directly derived from the ἐπιτιμα-root. It is preferable to understand it as meaning ‘punishment’. The punishment may, of course, have taken the form of an official, public rebuke. But there must have been more to it than this, since it had had continuing practical results, which now needed to be annulled by means of some specific action.<sup>312</sup> Most probably, the offender had been banned from participation in some congregational activities, and in particular from the Eucharist.<sup>313</sup> This might seem to approximate the penalty to that imposed upon the offender of 1 Cor 5, but this is not necessarily so. The latter will have been permanent and irrevocable.<sup>314</sup> In the present case, the exclusion is temporary, and the ‘sufficiency’ of the penalty will relate to the length of time the exclusion has been in force.<sup>315</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), 173–174.]

of Paul, such actions would normally be overwhelming to individuals, since belonging was the determinative foundation of their existence.<sup>46</sup>

This ἐπιτιμία has been imposed ἢ ὑπὸ τῶν πλειόνων, by the majority, of the members of the Christian community. Most commentators in trying to understand this work off wrong assumptions framed by modern church life. It would be wrong to assume a collective action by all the house church groups taken against this individual. At no time was there any sort of general meeting of all the Christians in which a majority agreed to inflict punishment on this individual. Such meetings never happened in ancient Christianity! The most natural meaning of ἢ ὑπὸ τῶν πλειόνων in a first century Christian context is that most of the house church groups forbid the individual from attending their meetings. With an ambition for high influence over the Christian community (remember the ‘knowledgers’ of First Corinthians), being cut off like this would be devastating to such an individual.

Paul asserts that the punishment thus inflicted has been sufficient to achieve the desired impact (v. 6). Continuing it will produce what Paul labels τῇ περισσοτέρᾳ λύπῃ, excessive grief (v. 7c). The open embarrassment of being banned has brought him to his senses and resulted in a turning around of his attitude. Evidently he was seeking reinstatement into the house churches of the community, but without much success.

The result (v. 7): ὥστε τούναντίον μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς χαρίσασθαι καὶ παρακαλέσαι, μὴ πως τῇ περισσοτέρᾳ λύπῃ καταποθῆ ὁ τοιοῦτος. so that such a person you must rather forgive and encourage, lest he be overwhelmed by excessive grief. Notice that Paul’s uses the qualitative demonstrative pronoun τούναντίον / τοιοῦτος to present the individual as a standard for treating all individuals like him and not just this one person. In the application beginning in v. 8, the specific individual at Corinth will be referenced by the personal pronoun αὐτόν, him, who is the τις in v. 5. Most western languages have a hard time maintaining clearly such fine distinctions like this.

What the Corinthians need now to do is χαρίσασθαι καὶ παρακαλέσαι, to forgive and encourage. The infinitive χαρίσασθαι connected to χάρις has the tone of giving grace or favor to someone, while the more common word for forgive, ἀφήμι, has the sense of ‘sending away,’ something God does. The Christian can’t send sin away from another, but in χαρίζομαι, he/she can show favor by accepting the individual back into relationship. The model here is Christ who χαρίζομαι us as sinners (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13). This individual needs to

<sup>46</sup>Paul’s world bears virtually no resemblance to modern western society where individual worth is inherent to the person, independently of group belonging. Both Asian and rural African societies are closer to Paul’s world.

be brought back into the community of believers and be given ongoing encouragement to obey Christ.

In light of these general principles Paul now moves more directly to application to the situation at Corinth in vv. 8-11. His approach is declaration followed by justifying statement(s): # 33 <==# 34 and # 35 <==#s 36-37.

2.8 διὸ  
**33 παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς**  
**κυρῶσαι εἰς αὐτὸν ἀγάπην·**  
 2.9 γὰρ  
 εἰς τοῦτο  
 καὶ  
**34 ἔγραψα,**  
 ἵνα γνῶ τὴν δοκιμὴν ὑμῶν,  
 εἰ εἰς πάντα ὑπήκοοί ἐστε.

First comes an admonition (# 33, v. 8): διὸ παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς κυρῶσαι εἰς αὐτὸν ἀγάπην. *Wherefore I encourage you to affirm love to him.* The present tense of παρακαλῶ as an ongoing posture of Paul stands somewhat in contrast to the aorist infinitive κυρῶσαι that defines a specific action to be taken by the Corinthians. Amazingly far too many modern commentators falsely assume that a slight legal tone in κυρῶσαι assumes a general assembly of all the members of the house churches in order to take a formal decision binding upon all the believers. As mentioned above, such meetings in the first century world are sheer phantasy; they never happened. This is eisogizing the text at its worst!<sup>47</sup> The closest possible scenario for first century Christian that only met in private homes in small groups is for this letter to be read in the different house church groups and thus raise a discussion in each group on how to respond to Paul's request to affirm love toward this repenting offender. Each group would discuss the matter and decide what they wanted to do. Paul's hope was that all of the groups would choose to affirm this individual by showing him ἀγάπην. Love as a translation of ἀγάπην is probably very weak since what Paul wanted was a commitment of the believers *χαρίσασθαι καὶ παρακαλέσαι, to show forgiving favor and encourage-*

<sup>47</sup>"It is very probable that Paul has in view the passing of some formal congregational resolution which would be regarded within the church as having a kind of 'legal' validity. The predominant sense of the verb κυρῶσαι is 'confirm', 'ratify', in relation to official and legal acts and decisions.<sup>338</sup> Paul himself uses it this way in Gal 3:15, where he speaks of κεκυρωμένην διαθήκην, 'a will that has been ratified',<sup>339</sup> and a number of commentators would see a legal nuance attaching to κυρῶσαι in the present verse.<sup>340</sup> The notion of a legal ratification of love may seem paradoxical,<sup>341</sup> but since the original punishment will have been imposed by a formal congregational decision the forgiveness and encouragement must be expressed in the same manner, through the solemn readmission of the offender to those privileges from which he had been excluded, and perhaps by a formal declaration of forgiveness." [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), 177–178.]

ment (v. 7) to this individual, as well as anyone else in a similar circumstance.

The basis of this admonition comes in the coordinate causal statement (γὰρ) of v. 9 (# 34). εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ ἔγραψα, ἵνα γνῶ τὴν δοκιμὴν ὑμῶν, εἰ εἰς πάντα ὑπήκοοί ἐστε. *For unto this end I also wrote so that I might know your genuineness, that is, whether you are obedience in all things.* One of the uncertainties of this statement is the antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο, *this*. Normally pronoun antecedents reach backwards to something already mentioned. If that's the case here, then the admonition (#33) would be covered by this neuter accusative pronoun τοῦτο. But in the idiomatic prepositional phrase εἰς τοῦτο in the sentence prefield it mostly stands to introduce a ἵνα purpose clause that stands as the reason for the main clause verb action, here ἔγραψα.<sup>48</sup> It was a major way for ancient Greeks to combine both reason and purpose into a single statement.

Why did Paul write the painful letter? The reason was to find out if the Corinthians were genuine in their commitment to Christ or not. The object τὴν δοκιμὴν ὑμῶν, *your genuineness*, stresses not the act of testing but the outcoming of testing. Paul is not saying here, as implied in the NRSV translation, that the painful letter was a test of the Corinthians! To the contrary, Paul wanted by this letter to guide the Corinthians in a proper response to the inappropriate behavior of this individual so that they could demonstrate that they genuinely possessed ἀγάπην for him. Authentic ἀγάπη will never ignore wrong behavior by a fellow believer. It will always make the sacrificial commitment to confront the wayward believer in sincere desire to help him return to the way of Christ. Paul had earlier laid this out in detail in Gal. 6:1-4 -- something I suspect he had also taught the Corinthians when with them earlier. The followup painful letter was intended to give them opportunity to show their obedience to Christ in the treatment of this individual: εἰ εἰς πάντα ὑπήκοοί ἐστε. The marvelous Christian principle is the enormous power of ἀγάπη to reclaim lives for Christ and for the benefit of the larger Christian community. ἀγάπη, not vengeance or retaliation, is the way of Christ. The apostle generally felt the Corinthians to possess ἀγάπη but the painful letter pro-

<sup>48</sup>What emerges is that the reference to the writing of the painful letter here in ἔγραψα discloses an additional motivation beyond those already mentioned in vv. 3-4. It becomes clear that this painful letter, although difficult for Paul to write because he was rebuking the Corinthians for not doing what they needed to do in confronting this individual, was also based on a confidence that the Corinthians did indeed actually possess genuine ἀγάπη that would motivate them not only to confront the wayward individual but would lead them to receive him back upon his repentance. Now his statements here in Second Corinthians reaffirm this, and especially encourage a forgiving acceptance of the individual.

vided the opportunity to demonstrate this. And this is exactly what they had done as vv. 6-7 assert. Now Paul can rejoice in the reclaiming of a wayward life for the church.

This prompts the second declaration in vv. 10-11 with justifying statements; 10 ὧ δέ τι χαρίζεσθε, κἀγὼ· καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ὁ κεχάρισμαι, εἴ τι κεχάρισμαι, δι' ὑμᾶς ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ, 11 ἵνα μὴ πλεονεκτηθῶμεν ὑπὸ τοῦ σατανᾶ· οὐ γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὰ νοήματα ἀγνοοῦμεν, *And to whom ever you grant forgiving favor I do also, for also what I forgive -- if anything -- it is because of you in the presence of Christ. This is so that we may not be outwitted by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his designs.*

The Corinthians have by this point demonstrated genuine ἀγάπη in their handling of this situation. Thus Paul can affirm his solidarity with them in granting forgiving favor to this individual the way they have already done. Note the very axiomatic nature of Paul's expression that grows out of the specific situation of this repentant offender at Corinth. Instead of specifically targeting this offending individual he states his position in more generalized terms, ὧ δέ τι χαρίζεσθε, *but to the one whom you grant forgiving favor...* The Corinthians have by now proven the genuineness of their ἀγάπη commitment and thus Paul can identify with them in granting forgiving favor to whomever they do. This is the heart of his justifying statement in v. 10.

An important objective behind this solidarity with the forgiving Corinthians is to not give Satan an opportunity to work mischief in this situation with the offending individual. At superficial glance there seems to be some tension between Paul's statement here and what he told the Corinthians earlier regarding the expulsion of the incestuous member in 1 Cor. 5:5, παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ σατανᾶ εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῆ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου, *to hand over such a person to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.* Yet careful analysis of both texts reflect that no real tension is present. In the earlier instance, the offense of sexual immorality was in danger of infecting the entire congregation since some in the church saw it as positive. The expulsion of the individual would clearly demonstrate that the house church groups in the Christian community of Corinth had no toleration for such perversion. Here in this second situation, the initial inaction of the house church groups to take action against the offending member was the problem at the beginning. But after their rather strong action against the individual that produced repentance on his part, to not show forgiving love toward him would be a denial of Christ and His teachings. Thus such a hypocritical stance would open the door for Satan to do damage in the community, and in its image to the city. The core idea of πλεονεκτηθῶμεν from πλεονεκτέω is

to outwit or out smart someone. Satan, better than we, knows how to manipulate divine principles of morality.

In the second justifying statement (v. 11b) his skills in this are labeled as τὰ νοήματα: οὐ γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὰ νοήματα ἀγνοοῦμεν, *for we are not ignorant of his designs.* The noun νόημα literally means thinking actions or the working of the mind. It can have either a good or negative meaning. The negative idea moves toward the English idea of plotting or scheming to do something bad. Thus Paul asserts that he and the Corinthians should be well aware that Satan would be smart enough to use such a hypocritical action as refusing to forgive in order to do damage to the individual, the church, and the Gospel message of divine forgiveness. Thus the Corinthians against need to show a full comprehension of the meaning of ἀγάπη in showing forgiving favor to this repenting offender. Typically, this side of ἀγάπη is more challenging to exhibit than confronting the wrong doing of the individual.

#### **10.2.3.1.4 Paul's Anxiety in Troas, 2:12-17.**

12 Ἐλθὼν δὲ εἰς τὴν Τρωάδα εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θύρας μοι ἀνεωγμένης ἐν κυρίῳ, 13 οὐκ ἔσχηκα ἄνεσιν τῷ πνεύματί μου τῷ μὴ εὑρεῖν με Τίτον τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, ἀλλ' ἀποταξάμενος αὐτοῖς ἐξῆλθον εἰς Μακεδονίαν.

14 Τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ πάντοτε θριαμβεύοντι ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ καὶ τὴν ὁσμὴν τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ φανεροῦντι δι' ἡμῶν ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ· 15 ὅτι Χριστοῦ εὐωδία ἐσμὲν τῷ θεῷ ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, 16 οἷς μὲν ὁσμὴ ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον, οἷς δὲ ὁσμὴ ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν. καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ικανός; 17 οὐ γὰρ ἐσμεν ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐξ εὐκρινείας, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν.

*12 When I came to Troas to proclaim the good news of Christ, a door was opened for me in the Lord; 13 but my mind could not rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said farewell to them and went on to Macedonia.*

*14 But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him. 15 For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; 16 to the one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not peddlers of God's word like so many; but in Christ we speak as persons of sincerity, as persons sent from God and standing in his presence.*

As even as a quick reading of vv. 12-17 signals, there are two distinct segments to this unit of scripture: vv. 12-13 and 14-17. The first is a historical note and the second one is a doxological praise to God. They are loosely tied together by the coordinate conjunction δὲ. In the early twentieth century 'cut and paste' mentality of some of the Form Criticism scholars, it was common



place to assume that vv. 12-13 belonged elsewhere in the letter and that the affirmations of the Corinthians in 2:1-11 especially led to the climatic doxology of vv. 14-17. But in the history of the hand copying of this text no indication emerges at all of these two verses being dislocated. The earlier tendency far too much wanted Paul to be a western twentieth century religion professor in his thinking. When the apostle's line of reasoning took twists and turns at variance with modern rational thinking, the phony assumption was that a copyist had rearranged the sequence of pericopes and thus perverted Paul's thinking. Fortunately by the end of the twentieth century, most biblical scholars were waking up to the earlier mistakes and moving toward letting the text stand as is rather than attempting to re-arrange it.

#### 10.2.3.1.4.1 Arrival in Troas, 2:12-13.

The single sentence that comprises these two verses is built off the main clause οὐκ ἔσχηκα ἄνεσιν τῷ πνεύματί μου, *I could not find rest in my spirit*. Even though he enjoyed a very successful time of ministry there, he was restless due to not meeting up with Titus in order to find out news about the Corinthians. Very graphically he describes not finding peace in terms of the perfect tense form of ἔσχηκα from ἔχω. That is, not finding Titus there waiting for him was troubling and the restlessness continued all the time he was in the city. The expression ἄνεσιν τῷ πνεύματί μου defines an inner peace of mind -- to use an English idiom -- that he felt. Because of concern about the Corinthians Paul could not find this inner peace. This doesn't contradict the idea of Paul having prayed for the Corinthians and trusting God to work on them. The apostle was very human and felt deeply for the Corinthians. Titus was to meet him there in Troas with what Paul hoped would be good news about the situation in Corinth.

Ἐλθὼν δὲ εἰς τὴν Τρωάδα, *and after coming to Troas*. Interestingly, Luke makes no reference to this stop-over by Paul. He only mentions the first time the apostle came to Troas in the second missionary journey (Acts 16:6, 11) and then when the apostolic group was

headed to Jerusalem at the end of the third missionary journey (Acts 20:5, 6). But at least on two other occasions, Paul spent time in Troas: after leaving Ephesus on third missionary journey (2 Cor. 2:12-13) and much later during travels after release from Roman imprisonment (2 Tim. 4:13).

Troas was not that far from Ephesus at appx. 550 km, with the distance and travel time depending upon whether one went by ship or by land between the two cities (see above maps). Neither Paul here nor Luke in Acts 20:1 signals which way Paul traveled after leaving Ephesus. Early in the first Christian century the estimated population of Troas was around 100,000 people. According to Roman sources, it was very multi-cultural with ethnic groups from over the Roman empire represented in its makeup. A Christian community had been established on the second missionary journey of Paul several years prior to this visit described in Second Corinthians. On the later trip from Corinth through Macedonia to Judea, Paul will spend a full week there encouraging the believers (Acts 20:7-13).

Luke describes the uproar in Ephesus that largely occasioned Paul's departure from the city. Then Luke simply says that he went to Macedonia with no mention of Troas (Acts 20:1):

Μετὰ δὲ τὸ παύσασθαι τὸν θόρυβον μεταπεμψάμενος ὁ Παῦλος τοὺς μαθητὰς καὶ παρακαλέσας, ἀσπασάμενος ἐξῆλθεν πορεύεσθαι εἰς Μακεδονίαν. *After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples; and after encouraging them and saying farewell, he left for Macedonia.*

Paul mentions the stop in Troas because this was where he and Titus were scheduled to meet after Titus worked with the Corinthian church to solve its problems, and reduce the tensions it had toward Paul. In this Second Corinthians letter to the Corinthians, he wanted them to understand his continued concern for them following the painful visit and subsequent painful letter. All of this stood beyond Luke's purpose in writing Acts and thus was omitted from the Acts account quite properly.

But Paul's most immediate objective in stopping in Troas was εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θύρας μοι ἀνεωγμένης ἐν κυρίῳ, *for the Gospel of Christ and an open door to me in the Lord*. Earlier he had mentioned something similar about the ministry opportunity for him in Ephesus: 8 ἐπιμενῶ δὲ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἕως τῆς πεντηκοστῆς· 9 θύρα γάρ μοι ἀνέωγεν μεγάλη καὶ ἐνεργής, καὶ ἀντικείμενοι πολλοί. *8 But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, 9 for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries* (1 Cor. 16:8-9). Always central to his ministry was proclaiming the apostolic Gospel. When he arrived in Troas after leaving Ephesus, he found an unusual responsiveness to his preaching of the the Gospel, just as he had experienced especially in the

2.12 δὲ  
 Ἐλθὼν  
 εἰς τὴν Τρωάδα  
 εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ  
 καὶ  
 θύρας μοι ἀνεωγμένης ἐν κυρίῳ,  
**38 2.13 οὐκ ἔσχηκα ἀνεσιν**  
 τῷ πνεύματί μου  
 τῷ μὴ εὐρεῖν με Τίτον  
 τὸν ἀδελφόν μου,  
 ἀλλ'  
 ἀποταξάμενος αὐτοῖς  
**39 ἐξῆλθον**  
 εἰς Μακεδονίαν.

2.14 δὲ  
**40 Τῷ θεῷ χάρις (ἔστω)**  
 τῷ πάντοτε|θριαμβεύοντι ἡμᾶς  
 | ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ  
 καὶ |  
 -- τὴν ὁσμὴν τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ φανεροῦντι  
 | δι' ἡμῶν  
 | ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ·  
 2.15 ὅτι Χριστοῦ εὐωδία ἐσμὲν  
 τῷ θεῷ  
 ἐν τοῖς σφζομένοις  
 καὶ  
 ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις,  
 2.16 οἷς μὲν ὁσμὴ  
 | ἐκ θανάτου  
 | εἰς θάνατον,  
 | δὲ  
 οἷς ὁσμὴ  
 ἐκ ζωῆς  
 εἰς ζωὴν.

καὶ  
 πρὸς ταῦτα  
**41 τίς ἰκανός (ἔστίς);**

2.17 γάρ  
**42 οὐ ἔσμεν**  
 ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ,  
 ἀλλ'  
**43 (ἔσμεν)**  
 ὡς ἐξ εἰλικρινείας,  
 ἀλλ'  
 ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ κατέναντι θεοῦ  
 ἐν Χριστῷ  
**44 λαλοῦμεν.**

latter part of his ministry at Ephesus.

But the troubling aspect for Paul was that Titus was not in the city when he first arrived. The text of vv. 12-13 give no real signal of how long he remained there. The open door in Ephesus had prolonged his ministry there at least a year, but it doesn't seem likely that the apostle remained in Troas that long.

After a period of time his anxiety about the situation in Corinth and Titus' non arrival in the city prompted

him to say good-bye to the believers and travel on to Macedonia in the hopes of meeting up with Titus there, which he did: τῷ μὴ εὐρεῖν με Τίτον τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, ἀλλ' ἀποταξάμενος αὐτοῖς ἐξῆλθον εἰς Μακεδονίαν. *In that I did not find Titus my brother, instead, after having said a formal farewell to them I departed to Macedonia.* The rather unusual infinitive phrase τῷ μὴ εὐρεῖν με Τίτον τὸν ἀδελφόν μου references why Paul was restless in his

spirit. It implies that the apostle expected Titus to be in Troas when he arrived and once he discovered this anxiety about Titus and Corinth set in.

That Paul could be in the midst of a very fruitful preaching of the Gospel with unusual responsiveness to his message, and, at the same time, feel anxiety about another community that he loved is not unique. Every pastor of a local congregation experiences the same kinds of mixed feelings in ministry quite often. The anxiety does not signal lack of faith in God at all. To the contrary, it affirms a pastor's love for the people of God whom he/she serves.

The temporal participle phrase ἀποταξάμενος αὐτοῖς indicates a formal farewell to a group of people. Given the massive significance of φιλία, friendship, in Paul's world, a formal good-bye was the only appropriate way to leave the city. The best depiction of such comes in Acts 20:36-38, when Paul said good-bye to the leaders of the Ephesian church at Miletus:

36 Καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν θεὶς τὰ γόνατα αὐτοῦ σὺν πᾶσιν αὐτοῖς προσήύξατο. 37 ἰκανὸς δὲ κλαυθμὸς ἐγένετο πάντων καὶ ἐπιπεσόντες ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον τοῦ

Παύλου κατεφίλου αὐτόν, 38 ὀδυνώμενοι μάλιστα ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ ᾧ εἰρήκει, ὅτι οὐκέτι μέλλουσιν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ θεωρεῖν. προέπεμπον δὲ αὐτόν εἰς τὸ πλοῖον.

36 When he had finished speaking, he knelt down with them all and prayed. 37 There was much weeping among them all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, 38 grieving especially because of what he had said, that they would not see him again. Then they brought him to the ship.

The final statement ἀποταξάμενος αὐτοῖς ἐξῆλθον εἰς Μακεδονίαν, *after having said farewell to them I departed to Macedonia* (v. 13b), picks up the Acts 20:1 depiction by Luke of Paul's departure from Ephesus: ἀσπασάμενος ἐξῆλθεν πορεύεσθαι εἰς Μακεδονίαν, *having said his farewell, he departed in order to go to Macedonia*.

### 10.2.3.1.4.2 Thanksgiving for God's blessing, 2:14-17

14 Τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ πάντοτε θριαμβεύοντι ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ καὶ τὴν ὁσμὴν τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ φανεροῦντι δι' ἡμῶν ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ 15 ὅτι Χριστοῦ εὐωδία ἐσμὲν τῷ θεῷ ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, 16 οἷς μὲν

2.14 δὲ

**40** Τῷ θεῷ χάρις (ἔστω)

τῷ πάντοτε | θριαμβεύοντι ἡμᾶς  
 | ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ  
 καὶ |  
 -- τὴν ὁσμὴν τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ φανεροῦντι  
 | δι' ἡμῶν  
 | ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ·

2.15 ὅτι Χριστοῦ εὐωδία ἐσμὲν

τῷ θεῷ  
 ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις  
 καὶ |  
 ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις,  
 2.16 οἷς μὲν ὁσμὴ  
 | ἐκ θανάτου  
 | εἰς θάνατον,  
 | δὲ  
 οἷς ὁσμὴ  
 ἐκ ζωῆς  
 εἰς ζωὴν.

καὶ  
 πρὸς ταῦτα

**41** τίς ἰκανός (ἐστίν);

2.17 γάρ

**42** οὐ ἐσμὲν  
 ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ,  
 ἀλλ'

**43** (ἐσμὲν)  
 ὡς ἐξ εἰλικρινείας,  
 ἀλλ'  
 ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ κατέναντι θεοῦ  
 ἐν Χριστῷ

**44** λαλοῦμεν .

ὄσμη ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον, οἷς δὲ ὄσμη ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν. καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἰκανός; 17 οὐ γὰρ ἔσμεν ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐξ εἰλικρινείας, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν.

14 But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him. 15 For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; 16 to the one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not peddlers of God's word like so many; but in Christ we speak as persons of sincerity, as persons sent from God and standing in his presence.

Although he left Troas with apprehension, it didn't last too long after he arrived in Macedonia and met up with Titus.<sup>49</sup> But here in vv. 14-17, the apostle bursts forth in celebration of God's blessings. This unit both brings his discussion of integrity in ministry beginning in 1:12 to a climax, and it also sets up the following emphasis in 3:1-6:12 on further aspects of Paul's ministry.

The clearly defined two fold division of this text subunit is made clear by the diagram below. The lengthy sentence (# 40) in vv. 14-16a reflects the praise of God through a creative use of the Roman cultural symbol of a march of triumph. The second part (#s 41-44) in vv. 16b-17 raises the rhetorical question of who is qualified to march in such a victory procession (# 41). The answer comes in the threefold set of justifying statements (#s 42-44) in v. 17 where Paul declares the integrity of him and his associates in preaching the Gospel properly and accurately.

#### 10.2.3.1.4.2.1 God's Triumphal Victory March, 2:14-16a

In order to understand the richness of this passage one must understand the Roman cultural background it is based on.<sup>50</sup> The triumph represented in Roman cul-

<sup>49</sup>More about that meeting is contained indirectly in 7:5-16.

<sup>50</sup>As S. Hafemann has demonstrated, exegetes of 2:14-16 have paid insufficient attention to the actual character of Roman triumphs.<sup>22</sup> Several ancient Roman, Greek, and Jewish writers mention the Roman triumph. Dionysius of Halicarnassus writes (30-32 B.C.) that in the victory procession 'the trophies' were carried and that the procession was concluded with 'the sacrifice that the Romans call a triumph' (2:3). The triumph was to honor a conquering general who 'drove into the city,' that is, Rome, 'with the spoils, the prisoners, and the army that had fought under him, he himself riding in a chariot drawn by horses with golden bridles and arrayed in royal robes, as is the custom in the greater triumphs' (8.67.9f.).

ture a celebration of the victory of a conquering general over the enemies of Rome and also thanksgiving to the gods for giving him this victory. It was quite an impressive parade and required the approval of the Roman senate for one to be scheduled. Paul's Corinthian readers would have been quite familiar with this cultural experience either from having witnessed it directly in the city of Rome or else having heard graphic descriptions of some of them.<sup>51</sup>



A Roman triumph. Note the captive being led to execution at the left side of the picture. (Illustration by P. Connolly, from R. Burrell, *The Romans* [Oxford University Press, 1991], used by permission. From 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), 368.

Plutarch uses the same term as Paul, *thriambeuein*: 'To this very day, in offering a sacrifice for victory, they lead in triumph an old man wearing a boy's toga with a *bulla* attached to it through the Forum to the Capitol, while the herald cries: 'Sardians for sale!' ' (*Romulus* 25.4). Appian says that the normal custom was to kill the prisoners who had been led in triumph (Mithridatic Wars 12.116f.), and Josephus *Jewish Wars* 7:153-55 confirms this. As the captive states clearly in Seneca *De Ben.* 2.11.1, 'In a triumph I would have had to march only once.'<sup>23</sup>

"Hafemann rightly stresses that

although the focus of the procession itself was on the triumphant, with its displays of the spoils of war, the recounting of the high points of the decisive battle through dramatic presentations and paintings, the army's praise for its general, and the parade of the vanquished foes, the procession itself, as a whole was intended to be an act of worship to the god who had granted the victory.<sup>24</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), 367.]

<sup>51</sup>Personal side note: Doing this study brings back the memory of using this text in October 1974 for my 'trial sermon' in chapel at Southwestern Baptist Seminary as a beginning professor in the School of Theology. All new professors were required by the then president of the seminary to preach in a chapel service with him present and evaluating the new professor thoroughly. A colleague

In 1 Cor. 4:9, the apostle had alluded to such a parade figurately,<sup>52</sup> but here the idea is more fully developed. In his application of the image to his ministry Christ is the conquering general and Paul and his associates are soldiers marching in the victory parade: τῷ πάντοτε θριαμβεύοντι ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ *who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession*. God is the Roman emperor enjoying the parade of his victorious general. Paul and his associates as parading soldiers symbolize two very different things to the spectators watch them.

Paul saw himself and his colleagues as τὴν ὄσμην τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ φανεροῦντι δι' ἡμῶν ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, *the aroma of the knowledge of Christ being revealed through us in each place* (v. 14b). This rather unusual application signals that their preaching of the Gospel of Christ centered on sacrificial scents flowing up where humanity could smell them. The sacrifice, of course, is that of Christ on the cross. But this scent triggered two different responses, which the causal ὅτι clause defines. To those being saved, these preachers of this Gospel smelled like the sweet smelling aroma of Christ on the cross, which meant eternal life: Χριστοῦ εὐωδία ἐσμέν τῷ θεῷ ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις ... οἷς δὲ ὄσμη ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν. But to those perishing outside Christ this aroma of Christ was the smell of death, i.e., their eternal damnation: καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, οἷς μὲν ὄσμη ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον. The apostle sets up an informal chiasmic structure here in order to bind the concepts tightly together: ABb'a'

- A ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις
- B καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις,
- b' οἷς μὲν ὄσμη ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον,
- a' οἷς δὲ ὄσμη ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν.
- A among those being saved
- B and among those perishing
- b' to these an aroma of death to death,
- a' but to the others an aroma of life to life.

Notice from the diagram above even with its limitations

beginning in OT the same semester had had a disastrous experience barely a month before in his 'trial sermon' in chapel when he went overtime and the president stopped him in mid stream in his sermon. This new professor lasted only that academic term and his contract was not renewed in large part due to his chapel disaster. Words cannot describe my nervousness when it came my turn to preach in chapel. The one thing I made certain of was to end my sermon thirty seconds before the 10:30 am bell rang ending the chapel service time. I will always remember my mentor professor, Dr. Jack MacGorman, rushing up to greet me after chapel to congratulate me on the 'fine job I had done.' For me, I was just grateful to God for having survived being paraded before the president and about a thousand people who were in the chapel service!

<sup>52</sup>1 Cor. 4:9. δοκῶ γάρ, ὁ θεὸς ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀποστόλους ἐσχάτους ἀπέδειξεν ὡς ἐπιθανατίους, ὅτι θέατρον ἐγενήθημεν τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ ἀγγέλοις καὶ ἀνθρώποις.

For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, as though sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to mortals.

to visually highlight certain aspects, some enormously rich concepts presented by Paul in applying this image to those proclaiming the Gospel of Christ.

a) τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις, *praise be to God*. The mention of Μακεδονίαν triggers thanksgiving to God because it became the place where Paul's mind was put at ease about Corinth with the report of Titus.

b) τῷ πάντοτε θριαμβεύοντι ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, *who always leads us in triumphant procession in Christ*. How better to lift a voice of praise than with the use of a contemporary cultural image that would convey a clear, dramatic picture of the ministry that God had given him and his associates. The victory march of Christ over the enemies of God that included the apostle and his fellow servants as soldiers in the march gave vivid affirmation of the meaning of true ministry.

c) τὴν ὄσμην τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ φανεροῦντι δι' ἡμῶν ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, *the aroma of knowledge of Him being manifested through us in every place*. Not only were they soldiers of Christ in this victory parade, but through them the scent of the sacrificial Christ flowed out bringing the saving knowledge of Christ everywhere they were able to preach the Gospel.<sup>53</sup>

d) ὅτι Χριστοῦ εὐωδία ἐσμέν τῷ θεῷ ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, *because a sweet smelling aroma of Christ we are to God among those being saved and among those perishing*. Against the backdrop of the religious significance of the Roman triumph, Paul uses the picture of the Gospel preachers as channels of the fragrance of Christ on the cross to both believers and non-believers alike.

e) οἷς μὲν ὄσμη ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον, *to those on the one hand a fragrance of death into death*. This relative clause amplifies the ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις prepositional phrase and signals that Christ's death on the cross has the day of final judgment built into it. For those not accepting Christ, the smell that comes to them out of the Gospel is the message of eternal damnation. Out of Christ's death (ἐκ θανάτου) comes their eternal death (εἰς θάνατον).

f) οἷς δὲ ὄσμη ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν, *but to the others a fragrance of life into life*. In contrast to τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις there comes life ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις, *among those being saved*. This final relative clause completes the chiasm of AB//b'a'. To believers the smell of Christ on the cross becomes in the Gospel preached by Paul and his asso-

<sup>53</sup>If you read much of Paul's writings, one trait will become very clear: he seldom, if ever, makes what seems to the modern reader to be a logical application of his metaphors. Normally when a fuller picture is painted figuratively as here, he simply chooses what he considers relevant parts of the picture and assigns spiritual meaning to them. For Paul's world, such was normative, but not for a post Enlightenment rationalistic based world. Recognizing this is critical for understanding Paul.

ciates the affirmation of life. Out of the life of the resurrected Christ (ἐκ ζωῆς) comes eternal life to the believers (εἰς ζωὴν).

With eloquent beauty Paul pictures both sides of Gospel ministry. When people hear the message proclaimed and respond in faith surrender that message along with the messenger become precious sources of God's saving message in Christ's death and resurrection. This is the 'fun' part of Gospel ministry. But the other side is just as important. There will always be those who reject both the Gospel message and its preacher. But they do so to their eternal doom. Such rejection should never be joyful to the preacher, but it must be accepted as fundamental spiritual reality. And knowing this should never ever cause the preacher to hesitate to proclaim the Gospel of Christ.

### 10.2.3.1.4.2.2 Being Qualified to March, 2:16b-17.

καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἱκανός; οὐ γάρ ἐσμεν ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐξ εἰλικρινείας, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν. *Who is sufficient for these things? For we are not peddlers of God's word like so many; but in Christ we speak as persons of sincerity, as persons sent from God and standing in his presence.*

The rhetorical question at the beginning, καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἱκανός;, *and for these things who is qualified?* The demands of this Gospel ministry are significant. Only qualified people should undertake it. But who is qualified? This is Paul's point. The threefold answer provided in the extended γάρ causal clause of v. 17 provides the emphatic answer for qualification:

2.17	γάρ
42	οὐ ἐσμεν ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλ'
43	(ἐσμεν) ὡς ἐξ εἰλικρινείας, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ
44	λαλοῦμεν.

The structure is simple: first a negative (οὐ, #42) followed by two strongly contrastive positive affirmations introduced by ἀλλ' (#s 43 - 44). The powerful contrastive structure here means that precise meaning of each of the statements plays off one another. That is, οἱ πολλοὶ καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, *the many peddlers of the Word of God* is defined as the opposite of ἐξ εἰλικρινείας, *out of sincerity*, and ἐκ θεοῦ κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ, *out of God while standing in God's presence in Christ*. The role of ὡς in introducing these three phrases is as a comparative preposition. The sense of ὡς here is "comparable to." That is any criticism that makes

a comparison of them to other communicators in the world of the Corinthians has to be on genuine grounds and not false grounds.

Also note that in vv. 15-17 he shifts back to the plural 'we' rather than the singular "I" as in vv. 12-14. It is not just his integrity being challenged but that of his associates as well since they all proclaimed the same Gospel message.

**First**, he and his associates cannot be compared to οἱ πολλοὶ καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ. The verb καπηλεύω, here used as a present tense participle, is only found here inside the NT. But it has a wide background usage in the secular literature of Paul's world.<sup>54</sup> Buying food and other items in the first century market place was challenging simply because most all the sellers were unscrupulous and would go to great lengths to cheat their customers. Thus merchants had a hugely negative image in society. But out of this literal background meaning came a figurative use that Paul is likely to be playing off of here. The sophist philosophers of that day were often labeled as καπηλεύοντες, *peddlers*. This carried with it the same negative tone of deceit and cheating in regard to the ideas being promoted in their philosophies for money.<sup>55</sup> Paul's critics evidently

<sup>54</sup>καπηλεύειν comes from κάπηλος, the 'retailer' who sells on the market wares which he has bought from the ἔμπορος ('wholesaler'), and it means 'to engage in retail trade.' Both words carry with them the suggestion of trickery and avarice. κάπηλος (adj.) means 'deceitful,' 'false'; καπηλεύειν, 'to sell, to hawk, deceitfully, at illegitimate profit,' or 'to misrepresent a thing, i.e., wares'; hence καπηλικός means 'deceitful.'<sup>11</sup> [[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 3:603.]

<sup>55</sup>Intellectually, the word is used in the polemic of philosophers against inauthentic sophists or philosophers who sell their teaching for money.

Plat. Prot., 313c d: ἄρ' οὖν ... ὁ σοφιστής τυγχάνει ὦν ἔμπορος τις ἢ κάπηλος τῶν ἀγωγίμων, ἀφ' ὧν ψυχὴ τρέφεται; ... οὕτω καὶ οἱ τὰ μαθήματα περιάγοντες κατὰ τὰς πόλεις καὶ πωλοῦντες καὶ καπηλεύοντες τῷ αἰεὶ ἐπιθυμοῦντι. Soph., 231d, 2, where the σοφιστής is characterised as 1. νέων καὶ πλουσίων

ἔμισθος θηρευτής, 2. ἔμπορος τις περὶ τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς μαθήματα, 3. περὶ αὐτὰ ταῦτα κάπηλος, and 4. αὐτοπώλης (self-vendor) περὶ τὰ μαθήματα. Luc. Hermot., 59, where philosophy is drastically compared to wine: ὅτι καὶ οἱ φιλόσοφοι ἀποδίδονται τὰ μαθήματα ὡσπερ οἱ κάπηλοι, κερασάμενοι γε οἱ πολλοὶ καὶ δολώσαντες (cf. 2 C. 4:2) καὶ κακομετροῦντες. According to Philostr. Vit. Ap., I, 13 Euphrates opposed Apollonius of Tyana: ἐπειδὴ πάνθ' ὑπὲρ χρημάτων αὐτὸν πράττοντα ἐπέκοπεν οὕτως καὶ ἀπῆγε τοῦ χρηματίζεσθαί τε καὶ τὴν σοφίαν καπηλεύειν — even Apollonius was regarded as a mercenary sophist. Aristides, 46, 144 (II, 193, 1 ff., G. Dindorf [1829]): ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν Σωκράτους εἶτε χρὴ σοφίαν εἶτε φιλοσοφίαν λέγειν, ἢ καὶ τι ἄλλο, καὶ τοῦτ' ἄγαμαι, τὸ μὴ καπηλεύειν μηδ' ἐπὶ τοῖς βουλομένοις ὄνεισθαι ποιεῖν ἑαυτὸν."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Fried-

charged him and his associates with being in ministry for the money they could make out of it. Remember the strong emphasis being made by Paul throughout the third missionary journey on the love offering for the Jewish Christian believers back in Palestine. Not liking Paul and his strong message on Gospel oriented behavior, the offering provided them with what they saw as an opportunity to level criticisms against him and those working with him. By using a label frequently associated with the despised sophists their charge raised credibility questions about the apostolic Gospel that Paul proclaimed as well.<sup>56</sup>

The apostle's denial here is making the same point made later in his farewell speech to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:33, ἀργυρίου ἢ χρυσίου ἢ ἱματισμοῦ οὐδενὸς ἐπεθύμησα, I coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing. Evidently such suspicions about traveling preachers were common place in Paul's world because on the second missionary journey some years earlier while in Athens, he defended his and his associates' integrity in the first letter to the Thessalonians (2:3-4):

3 ἡ γὰρ παράκλησις ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐκ πλάνης οὐδὲ ἐξ ἀκαθαρσίας οὐδὲ ἐν δόλῳ, 4 ἀλλὰ καθὼς δεδοκιμάσαμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, οὕτως λαλοῦμεν, οὐχ ὡς ἄνθρωποι ἀρέσκοντες ἀλλὰ θεῷ τῷ δοκιμάζοντι τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν. 5 οὔτε γὰρ ποτε ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας ἐγενήθημεν, καθὼς οἴδατε, οὔτε ἐν προφάσει πλεονεξίας, θεὸς μάρτυς,

3 For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, 4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. 5 As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed;

But his denial here in Second Corinthians makes use of the dramatic image common in the world of the Corinthians and thus carries more 'punch' than just a regular denial would. In his further stinging rebuttal of his critics later on in 11:2-15, he will charge them with naively buying the crap of the false prophets who did charge them for their phony message. Huge hypocrisy was going on in Corinth among those critics of the

rich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 3:603.]

<sup>56</sup>“On the lips of Paul *καπηλεύειν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ* means 1. to offer for money the word concerning God which is entrusted to the missionary,<sup>6</sup> so that even a legitimate custom supported by a known saying of the Lord, i.e., ἐκ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ζῆν (1 C. 9:14), is defamed. It also means 2. to falsify the word<sup>7</sup> (as the *κάπηλος* purchases pure wine and then adulterates it with water) by making additions (cf. 4:2: *μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ*). This refers to the false Gospel of the Judaizers, 2 C. 11:4.’ [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 3:604-605.]

apostle. This perversion of the Gospel was what the apostle sought vigorously to avoid, even those Christ in His teachings had indicated that His servants had a right to expect support from those benefiting from their ministry.<sup>57</sup>

**Second**, what Paul and his associates can be compared to are preachers who serve ἐξ εἰλικρινείας, *out of sincerity*. In this third use of εἰλικρινεία, sincerity in the NT -- 1 Cor. 5:8; 2 Cor. 1:12; 2:17 -- the apostle affirms the integrity behind his and his associates' ministry. The use here in 2:17 builds off the thesis affirmation for these chapters in 1:12-14 where εἰλικρινεία is affirmed.

The simple meaning of this noun is *without deceptive motives*. That is, complete transparency in ministry which is prompted by God as 1:12 affirms ἐν ἀπλότητι καὶ εἰλικρινείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ. This helps explain the need for the second ἀλλ' statement in v. 17c: ἀλλ' ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν, *but as from God while standing before God in Christ*. What defines for Paul the idea of ἐξ εἰλικρινείας? Clearly it means speaking the words that come from God in the awareness of God's continuing presence and evaluation of those words against the day of final judgment, as 5:1-10 will amplify!

Doing Gospel ministry thus meant for Paul doing it with pure motives while being aware of full accountability to God for such ministry. All of this against the background imagery of the Roman triumph in vv. 14-15 creates a powerful defense of the apostle's ministry to the Corinthians. The graphic portrayal of this ministry here communicated clearly and forcefully with his Corinthian readers. How many of his critics at Corinth were persuaded by this is unknown. But those with an open mind could not help but be persuaded.

In the following units of text this conceptual argument will be fleshed out with narrative of various events in Paul's ministry, and especially in his relationship with the Corinthians.

<sup>57</sup>“At this point, then, the rule which Jesus Himself laid down for missionary work (Mt. 10:10; Lk. 10:7) seems in Paul to conflict with the basic principle accepted by the best philosophers, namely, that philosophy is not to be taught for money.<sup>8</sup> Paul knows the saying of the Lord (1 C. 9:14; 1 Tm. 5:18), but, if we may put it thus, he keeps it after the manner of Socrates. He personally does not accept support by the community and blames those who seek payment for their preaching of the Word. One of his reasons is undoubtedly the avarice, lashed by Plato, of wandering philosophers and sophists, whom he must often have met and with whom unfavourable critics classified him.<sup>9</sup> *καπηλεύειν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ* is thus a striking phrase for a terrible abuse of the sacred Word. Hence Paul immediately contrasts with this the right attitude, his own, i.e., that of selflessness, commitment to God's own Word, a sense of responsibility towards God, and allegiance to Christ.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 3:605.]