



BIBLICAL INSIGHTS COMMENTARY



Boiling Springs, NC
704 966-6845
clv@cranfordville.com
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One Volume Overview SECOND CORINTHIANS



by

Lorin L. Cranford

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10.2 The Second Letter to the Corinthians

This second letter of Paul to the Corinthians is actually the [fourth and final letter](#) of the apostle to the church at Corinth. Coming also in the third missionary journey of the apostle, the letter was composed somewhere in Macedonia after Paul had left Ephesus hoping to make his way to Corinth. This puts the dating of the letter sometime in 56 AD a few months prior to his arrival in Corinth.

The [letter](#) follows the standard format adopted by the apostle from Greek letter writing patterns of that time: Praescriptio, 1:1-2; Proem, 1:3-11; letter body, 1:12-13:10; Conclusio, 13:11-13. In the history of interpretation the authenticity of the letter as coming from Paul has never been seriously challenged. But the unity of the letter has been rigorously debated in more modern times with 6:14-7:1 sometimes being linked as a fragment to the first letter mentioned by Paul in First Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9). Also chapters 10-13 have on occasion been viewed as a major fragment of the “sorrowful letter” mentioned in 2 Cor. 2:4 and 7:8. But contention for the unity of Second Corinthians remains the increasingly dominant viewpoint among scholars today. These two issues will be discussed at the appropriate points inside the text of Second Corinthians.

10.2.1 Praescriptio

The structure and format of the letter opening in the first two verses is standard [Pauline pattern](#). In following the structure of the ancient Greek letter Paul introduces the letter as having come from him and Timothy. It is addressed to τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, [the community of God](#), that existed in Corinth. But also a broader scope is added with σὺν τοῖς ἁγίοις πᾶσιν, [together with all the holy ones](#), who are in Asia. The bridge establishing Salutatio in v. 2 is very typical to Paul’s letters. The formula nature of the Praescriptio is highlighted visually in the block diagram.

10.2.1.1 Superscriptio

Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφός

[Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,](#)

The apostle first introduces himself by popular name and then by title. This is followed by introducing Timothy who most likely stands as the writing secretary for this letter.

In interpreting these kinds of formula based state-

ments it is important to note the use of a personal name,

Superscriptio

1.1 Παῦλος
ἀπόστολος
Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ
διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ
καὶ

Τιμόθεος
ὁ ἀδελφός

Adscriptio

τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ
τοῦ θεοῦ
τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ
σὺν τοῖς ἁγίοις πᾶσιν
τοῖς οὔσιν
ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ,

Salutatio

1.2 χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη (ἔστωσαν)
ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν
καὶ
κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

that is familiar to the intended recipients, which is virtually always followed by a title denoting the authority of the sender of the letter. Now in intimate family letters the title is seldom used but in more formal kinds of letters where the sender anticipates making demands upon his readers a title is rather universal in the Superscriptio section of the letter. Thus Παῦλος sends this letter to the Corinthians as an ἀπόστολος.

The Greek name Παῦλος probably reflected the Latin *Paulus* that was a part of the naming listed on his Roman citizenship certificate that he carried wherever he went.¹ Both the Greek and Latin names reflect the transliterated Hebrew form Σαούλ, reflecting King Saul who also came from the tribe of Benjamin.

The title ἀπόστολος, [apostle](#),² carried with it the spe-

¹“In Acts 13:9 Luke refers to Paul as Σαῦλος δέ, ὁ καὶ Παῦλος, ‘Saul, who is also [known as] Paul.’ Σαῦλος, the Greek form of the Hebrew *šā’ul* (‘asked [of God]’), transliterated Σαούλ, was Paul’s Jewish birth name (like King Saul, he belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, Phil. 3:5), while Παῦλος was his Greco-Roman name and his cognomen (Lat. *Paullus*) as a Roman citizen. Jews who adopted Greek names generally assumed names similar in sound to their original Hebrew or Aramaic names; thus Σαῦλος became Παῦλος and Σιλᾶς became Σιλουανός.” [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), 128.]

²ἀπόστολος as a title in the epistolary Superscriptio of Paul’s letters is used 9 times: Gal. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Rom. 1:1; Col. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:1. The primarily other term of authorization is the LXX prophetic based label δοῦλος, [servant](#): Rom. 1:1 and Phil. 1:1. The roughly equivalent term δέσμιος is used in Philm. 1. Only 1-2 Thessalonians carry no

cial authorization from Christ that had also been given to the Twelve disciples. Their authorization to carry the Gospel message was unique and distinct inside Christianity, as Lk. 6:13 asserts:

καὶ ὅτε ἐγένετο ἡμέρα, προσεφώνησεν τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐκλεξάμενος ἀπ’ αὐτῶν δώδεκα, **οὓς καὶ ἀποστόλους ὠνόμασεν**. And when day came, he [Jesus] called his disciples and chose twelve of them, **whom he also named apostles**:

The complete phrase, ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ, fleshes out the fuller concept: **an apostle commissioned by Christ Jesus through God’s will**. The subjective genitive function of Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ signals the agent of sending Paul out as an apostle. The framework of this apostleship is διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ, **by the will of God**. Thus both Christ and God the Father are behind Paul’s commissioning as an apostle. What this meant was not special privilege but a unique authorization to carry the Gospel message to the world.³ The true Gospel was entrusted to the apostles by Christ and God. This was intended to be the conceptual foundation for the Christian religion. Deviation from it meant a non-divine source of understanding. This part of the Superscriptio is virtually identical to the one in First Corinthians: Παῦλος κλητὸς ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ, **Paul, a called apostle by Christ Jesus through God’s will**.

Timothy is listed as the second sender of the letter: καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφός, **and Timothy our brother**. This associate of Paul had joined Paul and Silas in ministry when the two missionaries passed through Lystra in Galatia on the second missionary journey (cf. Acts title after Paul’s name in the Superscriptio of all of Paul’s letters. The title of δοῦλος also applies to Timothy in Phil. 1:1. Rom. 1:1 lists both titles ἀπόστολος and δοῦλος.

How Paul frames his title signals something about his relationship with the targeted readers. But one should note that the titular use in the personal letters of Philemon, First and Second Timothy, and Titus assumes a public reading of these letters before the various house church groups in the city of the recipients. Thus the title is more for the benefit of the listeners in the gathered Christian communities than for the individuals who are the stated recipients of the letters.

³“Apart from 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philipians, and Philemon, Paul always begins his letters with a reference to his apostleship. Such a reminder to his addressees was never more needed than at Corinth and never more timely than when serious doubts about his apostolicity were being sown in the fertile soil of the Corinthians’ minds by the interlopers from Judea (2 Cor. 11:4–5, 12–13; 12:11–12). Now it is true that the term ἀπόστολος appears only five other times in 2 Corinthians (8:23; 11:5, 13; 12:11–12) and never in direct reference to Paul himself, but the heart of 2 Corinthians 1–7 is Paul’s description of the apostolic ministry (2:14–7:4), while chs. 10–13 are essentially his defense of his apostolic authority.” [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), 128.]

16:1-5). This was about 50 AD and now with the writing of this letter in 56 AD several years of ministry together had transpired.⁴ Timothy became one of the apostle’s closest friends and co-workers. He stayed with Paul until the very end of Paul’s life in the mid 60s. His name shows up as a co-sender in several of Paul’s letters: in 1-2 Thess, along with Silas; 2 Corinthians; to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Philippians. Then he is the recipient of two of Paul’s letters while helping the church at Ephesus toward the end of Paul’s life.

Here he is designated as ὁ ἀδελφός, **our brother**. Timothy was well known by the members of the Christian community in Corinth. He had been a part of the initial evangelization of the city (cf. Acts 18:3; 19:22; 20:3). He had made at least one trip from Ephesus to Corinth in behalf of Paul during the apostle’s lengthy ministry there (1 Cor. 4:17-21). In this context, ὁ ἀδελφός signifies a Christian brother who is loved and respected, particularly by Paul.

The significance of listing Timothy as a co-sender of the letter has been vigorously debated over the years.⁵ At minimum, it stands as an endorsement of Timothy who probably accompanied Titus in carrying

⁴“The placing of Timothy’s name alongside that of Paul is not intended to connote a shared responsibility for authorship. To be sure, the following letter oscillates between the use of the singular (‘I’) and the plural (‘we’); and this feature has been discussed at some length.¹¹ But there is no suggestion that Paul consciously looked to Timothy to lend support to his apostolic convictions or that Timothy was a coauthor.

“On the contrary, it is more probable that Timothy is mentioned in the letter’s prescript because he needed Paul’s endorsement of all he had sought to do as he undertook an intermediate mission between the visits of Acts 18:3 and 20:4. In that interim we may postulate (on the basis of Acts 19:22) a visit made by Timothy subsequent to the sending of 1 Corinthians. Paul may well have dispatched him to report on the Corinthian crisis, inferred from 1 Cor 4:17–21, where v 17 is an example of an epistolary aorist, ‘I am sending to you Timothy.’¹²”

[Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 134–135.]

⁵“Paul often includes Timothy (Phil 1:1; Col 1:1; Phlm 1), Timothy and Silvanus (1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1), and others (Gal 2:2) in his greetings.⁷ Timothy is mentioned to endorse the letter, but other options for his role include a scribe, the letter bearer, a co-author, or a co-sender. The issue of Paul’s use of his own name and that of his colleagues is considered in Byrskog, and more broadly it is the theme of Richards.⁸ In the latter book, Richards argues that ‘the named co-senders of Paul’s letters were contributors to the letter’s content, that is, they were coauthors. Material from the coauthors was non-Pauline but not un-Pauline.’⁹ This is improbable, in our view.¹⁰” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 134.

the letter to Corinth (7:6, 13-14; 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18). Beyond this, Timothy most likely stands as the writing secretary who did the actual composition of the letter. The same reference ὁ ἀδελφὸς is given to Timothy in Philm. 1 and Col. 1:1. while in Phil. 1:1, Timothy is mentioned as a δούλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. In 2 Cor. 1:19, Timothy is included with Paul and Silas as having been of the highest integrity in their previous Gospel ministry to the Corinthians.

10.2.1.2 Adscriptio

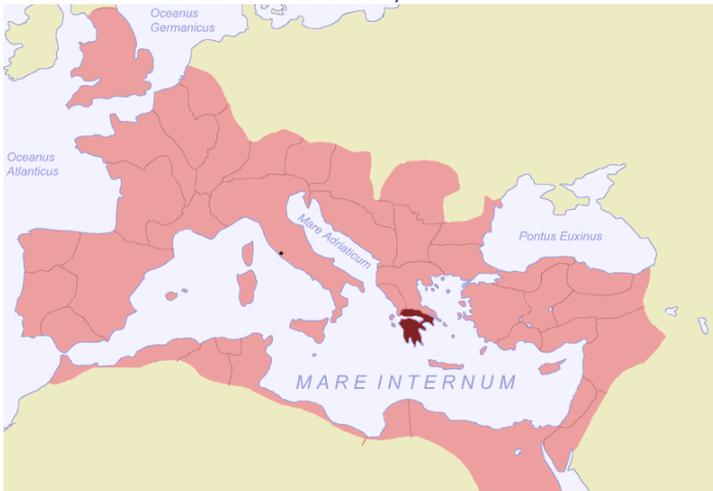
τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῆ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ σὺν τοῖς ἁγίοις πᾶσιν τοῖς οὔσιν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ,

To the church of God that is in Corinth, including all the saints throughout Achaia:

Although similar, the designation of the Corinthians in the Adscriptio of First Corinthians 1:2 is slightly different:

τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῆ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ, ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, **κλητοῖς ἁγίοις,** σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν·

To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:



The province of Achaia within the Roman Empire, c. 117 AD

The core specification is identical, but the expansion elements go distinctly different directions. Only the reference to τοῖς ἁγίοις, **the saints**, is common between the two segments. In First Corinthians, τοῖς ἁγίοις is used in reference to the Corinthians, while in Second Corinthians it refers to all the believers in the Roman province of Achaia, of which Corinth was the capital city at this point in time.

The phrase τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, **to the church of God**, is not intended as a title of the group. Used some 9 times in Second Corinthians (2 Cor 1:1, 8:1, 18–19, 23–24, 11:8, 28, 12:13), ἐκκλησίᾳ specifies the different

house church groups in the city as a collective designation of the Christian community. The addition of τοῦ θεοῦ, **God's**, distinguished the Christian community from an assembly of citizens of the city that would also be labeled τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ.⁶ The possessive genitive case use of τοῦ θεοῦ denotes this community as belonging to God -- a point contested by the Jewish synagogues of the city who claimed this as a label for themselves.

The geographical designation τῆ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ, **that is in Corinth**, gives location to this group of believers. The city in the mid first century was prosperous and large.⁷ It was a highly multi-cultural city with nu-

⁶“In the Greek city-state, ἐκκλησία denoted ‘a summoned assembly’ (from ἐκ-καλέω) of all citizens called out to carry on legislative or judicial business. In the Greek Pentateuch συναγωγή generally renders both qāhāl (‘assembly,’ the people of Israel convened in assembly) and ‘edā (‘congregation,’ the people of Israel constituting a national entity). Elsewhere in the LXX ἐκκλησία regularly translates qāhāl and συναγωγή generally renders ‘edā (and sometimes qāhāl). On the Jewish preference for συναγωγή to denote a local congregation and the Christian preference for ἐκκλησία, E. de W. Burton makes the perceptive observation that the common use of ἐκκλησία in the Greek-speaking world to designate a civil assembly (cf. Acts 19:39) led the Jews as they spread through that world and established their local congregations to prefer what had previously been the less used term, συναγωγή. On the other hand, when, in the same regions in which these Jewish συναγωγαὶ existed, the Christians established their own assemblies they, finding it more necessary to distinguish these from the Jewish congregations than from the civil assemblies, with which they were much less likely to be confused, chose the term ἐκκλησία, which the Jews had discarded.²⁴

“The possessive genitive τοῦ θεοῦ distinguishes the Christian ἐκκλησίᾳ from secular political assemblies: the church belongs to God, having been brought into existence by him and being sustained by his power.”

[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), 132.]

⁷ “First-century Corinth was the leading commercial center of southern Greece.¹ Its favorable geographical situation contributed to this, for it was located on the isthmus connecting northern Greece with the Peloponnesus, and it boasted two harbors, Lechaenum to the west and Cenchreae to the east.² It thus became an emporium for seaborne merchandise passing in either direction, and a considerable number of roads converged on it.³ Sailors were able to avoid the dangerous route around the Peloponnesus, and a more northerly trip across the Aegean Sea, away from storms, was made possible. Tribute to Corinth’s topographical position, which made unnecessary the voyage around Cape Malea, is given in Strabo: ‘To land their cargoes here was a welcome alternative to the voyage to Malea for merchants from both Italy and Asia.’⁴

“Like most seaports throughout history, Corinth took on an international reputation. Of this fact Cicero’s treatise⁵ *De republica* is cognizant: ‘Maritime cities also suggest a certain corruption and degeneration of morals; for they receive a mixture of strange languages and customs, and import foreign ways as well as foreign merchandise, so that none of their ancestral institutions can

possibly remain unchanged.’ There must have been considerable intermixing of races in its population, and this resulted in a variety of religious cults. Corinth’s chief shrine was the temple of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and life.⁶ In Corinth her cult appeared in a debased form, because of the admixture of certain oriental influences. This meant a low moral tone and sexual perversion in a possibly attested cult of sacred prostitution. According to Strabo, ‘the Temple of Aphrodite was so rich that it owned more than a thousand temple-slaves, courtesans, whom men and women had dedicated to the goddess.’⁷ But Conzelmann doubts the relevance of this description to the city of Paul’s day on the ground that Strabo’s reference to ‘prostitutes in the temple service’ (of Aphrodite)—*ιεροδούλους ἐταίρας*—is anachronistic because he is referring to the city in the pre-146 B.C. period, not the city he visited in 29 B.C.,⁸ and Pausanias is silent on the issue. J. Murphy-O’Connor notes that sacred prostitution was never a Greek custom, and — if Corinth was an exception — it becomes impossible to account for the silence of other ancient Greek authors.⁹ Because of the luxury and vice of Corinth the word ‘corinthianize’—*κορινθιάζεσθαι*—(i.e., to fornicate) was coined as an infamous sign of the wealth and immorality for which the city was renowned in the ancient world. But Aristophanes (ca. 450–385 B.C.) may have invented the verb as part of Athenian disdain for the region in southern Greece during the Peloponnesian War, or else the term reflects the rivalry of Athens, whose trade was jeopardized by Corinth. Yet the term was widely popular. Plays such as *Korinthiastēs* (*Κορινθιαστής*, i.e., ‘The Harlot’) were written by Philetaerus (4th cent. B.C.) and Poliochus, according to Athenaeus.¹⁰ Plato¹¹ uses *Korinthia korē*, ‘a Corinthian girl,’ to mean a prostitute (*ψέγεις ἄρα καὶ Κορινθίαν κόρη;* ‘you would frown then on a Corinthian girl?’).

“In such a place, by the grace of God and the ministry of his servant Paul, a church was formed. A large proportion of its members must have been drawn from the pagan world, with its heterogeneous standards of life and conduct. Yet they would be familiar with Jewish teaching as converts to the faith of the synagogue (Acts 18:4).¹² Not surprisingly, issues of Christian morality and behavior dominate the first epistle to the Corinthians; and in 2 Cor 6:14–18 a strong warning is issued against association with unbelievers. ‘Also, the tendencies to factiousness and instability have a real psychological basis in both the blend and the clash of racial character to be found in such a cosmopolitan city.’¹³

“A section of the church belonged to the Jewish colony, the so-called Dispersion, that was naturally represented in such a commercial center.¹⁴ Jewish exiles from Sicyon (to the northwest of Corinth) may have fled when their city was destroyed in 146 B.C. There were common trade links to draw them.¹⁵ Murphy-O’Connor remarks that after A.D. 67, when Vespasian sent six thousand young men to work on the Corinth canal, the nucleus of Jewish communities in Corinth would have been augmented.¹⁶ Jewish legal rights in such situations include the right to assembly, permission to send the temple tax to Jerusalem, and exemption from any civic activity that would violate their Sabbath observance. Smallwood¹⁷ suggests that by Paul’s time the Jewish presence at Corinth would be considered a *politeuma*, i.e., a corporation of resident aliens with permanent rights of domicile and empowered to manage its own affairs through self-appointed officials. Hence we read of a synagogue ruler (Acts 18:8, 17), and a debated inscription [SYN]AGOGĒ HEBR[AIŌN], ‘Synagogue of the Hebrews,’ may testify to the site of their meeting place.^{18*}

[Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 30–

merous influences politically, culturally, and religiously. Acts 18:1-11 describes the founding of the Christian community in the city under Paul’s evangelizing leadership. It was comprised of a mixture of Jewish and Gentile converts.⁸

But the letter is also addressed to a wider audience than just the house church groups inside the city itself: *σὺν τοῖς ἀγίοις πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ*, *together with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia*.⁹ This has some resemblance to the Adscriptio expansion in First Corinthians: *σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν*, *together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours* (1:2b). But Second Corinthians limits the designation to the believers in the Christian communities all over the Roman province¹⁰ of Achaia. The inclusion of this wider 31.]

⁸“Corinth had attained eminence as a city much earlier than Paul’s arrival there, owing to its commercial advantages, but it had been destroyed by the Roman conqueror L. Mummius about two hundred years before the apostle’s visit.²⁰ After lying in ruins for about a century, it was reconstructed by Julius Caesar in 46–44 B.C. and peopled as a Roman colony. Our authority here is Appian.²¹ He supplies the datum that Julius Caesar sent in a band of colonists. His statement that those colonists were sent ‘to Carthage and some to Corinth’ links the repopulating of the two cities and provides a fixed point of chronology. Appian concludes: ‘Thus the Romans won the Carthaginian part in Africa, destroyed Carthage, and repeopled it again 102 years after its destruction.’ The two cities of Carthage and Corinth fell in 146 B.C., so their rebuilding is dated 44 B.C. Possibly this occurred sooner, since Julius Caesar was assassinated on the Ides of March in 44 B.C. and Augustus (Octavian) was in no position to execute the plan to reestablish the colonies before the end of 43 B.C. at the earliest.²² It may be preferable to keep the date flexible and allow the time of Corinth’s rebirth by the Romans to fall between 46 B.C., when Julius Caesar was engaged in his Africa campaign, and his death two years later. He may well have grasped the strategic importance of Corinth as a commercial center.²³ This historical background may account for Roman names that appear in the Corinthian letters (1 Cor 1:14: Crispus, Gaius; 16:17: Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus).” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 32.]

⁹“A Greek region which twice gave its name to all of Greece before its Achaean League (280–146 B.C.) fell to the Romans (Polyb. 2.41; Thuc. 1.111, 115). All relevant NT references involve Corinth, Achaia’s capital (Acts 18:12, 27; 1 Cor 16:15; 2 Cor 1:1).” [Jerry A. Pattengale, “Achaia (Place),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 53.]

¹⁰“Although Achaia aligned with Rome in 198 B.C., it lost its autonomy in 146 B.C., when, after years of disputes, the Romans razed Corinth. Julius Caesar turned Rome’s attention again to Achaia in 46 B.C. and rebuilt its former isthmian city, which became the Roman capital of Achaia in 27 B.C. (Apul Met. 10.18). Achaia now included all of the southern half of the Greek peninsula (Paus. 8). In this same year the Romans made the northern part



audience stresses the importance of this letter being read and discussed by Christians outside the city of Corinth. Additionally, after some five or six years from the beginning of Christianity in Achaëa.¹¹ at both Athens and Corinth, the assumption behind this statement is that numerous churches are located in towns across the province. As a senatorial province, rather than an imperial province, the region was free from large contingents of Roman military and its governorship was a prized trophy for Roman senators who received one year appointments as governor usually as a reward of some kind by the senate in Rome. Thus Christianity had freedom to spread during these decades with interference from the emperor.

Again it should be noted that τοῖς ἁγίοις πᾶσιν, **all the saints**, is a label for Christians on earth who are committed to Christ as believers.¹² It is in no way designating a

of (former) Achaia into Macedonia, with a southern border stretching from the Eubian gulf west-northwest to around Actium. This division prefaces the reference ‘Macedonia and Achaia’ which generally implied all of Greece (Acts 19:21; Rom 15:26; 1 Thess 1:8). The Romans often just used ‘Achaia’ to define the parameters of Greece, excluding Thessaly. The early Christians recognized Macedonia and Achaia as one of the thirteen major Roman provinces (MCBW, 218). By A.D. 65 the provinces of Thessaly and Epirus were clearly defined and constituted Achaia’s northern border; Actium, and the coastal territory to its immediate south, became part of Epirus.” [Jerry A. Pattengale, “Achaia (Place),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:53.]

¹¹“The name of Achaëa has a slightly convoluted history. Homer uses the term *Achaeans* as a generic term for Greeks throughout the Iliad; conversely, a distinct region of *Achaëa* is not mentioned. The region later known as Achaëa is instead referred to as Aegialus.^[1] Both Herodotus and Pausanias recount the legend that the Achaean tribe was forced out of their lands in the Argolis by the Dorians, during the legendary Dorian invasion of the Peloponnese.^[2] Consequently, the Achaeans forced the Aegialians (now known as the Ionians) out of their land.^[3] The Ionians took temporary refuge in Athens, and Aegialus became known as Achaëa.^{[4][5]} It was supposedly for this reason that the region known as Achaëa in Classical Greece did not correspond to Homeric references.

“*Under the Romans, Achaëa was a province covering much of central and southern Greece.* This is the Achaëa referenced in the New Testament (e.g., Acts 18:12 and 19:21; Romans 15:26 and 16:5). However, Pausanias, writing in the 2nd century AD, devotes one of the books of *Description of Greece* to the ancient region of Achaëa, showing that the name, locally at least, still preserved the use from the Classical period.^[6] The name, Achaëa, was later used in the crusader state, the Principality of Achaëa (1205–1432), which comprised the whole Peloponnese, thus more closely following Roman use. The modern Greek prefecture of Achaëa is largely based on the ancient region.” [“Achaëa (ancient region),” wikipedia.org]

¹²“The substantive adjective ἅγιος, ‘saint,’ as a title for Christians has its roots in the OT. It derives from a Hebrew word meaning ‘to separate’ (שָׁדַד, *qds*), and the LXX renders the root by ἅγιος, ‘holy,’ in its adjectival form. The saints are the separated ones in a double sense; negatively, there is separation from evil, and, on the positive side, dedication to God and his service.²⁸⁷” [Ralph P. Mar-

sub-category of individuals inside Christianity.

10.2.1.3 *Salutatio*

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Instead of the very common greeting, both orally and in letter *salutatio*, in the Greek speaking world of Paul as simply χαίρειν, **Hello**, Paul adopts a special form that is reflected here with χάρις, **grace**, and εἰρήνη, **peace**.¹³

Note the etymological link of χάρις to χαίρειν as the Greek hello. But χάρις shifts the focus from the individual feeling happiness as in χαίρειν to God’s favor and blessing, as referenced by χάρις. Then added is the Hebrew standard greeting of דּוּלֶשׁ (*šā·lōm*), equal to εἰρήνη in Greek. The Hebrew idea of peace, especially as a greeting, referenced not the negative aspect as does the English word ‘peace,’ i.e., the absence of conflict. But instead the focus was on the positive side of the fullness of God’s blessings. Think the Garden of Eden before the fall in order to get the richer view of the Hebrew דּוּלֶשׁ. Paul’s adoption of a Christian greeting stresses out of both the Greek and Jewish worlds the blessings of God being wished upon the individual, rather than the person finding a way to conjure up some happiness in their life.

The distinctly Christian aspect of this greeting is further stressed by ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, **from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**. Note the dual ‘balancing’ of χάρις, **grace**, and εἰρήνη, **peace**. with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The source of all divine blessing comes from God through Jesus Christ. This Paul asserts in this greeting. Paul’s greeting in Second Corinthians exactly matches the one in First Corinthians.

The epistolary function of the *salutatio* in an ancient letter was ‘bridge building’ for a positive relationship between the sender and recipients of the letter. Instead of it being predicated upon human joy as was the typical case in the secular greeting χαίρειν, Paul’s Christian version bases a positive relationship upon the common blessings of God and Christ. This is what links us together as believers in the family of God. Further, Paul’s framing of the greeting points to what he is going to say to his readers as reflecting the bestowal of divine

tin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 137.]

¹³Note the pattern of grace and peace dominating **the salutatio** in all of Paul’s letters: Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:2; Col. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:2; Phlm 3; Titus 1:4. In 1 and 2 Timothy it is modified to χάρις, ἔλεος, εἰρήνη.



blessing by their hearing and heeding his words as an apostle of Christ. His desire is for what he is going to say in the letter to bring them into a greater experience of that divine blessing.

10.2.2 Proem

3 Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ πατὴρ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν καὶ θεὸς πάσης παρακλήσεως, 4 ὁ παρακαλῶν ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν εἰς τὸ δύνασθαι ἡμᾶς παρακαλεῖν τοὺς ἐν πάσῃ θλίψει διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως ἧς παρακαλούμεθα αὐτοὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ. 5 ὅτι καθὼς περισσεύει τὰ παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ἡμᾶς, οὕτως διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ περισσεύει καὶ ἡ παράκλησις ἡμῶν. 6 εἴτε δὲ θλιβόμεθα, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως καὶ σωτηρίας· εἴτε παρακαλούμεθα, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως τῆς ἐνεργουμένης ἐν ὑπομονῇ τῶν αὐτῶν παθημάτων ὧν καὶ ἡμεῖς πάσχομεν. 7 καὶ ἡ ἐλπίς ἡμῶν βεβαία ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν εἰδότες ὅτι ὡς κοινωνοὶ ἐστε τῶν παθημάτων, οὕτως καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως.

8 Οὐ γὰρ θέλομεν ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς θλίψεως ἡμῶν τῆς γενομένης ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ, ὅτι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὑπὲρ δύναμιν ἐβαρῆθημεν ὥστε ἐξαπορηθῆναι ἡμᾶς καὶ τοῦ ζῆν· 9 ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς τὸ ἀπόκριμα τοῦ θανάτου ἐσχήκαμεν, ἵνα μὴ πεποιθότες ὦμεν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ τῷ ἐγείροντι τοὺς νεκρούς· 10 ὃς ἐκ τηλικούτου θανάτου ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς καὶ ρύσεται, εἰς ὃν ἠλπίκαμεν [ᾧ] καὶ ἔτι ρύσεται, 11 συνυπουργούντων καὶ ὑμῶν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τῇ δεήσει, ἵνα ἐκ πολλῶν προσώπων τὸ εἰς ἡμᾶς χάρισμα διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστηθῇ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, 4 who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. 5 For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. 6 If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering. 7 Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation.

8 We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of the affliction we experienced in Asia; for we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death so that we would rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. 10 He who rescued us from so deadly a peril will continue to rescue us; on him we have set our hope that he will rescue us again, 11 as you also join in helping us by your prayers,

so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

In ancient Greek letters the salutatio usually led directly into a prayer wish from the letter sender. This is the proem section in Paul's letters and typically is much longer than that found in ancient secular letters. Also, especially in the Proem section the expansion elements beyond the core expression of thanksgiving additionally serve to signal major themes to be developed in the letter body.

The Proem of Second Corinthians goes a slightly different direction than do those of Paul's other letters in all but the pastoral letters and Ephesians. The dominant formula introduction is Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου, I give thanks to my God.... Minor deviations such as a plural form may occur but this is found in 1 Thess. 1:2-10; 2 Thess. 1:3-12; 1 Cor. 1:4-9; Rom. 1:8-15; Philm. 4-7; Col. 1:3-12; Phil. 1:3-11 (7 of the 13 letters).¹⁴ Only¹⁵ 2 Cor. 1:3-11 and Eph. 1:3-23 reflect a significant modification with Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ....¹⁶ The different thrust of the expansion elements for both these proems reveals why the apostle used a different introductory formula. True to both his creativity and literary integrity, he uses a different introductory formula when the content of the proem is different.

The thrust of thanksgiving to God remains in tact as is true for all the proems. But in 2 Cor. 1:3-11, the emphasis upon not upon Paul's readers, the Corinthians, and his thankfulness to God for them. Although this was the case in First Corinthians, now the focus is upon God's deliverance of Paul out of some horrific situations that posed serious danger to his physical life.

But true to the pauline use of the longer proem, the expansion elements set the stage for the entire letter body with a repeated stress upon the ministry that God had called him to carry out. To be sure, this will be approached several different ways in 1:12- 3:10. But Paul's ministry remains the underlying theme of the entire letter from the proem to the end of the letter body. The proem sets up the core foundation of thankfulness to God for preserving Paul through hardships so that

¹⁴1-2 Timothy with their distinct emphasis have Χάρις ἔχω τῷ, I have praise to (God). And Titus omits a proem. ...

¹⁵But outside the Pauline corpus of letters, the Proem of 1 Peter 1:3-9 adopts this Pauline formula in its opening declaration: Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Thanks be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.... This reflects a Pauline influence via Silas serving as the writing secretary of First Peter (cf. 5:12). This evidently came to be considered more appropriate for a letter written to multiple audiences as was the case for both Ephesians and First Peter.

¹⁶The use of a single sentence in Eph. 1:3-14 as the thanksgiving section (vv. 15-23 are the intercessory section) clearly has its own distinct trinitarian praise of God for the circular letter.

Proem

1 ^{1.3} **Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς (ἔστω)**

καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,
ὁ πατὴρ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν
καὶ

^{1.4} θεὸς πάσης παρακλήσεως,

ὁ παρακαλῶν ἡμᾶς

ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν

εἰς τὸ δύνασθαι ἡμᾶς παρακαλεῖν τοὺς ἐν πάσῃ θλίψει

διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως |

/-----|

ἧς παρακαλούμεθα αὐτοὶ

ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ.

^{1.5} ὅτι

καθὼς περισσεύει τὰ παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ἡμᾶς,

οὕτως

διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ

2 **περισσεύει καὶ ἡ παράκλησις ἡμῶν.**

^{1.6} δὲ

εἴτε θλιβόμεθα,

3 **(θλιβόμεθα)**

ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως καὶ σωτηρίας·

εἴτε παρακαλούμεθα,

4 **(παρακαλούμεθα)**

ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως

τῆς ἐνεργουμένης

ἐν ὑπομονῇ

τῶν αὐτῶν παθημάτων

ῶν καὶ ἡμεῖς πάσχομεν.

^{1.7} καὶ

5 **ἡ ἐλπίς ἡμῶν βεβαία (ἐστίν)**

ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν

εἰδότες

ὡς κοινωνοὶ ἐστε τῶν παθημάτων,

ὅτι...οὕτως (ἐστε) καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως.

^{1.8} γὰρ

6 **Οὐ θέλομεν ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν,**

ἀδελφοί,

ὑπὲρ τῆς θλίψεως ἡμῶν

τῆς γενομένης

ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ,

καθ' ὑπερβολὴν

ὑπὲρ δύναμιν

ὅτι...ἐβαρῆθημεν

ὥστε ἐξαπορηθῆναι ἡμᾶς καὶ τοῦ ζῆν·

^{1.9} ἀλλ'

ἐν ἑαυτοῖς

7 **αὐτοὶ...τὸ ἀπόκριμα τοῦ θανάτου ἐσχήκαμεν,**

ἵνα μὴ πεποιθότες ᾖμεν

ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς

ἀλλ'

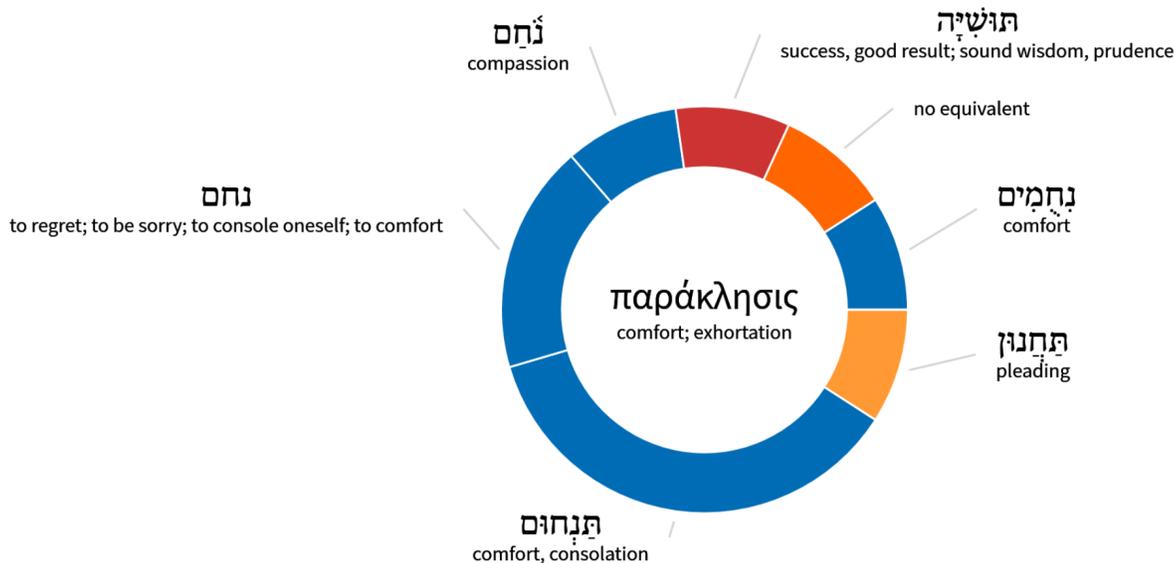
--- (πεποιθότες ᾖμεν)

ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ

τῷ ἐγείροντι τοὺς νεκρούς·

| ἐκ τηλικούτου θανάτου





חַסְדִּים tanhûm | 4 of 16

Ps 93:19 Κύριε, κατὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ὀδυνῶν μου ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ μου, αἱ παρακλήσεις σου ἠγάπησαν τὴν ψυχὴν μου.

Job 21:2 Ἀκούσατε, ἀκούσατέ μου τῶν λόγων, ἵνα μὴ ᾖ μοι παρ' ὑμῶν αὕτη ἡ παράκλησις.

Is 66:11 ἵνα θηλάσητε καὶ ἐμπλησθῆτε ἀπὸ μαστοῦ παρακλήσεως αὐτῆς, ἵνα ἐκθηλάσαντες τρυφήσητε ἀπὸ εἰσόδου δόξης αὐτῆς.

Je 16:7 καὶ οὐ μὴ κλασθῆ ἄρτος ἐν πένθει αὐτῶν εἰς παράκλησιν ἐπὶ τεθνηκότι· οὐ ποτιοῦσιν αὐτὸν ποτήριον εἰς παράκλησιν ἐπὶ πατρὶ καὶ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ.

חַסְדִּים nham | 2 of 16

Na 3:7 καὶ ἔσται πᾶς ὁ ὄρων σε καταβήσεται ἀπὸ σοῦ καὶ ἐρεῖ Δειλαία Νινευή· τίς στενάξει αὐτήν; πόθεν ζητήσω παράκλησιν αὐτῆς;

Je 16:7 καὶ οὐ μὴ κλασθῆ ἄρτος ἐν πένθει αὐτῶν εἰς παράκλησιν ἐπὶ τεθνηκότι· οὐ ποτιοῦσιν αὐτὸν ποτήριον εἰς παράκλησιν ἐπὶ πατρὶ καὶ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ.

חַסְדִּים nōham | 1 of 16

Ho 13:14 ἐκ χειρὸς ἄδου ρύσομαι καὶ ἐκ θανάτου λυτρώσομαι αὐτούς· ποῦ ἡ δίκη σου, θάνατε; ποῦ τὸ κέντρον σου, ἄδη; παράκλησις κέκρυπται ἀπὸ ὀφθαλμῶν μου,

הַשְׂכָּל tûšiygâ | 1 of 16

Is 28:29 καὶ ταῦτα παρὰ Κυρίου σαβαὼθ ἐξῆλθεν τὰ τέρατα· βουλεύσασθε, ὑψώσατε ματαίαν παράκλησιν.

no equivalent | 1 of 16

Is 30:7 Αἰγύπτιοι μάταια καὶ κενὰ ὠφελήσουσιν ὑμᾶς· ἀπάγγελον αὐτοῖς ὅτι ματαία ἡ παράκλησις ὑμῶν αὕτη.

רַחֲמִים nihumîm | 1 of 16

Is 57:18 τὰς ὁδοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐόρακα, καὶ ἰασάμην αὐτὸν καὶ παρεκάλεσα αὐτόν, καὶ ἔδωκα αὐτῷ παράκλησιν ἀληθινήν,

תְּפִלָּה tahānûn | 1 of 16

Je 38:9 ἐν κλαυθμῷ ἐξῆλθον, καὶ ἐν παρακλήσει ἀνάξω αὐτούς, αὐλίζων ἐπὶ διώρυγας ὑδάτων ἐν ὁδῷ ὀρθῆ, καὶ οὐ μὴ πλανηθῶσιν ἐν αὐτῇ· ὅτι ἐγενόμην τῷ Ἰσραὴλ εἰς πατέρα, καὶ Ἐφράιμ πρωτότοκός μου ἔστιν.

18 Εὐλογητὸς κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραὴλ ὁ ποιῶν θαυμάσια μόνος,†

19 καὶ εὐλογητὸν τὸ ὄνομα τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος,

18 Thanks be to the Lord God, the God of Israel, the One exclusively doing wondrous things

19 And thanks be to the name of His glory for the age and forever and ever.

Here Εὐλογητὸς translates the Hebrew **רַבָּרַב**, meaning

blessed and also Baruch.¹⁸ The the Jewish *berakah*, prayer of blessing, stands behind the opening prayer expression of the Jewish Christian leader. Those Corinthian members with a Jewish background and the Gentiles who had attended the Jewish synagogue would have heard this echo in the wording of Paul's opening

¹⁸1263. **רַבָּרַב** Bârûwk, *baw-rook'*; pass. part. from 1288; *bless-ed*; Baruk, the name of three Isr.:—Baruch. [CDWGT HB]

prayer of this letter.

This opening formula ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ clearly asserts the deity of Christ as God's Son. Had Christianity adopted such a formula expression for opening the house church gatherings? Possibly so and Paul either picks up on it or reflects his influence previously on shaping the structuring of those meetings. Clearly the Jewish heritage of Zechariah stands in the background of his thanksgiving to God for the birth of John in his dedication in the Jerusalem temple: **Εὐλογητὸς κύριος ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ**, ὅτι ἐπεσκέψατο καὶ ἐποίησεν λύτρωσιν τῷ λαῷ αὐτοῦ, **Thanks be to the God of Israel because He has looked favorably on His people and has redeemed them** (Lk. 1:68). Thus a Christian berakah style Jewish prayer in early Christianity reflects a close linkage of the God of Israel with Jesus Christ. This Paul utilizes in his opening prayer of thanksgiving in Second Corinthians.

ὁ πατὴρ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν καὶ θεὸς πάσης παρακλήσεως, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort. This expansion element not only continues the heavy Jewish tones in its wording but prepares for the next element in v. 4. Note how a similar emphasis unfolds in the other two poems:

Eph. 1:3. Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ εὐλόγησας ἡμᾶς ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἐν Χριστῷ, **Thanks be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ....**

1 Pet. 1:3 Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς εἰς ἐλπίδα ζωῆς δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν, **Thanks be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has given us birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**

The emphasis naturally moves from thanksgiving to a focus on God as merciful and gracious to His people. And for Paul, as well as Peter, this is embedded in the relationship between God and Christ as His Son. God's stance of showing favor (τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν) rather than wrath stands as the source of παρακλήσεως, comfort. The term οἰκτιρμός reflects a divine display of compassion and concern. Here in the plural form οἰκτιρμῶν in the very Hebraistic phrase ὁ πατὴρ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν the idea moves to multiple expressions arising from God as their source.

This leads then to θεὸς πάσης παρακλήσεως, **God of all comfort.** The term παράκλησις is one of those Greek terms with such depth of meaning that any modern translation of it sheds most of its meaning in translation. For English, it encompasses the ideas of encouragement, exhortation, appeal, comfort, consol-

ation etc. And as the above chart indicates, παράκλησις in LXX translation picks up a wide variety of Hebrew terms out of the OT. The combining of οἰκτιρμῶν and παρακλήσεως, with both in the plural form, stresses concrete demonstrations of God's mercy in specific situations. And it is this which has lifted Paul out of any tendency toward self-pity or depression from these situations. Paul's experiencing of the many expressions of divine mercy means also, at the same time, that which encourages and comforts him. The reality here is better understood experientially than rationally.

Also important here is the unique structure with which both these two phrases are set up using a basic principle of Greek grammar not easily brought out in translation:

ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ
ὁ πατὴρ...καὶ θεὸς

Two things should be noted. First note the θεὸς / πατὴρ // πατὴρ / θεὸς chiasistic structure: AB//B'A'. The One who produces these experiences is first and foremost θεὸς, **God.** But these experiences show Him most significantly as πατὴρ, **Father.** This central affirmation of God set Christianity apart from other religions of Paul's day.

Secondly, note the unity structure here with the standard Greek pattern:

Article Noun + Noun (1 + 1 = 1)

ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ
ὁ πατὴρ...καὶ θεὸς

This means that only one person is referenced although from two different angles as both θεὸς and πατὴρ. This close link of θεὸς as πατὴρ is found five times inside Second Corinthians: 1:2, 3; 6:18; 11:31. This emphasis upon God as Father, while not unique to Christianity, was central in Christian belief and came out of the teachings of Jesus Himself.

Paul had a clear sense of both dimensions of who God is. He is θεὸς as an all powerful deity to be revered and respected. But unlike the Greek and Roman deities, He is also πατὴρ in the sense of a deity who desires close personal relationships with those who are His children. In Rom. 8:15 and Gal. 4:6, this idea is taken a step further via the Aramaic equivalent of the Greek πατὴρ: αββα ὁ πατὴρ, Abba!, i.e., **Father!** The Aramaic stresses close relationship, even beyond what might be understood from the Greek πατὴρ. Yet it does not lose the sense of deep reverence and respect, conveyed in the Greek even by πατὴρ and certainly by θεὸς.

ὁ παρακαλῶν ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν εἰς τὸ δύνασθαι ἡμᾶς παρακαλεῖν τοὺς ἐν πάσῃ θλίψει διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως ἧς παρακαλούμεθα αὐτοὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ. **The One who comforts us in our every affliction so that we can comfort those in their every affliction through the com-**

fort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Now the point of the first two stichs becomes clear in this third one found in v. 4. The God who gives comfort expects His people also to give comfort to others. The flow of divine comfort must not dead end in us! Rather, it is to be a flowing river passing through us into the lives of others! That way it stands as a “Sea of Galilee” full of life and nourishment, rather than a “Dead Sea” filled with nothing but the leftovers of death and ruin.

The common circumstance between us as believers and others is here depicted as ἐν πάσῃ θλίψει, *in affliction*. The meaning behind Paul’s use of θλίψις translated as ‘affliction’ is fleshed out in part in the rationale section of vv. 8-11 where the same term is used. The common θλίψις between Paul and the Corinthians is also deeply connected to τὰ παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, the sufferings of Christ. This suffering is then defined with the same term παθημάτων along with the verb derivative πάσχομεν in v. 6. Thus θλίψις and πάθημα are used interchangeably by Paul for hardships derived from persecution for himself and for the Corinthians. But πάθημα alone is used to define what Christ experienced (v. 5).

But as recipients of God’s encouragement in times of persecution -- ὁ παρακαλῶν ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν, *He who encourages us in our every affliction* -- we then reach out to give this encouragement to fellow believers undergoing the same things: εἰς τὸ δύνασθαι ἡμᾶς παρακαλεῖν τοὺς ἐν πάσῃ θλίψει, *so that we are able to encourage those in their every affliction*. But this ability to comfort others does not come from within us and our abilities. The παράκλησις that we can share is actually that which has come from God through Christ: διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως ἧς παρακαλούμεθα αὐτοὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, *through the encouragement by which we ourselves have been encouraged by God*. This rather complex sentence, that is unfolding here, is a beautiful binding together in ancient Koine Greek of some of the most profound spiritual insights that exist. The core idea of παράκλησις / παρακαλέω (n/v) of coming to stand along side of another in providing needed help here pictures God first doing that with us as believers and then through what came through Christ in this παράκλησις is to then be passed on to fellow believers experiencing affliction as well. Paul gives here a beautiful picture of διακονία, *ministry/service* for the believing community. Note that this noun is used nine times in Second Corinthians along with its parallel λειτουργία (1x) that pictures the same reality through the figurative expression of service rendered by a temple priest. This signals a major point of emphasis for the letter body of Second Corinthians.

One should also note the extensiveness of the giving of παράκλησις. Since God has met us τῇ θλίψει

ἡμῶν, *in our every affliction*, we then are to share that παράκλησις with τοὺς ἐν πάσῃ θλίψει, *those in their every affliction*. We cannot be selective about when and to whom we share παράκλησις. We are to stand alongside fellow believers at all times in order to become a channel of God’s encouragement to them.

And to be sure that Paul’s readers understand clearly his point he inserts a subordinate causal ὅτι clause that elaborates the details of what has been declared thus far (v. 5). ὅτι καθὼς περισσεύει τὰ παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ἡμᾶς, οὕτως διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ περισσεύει καὶ ἡ παράκλησις ἡμῶν. *For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ*. Here is a challenge to Bible translators that is virtually impossible to overcome in most of the modern western languages. In verse 8, the coordinate level causal conjunction γὰρ introduces the significant amplification of the ideas in vv. 3-7. But in v. 5, the subordinate causal conjunction ὅτι introduces a secondary level amplification mainly of just the infinitive phrase beginning with ὁ παρακαλῶν and contained in verse 4. Since almost universal ignorance of coordinate and subordinate conjunctions exists in modern English, especially the American version of it, both Bible translators and most commentators ignore these distinctions and impose a different set of assumptions down upon the biblical text. The NRSV handling of this is a prime example with its use of ‘for’ to introduce v. 4 with ὅτι and then completely ignore γὰρ in v. 8. But ‘for’ is only usable in English as either a preposition or coordinate conjunction, it is thus incorrect with a subordinate clause. The correct English subordinate conjunction here for ὅτι is ‘because of.’ But in English a subordinate conjunction can’t introduce a coordinate clause expressed in English.¹⁹

¹⁹It is very laughable to try to sort this out using most of the English language grammars of ancient Greek, especially of Koine Greek. The majority explain this common pattern in ancient Greek in terms of the limited English language grammar with the absurd claim that the NT sometimes substituted ὅτι for γὰρ. But this is completely incorrect. Ancient Greek grammar should be explained within the framework of how it worked grammatically in the ancient world. Noting the differences between authentic Greek grammar function in that world and the limitations of modern western languages should be given, not ignored. Again the modern German grammars of ancient Greek tend to be right on target *he3re*, while the English language grammars mostly miss the point.

The ancient Greek mind had a very clear sense of primary and secondary level ideas, and their language, especially classical Greek, reflected this quite clearly. Much time was spent both in oratory and in writing in learning how to carefully balance out these distinctions. With only oral pauses being used for idea separation both in speaking and in reading written materials (with no punctuation marks or spaces between words), understanding such distinctions and how to communicate them clearly was central to skill development with the language.



What v. 5 explains is how the move of divine παράκλησις flows from God to us and then through us to others. Its central God's structuring of the Christian life and is reflected also in Jesus' declaration in Mt. 5:16, οὕτως λαμψάτω τὸ φῶς ὑμῶν ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὅπως ἴδωσιν ὑμῶν τὰ καλὰ ἔργα καὶ δοξάσωσιν τὸν πατέρα ὑμῶν τὸν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. [In the same way let the light in you shine before people so that they see your good works and praise your Father in Heaven.](#)

Verse 6 adds a second declaration to this causal expression although at a primary clause level: εἴτε δὲ θλιβόμεθα, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως καὶ σωτηρίας· εἴτε παρακαλούμεθα, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως τῆς ἐνεργουμένης ἐν ὑπομονῇ τῶν αὐτῶν παθημάτων ἧν καὶ ἡμεῖς πάσχομεν. [And whether we are being afflicted, it is in behalf of your encouragement and deliverance; whether whether we are being encouraged, it is in behalf of your encouragement that is being energized in perservance of the same sufferings which we also suffer.](#) What Paul and his associates were experiencing in persecution was for the sake of encouraging the Corinthians to be true to Christ and discover God's deliverance in the process. Even the divine encouragement given to Paul by God served to encourage the Corinthians through a divine infusion of perservance in the face of sufferings common to those of Paul and his associates.

This application in v. 6 of the divine principle of παράκλησις set forth in vv. 4-5 makes abundantly clear what Paul has touched on with παράκλησις. Ingenuously he has used the first person plural throughout this larger section of vv. 3ff. to reference primarily himself and Timothy from the superscriptio (v. 1). But also in the more principalized aspects of vv. 3-11 especially the 'we' means 'we believers' in Christ. This he does while maintaining a distinction between ἡμᾶς/ ἡμῶν and ὑμῶν in the idea expression.

He ends this section (vv. 3-7) on a positive note in verse 7 regarding the Corinthians: καὶ ἡ ἐλπίς ἡμῶν βεβαία ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν εἰδότες ὅτι ὡς κοινωνοὶ ἐστε τῶν παθημάτων, οὕτως καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως. [And our confidence is strong for you knowing that as you are participants in sufferings you also are in the same way with encouragement.](#) Some see eschatological projections in this, but contextually no clear signal of such exists in the text itself. παράκλησις at the end of verse 7 is sometimes translated 'consolation' implying end times. But the contextual use of παράκλησις throughout these verses defines encouragement experienced here and now in the midst of suffering persecution. ἡ ἐλπίς ἡμῶν at the beginning should be translated according to its literal meaning of confidence. When linked to ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, regarding you, it clearly expresses Paul's confidence in the Corinthians experiencing the same παράκλησις as he was out of a common commitment to Christ and

service to others.

What has transpired between First Corinthians, written some two or so years before Second Corinthians, is significant improvement in the spiritual life of the church. It was not in any way perfect as chapters 10-13 will illustrate, but the positive side of the church alluded to especially in chapter 16 of First Corinthians had evidently grown stronger in this interim period. Thus the apostle's confidence in the Corinthians to obey Christ was much greater by the writing of Second Corinthians.

In the usual pattern of the proem in Paul's letters, the prayer of thanksgiving to God for his readers shades into a prayer of intercession for even greater spiritual experience with God. But given the unique direction of this proem in Second Corinthians, the second unit of the proem stands an elaboration (via γὰρ) on what stood behind the mentioning of Paul and Timothy's τῆς θλίψεως ἡμῶν referenced in vv. 3-7. Additionally greater detail regarding the spiritual growth of the Corinthians is mentioned as well. Thus when vv. 3-7 and 8-11 are taken together they stand as a summarizing introduction to the letter body of Second Corinthians and structured in a Proem prayer of praise to God. The sometimes used topic introduction of Οὐ θέλομεν ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, [We do not want you to be ignorant...](#), signals here a beginning transition into the letter body from the proem itself. Thus Paul moves from one section into another of the letter without giving a signal of a sharp break point between the two sections. And this was normal not just for Paul but among the writers of more formal letters generally in the ancient world. Here in Second Corinthians with the role of this unique proem, such transitional signals would be expected since essentially the two sections represent a continuation of a common theme. The contents of the letter body largely amplify the core points especially in vv. 3-7. The causal γὰρ in v. 8 sets up vv. 8-11 as an important rationale for vv. 3-7, thus getting the readers and listeners of this letter ready for the detailed development in the letter body of the principle of παράκλησις as Paul had experienced it in ministry, especially in regard to the church at Corinth.

The central point of vv. 8-11 is stated in the amplification of the introductory Οὐ γὰρ θέλομεν ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί. The prepositional phrase ὑπὲρ τῆς θλίψεως ἡμῶν τῆς γενομένης ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ, [regarding our affliction which happened in Asia](#), identifies the primary θλίψις of Paul and Timothy as having occurred during the lengthy ministry in Asia. The wording of the singular form with the participle modifier locating it in Asia refers to something serious that happened to Paul while in Ephesus, the capital of this Roman province.

One immediately thinks of the description of that

ministry in Acts 19:1-20:1. But Luke does not describe any event during this three plus year ministry from about 53 through 55 AD that seems to seriously jeopardize Paul's life. The closest thing is the city uproar at the end of this period in vv. 23-36 over the opposition of Demetrius the silversmith. But Luke stresses that Paul was protected by the brothers from direct exposure to harm during this time. Plus Timothy was not in Ephesus at this point according to v. 22. Paul's use of the plural ἡς θλίψεως ἡμῶν, **our affliction**, in v. 8 here implies that both he and Timothy shared this experience.

Of course where ambiguity exists in the scriptural text, commentator speculation abounds all over the place. But trying to identify the θλίψις as a specific event is hugely difficult given the very limited data provided by Paul, and even by Luke in Acts.²⁰ Some observations are helpful here. 1) The rather unusual reference ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ, in Asia, rather than ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, in Ephesus (1 Cor. 15:32; 16:18; 1 Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:18) could likely imply this happening elsewhere in the province rather than in Ephesus. Only in Acts 20:16 does a reference to the province imply the city of Ephesus. 2) Probably the event occurred sometime between the writing of First and Second Corinthians. Given the severe impact it had on Paul (cf. vv. 8b-9), it would have been mentioned in First Corinthians had it taken place prior to this letter. This means that the reference to 'fighting with the beasts in Ephesus' mentioned in 1 Cor. 15:32 references something else than this event. Also Paul's limited depiction does not harmonize with the Demetrius episode described by Luke in Acts. 3) Thus this event most likely took place after Paul left Ephesus on his way to Macedonia (cf. Acts 20:1-2). The idea of a chronic illness, i.e., his infamous 'thorn in the flesh' (12:7), crippling him in a bout with severe sickness has numerous advocates, possibly on his way north to Troas before crossing over into Macedonia. It's hard to conceive this happening in Troas since the city was not a part of the province of Asia.

Yet in spite of several possibilities of reference in τῆς θλίψεως ἡμῶν (1:8), the simple truth is that we have absolutely no idea of what the apostle is referencing here. That doesn't raise credibility issues about Paul's statement. Rather it honestly acknowledges that we don't have enough information for drawing a credible conclusion about the event. Speculation, especially when put forth as solid conclusion, is not only wrong

²⁰A helpful survey of the history of interpretation as well as assessment of the existing data is provided by Murray 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) in his excursus "PAUL'S AFFLICTION IN ASIA (2 COR. 1:8-11): THE PERSONAL BACKGROUND TO 2 CORINTHIANS," pp. 164-182.

but is potentially dangerous. Ultimately historical identification of this affliction is irrelevant to Paul's pointing to it. Whatever it may have been, it had a major impact on Paul's life and his thinking about death.²¹

The impact of this affliction on Paul is here stated in the ὅτι clause of vb. 8b-10, ὅτι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὑπὲρ δύνάμιν ἐβαρῆθημεν ὥστε ἐξαπορηθῆναι ἡμᾶς καὶ τοῦ ζῆν, **because we were exceedingly crushed beyond measure so that we were convinced that we had received a sentence of death, this so that we would not be relying upon ourselves but upon the God who raises the dead, on Him who rescued us out of certain death and will continue rescuing us.**

The severity of the event is described with intense expression: καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὑπὲρ δύνάμιν ἐβαρῆθημεν, **we were crushed exceedingly beyond measure; ὥστε ἐξαπορηθῆναι ἡμᾶς καὶ τοῦ ζῆν, so that we despaired even of living; αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς τὸ ἀπόκριμα τοῦ θανάτου ἐσχίκαμεν, we indeed felt inwardly that we had received the sentence of death.** Paul never speaks quite the same way about any other negative experience in his life, and by the writing of Second Corinthians in 56 AD there's a long list of such things that could have been discussed in detail (cf. 11:23-29).²²

But this affliction was not an end within itself. Instead, it served a much more noble purpose: ἵνα μὴ πεποιθότες ὦμεν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ τῷ ἐγείροντι τοὺς νεκρούς, **so that we might not be trusting in ourselves, but rather in the God who raises the dead.** When Paul later makes the declaration that all things work together for good in Rom. 8:28, he speaks out of personally experiencing of this principle at work in his own life. In addition to his θλίψις becoming a channel for divine παράκλησις being passed on to others (1:3-7), this particular θλίψις that he and Timothy experienced in Asia had the divine objective of pushing them to entrust their lives even more completely into the hands of God. This close brush with physical death for them was a significant moment of growing in their confidence that God controls physical death in the lives of His people. When it envelopes a believer, God's superior power over rides it for all eternity. And such death does not happen outside of God's plan for His servants. Paul and Timo-

²¹In my doctoral dissertation completed in 1975, the point was made that this signaled a major shift in the eschatological focus of Paul's writings. Up to this point his focus was on the parousia of Christ in the assumption that he would be among the living when it occurred. From Second Corinthians on the parousia discussions assume Paul having died prior to it happening.

²²One should also note that in the listing of sufferings found in 11:23-29, the majority of items are never described or even alluded to anywhere else in the NT for Paul. That the apostle did not dwell on his sufferings, especially in a 'woe is me' mind-set becomes verby clear in examining the places where sufferings are referenced. That he suffered, and did so exceedingly, is clear. But he never dwelt on them in a manner of inducing pity.



thy's experience in Asia brought home to them in even greater fashion this fundamental principle of Christian faith.

Even though dying physically seemed certain to these two missionaries in this Asian experience, God's plan was different (v. 10): ὃς ἐκ τηλικούτου θανάτου ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς καὶ ῥύσεται, εἰς ὃν ἠλπικαμεν [ὅτι] καὶ ἔτι ῥύσεται, *who rescued us out of such certain death, and continues to rescue us*. This relative clause links back to τῷ θεῷ as the antecedent of the pronoun ὃς as the Rescuer. The more classical Greek adjective τηλικούτος, -αύτη, -οὔτο stresses intensity and here underscores a situation which appeared humanly speaking to be leading to a certain physical death. But this time God rescued Paul and Timothy from certain death in exercising His control over death. The aorist verb ἐρρύσατο stresses this event action in the past.

This is essentially all that Paul mentions about the event. We don't know what it was nor exactly when it happened. All we do know is that it took place somewhere in the province of Asia. Likewise, no details are provided about how God delivered these two leaders from what seemed to be certain death. One thing to note: the continued use of the first person 'we' including Timothy in the experience does argue against the speculative idea that some kind of physical illness connected to his 'thorn in the flesh' was what happened. The danger connected to this θλίψις seems to have come externally from other people. But beyond this nothing more is suggested by the text.

The adding of καὶ ῥύσεται, εἰς ὃν ἠλπικαμεν [ὅτι] καὶ ἔτι ῥύσεται, *and he continues rescuing us, in whom we have confidence that he will continue rescuing us*, expresses the idea that this danger was continuing for Paul and Timothy even while in Macedonia where this letter was composed. This addendum can be taken legitimately in a couple of slightly different ways, mostly predicated on an understanding of the function of the future tense verb ῥύσεται. If the adverb ἔτι is a part of the original wording, then the punctiliar action of the future tense is favored with ἔτι denoting a repetition at a future time. But ἔτι can also be taken to mean that God will still continue rescuing Paul and Timothy into the future with ῥύσεται denoting linear action in future time, thus underscoring the continued exercising of divine control over the moment of physical death for both these men. In either understanding the essential point of the apostle remains the same: God has control over when we die as His people.

The last addendum to this lengthy sentence in vv. 8-11 adds an important insight closely related to the purpose statements in the ἵνα clause in v. 9b and the amplification in vv. 6-7: συνυπουργούντων καὶ ὑμῶν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τῇ δεήσει, ἵνα ἐκ πολλῶν προσώπων τὸ εἰς ἡμᾶς

χάρισμα διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστηθῆ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν. *as you also join in helping us by your prayers, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many*. The genitive absolute participle phrase, set up with συνυπουργούντων καὶ ὑμῶν, links back to τὸ εἰς ἡμᾶς at the end of v. 10 as an adverbial conditional modifier. That is God's continue rescuing of Paul and Timothy in part depends upon the Corinthians joining Paul and Timothy in prayer for their deliverance and continued witness. This one time use of συνυπουργέω in the NT underscores joint effort on a project by two or more individuals. That effort is defined as ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τῇ δεήσει, *in our behalf in prayer*. But what did Paul ask the Corinthians to pray for in his and Timothy's behalf? Not that God would keep them from dying! The ἵνα clause lays out the prayer goal: ἵνα ἐκ πολλῶν προσώπων τὸ εἰς ἡμᾶς χάρισμα διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστηθῆ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, *so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many*. That is, that many people will sense God at work in this situation that Paul and Timothy faced and continue to face and thus give glory and praise for the mighty working of God. Further that many will sense the importance of intercessory prayer for others as a part of their Christian commitment. Again, the focus is not on Paul or Timothy, but rather upon God's working in and through their lives. Some critics of Paul might be inclined to claim that these two figured out some clever way to escape death in this situation, thus denying God's actions. But Paul seeks the prayers of the Corinthians that many people will see God at work and give thanks to Him.

The probing spiritual principle here is challenging to us today. When we face difficult situations what do we pray for? And what do we want others to pray in our regard? I would suspect that most of the time the modern prayer focus is for us to come through the difficulty successfully. But what we can learn from Paul here is that our focus must never be on us. Rather it should center on a witness to the presence and power of God in some situation to bring His people through it. And our request for prayer from others should be targeted the same way.

Thus vv. 3-7, coupled with vv. 8-11 as a rationale explaining the specific θλίψις experienced by Paul and Timothy, set up the introduction of the letter for the reader / listener to anticipate much greater details especially regarding this rich perspective on ministry and service that the apostle depicts here. Second Corinthians should be mandatory reading and comprehension for every person called to ministry in the service of Christ. And this means every one of us as believers.

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.²³ 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 four parts of the letter body. The first subunit in 1:12-14 sets the tone for much of what follows in 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 ἀπλότητι καὶ εἰλικρινείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, [καὶ] οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ σαρκικῇ ἀλλ' ἐν χάριτι θεοῦ, ἀνεστράφημεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, περισσοτέρως δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

²³The 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.

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

1.13 γὰρ
οὐ ἄλλα γράφομεν ὑμῖν
ἀλλ'
(γράφομεν ὑμῖν)
ἢ ἃ ἀναγινώσκετε
ἢ καὶ ἐπιγινώσκετε·
δὲ
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.

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.²⁴ This

²⁴“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.⁴ However, such a distinction seems inapplicable here, for καύχησις in v. 12 signifies the ground or basis for boasting (‘the reason for our exultation,’ Berkeley),⁵ or, better, the content or object of boasting (‘what we boast about/are proud



unit 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?²⁵ First is the phrase τὸ μαρτύριον τῆς συνειδήσεως ἡμῶν, **the witness of our conscience**. Although often a genitive 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 subjective 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 referencing of the divinely given skills of rational thinking that can look at evidence and draw conclusions.²⁶ 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.

of").⁷ Following the prospective αὕτη, the phrase τὸ μαρτύριον τῆς συνειδήσεως ἡμῶν defines what Paul is proud of,⁸ the testimony that our conscience gives' (BAGD 494a), or simply, 'what my conscience tells me' (Goodspeed).⁹ 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.]

²⁵One should note that the feminine gender αὕτη is reaching back to the feminine καύχησις, rather than a neuter gender form 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.

²⁶For 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.

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 εἰλικρινείᾳ
τοῦ θεοῦ,
[καὶ]
οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ σαρκικῇ
ἀλλ'
ἐν χάριτι θεοῦ,
ὅτι . . . ἀνεστράφημεν
ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ,
δὲ
περισσοτέρως
πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

The core expression ἀνεστράφημεν lays out the essential point that **we have behaved ourselves** in a specific manner.²⁷ 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.²⁸ 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

²⁷"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.¹⁴ 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.]

²⁸αγιοτητι P⁴⁶ N* A B C K P Ψ 0121. 0243. 33. 81. 365. 630. 1175. 1739. 1881. 2464 r co; Cl Or Did

| txt N² 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.]

factors.²⁹

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 εἰλικρινεῖα, **in honesty**. A companion term to ἀπλότης, εἰλικρινεῖα 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 κατηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐξ 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 εἰλικρινεῖα.³⁰ Contextually the source of these two qualities is God, and not human. The following minus/plus declarations make this exceedingly clear.

²⁹“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 candour, 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.]

³⁰“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,¹³ ‘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.]

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 prepositional 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.³¹ 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.

³¹**Eph. 2:8-10.** 8 Τῇ γὰρ χάριτι ἔστε σεσωσμένοι διὰ πίστεως· καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν, θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον· 9 οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων, ἵνα μὴ 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.

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 the guidance of God's grace.

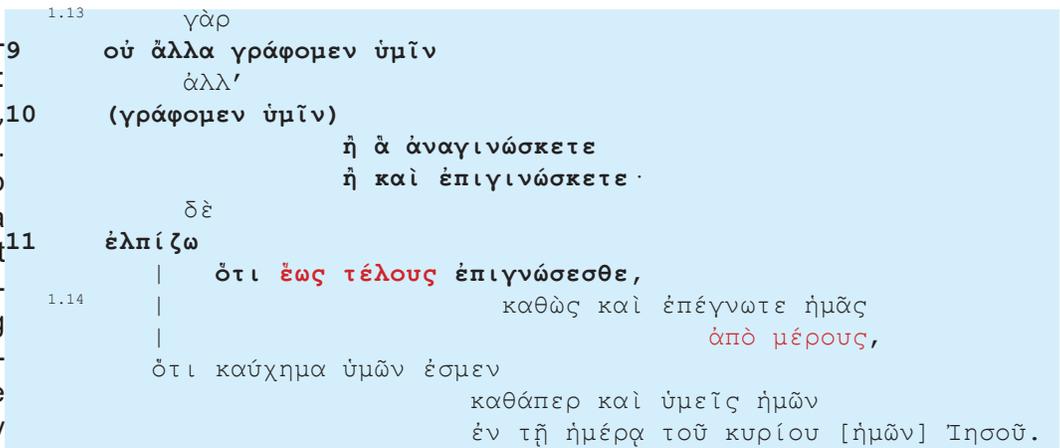
The second locational modifier is specific: περισσοτέρως δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, **and especially toward you**. The comparative adverb περισσοτέρως stresses extra attention and effort being put forth. Perhaps in the background are criticisms being raised against Paul, as 1:15-24 suggest.³² His words here should not be taken to imply one set of standards for relating to the Corinthians and another for relating to the world.³³ The **background** of the enormous amount to time and effort expended by Paul toward the Corinthians **over the years** should mean that of any folks who

³²What 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.

³³"Whether περισσοτέρως is a comparative adverb meaning 'even more,' or is equivalent to an elative superlative, 'above all,' 'most of all,'¹⁵ '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.]

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 above 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. 14.³⁴ 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 ἀλλ' ἢ... in the next clause. The sense of ἄλλα then becomes **other things beyond that**

³⁴The middle voice form ἐπιγνώσεσθε is due to the future tense sixth principle part form of the verb is deponent in form.

which....³⁵ 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: ἀλλ’ ἢ ἂ 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 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 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 ἐπιγινώσεσθε, **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.

³⁵“The combination ἀλλ’ 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 ἄ; ἢ is omitted in P⁴⁶ 33:945. 2495^{pc} sy; FG omit ἀλλ’; ἄ is omitted in D* 0243:1739 pc. The full text is read in κ BCD² Ψ^M.” [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).]

The comparative clause καθὼς καὶ ἐπέγνωτε ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ μέρους attached to ἐπιγινώσεσθε 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 ἐπιγινώσεσθε 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 ἐσμεν 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 εἰλικρινεῖα 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 ἂ βουλευόμαι κατὰ σάρκα βουλευόμαι, ἵνα ἢ παρ’ ἐμοὶ τὸ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ; 18 12 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 ναὶ· 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.

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

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 Ἐκρινά 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, 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 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

1.17 οὖν
τουῦτο βουλόμενος
μήτι ἄρα
τῆ ἑλαφρίᾳ
13 ἐχρησάμην;

ἢ
ἄ βουλευόμαι
κατὰ σάρκα
14 βουλευόμαι,
ἵνα ἦ παρ' ἐμοὶ τὸ ναὶ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ;

1.18 δὲ
15 πιστὸς ὁ θεὸς (ἐστίν)
οὐτι ὁ λόγος ἡμῶν . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ναὶ καὶ
οὐ
ὁ πρὸς ὑμᾶς .

1.19 γὰρ
δὲ ἡμῶν
16 ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ υἱὸς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς... κηρυχθεὶς,
ὁ ἐν ὑμῖν
δὲ ἐμοῦ καὶ Σιλουανοῦ καὶ Τιμοθέου,
17 οὐκ ἐγένετο ναὶ καὶ οὐ
ἀλλὰ
ἐν αὐτῷ
18 ναὶ . . . γέγονεν.

1.20 γὰρ
ὅσαι ἐπαγγελίαι θεοῦ,
ἐν αὐτῷ
19 (ἐστίν) τὸ ναί·

διὸ
καὶ
δὲ αὐτοῦ
20 (ἐστίν) τὸ ἀμὴν τῷ θεῷ
πρὸς δόξαν
δὲ ἡμῶν.

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.

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

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

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 subunits. 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 ἂ βουλευόμεαι κατὰ σάρκα βουλευόμεαι, ἵνα ἢ παρ' ἐμοὶ τὸ 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 ναὶ· 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; 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.

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 (οὕν) 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 [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.³⁶ 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 him-

³⁶1 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 οὗ ἂν πορεύομαι. 7 οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἄρτι ἐν παρόδῳ ἰδεῖν, ἐλπίζω γὰρ χρόνον τινὰ ἐπιμεῖναι πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐὰν ὁ κύριος ἐπιτρέψῃ. 8 ἐπιμενῶ 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.

self (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.³⁷ He 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 πρότερον³⁸ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν, ἵνα δευτέραν χάριν σχῆτε, **I intended first to come to you so that you might have a twofold blessing of God.**³⁹ The am-

³⁷The ‘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 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).

³⁸Two 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.

³⁹“The purpose of Paul’s plan was to provide the Corinthians with a second benefit (or a second occasion for joy).⁵⁸ This second

ambiguity 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).⁴⁰ The most natural meaning is that Paul envisioned this visit as another oppor-

χάρις has been variously interpreted.

“(i) The least likely option is that χάρις is here the equivalent of χαρά, ‘joy’.⁵⁹ 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.⁶⁰ This full theological sense is supported by several commentators.⁶¹ There are parallels to this understanding of an apostolic visit in Rom 1:11; 15:29.⁶² 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.⁶³ At any rate, a ‘spiritual advantage’ of some kind would be the product of the visit.⁶⁴ 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.⁶⁵

“(iii) Perhaps χάρις means ‘sign of favour’, ‘mark of goodwill’, ‘gracious kindness’, and the like.⁶⁶ Against this view it is suggested that it would imply an attitude of ‘egotism and condescension.’⁶⁷ 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 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.⁶⁸ 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 καὶ 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.⁶⁹ 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.⁷⁰”

[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.]

⁴⁰Margaret 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.



tunity 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.⁴¹ 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 Corinthians 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 rhe-

⁴¹What 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. .

torical 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.⁴² 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,⁴³ but the NRSV reflects the more likely correct 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,⁴⁴ assumes a rigid obstinate self-will, which is nowhere in the contextual picture here and doesn't fit at all.⁴⁵

(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.⁴⁶

⁴²"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.]

⁴³"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.⁸⁹ Which, then, of these two possible consequences⁹⁰ 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.]

⁴⁴That is, My oral yes really means yes, and my oral no really means no.

⁴⁵This view goes back to Chrysostom who falsely understood this phrase here in Paul to have the same meaning as ἦτο δὲ ὑμῶν τὸ ναὶ 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.

⁴⁶A 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

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.⁴⁷ What Paul says is legitimate 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' ἑμοῦ καὶ Σιλουανοῦ καὶ Τιμοθέου, οὐκ ἐγένετο ναὶ καὶ οὐ ἀλλὰ ναὶ ἐν αὐτῷ γέγονεν. 20a ὅσαι γὰρ ἐπαγγελίαι θεοῦ, ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ ναὶ. 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

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.

⁴⁷“Having rejected the charge of inconsistency by means of rhetorical questions expecting a negative answer, Paul proceeds¹¹⁴ 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 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.¹¹⁵ In favour of this interpretation it is argued that nowhere else in the NT is the expression used as an oath-formula,¹¹⁶ that Paul's adjurations are phrased quite differently,¹¹⁷ and that in 1 Cor 1:9 and 10:13 πιστός ὁ θεός is not such,¹¹⁸ 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.¹¹⁹ Moreover, the following ὅτι-clause found here is characteristic of some of the oath-formulae Paul does use,¹²⁰ and this could justify the same interpretation here.¹²¹ And this is the way it sounds.¹²² As surely as God is faithful,¹²³ Paul's word is¹²⁴ 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.]

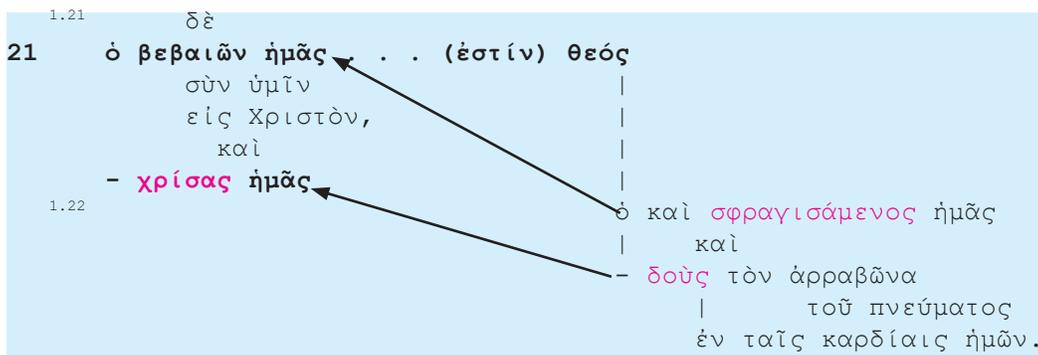
Paul's preaching to the Corinthians, as the sign that God always keeps His promise to deliver His people from their sin. God in Christ never ‘speaks out of both sides of His mouth at the same time.’ In the apostolic Gospel centered in Christ comes the totality of all spiritual needs for the repenting 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).⁴⁸ 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 ναὶ.

(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 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.⁴⁹

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 $\mu\eta\chi$, 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

⁴⁸The 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.

⁴⁹“It is also through Christ,¹⁵⁶ moreover, that there comes about the ‘Amen’ to God, to God's glory ‘through us’.¹⁵⁷ 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.]



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 δοὺς 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 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 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,⁵⁰ 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

⁵⁰The 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.¹⁸² 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’.¹⁸³ [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.]

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:⁵¹ 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 it being a giving of the Holy Spirit as a divine pledge (δοὺς 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.⁵²

In vv. 12-22, Paul sets forth a rich, spiritually profound picture of Christian service to the Gospel in minis-

⁵¹Note 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 δοὺς τὸν ἄρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν.

⁵²The 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.

try 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 on-going 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 Re-counting 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, πεποιθὼς ἐπὶ πάντας ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἡ ἐμὴ χαρὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐστίν. 4 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. 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 work-

ers 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

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

23 ^{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.

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 ἔλθων 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.⁵³ 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 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.'⁵⁴

⁵³Oath 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. ,

⁵⁴ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν is a Hebraism ('*al-napšī*') meaning 'against my soul' (= 'against me,' RSV, NRSV³) or 'on my own life'⁴ (= '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.'⁵ By implication, God is presented here as the judge or divine assessor to whom all persons are ultimately accountable.⁶ The destruction Paul has in mind 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: his own integrity as a minister of the gospel, and also, ultimately, the integrity of the gospel itself, were at stake." [Murray J.

But not all take the phrase this way.⁵⁵ 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 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.⁵⁶ 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).⁵⁷ The

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.]

⁵⁵"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]

⁵⁶"Although the present participle φειδόμενος could be causal ('because I was sparing you'),⁹ it is more naturally taken as telic "'in order to spare you,' NIV).¹⁰" [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 213.]

⁵⁷What 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



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 promise 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 ^{1,24} (ἐστίν) οὐχ ὅτι κυριεύομεν ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως ἀλλὰ
 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.⁵⁸ Persuasion to follow Christ, not ecclesiastical 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.⁵⁹

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.

⁵⁸The verb κυριεύομεν from κυριεύω, with 7 uses in the NT, carries the idea of exercising control or power over others, with a negative meaning when used of humans so functioning. The clearest 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 διακονῶν. 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.

⁵⁹As 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.'

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 mention-

23 ^{1,24} (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.

ing 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 opponents 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.

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

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.

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 wayward 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.⁶⁰

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, πεποιθὼς ἐπὶ πάντας ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἡ ἐμὴ χαρὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐστίν. 4 ἐκ γὰρ πολλῆς θλίψεως καὶ συνοχῆς καρδίας ἔγραψα ὑμῖν διὰ πολλῶν δακρύων, 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.

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
ἦν ἔχω περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς.

His letter reflected the same tones and content as his visit had: καὶ ἔγραψα τοῦτο αὐτό And I wrote this same thing. Was this a mistake on Paul's part? Not at all. By

⁶⁰Every 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!

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, πεποιθῶς ἐπὶ πάντα 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

28 ἔγραψα τοῦτο αὐτό,
 ἵνα μὴ ἐλθὼν λύπην σχῶ
 ἀφ' ὧν ἔδει με χαίρειν,
 πεποιθῶς _____
 ἐπὶ πάντα ὑμᾶς |
 ὅτι ἡ ἐμὴ χαρὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐστίν.

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 ἔγραψα but following up also on the ἀφ' ὧν ἔδει με χαίρειν relative clause: πεποιθῶς ἐπὶ πάντα 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 πεποιθῶς from πείθω defines in the fourth principle part forms of the perfect and pluperfect tens-

es a sense of being deeply convinced of something. Paul wants the Corinthians 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.

The justifying statement (γὰρ) in v. 4 amplifies the circumstances of the composition of this painful letter that was sent: ἐκ πολλῆς θλίψεως καὶ συνοχῆς καρδίας ἔγραψα ὑμῖν διὰ πολλῶν δακρῦων, οὐχ ἵνα λυπηθῆτε ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀγάπην ἵνα γνῶτε ἦν ἔχω περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς. *For*

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

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*.⁶¹ The parallel terms πολλῆς θλίψεως and συνοχῆς 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 δακρῦων, *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.⁶² Paul sets the standard here for godly leader-

⁶¹"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 Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 170.]

⁶²As an example, any preacher who enjoys preaching on hell -- which faithfulness to the Gospel does require -- is not qualified to

ship.

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 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 eniovement and satisfaction.

30 οὐκ ἐμὲ λελύπηκεν,
 31 ἀλλ' (λελύπηκεν)... πάντας ὑμᾶς.
 ἀπὸ μέρους,
 ἵνα μὴ ἐπιβαρῶ,
 32 ^{2.6} ἱκανὸν (ἐστίν) τῷ τοιοῦτῳ ἢ ἐπιτιμία αὕτη
 | ἢ ὑπὸ τῶν πλειόνων,
^{2.7} ὥστε τούναντίον μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς χαρίσασθαι καὶ παρακαλέσαι,
 μὴ πως τῇ περισσοτέρῃ λύπῃ καταποθῆ ὁ τοιοῦτος.
^{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.
^{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.

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 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 ἢ 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 ᾧ δέ τι χαρίζεσθε, κἀγὼ καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ὁ κεχάρισμαι, εἰ 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.

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 δέ 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 ἐμέ λελύπηκεν, further links this section back to the previous one by the repetition of λυπέω, here in the perfect 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.⁶³

But the unanswered -- and ultimately unanswerable -- question remains the identity of τις, *someone* in v. 5.⁶⁴

⁶³I 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.

⁶⁴“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 reference 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*

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’ ἐπιπόθησιν, 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.⁶⁵ And initially the church did nothing

the Apostle to the Corinthians, Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 44-45.]

⁶⁵“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 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*,



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 had³² 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: 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.⁶⁶

Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2002), 167–168.]

⁶⁶“Even in respect of this aspect of the situation, however, Paul does not wish to say too much.²⁹⁶ It is only ἀπὸ μέρους, *in part*,²⁹⁷ 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?²⁹⁸ This is

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 toward 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.

^{2,6} ἱκανὸν (ἐστίν) τῷ τοιοῦτῳ ἡ 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

less likely, since a numerical restriction of those who had been grieved would conflict with the πάντας.²⁹⁹ 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.³⁰⁰

“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 ...*’³⁰¹

“(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...*’³⁰² 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.³⁰³

“(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*’.³⁰⁴ 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.³⁰⁵ 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*’.³⁰⁶ Paul would be concerned to minimise his own personal distress. But the οὐκ ἔμε and the ἀπὸ μέρους do not constitute an antithesis.³⁰⁷”

[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.]

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.⁶⁷ 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 of Paul, such actions would normally be overwhelming to individuals, since belonging was the determinative foundation of their existence.⁶⁸

This ἐπιτιμία has been imposed ἡ ὑπὸ τῶν πλειόνων, **by the majority**, of the members of the Christian community. Most commentators in trying to understand this

⁶⁷“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.³⁰⁸ Consequently, it is suggested that ἐπιτιμία derives from ἐπιτιμάω, common in the NT and usually connected with reproof,³⁰⁹ and so may have the meaning ‘reprimand’, ‘verbal censure’.³¹⁰ But the case for this second possibility is not as convincing as it might seem.³¹¹ 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.³¹² Most probably, the offender had been banned from participation in some congregational activities, and in particular from the Eucharist.³¹³ 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.³¹⁴ 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.³¹⁵ [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.]

⁶⁸Paul’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.

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 ἡ 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 τῆ 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, μή πως τῆ 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 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.

First comes an admonition (# 33, v. 8): διὸ παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς κυρῶσαι εἰς αὐτόν ἀγάπην. **Wherefore I encourage you to affirm love to him.** The present tense

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.

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!⁶⁹ 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 encouragement* (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 **ΤΟΥΤΟ**,

⁶⁹“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.³³⁸ Paul himself uses it this way in Gal 3:15, where he speaks of κεκυρωμένην διαθήκην, ‘a will that has been ratified’,³³⁹ and a number of commentators would see a legal nuance attaching to κυρῶσαι in the present verse.³⁴⁰ The notion of a legal ratification of love may seem paradoxical,³⁴¹ 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.]

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.⁷⁰ 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 vengence or retaliation, is the way of Christ. The apostle generally felt the Corinthians to possess ἀγάπη but the painful letter provided 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 ὃ δέ τι χαρίζεσθε, κἀγὼ καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ὁ κεχάρισμαι, εἶ τι κεχάρισμαι, δι' ὑμᾶς ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ, 11 ἵνα μὴ πλεονεκτῶμεν ὑπὸ τοῦ

⁷⁰What 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.

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, ὃ 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 εὐρεῖν 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 ἐσμὲν ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐξ εἰλικρινείας, 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*

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.

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 ἀνεσιν 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 ἀνεσιν 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 stopover 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 μεταπεμφάμενος 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 ἐνεργῆς, 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 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 προσηύξατο. 37 ἰκανὸς δὲ κλαυθμὸς ἐγένετο πάντων καὶ ἐπιπεσόντες ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον τοῦ Παύλου κατεφίλουσιν αὐτόν, 38 ὀδυνώμενοι μάλιστα ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ ᾧ εἰρήκει, ὅτι οὐκέτι μέλλουσιν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ θεωρεῖν. προέειπον 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 ἐξήλθον 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 ἐξήλθεν 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 ὁσμὴ ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον, οἷς δὲ ὁσμὴ ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν. καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἰκανός; 17 οὐ γάρ ἐσμεν 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

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 |

2.16

ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις,
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 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.





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.

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.⁷¹ 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.⁷² The triumph represented in Roman cul-

⁷¹More about that meeting is contained indirectly in 7:5-16.
⁷²As S. Hafemann has demonstrated, exegetes of 2:14-16 have paid insufficient attention to the actual character of Roman triumphs.²² 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

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.⁷³

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.). 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.'²³

"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.²⁴

[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.]

⁷³Personal 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 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!

In 1 Cor. 4:9, the apostle had alluded to such a parade figurately,⁷⁴ 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 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,

⁷⁴1 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.

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.⁷⁵

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 associates 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

⁷⁵If 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.

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 γὰρ ἔσμεν 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.*

^{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.

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:

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.⁷⁶ 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.⁷⁷ Paul’s critics evidently 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

⁷⁶“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.’” [[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:603.]

⁷⁷“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 ὄν 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 ἔμμισθος 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 ὥσπερ οἱ κάπηλοι, κερασάμενοί 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 ἐπέκοπτεν οὗτος καὶ ἀπῆγε τοῦ χρηματίζεσθαι 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 ἀνεῖσθαι ποιεῖν ἑαυτόν.”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:603.]

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.⁷⁸

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 ἢ γὰρ παράκλησις ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐκ πλάνης οὐδὲ ἐξ ἀκαθαρσίας οὐδὲ ἐν δόλω, 4 ἀλλὰ καθὼς δεδοκιμάσμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, οὕτως λαλοῦμεν, οὐχ ὡς ἀνθρώποις 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 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.⁷⁹

⁷⁸“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,⁶ 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 word⁷ (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.]

⁷⁹“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.⁸ Paul knows the

Second, what Paul and his associates can be compared to are preachers who serve ἐξ εὐλικρινείας, *out of sincerity*. In this third use of εὐλικρινεία, 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 εὐλικρινεία 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 εὐλικρινείᾳ 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 εὐλικρινείας? 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.

10.2.3.1.5 Ministry compared to Moses, 3:1-18

In this section, Gospel ministry in Paul's calling is compared to the leadership of Moses among the Hebrews. The point of comparison includes both similarities and differences due to the nature of the two separate covenants God made, one with Israel and the other with believers in Christ. Through out Paul maintains the plural 'we' rather than singular "I" perspective

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.⁹ *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.]



in order to define not just his Gospel ministry but that of his associates as well. Thus Christian ministry is being compared to that of Moses, and not just Paul's ministry.

The progression of thought in this section moves from the cultural illustration of religiously neutral letters of recommendation to the 'letters of the Torah' of Moses. Throughout is a contrast between the Israelite approach to religion through Torah and the Gospel of Christ that Paul and his associates were preaching. Whether or not this contrast implies an element of Jewish Christian opposition to Paul in the Christian community at Corinth is debatable. Clearly both Jews and non-Jews were members of the community in the city. But Paul may well be speaking more out of his own Jewish heritage as a Pharisee prior to becoming a Christian, than suggesting that his opposition in the church was Jewish in nature. The heart of the contrast consistently in the passage is changed lives of believers in contrast to externally imposed regulations in Judaism.

10.2.3.1.5.1 Letters of Recommendation, 3:1-3

3.1 Ἀρχόμεθα πάλιν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστάνειν; ἢ μὴ χρῆζομεν ὡς τινες συστατικῶν ἐπιστολῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἢ ἐξ ὑμῶν; 2 ἢ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε, ἐγγεγραμμένη ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν, γινωσκομένη καὶ ἀναγινωσκομένη ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων, 3 φανερούμενοι ὅτι ἐστὲ ἐπιστολὴ Χριστοῦ διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν, ἐγγεγραμμένη οὐ μέλανι ἀλλὰ πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος, οὐκ ἐν πλαξίν λιθίναις ἀλλ' ἐν πλαξίν καρδίαις σαρκίνας.

3.1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again?

45 ^{3.1} Ἀρχόμεθα πάλιν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστάνειν;

46 ἢ
μὴ χρῆζομεν . . . συστατικῶν ἐπιστολῶν
ὡς τινες
πρὸς ὑμᾶς
ἢ
ἐξ ὑμῶν;

47 ^{3.2} ἢ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε,
ἐγγεγραμμένη |
ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις | ἡμῶν,
γινωσκομένη |
| καὶ |
ἀναγινωσκομένη |
| ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων,
^{3.3} | φανερούμενοι
| ὅτι ἐστὲ ἐπιστολὴ Χριστοῦ
| διακονηθεῖσα
| ὑφ' ἡμῶν,
ἐγγεγραμμένη
οὐ μέλανι
ἀλλὰ
πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος,
οὐκ ἐν πλαξίν λιθίναις
ἀλλ'
ἐν πλαξίν καρδίαις σαρκίνας.

Surely we do not need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you, do we? 2 You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all; 3 and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

As is visually illustrated in the block diagram below, Paul begins with a pair of rhetorical questions (#s 45-46), which he then answers in statement #47. The two rhetorical questions make the same essential point of what does it take to gain acceptance among all the Corinthians. His answer is a complex structured sentence built off the core declaration ἢ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε, you are our letter (of recommendation).

The historical background of letters of recommendation in Paul's world is important to understand here. The adjective in the superlative form συστατικῶν is only used here in the NT, but the form συστατικός, -ή, -όν comes from the verb συνίστημι used in this same verse as the infinitive συνίστημι. The verb συνίστημι literally means to stand together or to put together in the sense here of creating a written evaluation that matches correctly the individual and his character. The infinitive use συνίστημι carries the sense here with ἑαυτοὺς of self commendation, something basically done by others and not for oneself. Playing off of this is συστατικῶν ἐπιστολῶν, letters of recommendation. The purpose of such letters was to introduce the named individual as a person of worth and possessing necessary credentials for his position. Oral recommendations given in

behalf of another were commonplace in Paul's world and constituted a distinct form of speech with its own rules and guidelines for composition and delivery. Written letters for this purpose of introducing or commending an individual followed established rules of composition as well.⁸⁰ Inter-

⁸⁰What Paul references here should not be confused with later ecclesiastical formulations which, although building off the core idea of commendation, take on a distinct character, mostly of recommending priests by bishops.

The bishop of any congregation, in any part of the empire, might commend a

estingly when Apollos left Ephesus for Corinth οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἔγραψαν τοῖς μαθηταῖς ἀποδέξασθαι αὐτόν, **the brothers wrote to the disciples to welcome him** (Acts 18:25b),

For the apostle Paul, the idea of commendation, either written or oral, was a significant issue in Second Corinthians.⁸¹ Nine of the 14 Pauline uses of συνίστημι are in Second Corinthians: 3:1; 4:2; 5:12; 6:4; 7:11; 10:12, 18 (4x); 21:11. But given the overall emphasis of this letter, this is not particularly surprising.

A letter of recommendation of Paul to the Corinthian

traveller, layman or cleric, to the good offices of any other. The precautions against imposture might sometimes, as in the well-known instance of Peregrinus (Lucian, de Morte Peregrin.), perhaps also in that of the παρείσακτοι ψευδάδελφοί of Gal. 2:4, be insufficient, but as a rule it did its work, and served as a bond of union between all Christian Churches. Wherever the Christian traveller went, if he were provided with these letters, he found the “communicatio pacis,” the “contesseratio hospitalitatis” (Tertull. de Praescript. Haeretic. c. 20). Those outside the Church’s pale, however arrogant might be their claims, could boast of no such proof of their oneness. They were cut off from what was in the most literal sense of the term the “communion of saints” (Ibid. c. 32). It was the crowning argument of Augustine (Epist. xlv. 3) and Optatus (De Schism. Donat. ii. 3) against the Donatists that their letters would not be received in any churches but their own; that they were therefore a sect with no claim to catholicity, no element of permanence. It was, in like manner, but a necessary sequel to the deposition of Paul of Samosata by the so-called Second Council of Antioch, when the bishops who passed sentence on him wrote to Dionysius of Rome and Maximus of Alexandria (Euseb. H. E. vii. 30), requesting them not to address their letters to him, but to Domnus, whom they had appointed in his place. The letters of Cyprian on the election of Cornelius (Epist. xlv.) and to Stephen (Epist. lxxvii.) are examples of the same kind. The most remarkable testimony, however, to the extent and the usefulness of the practice is found in the wish of Julian to reorganise heathen society on the same plan, and to provide, in this way, shelter and food for any non-Christian traveller who might be journeying to a strange city (Sozomen. H. E. v. 16).

[Edward Hayes Plumptre, “Commendatory Letters,” ed. William Smith and Samuel Cheetham, *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* (London: John Murray, 1875–1880), 407.]

⁸¹“Συνίστημι occurs 16 times in the NT: 14 times in the Pauline corpus (9 of those in 2 Corinthians), and once each in Luke and 2 Peter.” [Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990–), 3:308.]

ans from someone else made no sense at all. Such letters of introduction were for the benefit of folks who did not know personally the individual being recommended. Paul as the ‘founder’ of the Christian community on the second missionary journey was well known by the community of believers. To be sure, when Apollos first arrived at Corinth after leaving Ephesus just as Paul arrived there was a legitimate situation. He was not known personally in Corinth and so the Ephesian Christian community, especially with the influence of Priscilla and Aquila, composed such a letter of introduction for Apollos to the Corinthian church (Acts 18:24-28). But this was not the case at all for Paul as he prepared to make at least his third visit to Corinth in his ministry. Thus Paul’s two introductory rhetorical questions in 3:1 carry a subtle tone of sarcasm.

In his reply to these two questions in statement # 47 (vv. 2-3) he makes the central point ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε, **you are our letter**. This core point is then qualified by a wide variety of modification as illustrated in the block diagram:

To a group of folks who already knew the apostle well, he makes the declaration that they themselves are his ‘letter of recommendation. That is, their very existence as a Christian community is conformation of Paul’s apostolic credentials. What he means by this core declaration is amplified in four different ways via the modifiers, the participles, attached to either the subject or the verb of the core declaration. The first three develop the idea of ἐπιστολὴ, while the fourth participle centers on the verb ἐστε. This final modifier affirms the nature of the Corinthians being a letter of recommendation.

a) **ἔγγεγραμμένη ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν, written in our hearts**. Here ironical play is made between the perfect passive participle ἔγγεγραμμένη and ἐν ταῖς

47 3.2 ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε,

ἔγγεγραμμένη	
ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις	ἡμῶν,
γινωσκομένη	
καὶ	
ἀναγινωσκομένη	
ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων,	
3.3 φανερούμενοι	
	ὅτι ἐστὲ ἐπιστολὴ Χριστοῦ
	διακονηθεῖσα
	ὑφ’ ἡμῶν,
ἔγγεγραμμένη	
οὐ μέλανι	
ἀλλὰ	
πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος,	
οὐκ ἐν πλαξὶν λιθίναις	
ἀλλ’	
ἐν πλαξὶν καρδίαις σαρκίναις.	

καρδίαις ἡμῶν. The first person plural pronoun ἡμῶν, *our*, seemed illogical to a few copyists, who changed it to the second person pronoun, ὑμῶν, *your*.⁸² But the evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of ἡμῶν. Thus what Paul affirms here is that the existence of the Christian community is deeply embedded down inside the apostle. Here ταῖς καρδίαις specifies the interior part of not just Paul but with the plural of his associates as well. These people were very precious and important to these Christian missionaries. Much time and effort had been invested into growing this group of people in Christ in the midst of all their problems and issues.

b) *γνωσκομένη καὶ ἀναγνωσκομένη ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων, being known and read by all men.* As a reminder to the Corinthians, they had a witness that they gave out to everyone around them whether they recognized it or not. The witness centered on the transforming power of the apostolic Gospel, but this message came through the preaching of Paul and his associates. Thus their witness reflected the kind of life transformation that came through this Gospel, rather than some spurious version of it. As such it reflected what actually came directly from God. The pair of participles here γνωσκομένη καὶ ἀναγνωσκομένη underscores the central point of a witness being given out to others by the Corinthians.

c) *ἔγγεγραμμένη οὐ μέλανι ἀλλὰ πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος, οὐκ ἐν πλαξίν λιθίναις ἀλλ' ἐν πλαξίν καρδίαις σαρκίνας. written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not of tablets of stone but on tables of human hearts.* Here the repetition of ἔγγεγραμμένη at the end of the sentence ties this participle back to the same antecedent of ἐπιστολή in the core expression. The image of a written letter controls the image being presented here in figurative terms. In the first participle modifier the location of that 'writing' is embedded deeply inside the lives of Paul and his associates. Now the second use of ἔγγεγραμμένη stresses how this 'writing' was done.

Note the two parallel sets of 'not this...but that' which throw important light on how the Corinthians themselves became Paul's letter of recommendation. First, ἔγγεγραμμένη οὐ μέλανι ἀλλὰ πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος, *written not in ink but by the Spirit of the living God.* The contrast is between the Jewish Torah and the Christian Gospel. In the background of this stands Jeremiah 31:31-34 with the projection of a new covenant that God would eventually establish with His people.⁸³

⁸²υμων κ 33. 1175. 1881.

⁸³Jer. 31:31-34 NRSV. 31 The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their

The central point of the contrast is the more direct action of God in the new covenant via the working of the Holy Spirit. Second, οὐκ ἐν πλαξίν λιθίναις ἀλλ' ἐν πλαξίν καρδίαις σαρκίνας, *not on tablets of stone but on the tablets of human hearts.* This parallel to the first re-enforces the point of the first by specifying where as opposed to how in the first strophe.

ἔγγεγραμμένη (going back to ἐπιστολή in main clause)

A οὐ μέλανι

B ἀλλὰ πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος,

A' οὐκ ἐν πλαξίν λιθίναις

B' ἀλλ' ἐν πλαξίν καρδίαις σαρκίνας.

Here to so-called Hebrew 'step parallelism' is used where the second set (A'B') advances the idea of the first set (AB) a step further in thought.

Paul's letter reflecting the Gospel of Christ stands in contrast with the Jewish Torah as superior and more relevant to the Corinthians. But it really isn't so much Paul's letter as it is the Corinthians themselves as committed believers in Christ who are Paul's 'letter of recommendation.' That God has worked in life transforming manner in their lives becomes the ultimate validation of Paul's Gospel message. Just some reflection on their past is all they need for understanding the validity of Paul's message to them.

Now, does Paul's analogy against the backdrop of the Jewish Torah signal that his opponents in Corinth were Christian Jews in the church? This is connected also to the ὡς τινες, *as some do*, in verse one. There Paul implies that some preachers coming to Corinth had to produce a letter of recommendation, evidently from Christians in Judea. It would be very misleading to take this as referring to the letter of recommendation that Apollos brought with him from Ephesus to Corinth as Luke describes in Acts 18:27. That was a very different situation from what the apostle is talking about here. But Paul's contrast image here is natural for him to use as a Jewish Christian himself and former Pharisee. Plus it strengthens the claim of the apostle Gospel as from God.

To be learned from this section of modifiers is the fundamental importance of Christian validation. Logical arguments of proof will never move off dead center in persuading people of the Gospel. But the message presented by a community of believers living that Gospel can and will have powerful impact on the non-believing world.

d) *φανερούμενοι ὅτι ἐστὲ ἐπιστολή Χριστοῦ διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν, being made clear that you are*

hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.



Christ's letter having been prepared by us. This participle phrase in v. 3a via the nominative masculine plural spelling goes back to ὑμεῖς ἐστε, **you are**. The absence of an article with the participle signals an adverbial function tying it especially to the verb ἐστε. The specific adverbial function can range from temporal to possible causal: **You are while being revealed; you are because of being revealed**. The use of φανερούμενοι is appropriate to ἐπιστολή as disclosing important understanding about something. The ὅτι clause ὅτι ἐστὲ ἐπιστολή Χριστοῦ διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν defines what is being disclosed: **you are Christ's epistle prepared by us**. That is, the transformed lives of the Corinthians believers comes from Christ, not from Paul. Paul and his associates' role was simply διακονηθεῖσαι. This aorist passive participle from διακονέω beautifully pictures Paul and his associates as the slaves in God's household who served up the nourishing food of the Gospel to the Corinthians. The food comes from Christ and is Christ while Paul and his associates simply serve it to those hungry from life changing salvation.

10.2.3.1.5.2 God's Recommendation, 3:4-11

4 Πεποιθήσιν δὲ τοιαύτην ἔχομεν διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. 5 οὐχ ὅτι ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν ἱκανοὶ ἐσμεν λογίσασθαί τι ὡς ἐξ ἑαυτῶν, ἀλλ' ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, 6 ὃς καὶ ἰκάνωσεν ἡμᾶς διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης, οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος· τὸ γὰρ γράμμα ἀποκτείνει, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωοποιεῖ. 7 Εἰ δὲ ἡ διακονία τοῦ θανάτου ἐν γράμμασιν ἐντετυπωμένη λίθοις ἐγενήθη ἐν δόξῃ, ὥστε μὴ δύνασθαι ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον Μωϋσέως διὰ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ τὴν καταργουμένην, 8 πῶς οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἡ διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος ἔσται ἐν δόξῃ; 9 εἰ γὰρ τῇ διακονίᾳ τῆς κατακρίσεως δόξα, πολλῶ μᾶλλον περιοσεύει ἡ διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης δόξῃ. 10 καὶ γὰρ οὐ δεδόξασται τὸ δεδοξασμένον ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει εἵνεκεν τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης. 11 εἰ γὰρ τὸ καταργούμενον διὰ δόξης, πολλῶ μᾶλλον τὸ μένον ἐν δόξῃ.

4 Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, 6 who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

7 Now if the ministry of death, chiseled in letters on stone tablets,^b came in glory so that the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses' face because of the glory of his face, a glory now set aside, 8 how much more will the ministry of the Spirit come in glory? 9 For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, much more does the ministry of justification abound in glory! 10 Indeed, what once had glory has lost its glory because of the greater glory; 11 for if what was set aside came through glory, much more has the permanent come in glory!

This section via the antecedent nature of τοιαύτην, **such**, continues the previous emphasis but with much more stress upon the saving work of God through Christ in the Gospel. The contrast between Torah and Gospel will continue but with more detail.

The internal arrangement of this pericope in vv. 4-11 is built around two key points made in statement # 48 and a followup rhetorical question in statement # 51. Both points generate a series of justifying statements introduced by γὰρ: # 48 ==> #s 49-50; # 51 ==> #s 53-54. Note the structure of this passage in the above block diagram.

First is Paul's confidence, vv. 4-6 (#s 48-50). The very first word πεποιθήσις, a noun built from the perfect participle πέποιθα from πείθω, is more the sense of **my having been persuaded**. It alludes to a conviction deeply held through being persuaded via external circumstances. The addition of the correlative adjective modifier τοιαύτην ties this persuasion back to the discussion in vv. 1-3 on the Corinthians themselves being Paul's 'letter of recommendation.' Their transformed life stands as the external persuader of Paul.

But the focus ultimately of this persuasion is to observe what God has done through Christ in transforming these lives in Corinth: διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. Thus his confidence is in the ability of God to change lives through Christ, which he has witnessed taking place in Corinth. His preaching of the apostolic Gospel occasioned the transformation but as he declares in v. 5, οὐχ ὅτι ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν ἱκανοὶ ἐσμεν λογίσασθαί τι ὡς ἐξ ἑαυτῶν, ἀλλ' ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, **not that from within ourselves are we able to claim anything as coming from us, but our competency is from God**.

Paul and his associates' role in this divine transformation of the Corinthians is depicted simply as ὃς καὶ ἰκάνωσεν ἡμᾶς διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης, **who [God] also outfitted us as servants of a new covenant**. These men were the διακόνους, **servants**, who delivered the nourishing Gospel to the Corinthians. They did not make the Gospel meal, but rather served to the people what God had prepared. The modern image is somewhat that of a waiter / waitress in a restaurant, or the more contemporary label, food server. But Paul makes it clear that God has 'employed' them to do this work.

What is being served is the apostolic Gospel which here Paul labels as καινῆς διαθήκης, **new covenant**. Although a variety of rather wierd theories emerge with the idea of new covenant here in Paul's language. Clearly the contrast being presented is between the apostolic Gospel as new covenant and the Jewish Torah of Moses as the old covenant. That the Essenes in Judea spoke of a new covenant as their possession is

3.4 δὲ
48 Πεποιήθισιν τοιαύτην ἔχομεν
 | διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ
 | πρὸς τὸν θεόν.
 | ἀφ’ ἑαυτῶν
 3.5 οὐχ ὅτι...ἱκανοὶ ἐσμεν
 | λογίσασθαί τι
 | ὡς ἐξ ἑαυτῶν,
 | ἀλλ’
 ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν (ἐστίν)
 ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ,
 3.6 ὃς καὶ ἰκάνωσεν ἡμᾶς
 | διακόνους
 | καινῆς διαθήκης,
 οὐ γράμματος
 | ἀλλὰ
 πνεύματος·
 γὰρ
49 τὸ γράμμα ἀποκτέννει,
 δὲ
50 τὸ πνεῦμα ζῶοποιεῖ.
 3.7 δὲ
 Εἰ ἡ διακονία τοῦ θανάτου. . .ἐγενήθη
 /---|-----|
 ἐν γράμμασιν ἐντετυπωμένη |
 | | λίθοις |
 | | ἐν δόξῃ
 ὥστε|μὴ δύνασθαι ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ
 | /-----|
 | εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον Μωϋσέως
 | διὰ τὴν δόξαν
 | τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ
 | τὴν καταργουμένην,
51 3.8 πῶς οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἡ διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος ἔσται
 ἐν δόξῃ;
 3.9 γὰρ
 εἰ τῆ διακονίᾳ τῆς κατακρίσεως δόξα,
52 πολλῶ μᾶλλον περισσεύει ἡ διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης δόξῃ.
 3.10 γὰρ
 καὶ
53 οὐ δεδόξασται τὸ δεδοξασμένον
 ἐν τούτῳ
 | τῷ μέρει
 εἵνεκεν τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης.
 3.11 γὰρ
 εἰ τὸ καταργούμενον
 διὰ δόξης,
54 πολλῶ μᾶλλον τὸ μένον (ἐστίν)
 ἐν δόξῃ.

not in mind here with Paul.⁸⁴ In the history of salvation

⁸⁴“Did Paul, perhaps, need to counter the influence of opponents who themselves claim to be agents of a new covenant but who saw it as including, still, the observance of the law of Moses? There would be something of a non-Christian parallel to such an attitude in the outlook of the Qumran community. The actual expression ‘new covenant’ occurs in the Damascus Document (CD

6:19; 8:21 = 19:33; 20:12), expressing a relationship into which the members of the sect have entered, and in no way does this involve abandonment of the law.³¹⁷ Elsewhere, the sectaries speak of the renewing of the covenant (see, e.g. IQSb 3:26; 5:21).³¹⁸ At the same time, there is also the belief that God has placed his Spirit within them (1QH 12:11–12), and this may be related to the concept of

only the two covenants have connection to the God that Paul worshiped. So compare and contrast of these two would be entirely natural. With some of the Corinthians being Jewish and some of the Gentiles having attended the synagogue as 'God fearers' before becoming Christians, such a comparison would make clear sense to these members at Corinth.

The subsequent contrasts (v. 6b) draw the distinctions between the two covenants in dramatic terms:

οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος·
τὸ γὰρ γράμμα ἀποκτείνει, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωοποιεῖ.
not of letter but of spirit,
for the letter kills but the Spirit gives life.

An ironical play off of γράμμα as 'writing' and 'letter of the alphabet' enables the apostle to contrast the written Torah to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Corinthians as his 'letter of recommendation. The written Torah given to Moses as ten words chiseled in stone centered on penalties for wrong doing. In stark contrast the new covenant reflects the working of God directly through His Spirit in giving eternal life to those choosing obedience to Christ.

Second, this sets up the second major point of the contrast in statement # 51 as a lengthy first class conditional sentence. The protasis Εἰ δὲ ἡ διακονία τοῦ θανάτου ἐν γράμμασιν ἐντετυπωμένη λίθοις ἐγενήθη ἐν δόξῃ, ὥστε μὴ δύνασθαι ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον Μωϋσέως διὰ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ τὴν καταργουμένην, **Now since the ministry of death, chiseled in letters on stone tablets, came in glory so that the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses' face because of the glory of his face, a glory now set aside,** (v. 7). Paul alludes here to Exodus 34:29-35.⁸⁵ The OT text speaks of the

a new covenant (1QH 17:26–27).³¹⁹ Perhaps there were people in Corinth who had been influenced by this kind of thinking.³²⁰ Paul would share with them the idea of the new covenant, but would strongly disagree on the question of the function of the law within this new order.³²¹ The phrase οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος may be seen as distinguishing between two forms of the new covenant (rather than between the old and the new).³²² Against all theories of this kind, however, it has to be said that in what follows there is no indication that Paul is contesting a contemporary christianised concept of a new covenant." [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), 236.]

⁸⁵**Exodus 34:29-35 LXX.** 29 ὥς δὲ κατέβαιναν Μωϋσῆς ἐκ τοῦ ὄρους, καὶ αἱ δύο πλάκες ἐπὶ τῶν χειρῶν Μωϋσῆ· καταβαίνοντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐκ τοῦ ὄρους Μωϋσῆς οὐκ ἦδει ὅτι δεδόξασται ἡ ὄψις τοῦ χρώματος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ λαλεῖν αὐτὸν αὐτῷ.† 30 καὶ εἶδεν Ααρων καὶ πάντες οἱ πρεσβύτεροι Ἰσραὴλ τὸν Μωϋσῆν καὶ ἦν δεδοξασμένη ἡ ὄψις τοῦ χρώματος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν ἐγγίσει αὐτοῦ.† 31 καὶ ἐκάλεσεν αὐτοὺς Μωϋσῆς, καὶ ἐπεστράφησαν πρὸς αὐτὸν Ααρων καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄρχοντες τῆς συναγωγῆς, καὶ ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς Μωϋσῆς.† 32 καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα προσήλθον πρὸς αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ, καὶ ἐνετείλατο αὐτοῖς πάντα, ὅσα ἐλάλησεν κύριος πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ὄρει Σινα.† 33 καὶ ἐπειδὴ κατέπαυσεν λαλῶν πρὸς αὐτούς, ἐπέθηκεν ἐπὶ τὸ

skin on Moses' face shining after coming down from the mountain. He took to covering his face to prevent the people from seeing it. Paul's point in this allusion is to compare the superior glory of the new covenant to the lesser splendor of the old covenant. The use of δόξα for glory or splendor alludes to the divine Presence of God in connection to both covenants. It was present in the first covenant in that it impacted Moses' appearance.

But as the main clause apodosis asserts (v. 8), πῶς οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἢ διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος ἔσται ἐν δόξῃ; **how much more will the ministry of the Spirit come in glory?** The divine Presence is greater in the new covenant due to the Spirit of God Himself administering it. Again the play off of ἡ διακονία, service, is made against the backdrop of first century house slaves labeled διακόνους (v. 6) who served the food to the members of the family. Here Paul sees the role of διάκονος for the Holy Spirit serving the nourishment of the new covenant. Such is far greater than Moses' role of giving the Torah to the Israelites.

This assertion in the main clause of statement # 51 is now amplified through a series of justifying (γὰρ) statements (#s 52-54, vv. 9-11).

Note that in the first (# 52) and third (# 54) statements as first class conditional sentences the comparative πολλῶ μᾶλλον, much more, is used to introduce the apodosis main clause. This adds heightened contrast to the new covenant mentioned in the main clause in contrast to the old covenant referenced in the protasis if-clause. Note that the first class grammar construction here stresses assumption of reality in the protasis. That is, 'since this is correct, that is also correct.' The central topic throughout all three statements is that

πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ κάλυμμα.† 34 ἥνικα δ' ἂν εἰσπορεύετο Μωϋσῆς ἐναντι κυρίου λαλεῖν αὐτῷ, περιηρεῖτο τὸ κάλυμμα ἕως τοῦ ἐκπορεύεσθαι. καὶ ἐξελθὼν ἐλάλει πᾶσιν τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ ὅσα ἐνετείλατο αὐτῷ κύριος,† 35 καὶ εἶδον οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ τὸ πρόσωπον Μωϋσῆ ὅτι δεδόξασται, καὶ περιέθηκεν Μωϋσῆς κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον ἑαυτοῦ, ἕως ἂν εἰσέλθῃ συλλαλεῖν αὐτῷ.

NRSV. 29 Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. 30 When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. 31 But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them. 32 Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. 33 When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; 34 but whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, 35 the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

of the contrast in the δόξα, the divine Presence, between the two covenants. In the new covenant it is substantially greater than it was in the old covenant.

Particularly insightful is the labeling of the two covenants:

Old Covenant	New Covenant
#52 τῆ διακονία τῆς κατακρίσεως ministry of condemnation	ἡ διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης ministry of righteousness
#53 τὸ δεδοξασμένον what had glory	τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης the surpassing glory
#54 τὸ καταργούμενον what was set aside	τὸ μένον the permanent

3.9 γὰρ
52 πολλῶ μᾶλλον περισσεύει ἡ διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης δόξῃ.
3.10 γὰρ καὶ
53 οὐ δεδοξασται τὸ δεδοξασμένον ἐν τούτῳ | τῷ μέρει εἵνεκεν τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης.
3.11 γὰρ
54 πολλῶ μᾶλλον τὸ μένον (ἐστίν) εἰ τὸ καταργούμενον διὰ δόξης,
ἐν δόξῃ.

In # 52 (v. 9), the Torah is viewed from the angel of imposing punishment from disobedience. The Law of Moses worked off the premise of the inclination toward sinning and thus imposed punishments upon disobedience. Paul does assert that δόξα, the divine Presence, did indeed exist in the giving of the Torah. But the new covenant serves righteousness. That is, its design is to bring sinful humanity to God in a way that makes them presentable to a holy God. In this covenant, the divine Presence abounds far greater πολλῶ μᾶλλον περισσεύει, since God worked through Christ to produce this covenant.

In # 53 (v. 10), Paul shifts over to the verb δοξάζω in a couple of Greek perfect tense passive voice forms: οὐ δεδοξασται τὸ δεδοξασμένον, what contained glory does not contain glory. But here the adverbial qualifier ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει, in this part, sets up a contemporary time frame. That is, the Torah did contain the divine Presence at its giving, but not now. Why? εἵνεκεν τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης, because of the much greater divine Presence, now in the new covenant. Remember that Paul is primarily contrasting the giving of the Torah through Moses from Exodus 34:29-35 with the presentation of the apostolic Gospel. These are the two covenants under consideration. Both the Jewish converts and the Gentile God-fearer converts in the Corinthian community would immediately recognize this differ-

ence as they reflected upon their conversion experience through the apostolic Gospel. And just who was it that first brought this Gospel to them? The apostle Paul and his associates, of course!

In # 54 (v. 11), Paul contrasts the temporality of the old covenant with the permanence of the new covenant. But his main point is that if the old covenant at its giving reflected the divine Presence, then the coming of the new covenant in Christ brings a much greater presence of God that is permanent rather than temporary.

All this represents the basis of Paul Πειθοίθησιν, persuasion, that comes through Christ (v. 4). Thus the direct working of the Spirit of God through the new covenant brings a much greater divine Presence into the lives of all believers whether Jews or Gentiles.⁸⁶ In this reality the Corinthians themselves become Paul's 'letter of recommendation.'

One of the many 'lessons' to be learned from this passage vv. 4-11 is that the validation of one's ministry both as a minister and simply as a Christian lays not in what you possess. Rather, it is found in what

you pass on to others that brings life changing transformation to them. God alone is the one who stamps 'approved' on your ministry. And He does that through

⁸⁶The many blind, dead end 'rabbit trails' followed by many commentators in vv. 7-11 usually comes out of failure to understand Paul's use both of Ex. 34:29-35 and the term δόξα. The apostle uses the OT text as a biblical event, not as principalized teaching.

A comparison of 2 Cor. 3:7-18 with Exod. 34:29-35 indicates several ways in which the OT passage differs from Paul's commentary. The Exodus narrative makes no mention of Moses' purpose in veiling his face, the fading splendor of his face, or the inability of the Israelites to gaze at his face because of its brightness. Aware of these differences, some scholars speak of 2 Cor. 3:7-18 as a "midrash" on Exodus 34,⁸ some prefer the designation "pesher"⁹ or "midrash pesher,"¹⁰ while others appeal to the category of allegory.¹¹ Given the fact that specific reference to the Exodus story is found only in vv. 7, 13, and 16 of 2 Corinthians 3, it may be wiser to follow Hays's lead and describe 3:7-18 as "an allusive homily based on biblical incidents."¹²

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 277.]

That Paul uses δόξα in reference to the divine Presence, and not in regard to either Moses' glory or his glory should be so apparent as to not need commentary. But numerous commentators miss this completely, which probably tells you more about them personally than the biblical text.

changing the lives of people you provide ministry to. Out of this then ought to come the highest priority of being utterly obedient to God in ministry. Education and personal experience are important, but they must never ever substitute for complete surrender to the leadership of God's Holy Spirit in ministry.

10.2.3.1.5.3 Paul's bold Ministry in New Covenant, 3:12-18

12 Ἐχοντες οὖν τοιαύτην ἐλπίδα πολλῇ παρρησίᾳ χρώμεθα 13 καὶ οὐ καθάπερ Μωϋσῆς ἐτίθει κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου. 14 ἀλλ' ἐπωρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν. ἄχρι γὰρ τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας τὸ αὐτὸ

κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης μένει, μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον ὅτι ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται· 15 ἀλλ' ἕως σήμερον ἡνίκα ἂν ἀναγινώσκηται Μωϋσῆς, κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτῶν κεῖται· 16 ἡνίκα δὲ ἐὰν ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς κύριον, περιαιρεῖται τὸ κάλυμμα. 17 ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν· οὗ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου, ἐλευθερία. 18 ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος.

12 Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, 13 not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. 14 But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading

3.12	οὖν	Ἐχοντες τοιαύτην ἐλπίδα πολλῇ παρρησίᾳ
55	χρώμεθα	
3.13	καὶ	
56	οὐ (χρώμεθα)	καθάπερ Μωϋσῆς ἐτίθει κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου.
3.14	ἀλλ'	
57	ἐπωρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν.	
	γὰρ	
58	τὸ αὐτὸ κάλυμμα . . . μένει,	ἄχρι τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον ἐν Χριστῷ ὅτι...καταργεῖται·
3.15	ἀλλ'	ἕως σήμερον ἡνίκα ἂν ἀναγινώσκηται Μωϋσῆς, ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτῶν
59	κάλυμμα...κεῖται·	
3.16	δὲ	ἡνίκα ἐὰν ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς κύριον,
60	περιαιρεῖται τὸ κάλυμμα.	
3.17	δὲ	
61	ὁ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν·	
	δὲ	
62	(ἐστιν) ἐλευθερία.	
3.18	δὲ	ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι
63	ἡμεῖς πάντες...τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα	ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος.

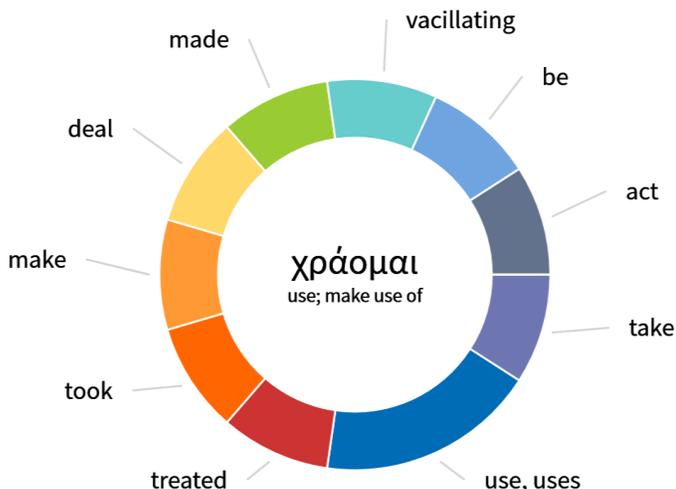
of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. 15 Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; 16 but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

This pericope of vv. 12-18 is linked to vv. 4-11 by the inferential conjunction οὖν, *therefore*, in v. 12. Thus Paul's focus in vv. 12-18 on ministry in the new covenant makes explicit what he considered implicit in vv. 4-11. A major topic in this passage is the often repeated word κάλυμμα, *veil*. The covering that Moses' used to hide his face from the Israelite people becomes a symbolic reference to the spiritual blindness of those failing to see the divine Presence in the apostolic Gospel as the new covenant of God.

The organization structure of this pericope, as reflected in the block diagram above, is built largely off of statement # 55 with justifying and expansion statements (#s 56-63) following. The core assertion of # 55 is χρώμεθα, *we take action*. This dominantly Pauline verb in the NT (9 of 11 uses) from χράομαι, fundamentally means to *act, do, function*. With such a basic meaning, it will be translated by a wide variety of English terms as the chart from the NRSV below illustrates. What Paul specifies by this present tense verb χρώμεθα is everything connected to actions in his life and ministry. Again the first person plural form includes his associates as well.

With the verb here, it is the attached qualifications that adds richness and specificity to their actions.

First is the adverbial causal participle phrase ἔχοντες τοιαύτην ἐλπίδα, *since having such confidence*. Not much difference between this participle phrase and the earlier main clause expression, Πεποίθησιν τοιαύτην ἔχομεν, *we have such confidence* (v. 4) exists. Contextually a slightly different emphasis is present. In



v. 4, Paul's *confidence*, Πεποίθησιν, was centered in the evidence of genuine conversion of the Corinthians that came through Christ. Here in v. 12, his ἐλπίδα, *hope*, centered in the new covenant reflected in the apostolic Gospel that the Corinthians had accepted. The use of the correlative adjective τοιαύτην in both instances links the modified noun back to the immediately preceding theme: in v. 4 back to vv. 1-3, and in v. 12 back to vv. 7-11. Thus the very basis for how Paul and his associates function is the greater divine Presence in the new covenant of the apostolic Gospel. Paul is totally confident that this is of God.

Second, πολλῇ παρρησίᾳ, *with much boldness*, Paul functions. Now what is παρρησία? The English word 'boldness' is potentially misleading. The manner of Paul doing ministry was not as an arrogant smart aleck! I've encountered countless preachers over the past 50+ years of ministry who took παρρησία to mean acting like an arrogant fool. In reality what they do is biblically reflecting ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου which has no connection to God whatsoever according to 1 John 2:16.

What Paul means here by παρρησία is to do ministry out of deep conviction that this ministry comes from and is being led by God through the Holy Spirit. It reflects confidence, but not one based on Paul himself. Rather a confidence to speak courageously based on God's presence in his life.

Third, a pair of elliptical amplification follows (#s 56-57), introduced by καί. The οὐ...ἀλλ', *not this...but that* sets up a contrast that is important to note correctly. On the initial negating side come καὶ οὐ καθάπερ Μωϋσῆς ἐτίθει κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου, *not like Moses put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not gaze at the end of his fading glory*. One issue that emerges here is the assertion of a reason for Moses putting the veil over his face when he spoke to the people after being on the mountain with God.⁸⁷ The Ex-

⁸⁷“The Exodus narrative gives no explicit reason for Moses' recurrent veiling of his face, but many commentators assume that it was to avoid frightening the people or to protect them from prolonged exposure to the divine radiance and to mark clearly the difference between his official role as Yahweh's intermediary, regularly declaring Yahweh's words to Israel (the unveiled face), and his status as a private citizen, speaking his own words (the veiled face). But Exod. 34:35 contains a hint of Moses' purpose, if the καί that joins the two parts of the verse is rendered 'and so':¹⁴ 'The people of Israel saw (εἶδον) that the face of Moses was radiant, and so (καί) Moses placed a veil over his face.' That is, he wanted to prevent the people from being preoccupied with what they saw, from gazing in amazement, as opposed to giving attention to what they had heard. It is this idea, we suggest, that prompted Paul's statement in 3:13b.” [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), 297.]



odus text simply defines a sequence as follows:

- 1) on the mountain with God, no veil
- 2) off the mountain speaking with the people, no veil.
- 3) when finished speaking with the people, a veil put on his face until the next time speaking with God.

What seems to be happening with Paul's statement is taking what, at least in the LXX translation of Exd. 34:35, appears to be a hint that Moses put the veil on so that the people would not focus on him and the odd glow on his face, but rather on the words of the Torah delivered to the people. While reporting these words he did not wear the veil, but at the end of his speeches, he put it on. While delivering the words of God to the people the visible glow on Moses' face confirmed the divine nature of the words being spoken. But at the end of the speech it was critical for the Israelites to seriously ponder the meaning of those words, and not to be fascinated with the divine glow on Moses' face, which evidently faded with time. Paul's statement πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου, *so that the sons of Israel would not gaze into the end of what loses its usefulness*, reflects something of the hint in the LXX translation, but with the interpretive comment εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου it seems to go beyond the OT text.⁸⁸

The contrastive statement # 57 introduced by ἀλλ' ἐπρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν, *but their minds were hardened*, shifts from Moses to the Israelite people of Moses' time. All five uses of πωρῶ inside the NT -- Mk. 6:52; 8:17; Jhn. 12:40; Rom. 11:7; 2 Cor. 3:14 -- allude to the process of the intensifying of rebellion by the Israelites to the leadership of God through Moses. The literal meaning of to harden has the figurative meaning of 'hardening' of the heart in heart in the sense of re-

⁸⁸“πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου. ‘To prevent the people of Israel from gazing steadily until the end of what was fading away.’ πρὸς with the particular infinitive expresses purpose.¹⁵ A variety of proposals have been made regarding Paul's understanding of the reason for Moses' veiling of his face:¹⁶

“to prevent the Israelites from seeing that the splendor of his face was fading¹⁷ and thus to preclude their disappointment¹⁸ or their disparagement of his importance,¹⁹

“to conceal from the Israelites the temporary nature of the whole Mosaic system²⁰ or the goal of the fading old covenant,²¹

“to show the people, through an acted parable, that their sins had made them unable and unworthy to view even temporary glory without interruption,²²

“to prevent the glory of God from achieving its intended result, namely the judgment of the ‘stiff-necked’ Israelites,²³

“to prevent the Israelites from continuing to gaze in amazement until his face had totally lost the brilliance of the reflected glory and to demonstrate that the glory of the Sinai covenant would be eclipsed.”

[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), 297–298.

bellion against leadership. Hear Paul indicates that τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν, *their minds*, became hardened so that they would not listen to God through Moses. Of course, the narrative in the Exodus of the Israelites after crossing the Red Sea is the story of just that.

Fourth, statements #s 58-60 (vv. 14b-16) re-enforce the point, especially in # 57, of the symbolic veil still being present among the Jews both in their synagogue meetings and temple worship in Jerusalem. Paul's application of the OT principle of the hardness of the Israelites to his present generation is made emphatically twice:

ἄχρι τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας (v. 14b)

until this very day

ἕως σήμερον ἡνίκα ἂν ἀναγινώσκηται Μωϋσῆς (v. 15)

until today whenever Moses is read.

In both main clauses their rebellion reflected as spiritual blindness, or more literally, spiritual dumbness:

τὸ αὐτὸ κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης μένει, (v. 14b)

this same veil continues at the reading of the old covenant

κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτῶν κεῖται· (v. 15b)

a veil rests upon their heart

The veil on Moses' face now becomes a veil on the reading of the Torah of Moses that keeps the people from seeing the divine Presence and then submitting to God in obedience.

But there is a way to get rid of the veil and see clearly the divine Presence: turn to Jesus who lifts this veil of ignorance. Notice this option first in statement # 58, μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον ὅτι ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται, *not being uncovered because it is nullified in Christ* (v. 15c).⁸⁹ This ὅτι clause principle then becomes the fully expressed main clause statement # 60 in v. 16: ἡνίκα δὲ ἔαν ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς κύριον, περιαιρεῖται τὸ κάλυμμα, *but whenever one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed*. In commitment to Christ one can see the divine Presence clearly even in the Torah of Moses. The veil has been removed by Christ. The difference in meaning between καταργεῖται (v. 15c) and περιαιρεῖται (v. 16b) is slight and essentially refers to the removing of the barrier to spiritual perception of the divine Presence during the reading of the Torah of Moses.

Fifth, statements #s 61-63 amplify the meaning and implications of the option of turning to the Lord for the removal of the veil. Notice the repetitive δὲ introduc-

⁸⁹Side note: this contrastive option in participle phrase is the basis for Paul's use of the contrastive conjunction ἀλλ' to introduce #59, while the core expressions of #58 and #59 are synonymous parallels. Setting up such unbalanced contrasts grammatically is not possible in most modern western languages. This forces rather artificial translation efforts that one finds in most contemporary translations.

ing each of these three statements. 17 ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν· οὗ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου, ἐλευθερία. 18 ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος. **17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.**

3.18 δὲ
63 ἡμεῖς πάντες...τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα
 ἀπὸ δόξης
 εἰς δόξαν
 καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος.

about change spir-
 itually and morally.
 All of it is shaped
 by the single image
 of Christ and the life
 He lived while on
 earth.

The beginning declaration is important to get correctly so that the other statements come together sensibly. What does Paul mean by ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν, *the Lord is the Spirit*? First, who is ὁ κύριος? Christ or God? The use of the rare ἡνίκα only in vv. 15-16 in the entire NT suggests that Paul is following relatively closely Exod. 34:34 from the LXX in vv. 15-18. The use of κύριος twice in verse 34 is a clear reference to God. When Moses went up the mountain to speak to God the veil was removed. Normally in Paul's use of κύριος in his writings it refers to Christ. The new covenant is closely linked in vv. 4-11 to the Spirit. Paul's statement # 61 links ὁ κύριος to τὸ πνεῦμά, but is immediately followed by τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου, *the Spirit of the Lord*, in # 62. These would seem to equate κύριος with God. But *turning to the Lord*, ἐπιστρέφη πρὸς κύριον, in v. 16, while playing off Exod. 34:34 also amplifies ὅτι ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται, *because in Christ it is nullified* (v. 14b). Paul can move seamlessly between κύριος as God and also as Christ, which here he seems to blend together. Add to this is that Christ in the new covenant is the δόξα, the divine Presence of God (vv. 7-11). It may well be that the beginning questions, who is ὁ κύριος? Christ or God?, pose an artificial distinction resulting from post Enlightenment kind of thinking. When we encounter the Spirit in the new covenant we encounter God through Christ as the divine Presence of God.

In statement # 62 comes the huge implication of such an encounter: οὗ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου, ἐλευθερία, *and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*. Crucial here is the definition of ἐλευθερία in this particular context. Clearly in light of statement # 63 especially, ἐλευθερία means the freedom to be consistently transformed so that the divine Presence increasingly is impacting our life. This greater glory of the new covenant begins to impact us at conversion, but over a life time

of obedience it continually transforms and changes us to be able to sense the presence of God in our lives.

Note the core affirmation: ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες... τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα, *And we all are being transformed into the same image*. That is, our lives are all being re-shaped into the same image of Christ as the δόξα, the divine presence of God. This is much deeper than just becoming more 'Christ like.' In Paul's complex construction here in # 64, the central point is that this δόξα of God is permeating our lives step by step in bringing

The modifiers of the main clause verb, as illustrated in the above diagram, underscore this central point. First, this transformation comes about only with ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ, *unveiled faces*. This alludes back to the previous reverences in vv. 14b and 16 where turning to Christ is the only way to get rid of the veil of ignorance of God's presence. The perfect passive participle ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ references one's conversion commitment as the moment of unveiling. The phrase ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ spelled in the instrumental of means function (sometimes labeled the instrumental dative) stresses this unveiling as essential to the process of being transformed, μεταμορφούμεθα.

Then the process of transformation is linked to τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι as a simultaneous action. Here the idea is *continual gazing into the glory of the Lord*. Interestingly, κάτοπτρον, based upon the root verb κατοπτρίζω, is the most common word for 'mirror' in ancient Greek. For transformation to happen it must grow out of focused attention to Christ, the divine Presence of God. One should be very cautious here about this figurative picture of 'gazing' as advocating meditation. In later interpretive history this passage has been used for this. But Paul was no 'meditator' in the later Christian definition of such. Focus on the Presence of God in Christ means first and foremost obedient actions in ministry service. The symbolic veil referenced here centers on sinful actions out of ignorance of the Presence of God. And this came among the Jews of Paul's day in spite of the reading of the Torah on Friday evenings in the sabbath gatherings where much discussion took place around what was read. The reading and discussion of the Law occurred in ignorance of the divine Presence of God even in connection to the Torah, much less in rejection of Christ as that divine Presence

in the new covenant. Thus Paul's point with the participle phrase modifier τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι asserts dramatically that divine transformation happens only in a concentrated focus on Jesus as the divine Presence of God.

The above two sets of modifiers are in the prefield position, and are matched by three modifying sets following the main clause verb.⁹⁰ Here we discover what this transformation means more precisely. The first two prepositional phrases, ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν, **from glory into glory**, underscore the verb action of transformation in μεταμορφούμεθα. That is, transformation moves from one level of the divine Presence to a another, deeper level. This contextually is against the backdrop of the greater divine Presence, δόξα, in the new covenant as opposed to the old covenant in vv. 7-11. But beyond a conversion transformation, the present tense of μεταμορφούμεθα underscores an ongoing process of transformation to ever heightened awareness of the divine Presence inside the new covenant.

The source of this continual transformation is signaled by καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος. The dependent conjunction καθάπερ, only used in Paul's writings, stresses a comparison of this transforming divine Presence has its starting point in κυρίου πνεύματος. Most likely πνεύματος is in the genitive of apposition function and thus the translation of κυρίου πνεύματος is **from the Lord, that is, the Spirit**. This ongoing transformation is traced back to God working through His Spirit which is linked in vv. 7-11 to the new covenant.

Thus the heart of the Christian experience in the new covenant is μεταμορφούμεθα, **being transformed**. **But the transformation that changes us inside and out**

⁹⁰One pattern to always look for is the positioning of groups of modifiers. In the vast majority of instances, multiple sets of modifiers will be grouped together both before and after when they modify. Usually some kind of rationale for listing sets together on either side of the word being modified will be detectable.

In the instance of # 63, the pair in the prefield center on our responsibility or requirements for the transforming action to take place. The three modifiers after the verb μεταμορφούμεθα define the nature of the transformation that takes place through God's action.

4.1 Διὰ τοῦτο,
ἔχοντες τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην
καθὼς ἠλεήθημεν,
64 οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν
4.2 ἀλλ'
65 ἀπειπάμεθα τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης,
μὴ περιπατοῦντες
ἐν πανουργίᾳ
μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ
ἀλλὰ
τῆ φανερώσει τῆς ἀληθείας συνιστάνοντες ἑαυτοὺς
πρὸς πᾶσαν συνείδησιν ἀνθρώπων
ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ.

is dependent upon moving from one level of awareness of the divine Presence of God to a deeper awareness. The Corinthians themselves in their conversion and spiritual growth are Paul's 'letter of recommendation' that the true Gospel of the transforming new covenant was brought to them by the apostles and his associates. Proclamation this message stands as the center of Paul's ministry, and, as he will proceed to declare in the next pericope, energizes him in ministry.

10.2.3.1.6 Ministry in clay pots, 4:1-15

In this next larger pericope the apostle uses the preceding comments as foundational for some personal applications to the ministry of both him and his associates. The prepositional phrase Διὰ τοῦτο, **because of this**, links up what follows in vv. 1-15 especially to the preceding 3:1-18. The following segment of vv. 1-15 has a two fold emphasis with the first one built around the contrastive οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν ἀλλ' ἀπειπάμεθα τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης, **we do not loose heart, but we have renounced the secret things of shame**. The same pattern is used to structure the subsequent segment of 4:16-5:10. The same denial οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν, **we do not loose heart**, is followed by the contrastive declaration in dual forms: διαφθείρεται, **wasting away**, and ἀνακαινοῦται, **being renewed**.

Thus both 4:1-15 and 4:16-5:10 both grow out of the foundational principles of ministry set forth in 3:1-18. The parallel rhetorical structure of both 4:1-15 and 4:16-5:10 further link the two units closely together.

10.2.3.1.6.1 Not loosing heart, pt. 1, 4:1-6

4.1 Διὰ τοῦτο, ἔχοντες τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην καθὼς ἠλεήθημεν, οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν 2 ἀλλ' ἀπειπάμεθα τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης, μὴ περιπατοῦντες ἐν πανουργίᾳ μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ τῆ φανερώσει τῆς ἀληθείας συνιστάνοντες ἑαυτοὺς πρὸς πᾶσαν συνείδησιν ἀνθρώπων ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. 3 εἰ δὲ καὶ ἔστιν κεκαλυμμένον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν, ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις ἐστὶν κεκαλυμμένον, 4 ἐν οἷς ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων εἰς τὸ μὴ αὐγάσαι τὸν φωτισμὸν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ. 5 οὐ γὰρ ἑαυτοὺς κηρύσσομεν ἀλλ' Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν κύριον, ἑαυτοὺς δὲ δούλους ὑμῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦν. 6 ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπὼν, Ἐκ σκότους φῶς λάμψει, ὃς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ.

4.3 δὲ
εἰ καὶ ἔστιν κεκαλυμμένον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν,
ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις

66 **ἔστιν κεκαλυμμένον,**
4,4 ἐν οἷς ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα
| τῶν ἀπίστων
εἰς τὸ μὴ ἀγάσσει τὸν φωτισμὸν
/-----|
τοῦ εὐαγγελίου
τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ,
ὃς ἔστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ.

4.5 γὰρ

67 **Οὐ ἑαυτοὺς κηρύσσομεν**
ἀλλ'

68 **(κηρύσσομεν) Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν**
| κύριον,
| δὲ
| **ἑαυτοὺς**
| δούλους ὑμῶν
διὰ Ἰησοῦν.

4.6 ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπὼν·
ἐκ σκοτίους φῶς λάμψει,
ὃς ἔλαμψεν
ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν
πρὸς φωτισμὸν
τῆς γνώσεως
τῆς δόξης
τοῦ θεοῦ
ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ.

4.1 Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2 We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Here the apostle deals with one of the continual challenges before every person engaged in Christian ministry. The heavy load that must be carried in ministry can wear a person down and lead to discouragement. But here the apostle counters that temptation with a positive note about ministry in the midst of great difficulty. Central to his point here is statement # 65 stressing integrity in ministry. In light of the marvelous transformation of life that comes in the apostolic Gospel, service to others with this message can only be done with the highest of integrity.

The internal arrangement of ideas is clearly reflected in the above block diagram. The contrastive first two statements of #s 64 and 65, οὐκ... ἀλλ', *not...but*, set up the core emphasis. The amplification role of statement # 66 referencing the unwillingness of many to accept the Gospel sets a context for integrity in ministry. Statements #s 67-68 stand as justifying assertions to the first three declarations affirming the meaning of statement # 65 especially. Paul promotes Christ, not himself in this ministry.

The phrase τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην, *this ministry*, identifies the major thrust of Paul's discussion. διακονία looms large in Second Corinthians with 12 uses: 3:7, 8, 9 (2x); 4:1; 5:18; 6:3; 8:4; 9:1, 12, 13; 11:8. The essence of διακονία for Paul was proclaiming the apostolic Gospel. Its use in 4:1 with the demonstrative pronoun τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην references the depiction in chapter three as what the Paul is talking about. Being granted such ministry, ἔχοντες τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην, means becoming an object of divine mercy, καθὼς ἠλεήθημεν, *just as we have received mercy*. It is not a διακονία that one takes up under his own initiative, nor even volunteers for. Instead, it is granted by God as an expression of His mercy and compassion. Ministry perceived this way must then be carried out exclusively with integrity

and proper motivation.

On the first side of the contrast stands ἐγκακῶ in the present tense first person plural. The verb stresses the loss of one's motivation for actions or conduct. Thus one can easily become victimized by false motivations behind actions. This very Pauline oriented verb in the NT (5 of the 6 instances) is stressed strongly in vv. 4 and 16 of chapter four: οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν, **we are not loosing our integrity for ministry**. Again as has been overwhelmingly the case in the first four chapters of Second Corinthians, the 'we' means Paul and his associates, especially Timothy (cf. 1:1). The present tense underscores ongoing motivation, rather than that at the beginning with can then fade into some less honorable.

The opposite idea is then ἀλλ' ἀπειπάμεθα τὰ κρυπτά τῆς αἰσχύνης, **but we have renounced the secret things of shame**. This verb ἀπέπιπον only surfaces this one time inside the NT and means to strongly disown or renounce something. The direct object τὰ κρυπτά τῆς αἰσχύνης references the implicit thrust of ἐγκακοῦμεν, i.e., loosing proper motivation for improper ones (τὰ κρυπτά τῆς αἰσχύνης). The idea is the doing of things which one hides out of a sense of shame.

Here those actions that one would try to hide include μὴ περιπατοῦντες ἐν πανουργίᾳ μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, **not living in deceitfulness nor falsifying the Word of God**. Both behavior and treatment of the apostolic Gospel must be driven by proper motives. The inner connection of these two negative oriented participle modifiers of ἀπειπάμεθα is clear. Paul renounced the twisting of the Gospel in order to justify questionable behavior.

With the series of modifiers of the core verb ἀπειπάμεθα (see above diagram), the apostle sets up an additional not this...but that, μὴ... μηδὲ... ἀλλὰ, **not... neither...but**, structure. On the positive side then stands ἀλλὰ τῇ φανερώσει τῆς ἀληθείας συνιστάνοντες ἑαυτοὺς πρὸς πᾶσαν συνείδησιν ἀνθρώπων ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ, **but in the manifestation of divine Truth commending ourselves to the scrutiny of every person as we will stand before God**. Of course, literal translation of this lengthy sentence, and even of this modifying participle, is impossible to do with clarity of idea expression. The core participle expression συνιστάνοντες ἑαυτοὺς, **commending ourselves**, is defined contextually as the opposite of the two negatives μὴ περιπατοῦντες ἐν πανουργίᾳ μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ which spell out what is hidden from view out of a sense of shame for its impropriety, τὰ κρυπτά τῆς αἰσχύνης. Thus Paul conducts both his living and presentation of the Gospel with open transparency because he has nothing to hide. He and his associates open themselves up to the scrutiny of every one who can examine these leaders and see for themselves that integrity is central to what is being done.

The sense of πρὸς πᾶσαν συνείδησιν ἀνθρώπων is emphatic here in emphasizing complete transparency toward every individual making a judgment about how ministry is being done. The translation of συνείδησιν as 'conscience' is misleading due the enormous baggage of the English word. Paul worked inside the framework of first century Greek understanding of συνείδησις as the human ability to make decisions, including evaluative decisions, about issues.⁹¹ The larger context setting for doing ministry with this openness is ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ, **in the presence of God**. Paul's ministry is carried out in the full awareness that judgment day is coming as he will describe in 5:1-10. This openness to people reflects anticipation of being completely exposed before Almighty God on judgment day.

Statement # 66 via the conjunction δὲ adds an amplification to the preceding two statements in #s 64-65. It is structured as a concessive sentence with the protasis introduced by εἰ καὶ, **even if**, and the apodosis main clause ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις ἐστὶν κεκαλυμμένον, **among those perishing it is veiled**. Paul sets up the hypothetical possibility of his Gospel message being veiled. That is, its meaning and ability to communicate the divine Presence in Christ is hidden from certain individuals. Here the language of veiling and unveiling goes back to chapter three where τὴν δόξαν κυρίου, **the divine Presence of the Lord** (cf. 3:18), is hidden to some individuals. These individuals are identified in the main clause as ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, **among those perishing**. This plays off the earlier assertion in 3:7-11 that the reading of the Torah in the Jewish synagogues was veiled to those present in that they could not see the glory of God that Moses' had seen on Mt. Sinai. Their hardness of heart (cf. 3:14-15) kept them from sensing the Presence of God. Also, the only way to lift that veil is to turn to Christ (cf. 3:16-18).

The adjectival functioning relative clause in 4:3 identifies this hardening of the heart as the blinding work of the Devil himself: ἐν οἷς ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων εἰς τὸ μὴ αὐγάσαι τὸν φωτισμὸν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ, **among whom the god of this world has blinded the thinking of unbelievers so that they cannot see the illumination of the Gospel that brings the divine Presence, Christ, who is the very image of God**. The relative clause here connects back to τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, **those perishing**, as the antecedent of the pronoun οἷς. Thus those perishing are further identified as τῶν ἀπίστων, unbelievers, in the relative clause.

The unusual phrase ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, **the**

⁹¹For a detailed exploration of συνείδησις in the NT see my article "[The Western Introspective Conscience: A Biblical Perspective on Decision Making.](#)" at volume 37 of the BIC commentary series in cranfordville.com.

god of this age, is found inside the NT only here, but is very similar to the Johannine image of the ruler of this world, ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, in Jhn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11. Also Eph. 2:2 has a similar reference: τὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος, the ruler over the power of the air. All of these allude to Satan. The phrase here, ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, would have had particular relevancy to the Corinthians caught up in the surrounding culture of massive polytheism. Additionally the use of the apocalyptic Jewish oriented phrase τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, of this age, signals Paul's adoption generally of this diaspora Jewish terminology that divided human history into two periods of time: this evil age and the Messianic age to come. This echoes the earlier expression by Paul in Gal. 1:4, ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ, out of this present age of the evil one. Central to the idea of this present age being evil was the contention that Satan dominates humanity during this period. Although his powers are somewhat limited (cf. Rev. 20:1-6), he nonetheless can exert great influence over the lives of those outside the control of God in His kingdom on earth. These, as Paul declares in Gal. 1:4, have been rescued out from under Satan's control by Christ: τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, ὅπως ἐξέλθῃται ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρός ἡμῶν, who gave Himself in behalf of our sins, so that He might rescue us out of this present age of the evil one according to the will of God, indeed our Father. To the Corinthians, Paul asserts that when the Gospel is hidden from unbelievers to keep them from receiving Christ, it is due to the blinding impact of Satan upon their lives. Specifically Satan has ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων, blinded the minds of unbelievers. The idea of τὰ νοήματα is the ability to think coherently. Intellectually they can comprehend the concept of the apostolic Gospel, but they cannot grasp both its relevancy to their lives and its potency to transform their lives. Satan has convinced them that it has no value for them. Thus εἰς τὸ μὴ αὐγάσαι τὸν φωτισμὸν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ, so that they may not see the illumination coming from the Gospel, that is the divine Presence who is Christ, the very image of God. Here is the great tragedy: they do not sense God's life changing Presence in Christ through the Gospel. Thus they continue living completely ignorant of the powerful Presence of Almighty God in this world. For the Corinthian critics of Paul, the issue of rejection of the Gospel is centered in the work of Satan and not in Paul's preaching of the Gospel itself.

In verses 5-6, comes a series of justifying state-

ments (γὰρ) providing support for what he has just claimed in the preceding statements of vv. 1-4. These two declarations, #s 67-68, assert that Paul's preaching does not focus upon himself as the preacher (# 67). Instead, everything in his message centers on Christ as Lord and the apostolic leaders as servants of the people in behalf of Christ (# 68).

Statement 67 begins with a denial of promoting himself in preaching the Gospel:

^{4.5} γὰρ
67 Οὐ ἑαυτοὺς κηρύσσομεν

Behind this very likely stands a self promotion in the preaching by some of Paul's critics at Corinth and possibly a criticism that Paul puts too much of himself in his preaching.⁹² Given the mentality reflected in the first letter to the Corinthians about the attitudes of Paul's critics, this latter angle is not likely. Egocentrism was central to their thinking. The apostle was seeking to advance the Kingdom of God on earth in his preaching, and not interested in building a personal empire as is often found in modern Christianity.

^{4.6} ἀλλ' (κηρύσσομεν) Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν
| κύριον,
| δὲ
| ἑαυτοὺς
| δούλους ὑμῶν
διὰ Ἰησοῦν.
ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπὼν·
ἐκ σκοτῶν φῶς λάμψει,
ὃς ἔλαμψεν
ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν
πρὸς φωτισμὸν
τῆς γνώσεως
τῆς δόξης
τοῦ θεοῦ
ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ.

Intead of himself, his preaching centered on Christ as is set forth in # 68:

Clearly this point in made. The triple object of Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν κύριον is best taken as Jesus Christ as Lord. With the repeated use of κύριος as a reference to God in 3:12-18, the apostle now shifts the emphasis to Christ as the divine κύριος which is central to the

⁹²“This statement could be either apologetic or polemic, possibly even both. It would be apologetic if Paul is responding to criticism that in his preaching he puts himself forward, i.e. that he is more concerned to establish his authority as an apostle than to proclaim the gospel. It would be polemic if Paul is implying that, unlike others who put themselves forward in their preaching, he preaches the lordship of Christ.” [Colin G. Kruse, 2 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary, vol. 8, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 104-105.]

apostolic Gospel. But in the compound set of objects, *ἐαυτοὺς* shows up again but with the appositional qualifier *δούλους ὑμῶν*, *ourselves as your servants*. This is a huge difference than the unqualified *ἐαυτοὺς* in statement # 67. This echoes the earlier declaration of Paul in 1:24, *οὐχ ὅτι κυριεύομεν ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως ἀλλὰ συνεργοί ἐσμεν τῆς χαρᾶς ὑμῶν· τῇ γὰρ πίστει ἐστήκατε*, *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*. The apostle well understood the servant minister teaching of Jesus as set forth in Mk. 10:41-45, 43 *οὕτως δὲ ἐστὶν ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀλλ' ὅς ἂν θέλῃ μέγας γενέσθαι ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσται ὑμῶν διάκονος*, 44 *καὶ ὅς ἂν θέλῃ ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι πρῶτος ἔσται πάντων δοῦλος*. 43 *But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant*, 44 *and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all*.

This posture in preaching is further defined as *διὰ Ἰησοῦν*, *because of Jesus*. That is, accepting Jesus as κύριος translates into becoming the διάκονος / δοῦλος, *servant* to others in the Gospel. This defines *συνεργοί*, *fellow workers*, in 1:24.

This concept of servanthood in ministry is so central to the teaching of the NT that it must not be overlooked or neglected. And neither can it be reduced down to ceremonial ritual or used as a facade to cover up a dictatorial approach to ministry. Modern Christianity across the theological spectrum has become guilty of explaining away both Jesus and Paul here. The depraved nature of humanity craves the possession of power and fears surrendering it completely to others. But both Jesus and Paul recognized that the way to influence people toward God was through serving them, not bossing them. Many in the Corinthian church had not yet learned this principle, as is also the case for many Christian leaders in today's world.

The elliptical *ὅτι* clause in v. 6 provides the basis upon which Paul preaches Christ and himself as a servant of Jesus: *ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπὼν, Ἐκ σκότους φῶς λάμψει, ὃς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ*. *For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*.

The scripture allusion *Ἐκ σκότους φῶς λάμψει* seems to recall Gen. 1:3, *καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς Γενηθήτω φῶς. καὶ ἐγένετο φῶς*. *And God said, "Let there be light!" And there was light*. Additionally it reminds one of the language of Isaiah in Isa. 9:2, (LXX 9:1), *1 ὁ λαὸς ὁ πορευόμενος ἐν σκότει, ἴδετε φῶς μέγα· οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν χώρα καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου, φῶς λάμψει ἐφ' ὑμᾶς*. *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined*.

The application of this OT image of God's light

shining is then made with the relative clause modifier, *ὃς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ*. *who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*. The God who spoke is the One who has illuminated believers down to the deepest part of their being. Thus the God of Abraham is identified here as working in Christ. The *ἔλαμψεν*, *shined*, links back to the future imperative *λάμψει*, *let the light shine*. God commanded it to shine and it did. The phrase *ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν*, *in our hearts*, stresses the interior part of our existence, and especially the volitional aspect.

The intent of this illumination action of God is *πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ*, *for the enlightenment of knowledge of the glory of God*. This overly literal translation of these 'stacked up' genitive case nouns doesn't make much sense. The sense of *φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως*, *enlightenment of knowledge*, moves along the lines of throwing light into our inner being that provides us with experiential understanding and insight. The noun *φωτισμός*, used only here in vv. 4 and 6, is a salvational term like *φῶς* tends to be in the NT. This form *φωτισμός* stresses the action of shining in a manner similar to the verb *λάμπω* used here. Thus *φωτισμός* defines the moment *ὃς ἔλαμψεν*, *who shined*, from the perspective of a noun reference.

Paul's own conversion experience on the road to Damascus likely stands in the background here, given the similarity of language used.⁹³ Yet the use of the plural

⁹³“What makes an allusion to Paul's Damascus encounter with the risen Christ likely are the many similarities in thought and diction between 2 Cor. 4:6 and the three Lukan accounts of Paul's conversion in Acts. In both sets of data there are inward and outward aspects to the conversion, but while Paul emphasizes here the inward, the Acts accounts stress the outward phenomena.

2 Cor. 4:6	Acts
ἔλαμψεν	περιήστραψεν (9:3) περιαστράψαι (22:6) τὴν λαμπρότητα (26:13) περιλάμψαν (26:13)
ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις	hearing (9:4; 22:7, 14–15; 26:14) “seeing” (9:17, 27; 22:14–15; 26:13, 16 [twice], 19)
φωτισμός τῆς δόξης	φῶς (9:3; 22:6, 9, 11; 26:13) τῆς δόξης τοῦ φωτὸς ἐκείνου (22:11) ὑπὲρ τὴν λαμπρότητα τοῦ ἡλίου (26:13)

ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ ἰδεῖν τὸν δίκαιον (22:14)¹¹¹

“The plural *ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις* (ἡμῶν) may seem a difficulty for the view that 4:6 refers primarily to Paul's Damascus experience since in 6:11 the singular *ἡ καρδιά* (ἡμῶν) refers to Paul alone. It may be, however, that this plural is a hint that Paul viewed his own conversion experience, seen as the advent of light and the dispelling of darkness (not as involving a christophany), as a paradigm for all Christian conversion.¹¹²”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A*



ἡμῶν, *our*, argues strongly against limiting the picture of shining just to Paul's earlier experience. Consistently in these first four chapters the plural 'we' has referenced Paul and his associates. In the context of Paul's continued defense of the preaching of the apostolic Gospel by him and his associates, the plural here should be taken to refer primarily to all of them. The use of the Lukan language of conversion from Acts merely provides a background setting for seeing the ὅς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν, *Who has shined in our hearts*, as alluding to the believer's conversion from hearing the apostolic Gospel message. And thus it stands as further confirmation of the correctness of Paul's message.

The next set of genitives τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ, *of God's glory*, reaches back to the repeated use of δόξα to reference the divine Presence of God. Where do we discover this divine Presence of God? Moses discovered it on Mt. Sinai, but now we become aware of it ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ, *in the face of Jesus Christ*. As Paul asserted earlier in 3:7-18, this is a greater Presence than with Moses, and an ever greater awareness of it is a continuing experience of the believer (3:18).

The privilege of proclaiming such a message as this was a humbling experience for the apostle. But proclaim and live this message was central to Paul and his associates' existence. The Corinthians had been richly blessed to have begun their Christian community on the basis of this very message. To turn away from it and its messengers would make no sense at all.

Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 336–337.]

69 Ἔχομεν τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον
ἐν ὄστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν,
ἵνα ἢ ὑπερβολῇ τῆς δυνάμεως ἧ τοῦ θεοῦ
καὶ
μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν·

4.8 ἐν παντὶ

70 (ἔσμεν) θλιβόμενοι
ἄλλ'
οὐ στενοχωρούμενοι,
ἀπορούμενοι
ἄλλ'
οὐκ ἐξαπορούμενοι,
διωκόμενοι
ἄλλ'
οὐκ ἐγκαταλειπόμενοι,
καταβαλλόμενοι
ἄλλ'
οὐκ ἀπολλύμενοι,

71 4.10 (Ἔχομεν) πάντοτε τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ
ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέροντες,
ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν
ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ... φανερωθῇ.

10.2.3.1.6.2 Illuminating the presence of God, 4:7-15

7 Ἔχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον ἐν ὄστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, ἵνα ἢ ὑπερβολῇ τῆς δυνάμεως ἧ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν 8 ἐν παντὶ θλιβόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐ στενοχωρούμενοι, ἀπορούμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐξαπορούμενοι, 9 διωκόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐγκαταλειπόμενοι, καταβαλλόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀπολλύμενοι, 10 πάντοτε τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέροντες, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν φανερωθῇ. 11 ἀεὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα διὰ Ἰησοῦν, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῇ ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν. 12 ὥστε ὁ θάνατος ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνεργεῖται, ἡ δὲ ζωὴ ἐν ὑμῖν. 13 ἔχοντες δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον, Ἐπίστευσα, διό ἐλάλησα, καὶ ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν, διό καὶ λαλοῦμεν, 14 εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ ἐγείρας τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἡμᾶς σὺν Ἰησοῦ ἐγερεῖ καὶ παραστήσει σὺν ὑμῖν. 15 τὰ γὰρ πάντα δι' ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσασα διὰ τῶν πλειόνων τὴν εὐχαριστίαν περισσεύσῃ εἰς τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

7 But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. 11 For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you. 13 But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—"I believed, and so I spoke"—we also believe, and so we speak, 14 because we know that the

4.11 γὰρ
72 **ἀεὶ ἡμεῖς...εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα**
οἱ ζῶντες διὰ Ἰησοῦν,
ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῆ
ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν.

4.12 ὥστε
ἐν ἡμῖν
73 **ὁ θάνατος...ἐνεργεῖται,**
δὲ
74 **ἡ ζωὴ (ἐνεργεῖται)**
ἐν ὑμῖν.

4.13 δὲ
ἔχοντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως
κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον·
| ἐπίστευσα,
| διὸ
| ἐλάλησα,
καὶ

75 **ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν,**
διὸ

76 **καὶ λαλοῦμεν,**
εἰδότες

ὅτι ὁ ἐγείρας τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν
καὶ
ἡμᾶς σὺν Ἰησοῦ ἐγερεῖ
καὶ
παραστήσει σὺν ὑμῖν.

4.15 γὰρ
77 **τὰ πάντα (ἐστίν)**
δι' ὑμᾶς,

διὰ τῶν πλειόνων
ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσασα...τὴν εὐχαριστίαν περισσεύσῃ
εἰς τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. 15 Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

Out of the marvelous privilege just described in vv. 1-6, the apostle now heightens the contrast of this precious Gospel message with the frailty of its carrier, himself and his associates. The analogy of precious treasure stored in clay pots (v. 7) provides the background setting for this discussion. In the unfolding of the image in the subsequent verses the emphasis is given to the clay pot, since he has already described in detail the treasure as nothing less than τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ, [God's divine Presence in the face of Jesus Christ](#) (vv. 1-6). This depiction ran counter to what the Corinthians had been conditioned to believe, that Gospel preachers were super heroic figures who could rise about dangers and their own frailty. That is, they were Greek and Roman like heroes.

The internal organization of ideas becomes clear

with an analysis of the block diagram. Statement # 69 sets up the discussion as a topic sentence through the contrastive analogy of a treasure contained in a clay pot. Then statements #s 70-71 develop and apply the analogy but only by amplifying the 'clay pot' side. The 'treasure' side has already been explained and is alluded to by the demonstrative pronoun modifier τοῦτον in #. 69. Thus with # 70 in applying the 'clay pot' he goes through an eloquently structured listing with four pairs of *this but not that* expressions. Statement # 71 then summarizes statement # 70. These are then followed by a justifying statement # 72 (γὰρ) with inclusive reference to the listing in statement # 71. The consequence of #s 69-72 (ὥστε) is sketched out in #s 73-75. Note that the plural 'we' / 'you' dominates until statement # 75 where the scripture reference [Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα, I have believed, thus I have spoken](#), inserts a first person singular angle. But this is turned back into the 'we' / 'you' frame of reference in #s 75-77. This pattern of thought

development, although not overly common in modern western thinking, is typically scribal Jewish thinking with segments linked together in various ways.

10.2.3.1.6.2.1 The Analogy, v. 7.

7 Ἔχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον ἐν ὄστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, ἵνα ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως ἧ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν. **7 But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.**

^{4.7} δὲ
69 Ἔχομεν τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον
 ἐν ὄστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν,
 ἵνα ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως ἧ τοῦ θεοῦ
 καὶ
 μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν.

The core expression Ἔχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον, and we possess this treasure, signals both a summation of the previous discussion and sees the apostolic Gospel as indeed a θησαυρός, treasure. More precisely this treasure is φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ, the illumination of God’s divine Presence in the face of Jesus Christ (v. 6). Such a marvelous Presence of God is contained, however, ἐν ὄστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, in an earthly pot. Even though saved by God’s grace, the apostle knew quite well that we believers remain fragile and limited in our physical existence. Conversion does not turn us in super humans! This fragility will be the focus of attention in the next two declarations (#s 70-71). The adjective ὄστράκιος, -η, -ον simply means made of earth or dirt. And σκεύεσιν, from σκεῦος, is the ambiguous ‘thing’ or ‘object.’ But a ὄστράκινον σκεῦος normally designates a container made from clay in which various items would be stored; cf. Lk. 8:16; Jhn. 19:29; Rom. 9:21; 2 Tim. 2:20-21 et als. Thus in the analogy the divine Presence is contained in the frail humanity of Paul and his associates.

The apostle knows this all too well, but he sees in this a marvelous intention of God: ἵνα ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως ἧ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν, so that the extraordinary power may be God’s and not from us. This adverbial purpose ἵνα clause here in the introductory statement provides a platform for three subsequent amplifications:

v. 10: ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν φανερωθῆ, in order that also the live of Jesus may be made clear in our body.

v. 11: ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῆ ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν, in order that also the life of Jesus may be made clear in our mortal flesh.

v. 15: ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσασα διὰ τῶν πλειόνων τὴν εὐχαριστίαν περισσεύσῃ εἰς τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ, in order that abounding grace through more and more people may extend thanksgiving for God’s divine Presence.

When taken together the fuller richness of Paul’s statement # 69 in verse 7 becomes clear. For the apostle -- and hopefully for all believers -- absolutely everything revolves around Christ. The marvel is that a holy God would choose to implant His sacred Presence in us sinners and thus enable service in the Gospel to be given back to Him through ministry to others. When we present Christ to others it is not us working but God through His Spirit at work. When that presentation is accepted, we are not to take glory for it, but everything goes exclusively to God in honor of His transforming work in the Gospel. This the apostle knew profoundly and this thinking framed his living and ministry completely. He understood clearly that only God’s power can transform a sinful life. This the Corinthians must understand, if they are to experience the full transforming power of the apostolic Gospel in their lives. So the apostle goes to great lengths to underscore this point to them.

10.2.3.1.6.2.2 The application, vv. 8-15.

The application of the analogy centers on Paul and his associates as ‘clay jars’ containing the marvelous Gospel message. He does this first through four pairs of contrasts which continue the sentence begun in verse seven. It is summarized in a concluding expression in v. 10 which brings the sentence of vv. 7-10 to a close.

The use of ellipsis by Paul becomes challenging in seeking to understand his thought pattern. Statement # 70 is considered by some Greek text editors to simply be a continuation of the modifiers of the verb Ἔχομεν in v. 7. But the better understanding is reflected in the diagram where two distinct elements of amplification of

^{4.8} ἐν παντί
70 (ἔσμεν) θλιβόμενοι
 ἄλλ’
 οὐ στενοχωρούμενοι,
 ἀπορούμενοι
 ἄλλ’
 οὐκ ἐξαπορούμενοι,
 διωκόμενοι
 ἄλλ’
 οὐκ ἐγκαταλείπόμενοι,
 καταβαλλόμενοι
 ἄλλ’
 οὐκ ἀπολλύμενοι,
71 ^{4.10} (Ἔχομεν) πάντοτε τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ
 ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέροντες,
 ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν
 ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ... φανερωθῆ.

the 'clay jar' side of the analogy are set forth in abbreviated style. The two adverbial modifiers ἐν παντί, *in every way*, and πάντοτε, *always*, are important assertions to these statements. This contrastive weakness/strength theme stands as all encompassing and constant in the lives of Paul and his associates. It was not spasmodically when they experienced these challenges. There was no 'end around' for them where they could escape such experience. Their frailty was an unrelenting pressure put upon them in ministry.

Note the four pairs of contrasts:

- θλιβόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐ στενοχωρούμενοι,
being persecuted but not being abandoned
- ἀπορούμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐξαπορούμενοι,
being perplexed but not being brought to despair,
- διωκόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐγκαταλειπόμενοι,
being hunted down but not being left behind,
- καταβαλλόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀπολλύμενοι,
being knocked down but not being destroyed,

The this but not that structure set up with ἀλλ' οὐκ underscores the negative strikes against Paul and his

asso-
ciates.
But it
asserts
that in

4.11 γὰρ
72 ἀεὶ ἡμεῖς...εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα
οἱ ζῶντες διὰ Ἰησοῦν,
ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῇ
ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν.

spite of the negative strikes nothing really overwhelms them because of the grace and Presence of God in their lives.

The four pairs of contrastive perspectives is interesting to analyze. θλιβόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐ στενοχωρούμενοι is *being oppressed but not crushed*. ἀπορούμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐξαπορούμενοι is *being pushed into confusion but not being driven into despair*. διωκόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐγκαταλειπόμενοι is *being persecuted but not being abandoned*. καταβαλλόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀπολλύμενοι is *being struck down but not being ruined or destroyed*. Divine strength in very adverse circumstances of both physical and mental pressures is the point being made. The uniform use of the present tense participles throughout stresses the ongoing nature of these experiences. In 11:16-33, we find a listing of these adverse circumstances that the apostle had experienced thus far to the time of the writing of Second Corinthians in the mid 50s. What he did not know at this point was that even worse pressures lay ahead for him before he finished his earthly life.

The summarizing statement # 71 brings to a climatic summary of these four pairs of contrasts: πάντοτε τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέροντες, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν φανερωθῇ, *we are always carrying around in our body the death of Jesus, so that also the life of Jesus may be made clear in our body*. Here the full contrast is laid out. Our sufferings reflect

the suffering of Christ on the cross. But ironically these same bodies locked in a death grip by suffering reflect at the same time the resurrection life of Christ that ultimately overcomes the sufferings. And best of all, the ἀλλ' οὐκ, *but not*, segment of the above four pairs reflects the growing clarity that Christ is alive and present in the life and ministry of these missionaries. If questionable human motivations stood behind their ministry, they would have been overwhelmed and would have given up long ago. But no! The presence of the resurrected Christ in their life and ministry made difference. Overcoming victory, not defeat, was what came about through Christ. Hopefully the Corinthians will see and recognize this difference in Paul's and his associates' lives.

The further justification principle is then introduced with γὰρ in # 72. ἀεὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα διὰ Ἰησοῦν, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῇ ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν. *For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh.*

This general principle stands under the victorious suffering points in vv. 8-10 above as foundational. Note the pre-position of the temporal adverb ἀεὶ, *always*, for emphasis. Again note also the pre and post positions of the adverbial modifiers. Not only is ἀεὶ positioned before the verb παραδιδόμεθα, *we are being handed over*, but also εἰς θάνατον, *into death*, is as well. Both these modifiers reach back conceptually to the previous discussion in vv. 8-10. εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα, *into death we are being handed over*, is essentially defining πάντοτε τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέροντες, *always the death of Jesus in our bodies carrying around* (v. 10) but with more emphasis upon the physical dangers being faced rather than the spiritual thrust as in v. 10. While the meanings of πάντοτε and ἀεὶ are essentially the same, *always*, the use of the more eloquent Greek ἀεὶ is particularly appropriate to an especially principled statement such as # 72 in v. 11.

The verb παραδιδόμεθα is present tense passive voice from παραδίωμι and is especially significant since it is often used to express the betrayal of Jesus on Good Friday both in the gospels and in Paul's writings. Jesus was 'handed over' to the authorities for crucifixion. Paul and his associates in their ministry are being handed over to physical death constantly. That is, they face being executed for their work continuously.

The post modifiers διὰ Ἰησοῦν, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ

Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῆ ἔν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκί ἡμῶν define spiritual aspects of this constant facing of death by Paul and his associates. This is done with a prepositional phrase and a dependent purpose clause. First, διὰ Ἰησοῦν, for Christ's sake, defines the spiritual basis of constantly facing death. This is due to their unwavering commitment to Christ and His Gospel message. If ministry were self-motivated, they would be seeking ways to avoid the danger of execution by those hostile to the Gospel. But their commitment is unconditionally to Christ which brings them into very real personal danger.

The motivation behind this facing of death is stated in ἵνα clause, which comes as [the second amplifying purpose statement](#) behind the purpose statement in v. 7, is defining one aspect the demonstration of ἡ ὑπερβολή τῆς δυνάμεως ἧ τοῦ θεοῦ the superior power of God. How does the divine power become clear to the surrounding world? In v. 10, the ἵνα clause defined it in terms of the resurrection life of Jesus being made clear in the body of the believers. Now in parallel to this, as the adverbial function of καὶ signals, this life of Jesus is made clear in our mortal flesh. Paul does not glorify our physical life as humans, as some of the Greeks did. Neither does he condemn it as worthless due to total corruption as did even more of the Greeks. But it is nonetheless τῇ θνητῇ σαρκί, that is, [flesh doomed to die physically](#). Note that the adjective θνητός, -ή, -όν is built off the identical root stem for θάνατος, death.⁹⁴ What this constant facing of death communicated was the sacrificial life of Christ given in service to others. There was not any seeking of personal fame from this, as in some Greek philosophical circles where facing death heroically was thought to bring immortal fame and remembrance.⁹⁵ Rather, Paul's and his associates' willingness to constantly face death in Gospel ministry had the single objective of revealing even clearer the sacrificial love for others that Christ had demonstrated. And in this the surpassing power of God became clearer. People could take one look at the selflessness of these Christian leaders doing ministry and recognize that such commitments did not originate within human strength but instead came from without and from God. This, in turn, then stood as a powerful confirmation that their message and ministry reflected the leader-

⁹⁴Note the complex of Greek terms built off this same Greek stem: θάνατος, θνήσκω, ἀποθνήσκω, συναποθνήσκω, θανατόω, θνητός, ἀθανασία (ἀθάνατος) → ζωή. [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:7.]

⁹⁵But as the Homeric heroes hazard their lives for fame,⁹ so κλέος (δόξα) offers the opportunity of bringing death as an act into life. Those who fall in glorious battle live on immortally in their renown on earth,¹⁰ and perhaps the dead hear something of this renown.¹¹ [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:9.]

ship of God, and was not human based. Paul's critics in Corinth had their criticism of the facing of death as a denial of a God led and blessed ministry turned on its head. Paul argues the opposite point that such selfless ministry stands as undeniable confirmation of a God led and blessed ministry. His critics at Corinth were still enslaved to their Greek cultural way of thinking, and thus could not -- or would not -- see God at work in the ministry of Paul and his associates.

What then is the conclusion? ὥστε, so that, of this (v. 12)? ὥστε ὁ θάνατος ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνεργεῖται, ἡ δὲ ζωὴ ἐν ὑμῖν, So then death is at work in us, but life in you.

	4.12	ὥστε	ἐν ἡμῖν
73		ὁ θάνατος...ἐνεργεῖται,	
		δὲ	
74		ἡ ζωὴ (ἐνεργεῖται)	ἐν ὑμῖν.

This is the first of two distinct conclusions that Paul reaches from the discussion of vv. 7-11. The second one comes in the single sentence of vv. 13-14 and is followed by the justifying declaration in v. 15 which is summarizing by nature.

Note the rhetorical structure of #s 73-74:

ἐν ἡμῖν, in us = ὁ θάνατος, death

ἐν ὑμῖν, in you = ἡ ζωὴ, life

The verbal action for both is ἐνεργεῖται, is at work. The English word 'energize' comes from this Greek verb, and gets relatively close in meaning also.

Paul's contrast between death at work in his and his associate's life to life at work in the Corinthians' life must be understood contextually in order to avoid misunderstanding of his words here. The contrast between ἐν ἡμῖν, in us, i.e., himself and his associates, and ἐν ὑμῖν, in you, i.e., the Corinthians, draws a clear contrast between the messengers and the Corinthian audience. This is similar to Paul's more detailed statement in 1 Cor. 4:8-10. For the messengers to bring the life generating message of the Gospel a death dynamic is at work in their lives: ὁ θάνατος ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνεργεῖται. Their sacrificial suffering described in vv. 8-11 is summed up by this declaration.

But for the Corinthians who have received this message a life producing dynamic is at work: ἡ δὲ ζωὴ ἐν ὑμῖν. In 3:4-18, Paul has laid out the details of the life giving message of the apostolic Gospel by contrasting it to the Jewish Torah system of religion. The Gospel has brought spiritual life and existence to the Corinthians. Thus the cross principle of *life through death* continues on with the preaching of the message of Christ to the Corinthians. In this way the Gospel that Paul proclaimed finds validation. The messenger walks in the

path of suffering and endangerment of his life in order to bring this life giving message.

For those, evidently including some at Corinth, who thought that the Gospel brings only blessings and enables one to avoid the unpleasantness of life, Paul affirms that such just doesn't happen. Believers experience blessings from God through the Gospel to be certain. But one's struggles and difficulties with life and living do not disappear at all. In fact, some of them will intensify with Christian commitment. And this is particularly true for those devoting their entire lives to the spreading of this message, such as Paul and his associates. Every kind of "prosperity gospel" stands utterly condemned by the apostle here.

That shared in common: vv. 13-14. In spite of these different dynamics at work between the apostle and his associate and the Corinthians, some very precious is shared in common between the two groups as vv. 13-14 assert: 13 Ἐχοντες δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον· ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα, καὶ ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν, διὸ καὶ λαλοῦμεν, 14 εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ ἐγεῖρας τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἡμᾶς σὺν Ἰησοῦ ἐγερεῖ καὶ παραστήσει σὺν ὑμῖν. **13 But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—"I believed, and so I spoke"—we also believe, and so we speak, 14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence.**

4.13	δὲ	Ἐχοντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον· καὶ	ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα,
75		ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν, διὸ	
76		καὶ λαλοῦμεν, 4.14 εἰδότες	
		ὅτι ὁ ἐγεῖρας τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἡμᾶς σὺν Ἰησοῦ ἐγερεῖ	
		-----	καὶ παραστήσει σὺν ὑμῖν.

Here Paul reaches back to Psalm 116:10 (=LXX 115:1) for an affirmation of his and his associates willingness to speak the Gospel message. One should note that Paul uses the LXX Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα, which is very different in meaning from the MT Hebrew text: מָדַדְתִּי אֶת־פִּי כִּי אֲדַבֵּר אֲנִי עֲנִיתִּי מִדָּבָר (116:10), **I kept my faith, even when I said. "I am greatly afflicted."** Yet the larger context of Psalm 116 provides some basis for the LXX highly interpretative translation of this part of the psalm. The essential principle of speaking out of a faith commitment is asserted in the psalm. Paul merely ap-

plies it to a different situation than that of the psalmist.

He makes the valid point in the participle phrase Ἐχοντες δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως that he shares the same kind of faith commitment in negative circumstances which the psalmist spoke of when being opposed by people around him. It is somewhat unclear what Paul meant by τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, **the same spirit**. But given the link to OT faith commitment, the idea most likely is the same disposition toward faith exhibited by the psalmist in Ps. 116.⁹⁶ When abused he found God's strength and protection, now he celebrates this in the presence of the assembly in praising God.

In like manner to the psalmist, Paul and his associates are compelled to speak the words of praise to God for what He has done for them through the Gospel of Christ: καὶ ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν, διὸ καὶ λαλοῦμεν, **and we believe, therefore we also speak**.

This has the solid basis of the Gospel message as expressed in the causal participle εἰδότες phrase: εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ ἐγεῖρας τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἡμᾶς σὺν Ἰησοῦ ἐγερεῖ καὶ παραστήσει σὺν ὑμῖν, **because we know that the One who worked in the Lord Jesus also works in us with Je-**

⁹⁶“If πνεῦμα refers to the Holy Spirit, τῆς πίστεως will be an objective genitive, ‘the same Spirit, who prompts faith.’⁷⁷ If, on the other hand, πνεῦμα here means ‘disposition’ (as in 1 Cor. 4:21; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 4:23; 1 Pet. 3:4),⁷⁸ genitive τῆς πίστεως may be either objective, ‘the spirit imbuing our faith’ (Cassirer), or more probably adjectival, ‘the same spirit of faith’⁷⁹ (= ‘the same spirit

that is marked by faith,’ ‘the same disposition that believes’).⁸⁰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα clearly implies a comparison, so the question arises, With whom does Paul share this ‘spirit of faith’? Some argue that since in v. 12 Paul has emphatically distinguished his experience

from that of the Corinthians, he now wishes to stress their common faith.⁸¹ But the preceding context contains no reference to the πίστις of the Corinthians, and it is arbitrary to equate πίστις with ζωὴ (v. 12b). It is more natural to see τὸ αὐτὸ as anticipating the formula κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον, ‘(that is) in accordance with what stands written (in Scripture),’⁸² so that Paul views himself as sharing ‘the same spirit of faith’ as was expressed by the psalmist when he said ‘I believed, and therefore I spoke.’⁸³ [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), 351.]

sus and will raise us together with you.⁹⁷ This certainty grows out of the awareness of the continuity of God's working with Christ and continuing to work with the followers of Christ. He empowers both to do His will even under the hardest of circumstance. And that empowering culminates in being brought into His holy presence on the day of judgment, as 5:1-10 explains. Here with σὺν ὑμῖν, he brings the Corinthians into the picture directly by affirming their hope of the future as well.

The placing of σὺν ὑμῖν at the end of the lengthy sentence in vv. 13-14 allows easily for the justifying statement (γὰρ) found in v. 15: τὰ γὰρ πάντα δι' ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσασα διὰ τῶν πλειόνων⁹⁸ τὴν εὐχαριστίαν περισσεύσῃ εἰς τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ, *for everything is for your sake, so that His grace having been richly given through His wealth may abound to thanksgiving for the glory of God.*⁹⁹ With this declaration the apostle asserts the foundation of ministry for him and his associates rests on serving folks like the Corinthians so that God may receive the praise for the spiritual transformations that

⁹⁷“The closing part (v 14) of the sentence (that begins in v 13), which is heavy with stereotyped phrases betraying the presence of traditional material, is in an expected Pauline style.³⁵¹ He will elsewhere employ paraenetic matter from tradition and then add a comment to apply it to his readers' situation. So he writes: ‘and lead us with you [σὺν ὑμῖν] into his presence.’ This is an elliptical remark, lacking a complement to the verb παραστήσει, ‘will present’; it would be ἐαυτῷ, ‘to himself,’³⁵² which is associated with the Parousia of Christ (Rom 14:10) or the final day of God's purposes (Eph 5:27). But it can be a more immediate reference to entry into the Lord's presence here and now (1 Cor 8:8; Col 1:22, 28). The future tense, however, points to a final consummation, with the note of judgment struck, a thought Paul will return to in 5:10.” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 235.]

⁹⁸The use of the comparative form τῶν πλειόνων from πολὺς, πολλή, πολύ is ambiguous here. As a masculine substantival adjective it would mean ‘more and more people.’ But as a neuter form with the identical spelling, it means ‘more and more wealth,’ which is the adopted meaning. The abundance of God's grace comes through His greater ‘wealth.’ Clearly Paul is playing off of πλεονάσασα, πλειόνων, and περισσεύσῃ with inner connected meanings. But this is lost in translation.

⁹⁹“There are various possibilities for reading this purpose clause. Is the verb pleonazō (‘to increase’) transitive or intransitive? The same question can be asked regarding perisseuō (‘to abound’). Furthermore, what is the grammatical function of the accusative ‘thanksgiving’? We take the first verb to be transitive (with ‘thanksgiving’ as direct object), the second intransitive. In his commentary Alfred Plummer appropriately notes / the play of words between charis and eucharistia, and the alliteration, pleonasasa ... pleionōn ..., and the climax from pleonasasa to perisseuseō’ (Commentary 134). Regarding the vocabulary and the redundant, overloaded character of this clause, cf. 2 Cor 8:7; 9:8a; 9:12; Rom 5:15; 5:20; 6:1; 1 Thess 3:12. One has the impression that this text unit comes to a close at this point. [Daniel J. Harrington, *Second Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 8, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 75.]

take place. In this Gospel comes the grace of God in abundant measure and generates profound thanksgiving to God for what He has done. Both the messengers and the audience are greatly blessed.

Thus the apostle repeatedly and from several angles makes the point that the spiritual life of the Corinthians is all about God, and nothing about human endeavor. He and his associates are merely carrying out their calling to deliver this life saving message in the Gospel not just in their preaching but also in the way they live.

10.2.3.1.7 Ministry based on faith, 4:16-5:10

Clearly this unit stands as two inner connected parts. Vv. 16-18 both repeats the introductory declaration in 4:1, but develops the idea in a somewhat new direction. 5:1-10 then comes as a justifying declaration (γὰρ) to 4:16-18 looking forward to final judgment.¹⁰⁰ This lies behind the dilemma of modern Bible translators and their use of paragraphing of the translated text. No easy way exists to reflect this in formatting of translation for this dual role for the pericope.

10.2.3.1.7.1 Not loosing heart, pt. 2, 4:16-18

16 Διὸ οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν, ἀλλ’ εἰ καὶ ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος διαφθείρεται, ἀλλ’ ὁ ἔσω ἡμῶν ἀνακαινοῦται ἡμέρα καὶ ἡμέρα. 17 τὸ γὰρ παραυτίκα ἐλαφρὸν τῆς θλίψεως ἡμῶν καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν αἰώνιον βάρος δόξης κατεργάζεται ἡμῖν, 18 μὴ σκοποῦντων ἡμῶν τὰ βλεπόμενα ἀλλὰ τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα· τὰ γὰρ βλεπόμενα πρόσκαιρα, τὰ δὲ μὴ βλεπόμενα αἰώνια.

16 *So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature in contrast is being renewed day by day. 17 For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, 18 because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.*

The conjunction Διὸ (# 78) links this pericope to what has preceded in 4:1-15, as an implication of the earlier declaration. Additionally the causal γὰρ (#80) signifies the basis of the assertion of the first sentence in v. 16, which is then amplified substantially in 5:1-10. In sum, the sufferings of the present do not cause one to give up because of what lies ahead in final judgment before the throne of God. Thus the pericope is a beautiful example of how the apostle moved from one emphasis to another while tying the two larger units together in a progression of thought.

His first affirmation in #s 78 and 79 reflect upon his response to the hardships in ministry. Also οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν in # 78 repeats the οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν in the opening affirmation [in 4:1](#) of this unit. Beyond serving as a boundary marker, the affirmation asserts a positive attitude and stance by the apostle throughout the

¹⁰⁰The richness of 5:1-10 I experienced many years ago in producing a 300 page doctoral dissertation on these verses.

4.16	Διὸ		
78	οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν, ἀλλ'	εἰ καὶ ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος διαφθείρεται, ἀλλ'	
79	ὁ ἔσω ἡμῶν ἀνακαινοῦται ἡμέρα καὶ ἡμέρα.		
4.17	γὰρ		
80	τὸ παραυτικά ἐλαφρὸν . . . αἰώνιον βάρος δόξης κατεργάζεται ἡμῖν, τῆς θλίψεως ἡμῶν	 καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν μὴ σκοπούντων ἡμῶν τὰ βλεπόμενα ἀλλὰ (σκοπούντων ἡμῶν) τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα·	
4.18			
	γὰρ		
81	τὰ βλεπόμενα πρόσκαιρα, δὲ		
82	τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα αἰώνια.		

duration of his ministry in spite of the difficulties.

While in 4:1 this stance is linked to knowing the mercy of God in ministry calling, here the apostle acknowledges the physical wear and tear from these hardships: εἰ καὶ ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος διαφθείρεται. This present tense form of διαφθείρω affirms a continual wearing down of his body ultimately leading to death. Ministry (τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην, cf. 4:1), and especially the hardships that come with it, can and will take a toll on one's life. Paul was a realist who well understood the physical limitations that every person faces. Fulfilling the will of God in demanding ministry has a high price connected to it. The prosperity gospel preachers miss the boat totally in making the false promises of everything being easy once you're a believer. Real ministry in the Kingdom of God is just the opposite. Sufferings are real and normally very painful.

But what keeps Paul going (# 79) is not the wearing down of his physical body. Rather it is what God is doing inwardly in his life. The rather unusual Greek construction¹⁰¹ puts a high emphasis on contrast with ἀλλ' repeated before both the secondary and the main clause.

¹⁰¹“εἰ καὶ means ‘even though,’ ‘although,’² introducing a concessive clause that describes an actual circumstance. In the apodosis of such a clause, ἀλλά means ‘yet,’ ‘certainly,’ ‘at least’ (BAGD §448 [5]) and ‘introduces with emphasis the opposite compensating relation’ (Meyer 502). The two verbs διαφθείρεται and ἀνακαινοῦται depict incessant and therefore simultaneous processes.³ The former may be translated as a passive (‘is being destroyed,’ NAB1; ‘is in process of destruction,’ Thrall 347) or intransitively (‘is wasting away,’ RSV, NRSV; ‘is decaying,’ RV). Either way, what brought about the destruction or debilitation was the combined effect of Paul’s circumstances. On the other hand, the implied agent behind the passive ἀνακαινοῦται (‘is being renewed,’ RSV, NRSV) is the Spirit, as 3:18 and Eph. 3:16 make clear.” [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), 359.]

The concessive clause with εἰ καὶ sets up the secondary statement of wearing away as being overcome in order to realize the primary assertion of renewal taking place inwardly. The boundaries are put in contrast to one another with a very Greek idiom, ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος, our outward person, over against ὁ ἔσω ἡμῶν, our inner self. This is somewhat close to the English idiom the physical life versus the spiritual life but this doesn't quite capture the sense of Paul's terms here. One must be careful not to read from this a well developed anthropological view of humanity. This Greek idiom provided him with an easy contrast between the physical and the spiritual aspects of human existence.¹⁰²

The contrast is extended to the two verbs. First, διαφθείρεται denotes being wasted away into death, but ἀνακαινοῦται signifies being renewed with new vigor and life. Both are present tense verb meaning the actions

¹⁰²“In the balanced pair of expressions ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος and ὁ ἔσω ἡμῶν [ἄνθρωπος], the adverbs ἔξω-ἔσω, here used adjectivally, may be rendered ‘outer-inner’ or ‘outward-inward,’ while ἄνθρωπος has been variously translated—‘man’ (RV), ‘person’ (Martin 82), ‘self’ (Barclay, NAB2), ‘nature’ (NRSV), ‘human nature’ (NJB), ‘being’ (GNB), ‘humanity’ (NEB, REB in v. 16a) — and some versions render the complete phrases adverbially, ‘outwardly’ and ‘inwardly’ (TCNT, NIV). Because Paul’s anthropology is aspectival not partitive, and synthetic not analytic,⁷ when he speaks of ‘our outward self’ and ‘our inward self’ he is not thinking of two distinct entities, ‘the body’ (σῶμα) and ‘the soul’ (ψυχή), with the former as the receptacle for the latter.⁸ He is, rather, contemplating his total existence from two contrasting viewpoints.⁹ The ‘outer self’ is the whole person from the standpoint of one’s ‘creaturely mortality,’¹⁰ the physical aspect of the person. ὁ ἔξω ἄνθρωπος is therefore indistinguishable from τὸ σῶμα (4:10), ἡ θνητὴ σὰρξ (4:11),¹¹ and τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως (Phil. 3:21).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 359–360.]

are continuous and simultaneous. Talk to an aged saint of God with a history of faithful commitment, and this person out of their experience can describe what Paul is alluding to here. Additional emphasis upon the ongoing nature of these experiences comes with the adverbial phrase *ἡμέρα καὶ ἡμέρα*, which is close to the English expression 'day by day.'¹⁰³

The foundation for this continual renewal inwardly is set forth in the two sets of causal *γάρ* clauses in vv. 17-18 (#s 80 - 82). Paul effectively gathers up the depiction of suffering hardships in 4:1-15 under the label of *τὸ παραυτικά ἐλαφρὸν τῆς θλίψεως ἡμῶν*, *this slight momentary affliction*, in v. 17.

The core expression *ὁ παραυτικά ἐλαφρὸν* is made up of an adverb, *παραυτικά*, *momentary*, and an adjective, *ἐλαφρὸν*, *slight*, that together form a unitary idea of something happening only briefly and at a minor level of intensity. What that something is Paul labels as *τῆς θλίψεως ἡμῶν*, *of our affliction*. Contextually it refers back especially to vv. 7-12, which most would not define as temporary nor minor troubles. But this would be a purely human perspective on Paul's situation. The apostle downplays this aspect in comparison to the 'heavy weight' stuff that is ahead in eternity for God's people.

This he defines as *αἰώνιον βάρος δόξης*, *the eternal weight of glory*. Stark contrast is thus injected into the comparison between the present sufferings and what stands ahead in eternity for God's people. The temporal contrast is especially prominent here. The *suffering*, *θλίψις*, is but *παραυτικά*, *momentary*. On the opposite side, the *δόξης*, *the experiencing of the Divine Presence*, is *αἰώνιον*, *eternal*. But also the level of intensity of experience is stressed between *ἐλαφρὸν*, *slight*, and *βάρος*, *heavy*. Heaven for Paul, first and foremost, was the privilege of standing in the presence of the utterly pure and holy God of this universe. This is his meaning of *δόξα*. It is not something that we come to possess or some effect planted upon us. Never! Just the opposite is the case. *δόξα* is God in His overpowering presence as revealed through Jesus Christ which kills off every-

¹⁰³“The phrase *ἡμέρα καὶ ἡμέρα* is unique in the Greek Bible, and although it is often described as a Semitism⁴ it is more probably a colloquial use of the temporal dative, with the repeated *ἡμέρα* denoting repetition,⁵ ‘day after day,’ or, as in the colloquial English expression, ‘day in and day out.’ It is conceivable that the weakening and strengthening is progressive, that is, from one day to another or from one degree to another, but these twin processes are more probably to be seen as repeated ‘day after day.’⁶ If this is so, this process of renewal is unlike the process of transformation into the image of Christ, which is ‘from one degree of glory to another (more radiant degree)’ (3:18).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 359.]

thing impure and evil. Absolutely nothing impure can survive in this utterly pure presence of God. Yet through the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ, the dirty sinner can come into this divine presence and survive. Why? Because that holy purity of God has killed off the sin and filth of the sinner through the blood of the Lamb of God on the cross. Getting out this message to a sinful world thus stood as the central objective of Paul's *τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην* (4:1). Only by coming to Christ in unconditional faith surrender is one able to experience this cleansing for eternity.

And the reality of this cleansing is deepened through the experience of hardships and suffering for Christ in this earthly life. Thus Paul asserts that they *κατεργάζεται ἡμῖν*, *are preparing us*, for the profoundly more substantive experiencing of God's presence in eternity. The verb *κατεργάζομαι* has a wide range of meaning but in this context with *βάρος* as the direct object, the sense is that our sufferings produce an every increasing sense of the 'weightiness' or profound substance that is inherent to the divine *δόξα*. Thus the more we suffer the more substance in the divine presence we sense. The ultimate reality is that none of God's people this side of eternity fully grasps all that God is and how that radiates out through His presence. John in the book of Revelation sought to give human expression to this via his use of prophetic apocalyptic visionary depiction. Yet it is obvious through this uniquely analogous language vehicle that John understood that his depiction only caught a small glimpse into all this. In 5:1-10, the apostle Paul will focus on one particular aspect of this divine presence, i.e., the coming judgment of believers in eternity at the return of Christ. Anticipating judgment before Christ to evaluate the quality of the believer's commitment to Christ on earth gives particular 'weightiness' to the experience of eternity.

Verse 18 is not a separate sentence from the one in verse 17, but rather a continuation of it. The *Genitive Absolute construction*¹⁰⁴ introduced by *μὴ σκοποῦντων ἡμῶν*

¹⁰⁴Simply explained, a Genitive Absolute construction in ancient Greek enabled the writer to attach a secondary verbal expression to a finite verb when the source of the verb action (i.e., subject) was different from the source of the genitive participle action. It's pattern is relatively simple: just attach an adverbial participle to the finite verb by placing both it and its 'subject' in the genitive case spelling and normally without using an article with the participle. This is one of many options the Greek writer had available to him for setting up such an idea. One should note that due to the adverbial nature of this participle use, it can play a wide range of roles in defining a link of the particle to the verb. Here the context demands a causal function, rather than the common temporal function.

Nothing comparable to the Greek Genitive Absolute expression exists in most modern western languages, including English. Thus translation of it necessitates the use mostly of appropriate dependent clause expressions, such as the "because we look not..." expression in the above NRSV for *μὴ σκοποῦντων ἡμῶν*.



adds a causal expression to the core verb κατεργάζεται. What Paul ‘looks at’ forms the basis of his view of the role of sufferings preparing him for eternity. One should note that the verb σκοπέω defines careful and close observation, rather than superficial glancing at something.¹⁰⁵ Implication: only with spiritual eyes can one see through the physical aspects of suffering to the deeper spiritual reality going on in the suffering.

What does Paul notice through this close observation? He states it in a negative followed by a positive: μὴ σκοπούντων ἡμῶν τὰ βλεπόμενα ἀλλὰ τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα αἰώνια, *because we do not pay close attention to the things being seen but to the eternal things not being seen*. This double direct object sets up an interesting concept. Paul asserts we do not see the things being seen but instead the things not being seen. Humanly such is virtually impossible! But for a believer such is simple. We do not pay attention to the outward physical sufferings that are obvious to people in general. Instead, the focus of attention is on the invisible spiritual dynamics that are just as real and as present as the pain and hurt from the physical sufferings. What Paul then sees is how the outward physical sufferings are being used by God to prepare him to experience the fully pure divine Presence of God in eternity.

Paul’s stance here is so opposite of modern western pleasure oriented society that runs from any kind of pain and unpleasantness. One cannot label him a fatalist either. The physical pain of suffering persecution is very real. He never denies such. But within this pain exists a working of God to turn the intended destructive into something immensely beneficial to the people of God. We experience great measures of God’s presence with every experience of painful suffering. Our western culture largely rejects such understanding and sees nothing but negative connected to pain and suf-

¹⁰⁵σκοπέω (σκοπός; Hom.+; ins, pap; Esth 8:12g; 2 Macc 4:5; TestNaphth 3:1 v.l.; Philo, Joseph., Just.; Ath. 10, 2, R. 2 P. 49, 25 al.—B-D-F §101, P. 48; Mt.-H. 258) fut. ptc. σκόπησον (Just., D. 3, 2) to pay careful attention to, look (out) for, notice w. acc. of pers. or thing someone or someth. (Jos., Ant. 12, 30; Just., D. 2, 5) σκοπεῖτε τοὺς οὕτω περιπατοῦντας notice those who conduct themselves thus, i.e. in order to imitate them Phil 3:17. σκοπεῖν τοὺς τὰς διχοστασίας ποιοῦντας look out for those who cause divisions, i.e. avoid them Ro 16:17.—σκ. τὰ βλεπόμενα keep one’s eyes on what can be seen 2 Cor 4:18.—τὰ ἑαυτῶν look out for one’s own interests (Pla., Phdr. 232d) Phil 2:4. Also τὸ καθ’ ἑαυτοῦς MPol 1:2. τὸ κοινὸν τῆς ἐλπίδος 1 Cl 51:1.—σκ. ἑαυτὸν foll. by μὴ look to oneself, that ... not Gal 6:1. σκόπει μὴ τὸ φῶς σκότος ἐστίν consider whether the light be darkness Lk 11:35 (μὴ interrog. = Lat. ‘num’ [cp. Zahn ad loc.; diff. Rob. 995] because of the indic.; cp. Epict. 4, 5, 18 ὅρα μὴ Νερωνιανὸν ἔχει χαρακτήρα).—DELG s.v. σκέπτομαι. M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 931.]

fering. The prosperity preachers of a perverted version of the gospel have been trapped by this cultural blindness and fall in line with the non-Christian culture rather than with the apostolic Gospel of Paul and Jesus. They then miss the authentic spiritual blessing of pain and substitute it with a phony cultural sense of being happy. What a tragedy for them and the gullible people they influence. To put it in Texas terms, they trade a sirloin steak for an old greasy hamburger!

10.2.3.1.7.2 Ministry in an earthly tent, 5:1-10

5.1 Οἶδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι ἐὰν ἡ ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν οἰκία τοῦ σκηνῶος καταλυθῇ, οἰκοδομηὴν ἐκ θεοῦ ἔχομεν, οἰκίαν ἀχειροποίητον αἰώνιον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. 2 καὶ γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ στενάζομεν τὸ οἰκητήριον ἡμῶν τὸ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἐπενδύσασθαι ἐπιποθοῦντες, 3 εἶ γε καὶ ἐκδυσάμενοι οὐ γυμνοὶ εὐρεθισόμεθα. 4 καὶ γὰρ οἱ ὄντες ἐν τῷ σκηνῶει στενάζομεν βαρούμενοι, ἐφ’ ᾧ οὐ θέλομεν ἐκδύσασθαι ἀλλ’ ἐπενδύσασθαι, ἵνα καταποθῇ τὸ θνητὸν ὑπὸ τῆς ζωῆς. 5 ὁ δὲ κατεργασάμενος ἡμᾶς εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο θεός, ὁ δοὺς ἡμῖν τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος.

6 Θαρροῦντες οὖν πάντοτε καὶ εἰδότες ὅτι ἐνδημοῦντες ἐν τῷ σώματι ἐκδημοῦμεν ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου· 7 διὰ πίστεως γὰρ περιπατοῦμεν, οὐ διὰ εἶδους· 8 θαρροῦμεν δὲ καὶ εὐδοκοῦμεν μᾶλλον ἐκδημῆσαι ἐκ τοῦ σώματος καὶ ἐνδημῆσαι πρὸς τὸν κύριον. 9 διὸ καὶ φιλοτιμούμεθα, εἴτε ἐνδημοῦντες εἴτε ἐκδημοῦντες, εὐάρεστοι αὐτῷ εἶναι. 10 τοὺς γὰρ πάντας ἡμᾶς φανερωθῆναι δεῖ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα κομισθῆται ἕκαστος τὰ διὰ τοῦ σώματος πρὸς ἃ ἔπραξεν, εἴτε ἀγαθὸν εἴτε φαῦλον.

5.1 For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling — 3 if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. 4 For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

6 So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord — 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. 10 For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

With the setup of 4:16-18, Paul now turns to amplify a major aspect of the τὰ δὲ μὴ βλεπόμενα αἰώνια, *the eternal things not being seen*. At the center of the eternal things is being with Jesus in full experience. Ministry now thus means seeking to please the Lord, especially in light of the coming judgment when our earthly commitment will be exposed to divine examination.

The apostle presents this in a twofold emphasis in vv. 1-10. The inferential conjunction οὖν in v. 6 signals a turning point in the thought flow. In vv. 1-5 Paul reflects upon the dilemma of earthly ministry while wishing to

be in the heavenly habitation with the Lord. Implicit in this dilemma is the implication, now made explicit in vv. 6-10, that his core wish is to be faithful to Christ whether here or there. One foundational motivation is the awareness of a day of accountability before the Lord in eternity.

In the history of interpretation this passage has played an important role in the theological exploration of the meaning of death for believers. The scripture text has generated substantial controversy as well due to Paul's non-treatment of the so-called 'intermediate state' here. What is implied in the affirmation of confidence of expecting a heavenly habitation upon dying in this life?¹⁰⁶

A huge source for the differing readings of these verses arises out of the cultural influences of western individualism. The tendency of interpreters has been for several centuries in the west to see ἡ ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν οἰκία τοῦ σκηνῶν and οἰκίαν ἀχειροποίητον αἰώνιον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς in verse one solely in individualized terms contrasting the physical and the resurrection bodies of believers. Toward the end of the previous century this cultural blind spot was overcome by a few western scholars in the realization that Paul functioned in the collectivistic world of the first century and not in the individualism of the modern western hemisphere. Thus the language of Paul here in chapter five is in no way contrasting the physical body with the resurrection body.¹⁰⁷ To the contrary, Paul is contrasting physical life

¹⁰⁶“In 5:2–4 Paul continues his discussion of the spiritual body, but why he does so is unclear. He speaks of putting on (ἐπενδύσασθαι) the heavenly body over the earthly tent (5:2). But into this discussion Paul brings the idea of being unclothed, naked (γυμνός, 5:3). We do not know for sure what was Paul's reason for including 5:2–4 in the epistle. Is Paul speaking of the Christian taking on the spiritual body at death or at the Parousia? Or does the Christian 'already' have this body? Furthermore, does the idea behind 'being naked' suggest an intermediate state (the period between the death of a Christian and the putting on of the spiritual body at Parousia) or does this suggest the concept of judgment as depicted in the Old Testament? There is no consensus as to the purpose for Paul's writing of 5:2–4.” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 97.]

¹⁰⁷The later 'westernizing' of this passage has introduced a long list of unanswerable and ultimately useless issues into this passage. The theology of 'soul sleep' is one of the main by-products of such distortion of this scripture text. Whether Paul changed his mind about the timing of the resurrection from the second coming (1 Cor 15) to the moment of death (2 Cor 5) is another of these pointless issues.

But when the passage is properly viewed as a contrast between living on earth and living in Heaven, such issues are irrelevant to Paul's thought both here, and elsewhere in his writings. Paul's positive message can thus shine through without questionable blemishes being attached to it. Death is a transition of leaving this earthly life and stepping into the heavenly life that God prepares for His people. Thus comes his longing for this experience.

on earth, which in 4:7 he called ὄστρακίνοις σκεύειν, *clay jars*, with spiritual life in Heaven.¹⁰⁸ As we will note below, his sense of confidence in not showing up 'naked' (v. 3) is Jewish in orientation and signals his expectation of standing before God in judgment not deficient in his obedience during his earthly ministry.¹⁰⁹ That his continuing aim εὐάρεστοι αὐτῷ εἶναι, *to be pleasing to Him* (v. 9), will be validated by God on judgment day is central to the confidence expressed by Paul in this passage.

10.2.3.1.7.2.1 Expectation of a home, 5:1-5

5.1 Οἶδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι ἐὰν ἡ ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν οἰκία τοῦ σκηνῶν καταλυθῆ, οἰκοδομῆν ἐκ θεοῦ ἔχομεν, οἰκίαν ἀχειροποίητον αἰώνιον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. 2 καὶ γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ στενάζομεν τὸ οἰκητήριον ἡμῶν τὸ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἐπενδύσασθαι ἐπιποθοῦντες, 3 εἴ γε καὶ ἐκδυσάμενοι οὐ γυμνοὶ εὐρεθισόμεθα. 4 καὶ γὰρ οἱ ὄντες ἐν τῷ σκηνῶν στενάζομεν βαρούμενοι, ἐφ' ᾧ οὐ θέλομεν ἐκδύσασθαι ἀλλ' ἐπενδύσασθαι, ἵνα καταποθῆ τὸ θνητὸν ὑπὸ τῆς ζωῆς. 5 ὁ δὲ κατεργασάμενος ἡμᾶς εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο θεός, ὁ δοὺς ἡμῖν τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος.

5.1 For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling — 3 if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. 4 For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

As the block diagram below highlights, this pericope revolves around the central point made in statement # 83 in verse one. The assertion of confidence in the heavenly habitation awaiting believers in eternity is then defended by three more assertions introduced by the causal conjunction γὰρ: #s 84-86. Central to this stands the verb στενάζομεν.

But the verb στενάζω adds a negative tone to this longing in acknowledgement of the physical limitations and sufferings from the sinful world of this life. Thus it is often translated as *groaning* in referencing this negative impact. The addition of the participle βαρούμενοι, *being weighted down*, as a circumstantial modifier in the second use of στενάζω in v. 4 is quite instructive in un-

¹⁰⁸“The image signifies man's total earthly existence. This is so in the use of the similar images in Isa 38:12 and Job 4:19. These texts may show the ego as inhabiting the dwelling, but the dwelling itself signifies the whole being.¹¹⁷⁷ Moreover, there is no evidence in (rabbinic) Judaism that the image of the house was ever used to distinguish between body and Soul.¹¹⁷⁸ The σκῆνος ('body') is the whole person.” [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), 360.]

¹⁰⁹A massive defense of this view was presented in my doctoral dissertation in 1975 at SWBTS.

5.1	γὰρ		
83	Οἶδαμεν	ἐὰν ἡ ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν οἰκία τοῦ σκήνου καταλυθῆ, ὅτι...οἰκοδομῆν ἐκ θεοῦ ἔχομεν, οἰκίαν ἀχειροποίητον αἰώνιον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.	
5.2	γὰρ καὶ ἐν τούτῳ		
84	στενάζομεν τὸ οἰκητήριον ἡμῶν	τὸ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἐπενδύσασθαι ἐπιποθοῦντες, εἰ γε καὶ ἐκδυσάμενοι οὐ γυμνοὶ εὐρεθησόμεθα.	
5.3			
5.4	γὰρ	καὶ	
85	οἱ ὄντες . . . στενάζομεν	ἐν τῷ σκηνεῖ βαρούμενοι, ἐφ' ᾧ οὐ θέλομεν ἐκδύσασθαι ἀλλ' ----- ἐπενδύσασθαι, ἵνα καταποθῆ τὸ θνητὸν ὑπὸ τῆς ζωῆς.	
5.5	δὲ		
86	ὁ κατεργασάμενος ἡμᾶς... (ἐστὶν) θεός,	εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο	ὁ δοὺς ἡμῖν τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος.

derstanding Paul's use of the term. This longing for the heavenly habitation is defined and intensified by the burdens of living in this sinful world on earth. Paul's own sufferings have produced an even greater longing to be with the Lord in Heaven.

But this posed a dilemma for the apostle. Life in this world meant continued ministry even with suffering, while death would bring him into the heavenly habitation in deeper union with Christ -- something far better, as he will later relate to the Philippians in Phil. 1: 22-24. But ministry now is the primary concern as he relates to the Corinthians. It is hard and the groaning over the difficulties pushes him to yearn for the heavenly habitation awaiting him even more.

What he longs for is not in doubt at all: Οἶδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι... As the foundational affirmation asserts with graphic imagery, when death comes to this physical existence on earth, there awaits a heavenly home for the people of God. The contrast between physical life on earth as ἡ ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν οἰκία τοῦ σκήνου, our earthly tent dwelling,¹¹⁰ and Heaven as οἰκίαν ἀχειροποίητον

¹¹⁰To equate ἡ ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν οἰκία τοῦ σκήνου with σῶμα, strictly in the sense of the physical body, is seriously false here. This is at the heart of the wrong interpretation in western tradition and looks to the dualism of Plato philosophically rather than to Paul's Jewish heritage and orientation. The Garden of Eden in

αἰώνιον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, a permanent eternal home not Genesis is the origin of Paul's thought here, not Plato. In the NT, σῶμα, moreover, is more the sense of physical life than merely the physical body, which more naturally was referenced by βίος. And this corresponds generally to popular Greek usage of σῶμα in the ancient world as well. Death then is not just the end of existence of the physical body. Rather it is the termination of physical life on earth. One must never ignore the collective orientation of Paul's world in favor of western individualism.

The term γυμνός may refer to the soul when it is stripped of its earthly body. Plato speaks of the soul as going to the god of the underworld in this condition: ἡ ψυχὴ γυμνὴ τοῦ σώματος παρ' ἐκεῖνον ἀτέρχεται ('the soul goes to him without the covering of the body' LCL).¹²⁷⁹ Judgement takes place for the soul ἐπειδὴν γυμνωθῆ τοῦ σώματος ('when a man's soul is stripped bare of the body' LCL).¹²⁸⁰ In Philo's description of the death of Moses he uses the phrase τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπογυμνουμένης ('the soul was being stripped bare').¹²⁸¹ In Gnosticism also the soul stripped of the body can be described as naked.¹²⁸² Within this philosophical framework of thought the state of disembodiment is seen as desirable,¹²⁸³ though this may not have been the attitude of the ordinary person.¹²⁸⁴ At this point we also need to consider the Jewish attitude towards the idea of disembodiment, since this would affect Paul's attitude, and in consequence the significance of his 'Greek' terminology. The Jews, as is well known, had a horror of actual nakedness.¹²⁸⁵ But does this necessarily mean that the post-mortem 'nakedness' of the soul would be objectionable?¹²⁸⁶ In some circles where there emerged the notion of the separation of body and spirit at death there emerged also the idea of



made with human hands in the heavenlies, is very dramatic. The difference between life in a tent, σκῆνος, even if symbolized here as a tabernacle, and Heaven as a building under construction (cf. Jhn 14:1-7),¹¹¹ and as possibly symbolized here also as a temple, is dramatic. If religious tones stand in the background here for both σκῆνος and οἰκοδομή, the implication is contact with God through Christ in both. But the latter is far better and to be preferred. Additionally the σκῆνος is temporary and not enduring, while the οἰκοδομή / οἰκία is permanent and eternal. In this world, we as God's people are nomads without a permanent home on earth. But we have one under construction that will be ready for us when death comes. Of that we are certain!

The basis for this confidence is developed in the causal statements (#s 84-86) that follow, with # 86 as climatic. First in v. 2 (# 84), to this earthly life (= ἐν τούτῳ) Paul adds (καὶ) his yearning for the eternal home being prepared for God's people (τὸ οἰκητήριον ἡμῶν). The groaning in this earthly life (στενάζομεν) is qualified by intense longing (ἐπιποθοῦντες) to put on the heavenly life (τὸ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἐπενδύσασθαι). Quite graphically the image of getting dressed (ἐπενδύσασθαι) / undressed (ἐκδυσάμενοι) for the experience of death is vivid. The latter ἐκδυσάμενοι (v. 3) is but another way of asserting καταλυθῆ (v. 1). The apostle sees death as both the shedding of the filthy garments of this world and the being dressed with the pure garments of the heavenly life. John in Revelation depicted this as being given white robes upon entrance into Heaven (Rev. 3:18). Just as John envisioned the white robes of heavenly existence as covering our deficits (ἵνα περιβάλη καὶ μὴ φανερωθῆ ἢ αἰσχύνῃ τῆς γυμνότητός σου, **to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen**), Paul expresses similar confidence of facing God without deficits in his commitment to Christ: οὐ γυμνοὶ εὐρεθησόμεθα, **we will not be found naked** (v. 3).

Although debated for many centuries,¹¹² the un-

the joyful condition of the spirits of the righteous, as in Jub. 23:31:

'And their bones will rest in the earth, and their spirits will increase joy.' (OTP II P. 102)¹²⁸⁷

[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), 374.

¹¹¹The term οἰκοδομή stresses a building under construction, while οἰκία is the completed dwelling place. This latter term is used with the stress on permanency in v. 1b.

¹¹² "Some witnesses (P⁴⁶ B D F G 33. 1175 pc) read εἴπερ. For a detailed defence of the reading εἴ γε see Thrall, '2 Corinthians 5:3', pp. 223-9. Briefly, it is the more difficult reading, since it might be interpreted as expressing a real doubt, which would contradict the certainty of v. 1. Hence, it would be more susceptible to scribal alteration." [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).]

usual Greek expression εἴ γε καὶ is contextually an expression of confidence, not apprehension. The proper translation is thus **Since indeed**, rather than that of the NRSV which reflects the false westernizing of the text. The western interpretation tradition of doubt depends mostly on later post apostolic theology that can never be certain about the outcome of divine judgment of believers. Paul's expressed intention εὐάρεστοι αὐτῷ εἶναι, **to be pleasing to Him** (5:9) is no sentimental musing but the serious confidence of his life being pleasing to the Lord. Chapters 4 and 5 literally abound with such expressions of confidence about his Christian commitment.

The second (καὶ) justifying statement (γὰρ; v. 4; # 85) also builds off the core verb στενάζομεν. The inclusiveness of 'we' is asserted by οἱ ὄντες ἐν τῷ σκῆνει στενάζομεν, **and we as those being in the tent life**. The groaning of longing is intensified by βαρούμενοι, **being weighted down**.

The classical Greek adverbial use of the relative clause in ἐφ' ᾧ οὐ θέλομεν ἐκδύσασθαι ἀλλ' ἐπενδύσασθαι, **in that we don't want to be unclothed but clothed**, specifies that which weights down the apostle. This image here in context clearly means the desire to be in Heaven with Christ over the struggles of this earthly life. The ἐπενδύσασθαι experience means ἵνα καταποθῆ τὸ θνητὸν ὑπὸ τῆς ζωῆς, **so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life**. As already affirmed, here the apostle reiterates again his deep longing to pass through death into the heavenly life that God is preparing for him.

This leads to the climatic third justifying statement (v. 5; # 86): ὁ δὲ κατεργασάμενος ἡμᾶς εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο θεός, ὁ δούς ἡμῖν τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος, **and He who has prepared us for this very experience is God who has given to us the down payment, His Spirit**. The bottom line guarantee of the Heavenly life is God Himself. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer stands as God's guarantee of this life as the vivid image of ἀρραβῶν, **down payment**, from the ancient economic world asserts. The prepositional phrase εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο, **for this very thing**, captures dramatically the previous depiction of death as a being clothed with heavenly garments.

Thus Paul's confidence about death and what stands beyond is based not on anything human, but fundamentally upon God's action of placing His Spirit in Paul's life and ministry. His longing is not an escape mechanism from the hardships of this life. To the contrary, it represents the deep desire to experience the full presence of God in eternity through deeper union with Christ.

10.2.3.1.7.2.2 Determination to please Him, 5:6-10

6 Θαρροῦντες οὖν πάντοτε καὶ εἰδότες ὅτι ἐνδημοῦντες ἐν τῷ σώματι ἐκδημοῦμεν ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου· 7 διὰ πίστεως γὰρ περιπατοῦμεν, οὐ διὰ εἶδους· 8 θαρροῦμεν δὲ καὶ εὐδοκοῦμεν μᾶλλον ἐκδημῆσαι ἐκ τοῦ σώματος καὶ ἐνδημῆσαι πρὸς τὸν κύριον. 9 διὸ καὶ φιλοτιμούμεθα, εἴτε ἐνδημοῦντες εἴτε ἐκδημοῦντες, εὐάρεστοι αὐτῷ εἶναι. 10 τοὺς γὰρ πάντας ἡμᾶς φανερωθῆναι δεῖ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα κομίσηται ἕκαστος τὰ διὰ τοῦ σώματος πρὸς ἃ ἔπραξεν, εἴτε ἀγαθὸν εἴτε φαῦλον.

6 So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord — 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. 10 For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

5.6 οὖν

87 (ἔσμεν) **Θαρροῦντες**
 πάντοτε
 καὶ
εἰδότες
 ἐνδημοῦντες
 ἐν τῷ σώματι
 ὅτι... ἐκδημοῦμεν
 ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου·

5.7 γὰρ
 διὰ πίστεως

88 **περιπατοῦμεν,**

89 οὐ (περιπατοῦμεν)
 διὰ εἶδους·

5.8 δὲ

90 **θαρροῦμεν**
 καὶ

91 **εὐδοκοῦμεν**
 μᾶλλον
ἐκδημῆσαι
 ἐκ τοῦ σώματος
 καὶ
ἐνδημῆσαι
 πρὸς τὸν κύριον.

5.9 διὸ
 καὶ

92 **φιλοτιμούμεθα,**
 εἴτε ἐνδημοῦντες
 εἴτε ἐκδημοῦντες,
εὐάρεστοι αὐτῷ εἶναι.

5.10 γὰρ

93 **τοὺς πάντας ἡμᾶς φανερωθῆναι δεῖ**
 ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ,
 ἵνα κομίσηται ἕκαστος τὰ διὰ τοῦ σώματος
 πρὸς ἃ ἔπραξεν,
 εἴτε ἀγαθὸν
 εἴτε φαῦλον.

fident. The entire pericope is presented via the inferential conjunction οὖν (v. 6) as making explicit what was considered implicit in vv. 1-5. Central to this is confidence (# 87), which is followed by a series of justifying declarations (#s 88-91). Another inferential conjunction διὸ in v. 9 (# 92) introduces an additional implication of vv. 1-5, that of Paul’s intention to always be pleasing to God, and this is based (γὰρ) upon the anticipation of divine judgment (v. 10, # 93).

The concept of θαρρέω centers a combination of confidence leading to courageous expression.¹¹³ Two ¹¹³θαρρέω is especially a Pauline word in the NT with 5 of 6 NT instances found just in 2 Corinthians: 5:6, 8; 7:16; 10:1, 2. Louw-Nida list it under **Courage, Boldness (25:156-166)**:

25.156 θαρρέω or **θαρσέω** (alternative dialectal forms, with θαρσέω occurring in the NT only in the imperative): to have confidence and firmness of purpose in the face of danger or testing—‘to be courageous, to have courage, to be bold.’

25.157 λαμβάνω θάρσος: (an idiom, literally ‘to take courage’) to become confident or courageous in the face of real or possible danger—‘to become confident, to take courage.’

25.158 παρρησία, ας f: a state of boldness and confidence, sometimes implying intimidating circumstances—‘boldness, courage.’

2 5 . 1 5 9 παρρησιάζομαι^b: to have courage or boldness in the face of danger or opposition—‘to be bold, to have courage.’

25.160 ἐπαίρω τὴν κεφαλὴν: (an idiom, literally ‘to raise up the head’) to demonstrate courage in the face of danger or adversity—‘to have courage, to lift the head.’

25.161 τολμάω: to be so bold as to challenge or defy possible danger or opposition—‘to dare.’

2 5 . 1 6 2 τολμηρότερον: (comparative adverb of τολμηρός ‘bold, daring,’ not occurring in the NT) pertaining to an activity involving unusual boldness or daring—‘boldly.’

As highlighted in the block diagram, this pericope is structured around the concept of θαρρέω, being con-

spellings of it surface inside the NT. The emerging Koine spelling θαρρέω shows up five times inside Paul's writings (all in 2 Cor: 5:6, 8; 7:16; 10:1, 2) with one additional use in Hebrews (13:6). The classical Attic dialectal spelling θαρσέω is found six times (7 with codex D in Lk. 23:43) among the gospel writers and Acts: Mt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mk. 6:50; 10:49; Lk. 23:43 (D); Jn. 16:33; Acts 23:11. Interestingly this earlier form is found only in the Aorist imperative form (θάρσει, θαρσεῖτε) as an admonition to be courageous.¹¹⁴ θαρσέω is the dominant translation word in the LXX with θαρρέω only in 4 Maccabees, which incidently is a late first Christian century document.

The core concept is that of courageous confidence in a positive sense. The apostle here uses both the present participle (# 87) and finite verb (# 90) to define the by-product of his faith commitment and certainty in the promises of God for eternity. Haughtiness and arrogance are excluded from the idea since these come from human pride. Paul's confidence comes from God instead.

In the elliptical expression assuming the declarative ἔσμεν, θαρροῦντες is adverbially qualified by πάντοτε with the sense of continuously. It is thus an integral trait in Paul's ministry. Additionally θαρροῦντες is closely linked to εἰδότες ὅτι..., and knowing that.... His courageous confidence is linked to what he knows. Here that is specified as ἐνδημοῦντες ἐν τῷ σώματι ἐκδημοῦμεν ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, while being dressed up in the body we are undressed in separation from the Lord. In a manner quite typical of Paul, he uses the dressed up / undressed imagery in a reverse role from that in vv. 2-4. ἐνδημοῦντες ἐν τῷ σώματι, being dressed up in the body, signals his physical life on earth prior to death. To be so dressed means to be undressed in regard to the heavenly habitation and this implies separation from the Lord. These statements must be considered in the context here. Spiritual union with Christ

25.163 ἀποτολμῶ: to be particularly bold or daring in what one does—'to be very bold, to be very daring.'

25.164 τολμητής, οὗ m: one who is particularly bold and daring—'daring person.'

25.165 ἀνδρίζομαι: (a figurative extension of meaning of ἀνδρίζομαι 'to be manly' or 'to become a man,' not occurring in the NT) to exhibit courage in the face of danger—'to be brave, to be courageous.'

25.166 πείθω τὴν καρδίαν: (an idiom, literally 'to convince the heart') to exhibit confidence and assurance in a situation which might otherwise cause dismay or fear—'to be confident, to be assured.'

[Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 305-306.] York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 305-306.]

¹¹⁴“**θαρρέω** or **θαρσέω** (alternative dialectal forms, with θαρσέω occurring in the NT only in the imperative): to have confidence and firmness of purpose in the face of danger or testing—'to be courageous, to have courage, to be bold.'” [Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 305.]

was established on the road to Damaskus for Paul and he had an ongoing sense of the presence of Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. But still be in this world rather than in Heaven brought limitations on that relation. The transition to Heaven would eliminate these limitations and bring the union with Christ to it full and eternal expression.

The following assertion in v. 7 (#s 88-89) identify the heart of the limitation: διὰ πίστεως γὰρ περιπατοῦμεν, οὐ διὰ εἶδους, for through faith we are walking, not through sight. Some consider this statement an 'interruption' to Paul's line of thinking, but properly understood the declaration is a natural affirmation as a justifying statement (γὰρ) to define clearly the intent of his dressed up / undressed imagery. The image of walking in περιπατοῦμεν was a very common first century Greek expression for living out one's life. It simply defines ἐνδημοῦντες ἐν τῷ σώματι from v. 6. And οὐ διὰ εἶδους, not by sight, defines ἐκδημοῦμεν ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου.¹¹⁵ What is it that Paul does not see while living out his life on earth? Of course, it is the Lord. His vision of the risen Christ on the Damaskus road was a momentary experience, rather than an ongoing one. But by means of his πίστεως, faith surrender, the apostle sensed the ongoing presence of the risen Christ in his daily living.

Thus it is while in this life on earth that Paul lives in courageous confidence. His faith then became the channel of courageous confidence as he repeats in θαρροῦμεν δὲ, and we are confident... (v. 7; # 90). This time θαρρέω is linked up to εὐδοκοῦμεν μᾶλλον, we desire rather... Here the apostle expresses his preference to be in Heaven with Christ rather than still in this physical life on earth. Once again the imagery of being dressed up / undressed is

¹¹⁵“But to get a complete idea of what Paul means by 5:7 is difficult because his use of εἶδος, 'sight,' is debated. The question centers upon whether εἶδος is to be given an active ('sight') or passive ('being seen') meaning. G. Kittel⁵⁵⁹ argues that εἶδος is not to be understood in the active sense (cf. LSJ); thus διὰ εἶδους means 'on the basis of what is seen.'⁵⁶⁰ Kittel then interprets 5:7 as suggesting that the believer is controlled not by the things he cannot see but by the faith that they do exist (we walk by faith, not by the appearance of things). However, Lietzmann and Kümmel⁵⁶¹ point out that εἶδος can have an active sense (Num 12:8 LXX), and thus 5:7 emphasizes that faith in Christ is the determining factor in the Christian's life even though he remains invisible.⁵⁶² In terms of context, Paul probably meant the latter, for to evaluate εἶδος in a passive sense ('being seen'), as understood by Kittel, loses Paul's use of it as an antithesis to faith. The parenthesis (5:7) has been inserted to correct any misunderstanding presented in 5:6. The faith of the Christian overcomes the problem set by the invisibility of the Lord. To be away from the Lord is not to be out of communion with him. Rather, our walk with him in fellowship, though not yet perfected, is possible because of faith.⁵⁶³ Barrett⁵⁶⁴ argues that the passive sense of εἶδος, 'being seen,' could also mean 'we live by believing in the absent and invisible Christ, not by looking at visible forms.' If this is true, then regardless of our choice as to the meaning of εἶδος, the emphasis of 5:7 centers on faith in Christ as possible.” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 266–267.]

used but in reverse meaning to that in v. 6 and along similar lines to its meaning in vv. 2-4. His preference is defined by two Aorist infinitives as complement objects of εὐδοκοῦμεν: ἐκδημῆσαι ἐκ τοῦ σώματος καὶ ἐνδημῆσαι πρὸς τὸν κύριον, *to be undressed from the body and to be dressed up before the Lord*. That is, he much prefers to leave behind the physical life with all its limitations and to stand dressed up before the Lord in his heavenly garments.

What prompts the apostle to utilize the images of a tent vs. a permanent home and being undressed and dressed up? Is he targeting the 'knowledgers' (cf. 1 Cor. 5:12 et als) who depended upon ecstatic experience as the source of their understanding of the Christian experience? If so, then the apostle is asserting that living the Christian life and understanding it comes out of one's faith commitment to Christ and not from outward ecstatic experience (1 Cor. 12:12). His statement in 4:18 seems to point this direction: μὴ σκοποῦντων ἡμῶν τὰ βλεπόμενα ἀλλὰ τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα, *we do not focus on the things that can be seen, but rather on those that cannot be seen*. Clearly this focus on faith by Paul and his associates distinguished them from many in Corinth who were centered on the outward and showy expressions of religion.

In contrast to this outward focus of ecstatic seeing, Paul asserts that his approach centers in one guiding principle: εὐάρεστοι αὐτῷ εἶναι, *to be pleasing to Him*. The issue here goes beyond a concern for salvation. To the Lord who so generously had blessed the apostle the driving passion then became pleasing this Lord in every aspect of one's life. The use of καὶ φιλοτιμούμεθα, *we indeed make it our aim...* puts highest priority upon the objective expressed in the infinitive object εὐάρεστοι αὐτῷ εἶναι. The inferential conjunction διὸ introduces this statement (# 92; v. 9) as being implicit in what he has claimed in vv. 1-8 and especially in vv. 6-7. Thus whatever location we find ourselves in εἴτε ἐνδημοῦντες εἴτε ἐκδημοῦντες, *whether dressed up or undressed*,¹¹⁶ the objective remains the same: εὐάρεστοι αὐτῷ εἶναι. That is, whether we are in this physical life or in our heavenly habitation, the aim is to be pleasing to Him.

A gigantic lesson is to be learned here. Many professing Christians are only concerned about escaping Hell in a very egocentric oriented religious stance. For Paul, however, everything is about Christ and not Paul. As the absolute center of our life, Christ is the one to be happy and satisfied with our lives. To give Him pleasure ought to be the single driving dynamic of our Christian life.

The meaning of εὐάρεστοι αὐτῷ, *pleasing to Him*, is defined in part by the justifying statement (γὰρ) in v. 10

¹¹⁶He uses the dressed up / undressed imagery this time without defining which one means this world and which one means Heaven. The point here is to stress inclusiveness of both existences.



(# 93): τοὺς γὰρ πάντας ἡμᾶς φανερωθῆναι δεῖ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα κομισθῆται ἕκαστος τὰ διὰ τοῦ σώματος πρὸς ᾧ ἔπραξεν, εἴτε ἀγαθὸν εἴτε φαῦλον, *for we all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ in order to receive -- each one -- what we have done in this physical life whether good or bad*. The axiomatic nature of this declaration¹¹⁷ puts it as foundational to understanding the Christian life.¹¹⁸ All of God's people are accountable for how they live out their faith commitment to Christ.

Clearly the language here alludes to divine judgment of every person. It centers on each believer appearing ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *before the judgment seat of Christ*.¹¹⁹ Interestingly in Rom. 14:10c

¹¹⁷This is clearly signaled by both the inclusive τοὺς πάντας ἡμᾶς, *we all*, and by the individualized ἕκαστος, *each one*.

¹¹⁸"In 4:16a, Paul is still speaking without doubt about his own apostolic attitude; yet by the time he gets to 5:10 ('we ... all') he most probably points to all Christians. It would be rather unwise to hold that this change took place no earlier than v. 10. One has the impression that Paul has been broadening his horizon, perhaps beginning already in 4:16b. This is due partly to the density or importance of the refection. Considerations about the eschatological future concern all Christians. There should, however, be no misunderstanding: in v. 10 a general, universal judgment (cf. Rom 2:6-11) is not meant, only that of Christians." [Daniel J. Harrington, *Second Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 8, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 86.]

¹¹⁹"CL In secular Gk. *bēma* is used in the sense of step or stride, as in walking (Pindar, Aeschylus). It has also the associative connotation of a pace as a unit of measure. The word is also used as a platform for a public speaker and, in legal contexts, it denotes the place where litigants stood for trial (Demosthenes, Aeschines).

¹²⁰In the LXX *bēma* stands for two Heb. words *miḏrāk* and *miḡdāl*. The word *miḏrāk*, from the root *dāraḳ* (tread), denotes the area covered by placing down the foot, hence a footbreadth. It occurs only in Deut. 2:5 where it is used in the sense of a unit of measure. In this context the Lord affirmed to Moses that he would not allow the people of Israel to take any of the territory belonging to the descendants of Esau, 'not so much as for the sole of the foot to tread on.' A somewhat similar expression utilizes the word *māqīm* (place) rather than *miḏrāk* (Deut. 11:24; Jos. 1:3). In this latter expression the emphasis is more geographical and the concept of space or area is minimized. The word *miḡdāl*, from the root *gādāl* (grow up, become great) chiefly denotes a tower, but is used in Neh. 8:4 of a wooden platform on which Ezra stood to read from the book of the law. The word is used in the same sense in the parallel passage in 1 Esd. 9:42. In Sir. 19:30 *bēma* occurs in

Paul speaks of this as πάντες γὰρ παραστησόμεθα τῷ βήματι τοῦ θεοῦ, **for we all will be presented to the judgment seat of God.**

That believers will be evaluated as to the quality of their obedience growing out of their faith commitment is a basic teaching of the apostle Paul. In 1 Cor. 4:5, the apostle had described this judgment in slightly different terms: ὥστε μὴ πρὸ καιροῦ τι κρίνετε ἕως ἂν ἔλθῃ ὁ κύριος, ὃς καὶ φωτίσει τὰ κρυπτά τοῦ σκότους καὶ φανερώσει τὰς βουλὰς τῶν καρδιῶν· καὶ τότε ὁ ἔπαινος γενήσεται ἐκάστῳ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ. **Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God.** The second coming of Christ means a public disclosure of every aspect of the life of every

the plur. (but in the v. l. S2 *bēma podos* in the sing.) in the sense of the steps of a man, i.e. his manner of walking which reveals his character. Eth. Enoch 62:3, 5 depicts the Son of man judging the mighty on his throne.

“NT In the NT *bēma* occurs once in the sense of step as a unit of measure (Acts 7:5). It is found in the expression *bēma podos* (‘a foot’s length’ RSV), i.e. a small area. The usage is similar to the Heb. expression in Deut. 2:5.

“The word is used most frequently in the NT of the platform or *dais* on which was placed a seat for an official. The *bēma* was the platform from which orations were made (Acts 12:21) as well as the place where civil officials held session to hear certain legal cases and render judgment in such cases (Matt. 27:19; Jn. 19:13; Acts 18:12, 16f.; 25:6, 10, 17). Thus Jesus was brought before the *bēma* of Pilate (cf. A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*, 19652, 24 ff.), and the Jews at Corinth accused Paul before the tribunal of the Proconsul Gallio who drove them out, but ignored the beating of Sosthenes. The remains of a public rostrum still stand among the ruins of Corinth (cf. O. Broneer, “Corinth: Center of Paul’s Missionary Work in Greece”, *BA* 14, 1951, 91 f.). Later Paul appeared before the *bēma* of Festus at Caesarea.

“The word was twice used by Paul in his letters of the judgment seat. Rom. 14:10 speaks of ‘the judgment seat of God,’ and the following verse cites Isa. 45:23 as confirmation that all men will appear before it (cf. also Phil. 2:10f.). 2 Cor. 5:10 speaks of ‘the judgment seat of Christ’, drawing attention to the fact that Christ will be the judge of all men (cf. Matt. 16:27; 25:31–46). In Rom. 14:10ff. the emphasis is on the role of the litigant before the *bēma*: ‘So each of us shall give account of himself to God.’ In 2 Cor. 5:10 the emphasis falls on the judgment rendered: ‘So that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body.’ Both passages draw attention to the reversal of roles: Jesus who (like his apostle) appeared before the judgment seat of men and suffered unjust judgment will one day sit in righteous judgment over unjust men. But Paul reminds his readers that believers are not exempt from this scrutiny and judgment. Even though reconciled (cf. 2 Cor. 5:20f.) and justified (Rom. 5:1; 8:1), they still have to give account and have their work tested (cf. 1 Cor. 3:13ff.)”

[T. McComiskey, “Βῆμα,” ed. Lothar Coenen, Erich Beyreuther, and Hans Bietenhard, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 369–370.]

person. And it begins with examining the motivations that stand behind every word and deed.

And this is not an exclusively Pauline teaching. Jesus stressed similar themes in Matt. 16:27 and 25:31–46 with an emphasis upon every single person standing before God in judgment. The Kingdom entrance sayings of Jesus likewise stress judgment based upon the actions and words of individuals as a reflection of the condition of their inward life: e.g., Matt. 7:21–23, 24–27, along with 5:20; 19:17.

In Paul’s statement here in v. 10 the goal or intention of this appearance before the judgment seat is expressed as ἵνα κομίσηται ἕκαστος τὰ διὰ τοῦ σώματος πρὸς ἃ ἔπραξεν, εἴτε ἀγαθὸν εἴτε φαῦλον, **so that each person may receive recompense for the things through the body, for what he has done, whether good or bad.**¹²⁰ Both a positive evaluation and a negative evaluation are put on the table.¹²¹ This follows what he had said earlier to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 3:10–15. Note especially vv. 12–15,

12 εἰ δέ τις ἐποικοδομεῖ ἐπὶ τὸν θεμέλιον χρυσόν, ἄργυρον, λίθους τιμίους, ξύλα, χόρτον, καλάμην, 13 ἐκάστου τὸ ἔργον φανερόν γενήσεται, ἡ γὰρ ἡμέρα δηλώσει, ὅτι ἐν πυρὶ ἀποκαλύπτεται· καὶ ἐκάστου τὸ ἔργον ὁποῖόν ἐστιν τὸ πῦρ [αὐτὸ] δοκιμάσει. 14 εἴ τις τὸ ἔργον μενεῖ ὁ ἐποικοδόμησεν, μισθὸν λήμψεται· 15 εἴ τις τὸ ἔργον κατακαήσεται, ζημιωθήσεται, αὐτὸς δὲ σωθήσεται, οὕτως δὲ ὡς διὰ πυρός.

12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. 14 If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. 15 If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but

¹²⁰“The words ‘through the body’ apparently go with the words according to what he has done and not with the words one may receive. The sense is that people will be judged according to the things that they did while living here on earth, that is, in the body.” [Roger L. Omanson and John Ellington, *A Handbook on Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 95.]

¹²¹One should take note of the use of the singular number here ἕκαστος, each one, along with ἀγαθόν, good, and φαῦλον, bad. What is highly questionable is to see this as indicating a comprehensive view of one’s life rather than a compilation of individual actions. Some commentators find this through the singular number usage, but the counter balance is the plural τὰ and ἃ that clearly reference individual actions being weighed in divine judgment. What really matters is that our Christian life is being divinely scrutinized in great detail. Jesus made a similar point in Matt. 12:36, λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι πᾶν ῥῆμα ἄργον ὃ λαλήσουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀποδώσουσιν περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγον ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως, **I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter.**



only as through fire.

This is consistent with Jesus' words in Matt. 16:27, μέλλει γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεσθαι ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ, καὶ τότε ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ, **For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done.** One must never forget the Jewish heritage behind these words. What one says and does marks what's on the inside of him more than anything else. Empty claims to loving God only increase divine displeasure on judgment day. What we claim must be demonstrated in what we do day in and day out.

Paul makes his view clear in both First and Second Corinthians that the judgment of believers is not to determine eternal destiny. That has already been settled. But divine praise and/or displeasure will surface at our being judged. Both here and in Col. 3:25,¹²² Paul uses κομίζω to speak of the divine response to being judged. But he does not spell out exactly what this is either the positive or the negative aspects.¹²³ Neither does he indicate the point when this will take place, although commentator misguided preoccupation with the resurrection body blows this question up unnecessarily.¹²⁴ But this language is consistent with the larger

¹²²Col. 3:23-25. 23 ὁ εἰς τὸν κύριον ἐργάζεσθε ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώποις, 24 εἰδότες ὅτι ἀπὸ κυρίου ἀπολήμψεσθε τὴν ἀνταπόδοσιν τῆς κληρονομίας. τῷ κυρίῳ Χριστῷ δουλεύετε· 25 ὁ γὰρ ἀδικῶν κομίζεται ὁ ἠδίκησεν, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν προσωποληψία.

23 Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, 24 since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ. 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no partiality.

¹²³44 The personal character of the retributive process and the fact that recompense might be received for good as well as for bad actions prove that, in Paul's thought, the notions of recompense and reward are not incompatible.²⁴³ Reward may be recompense for good; the 'suffering of loss' (ζημιωθήσεται, 1 Cor. 3:15), the forfeiture of reward or privilege, may be part of the requital for evil.²⁴⁴ Whatever else may be involved in the Christian's μισθός,²⁴⁵ an essential element in it is God's ἔπαινος (1 Cor. 4:5; cf. εὐάρεστοι, 2 Cor. 5:9; τιμή, Rom. 2:10) and δόξα (2 Cor. 4:17; Rom. 8:17-18), which may be given or withheld, and given in varying measure. If, in 1 Cor. 4:5, Christ is the assessor of evidence and God the executor of judgment, in 2 Cor. 5:10 both roles are fulfilled by Christ. In Pauline thought it is sometimes Christ,²⁴⁶ sometimes God,²⁴⁷ and sometimes God through Christ²⁴⁸ who exercises judgment upon humans.²⁴⁹ [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), 408.]

¹²⁴44 "When would the φανερωθῆναι occur? By some it has been referred to a so-called 'particular judgment' occurring after the death of each individual;²⁵² by others, to a judgment which takes place at or after the parousia.²⁵³ V. 10 clearly implies that the requital is made immediately after the φανερωθῆναι, but Paul does not specifically relate this φανερωθῆναι to the time of the receipt of the spiritual body (v. 1), to the time of the εὐρεθῆσθαι (v. 3),

NT teaching of different levels of blessing in Heaven and different degrees of punishment in Hell. Given the intensely confident tone of this larger passage, Paul's main point was the expectation of divine praise from God upon having his earthly life examined on judgment day. That was his hope for the Corinthians as well.

The ongoing truth here for modern Christians is to never take advantage of divine grace. God has mercifully saved us from our sins and made us Heaven bound as His people. But that same God maintains very high expectations upon us to live in faithful obedience and unconditional surrender to Him. And He holds us accountable as will be expressed on judgment day when we give an accounting of ourselves to Him. We don't serve in order to gain praise. But our devotion to our Lord should put us with Paul in saying φιλοτιμούμεθα... εὐάρεστοι αὐτῷ εἶναι, **we make it our highest aim ... to be pleasing to Him** (v. 9).

10.2.3.1.8 Ministry as reconciliation, 5:11-6:13

In this section two perspectives are presented around the central topic of καταλλαγή, **reconciliation**, or the restoring of broken relationships. In 5:11-21, Paul presents the preaching of Christ as the basis of such restoration, and in 6:1-13, he stresses his intensive efforts to not in any way create a stumbling block to that message. Connected to this is his concern that the strained relationship with the Corinthian church could become a stumbling block to that message to the lost at Corinth. He is doing his part to keep it from such and appeals to the Corinthians to do their part also.

10.2.3.1.8.1 Persuading others, 5:11-21

11 Εἰδότες οὖν τὸν φόβον τοῦ κυρίου ἀνθρώπου πείθομεν, θεῷ δὲ πεφανερῶμεθα· ἐλπίζω δὲ καὶ ἐν ταῖς συνειδήσεσιν ὑμῶν πεφανερῶσθαι. 12 οὐ πάλιν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστάνομεν ὑμῖν ἀλλ' ἀφορμὴν διδόντες ὑμῖν καυχήματος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ἵνα ἔχητε πρὸς τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους καὶ μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ. 13 εἴτε γὰρ ἐξέστημεν, θεῷ· εἴτε σωφρονοῦμεν, ὑμῖν. 14 ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς, κρίναντας τοῦτο, ὅτι εἶς ὑπὲρ πάντων

or to the moment of departure from earthly existence (v. 8). While ἕκαστος means 'each individually,' it need not imply 'each in his turn, at death' as opposed to 'each, separately, at the parousia.' Nor does Paul's desire to gain Christ's approval when ἐκδημῶν [ἐκ τοῦ σώματος] (v. 9), that is, at the βῆμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, necessarily associate the φανερωθῆναι with the ἐκδημῆσαι ἐκ τοῦ σώματος (v. 8) which occurs at death. The issue, it seems, cannot be finally decided. But in comparison with the supreme and sobering fact of his accountability to Christ, the precise time of the φανερωθῆναι would have been a matter of relative insignificance to Paul." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 409.]



5.11	οὖν	Εἰδότες τὸν φόβον τοῦ κυρίου
94	ἄνθρώπους πείθομεν,	
	δὲ	
95	θεῷ πεφανερῶμεθα·	
	δὲ	
	καὶ	
	ἐν ταῖς συνειδήσεσιν ὑμῶν	
96	ἐλπίζω... πεφανερῶσθαι.	
97	5.12 οὐ πάλιν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστάνομεν ὑμῖν	
	ἀλλ'	
98	(ἑαυτοὺς συνιστάνομεν)	
	ἀφορμὴν διδόντες ὑμῖν	
	καυχήματος	
	ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν,	
	ἵνα ἔχητε	
	πρὸς τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους	
	καὶ	
	μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ.	
5.13	γὰρ	
	εἴτε ἐξέστημεν,	
99	(ἐστὶν) θεῷ·	
	εἴτε σωφρονοῦμεν,	
100	(ἐστὶν) ὑμῖν.	
5.14	γὰρ	
101	ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς,	
	κρίναντας τοῦτο,	
	ὅτι εἶς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν,	
	ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον·	
5.15	καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν,	
	/---	
	ἵνα οἱ ζῶντες μηκέτι ἑαυτοῖς ζῶσιν	
	ἀλλὰ	
	ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν	
	(ζῶσιν) τῷ...ἀποθανόντι	
	καὶ	
	ἐγερθέντι.	
5.16	Ὡστε	
	ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν	
102	ἡμεῖς...οὐδένα οἶδαμεν	
	κατὰ σάρκα·	
	εἰ καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν κατὰ σάρκα Χριστόν,	
	ἀλλὰ	
103	νῦν οὐκέτι γινώσκομεν.	
5.17	ὥστε	
	εἰ τις ἐν Χριστῷ,	
104	(ἐστὶν) καινῇ κτίσει·	
105	τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν,	
	ἰδοὺ	
106	γέγονεν καινά.	

ἀπέθανεν, ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον· 15 καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν, ἵνα οἱ ζῶντες μηκέτι ἑαυτοῖς ζῶσιν ἀλλὰ τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντι καὶ ἐγερθέντι.

16 Ὡστε ἡμεῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν οὐδένα οἶδαμεν κατὰ σάρκα· εἰ καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν κατὰ σάρκα Χριστόν, ἀλλὰ νῦν



5.18	δὲ	
107	(ἐστίν) τὰ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ	τοῦ καταλλάξαντος ἡμᾶς ἑαυτῷ
		διὰ Χριστοῦ
		καὶ
		--- δόντος ἡμῖν τὴν διακονίαν
		τῆς καταλλαγῆς,
5.19	ὡς ὅτι θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ,	μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν
		καὶ
		θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς.
5.20	οὖν	
108	ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ πρεσβεύομεν	ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος
		δι' ἡμῶν·
109	δεόμεθα ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ,	
110	καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ.	
111 ^{5.21}	τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν,	ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ
		ἐν αὐτῷ.

οὐκέτι γινώσκομεν. 17 ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινά. 18 τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ καταλλάξαντος ἡμᾶς ἑαυτῷ διὰ Χριστοῦ καὶ δόντος ἡμῖν τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς, 19 ὡς ὅτι θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ, μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν καὶ θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς. 20 ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ οὖν πρεσβεύομεν ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι' ἡμῶν· δεόμεθα ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ. 21 τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ.

11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. 12 We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. 15 And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. 17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. 20 So we are ambassa-

dors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

As becomes visibly clear from the block diagram below, this pericope divides itself into two basic sections. First, vv. 11-15 centers on Paul and the Corinthians with Christ as the linking presence between them. The conjunction ὥστε in vv. 16 and 17 draws two conclusions in vv. 16-19 from the above unit. The inferential conjunction οὖν in v. 20 introduces what is implicit in vv. 16-19.

The general theme of καταλλαγή, reconciliation, pulls these statements together. People can be reconciled to God (# 110) and also to one another (# 98). But only in the Christ who died for them and was raised from the dead. It is the powerful dynamic of ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ, Christ's love, that propels the apostle and his associates in ministry. The apostle utilizes several axiomatic principles, especially statement #s 104-107, from the Gospel to make his appeal to the Corinthians.

In vv. 11-15, he appeals to the Corinthians to reach out to him in a positive manner. One should note the role of the inferential conjunction οὖν that ties vv. 11-15 back to vv. 1-10 and especially to the v. 10 theme of final judgment. What he says in vv. 11-15 is implicit in what is contained in vv. 1-10. The sentence prefield position of the causal participle phrase Εἰδότες οὖν τὸν φόβον τοῦ κυρίου, therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, highlights this linkage even further. The objective genitive role of τοῦ κυρίου conveys the sense of 'because we hugely respect the Lord.' His perception of the awesomeness

of Christ stood as a motivating dynamic pushing him to encourage others to Christ: ἀνθρώπους πείθομεν (#94). This present tense of πείθω underscores ongoing actions of appealing to the principle of Christ in efforts to convince others to commit themselves to Him.¹²⁵ But additionally he is motivated by his respect for Christ to be completely transparent to God: θεῷ δὲ πεφανερῶμεθα (#95). Here the perfect tense passive voice form of φανερῶ stresses being absolutely clear in the eyes of God. Nothing is hidden or covered up before Almighty God. Although this is ultimately due to who God is, Paul's emphasis here is upon a deliberate intention by his associates and himself to willingly open up themselves to God's full inspection. Their ministry and including motivations are known completely by God.

This leads to his appeal to the Corinthians: ἐλπίζω δὲ καὶ ἐν ταῖς συνειδήσεσιν ὑμῶν πεφανερῶσθαι, *And I also trust that they are clear to your consciences* (# 96). The sense here is an appeal that the Corinthians, in their ability to make decisions properly, will see the full transparency of Paul and his associates to the same level that God does. The volitional side of human existence is the point of the use of συνειδήσις, i.e., the capacity to properly evaluate and draw conclusions.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ *persuade, appeal to*, also in an unfavorable sense *cajole, mislead* (so TestDan 1:8; ApcMos 21; Jos., C. Ap. 2, 201) τινά someone ἀνθρώπους (Ael. Aristid. 34, 19 K.=50 P. 552 D.) **2 Cor 5:11**; perh. also **Gal 1:10** (but s. c below). Cp. MPol 3:1; 8:2, 3. τινά w. inf. foll. (X., An. 1, 3, 19; Polyb. 4, 64, 2; Diod S 12, 39, 2; 17, 15, 5; Herodian 2, 4, 2; Jos., Ant. 8, 256; Just., A II 2, 10, D. 112, 3; Tat. 21, 3) Ac 13:43; MPol 4; 5:1. ἐπειθεν (sc. αὐτὸν) ἀρνεῖσθαι *he tried to induce him to deny* 9:2. Perh. this is the place for the textually uncertain pass. **Ac 26:28** ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι *you lose no time trying to make me play the Christian* (cp. the tr. in Beginn. IV 322, w. reff. to 3 Km 20:7 and patristic authors cited in Soph., Lex. s.v. ποιῶ 3; s. also Lampe s.v. ποιῶ C). Because of apparent misunderstanding of the idiom, this wording is simplified in a widespread v.l. in which ποιῆσαι is replaced with γενέσθαι *in a short time you are persuading (or trying to persuade) me to become a Christian* (cp. Jos., Vi. 151 πρὸς ὀλίγον ἐπειθοντο='they were nearly persuaded'), prob. meant ironically. Bauer considered it prob. that the rdg. of the text be understood as a combination of the two expressions 'in a short time you are persuading me to become a Christian' and 'in a short time you will make me a Christian', so that the sense is someth. like you are in a hurry to persuade me and make a Christian of me (so Goodsp, Probs. 137f [but it is not clear whether "make" here is to be understood in the sense 'play the part of']). S. the lit. s.v. ὀλίγος 2bβ and under 3a below, also AFridrichsen, SymbOsl 14, '35, 49–52, ConNeot 3, '39, 13–16 [w. ref. to X., Mem. 1, 2, 49; cp. PBenoit, RB 53, '46, 303]; DHesseling, Neophilol 20, '37, 129–34; JHarry, ATR 28, '46, 135 f; EHaenchen ad loc.). Instead of the inf. we have ἵνα (Plut., Mor. 181a πείθωμεν ἵνα μείνῃ) **Mt 27:20** (B-D-F §392, 1c; Rob. 993)." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 791.]

¹²⁶For an indepth analysis of συνειδήσις in the first century

The appeal is to the assumed ability of his Corinthian readers to properly evaluate his ministry and then draw the same conclusions about it that God does. The modern western idea of conscience is alien to Paul and the first century Greco-Roman world. Here for Paul is real confidence that an honest appraisal of his ministry will lead to the positive conclusion that it indeed is guided and blessed by Christ. In v. 10, Paul is convinced this will come to light on the day of judgment. He expects the Corinthians to be able to see it now.

In v. 12, amplification is given in reassurance that he is not bragging or boasting about himself as evidently some of those opposing him did about their work: οὐ πάλιν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστάνομεν ὑμῖν, *we are not commending ourselves again to you*. The present tense verb συνιστάνομεν from συνιστάνω / συνίστημι has the literal meaning of *to put together*. Here as a transitive verb with the direct object ἑαυτοὺς the sense becomes that of commending oneself in inappropriate self-commendation. This Paul insists is not what he and his associates were seeking to do. With his frequent use of συνιστάνω in Second Corinthians -- 3:1; 4:2; 5:12; 6:4; 10:12, 18 (2x); 12:11 -- the background issue was such self-commendation of Paul's opponents to the various house church groups at Corinth. The earlier use in 3:1 makes this picture clear: Ἀρχόμεθα πάλιν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστάνειν; ἢ μὴ χρῆζομεν ὡς τινες συστατικῶν ἐπιστολῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἢ ἐξ ὑμῶν; *Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Surely we do not need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you, do we?* In 4:2, the sense is of putting oneself before another for examination: συνιστάνοντες ἑαυτοὺς πρὸς πᾶσαν συνειδήσιν ἀνθρώπων, *commending ourselves to every conscience of men*.

Instead, Paul presents himself in full disclosure in order to give the Corinthians a basis for answering criticisms being leveled at him and his associates: ἀλλ' ἀφορμὴν διδόντες ὑμῖν καυχήματος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ἵνα ἔχητε πρὸς τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους καὶ μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ. *but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart* (v. 12). Perhaps there lay in the background the Aristotelean glorification of the physical body on the part of τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους, *those boasting in appearance*.¹²⁷ But the emphasis could very

world see my "*The Western Introspective Conscience: A Biblical Perspective on Decision Making*," at [volume 37](http://volume37oftheBiblicalInsightsCommentaryseriesinCranfordville.com) of the **Biblical Insights Commentary** series in cranfordville.com.

¹²⁷ Their pride was constantly focused (τοὺς ... καυχωμένους) on what was external, what caught the eye, what was clearly demonstrable, not on what was inward, what was not outwardly evident or fully provable. The ἐν προσώπῳ ... ἐν καρδίᾳ antithesis does not describe manner, "openly ... secretly," but the object, and by implication the ground, of the καυχᾶσθαι,²⁹ 'those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart' (NRSV) (cf. Rom. 2:28–29). Because πρόσωπον usually denotes the 'face' or 'outward ap-



well have been imperial in orientation. That is, reality centered on the material that could be touched, seen, smelled, tasted, heard etc. For them religion was an outward display of piety that others could easily spot.

Paul had experienced the phoniness of this while a Pharisee in Judaism and knew out of his encounter with the risen Christ that the bottom line of authentic religion is what is on the inside, ἐν καρδίᾳ, of a person. It is out of the quality of spiritual life inwardly that authentic outward expression of true commitment to Christ emerges, just as Jesus had stressed in His Sermon on the Mount (cf. Matt. 5-7). Thus contextually some parallels emerge here:

ἐν προσώπῳ (v. 12) equals τὰ βλεπόμενα (4:18)

ἐν καρδίᾳ (v. 12) equals τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα (4:18)

The noun καυχήματος and the verbal καυχωμένου are both translated ‘boasting’ but the idea is far deeper than mere verbal bragging. At its core is an inward experience and conviction of something immensely satisfying that the individual may or may not talk about openly. The apostle deeply sought to convince the Corinthians that true devotion to God must be centered in the inner life of the individual which then will radiate outwardly in actions, words, and behavior. His life exemplified this principle and he wanted them to understand this clearly and with conviction. Then when the religious ‘show-offs’ bragged about their piety, the Corinthians would not only recognize the falseness of this display of religiosity but could counter it with assertions of what true piety meant and how it actually worked. Thus Paul invited the Corinthians to scrutinize his life and ministry in order to discover this authenticity in him for themselves.¹²⁸ They would be ‘better armed’ to de-

pearance,’ it has been suggested that ἐν προσώπῳ refers to what may be expressed on the face,³⁰ such as piety or zeal, especially during religious ecstasy (cf. ἐξέστημεν, v. 13). But it is preferable to take πρόσωπον as a metonym for ‘what is outward,’ ‘externals,’ and καρδία as standing for ‘what is inward,’ the ‘character.’ On this understanding, πρόσωπον corresponds to τὰ βλεπόμενα (4:18) and κατὰ σάρκα (5:16; 11:18),³¹ while καρδία matches τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα (4:18) and κατὰ κύριον (11:17). The contrast is between ‘externals’ and ‘inward reality’ (Moffatt).³² Apparently Paul’s rivals at Corinth were making superficial claims to superiority over him — such as their relation to the Jesus of history (5:16) and to Palestinian orthodoxy (11:22) or their greater number of visions and revelations (cf. 12:1–7). Paul was content to take his stand on what was ‘in the heart’ — transparency before God and people and the testimony of the conscience (v. 11b). For the Christian superficial appearances count for nothing, the state of the heart is everything.” [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), 416–417.]

¹²⁸Phony outward religion is never made transparent by its practitioner. To the opposite, outward religion carefully controls its image to others so that they see only what the practitioner wants them to see. Authentic piety says to others, “Look at me inside and out so that you can determine that sincere commitment to Christ

defend the apostolic Gospel against the perverters of it with their phony piety approach. The elliptical ἀφορμὴν διδόντες ὑμῖν καυχήματος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, *giving you a basis for boasting about us*, highlights the tension still present at Corinth between Paul’s supporters and distractors. The opponents made the easy choice to what could be supposedly seen about piety as ‘spiritual.’ But this was highly deceptive and dangerous. Authentic spirituality must begin from inside the person with sincere commitment to Christ. It then comes to the surface in clear ways that focus on ministry and service to others, rather than by a series of seemingly religious acts. Paul was exemplifying this to them along with teaching them the religious basis of it in the apostolic Gospel.

In vv. 13-15 (#s 99-101 in the above diagram), the causal conjunction γὰρ sets forth a series of justifying declarations as the foundation for Paul’s claim in vv. 11-12. The twin assertions in v. 13 (#s 99-100), reflect the apostle’s hesitancy to engage in claiming superiority over these opponents: εἶτε γὰρ ἐξέστημεν, θεῷ· εἶτε σωφρονοῦμεν, ὑμῖν, *For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you*. What he says here does not reflect any kind of post enlightenment pattern of thinking and thus is not easy to understand beyond a surface level.¹²⁹ Evidently some irony with a touch of sarcasm is expressed in the contrastive ἐξέστημεν, *we are out of our minds*, and σωφρονοῦμεν, *we are of sound minds*, verbs. To Paul’s opponents his reasoning seemed irrational and totally invalid.¹³⁰ But he

permeates my entire life inside and out.”

¹²⁹“Paul continues his rejoinder against those who question his sincerity of motive.⁶⁶⁹ On the surface, it comes into view that no matter the state of Paul’s mind or disposition, he does nothing for himself; all is done for God and the Corinthians. But under the surface is the mystery of what he means by ἐξίστημι, “‘be out of one’s mind.’ The total understanding of this passage may be beyond our grasp.” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 283.]

¹³⁰“The meaning of ἐξίστημι, ‘be out of one’s mind,’ found here in contradistinction⁶⁷⁰ to σωφρονέω, ‘be of sound mind’ (mental health; BAGD), may denote a type of mental derangement (at least in the eyes of Paul’s opponents).⁶⁷¹ The use of σωφρονέω in 5:13 is the only time the verb is used in the epistle, and indeed in the Pauline corpus. Usually in the rest of the NT this verb is translated ‘be amazed’ (Matt 12:23; Mark 2:12; Luke 8:56; Acts 2:7, 12; 8:13; 9:21; 10:45; 12:16; see the LXX of Exod 19:18; Ruth 3:8, where the verb from ἠράδ, *hārad*, ‘tremble,’ is rendered ἐξέστη, ‘were astonished’).⁶⁷² Also, the related noun ἔκστασις, ‘ecstasy,’ either means ‘amazement’ (Mark 5:42; 16:8; Luke 5:26; Acts 3:10) or is used to describe an event in which someone is ‘not in his right mind’ because of a vision or trance (Acts 10:10; 11:5; 22:17). Moreover, one could ask why Paul does not use μανία, ‘insanity,’ or μαίνομαι, ‘be insane,’⁶⁷³ terms used when he was before Festus (Acts 26:24–25) to describe his ‘madness.’⁶⁷⁴ Hence, this line of reasoning leads us to doubt seriously that Paul was speaking of ‘mental illness,’ though his opponents possibly saw his fanaticism



was expressing how one properly relates θεῶ, to God. To these people he gladly appeared to be off his rocker while authentically serving God.¹³¹ But to his readers, ὑμῖν, whom he assumes know what he is talking about, this reasoning comes across as solid, correct thinking. He expects them to understand true spiritual dynamic as opposed to the phony showy religion his opponents were presenting.

5.14 γὰρ
101 ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς,
 κρίναντας τοῦτο,
 ὅτι εἷς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν,
 ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον·
 5.15 καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν,
 /---|
 ἵνα οἱ ζῶντες μηκέτι ἑαυτοῖς ζῶσιν
 ἀλλὰ
 ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν
 (ζῶσιν) τῷ...ἀποθανόντι
 καὶ
 ἐγερθέντι.

The second set of justifying statements in vv. 14-15 (# 101), also introduced by γὰρ, provides amplification of the heart of the spiritual principle being advocated by Paul: 14 ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς, κρίναντας τοῦτο, ὅτι εἷς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν, ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον· 15 καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν, ἵνα οἱ ζῶντες μηκέτι ἑαυτοῖς ζῶσιν ἀλλὰ τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντι καὶ ἐγερθέντι. 14 For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. 15 And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. Showy religiosity totally misses this foundational truth of the apostolic Gospel.

As the block diagram (cf. below) illustrates, central to authentic spirituality is the transforming love of

(11:1, 16–32) as ‘religious mania.’⁶⁷⁵⁹ [Ralph P. Martin, 2 *Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 283–284.]

¹³¹To inject visionary ecstatic experience into this is unjustified. The exclusive use of ἐξίστημι only here in all of Paul’s writings points away from some kind of ecstatic reference. That Paul was unconditionally committed to following Christ through all the sufferings he detailed earlier is the proper defining contextual framework here. His opponents were stressing outward religious actions not much unlike the patterns of activities of their pagan neighbors. No persecution would ever come from these religious actions. For his opponents general conformity to outward forms of religiosity acceptable in ancient Corinth was key to their Christian profession. For Paul to utterly reject this in favor of a deep inner transformation that then shaped the manner of one’s living regardless of whether other people accepted it or not was insanity to these people. In truth, following Paul’s way still produces the same mockery especially from nominal Christians in our world. But if you are a nominal Christian exegeting this text, some other explanation no matter how far fetched has to be adopted.

Christ: ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς, for Christ’s love compels us. The divine ἀγάπη is not a passive feeling but rather a forceful spiritual dynamic that pushes us powerfully forward in commitment, as the verb συνέχω defines with the literal sense of seizing hold of something and pulling it tightly together with something else. Here that love of Christ grabs hold of us and presses us hard into obedience to Christ.

What gives Christ’s love such power over individuals? The lengthy participle phrase in an adverbial causal role defines this powerful dynamic as the basis for Christ’s compelling power: κρίναντας τοῦτο, ὅτι εἷς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν, ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον· καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν, ἵνα οἱ ζῶντες μηκέτι ἑαυτοῖς ζῶσιν ἀλλὰ τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντι καὶ ἐγερθέντι, having come to this judgment that because One died for all, therefore all were dead; and He died in behalf of all, so that the living might not live any longer for themselves, but for the One who from them died and was raised.

Two key verbs provide the core structure of the pharticiple phrase: ἀπέθανεν / ἀπέθανον / ἀπέθανεν (“died”) and ζῶντες / ζῶσιν (“live”). Christ died for all humanity while all humanity was dead. The goal (ἵνα) of His dying is that those living would not longer live for themselves but instead for the One who died and was raised for them. At the heart of God’s redeeming work in Christ is the liberation of a person’s egotism. His self-centeredness traps him in a death trap of eternal damnation. Crucial contextually is this contention over against the egocentric focus of the showy, outward display of religion by Paul’s opponents. The axom set forth by the apostle strongly asserts that the death and resurrection of Christ has made no impact upon these kinds of religionists. Any message they spew out is nothing but a false message contrary to the apostolic Gospel. But Paul’s message emerges out of a live that has been transformed away of egotism to sacrificial service to God and others. And thus reflects the truth of the apostolic Gospel.

What is core here is the transforming power of

Christ's death. As he will expand in vv. 16-21, that sacrificial death of Christ cleanses us of our sinful nature and orientation, and refocuses our commitment to serving others in the power of the risen Christ present inside us. This is far more than a mere judicial action where a holy God in judgment declares us free from the penalty of our sinfulness based on the death of Christ on the cross. The work of divine grace changes us inside out into a new person. It is this powerful changing process in the cross that gives Christ the compelling dynamic drawing us to Him for commitment and a new style of living. Showing, outward focused religion completely misses this dynamic and continues in its heresy. Paul knew this was happening in Corinth and sought to correct it.

What then comes out of this powerful work of Christ? Vv. 16-19 answer this question.

16 Ὡστε ἡμεῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν οὐδένα οἶδαμεν κατὰ σάρκα· εἰ καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν κατὰ σάρκα Χριστόν, ἀλλὰ νῦν οὐκέτι γινώσκομεν. 17 ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινὰ. 18 τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ καταλλάξαντος ἡμᾶς ἑαυτῷ διὰ Χριστοῦ καὶ δόντος ἡμῖν τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς, 19 ὡς ὅτι θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσων ἑαυτῷ, μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν καὶ θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς.

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a hu-

man point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. 17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

The result conjunction ὥστε underscores a result of the preceding depiction, here in vv. 11-15. Put another way, what is the consequence of Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection? Vv. 16-19 describe this consequence. The repeating of ὥστε in v. 17 adds a second set of consequences to Christ's death. These two sets of depictions of consequences through ὥστε lay the groundwork for some implications that are made explicit through οὖν in vv. 20-21. The 'consequences' center on who believers are in Christ, while the implications stress ministry obligations arising out of this transformation of being in Christ depicted in vv. 16-19.

The first consequence (v. 16a; # 102) of the compelling force of Christ's love is a change in relationships and perspectives. Prior to Paul's conversion, he looked at other people purely κατὰ σάρκα, i.e., from a human perspective, rather than seeing them as spiritual entities. But coming to Christ changed all that. His perspective

5.16	Ὡστε	ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν
102	ἡμεῖς...οὐδένα οἶδαμεν	κατὰ σάρκα·
		εἰ καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν κατὰ σάρκα Χριστόν,
		ἀλλὰ
103	νῦν οὐκέτι γινώσκομεν.	
5.17	ὥστε	
	εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ,	
104	(ἐστίν) καινὴ κτίσις·	
105	τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν,	
	ἰδοὺ	
106	γέγονεν καινὰ.	
5.18	δὲ	
107	(ἐστίν) τὰ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ	τοῦ καταλλάξαντος ἡμᾶς ἑαυτῷ
		διὰ Χριστοῦ
		καὶ
		--- δόντος ἡμῖν τὴν διακονίαν
		τῆς καταλλαγῆς,
5.19	ὡς ὅτι θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσων ἑαυτῷ,	
	μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν	
	καὶ	
	θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς.	

of others from his conversion onward has become to see them from God's perspective. The construction although using the first person plural, "we," ἡμεῖς, to highlight himself and his associates, takes on a slight axiomatic tone, implying that this should be the case for every person who comes to Christ in faith.

The second consequence (v. 16b; # 103) focuses on this same principle in regard to his 'knowledge' of Christ. The concessive clause εἰ καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν κατὰ σάρκα Χριστόν, even if we indeed had known Christ from a human perspective, sets up a slight possibility of having known about Christ prior to his conversion. Modern western languages provide no way to convey the nuanced meaning contained in the construction used by Paul in Koine Greek.¹³² The concessive statement assumes a scenario in which some awareness of the historical Jesus existed among himself and his associates. But whatever its extent was, the understanding wasn't much and was from a purely human standpoint. No spiritual angle was present. None of them thought of Jesus as anything more than another Jew. To be sure, a heretical teacher, but still just a Jewish man. Hints of this surface in Luke's narrative in Acts:

7:58b, καὶ οἱ μάρτυρες ἀπέθεντο τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν παρὰ τοὺς πόδας νεανίου καλουμένου Σαύλου, and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

8:1a, Σαῦλος δὲ ἦν συνευδοκῶν τῇ ἀναιρέσει αὐτοῦ. And Saul approved of their killing him.

8:3, Σαῦλος δὲ ἐλυμαίνετο τὴν ἐκκλησίαν κατὰ τοὺς οἴκους εἰσπορευόμενος, σύρων τε ἄνδρας καὶ γυναῖκας παρεδίδου εἰς φυλακὴν. But Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison.

9:1-2, 1 Ὁ δὲ Σαῦλος ἔτι ἐμπνέων ἀπειλῆς καὶ φόνου εἰς τοὺς μαθητὰς τοῦ κυρίου, προσελθὼν τῷ ἀρχιερεῖ 2 ἠτήσατο παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐπιστολάς εἰς Δαμασκὸν πρὸς τὰς συναγωγὰς, ὅπως ἐάν τις εὑρῆ τῆς ὁδοῦ ὄντας, ἄνδρας τε καὶ γυναῖκας, δεδεμένους ἀγάγῃ εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ. 1 Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

22:4-5a, 4 ὃς ταύτην τὴν ὁδὸν ἐδίωξα ἄχρι θανάτου δεσμεύων καὶ παραδιδούς εἰς φυλακὰς ἄνδρας τε καὶ γυναῖκας, 5 ὡς καὶ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς μαρτυρεῖ μοι καὶ πᾶν τὸ πρεσβυτέριον, 4 I persecuted this Way up to the point of death by binding both men and women and putting them in prison, 5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me.

26:9-11, 9 Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἔδοξα ἐμαυτῷ πρὸς τὸ ὄνομα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου δεῖν πολλὰ ἐναντία πράξαι, 10 ὃ καὶ ἐποίησα ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, καὶ πολλοὺς τε τῶν ἁγίων ἐγὼ

¹³²One can really tell whether a commentator knows ancient Greek or not by how this clause is interpreted.

ἐν φυλακαῖς κατέκλεισα τὴν παρὰ τῶν ἀρχιερέων ἐξουσίαν λαβὼν ἀναιρουμένων τε αὐτῶν κατήνεγκα ψῆφον. 11 καὶ κατὰ πάσας τὰς συναγωγὰς πολλάκις τιμωρῶν αὐτοὺς ἠνάγκαζον βλασφημεῖν περισσῶς τε ἐμμαινόμενος αὐτοῖς ἐδίωκον ἕως καὶ εἰς τὰς ἔξω πόλεις. 9 Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death. 11 By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was so furiously enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities.

During this period the apostle learned many things about the teaching of Jesus from the Christians that he took prisoner, but this was merely information about a Jewish man claiming to have been the Messiah. Such information was simply evidence for convicting the captured Christians of treason against the Jewish nation. It was not information that Paul accepted as being correct, especially since it contradicted massively the contours of whom the Jewish Messiah was expected to be in the teaching of the Pharisees.¹³³

Not until the face to face encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus did Paul discover who Jesus really is. Luke makes this abundantly clear in his conversion narratives in Acts.¹³⁴ Paul likewise makes this

¹³³One would reasonably assume that Paul was familiar with the messianic pretenders, such as Judas the Galilean (cf. Acts 5:36-37), Theudas et als. prior to Christ. Their efforts to liberate the Jewish people from Roman rule ended in disastrous failure and caused the death of several hundred Jews in Palestine. For more details, see the article "Josephus on the Messiah Concept," at <http://yeshuaincontext.com/2010/11/josephus-on-the-messiah-concept/>.

¹³⁴Acts 26:12-18, 12 Ἐν οἷς πορευόμενος εἰς τὴν Δαμασκὸν μετ' ἐξουσίας καὶ ἐπιτροπῆς τῆς τῶν ἀρχιερέων 13 ἡμέρας μέσης κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν εἶδον, βασιλεῦ, οὐρανόθεν ὑπὲρ τὴν λαμπρότητα τοῦ ἡλίου περιλάμπαν με φῶς καὶ τοὺς σὺν ἐμοὶ πορευομένους. 14 πάντων τε καταπεσόντων ἡμῶν εἰς τὴν γῆν ἤκουσα φωνὴν λέγουσαν πρὸς με τῇ Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ· Σαοὺλ Σαοὺλ, τί με διώκεις; σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζεις. 15 ἐγὼ δὲ εἶπα· τίς εἶ, κύριε; ὁ δὲ κύριος εἶπεν· ἐγὼ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς ὃν σὺ διώκεις. 16 ἀλλ' ἀνάστηθι καὶ στήθι ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου· εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ὤφθην σοι, προχειρίσασθαι σε ὑπηρετήν καὶ μάρτυρα ὧν τε εἶδές [με] ὧν τε ὀφθῆσομαί σοι, 17 ἐξαιρούμενός σε ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰς οὓς ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω σε 18 ἀνοῖξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν, τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκότους εἰς φῶς καὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ κληρὸν ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πιστεῖ τῇ εἰς ἐμέ.

12 "With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, 13 when at midday along the road, your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions. 14 When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.' 15 I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The Lord answered, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.



clear in Gal. 1:15-16a, 15 Ὅτε δὲ εὐδόκησεν [ὁ θεὸς] ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου καὶ καλέσας διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ 16 ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί, ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, 15 *But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased 16 to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles,* Thus Paul's clause here εἰ καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν κατὰ σάρκα Χριστόν carries a lot of background that is important to understand.

But the apodosis main clause in elliptical expression is the more important declaration: ἀλλὰ νῦν οὐκέτι γινώσκουμεν, *instead we no longer know (Him this way)*. The obstacle of limited human perspective has been overcome in conversion so that a brand new perspective takes its place. Here is a fundamental principle of the Gospel. Conversion means coming into a completely new perspective about Christ. Up to that point, knowledge of Christ is not relationship, but rather knowing information about Christ which we may accept as true or we may completely reject as false as was Paul's case. But in face to face encounter with the risen Christ our perspective shifts to a completely new understanding,

16 But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. 17 I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

Compare also the parallel accounts in 22:6-11 and 9:1-9. Central is Paul's question to the risen Jesus:

9:5-6, 5 εἶπεν δὲ· τίς εἶ, κύριε; ὁ δὲ ἐγὼ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς ὃν σὺ διώκεις· 6 ἀλλ' ἀνάστηθι καὶ εἰσελθε εἰς τὴν πόλιν καὶ λαληθήσεται σοι ὅ τί σε δεῖ ποιεῖν. 5 *He asked, "Who are you, Lord?"* The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 6 But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."

22:8, 8 ἐγὼ δὲ ἀπεκρίθην· τίς εἶ, κύριε; εἶπέν τε πρὸς με· ἐγὼ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος, ὃν σὺ διώκεις. 8 *I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?'* Then he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.'

26:15-18, 15 ἐγὼ δὲ εἶπα· τίς εἶ, κύριε; ὁ δὲ κύριος εἶπεν· ἐγὼ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς ὃν σὺ διώκεις. 16 ἀλλ' ἀνάστηθι καὶ στήθι ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου· εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ὤφθην σοι, προχειρίσασθαί σε ὑπερέτην καὶ μάρτυρα ὧν τε εἶδές [με] ὧν τε ὀφθήσομαί σοι, 17 ἐξαιρούμενός σε ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰς οὓς ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω σε 18 ἀνοῖξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν, τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκότους εἰς φῶς καὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ κληρὸν ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ. 15 *I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?'* The Lord answered, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. 17 I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

for out of this encounter comes an intimate spiritual relationship with Christ.

The third consequent, introduced by the second ὥστε in v. 17 (# 104). Actually a series of consequences are set forth as axiomatic Gospel principle (#s 104-107) and are introduced as explanations of this new perspective of knowing Christ. 1) εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις, *since one is in Christ, he is a new creation*.¹³⁵ The new perspective begins with the realization that he has been changed into a new person, radically different from the previous old person. 2) τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, *the old things have passed away*. His sinful lifestyle of self-centered passion has died along with everything connected to it. 3) ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινά, *indeed everything has become new*.¹³⁶ In an unimaginable way, his life is starting over from scratch with the divine intent to fill it with nothing but good. 4) τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ καταλλάξαντος ἡμᾶς ἑαυτῷ διὰ Χριστοῦ καὶ δόντος ἡμῖν τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς, *and all things come from the God who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation*. Here is the heart of Christian conversion. God has brought us back to Himself through the work of Christ so that now we are in relationship with Him. Out of this has come the divine

¹³⁵The terminology employed by Paul here, καινὴ κτίσις, is the abstract noun, *new creation*. Elsewhere one discovers κτίσμα for *creation* or *creature*. Also κτίστης as *Creator*. And the verb κτίζω, *I create*. As topics 42.29-42.49 reflect in the Louw Nida Greek lexicon, this group is but one of several word sets used for creating, although mostly in reference to the material world.

¹³⁶2 Corinthians 5:17

WH NU γέγονεν καινά

"they have become new"

P⁴⁶ ⋈ B C D* F G 048 0243 1739 cop Clement

RSV ESV NIV TNIV NEB REB NJB NAB NLT HCSB NET

variant/TR γεγονεν καινα τα παντα

"all things have become new"

D2 L P Ψ (075 33) Marcion according to Tertullian

KJV NKJV NRSV NASB HCSBmg NETmg

"According to WH NU, a rendering of the full passage is: 'if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; old things have passed away, behold they have become new.' The variant has 'all things' becoming new. The variant reading could have first been created by a scribal error, due to dittography—τα and παντα occur at the beginning of the next verse. But the sequence τα δε παντα (with the δε interrupting τα and παντα) makes this unlikely. Thus, the variant reading is more likely a scribal assimilation to Rev 21:5, in which God says, 'I make all things new.' Marcion would have promoted the expansion because it shows the full superiority of the new covenant over the old. Whether intentional or not, both NASB and NRSV reflect TR, whereas the KJV and NKJV do so by design."

[Philip W. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary: Commentary on the Variant Readings of the Ancient New Testament Manuscripts and How They Relate to the Major English Translations* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2008), 541–542.]



mandate that our lives are to be centered on helping others discover this reconciliation as well.

These *new things*, *καινά*, have their exclusive source in God: τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ. How this happens is the amazing aspect since it comes solely from the One who reconciles us believers to Himself through Christ: τοῦ καταλλάξαντος ἡμᾶς ἑαυτῷ διὰ Χριστοῦ. Clearly this is a divine action, not possible for any human to achieve on their own. Our old self is sinfully depraved and incapable of transforming itself at the mandated level required by God's holy purity. It has to be completely shoved aside, τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, before God can do the re-newing work of transformation.

The nature and content of this τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς, *ministry of reconciliation*, is defined in v. 19 by the adverbial causal clause: ὡς ὅτι θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσειν ἑαυτῷ, μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν καὶ θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς, *in that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, by not counting against them their transgressions and by entrusting to us the message of reconciliation*. The ability of God to erase τὰ ἀρχαῖα, *the old things*, and begin creating *the new things*, *καινά*, depends upon the work of Christ in dying and being raised to life. One major aspect is God's ability to effect this reconciliation is μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν, *by not counting against them their transgressions*. This is due to Christ bearing the penalty of humanity's transgressions in His own body through dying sacrificially on the cross.¹³⁷ This implies what Paul makes explicit in v. 21, τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ. *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*.

Not only do God's people in coming to Christ experience this profound reconciliation, they also become obligated to work toward helping others experience this same reconciliation: καὶ θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς, *and by entrusting us with the message of reconciliation*. Of course the 'we' used here references Paul and his associates in the context. He wants the Corinthians to understand what stands behind the ministry these individuals have given to the Corinthians over the years since the founding of the church a few years earlier. Unlike the opponents who mostly pulled apart the community of believers, Paul's ministry has

¹³⁷**First Peter 2:24-25**, 24 ὃς τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον, ἵνα ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν, οὗ τῷ μῶλωπι ἰάθητε. 25 ἦτε γὰρ ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι, ἀλλ' ἐπεστράφητε νῦν ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν.

24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

centered on pulling them together in reconciliation with God so that the new life in Christ could develop and grow in the community.

Out of these sets of consequences in vv. 16-19 come a set of implications that are stated explicitly. The inferential conjunction οὖν, *therefore*, links up vv. 20-21 to vv. 16-19 in this manner. In a Jewish pattern rather typical of the apostle Paul, the two sets of implications are set up in informal step parallelism to the consequences:

A, #s 102-103, Paul's knowing of others changed

B, #s 104-107, theological depiction of reconciliation

C, #s 108-109, Paul's ministry of reconciliation to others

D, # 110, theological depiction of Christ in reconciliation

Thus οὖν pulls implications from the previous sets of consequences but does so in parallel sequence and connection with them.¹³⁸ For the ancient listeners of this text being read in the house church groups at Corinth, such made grasping and remembering the ideas much easier, as well as created a close sense of interconnectivity of these ideas. This provides some basis for linking vv. 16-21 together as a single pericope, but the clear twofold distinction between vv. 16-19 and 20-21, defined by οὖν, argues against blurring the nature of the distinction.

20 Ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ οὖν πρεσβεύομεν ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι' ἡμῶν· δεόμεθα ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ. 21 τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ.

20 So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The core affirmations in v. 20 fall into either two or three segments (#s 108 - 109), depending upon whether καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ is taken as direct discourse or not.

¹³⁸A lot of recent discussion in commentaries sees vv. 18-21 as a piece of Christian tradition that Paul has reworked to fit into his argument here. This may be possible but the evidence for it is rather slim and only mildly persuasive. The interpretive impact of this view is that the passage thus takes on more forcefulness by picking up ideas currently being taught as a part of the apostolic Gospel by Christian leaders generally.

Yet how systematically the Gospel was taught by the mid 50s is not really known because of extremely limited evidence. The broad contours of what was taught is readily observable from the NT documents themselves which arise in the second half of the first Christian century. But specific teachings as fixed form teachings are far less clear from this database.

Now beginning in the second century the situation shifts dramatically as signaled by the writings of the apostolic fathers and documents such as *The Didache*. But the content, and particularly the orientation, of the Gospel is also undergoing profound changes away from what Jesus and the apostles taught.

108 Ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ πρεσβεύομεν
ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος
δι' ἡμῶν·

109 δεόμεθα ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ,
καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ.

110^{5.21} τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν,
ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ
ἐν αὐτῷ.

If so taken as seems likely here, the two elements in # 109 merge into a compound sentence structure with καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ as the direct object of δεόμεθα. The verb δέομαι, I ask, plead, does function frequently in the NT as a transitive verb with a direct object. But typically the direct object is introduced by an infinitive or the subordinate conjunction ἵνα. This use of ἵνα especially to introduce indirect discourse in the form of a polite request, which dominates the usage, is uniformly the way of petitioning God, and only rarely of requests made to other humans. The transitive use of δέομαι with direct discourse following is limited to Acts 8:34; 21:39; Lk. 8:28 and Gal. 4:12 and follows a distinctive pattern as in Acts 21:39b: δέομαι δέ σου, ἐπίτρεψόν μοι λαλῆσαι πρὸς τὸν λαόν, but I beg you, permit me to speak to the people. It loses some of its politeness and takes on a mild tone of demand. Paul's couching of δεόμεθα with the prepositional phrase ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, in behalf of Christ, shifts the emphasis back to the initial declaration in # 108 to the role of ambassadors for himself and his associates. But the greater forcefulness is retained.

Paul's assertion of pleading with the Corinthians to be reconciled to God comes not from within himself or from some personal authority that he possessed. Instead, the authority behind the plea is God Himself speaking through the apostle, as v. 10a makes clear: Ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ οὖν πρεσβεύομεν ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι' ἡμῶν, therefore in behalf of Christ we 'ambassadorize' as God exhorting through us. Only Paul uses πρεσβεύω and then just here and in Eph. 6:20. The core idea is to define actions of an individual commissioned to represent some authority.¹³⁹ Usually

¹³⁹ In line with the basic sense of πρέσβυς (→ 652, 10 ff.) πρεσβεύω can mean 'to be the older or the eldest' (most with gen. comp.), Soph. Oed. Col., 1422; Plat. Leg., XII, 951e etc.; 'to occupy the first place' Soph. Ant., 720 or trans. 'to honour (someone or something) very highly,' Aesch. Eum., 1; Choeph., 488; Plat. Symp., 186b etc. Then in line with the special sense of πρέσβυς for 'one who is sent' (→ 683, 18 ff.) 'to be or to act as one who is sent,' 'to bring a message,' 'to negotiate' etc. In this political-legal sense πρεσβεύω is also common in the med. (corresponding to πρεσβευτής), Hdt., Thuc., Xen., Aristoph., Plat., inscr., pap., Philo, Jos. etc. The ambassador legally represents the political authority which sends him; his competence is acc. to its constitution. Athens had πρέσβεις ἀτοκράτορες who were entrusted with some freedom of action in detail but not with full authority to conclude treaties.¹ In the Rom. period πρεσβευτής is the Gk. equivalent of *lega-*

in the secular world of that day πρεσβεύω meant to communicate a message from either the emperor or high ranking officer in the Roman army. Other actions might be possible in certain situations, but dominantly the 'ambassador' was to communicate the ideas and

tus, Polyb., 35, 4. 5; Plut. Mar., 7, 1 (1, 409a), etc.² It is commonly used for the imperial legates.³ In the private sphere, too, the agent of another can be called πρεσβευτής, though not in the sense of a *tt.* [terminus technicus] for legally necessary or proxy representation. The one who gives the authority or commission is often introduced by ὑπέρ, e.g., Demosth. Or., 45, 64 (of a friend commissioned to negotiate): καὶ ὑπὲρ τούτου (Phormion) πρεσβευτής μὲν ᾧχετ' εἰς βυζάντιον πλέων, ἤνικ' ἐκεῖνοι τὰ πλοῖα τὰ τούτου κατέσχον ... For πρεσβεύω ὑπέρ τινος cf. also Ditt. Or., I, 339, 6; Syll.3, II, 656, 19; 805, 6; P. Lond., III, 1178, 14; P. Lips., 35, 12. In a transf. sense πρεσβεύω can be used gen. with acc. rei for 'to represent something.' Epict. Diss., IV, 8, 10; Luc. Piscator, 23; Gal. De bonis et malis suis, 1, 10 (CMG, V, 4, 2, P. 391, 18), etc.

"2. An important pt. for primitive Chr. usage is that the idea of the envoy is found fig. in the religious sphere. Thus πρεσβευτής is used for God's emissaries in Philo: for angels who deliver God's message to men (Abr., 115) and who represent men before God (Gig., 16), also for the mediatorial ministry of Moses (as ἀρχάγγελος and πρεσβύτατος λόγος): ὁ δ' αὐτὸς ἰκέτης μὲν ἐστὶ τοῦ θνητοῦ κηραίνοντος αἰεὶ πρὸς τὸ ἄφθαρτον, πρεσβευτής δὲ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος πρὸς τὸ ὑπήκοον, *Ret. Div. Her.*, 205. In particular the concept of the ambassador plays a dominant role in Gnostic texts to denote the heavenly origin and revelatory task of the Redeemer.⁴ though πρεσβευτής and πρεσβεύω are seldom used; cf. the Redeemer as ὁ πρεσβευτής ὁ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕψους ἀποσταλείς in *Act. Thom.*, 10; ἐλθὲ ὁ πρεσβευτής τῶν πέντε μελῶν,⁵ *ibid.*, 27, cf. 85. πρεσβευτής is a stock term for heavenly envoys in Manichaean texts,⁶ also for Mani himself and for those who proclaim Manichaean teaching.⁷ The wandering Stoic-Cynic teachers of the Hell. period are also shown with the halo of a messenger and herald of God, → I, 408 ff.; III, 693, 2 ff.⁸ In early Christianity, too, πρεσβευτής is used for the messenger of God. Thus *Ign. Phld.*, 10, 1 asks the church to choose a διάκονος and to send him to Antioch εἰς τὸ πρεσβεῦσαι ἐκεῖ θεοῦ πρεσβεῖαν, cf. also *Ign. Sm.*, 11, 2: χειροτονῆσαι ... θεοπρεσβευτήν. The message which they have to pass on to the church in God's service is thereby said to be divinely authorised and inspired. In this usage it is everywhere evident that πρεσβευτής is not a title but denotes a specific function. This consists simply in the delivery of a divine message; there is no ref. to the other duties of an envoy (in the secular political sense), e.g., negotiation with other parties, reporting to the sending authority etc., nor to his protection or legal status.⁹"

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:681–682.]



demands of a higher authority than the ambassador himself.¹⁴⁰ That the term is also connected to πρεσβύτερος carried subtle tones of anticipated respect being given to the ambassador as one authorized to speak for the higher authority.¹⁴¹ Paul asserts this in two ways here: 1) Ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ and 2) ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι' ἡμῶν.¹⁴² The prepositional phrase ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, repeated again in the following assertion of v. 20b (# 109) typically denoted the one having commissioned the ambassador. That calling to Paul came directly from Christ. The ultimate authority, however, is indicated in the adverbial comparative participle phrase where Paul's speaking is seen as God urging the Corinthians rather just as Paul speaking. A deeper dynamic was present beyond just human words being spoken. For the Corinthians to reject the apostle's words meant they were rejecting what God was trying to say to them through the apostle. Although his opponents at Corinth may have viewed the issue as disagreement with the words of the man Paul, in reality the issue was a rejection of God's way for them.

The heart of the message delivered by these ambassadors of Christ to the Corinthians is summarized in the imperative καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ, *be reconciled to God*. Here Paul reaches back to vv. 16 in amplification of the dramatic change of perspective he experienced in his conversion. Now he saw all people as at odds with God and desperately needing to be reconciled to God. And as depicted in vv. 17-18, this becomes possible only in Christ.

How Christ becomes the vehicle of reconciliation described in vv. 17-18 is now stated in v. 21 (# 110): τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ. *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*. This One who did not experience sin at all in His life (τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν) was turned into sin (ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν). Paul alludes to the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross in this statement with profound insight into the meaning of Calvary. In a mysterious action Christ turned into sin on

¹⁴⁰One should recognize the close affinity between πρεσβεύω as used by Paul and the much more common ἀποστέλλω. The two verbs are roughly interchangeable in Paul's usage.

¹⁴¹πρεσβεύω is a part of the word group πρέσβυς, πρεσβύτερος, πρεσβύτερης, συμπρεσβύτερος, πρεσβυτέριον, πρεσβεύω* [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:651.]

¹⁴²It would be wrong to inject issues of divine inspiration into the phrase ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι' ἡμῶν as defining the parameters of πρεσβεύομεν. What Paul claims here is divine authorization to speak the words of God as he understood them. He in no way claims to be under divine inspiration while speaking these words. The Damascus road encounter with and the calling of Christ to Paul stands in the background here.

the cross as He died for us the sinner (ὕπερ ἡμῶν). The objective of this wonderful action is ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ. *so that we might become God's righteousness in Him*. By our own abilities we can never ever achieve the purity of God, which is essential to stand in His presence throughout eternity. But in this marvelous action of Christ on the cross not just our sins are removed but much more importantly a process is begun that Paul describes in vv. 17-18. εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινὰ. . . *when one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away and indeed everything has become new*. . . . How is such possible? It is because of Christ. His death on the cross enables this transformation to take place. A spiritual dynamic was expressed that day far beyond the tragic death of a genuinely good man. The sacrificial system in the Jewish temple anticipated this but few far short of achieving such a transformation. Just how all this worked stands a mystery hidden from our full understanding. But we are called upon to both experience this transforming presence of the risen Christ and then to celebrate and proclaim it to the entire world. As Paul will later put it to the Colossians, τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τοῦ μυστηρίου τούτου ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ὃ ἐστὶν Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς δόξης, *the riches of the divine presence, this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the expectation of the divine presence* (Col. 1:27b).

The expression δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is sometimes translated 'righteousness before God' but the contextual sense here clearly is that God's own character of purity is transferred into our lives as we stand in union with Christ. This is both a beginning in conversion, a process to be worked out in obedient commitment to Christ, and a glorious final transformation in the resurrection at the end of time. It is a package, not a one time event. This is packed into the verb γενώμεθα as it envisions this righteous purity of God transforming our life and our living in anticipation of standing before God as believers in final judgment (cf. 5:10).

10.2.3.1.8.2 Avoiding stumbling blocks, 6:1-13

6.1 Συνεργοῦντες δὲ καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν μὴ εἰς κενὸν τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ δέξασθαι ὑμᾶς· 2 λέγει γάρ·

καιρῷ δεκτῷ ἐπήκουσά σου

καὶ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σωτηρίας ἐβοήθησά σοι.

ἰδοὺ νῦν καιρὸς εὐπρόσδεκτος, ἰδοὺ νῦν ἡμέρα σωτηρίας. 3 Μηδεμίαν ἐν μηδενὶ διδόντες προσκοπήν, ἵνα μὴ μωμηθῇ ἡ διακονία, 4 ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ συνιστάντες ἑαυτοὺς ὡς θεοῦ διάκονοι, ἐν ὑπομονῇ πολλῇ, ἐν θλίψεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν στενοχωρίαις, 5 ἐν πληγαῖς, ἐν φυλακαῖς, ἐν ἀκαταστασίαις, ἐν κόποις, ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις, ἐν νηστείαις, 6 ἐν ἀγνόητι, ἐν γνώσει, ἐν μακροθυμίᾳ, ἐν χρηστότητι, ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ,

έν ἀγάπῃ ἀνυποκρίτῳ, 7 ἐν λόγῳ ἀληθείας, ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ· διὰ τῶν ὄπλων τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῶν δεξιῶν καὶ ἀριστερῶν, 8 διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀτιμίας, διὰ δυσφημίας καὶ εὐφημίας· ὡς πλάνοι καὶ ἀληθεῖς, 9 ὡς ἀγνοοῦμενοι καὶ ἐπιγινωσκόμενοι, ὡς ἀποθνήσκοντες καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶμεν, ὡς παιδεύόμενοι καὶ μὴ θανατούμενοι, 10 ὡς λυπούμενοι ἀεὶ δὲ χαίροντες, ὡς πτωχοὶ πολλοὺς δὲ πλουτίζοντες, ὡς μηδὲν ἔχοντες καὶ πάντα κατέχοντες.

11 Τὸ στόμα ἡμῶν ἀνέφωγεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, Κορίνθιοι, ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν πεπλάτυνται· 12 οὐ στενοχωρεῖσθε ἐν ἡμῖν, στενοχωρεῖσθε δὲ ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχθοις ὑμῶν· 13 τὴν δὲ αὐτὴν ἀντιμισθίαν, ὡς τέκνοις λέγω, πλατύνθητε καὶ ὑμεῖς.

6.1 As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 2 For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you."

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! 3 We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, 4 but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; 6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, 7 truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8 in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors,

6.1 δὲ
Συνεργοῦντες
καὶ
111 παρακαλοῦμεν
εἰς κενὸν
μὴ...τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ δεξασθαι ὑμᾶς·
6.2 γάρ
112 λέγει
καὶ ῥῶ δεκτῶ
ἐπήκουσά σου
καὶ
ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σωτηρίας
b ἐβοήθησά σοι.
ἰδοὺ
νῦν
113 (ἐστίν) καιρὸς εὐπρόσδεκτος,
ἰδοὺ
νῦν
114 (ἐστίν) ἡμέρα σωτηρίας.
6.3 ἐν μηδενὶ
Μηδεμίαν...διδόντες προσκοπήν,
ἵνα μὴ μωμηθῇ ἡ διακονία,
6.4 ἄλλ'
ἐν παντὶ
συνιστάντες ἑαυτοὺς
ὡς θεοῦ διάκονοι,
ἐν ὑπομονῇ πολλῇ,
ἐν θλίψεσιν,
ἐν ἀνάγκαις,
ἐν στενοχωρίαις,
6.5 ἐν πληγαῖς,
ἐν φυλακαῖς,
ἐν ἀκαταστασίαις,
ἐν κόποις,
ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις,
ἐν νηστείαις,
6.6 ἐν ἀγνότητι,
ἐν γνώσει,
ἐν μακροθυμίᾳ,
ἐν χρηστότητι,
ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ,
ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἀνυποκρίτῳ,
6.7 ἐν λόγῳ ἀληθείας,
ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ·
διὰ τῶν ὄπλων τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῶν δεξιῶν καὶ ἀριστερῶν,
6.8 διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀτιμίας,
διὰ δυσφημίας καὶ εὐφημίας·
ὡς πλάνοι καὶ ἀληθεῖς,
6.9 ὡς ἀγνοοῦμενοι καὶ ἐπιγινωσκόμενοι,
ὡς ἀποθνήσκοντες
καὶ
ἰδοὺ
115 ζῶμεν,
ὡς παιδεύόμενοι καὶ μὴ θανατούμενοι,
6.10 ὡς λυπούμενοι
δὲ
ἀεὶ χαίροντες,

and yet are true; 9 as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

11 We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. 12 There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. 13 In return—I speak as to children—open wide your hearts also.

The syntax of this pericope is distinct and somewhat complex. The diagrams below will illustrate this clearly. Clearly the text divides itself naturally into two distinct sections, vv. 1-10 and 11-13. In the first section, the apostle develops something of a long virtue list in affirming the character and defining traits of the ministry he and his associates follow. Flowing out of the initial admonition (# 111), these stand as examples of how to allow the grace of God to flow into one's life and service to Christ. In the second set of short, pointed appeals (#s 115-119) in vv. 11-13, the apostle reaches out to the Corinthians generally in passionate urging of them to eliminate any barriers of communication between them and his group of leaders. This would indeed mean that God's grace has taken hold of their lives and is guiding their attitudes and relationships.

With the unifying theme of reconciliation, both vertical and horizontal, this completes the larger unit of the ministry of reconciliation that begins in 5:11 and continues through 6:13. In this the apostle underscores that his and his associates' calling to ministry gives major emphasis to reconciling people to God and then inside the community of believers to one another. This latter aspect the Greek heritage of most of the Corinthians would affirm the critical value of community and its functioning in unity. Their society was comprised of small 'communities' as ἐκκλησιαί built around social, sports, religious, governmental, and other civic cores. One's identity was largely determined by participation in these groups. Through these communities came a networking that provided mutual help, encouragement, and camaraderie. Community the Corinthians understood and valued. But the very different way a Christian community was to be structured and how it was to function under God's leadership was not well understood by most of the Corinthians. Far too many wanted church to work just like the other communities they belonged to. That is, basically top down leadership, reasonably well defined rules and regulations governing the life of the community, and clearly defined 'pecking orders' for the participants. These among other patterns were the commonly accepted ways such communities operated. The Christian community tended to reverse or nullify virtually every aspect of the other communities in in first century Corinth. Adjusting to such drastic change

ὡς πτωχοὶ
δὲ
πολλοὺς πλουτίζοντες,
ὡς μηδὲν ἔχοντες
καὶ
πάντα κατέχοντες.

posed big challenges to many of the Corinthian house church groups.

The idea of reconciliation loomed large over the needs of the Corinthians. At its core was respect for God as the central and exclusive authority and mutual respect toward one another as standing all on the same level of submission to God's exclusive authority. The Platonic background to everyone having a distinct στάσις in a hugely varied tier of importance had to be ditched completely inside the Christian community. There were leaders to be sure, but the leaders were servant leaders and not bosses. Reconciliation, meaning mutual acceptance of one another as equals before God, came only through the powerful influence of divine grace operating inside the community. Paul's appeal of the Corinthians to accept him and his associates came out of this background, and must be understood properly against it. Paul wanted no power over the Corinthians. Rather he sought their acknowledgment of the working of God's grace in the ministry of his associates and himself. If the Corinthians could see and accept this, they could then work together harmoniously with one another in promoting the Gospel to the lost of Corinth.

10.2.3.1.8.2.1 First set of appeals, 6:1-10

6.1 Συνεργοῦντες δὲ καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν μὴ εἰς κενὸν τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ δέξασθαι ὑμᾶς· 2 λέγει γὰρ·
*καιρῷ δεκτῷ ἐπήκουσά σου
καὶ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σωτηρίας ἐβοήθησά σοι.*

ἰδοὺ νῦν καιρὸς εὐπρόσδεκτος, ἰδοὺ νῦν ἡμέρα σωτηρίας. 3 Μηδεμίαν ἐν μηδενὶ διδόντες προσκοπήν, ἵνα μὴ μωμηθῇ ἡ διακονία, 4 ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ συνιστάντες ἑαυτοὺς ὡς θεοῦ διάκονοι, ἐν ὑπομονῇ πολλῇ, ἐν θλίψεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν στενοχωρίαις, 5 ἐν πληγαῖς, ἐν φυλακαῖς, ἐν ἀκαταστασίαις, ἐν κόποις, ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις, ἐν νηστείαις, 6 ἐν ἀγνότητι, ἐν γνώσει, ἐν μακροθυμίᾳ, ἐν χρηστότητι, ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ, ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἀνυποκρίτῳ, 7 ἐν λόγῳ ἀληθείας, ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ· διὰ τῶν ὄπλων τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῶν δεξιῶν καὶ ἀριστερῶν, 8 διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀτιμίας, διὰ δυσφημίας καὶ εὐφημίας· ὡς πλάνοι καὶ ἀληθεῖς, 9 ὡς ἀγνωστοὶ καὶ ἐπιγινωσκόμενοι, ὡς ἀποθνήσκοντες καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶμεν, ὡς παιδευόμενοι καὶ μὴ θανατούμενοι, 10 ὡς λυπούμενοι ἀεὶ δὲ χαίροντες, ὡς πτωχοὶ πολλοὺς δὲ πλουτίζοντες, ὡς μηδὲν ἔχοντες καὶ πάντα κατέχοντες.

6.1 As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 2 For he says,

"At an acceptable time I have listened to you,



and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! 3 We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, 4 but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; 6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, 7 truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8 in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; 9 as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

The anchor point of vv. 1-10 is the initial statement in v. 1 (# 111): Συνεργοῦντες δὲ καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν μὴ εἰς κενὸν τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ δέξασθαι ὑμᾶς, *And while working together we also exhort (you) to not receive the grace of God in vain.* The participle form from συνεργέω at the beginning signals a cooperative effort in ministry. Likely the implicit partner in this work is God or Christ, as is reflected in the NRSV translation “we work together with him.” This would reach back to θεοῦ or αὐτῷ in the preceding verse of 5:21. The participle summarizes in one word the heart of ministry as depicted in vv. 16-21. This its being positioned at the beginning of the statement in v. 1 ties what Paul goes on to say with what he has just said as a κεφαλή header link between the two units of material.

Thus the admonition καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν, *we indeed urge*, represents a cooperative effort of both Paul and Christ to the Corinthians. The content is spelled out in the infinitive phrase which serves as an indirect command in this kind of construction: μὴ εἰς κενὸν τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ δέξασθαι ὑμᾶς, *to not receive in vain the grace of God.* The double negative of μὴ and εἰς κενὸν sets up the idea of receiving God’s grace in a way where it makes no impact upon how one lives. Probably, although not without some uncertainty, the aorist infinitive δέξασθαι implies a prior reception of God’s grace in conversion. What the apostle here underscores is that God’s grace is in no way passive or merely connected to conversion. To the contrary, the grace of God is a powerful, life changing spiritual dynamic that immediately goes to work changing the individual as it enters his / her life (cf. Eph. 2:8-10).¹⁴³ But the apostle is not seeing significant evidence of this happening in the lives of at least some of the Corinthians as signaled by

¹⁴³The two phrases ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου and ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ are relatively common expressions especially inside Second Corinthians, as reflected in most of the 18 uses of χάρις in the letter. It stands as a significant foundational theme in Paul’s preaching of the apostolic Gospel.

their behavior and attitudes.¹⁴⁴ The life changing grace of God was being hindered by the lack of obedience to Christ at Corinth. Thus the apostle stresses that this appeal to them comes not just from him but also from God Himself. The Corinthians dare not ignore it.

The defense of this admonition in v. 1 begins in verse two with an OT scripture reference from Isa. 49:8 in the LXX:

8 οὕτως λέγει κύριος *Καιρῷ δεκτῷ ἐπήκουσά σου καὶ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σωτηρίας ἐβοήθησά σοι* καὶ ἔδωκά σε εἰς διαθήκην ἐθνῶν τοῦ καταστῆσαι τὴν γῆν καὶ κληρονομήσαι κληρονομίαν ἐρήμου,†

8 Thus says the Lord: *In a time of favor I have answered you, on a day of salvation I have helped you;* I have kept you and given you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages;¹⁴⁵

The apostle sees the messianic tones in this Servant Song in Isaiah 49 and uses relevant parts of it to admonish the Corinthians. The anticipated return from

¹⁴⁴“In the Pauline corpus ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ is often simply the apostle’s shorthand for all the benefits of the gospel that are secured by Christ and mediated by the Spirit.²¹⁴ In this context (5:16–21) those blessings are in particular the arrival of the new order with its new attitudes and new life (5:16–17), the receipt of reconciliation with God through the forgiveness of sins (5:18–19), and the acquisition of a right standing before God (5:21). All of this is included in what Paul calls σωτηρία in 6:2. But within the wider context of the letter, ‘the grace of God’ will also refer to the present opportunity that the Corinthians have to become fully reconciled to Paul.²¹⁵ From this perspective 6:1 is in part a preparation for Paul’s entreaty in vv. 11–13 for the Corinthians to throw their hearts wide open to him. With this said, it remains unlikely that he is equating his own ministry at Corinth with ‘the grace of God,’²¹⁶ for τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ stands unqualified (contrast the same expression in 8:1); that is, he did not write τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν εἰς ὑμᾶς δι’ ἡμῶν, ‘God’s grace shown to you by us.’” [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), 457–458.]

¹⁴⁵“Isa. 49:1–13 is the second of the four so-called ‘Servant Songs’²³² in which the circumference of the term ‘Israel’ expands and contracts, sometimes being a corporate reference to the whole nation or to the faithful remnant within the nation, and sometimes being an individual reference to the Messiah as ideal Israel. In Isaiah 49 Yahweh’s servant cannot be the nation as a whole, for ‘my servant, Israel’ (v. 3) has the task of restoring Israel (vv. 5–6, 8). In its original context v. 8a contains Yahweh’s promise to his servant (σου ... σοι) of answered prayer and personal support ‘in the time of my favor’ or ‘in the day of salvation,’ that is, at the time of the nation’s return from their Babylonian exile. In spite of being ‘despised and abhorred’ by the nation (v. 7), the servant would receive ready help (v. 8a) and divine vindication (vv. 7, 8b). He would ultimately be rewarded (v. 4b) by spiritual offspring (cf. 53:10) of both Jews and Gentiles (vv. 5–6).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 460.]



Babylonian exile expressed in the OT text is seen as also anticipating the salvation to be discovered in Jesus Christ as the divinely appointed Messiah. In the larger Servant Song (49:1-13) signal emerge suggesting that the use here of this messianic text was seen as foundational to Paul's own preaching of the Gospel, and in particular to the Corinthians themselves.¹⁴⁶

One should note that Paul does something in the Greek expression that cannot be preserved in translation. The infinitive δέξασθαι, **to receive**, plays off the same root stem for the adjective δεκτῶν, **favorable**, in the OT quote and again in the commentary expansion with the adjective εὐπρόσδεκτος, **acceptable**. The Corinthians are urged to not miss the marvelous opportunity of the grace of God, here defined in the OT reference as ἐπήκουσά σου, **I heard you**, and ἐβοήθησά σοι, **I helped you**. God's deliverance of the Israelites from Babylonian captivity was a hugely transforming favor expressed to these people. God's deliverance in Jesus Christ, i.e., ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σωτηρίας, is an equally huge expression of His favor to sinful humanity.

Paul elaborates on this blessing of divine grace in two ways. First, in v. 2b (#s 113-114), he amplifies the extent of this blessing. Then second, in vv. 3-10 (# 115), he stresses that his ministry in no possible way sets up any obstacle causing someone to miss this enormous blessing of divine grace. And that especially includes the Corinthians.

First in v. 2b comes the amplification: ἰδοὺ νῦν καιρὸς εὐπρόσδεκτος, ἰδοὺ νῦν ἡμέρα σωτηρίας, **behold now is the opportune moment for acceptance, behold now is the day of salvation**. Primarily these two exclamations apply the OT quote to the situation of the Corinthians: ἰδοὺ νῦν...; ἰδοὺ νῦν.... The salvation provided in Christ

¹⁴⁶There are three aspects of Paul's ministry that correspond to Isa. 49:1-6.

1. his call, as one set apart before his birth (Gal. 1:15-16)
 - v. 1 "Before I was born the LORD called me"
 - v. 5 "He who formed me in the womb to be his servant"
2. his twofold mission (Acts 9:15; 22:15; 26:17):
 - to Israel
 - v. 5 "to bring Jacob back to Israel ... and gather Israel" (cf. v. 6)
 - to Gentiles
 - v. 6 "I will also make you a light for the Gentiles"
3. certain misgivings about the result of his mission (Gal. 2:2; 4:11; Phil. 2:16; 1 Thess. 3:5)
 - v. 4 "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and to no purpose"

"To judge from these correlations and from other citations of and allusions to the "Servant Songs" in the Pauline epistles²³³ and in sections of Acts that relate to Paul,²³⁴ Paul envisaged his ministry as a continuation of the role of the Servant of Yahweh."

[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), 460.]

is a huge opportunity to welcome enthusiastically, i.e., καιρὸς εὐπρόσδεκτος, the marvelous grace of God into their lives. The deliverance of God in Christ is a deliverance of one's entire life, not just the invisible spiritual side of the individual. Just as those Israelites who returned home from Babylonian captivity had the opportunity to become a transformed people, so also do those who commit themselves to Christ in conversion faith surrender.¹⁴⁷ Paul passionately desires all the Corinthian believers to experience this transformation and to not miss the opportunity that God's grace provides them for this.

Verses 3-10 is a single sentence in the Greek, as is illustrated in statement 115 in the diagram, The core clause is simply καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶμεν, **wow we also live**, in v. 9b. Everything before and after this core declaration modifies it in a variety of very creative ways. In the pre-position before the verb two participle phrases set up qualifications the declaration καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶμεν **we indeed also live**.

The first participle phrase modifier Μηδεμίαν ἐν μηδενὶ διδόντες προσκοπήν, ἵνα μὴ μωμηθῇ ἡ διακονία, also reflects creativity no possible in translation. The negative pronoun Μηδεμίαν as the first word in the phrase is an adjective modifier of προσκοπήν the last word in the core phrase thus setting up clearly defined boundaries with the translation meaning of **absolutely no obstacle**. But in the emphatic pre-position of Μηδεμίαν he can make a dramatic play off of the negative pronoun with Μηδεμίαν ἐν μηδενὶ, **absolutely no in the life of no one**. The participle διδόντες with its direct object προσκοπήν then carries the sense of creating or generating an obstacle with these two forms of the negative pronoun, Μηδεμίαν in the accusative feminine form matching προσκοπήν as a adjective modifier and μηδενὶ as a pure pronoun in the locative masculine form.¹⁴⁸ The emphatic nature of the pronoun is also hard to bring out in translation as well.

The sense then becomes **'we indeed also live while generating absolutely no obstacle to anyone.'** The purpose behind this is the negative ἵνα μὴ clause attached as a modifier to the participle διδόντες. The literal sense of ἵνα μὴ μωμηθῇ ἡ διακονία then becomes **lest our ministry**

¹⁴⁷In this mini-commentary on Isaiah 49 in v. 2b, we catch a glimpse into how Paul approached the Hebrew scriptures as an authority base for his Christian Gospel preaching. His 'application' of the OT text was not based on 'this equals that.' Instead, the hermeneutical principle was simply 'this is parallel to that.' The legitimacy of the original meaning was not denied, as usually required in the 'this equals that' approach. Rather, it was affirmed and similarities of the first event to the later second event are highlighted.

¹⁴⁸The forms used here from μηδεὶς, μηδεμία, μηδέν rather than οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδέν reflect usage with a participle since οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδέν are only used with indicative mood regular verbs in ancient Greek.

may become moronized. The idea is that obstacles in the way of accepting the apostolic Gospel would expose gaps or deficiencies in Paul's ministry. The reception of God's grace can be hindered severely in the preacher of that grace has inconsistencies or sinful behavior existing in his service of Gospel ministry. Paul's claim here is that absolutely none of these things exist in the ministry that he and his associates are carrying out, and in particular ministry to the Corinthians.

Now the role of this first participle phrase in this lengthy sentence becomes clear. It is an emphatic denial that he or any of his associates have compromised their Gospel ministry in any possible way, thus legitimately calling their message into question as evidently had been done by some in the Corinthian community of believers.

The second participle phrase *συνιστάντες ἑαυτοῦς*, [presenting ourselves](#) (vv. 4-9a), is then qualified by numerous evidences in order to substantiate the claim made in the first participle phrase.¹⁴⁹ The grouping of these qualities by the use of the prepositions *ἐν*, *διὰ*, and *ὡς* helps in bundling sets of traits together in this extensive listing.¹⁵⁰ Additionally the beginning sets play off the participle modifying phrase *συνιστάντες ἑαυτοῦς*, [presenting ourselves](#). Also the pre-position of *ἐν παντί*, in

¹⁴⁹“Paul’s elevated style in this section should not be taken as an indication that he is using some preexistent text, whether of his own composition or borrowed (with modifications and additions) from some Stoic source.5 He was not incapable of lofty diction, witness 1 Cor. 13:1–13 or Rom. 8:28–39 or Col. 1:15–20. Certainly, the autobiographical touches are so particularistic in v. 5 and the polemical note so pronounced in vv. 8–10 that we may safely assume that if Paul has incorporated some existing text into his argument at this point, he himself was its composer.” [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), 464–466.]

¹⁵⁰“Within 2 Corinthians there are four ‘catalogues of hardships,’ 4:8–9; 6:4b–10; 11:23b–29; 12:10.1 The ‘tribulation list’ in 6:4b–10 may be analyzed by structure or by content (see P. 465). This analysis shows that the catalogue is sophisticated from the viewpoint of structure and style. Two of the common meanings of *ἐν* and of *διὰ* with the genitive are employed (as it happens, in a chiasmic arrangement, ABBA, circumstances—means—means—circumstances). There are breaks in the repetition to avoid monotony: the qualification of the four nouns in the second set (b) of 1; the absence of a matching or antithetical phrase in 2 (a); the presence of *ἰδοῦ* and *μή* in the second element in 3 (a); the isolation of the final *ὡς ... καί* antithesis and the presence of matching accusatives. Then there are the literary flourishes of anaphora (*ἐν*, 19x; *διὰ*, 3x; *ὡς*, 7x), homoioteleuton (-[ι]αίς in 1[a], -ιας in 2[b], -μενοι in 3[a], assonance and paronomasia (*δυσφημίας-εὐφημίας* in 2[b]; *ἔχοντες-κατέχοντες* in 3[c]), and chiasmus (*δόξης-ἀτιμίας-δυσφημίας-εὐφημίας* in 2[b]).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 464.]

6.3	ἐν μηδενὶ Μηδεμίαν... διδόντες προσκοπήν, ἵνα μὴ μωμηθῆ ἡ διακονία,
6.4	ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ συνιστάντες ἑαυτοῦς ὡς θεοῦ διάκονοι, ἐν ὑπομονῇ πολλῇ, ἐν θλίψεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν στενοχωρίαις,
6.5	ἐν πληγαῖς, ἐν φυλακαῖς, ἐν ἀκαταστασίαις, ἐν κόποις, ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις, ἐν νηστείαις,
6.6	ἐν ἀγνότητι, ἐν γνώσει, ἐν μακροθυμίᾳ, ἐν χρηστότητι, ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ, ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἀνυποκρίτῳ,
6.7	ἐν λόγῳ ἀληθείας, ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ· διὰ τῶν ὀπλων τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῶν δεξιῶν καὶ ἀριστερῶν,
6.8	διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀτιμίας, διὰ δυσφημίας καὶ εὐφημίας· ὡς πλάνοι καὶ ἀληθεῖς,
6.9	ὡς ἀγνωστοί καὶ ἐπιγινωσκόμενοι, ὡς ἀποθνήσκοντες καὶ ἰδοῦ
115	ζῶμεν,
6.10	ὡς παιδευόμενοι καὶ μὴ θανατούμενοι, ὡς λυπούμενοι δὲ ἀεὶ χαίροντες, ὡς πτωχοὶ δὲ πολλοὺς πλουτίζοντες, ὡς μηδὲν ἔχοντες καὶ πάντα κατέχοντες.

every way, stands as an inclusive header which is then spelled out in the series of modifiers introduced by *ἐν*, *διὰ*, and *ὡς*. Thus the content of the all inclusive claim *ἐν παντί* in front of the core participle phrase is spelled out in detail by the series of prepositional phrases (vv. 4c-9a) following the core expression *συνιστάντες ἑαυτοῦς* as adverbial modifiers as well. This kind of pattern is very common through ancient Greek, in both the classical and the Koine forms.

The core idea of *συνιστάντες ἑαυτοῦς* is [standing ourselves alongside points of comparison](#). The literal meaning of *συνίστημι* / *συνιστάνω* as a transitive verb is [to stand something together with something else](#). Thus the phrase *συνιστάντες ἑαυτοῦς* contextually takes on the sense of [presenting ourselves for comparison and evaluation in specific areas and aspects of our living](#).

In these specific evidences, another organizing feature clear in the Greek expression but usually obscured in translation is the role of the first post modifier ὡς θεοῦ διάκονοι. The comparative function of ὡς defines the basic point of evaluation to be made of Paul and his associates: **presenting ourselves as God's servants**. That they generated no obstacle for anyone accepting their Gospel message can be substantiated by examining how they functioned ὡς θεοῦ διάκονοι, **as God's servants**. Don't overlook the link of διάκονοι, **servants**, to ἡ διακονία, **ministry**. Being a διάκονος, **servant**, means διακονία, **service**. Remember also the first century social meaning of both these terms from the same root in designating the house slaves responsible for preparing and serving the food to the entire household. The social image of a slave serving nourishing food to the members of a household provided a rich image for God's servants serving healthy spiritual nourishment to the members of God's household, i.e., the communities of believers.

Places of evidence for genuineness (vv. 4c-7a). The preposition ἐν identifies areas to check to see whether these men are θεοῦ διάκονοι, **God's servants**, or not. Remember that Paul is urging the Corinthians to check these areas to determine his genuineness as a servant of God. In all likelihood standing somewhat behind all these is the assumption that when the Corinthians did the same checking of Paul's critics in the church they would make a different discovery regarding genuineness.

The first listings with ἐν, life experiences (vv. 4c-5): ἐν ὑπομονῇ πολλῇ, ἐν θλίψεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν στενοχωρίαις, 5 ἐν πληγαῖς, ἐν φυλακαῖς, ἐν ἀκαταστασίαις, ἐν κόποις, ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις, ἐν νηστείαις, **in great endurance, in persecutions, in hardships, in calamities, 5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in hard labors, in sleepless nights, in times of severe hunger**. Note the uniform plural form used here, except for the initial ἐν ὑπομονῇ πολλῇ which functions as an introductory header for the following nine plural forms defining life situations. These life experiences could reflect clearly on the genuineness of one's claim to being a servant of God. Notice the broadness of the first three plural form phrases in v. 4c that define opposition from others. The first three phrases in v. 5a allude especially to violence against the individual. The last four in v. 5b allude to difficulties in serving. In all of these Paul claims ἐν ὑπομονῇ πολλῇ, **with much endurance**.

The second listings with ἐν, character traits, (v. 6): ἐν ἀγνότητι, ἐν γνώσει, ἐν μακροθυμίᾳ, ἐν χρηστότητι, ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ, ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἀνυποκρίτῳ, **in purity, in understanding, in patience, in gentleness, in the holiness of spirit, in unhyprocritical love**. The shift from the plural forms in vv. 4b-5 to the singular forms in vv. 6-7a with ἐν signals a new set of evidences for authentic ministry. True ser-

vanthood in ministry is also an issue of personal character. One must be before doing. Inner virtues demonstrated in outward actions stand as important signals of authentic ministry.

Paul begins with ἐν ἀγνότητι, **in purity**.¹⁵¹ The emphasis is upon pure devotion to God that is not contaminated by various compromises of commitment. Its broad scope stands in some contrast to ἀγίῳ below with a more moral focus where behavior reflects devotion to God. The noun ἀγνότης is only found in the NT at 2 Cor. 6:6 and 11:3.

Then comes ἐν γνώσει, **in understanding**. The knowledge gained through experience signal authenticity as it guides and frames actions in ministry. Proper ministry arises from deep understanding of life and spiritual realities. Clearly from what is reflected in Paul's writings it becomes clear that his ministry reflected deep spiritual understanding.

Thirdly is ἐν μακροθυμίᾳ, **in patience**. Etymologically the noun μακροθυμία comes from μακρός and θυμός with the sense of extended heat / burning. The figurative sense here becomes holding our passions under control over an extended period. The derivative adjective μακρόθυμος, -ον takes this idea and turns the sense into self-control in the face of provocation. Paul's ability to remain calm and self-controlled in the midst of many provocations against him reflects authenticity.

Fourth is ἐν χρηστότητι, **in gentleness**. Playing off of μακροθυμία, χρηστότης stresses kindness and generosity as the controlling posture toward others. This superlative form spelling of χρηστός, **helpfulness**, stresses a strong positive reaction to others who often are negative in their words and actions. How Paul is defending his ministry in Second Corinthians provides as good a commentary as available on this word χρηστότης here.

Fifth comes ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ which is understood in two very different ways. Everything revolves around whether πνεύματι is taken as the human spirit (**in holiness of spirit**) or the divine Spirit (**with the Holy Spirit**).¹⁵²

¹⁵¹“ἐν ἀγνότητι, ‘in purity.’ After listing the many traumas that have overtaken him, Paul again picks up the idea of personal reaction (‘great endurance’ [6:4]) as inward proof of his ministry.⁹⁷⁸ This shift of thought is seen to be ‘a breathing place in the outburst of the apostle’s feeling.’⁹⁷⁹ The appeal to purity (‘innocence’)⁹⁸⁰ carries with it the idea of complete integrity of life⁹⁸¹ as well as moral purity.⁹⁸² Friedrich⁹⁸³ finds an allusion to sexual purity in contrast to the state of the church, which leads Paul to mourn over examples of Corinthian libertinism (see 12:20–21). But it is purity of intention (3:13; 4:2) that is more probable in this context.” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 337.]

¹⁵²“ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ, ‘in the Holy Spirit.’ The inclusion of this phrase has raised questions as to its meaning. Is it to be translated (and understood) as the third person of the Trinity, the Holy

Although it is unusual to insert a reference to the Holy Spirit,

or is it meant to convey the idea of a ‘spirit of holiness’ or even ‘holy zeal’ (le zèle la sainte énergie)?⁹⁹⁶ Moreover, if it is an allusion to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God, why include it in a list of human virtues?

“The problem presented by our second question has led Plummer,⁹⁹⁷ to view ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ as being equal to ‘a spirit that is holy.’ The point is that it seems unlikely that into a list of the qualities of a dedicated Christian life the apostle inserted the mention of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, if Paul meant this phrase to signify the Holy Spirit, then he would have put the title either at the head of the list or at its conclusion for emphasis. Plummer is following this line of thinking because of Paul’s desire to distinguish between a false and a true minister.

“While we agree with Plummer’s last point, it appears that he has overlooked the use of the expression in an identical manner elsewhere (Rom 5:5; 9:1; 14:17; 15:13, 16; 1 Cor 6:19; 12:3; 2 Cor 13:13; 1 Thess 1:5–6; 4:8). That is, in several other places Paul uses πνεῦμα ἅγιον for the ‘Holy Spirit.’ Furthermore, if Paul was concerned to denote a ‘spirit of holiness,’ he could have penned πνεῦμα ἀγιωσύνης (cf. Rom 1:4).⁹⁹⁸ Swete⁹⁹⁹ writes that it is not the person but the gift of the Spirit that is intended by Paul. Swete concludes that Paul is concerned to show ‘the Spirit which is common to all true ministers of God, distinguishing them from false apostles.’ Hence, we find Plummer’s position, though interesting, still unconvincing.¹⁰⁰⁰

“Barrett holds¹⁰⁰¹ a view similar to that of Plummer’s, noting that it is surprising that Paul should include the Holy Spirit in this list. Barrett thus concludes that Paul uses ‘spirit’ in terms of the human spirit, and ‘holy’ in terms of its ethical quality. He bases his findings on Paul’s use of πνεῦμα, ‘spirit,’ as an element of the human makeup (Rom 1:9; 8:16; 11:8; 1 Cor 2:11; 4:21; 5:4–5; 7:34; 14:14, 32; 16:18; 2 Cor 2:13; 7:1, 13; 12:18; Gal 6:1, 18; Phil 4:23; 1 Thess 5:23; Phlm 25). However, he omits an important piece of evidence. In each of these references, the term ἅγιος, ‘holy,’ is missing. Thus, while Paul includes the πνεῦμα, ‘spirit,’ in a descriptive summary of the human spirit, he separates this part of the human makeup from the third person of the Trinity by use of the adjective ‘holy.’ Therefore, we conclude that when Paul writes πνεῦμα ἅγιον, he means or implies a reference to ‘the Holy Spirit,’¹⁰⁰² but with emphasis on the ‘power’ that derives from him.¹⁰⁰³

“But we are still faced with the question of why Paul inserts this reference to the Holy Spirit in the list. There seem to be several good answers that, though only partial in themselves, when taken in toto, present convincing logic. For one, Paul is writing in free style and is not concerned with logical niceties.¹⁰⁰⁴ Next, Paul, who has an excellent ear for words and phrases, starts a series of double terms¹⁰⁰⁵ (see Form/Structure/Setting) and needs this phrase to pair with δύναμις θεοῦ, ‘the power of God,’ and both have a polemical slant.¹⁰⁰⁶ Also, Paul is not apt to divorce the gifts of the Spirit from the Spirit himself.¹⁰⁰⁷ In addition, Paul is listing some of his favorite phrases that demonstrate the work of the Spirit (love, longsuffering, kindness — Gal 5:22–23). Therefore, whether planned or spontaneous, the person of the Holy Spirit fits in (at least in Paul’s mind) with the list of these positive attributes and in fact gives a rationale to that list by showing that divine power-in-the-Spirit matches the apostle’s human weakness, the point under discussion at Corinth.

[Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 338–340.]

it in a listing of human virtues, the similarity of the phrase πνεύματι ἁγίῳ to the many other obvious references to the divine Spirit in Paul’s writings (Rom 5:5; 9:1; 14:17; 15:13, 16; 1 Cor 6:19; 12:3; 2 Cor 13:13; 1 Thess 1:5–6; 4:8) argues strongly for this understanding here, along with the use of πνεῦμα in reference to the human spirit in Paul’s writings never attaching the adjective ἅγιον to the noun (Rom 1:9; 8:16; 11:8; 1 Cor 2:11; 4:21; 5:4–5; 7:34; 14:14, 32; 16:18; 2 Cor 2:13; 7:1, 13; 12:18; Gal 6:1, 18; Phil 4:23; 1 Thess 5:23; Phlm 25).

The evidential point of this reference to the divine Spirit here is to claim the presence and leadership of God’s Spirit in his ministry. The Holy Spirit is strongly associated with character in the life of believers in Paul’s writings, which is the point of the traits listed both immediately before and following this reference. As such in συνιστάντες ἑαυτοὺς ὡς θεοῦ διάκονοι, [presenting ourselves as God’s servants](#), the point is made that the virtues indicated in the list come from the Holy Spirit and are not human accomplishments. Thus they reflect indications of authentic ministry to the Corinthians.

Sixth¹⁵³ is ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἀνυποκρίτῳ, [in unhyprocritical love](#). The double negative here with the adjective from ἀνυπόκριτος, -ον is a strong denial of deception or pretense in Paul’s love for others including the Corinthians. Of course, ἀγάπη stresses the volitional and not the emotional with its meaning of sacrificial commitment. This the apostle had already spelled out in great detail in First Corinthians thirteen to the folks at Corinth.

When taken as a unit these six qualities stress the critical importance of inner character, produced by the Holy Spirit, for Christian ministry. If the servant of God is not of a high quality in character, his / her service to the Gospel will not have the stamp of God’s blessing and approval. Who we are is essential to validating our ministry.

The third listings with ἐν, ministry actions, (v. 7a): ἐν λόγῳ ἀληθείας, ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ, with the Message of truth, with God’s power. Here continues the use of the singular form from the preceding group in v. 6. But the thrust of these two evidences centers on ministry actions rather than character traits. Again as is reflected in [the above block diagram](#), they continue to modify the participle phrase συνιστάντες ἑαυτοὺς ὡς θεοῦ διάκονοι, [presenting ourselves as God’s servants](#) (v. 4a). Additionally, they are a part of the inclusive ἐν παντί, [in all things](#) (v. 4a).

First is ἐν λόγῳ ἀληθείας, [in the message of truth](#). Here a diversity of understandings will surface in both translations and commentaries. They all center around how ἀληθείας is taken. In Greek grammar tones, is [the genitive case form functioning as a descriptive](#)

¹⁵³Perhaps some symbolic significance should be attached to the listing of six traits in this group of evidences of genuineness in ministry. But no clear signal of any particular meaning is present in the listing.



adjective (i.e., truthful speaking) or identity / objective (i.e., message of Truth)? The NRSV reflects the former understanding with 'truthful speech.' But the NLT reflects the latter with 'We faithfully preach the truth.' The earlier phrase in 4:2b, μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ τῇ φανερώσει τῆς ἀληθείας, [refusing to defile the Word of God but instead clearly manifesting the Truth](#), tips the scales here toward the objective genitive understanding of 'message of the Truth.'¹⁵⁴ Paul's claim to authentic ministry is predicated on his preaching the truth of the Gospel, rather than a twisted version like his opponents at Corinth.

One must be exceedingly cautious about the translation word 'Truth.' In the Post Enlightenment western culture, the meaning of truth is radically different than for the biblical use of ἀλήθεια in the NT. John 14:6 is the starting point for ἀλήθεια in Christianity. Post Enlightenment truth has roots in Aristotle but essentially is an abstract idea where two realities exist in harmony with one another. When applied to history, for example, a historical claim is true only when it corresponds to factually established information of human activity. Otherwise it is a false claim. Or at best it stands as possibly being true. In the apostolic Christianity of the NT, ἀλήθεια means something is true only to the extent that it reflects the being and essence of God. If it doesn't reflect God, then it is false.

When Jesus made the claim in Jhn. 14:6, ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωὴ, [I am the Way and the Truth and the Life](#), He claimed to correctly reflect God's being and essence as ἡ ἀλήθεια. His statement is neither a factual one nor an abstract issue. To the contrary, it is a faith issue where one must accept or reject Jesus as reflecting God. This is the foundation of His subsequent statement, οὐδεὶς ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εἰ μὴ δι' ἐμοῦ, [No one comes to the Father except through Me](#). Verse seven continues to elaborate on this with the affirmation that to see Jesus is to see the Heavenly Father for Jesus is the very reflection of God available to

¹⁵⁴Three times Paul uses the expression ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀληθείας (Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:15), once defining it as 'the gospel' (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, exegetical apposition, Eph. 1:13) and once defining the ἀλήθεια as 'the gospel' (τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, exegetical genitive, Col. 1:5). The anarthrous expression ἐν λόγῳ ἀληθείας is not to be distinguished in meaning from the articular ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας, given the canon of Apollonius.⁴⁶ In the present context ἀληθείας could be an attributive genitive, giving to the whole phrase the meaning 'the message characterized by truth,' 'the true message,' or 'truthful speech,'⁴⁷ but in light of the close parallel in 4:2 (τῇ φανερώσει τῆς ἀληθείας, 'by setting forth the truth openly'), λόγος should be given a verbal sense, with ἀληθείας construed as an objective genitive, 'by declaring the truth' (NEB, REB).⁴⁸ As in Col. 1:5; 2 Thess. 2:12 the 'truth' is to be identified with the gospel." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 476.]

folks on earth.

For Paul and the other apostles, Jesus as reflecting God is the center of the apostolic Gospel they preached. Everything in that message flows out of this core reality. Thus the preaching ministry of Paul and his associates is authentic because it correctly identifies Jesus as the reflection of God in His will and way for humanity. The Gospel is not a factual message in the modern sense. Instead, it is a message asserting who Jesus is and demanding one's commitment to Jesus. Truth comes into the picture only to the extent that the message accurately portrays who Jesus is against the standard of God's being and character.

Paul's opponents at Corinth did not understand this and consequently mixed foreign elements from their cultural world into the message about Jesus. From the early chapters of First Corinthians, it reflected Greek philosophical thinking in first century Corinth more than it did the divine revelation given to the apostles and Paul.

Closely connected then to his preaching of the Gospel is also ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ, [in God's power](#). In presenting himself and his associates as God's servants, the validation of this is in part from the clear demonstration of God's power in this ministry of preaching.¹⁵⁵ Moderns often ask Where does one observe God's power in the ministry of one serving God? The misleading answer usually focuses attention on the eloquence of the preacher (cf. 1 Cor. 2:3-5:1; 1 Thess. 2:13). Or on how many converts he generates through his preaching. Or on some other purely human element linked to the preacher. All of these have utterly no connection to God's power at all!

The power of God, especially in preaching, centers on the listener, not on the preacher. It is visible in true conversion to Christ as God's provided Savior and Redeemer. When the listener 'sees' Jesus clearly as God in preaching, the convicting work of the Holy Spirit produces true conversion to Christ. Here is demonstration of δυνάμει θεοῦ. This Paul sees as vindication of his ministry to the Corinthians. The true believers at

¹⁵⁵That what Paul is preaching is more than human speech is seen in this phrase.¹⁰¹⁵ The genuineness of Paul's message and person is made apparent by the power manifested in his preaching and experienced by his Corinthian listeners.¹⁰¹⁶ Paul's convincing manner was due not to his own eloquence but to God's power (1 Cor 2:3-5; 1 Thess 2:13). And this was displayed best in his ability to serve with patience and strength in spite of trying circumstances ('power experienced becomes power communicated').¹⁰¹⁷ The context here needs to be borne in mind when we come to 12:12 and ask what the 'signs of an apostle' really consist in, given Paul's self-confessed frailty and finitude." [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 340.]



Corinth who responded to his preaching of the Gospel are themselves the correct reflection of God's power in Paul's ministry.

The listings with διὰ, ups and downs in ministry (vv. 7b-8a): διὰ τῶν ὀπλων τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῶν δεξιῶν καὶ ἀριστερῶν, διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀτιμίας, διὰ δυσφημίας καὶ εὐφημίας, through the weapons of righteousness for the right hands and for the left hands, through glory and dishonor; through disrepute and good repute.

6.8 διὰ τῶν ὀπλων τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῶν δεξιῶν καὶ ἀριστερῶν,
διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀτιμίας,
διὰ δυσφημίας καὶ εὐφημίας

This grouping is characterized by the use of the preposition διὰ rather than ἐν.¹⁵⁶ The three prepositional phrases used here are also paired by opposites τῶν δεξιῶν καὶ ἀριστερῶν; δόξης καὶ ἀτιμίας; and δυσφημίας καὶ εὐφημίας. The first set are inclusive while the two following sets are more specific. But all three sets have the positive followed by negative sequence (+/-).

These three sets play off a military image (τῶν ὀπλων, with the weapons), which the apostle occasionally appeals to (cf. 10:4; 1 Thess. 5:8; cf. Eph. 6:13-17). There is a Greek military background present here as well, thus making it easier for the Corinthians to understand.¹⁵⁷ In the earlier mention of conflict and confrontation behind most of the sets with ἐν above naturally leads to the military image here. Paul's weapons for these kinds of hostile situations are τῶν ὀπλων τῆς δικαιοσύνης, with

¹⁵⁶“The third section, verses 7b-8a, is clearly defined in the Greek by a change of preposition (note the English ‘with’) but is not so clearly marked out by content. Paul employs the metaphor of armor regularly (e.g., 10:4; 1 Thess. 5:8; cf. Eph. 6:13-17). Here he is probably indicating through ‘right’ and ‘left’ that he is equipped both for the good and the ill that may come to him (in Greek, as in most languages, right and left are used of good and bad fortune). Whatever befalls Paul, honor, dishonor, good repute, ill repute, he has weapons for attack (a sword held in the right hand) and for defense (a shield in the left). ‘Honor, dishonor,’ and the like represent the opinions others have of Paul. Some have stood by him, but there have been those who have been extremely critical. Whatever they say, he will endure.” [Ernest Best, *Second Corinthians*, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Atlanta, GA: J. Knox Press, 1987), 62.]

¹⁵⁷“Conflicts suggest the need for **weapons**. In his encounters with opposition forces Paul's weapons are forged out of **righteousness**, one of his favorite terms and one of the cardinal virtues in both Greek and Roman society. The topic of uprightness is a major feature in Plato's dialogues. And to be committed in a just cause was every good Roman's dream. The term is standard in descriptions of ancient public-spirited persons, who are praised for their just and equitable conduct. The fact that the weapons are **for the right hand and for the left** suggests that uprightness is applicable to every situation, and Paul features it in all his personal relations. He does not cater to one at the expense of another.” [Frederick W. Danker, *II Corinthians*, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1989), 92-93.]

the weapons drawn from righteousness. Warfare itself is inherently evil, so Paul engages opponents with skills etc. that come out of God's righteous character. For him then to encounter an opponent to his ministry functions on a different level. Its not an issue of winners and losers, nor of destroying one's opponent. Rather it is a matter of how to encounter someone outside God's will in a manner consistent with God's holy character.

The genitive of advantage function of the two adjectives linked together by the common article, τῶν δεξιῶν καὶ ἀριστερῶν, for the right hands and for the left hands, most likely alludes to the soldier's use of a sword in the right hand and a shield in the left hand.¹⁵⁸ Either for offense or defense the apostle is fully prepared to meet the opposition and stand his ground in the apostolic Gospel. One should be highly reluctant to try to identify specific weapons from the metaphor here. Such misguided efforts immediately push the central point of the metaphor to the side lines if not out of the picture completely. Rather, Paul's point is to stress full preparation to encounter anyone in opposition to the apostolic Gospel. And this readiness comes from God's righteousness which stands as the source of his preparation, not in the skills of eloquent rhetoric in either speaking or writing, or anything else on the human side. Everything is from God and about God through Christ.

The second and third pairs then in v. 8a, διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀτιμίας, διὰ δυσφημίας καὶ εὐφημίας, stand essentially in parallel to one another, and extend the military metaphor. Both δόξα, praise, and εὐφημία, good repute, on one side are offset by their opposites, ἀτιμία dishonor, and δυσφημία, disrepute. Note the chiasmic AB//B'A' sequence here in the listing δόξης / ἀτιμίας // δυσφημίας

¹⁵⁸“But what are these weapons provided by God? It is unlikely that they are to be identified as virtues already mentioned in v. 6a or as any or all of the items in the tetrad of vv. 6b-7a.⁵⁷ Probably the answer is to be found in the phrase that qualifies τῶν ὀπλων, namely τῶν δεξιῶν καὶ ἀριστερῶν. A ὄπλον δεξιόν is a weapon used in the right hand and a ὄπλον ἀριστερόν is a weapon used in the left, so that τὰ ὄπλα τὰ δεξιὰ καὶ ἀριστερά will refer to weapons, presumably two in number,⁵⁸ one for the right hand, another for the left. The sword in the right hand (cf. Eph. 6:17) is used for offense, the shield in the left (cf. Eph. 6:16) for defense.⁵⁹ We should not, however, take the next step and identify the sword as ἡ μάχαιρα τοῦ πνεύματος and the shield as ὁ θυρεὸς τῆς πίστεως as in Ephesians 6, for that degree of specificity lies beyond the time of 2 Corinthians. But some commentators find in the qualification τῶν δεξιῶν καὶ ἀριστερῶν simply a reference to Paul's readiness to repel an attack from any quarter (Hughes 231) or “the completeness of the equipment provided by God” (Barrett 188).⁶⁰ [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), 477-478.]

/εὐφημίας (+/- // -/+).¹⁵⁹ This ties the two pairs closely together in meaning.¹⁶⁰ Every Roman soldier sought passionately the positive side and complete avoidance of the negative aspects. But Paul asserts that he is fully prepared to handle successfully both the positive and the negative that come at him. He sees through phony praise -- or even sincere praise -- and is unmoved by slanderous criticism. Neither will shake his commitment to the principles of the apostolic Gospel that is the center of his ministry. Thus the chiasmus here stresses strongly the readiness of the apostle to meet any kind of challenge, no matter what it may be. This full preparation therefore signals authenticity in ministry, in that these three preposi-

¹⁵⁹“The words *honor, dishonor, ill repute,* and *good repute* form a stylistic construction known as chiasmus. In such a construction the two center words are paired together, and the two outer words are paired together in the form a-b-b’-a’. In both cases the paired words are basically synonyms. In some languages it may be more natural to put the positive element first in each of the two pairs, but in others the negative element may come first in each case. Naturalness in the receptor language should be the determining factor in the arrangement of these four expressions.” [Roger L. Omanson and John Ellington, *A Handbook on Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 114–115.]

¹⁶⁰“*In honor and dishonor:* the word translated as honor is the Greek word often translated as ‘glory’ (see 1:20 and 3:7–18). In this context it means ‘in good reputation,’ making it virtually synonymous with the following statement good repute. The term dishonor is elsewhere translated ‘menial’ (Rom 9:21), ‘degrading’ (1 Cor 11:14), ‘shame’ (2 Cor 11:21) and ‘ignoble’ (2 Tim 2:20). This noun is made up of a negative prefix and the stem of a verb meaning ‘honor,’ ‘revere’ or ‘value.’ It seems to refer to the same sort of activities that result in ill repute which follows. Here it may be translated as ‘by shameful treatment’ or ‘someone esteems me, someone else treats me with contempt’ (ItCL).

“*In ill repute and good repute:* the two Greek terms refer to having a bad reputation and a good reputation. The first two pairs of words may be translated ‘sometimes people respect us and sometimes they shame us. Sometimes they mock us and sometimes they praise us.’ This will also solve the problem of translating passive meanings where this is a problem.”

[Roger L. Omanson and John Ellington, *A Handbook on Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 115.]

6.3 ἐν μηδενὶ
Μηδεμίαν...διδόντες προσκοπήν,
ἵνα μὴ μωμηθῆ ἡ διακονία,

6.4 ἄλλ’
ἐν παντὶ
συνιστάντες ἑαυτοὺς
ὡς θεοῦ διάκονοι,
ἐν ὑπομονῇ πολλῇ,
ἐν θλίψεσιν,
ἐν ἀνάγκαις,
ἐν στενοχωρίαις,

6.5 ἐν πληγαῖς,
ἐν φυλακαῖς,
ἐν ἀκαταστασίαις,
ἐν κόποις,
ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις,
ἐν νηστείαις,

6.6 ἐν ἀγνότητι,
ἐν γνώσει,
ἐν μακροθυμίᾳ,
ἐν χρηστότητι,
ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ,
ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἀνυποκρίτῳ,

6.7 ἐν λόγῳ ἀληθείας,
ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ·
διὰ τῶν ὀπλῶν τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῶν δεξιῶν καὶ ἀριστερῶν,
6.8 διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀτιμίας,
διὰ δυσφημίας καὶ εὐφημίας·
ὡς πλάνοι καὶ ἀληθεῖς,
6.9 ὡς ἀγνοοῦμενοι καὶ ἐπιγινωσκόμενοι,
ὡς ἀποθνήσκοντες

καὶ
ἰδοὺ

115 ζῶμεν,
ὡς παιδευόμενοι καὶ μὴ θανατούμενοι,
6.10 ὡς λυπούμενοι
δὲ
ἀεὶ χαίροντες,
ὡς πτωχοὶ
δὲ
πολλοὺς πλουτίζοντες,
ὡς μὴδὲν ἔχοντες
καὶ
πάντα κατέχοντες.

tional phrases modify the participle phrase συνιστάντες ἑαυτοὺς ὡς θεοῦ διάκονοι, presenting ourselves as God’s servants (v. 4a). Authentic servants of God should stand fully prepared for anything thrown at them!

The listings with ὡς, extremes in ministry (vv. 8b-10): ὡς πλάνοι καὶ ἀληθεῖς, 9 ὡς ἀγνοοῦμενοι καὶ ἐπιγινωσκόμενοι, ὡς ἀποθνήσκοντες καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶμεν, ὡς παιδευόμενοι καὶ μὴ θανατούμενοι, 10 ὡς λυπούμενοι ἀεὶ δὲ χαίροντες, ὡς πτωχοὶ πολλοὺς δὲ πλουτίζοντες, ὡς μὴδὲν ἔχοντες καὶ πάντα κατέχοντες, as deceivers and as true, as unknown and as fully knowledgeable, as being dead and indeed we live, as being disciplined and not as being killed, as sorrowful but always rejoicing, was poverty stricken but as making many rich, as having nothing and as possessing all things.

The contrasts in these pairs of references cover a wide range of situations. The Greek syntax used here

is complex and not possible to reproduce in modern English. In the diagram on the right this structure is visually set off in the various groupings. In the pair *ὡς ἀποθνήσκοντες καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶμεν*, as being dead and indeed we live, the apostle inserts a finite verb, *ζῶμεν*, rather than the expected participle *ζώνοντες*, so that it serves as the core for the early participles *διδόντες* and *συνιστάντες* to be linked to. At the same time it also serves as the second half of the contrasting pair *ἀποθνήσκοντες καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶμεν*. Further it marks a shift in emphasis found in the sets of pairs.

One of the key translation issues is the handling of *καὶ* in all the pairs except for the second and third sets following *ζῶμεν*, which switch to *δὲ* rather than *καὶ*. Clearly, contrast between each element in the pairs is uniformly the point. The interpretive aspect is whether *καὶ* can assume a contrastive meaning along with *δὲ*, although perhaps not quite as strong as *δὲ*. This leads to the question of how to take the second element in each pair. Contextually a strong argument can be made that the first element assumes a negative view that is offset by a positive element in the second item of the pair.

If this is correct, then the above translation¹⁶¹ should be revised to read, *as deceivers but true, as unknown but fully known, as dead but indeed we live, as sorrowful but always rejoicing, as poverty stricken but making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing everything*. The first element usually represents an accusation while the second element responds with a claim to what is actually the case. On the negative side, the range of activities in the first set in front of *ζῶμεν* covers hostility expressed against Paul and his associates, the ‘we’ of *ζῶμεν*, from both pagan and Christian sources. In spite of these things, their integrity remains in place as the series of second elements maintain.

The switch from *ἐν* and *διὰ* to *ὡς* shifts the qualities into a comparative relationship to either *συνιστάντες* for the first three or to *ζῶμεν* for the subsequent set of four pairs (cf. above diagram). The contextual sense is ‘as though we are’ in referencing various accusations leveled against Paul and his associates.

ὡς πλάνοι καὶ ἀληθεῖς, *as deceives but being true*. The adjective *πλάνος*, -ον used here is built off the same root stem as the verb *πλανᾶω*, *to lead astray*. Paul was frequently accused by fellow Christians and Jews alike of leading people away from God through his preaching of the apostolic Gospel.¹⁶² But his response is simply

¹⁶¹as deceivers and as true, as unknown and as fully knowledgeable, as being dead and **indeed we live**, as being disciplined and not as being killed, as sorrowful but always rejoicing, was poverty stricken but as making many rich, as having nothing and as possessing all things.

¹⁶²The term *πλάνος*, from *πλανᾶω*, ‘lead/go astray,’ ‘deceive,’ is used as an adjective in 1 Tim. 4:1 (*πνεύματα πλάνα*, ‘deceitful

καὶ ἀληθεῖς, *but we are true / truthful*. That is, by their words and their lifestyles, these men consistently reflected Jesus who reflects God Himself.

ὡς ἀγνοούμενοι καὶ ἐπιγινωσκόμενοι, *as unknown but being fully known*. The exact thrust of this contrastive pair is not absolutely certain.¹⁶³ What seems to be the point here is that some, even inside Christianity, did not

spirits’) but here is used substantively, ‘deceiver’ or ‘imposter.’ Obviously Paul did not regard himself as a deceiver, so the sense must be ‘considered impostors’ (BAGD 666a) or ‘treated as impostors’ (RSV, NRSV). During his ministry Jesus had been accused of leading the people astray (*πλανᾶ*, John 7:12), and after his death he had been called ‘that imposter’ (*ἐκεῖνος ὁ πλάνος*, Matt. 27:63). It was now a case of ‘like master, like slave’ (cf. Matt. 10:25), as Paul in turn was deemed a deceiver, perhaps in connection with his altered travel plans (1:15–2:1), perhaps because his pastoral techniques or financial dealings were seen as manipulative (cf. *πλεονεκτέω* in 7:2; 12:17), or perhaps those of his compatriots who saw Jesus as a messianic pretender viewed Paul as a champion of a false Messiah and therefore a deceiver. Whatever the reason or reasons for this charge against Paul, he rebuts it in the only way he can — by affirming his truthfulness (*ἀληθεῖς*). His divine call and mission are genuine (cf. Gal. 1:1, 15–16), his message is true (4:2; 6:7), and he does not lie (cf. *οὐ ψεύδομαι* in 11:31; Rom. 9:1; Gal. 1:20; 1 Tim. 2:7). What Paul signifies by *ἀληθεῖς* (‘truthful,’ ‘honest,’ ‘genuine’) is partly summed up in 2:17, ‘we act from pure motives, and, as persons sent from God, we speak in the sight of God and at Christ’s direction.’ [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), 480.]

¹⁶³(1) Here the contrast may be between views of Paul held outside and within the church. The sense is not exactly ‘obscure yet famous’ (JB) or ‘as nobodies to these, and celebrities to those’ (Plummer 166), but rather that non-believers would or did view him as an insignificant non-entity, someone uncelebrated for wisdom or scholarship or oratorical skills (cf. Windisch 208), whereas believers in general acknowledged his apostolic calling and recognized his distinctive gifts. Thrall comments (465) that ‘since this section as a whole (vv. 3–10) is primarily concerned with the apostle in relation to his fellow-men and to external circumstances it is probable that *ἐπιγινωσκόμενοι* does refer to human recognition.’

“(2) It is, however, equally possible that a human perspective is being contrasted with a divine viewpoint that is shared by some humans. Apparently Paul’s rivals at Corinth and some of the Corinthians influenced by them regarded him as non-credentialed as an apostle or at least as lacking the proper apostolic credentials (cf. 3:1; 5:12; 10:10; 11:6; 1 Cor. 9:1). In contrast, Paul’s genuine apostolicity was known to God (1:1; Gal. 1:1) and recognized by the ‘pillars’ of the Jerusalem church (Gal. 2:7, 9), and Paul still hoped it would be recognized by the Corinthians themselves (5:12) (Barrett 189). Support for this second view may be found in 1 Cor. 13:12 where the same verb, *ἐπιγινώσκω*, is used in the passive (as here) with God as the implied agent (‘then I shall know in full even as I have been fully known [*ἐπεγνώσθην*]’).⁷¹⁷

[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), 481.]



recognize Paul's claim to being an apostle and thus authorized to speak for God. This was evidently the case at Corinth. And if Paul was not authorized by God, then neither were the close associates working with him. His response here asserts that God fully recognizes him as do many believers.¹⁶⁴ Those denying him simply failed to see the authorization of God upon his ministry.

ὡς ἀποθνήσκοντες καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶμεν, **as being dead but indeed we live**. Here the grammatical unevenness of the syntax serves several roles. First, the finite verb ζῶμεν, **we are living**, provides a base point to attach all of these many modifiers, as illustrated in the above diagram. Second, as the contrastive element to the participle ἀποθνήσκοντες, it stands as a dramatic, undeniable rebuttal to those claiming that Paul was 'dying.' Third, this 'uneven grammar structure' serves to place primary emphasis upon καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶμεν, **but indeed we are alive**. The particle of emphasis ἰδοὺ heightens the emphasis even more. Out of the life given him by God all of the positive elements in the long sentence arise.

When then is Paul alluding to with the ὡς ἀποθνήσκοντες, **as though being dead**, phrase? Most likely he points to accusations that the apostle lived in such risk of being killed that whatever he said wasn't worth listening to.¹⁶⁵ Both in the background streams of Jew-

¹⁶⁴“Unknown, and yet well known: the sense may be that they are unknown in the sense that most people do not know them, or, more specifically, the sense is probably that their apostolic authority is ‘unrecognized’ by some Christians (so Barrett). The Greek does not state who knows Paul and his associates. According to TEV it is other Christians (‘by all’). REB says ‘whom all men know,’ and CEV says ‘but well known to you.’ Possibly Paul means that, even though certain Christians do not recognize his authority, yet God does, that is, ‘we are known by God.’ Or perhaps Paul is thinking of both people and God. The passive ideas will have to be made active in many languages. Some suggested models are: ‘people do not accept us, but God accepts us’ or, following the other interpretation, ‘people say they don’t know us, but they are always watching us.’ Brc reads ‘no one knows us and everyone knows us.’ However, it is probably more likely that different agents are intended for the words ‘known’ and ‘unknown.’ The probable meaning is ‘some Christians do not recognize our apostolic authority, yet our authority as apostles is well known to Christians everywhere.’” [Roger L. Omanson and John Ellington, *A Handbook on Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 115–116.]

¹⁶⁵“‘Death-life’ terminology is common in Paul's letters, especially 2 Corinthians. It is possible but unlikely that Paul is speaking here of death to sin and self (Rom. 6:1–14) through being crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20), for this is a wholly positive spiritual concept for Paul whereas the antithetical καὶ presupposes that the preceding concept is in some sense negative in import. At best ἀποθνήσκοντες could refer to both physical death and spiritual mortification (thus Martin 181–82). Another option is to relate ἀποθνήσκοντες purely to physical debilitation and ζῶμεν to spiritual rejuvenation, which would make this antithesis precisely parallel to 4:16 (εἰ καὶ ὁ ἕξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος διαφθείρεται, ἀλλ' ὁ ἕσω ἡμῶν ἀνακαινοῦται ἡμέρα καὶ ἡμέρα). To be preferred, however, is the view that sees in ἀποθνήσκοντες a reference to con-

ish messianic expectation and Greco-Roman heroism, the central figure was above dying, at least in some normal way. Heroic representatives of the gods were not subject to being killed by enemies. But to Paul's critics in the synagogues and churches he seemed to be constantly on the verge of being killed. In their thinking this raised serious questions about his legitimacy to speak correctly about God.

Following the core phrase καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶμεν comes four more pairs of contrastive declarations. The rationale for grouping these four together in a post position is not clear, although they do go in a little different direction than the first three. Numbers three and four are closely related via content emphasis. Possibly παιδευόμενοι and λυπούμενοι are to be seen as linked via content as well.

ὡς παιδευόμενοι καὶ μὴ θανατούμενοι, **as being punished but not being put to death**.¹⁶⁶ Important to understanding this set is the meaning of παιδευόμενοι, the present passive participle from παιδεύω. The core idea

tinual exposure to physical death or encounters with death, and in ζῶμεν a reference to ongoing physical life: ‘as ever at death's door, and yet behold! we live on’ (Plummer 166); ‘we are constantly exposed to death, and yet (as you see) we continue to live.’⁷² Two points support this interpretation. (1) Paul has already mentioned such exposure (4:10–11) and such encounters (1:9–10; 4:12) as he did earlier in 1 Cor. 15:30–31 (‘Why do we face danger every hour? Not a day passes without my being at death's door’) and will later in 11:23 (ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις). (2) The whole phrase alludes to Ps. 117:17 (LXX): ‘I shall not die (οὐκ ἀποθανοῦμαι), but I shall live (ζήσομαι) and recount what the Lord has done.’ (The next phrase is based directly on the following verse in this psalm—see below.) Since the psalm is a song of thanksgiving for victory in battle, the reference to escape from death and to the celebration of divine deliverance by the living must apply to physical life and death. (3) As well as meaning ‘I am dying,’ the present tense of ἀποθνήσκω can mean ‘I stand in danger of death.’⁷³

“ἰδοὺ marks a surprise, introducing something contrary to all appearance or expectation. The change from participles to finite verb (ζῶμεν)⁷⁴ — and further participles follow — also indicates the intensity of Paul's relief at deliverance from death: ‘As dying, and yet here we are—alive!’ The classic instances of such an experience for Paul occurred at Lystra when, after being pelted with stones and left for dead, he simply stood up (ἀναστὰς), perhaps in answer to prayer offered by the recent converts from Lystra who had formed a circle around him (Acts 14:19–20); and ‘in Asia’ when, after being utterly and unbearably crushed so that he despaired of life, he was delivered by the God who raises the dead (1:8–10).”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 481–482.]

¹⁶⁶Possibly in the back of Paul's mind here stands Psalm 118:17 (LXX 118:17), οὐκ ἀποθανοῦμαι, ἀλλὰ ζήσομαι καὶ ἐκδιηγῆσομαι τὰ ἔργα κυρίου. **I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord**. But considerable caution should be exercised here.

in English relates to discipline either in a positive or negative manner. The interpretive issue here is whether the discipline is ‘training’ (+) or punishment (-), and who is doing it, either God or humans. In the 13 NT uses of the verb, these four alternatives in a wide range of combinations are found: God punishes or trains and humans punish or train. Often God works through humans to punish or train. Then flip this into the passive voice, as with the participle here, and the options become Paul and his associates receive either punishment (cf. Heb. 12:6, God) or discipline (Rev. 3:19, God) from either God or other people (cf. Heb. 17:7; Lk. 23:16, 22).¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷“ὡς παιδεύόμενοι καὶ μὴ θανατούμενοι. ‘As punished and yet not killed.’ Both participles are in the passive voice. But who is the implied agent or agents? If Paul has in mind purely human action, the sense could be either ‘rumoured to be (= ὡς) executed before we are sentenced [to death]’ (JB), or ‘scourged but not executed’ (NJB). In the former case the point is the patent miscarriage of justice; in the latter, the avoidance of the death penalty. Neither interpretation can be ruled out as impossible, but both must be deemed improbable because although a life setting could be envisaged for both views, they overlook the unambiguous OT background of the statement.

“With regard to agency, the choice is not between human action and divine action, but between human action and divine action lying behind human action. Those who carry out the punishment and yet do not kill Paul are humans, but their actions fulfill a divine purpose. This becomes clear when we consider the OT passage which lies behind our phrase. ‘The Lord punished me severely (παιδεύων ἐπαίδευσεν) and yet (καί) he did not give me over to death (τῷ θανάτῳ)’ (Ps. 117:18, LXX). Psalm 118 (in the MT and EVV) is the last song and the climax of the ‘Egyptian Hallel’ (Psalms 113–18) that was sung at the great Jewish religious festivals and is frequently cited or alluded to in the NT. It is a processional thanksgiving liturgy, celebrating a God-given military victory. In the presence of the congregation the king testifies to Yahweh’s powerful intervention in answer to prayer when he and his army were confronted in war by a confederacy of nations (possibly 2 Chron. 20:1–30). ‘Yahweh’s right hand has done mighty things! Yahweh’s right hand is lifted high; Yahweh’s right hand has done mighty things!’ (Ps. 118:15b–16). In spite of being brought face to face with death, the king was spared: ‘I did not die, but survived⁷⁵ to proclaim what Yahweh has done’ (v. 17). Paul has alluded to this verse in the previous phrase (ὡς ἀποθνήσκοντες καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶμεν). Then the king continues: ‘Yahweh punished me severely, but he did not give me over to death’ (v. 18). That is, the king interprets the machinations of his enemies that led to the endangerment of his life as evidence of Yahweh’s drastic but beneficial discipline. So too, we suggest, Paul perceives the disciplinary hand of God behind the punishing hand of man.⁷⁶ Paul had endured physical punishment for the gospel’s sake (e.g., Acts 16:22–23; cf. 2 Cor. 11:23, ‘with innumerable beatings’), but the outcome had not been death but the benefits of παιδεία κυρίου, whose ‘fruit is seen in the peacefulness of a righteous life’ (Heb. 12:11, TCNT). Trials and hardships are not proof of God’s displeasure but are evidence of his painful but loving discipline (cf. Prov. 3:11–12; Heb. 12:4–11) that seeks the refinement of our faith (cf. 1 Pet. 1:6–7). ‘In Rev 3:19 the basic principle of παιδεία κυρίου is adopted: ὅσους ἐὰν φιλῶ, ἐλέγχω καὶ παιδεύω, God Himself intervenes with educative punishments in the life of men because He loves them and can in this way kindle zeal for repentance.’⁷⁷”

The difficulty in clear understanding is in part created by large cultural gaps between Paul’s world and our. The verb παιδεύω is a part of a larger word group -- παιδεύω, παιδεία, παιδευτής, ἀπαιδευτος, παιδαγωγός¹⁶⁸ -- that in ancient Greek related to education primarily of children.¹⁶⁹ To be sure vocational training was not included here but the instilling of moral values, patterns of proper behavior, along with understanding of one’s heritage were central themes of Greek education by what was done at home and that done by teachers in a school. The use of physical force, sometimes severe, to educate was a significant tool.¹⁷⁰ Thus the line of demarkation between training and punishing was not very clearly drawn in Paul’s world, unlike in the modern western world.

Via the context here, what probably was Paul’s intent was to assert that the human induced hardships that brought him and his associates often to the brink of execution were indeed being used by God to validate their ministry rather than to raise doubts about its divine nature. The παιδεία coming out of these experiences were strengthening them to give a better witness to the grace of God in the Gospel. But to fully grasp this one has to step out of modern cultural thinking and adopt that of Paul’s world.

ὡς λυπούμενοι ἀεὶ δὲ χαίροντες, *as though being sorrowful yet always rejoicing*.¹⁷¹ Not only were his hard-

[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), 482–483.]

¹⁶⁸Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:596]

¹⁶⁹“παιδεία, παιδεύειν, denotes the upbringing and handling of the child which is growing up to maturity and which thus needs direction, teaching, instruction and a certain measure of compulsion in the form of discipline or even chastisement. παιδεία is both the way of education and cultivation which has to be traversed and also the goal which is to be attained. Apart from the words in the title ref. might also be made to παιδεύμα, παιδευσις, and various compounds belonging to the group. The basis is a relatively late development of παιδ- (παίς), and in the first instance it is obviously as difficult as in the case of τρέφειν to distinguish between the senses ‘upbringing’ (e.g., Soph. Fr., 433 [TGF, 235]) and ‘education.’¹⁷¹ [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:596.]

¹⁷⁰The ancient Jewish approach to education would reflect very similar thinking to this aspect of ancient Greek education.

¹⁷¹“The noun λύπη (“pain,” “sorrow”) and the cognate verb λυπέω (‘cause pain/sorrow’) are common in this epistle, being used six times and twelve times (respectively), out of twenty-four total Pauline uses. Sometimes Paul’s sorrow was personal, as when he was grieved by slander or groundless accusation (2:5; see the commentary there) or when he was acutely disappointed



ships a challenge to ministry but he experienced considerable grief in ministry as well. Of the 26 NT uses of the verb λυπέω, 15 of them are in Paul's writings, and that includes 12 uses just in Second Corinthians. This compares to 40 NT uses of the noun λύπη with 9 Pauline uses, including 6 of them in Second Corinthians. Paul speaks **grief** (λύπη) and **grieving** (λυπέω) some 21 times in Second Corinthians. Chapters two and seven are where most of these uses are found. He experienced real pain and sorrow in his ministry. Most of it was caused by actions or attitudes of other Christians either in hostility toward him or in disappointment over their failures to obey Christ.

But such sorrow never ever crushed his experiencing of joy and rejoicing. Note the emphatic ἀεί, **always**, added here. One should note that the verb χαίρω, **rejoice**, used here and the noun χαρά, **joy**, are built off the same root stem.¹⁷² The English words **glad / gladness** are the most accurate translation. The primary emphasis falls on the inner sense of well-being that can on occasion be expressed outwardly mostly by speaking. The Stoics of Corinth would have seen all this as negative since they believed all emotions are defective judgments of the λόγος.¹⁷³ To be sure, this ran contrary to most ancient Greek understandings of χαρά. It especially was prominent positively in the mystery cults around the city. Paul's Jewish heritage provided a defining context for χαρά out of the religious expression of gladness over the kingship of God.¹⁷⁴ Thus χαρά is

by the behavior of his converts (2:4). But at other times his sorrow was vicarious, as when he sympathized with others in pain (cf. 1 Cor. 12:26). But perhaps his deepest sorrow was occasioned by the unbelief of his fellow Jews (Rom. 9:1–3); this caused him 'great grief' (λύπη ... μεγάλη) and 'constant anguish' (ἀδιάλειπτος ὀδύνη) (Rom. 9:2). Yet whatever the reason for his sorrow, his joy was inextinguishable. This joy is 'in the Lord' (cf. Phil. 3:1; 4:4) in the sense that he is its object (cf. Rom. 5:11; Ps. 32:11; 64:10) and it is prompted by having or remembering all the spiritual benefits afforded those 'in Christ.' Because those benefits are unchanging, the joy can be constant (cf. πάντοτε with χαίρετε in Phil. 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:16), as Jesus promised (John 16:22), and it can be experienced in the midst of suffering (Rom. 5:3–5; cf. Jas. 1:2–4; 1 Pet. 4:13)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 483–484.]

¹⁷²χαίρω, χαρά, συγχαίρω, χάρις, χαρίζομαι, χαριτώ, ἀχάριστος, χάρισμα, εὐχαριστέω, εὐχαριστία, εὐχάριστος [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:359.]

¹⁷³Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:361.

¹⁷⁴ "In the OT24 the experience and expression of joy are close to one another. One can see this in the juxtaposition of related expressions and their transl. into Gk. The usual Hebr. equivalent

festive joy, i.e., gladness over God's salvation and rulership over all creation. Although often used in the first Christian century in a non-religious sense, for the early Christians χαρά was deeply religious in orientation.¹⁷⁵

This was the basis of Paul's ἀεί χαίροντες claim. The circumstances around him, even inside church life, might produce λυπούμενοι, but by looking beyond human failures to the majesty and rulership of God he found continual gladness.¹⁷⁶ Ministry then was embedded with this sense of gladness and thus was validated through χαρά being centered on God.

ὡς πτωχοὶ πολλοὺς δὲ πλουτίζοντες, **as though being poverty stricken but enriching many**. Both this set and

is כַּמְשׁ, הִתְרַשׁ, cf. הִתְרַשׁ and terms for the expression of joy רַגַּל, לֵל, שִׂרָה, רָלָה, etc.²⁵ In the Ps. כַּמְשׁ is transl. by εὐφραίνομαι → II, 773, 12 ff.²⁶ It is often combined with ἀγαλλιάομαι (→ I, 19, 1 ff.), ψ 9:3; 30:8; 89:14.27" [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:362–363.]

¹⁷⁵ "As in profane Gk. and the OT χαίρω is associated with related verbs: ἀγαλλιάομαι, Mt. 5:12; 1 Pt. 4:13; Rev. 19:7, εὐφραίνομαι, Lk. 15:32; Rev. 11:10. The part. qualifies acts in Lk.: 'full of joy,' Lk. 19:6 etc.; we find the acc. of inner obj. at Mt. 2:10: χαρὰν χαίρω, 61 cf. φόβον φοβέομαι, Mk. 4:41 → 209, 16 f., with dat.⁶² χαρᾶ χαίρω, Jn. 3:29, cf. Is. 66:10. The obj. or reason may be indicated by the prep. ἐπί with dat., Mt. 18:13; Lk. 1:14; 13:17; Ac. 15:31; R. 16:19; 1 C. 13:6; 2 C. 7:13; Rev. 11:10, διὰ with acc., Jn. 3:29; 1 Th. 3:9. and ἐν, Phil. 1:18a, by ὅτι, Lk. 10:20 (twice); Jn. 11:15; 14:28; 2 C. 7:9, 16; Phil. 4:10; 2 Jn. 4, cf. 2 C. 13:9, or by part., Mt. 2:10; Lk. 23:8; Jn. 20:20; Ac. 11:23; Phil. 2:28; Mk. 14:11, cf. Ac. 13:48; Col. 2:5; 3 Jn. 3.⁶³" [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:366–367.]

¹⁷⁶ "Here [in Paul] χαρά⁸⁷ is never a profane mood. In Paul it is bound up with his work as an apostle. It is χαρὰ τῆς πίστεως, Phil. 1:25,⁸⁸ a fruit of the Spirit, Gl. 5:22. There is thus reference to the eschatological and paradoxical element in it.⁸⁹ 'The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy,' R. 14:17 → II, 416, 10 ff.⁹⁰ The eschatological significance may also be seen in the connection with ἐλπίς, R. 12:12; 15:13 → II, 417, 11 ff.⁹¹ The material relation between the two is brought out in R. 5:1 ff. with the help of the opposite concept of θλίψις.⁹² Joy is the actualisation of freedom, which takes concrete form in fellowship, R. 12:15.⁹³ The dialectic is worked out most sharply in 1 C. 7:30. Those who rejoice should be ὡς μὴ χαίροντες.⁹⁴ Joy is an essential factor in the relation between apostle and community. Paul asks the Roman church to pray that he might come with joy, R. 15:32. Joy is reciprocal, Phil. 2:28 f.; 2 C. 2:3 in contrast to λύπη. It is a matter of more than mood. In 1 Th. 3:9, with a play on εὐχαριστέω, joy is in God, and in Phil. 3:1; 4:4, 10, with the formula ἐν κυρίῳ, which has ecclesiological significance, it is in the Lord. Joy in the relation between apostle and community is eschatological. In the parousia the community will be manifested as the apostle's work, 1 Th. 2:19, cf. Phil. 4:1. The same thought stands behind the prologue to Phil. In Phil. 2:17 f. we find συγχαίρω alongside the simple χαίρω; this reflects the mutuality → lines 21 ff." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:369.]



the following one stand in close relationship to one another via common content. The common contrast is between poverty / wealth but with slightly different meanings.

Paul and his associates lived literally as beggars materially. The adjective πτωχός, -ή, -όν denotes extreme poverty. They were dependent on others for financial support, places to stay etc. Religion did not make them wealthy in any way possible.

But their ministry made many rich: πολλούς δὲ πλουτίζοντες. Not materially but as 1 Cor. 3:21-23 asserts, rich in spiritual blessings from God. Many people, i.e., those who heard the apostle Gospel and committed themselves to Christ, became possessors of God's blessings, something far more valuable than material possessions.

ὡς μηδὲν ἔχοντες καὶ πάντα κατέχοντες, **as though not having anything but possessing everything**. Again the contrast is between material poverty and spiritual riches. But it is Paul and his associates who are now the focus of attention. Interestingly, very similar expressions were common among the Greek and Latin philosophers of Paul's time.¹⁷⁷ Paul seems to have adopted this philosophical saying, given it Christian meaning,

¹⁷⁷“The antitheses are brought to a climax in the final ὡς μηδὲν ἔχοντες καὶ πάντα κατέχοντες, with a heightening of the rhetorical effect in relation to the immediately preceding contrast: the πτωχοί now becomes μηδὲν ἔχοντες. This is surely to be understood in the material sense, of lack of possessions and financial resources.¹⁹⁶¹ The content of the πάντα, on the other hand, is clearly of a spiritual nature. There are parallels in 1 Cor 3:21–22 and Rom 8:32. In the former passage the πάντα refers to the services of the various apostles, at the disposal of the Corinthians, and also to control over the universal forces of life, death and present and future vicissitudes, in the sense that believers are no longer dominated by these powers.¹⁹⁶² In Rom 8:32 Paul may have in mind the future glory, or simply ‘the fullness of salvation’¹⁹⁶³ in a general sense. Any or all of these ideas may be in view in 2 Cor 6:10. In any case, the πάντα must be filled with Christian content. But the general idea that the one destitute of material possessions may yet in some different sense be rich, and ‘possess everything’ was familiar to anyone acquainted, directly or indirectly, with the popular philosophy of the day, especially as found in the Stoic and Cynic traditions.¹⁹⁶⁴ The Cynic philosopher Crates is represented as claiming ἔχοντες μηδὲν πάντ’ ἔχομεν.¹⁹⁶⁵ Diogenes is said by Diogenes Laertius to have argued that the wise man possesses all things since he is a friend of the gods to whom all things belong and friends have property in common,¹⁹⁶⁶ and Philo uses the same argument in claiming that God put the whole cosmos into the hands of Moses.¹⁹⁶⁷ Philostratus represents Apollonius of Tyana as saying: εἶδον ... Ἰνδοῦς Βραχμᾶνας ... οὐδὲν κεκτημένους ἢ τὰ πάντων (‘I saw Indian Brahmans ... possessing nothing, yet having the riches of all men’), LCL).¹⁹⁶⁸ It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Paul intentionally takes over a familiar philosophical motif and christianises it. This last antithesis, like five out of the six which precede it, expresses in paradoxical fashion two aspects of Paul's existence.” [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), 467–468.]

and then asserted it as validation of his ministry to the Corinthians, some of whom were highly influenced by Greek modes of philosophical thinking. Thus this final claim possesses a subtle nuanced meaning distinctly targeting these people in the Corinthian church.

In summary, for Paul his ministry had the stamp of God's approval on it that could be clearly seen in the way he and his associates lived out their lives. The stacking up of these 28 comparative sets of modifiers to both συνιστάντες ἑαυτοὺς ὡς θεοῦ διάκονοι (v. 4a) and καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶμεν (v. 9b) become a compelling argument for legitimate ministry. The apostle through these pleads with all the Corinthians to accept his and his associates' ministry claims. To be sure many in the church had already given him a ‘thumbs up’ but there were others who still did not want to admit that the true Gospel was being brought to them by Paul.

10.2.3.1.8.2.2 Second set of appeals, 6:11-13

11 Τὸ στόμα ἡμῶν ἀνέφωγεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, Κορίνθιοι, ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν πεπλάτυνται· 12 οὐ στενοχωρεῖσθε ἐν ἡμῖν, στενοχωρεῖσθε δὲ ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχνοις ὑμῶν· 13 τὴν δὲ αὐτὴν ἀντιμισθίαν, ὡς τέκνοις λέγω, πλατύνθητε καὶ ὑμεῖς.

11 We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. 12 There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. 13 In return—I speak as to children—open wide your hearts also.

115 ^{6.11}	Τὸ στόμα ἡμῶν ἀνέφωγεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, Κορίνθιοι,
116	ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν πεπλάτυνται·
117 ^{6.12}	οὐ στενοχωρεῖσθε ἐν ἡμῖν, δὲ
118	στενοχωρεῖσθε ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχνοις ὑμῶν· 6.13 δὲ τὴν αὐτὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ὡς τέκνοις λέγω,
119	πλατύνθητε καὶ ὑμεῖς.

Here the way of presenting his ideas shifts dramatically from that in the preceding pericopes. Comparison of the diagrams above highlights visually this shift. In a single Greek sentence the apostle packs together five very forceful appeals to the Corinthians. The ideas are communicated via metaphorical language rather than by direct expression.

Structurally he begins with two declarations in #s 115-116 affirming his positive stance toward them. Their response in #s 117-119 is essentially twofold with the play on στενοχωρεῖσθε in #s 117-118. To this point the apostle has made a series of claims, but in

#119 he shifts from indicative mood verbs to an imperative verb in pleading with the Corinthians to reverse the στενοχωρεῖσθε of # 118. Thus the pericope is built around declarations (#s 115-118) and an appeal (# 119). The focus in #s 115-116 is on Paul and his associates and their reaching out to the Corinthians. The inadequate response of the Corinthians then occupies #s 117-119.

Reaching out to the Corinthians, v. 11: τὸ στόμα ἡμῶν ἀνέφηνεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, Κορίνθιοι, ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν πεπλάτυνται· *our mouth is open wide to you, Corinthians; our heart is enlarged greatly.* The images of mouth and heart communicate Paul's ideas here. The common point of these two images is enlargement that makes the point of inclusion of the Corinthians.

The symbolism of mouth is communication and of heart is deliberate commitment. The first metaphor alludes to his speaking not only the Gospel to the Corinthians but also what he has just written to them up to this point in the letter, in particular 6:3-10. The second metaphor, heart, has nothing to do with feelings but the volitional use of the metaphor in the ancient world speaks here to Paul's sincere commitment to ministry to the Corinthians that he is defending in this letter. The enlarging of his heart stresses expansion of that commitment to them in spite of their improper treatment of him.

Corinthians' response to this reaching out, vv. 12-13: 12 οὐ στενοχωρεῖσθε ἐν ἡμῖν, στενοχωρεῖσθε δὲ ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχνοις ὑμῶν· 13 τὴν δὲ αὐτὴν ἀντιμισθίαν, ὡς τέκνοις λέγω, πλατύνθητε καὶ ὑμεῖς. *You are not being squeezed by us, but you are being squeezed by your guts. But as to children I speak -- you too must open wide your own response.* Here the central image is the *guts*, σπλάγχνον, as the source of feelings. The point of the images is the reverse of enlargement above in v. 11. Their gut has been squeezed closed but it must be opened up for inclusion of Paul and his associates. The distinctive use of the metaphors of eye, heart, and gut makes unique points in the context of first century use of these human organs metaphorically. What Paul seeks is the Corinthians' acceptance of him and his associates to the same level as their acceptance of the Corinthians.

The σπλάγχνον in the ancient world stood as the symbol of emotions and affections. Besides the one literal usage in Acts 1:18 in reference to Judas, the remaining nine uses (all but two in Paul) are figurative uses referring to emotions of some sort. Paul's appeal to the Corinthians is to at least have a positive feeling toward him and his associates. That positive attitude is not being squeezed off by him or his associates (#117). Instead, the Corinthians are squeezing their own gut in adopting negative feelings toward him (#118). But they desperately need to do just the opposite. That is, they need to expand their gut (# 119) by coming up

to the same level of posture toward Paul as he and his associates have toward them. It was unlikely that the Corinthians as a whole Christian community would ever possess the same kind of commitment to the Gospel and toward Paul as he possessed. But at minimum, they could adopt increasingly positive attitudes.

With this set of appeals the apostle reaches out to the Corinthians urging them to adopt increasingly greater positive attitudes toward him. He and his associates have reached out to them in ministry in sincere commitment and frank, honest preaching of the Gospel. Some of them have shut him off in adopting negative attitudes toward him and his associates. But the Corinthians themselves have done this, not Paul or his associates. The Corinthians themselves then can reverse this stance and the apostle lovingly urges them to do so.

In Christian ministry not everyone is going to like you. Some people in fact will despise you, even inside the Christian community of believers. But from Paul's words here a couple of important principles emerge. First, by your words, behavior, and attitudes do not give them any justification for shutting you out. Second, continue reaching out to them even when they do reject you. In God's strength you can do this. Be true to the Gospel and speak encouraging words of reconciliation even if these words fall on deaf ears.

10.2.3.1.9 Ministry as temple service, 6:14-7:1¹⁷⁸

14 Μὴ γίνεσθε ἑτεροζυγοῦντες ἀπίστοις· τίς γὰρ μετοχὴ δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἀνομίας, ἢ τίς κοινωνία φωτὶ πρὸς σκότος; 15 τίς δὲ συμφώνησις Χριστοῦ πρὸς Βελιάρ, ἢ τίς μερίς πιστῶ μετὰ ἀπίστου; 16 τίς δὲ συγκατάθεσις ναῶ θεοῦ μετὰ εἰδώλων; ἡμεῖς γὰρ ναὸς θεοῦ ἐσμεν ζῶντος, καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι

ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω

καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῶν θεὸς καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μου λαός.

17 *διὸ ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν καὶ ἀφορίσθητε, λέγει κύριος, καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄπτεσθε·*

18 *καὶ ἔσομαι ὑμῖν εἰς πατέρα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι εἰς υἱοὺς καὶ θυγατέρας, λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ.*

¹⁷⁸Ministry for Paul continues to be viewed from a variety of perspectives. The collective impact of this variety creates strong persuasion for the Corinthians to accept the genuineness of this God ordained ministry from Paul and his associates:

10.2.3.1.5 Ministry compared to Moses, 3:1-18

10.2.3.1.6 Ministry in Clay Pots, 4:1-15

10.2.3.1.7 Ministry based on Faith, 4:16-5:10

10.2.3.1.8 Ministry as Reconciliation, 5:11-6:13

10.2.3.1.9 Ministry as Temple Service, 6:14-7:1



120^{6.14} Μὴ γίνεσθε ἑτεροζυγοῦντες ἀπίστοις·
γὰρ

121 τίς μετοχὴ δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἀνομία,
ἢ

122 τίς κοινωνία φωτὶ πρὸς σκότος;

6.15 δὲ

123 τίς συμφώνησις Χριστοῦ πρὸς Βελιάρ,
ἢ

124 τίς μερὶς πιστῶ μετὰ ἀπίστου;

6.16 δὲ

125 τίς συγκατάθεσις ναῶ θεοῦ μετὰ εἰδώλων;

γὰρ

126 ἡμεῖς ναὸς θεοῦ ἔσμεν ζῶντος,
καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι

a ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς

καὶ

b ἐμπεριπατήσω

καὶ

c ἔσομαι αὐτῶν θεός

καὶ

d αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μοι λαός.

6.17

διὸ

e ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν

καὶ

f ἀφορίσθητε,

λέγει κύριος,

καὶ

g ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄπτεσθε·

h κἀγὼ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς

καὶ

6.18

i ἔσομαι ὑμῖν εἰς πατέρα

καὶ

j ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι

εἰς υἱοὺς καὶ θυγατέρας,

λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ.

7.1

οὖν

ταύτας ἔχοντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας,

ἀγαπητοί,

127 καθαρίσωμεν ἑαυτοὺς

ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος,

ἐπιτελοῦντες ἀγιωσύνην

ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ.

7.1 Ταύτας οὖν ἔχοντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας, ἀγαπητοί, καθαρίσωμεν ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος, ἐπιτελοῦντες ἀγιωσύνην ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ.

14 Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship is there between light and darkness? 15 What agreement does Christ have with Beliar? Or what does a believer share with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,

"I will live in them and walk among them,

*and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.*

17 *Therefore come out from them,
and be separate from them, says the Lord,
and touch nothing unclean;
then I will welcome you,*

18 *and I will be your father,
and you shall be my sons and daughters,
says the Lord Almighty."*

7.1 Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse



ourselves from every defilement of body and of spirit, making holiness perfect in the fear of God.

This pericope to some extent has a history of its own in the modern era of biblical scholarship.¹⁷⁹ If while

¹⁷⁹“Anyone familiar with this passage in modern discussion of 2 Corinthians is sure to be aware of the critical questions that it provokes. Such questions will momentarily be delayed as a subject of consideration, for the structure of this passage needs first to be examined.

“The passage itself is a self-contained entity composed of a statement (6:14a) followed by five antithetical questions (6:14b, c, 15a, b, 16a). Each of these questions is designed to enforce the thrust of the admonition of 6:14a not to ‘become yoke-mates with unbelievers.’ The questions illustrate the need to be separate, i.e., to avoid association with evil.

“An impetus for this call to holiness is provided in the author’s intention to explore the imagery of believers as the temple of God (viewed collectively 6:16b).¹¹⁰⁸ To show that the ‘Christian temple’ is to be free of ‘idols’ (as was the case with the Jewish temple), the writer of our passage presents a catena of OT texts. These texts are sometimes a quotation (16d), but many times a paraphrase (16c) or a redaction of OT verses (6:18a, b). Intermingled with these exhortations are promises that reflect the author’s desire to portray a lifestyle, not simply to achieve holiness as an end in itself.¹¹⁰⁹ There are three promises (6:16c–d, 17c, 18) that become the basis for the concluding exhortation to (1) refrain from all defiling of flesh and spirit and (2) live as ‘perfecting’ holiness (7:1), i.e., bringing it to completion. The passage thus concludes as it commenced, with a charge to live a holy and separated life unto God. The theme of detachment from the pagan world is consistently held throughout the passage.

“With this structure in mind, scholars have struggled with questions regarding the placement and composition of this passage. For one, it becomes difficult to see any transition between 6:13 and 14. 2 Cor 6:13 concludes with Paul’s appeal for the Corinthians to ‘open wide their hearts.’ Suddenly, we find the admonition to avoid being yoked together with nonbelievers (6:14). In like manner, the conclusion of our passage (7:1), which speaks of avoiding contamination of the flesh and spirit, does not lead smoothly into 7:2, a verse describing once again the desire for the writer to enter the hearts of the Corinthians. Thus, one crucial question facing interpreters is the integrity of 2 Cor 6:14–7:1. Does it belong here, or is it an interpolation?

“But a second question focuses on the authorship of this passage. Is it authentic in terms of Pauline writing, or is it the creation of someone else? Arguments against Pauline authorship can be summarized under four headings: (1) the large number of hapax legomena (nine terms in all as a maximum count; see later) in such a short passage; (2) the extreme spirit of exclusiveness (based on a Levitical or cultic code) shown by its author, an attitude that is seemingly out of character when related to the former Pharisee who had been ‘liberated’ from the law; (3) an affinity with Qumran,¹¹¹⁰ such as the presence of dualistic contrasts (i.e., the antithetical questions), the idea of the community as a temple, and the catena of OT scriptural texts loosely strung together; and (4) the ‘un-Pauline’ use of ‘flesh’ and ‘spirit’ in 7:1.¹¹¹¹

“The reasons mentioned above have led several scholars to conclude that 6:14–7:1 is not from Paul. Fitzmyer¹¹¹² sees the passage as a ‘Christian reworking of an Essene paragraph and is to be read as a non-Pauline interpolation.’¹¹¹³ Dahl, in like manner, concludes that 6:14–7:1 is a ‘slightly Christianized piece of Qumran theology ... of non-Pauline origin.’¹¹¹⁴ Gnlika¹¹¹⁵ follows suit

reading 6:11–13 one skips over to 7:2 without stopping the theme appears to continue flowing uninterrupted. That is, until close examination of 6:11–13 and 7:2–4 is made which reveals a commonality but also a shift in perspective. What at first in 6:14–7:1 seems to be an artificial interruption between 6:11–13 and 7:2–4 becomes upon close examination very much linked to what precedes and what follows.¹⁸⁰ The modern post-enlighten-

and views the author as an unknown Christian other than Paul. Betz¹¹¹⁶ goes to the extreme by arguing that this is an anti-Pauline argument, portraying the position of Paul’s enemies at Galatia.¹¹¹⁷

“These arguments are worth attention, but they are not necessarily convincing. There are several hapax legomena in these verses (ἑτεροζυγοῦντες, ‘being mismated,’ μετοχή, ‘partnership,’ συμφώνησις, ‘harmony,’ βελιάρ, ‘Beliar,’ συγκατάθεσις, ‘agreement,’ and μολυσμός, ‘defilement’; ἐμπεριπατήσω, ‘walk with,’ εἰσδέξομαι, ‘receive,’ and παντοκράτωρ, ‘almighty,’ appear also as Pauline hapax legomena, but these are contained in OT renderings and hardly seem sufficient to count as original on the part of the author), but this is not so unusual. For one, Pauline outbursts containing a high percentage of hapax legomena are not uncommon.¹¹¹⁸ Furthermore, as Fee¹¹¹⁹ points out, the argument based on hapax legomena needs to be utilized with greater precision, for, since verbs and nouns, such as ἐλπίζω, ‘hope’/ἐλπίς, ‘hope,’ γινώσκω, ‘know’/γνώσις, ‘know,’ and πιστεύω, ‘believe’/πίστις, ‘faith,’ are related, why not μετέχω, ‘share’/μετοχή, ‘partnership’ and μολύνω, ‘defile’/μολυσμός, ‘defilement’? Also is ἑτεροζυγέω, ‘be mismated,’ that much different from similar compounds with ζυγός, ‘yoke,’ and σύζυγος, ‘yokefellow’? We can also see that συμφώνησις, ‘harmony,’ and συγκατάθεσις, ‘agreement,’ simply follow the pattern of other Pauline compound words formed with the prefix συν- (συν-, συμ-), ‘with.’ The only hapax legomenon to give any substantial evidence against Pauline authorship is βελιάρ, ‘Beliar’¹¹²⁰, and it is hardly reasonable to think that a term, so entrenched in Jewish thinking (see below), should necessarily be excluded from Paul’s thinking.¹¹²¹ Thus, Fee appears to be correct in concluding that ‘the authenticity of this passage is not called into question by the hapax legomena.’¹¹²² With Paul’s academic training and linguistic abilities,¹¹²³ the use of different words should not surprise us. Yet on balance the high proportion of unusual and rare terms is remarkable, and requires explanation.”

[Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 354–356.]

¹⁸⁰“An array of scholars¹¹⁴³ considers this passage as part of the original letter (that is, it is here by the author’s set purpose).¹¹⁴⁴ It was not unnatural for Paul to ‘dart’¹¹⁴⁵ to a parenthetical thought. We must not forget that Paul was dictating a letter,¹¹⁴⁶ not writing a dispassionate treatise. Furthermore, as will be seen, 6:14–7:1 is not that much out of touch with its context.¹¹⁴⁷ In 6:1–2 there is a call to holiness. Then Paul abruptly changes direction and begins a digression that includes some hapax legomena. He has paraded the qualities of his apostolic life in paradoxical fashion before the Corinthians (6:3–10); then, having assured them that he loves them (6:11–12), he asks for a reciprocal acceptance (6:13). But upon establishing his concern for them, he embarks on a final appeal, which many interpreters believe to be a digression, by supplying the reason why he feels they are liable to close him out of their hearts. Though the congregation has reacted strongly to Paul’s



ment plays tricks on us modern readers because 6:14-7:1 screams out at us to not allow corrupting influences to interfere with healthy relationships -- just the point that Paul was trying to make in the letter itself.

Add to that the frequent tendency to lift this passage out of its context here and to falsely set it back down in the context of marriage so that it reads as if a Christian should never marry a non-Christian.¹⁸¹ Given this more recent history of interpretation and one can see why modern readers have problems with 6:14-7:1. But these are phony issues created by modern eisegesis of the text. In reality, 6:14-7:1 is uniformly located at this place in the letter across the board in the first eight to ten centuries of copying and translating Second Corinthians.¹⁸²

The internal structure is visually highlighted by the above diagram.

- 1) Admonition (v. 14a; #120)
- 2) 1st set of justifications: γὰρ (vv. 14b-16a; #s 121-125)
- 3) 2nd set of justifications: γὰρ (vv. 16b-18; # 126)
- 4) Implied admonition: οὖν (7:1)

The first admonition (1), once validated (2-3), then leads

teaching (1 Cor 5:9–10), the Corinthians apparently have yet to break completely their ties with idolatry (1 Cor 10:14–22). Possibly Paul senses an uneasy awareness on the part of the Corinthians concerning this failure,¹¹⁴⁸ thus leading to his confidence that they will follow the logic of his call in 1 Cor 10:14: ‘So, my dear friends, avoid idolatry.’ Furthermore, it remains possible (but unlikely, we think) that he would sometimes break into overly enthusiastic preaching, forgetting that the converts were his audience.¹¹⁴⁹ Upon relieving his mind or remembering his main thought of 6:13, Paul returns to his appeal to come into the heart of the Corinthians.¹¹⁵⁰ [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 359.]

¹⁸¹It should be noted that the false marriage setting is not directly connected to the above critical question. Critics want to see 6:14-7:1 as a fragment of the first ‘lost’ letter of Paul alluded to in 1 Cor. 5:9. The theme of avoiding corrupting influences seems to fit both texts. But honest examination of 2 Cor. 6:11-7:4 indicates that the pericope fits here just as well, if not better. Ralph Martin (above footnote) has an essentially effective critique of the modern tendencies.

¹⁸²The only significant variation occurring in 6:14-7:1 comes with the issue in ἡμεῖς γὰρ ναὸς θεοῦ ἐσμεν in v. 16b. The alternative reading is ὑμεῖς ... ἐστε, *you...are*, rather than *we...are*.

The reading ἡμεῖς ... ἐσμεν, strongly supported by both Alexandrian and Western witnesses (κ* B D* 33 81* itd cōsa, bo al), is to be preferred to ὑμεῖς ... ἐστε (P46 C Dc G K Ψ 614 Byz Lect itg, ar vg syrj, h goth arm al), since the latter reading was very naturally suggested by the recollection of 1 Cor 3:16 as well as by the context (verses 14 and 17), while there was no reason for putting ἡμεῖς ... ἐσμεν in its stead. The plural ναοί (κ* 0243 1739 Clement Augustine) is a pedantic correction.

[Bruce Manning Metzger, United Bible Societies, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament* (4th Rev. Ed.) (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 512.]

to the second admonition (4). Both share the common theme of avoiding being corrupted by non-godly influences. The two sets of justifications (#s 121-125 & 126) provide verification of the admonition from both a Greek perspective and also from a Jewish scribal perspective in allusions to OT principles. Behind all this stands the problems of the Corinthians having adopted pagan ways of thinking that in turn severely hindered healthy relationships of them with Paul and his associ-



ates. These corrupting influences upon the Corinthians were harming their spiritual life and preventing them from receiving the desperately needed corrective ‘medicine’ from Paul and his associates.

10.2.3.1.9.1 Admonition to holiness, 6:14a Μὴ γίνεσθε ἑτεροζυγοῦντες ἀπίστοις, *Do not be mismatched with unbelievers*. The broad nature of the command here necessitates careful consideration of the context before a specific meaning can be concluded.

First comes the etymological meaning of the admonition. The use of the present participle ἑτεροζυγοῦντες is the only use of the verb ἑτεροζυγέω in the entire NT. The literal sense is to *be yoked to another of a different kind* from ἔτερο + ζυγέω. This seems to play off of Deut. 22:10, οὐκ ἀροτριάσεις ἐν μόσχῳ καὶ ὄνῳ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, *You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together*, although this verb is not used itself.¹⁸³ But this OT passage stands as a good example of the meaning of ἑτεροζυγέω. The literal meaning of ζυγός as a yoke in reference to domestic animals plowing fields etc. became a frequent image for people working closely together in some kind of relationship, although generally with a negative meaning.¹⁸⁴ It is commonly used in the

¹⁸³“ἔτερος, ζυγός; κτήνη ἑτερόζυγα = draft animals that need different kinds of yokes, because they are of different species [e.g., an ox and a donkey].” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 399.]

¹⁸⁴The other classical Greek meaning of ζυγός as scales is found in NT usage. “In the LXX the term is used at 3 Macc. 4:9 for



LXX of the OT for yoke in some figurative meaning.¹⁸⁵ NT uses, mostly figurative, convey both the meaning of scales (1x; Rev. 6:5) and of yoke (5 of 6 NT uses). The two Pauline uses of ζυγός in Gal. 5:1 and 1 Tim. 6:1 reflect the negative oriented figurative meaning of yoke in ζυγῶ δουλείας, *yoke of slavery*.

From the context of 6:14-7:1, it is clear that the mismatch implicit in the verbal ἕτεροζυγοῦντες is between believers and non-believers (cf. especially the questions in #s 121-125).¹⁸⁶ Central to this are the harm-

the cross-beam between the sides of a ship which served as a bench for rowers, but normally ζυγός or ζυγόν means either ‘scales’ or ‘yoke,’ and in both senses it occurs mostly in ethical or religious contexts. For ‘scales’ the only instances of secular use are at Ez. 5:1 (a means of division), Is. 46:6 (of measuring) and Jer. 39 (32):10 (for weighing gold).¹⁸⁷ [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:896.]

^{185c} The image of the yoke¹⁰ is relatively common in the LXX. It occurs in the political sphere for domestic tyranny—cf. Rehoboam in 2 Ch. 10:4 f.), and also the relation of Esau to Jacob acc. to Gn. 27:40—and for the rule of alien nations (Dt. 28:48 A), esp. the great empires. Thus it is used of Egypt in Is. 19:10 LXX (not the Mas.), of Assyria in Is. 14:29, of Babylon in Is. 47:6; Ἱερ. 35(28):14; Lam. 5:5 Σ, of Syria in Da. 8:25 Θ (not the LXX or Mas.). Liberation from this kind of dominion is the corresponding content of the message of deliverance. Thus the yoke is taken away from Israel in Is. 9:3; 10:27; 11:13 A; 14:25; or God breaks it in Lv. 26:13; Is. 14:5; Ἱερ. 27(34):8 (cf. the false prophecy in Ἱερ. 34[27]:6[8]; 35[28]:2, 4, 11); Ez. 34:27.

“The image is also significant in many different connections in relation to the development of morality. The yoke is for slaves whose self-will must be broken, Sir. 30:13 (33:27). Care must be taken not to fall under the power of garrulity (the yoke of the tongue), Sir. 28:19, 20. On the other hand, it is good to accept the yoke of wisdom, Sir. 51:26. In Lam. 3:27 we find the pedagogic insight that it is good for a man to bear the yoke in youth. In Job 16:8 Σ the fate of Job is called a heavy yoke. The Heb., which is correctly rendered in the LXX, has ἄν, “for a witness,” which Σ seems to have misread as ἄν. The same sense is found in Sir. 40:1 with reference to human destiny: ζυγός βαρὺς ἐπὶ υἱοὺς Ἀδάμ.¹¹

“The figure acquires a theological sense when the reference is to God’s yoke. Men want to break this yoke (Jer. 2:20; 5:5) or to throw it off (ψ 2:3, Mas. ‘bands’); Slav. En. 34:1. They do not want to bear any yoke (Hos. 7:16 Σ and E’, which are both independent of the obscure Mas., much emended in the LXX). On the other hand, cf. Zeph. 3:9: τοῦ δουλεύειν αὐτῷ ὑπὸ ζυγόν ἔνα. Those who bear the yoke are called blessed in Slav. En. 48:9, the yoke here being that of written revelation. It is commonly accepted that ‘we stand always under thy yoke and under the rod of thy discipline,’ the reference being to the suffering of the righteous.¹² This is important in relation to Mt. 11:29 f. and it is plainly reflected in 1 Cl., 16, 17, where the humiliation of the Lord is set forth as an example to those who stand under the yoke of His grace. In formulation there is even greater stress on the relation to the suffering of the righteous in Just. Dial., 53, 1: καὶ τὸν ζυγὸν τοῦ λόγου αὐτοῦ βαστάσαντες τὸν νῶτον ὑπέθηκαν πρὸς τὸ πάντα ὑπομένειν.”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:897–898.]

^{186c}In 2 C. 6:14 the word describes figur, the abnormal sit-

ful influences coming from pagans into the Christian community at Corinth. The ambiguity of the admonition leaves the issue open as to whether specific individuals are being targeted or not as ἀπίστοις, *unbelievers*. But the absence of the article would suggest not. Thus more likely the apostle is pointing to the teachings and influences of unbelievers upon some of the Corinthians Christians. The influence of pagan philosophy upon the church was made clear in First Corinthians in regard to numerous issues. Most likely this is the same point being made here, in regard to the negativism toward the ministry of him and his associates. These people in the church could not see the authenticity of Paul’s commitment to the pure apostolic Gospel because pagan influences were setting up false criteria by which to evaluate the apostle and his associates. Here with the present imperative γίνεσθε demands the cessation of something already being done, i.e., ἕτεροζυγοῦντες ἀπίστοις, being under the tyranny of pagan influences.

10.2.3.1.9.2 Two sets of justifications, 6:14b-18. 14b τίς γὰρ μετοχή δικαιοσύνη καὶ ἀνομία, ἢ τίς κοινωνία φωτὶ πρὸς σκότος; 15 τίς δὲ συμφώνησις Χριστοῦ πρὸς Βελιάρ, ἢ τίς μερίς πιστῶ μετὰ ἀπίστου; 16 τίς δὲ συγκατάθεσις ναῶ θεοῦ μετὰ εἰδώλων; ἡμεῖς γὰρ ναὸς θεοῦ ἐσμεν ζῶντος, καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῶν θεὸς καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μου λαός. 17 διὸ ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν καὶ ἀφορίσθητε, λέγει κύριος, καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄπτεσθε· κἀγὼ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς 18 καὶ ἔσομαι ὑμῖν εἰς πατέρα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι εἰς υἱοὺς καὶ θυγατέρας, λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ. 14b For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship is there between light and darkness? 15 What agreement does Christ have with Beliar? Or what does a believer share with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, 18 and I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

The line of demarcation between the two sets of justifying statements is dramatically clear. The first set is introduced uniformly by the interrogative pronoun τίς, who, in vv. 14b-16a (#s 121-125). The second set in vv. 16b-18 (# 126) contains a series of OT declarations, which in their poetic structure play off of three refer-

uation which results when Christians in their conduct follow the rules of the world, which knows nothing of what is given to the community: μὴ γίνεσθε ἕτεροζυγοῦντὲ ἀπίστοις· τίς γὰρ μετοχή δικαιοσύνη καὶ ἀνομία, ἢ τίς κοινωνία φωτὶ πρὸς σκότος; ... τίς μερίς πιστῶ μετὰ ἀπίστου; Paul leaves us in no doubt that when this happens the community ceases to exist as such, even though it continues to do so in outward form (cf. v. 15ff.).” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:901.]



ences to God speaking these demands: εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι; λέγει κύριος; and λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ. The OT declarations are adaptations of Lev. 26:11-12 and Ezek. 37:27 from the LXX.¹⁸⁷

10.2.3.1.9.2.1 Pointed rhetorical questions, 6:14b-16a. The rhetorical structuring of the five questions assumes the answer, “None at all.” The common contrastive structure plays off of the admonition that assumes incompatibility between Christians and non-Christians.¹⁸⁸ Close

¹⁸⁷“In this first OT citation Paul is basically following the LXX of Lev. 26:11–12 (see the preceding chart) but changes the second person plural pronouns to the third person plural on the basis of Ezek. 37:27 and omits the irrelevant phrase ‘and my soul shall abhor you’ from Lev. 26:11b.⁶⁰” [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), 505.]

¹⁸⁸What is essential to understand is how Paul asserts an incompatible gulf between believers and non-believers here. Yet at the same time to these same Corinthians he also affirmed the legitimacy of social interactions between believers and non-believers. Mostly in the First Corinthians discussions, the assumption is made that individual believers can and should interact in society with individual pagans. But the discussion in Second Corinthians centers on corrupting influences coming from pagan thinking and values down upon believers in the community of faith. The idea of being wrongly yoked ἐτεροζυγοῦντες is pivotal to his point. This is probably why he reached out to use a verb ἐτεροζυγέω that is not used in the LXX and was quite rare even in secular Greek. Pictorially it communicated the exact point of the danger of corrupting influences when too closely involved with non-believers.

When considered in the light of Paul’s earlier correspondence with the Corinthians, 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 appears strange. In these verses, the believers must be on guard against association with unbelievers; they must not be misyoked to them (6:14); they must “come out from them and be separate” (6:17); and they must (protect and) perfect their holiness via a self-cleansing of body and spirit (7:1). The closest Paul comes to such a picture elsewhere in his correspondence with the Corinthians is in the “previous” letter where he warned them about associating with immoral persons (πόρνοι pornoi) and later clarifies that he meant immoral persons within the community of believers because, he argues, one simply cannot avoid contact with immoral persons in the world (see the Commentary on 1 Cor 5:9–13).

From many details in 1 Corinthians, however, Paul’s hearers will have a dramatically different picture of how holiness is lived in the world. Whether one takes the misyoking in 2 Cor 6:14 to refer to marriage or not, Paul has written quite positively in 1 Corinthians about believers’ association with unbelievers. Paul’s auditors will know that he condones believers’ being married to unbelievers (1 Cor 7:12–16). But 1 Cor 7:12–16 goes beyond condoning marriage to unbelievers; it even speculates that the holiness of the believing spouse may, in fact, positively affect the unbelieving spouse and certainly has affected any children (1 Cor 7:14, 16). In 2 Cor 6:14–7:1, however, Paul expects believers to preserve holiness through separation and withdrawal, a position not unlike what he has opposed among some Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor 7:5–7, 12–13, 27–28, 36). In 1 Cor 7:12–16, Paul cred-

examination of this structure is important for proper understanding of the apostle’s point:

τίς μετοχή <i>δικαιοσύνη και ἀνομία,</i>	a
ἢ	
τίς κοινωνία <i>φωτὶ πρὸς σκότος;</i>	b
τίς <i>δέ</i> συμφώνησις <i>Χριστοῦ πρὸς Βελιάρ,</i>	b’
ἢ	
τίς μερίς <i>πιστῶ μετὰ ἀπίστου;</i>	a’
τίς <i>δέ</i> συγκατάθεσις <i>ναῶ θεοῦ μετὰ εἰδώλων;</i>	

As the above charting out visually signals, there are two pairs of contrastive questions set up at an informal chiasmus level of ab//b/a, as signaled by the two items set in contrast to each other in each question. These are then followed by the fifth one which sets up the string of OT allusions in vv. 16b-18, the second set of

its holiness with its own power to cross over the border and influence so as to change unbelievers. The one protects holiness; the other assumes that holiness has its own divinely inspired power. The one fears that holiness may be lost by association with unbelievers; the other assumes that holiness may change the unbelievers.

Elsewhere in 1 Corinthians Paul readily condones believers’ having social involvement with unbelievers. In an imagined scene, he contemplates that an unbeliever invites a believer to dinner, and he finds absolutely no problem with a believer’s going (1 Cor 10:27). Further, Paul anticipates that unbelievers may venture in when the church gathers and is not the least concerned; in fact, he contemplates that such a circumstance may ultimately be the occasion for what we might call a conversion (1 Cor 14:23–25).

In all three instances in 1 Corinthians, associations with unbelievers are viewed quite positively by Paul, and in two of them the relationship is positively infectious. In yet one more passage from 1 Corinthians, Paul depicts believers as living in a world whose structure (σχῆμα schēma), tainted by sin, is passing away (1 Cor 7:31; see also Rom 1:18–25); that world is where believers transact their lives. So Paul thinks they live directly in that world, but ὡς μη (hōs mē, “as-if-not”) doing so (1 Cor 7:29–31). There Paul advocates an eschatological reserve in which believers do not take their clues or values from the world in which they perforce live. They live in that world, but not by it.

[J. Paul Sampley, “The Second Letter to the Corinthians,” in *New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck, vol. 11 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994–2004), 11:104.]

What Sampley misses in his comparison of these two sets of discussions of Paul with the Corinthians is the contextual setting of 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1 in the first seven chapters of Second Corinthians. Paul is not just defending the authenticity of his ministry but is appealing to those in the Corinthian community with negative views of him and his associates to get passed their spiritual blindness so as to see the genuineness of his ministry, especially to the church at Corinth. 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1 in this context dramatically calls upon these people to get past their blindness.

justifying statements.

Important to note is how the relationship is defined in each of the questions. It is *μετοχή* which denotes a sharing or participation of items with one another. The adjectival form *μέτοχος*, -ον with six NT uses can refer to a partnership in nominal usage of the adjective. The second term is *κοινωνία* which is a virtual synonym of *μετοχή*, but is much more frequently found in the NT with 19 uses. The third defining term is *συμφώνησις* with the similar sense of “a state of shared interests, agreement”¹⁸⁹ between two persons. The fourth term *μερίς* denotes a share or portion of one with another. The fifth term *συγκατάθεσις* denotes agreement or union between two entities. When viewed collectively the picture clearly emerges that clearly a danger exists when believers interact closely with pagans. The potentially corrupting influence of the pagan is real and must be rejected by the believer.

Why this is so emerges from the two entities in each of the questions:

- δικαιοσύνη και ἀνομία
righteousness and lawlessness
- φωτὶ πρὸς σκότος
light with darkness
- Χριστοῦ πρὸς Βελιάρ
Christ with Beliar¹⁹⁰
- πιστῶ μετὰ ἀπίστου
a believer with an unbeliever
- ναὼ θεοῦ μετὰ εἰδώλων
God’s temple with idols

This series of contrasted items underscores the essential difference between the Christian community and the surrounding unbelieving world. The believer is linked to God and the goodness that flows out of God. But the unbeliever is linked to evil and immorality. The two actually have a fundamental incompatibility with one another. Social circumstances often necessitate interaction with one another, as Paul readily acknowledged in First Corinthians. But always there is risk of corrupting influence from the unbeliever that the believer must guard against.

This powerful set of rapid fire questions pushed the Corinthians to acknowledge the corrupting influences behind their negativism against Paul and his associates, as well as their spiritual inability to see the genuineness of his ministry to them.

¹⁸⁹William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 961.

¹⁹⁰“This name for the devil is found in the NT only at 2 C. 6:15: τίς δὲ συμφώνησις Χριστοῦ πρὸς Βελιάρ. It cannot be determined with any certainty whether Paul had particular reasons for the choice of this unusual name. Though it might be a title for Antichrist, this is not likely.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:607.]

The fifth and final question both climaxes the list of question and also sets up the second set of justifications in vv. 16b-18 with their scriptural appeal to the holiness of God and the mandate for holiness by His people. For the Corinthian Christians as the temple of God to allow corrupting pagan influences is no different than setting up idols inside God’s temple. The use of *ναὸς* rather than the more common *ἱερόν* for temple stresses the inner sanctuary where God’s presence was to be found. The placing of idols into the presence of a holy God is utterly incompatible, as every ancient Jew knew very well. But this was what some of the Corinthians were trying to do by allowing corrupting pagan thinking into the life of the church.

10.2.3.1.9.2.2 Foundational OT principles of holiness, 6:16b-18. The second *γὰρ* introduces the second set of justifying statements giving validity to the admonition in v. 14a. These statements grow out of some OT passages (note the Law and the Prophets as sources) that summarize a foundational truth of the Law of Moses. The distinctive way that Paul structures these is important to note. He introduces the allusions unusually with *καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι* which carries the English sense of “just as God meant when He said.”¹⁹¹ Thus the apostle does not intend to quote from the OT, but rather to summarize a central religious principle of the life of God’s people. This principle of holiness has continuing application to God’s new people, the people in the community of believers at Corinth.

Note the shift from the second person plural in the admonition (v. 14a) to the first person plural in the introductory formula of v. 16a. The ‘we’ means both Paul, his associates, and the Corinthian believers in an inclusive reference. Additionally note the justifying declaration *ἡμεῖς γὰρ ναὸς θεοῦ ἔσμεν ζῶντος, for we together are a temple of the living God.* In the collective oriented world of Paul, this asserts that the local community of gathered believers in the house churches represent the temple of God, rather than just individual believers.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹“His introductory formula, ‘As God said’, is found nowhere else in the NT but has a Qumran counterpart in CD 6:13; 8:9.2034 It is not unlike his own phraseology in 4:6, and in chaps. 3–6 he introduces quotations in various ways without restricting himself to any one formula.”²⁰³⁵ We do not need to suppose that he is dependent here on the terminology of Qumran.²⁰³⁶ [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), 477.

¹⁹²“Just as God may be said to live in a temple, so here he lives ‘in’ the Christian community, which is said to be God’s temple. Since the point in this context is that God lives ‘among’ the people in the community as a whole rather than living in the heart of each believer, the preposition *in* of RSV may be incorrectly understood to mean ‘in the individual’s heart.’ NJB captures the sense better: ‘I shall fix my home among them and live among them’ (so also

The image is ultimately derived from the organization structure of the camp of Israel in the wilderness where the tabernacle was set in the center of the camp with His people arranged in four groups of three tribes each circling the tabernacle where God's presence was found. This comes over into apostolic Christianity as God's presence being in the gathered house church groups standing as God's temple in visible expression in multiple locations. The idea of God's temple remains concrete and never fades into a vague abstract concept.¹⁹³

The second and third references to God's speaking -- λέγει κύριος and λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ -- come from the modified OT text at the conclusion of each section as markers of thought division, along with being a reminder of the divine source of these ideas.¹⁹⁴

GNC 'I will live in their midst and move among them'. [Roger L. Omanson and John Ellington, *A Handbook on Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 122.]

¹⁹³Interestingly, Jewish people in the second temple period never accepted the idea of God's presence on earth as being anywhere except in the temple in Jerusalem. From this temple alone God extends His authority over the entire material world. With its destruction by the Romans in 70 AD, the emerging Judaism gradually moved to a similar idea to that of Christians of the gathered synagogue communities representing the presence of God on earth. It took until the middle of the second century for this way of thinking to take root in Judaism. This shift came about with the shift in thinking about the Friday evening synagogue gathering of Jews. Prior to 70 AD the sabbath gathering in the synagogue was in no way a 'worship service.' Rather it was strictly for reading and understanding the Torah along with offering up prescribed prayers. By the end of the second century, however, the synagogue had become the center of religious worship for Jews, since no longer was the worship center of the Jerusalem temple available.

¹⁹⁴Verses 16–18 form a catena of OT quotations, drawn from the Law and the Prophets (both 'former' and 'latter') of the Hebrew canon.

Verse	Quotation Formulas	Phrase	OT Source (LXX)
16	καθώς εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι	ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς	Lev. 26:11 καὶ θήσω σκῆνην μου ἐν ὑμῖν ...
		καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω,	Lev. 26:12 καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω ἐν ὑμῖν
		καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῶν θεός,	καὶ ἔσομαι ὑμῶν θεός,
		καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται	καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ
		μου λαός.	μου λαός.
			Ezek. 37:27 καὶ ἔσται ἡ κατασκήνωσίς μου ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς θεός, καὶ αὐτοὶ μου ἔσονται λαός.
17	δοῦ		Isa. 52:11 ἀπόστητε ἀπόστητε

Because this use of the OT is a conflation of texts from a variety of passages, the introductory markers reminding his readers that these principles ultimately come from God.

What we encounter here is an example of Paul's very Jewish pesher hermeneutical technique in which a number of OT texts are brought together to make a central point. Appropriate modifications are made in order to assert the uniformity of viewpoint of the texts. These don't change the meaning of the source texts, but do bring out the central foundational truths that justify linking them together.¹⁹⁵

Verse	Quotation Formulas	Phrase	OT Source (LXX)
	λέγει κύριος	ἀφορίσθητε καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄπτεσθε	ἐξέλθατε ἐκεῖθεν καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄπτεσθε, ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν καὶ μέσου αὐτῆς
18		καὶ ἔσομαι ὑμῖν εἰς πατέρα	Ezek. 20:34 καὶ ἐξάξω ὑμᾶς ἐκ τῶν λαῶν καὶ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς, καὶ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς ἐκ τῶν χωρῶν οὓς διεσκορπίσθητε ἐν αὐταῖς
		καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ εἰς υἱούς	2 Kgdms. 7:14 ἐγὼ ἔσομαι αὐτῶ εἰς πατέρα, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι εἰς υἱόν.
		καὶ θυγατέρας,	Isa. 43:6 ἄγε τοὺς υἱοὺς μου ἀπὸ γῆς πόρρωθεν καὶ τὰς θυγατέρας μου ἀπ' ἄκρων τῆς γῆς.
		λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ	2 Kgdms. 7:8 καὶ νῦν τάδε ἐρεῖς τῷ δούλῳ μου Δαυὶδ Τάδε λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ

[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), 495–496.]

¹⁹⁵The three quotations in vv. 16–18, two of them being composite citations,⁹¹ well illustrate Paul's pesher hermeneutical technique, in which he cites an OT passage or combination of passages, and interprets it from the viewpoint of the messianic age (cf. 6:2) and with some alteration to the wording,⁹² in order to show its contemporary application and relevance.⁹³ For instance, 'God's command to Israel concerning Babylon (αὐτῆς) is now applied to the relation of Christians with unbelievers (αὐτῶν); the promise given to Israel 'personified' in Solomon (αὐτῶ ... αὐτός) is fulfilled in true Israel, the members of Christ's body (ὑμῖν ... ὑμεῖς)' (Ellis 144). [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*: Page 113



	γάρ	
126	ἡμεῖς ναὸς θεοῦ ἔσμεν ζῶντος,	
	καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι	
a		ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς
		καὶ
b		ἐμπεριπατήσω
		καὶ
c		ἔσομαι αὐτῶν θεός
		καὶ
d		αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μου λαός.
6.17		διὸ
e		ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν
		καὶ
f		ἀφορίσθητε,
	λέγει κύριος,	
		καὶ
g		ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄπτεσθε·
h		κἀγὼ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς
6.18		καὶ
i		ἔσομαι ὑμῖν εἰς πατέρα
		καὶ
j		ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι
		εἰς υἱοὺς καὶ θυγατέρας,
	λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ.	

The ten OT affirmations fall into a twofold division with the inferential conjunction διὸ (v. 17) as the division marker. The four core principles (v. 16; #s 126a-d) carry implications for action by God's people (vv. 17; #s 126e-j). Thus the shift from the future indicative verbs to the imperative verbs.

Principles (v. 16): ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῶν θεός καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μου λαός. *I will dwell among them and I will move about and I will be their God and they will be My people.* Here Paul dominantly follows the LXX translation of Lev. 26:11-12 but with a shift from second person plural (ἐν ὑμῖν; ὑμῶν θεός) to third person plural (ἐν αὐτοῖς; αὐτῶν θεός) pronoun references.¹⁹⁶ The influence of Ezek. 37:27 is evident here.¹⁹⁷ Both the Law of Moses and the Prophets affirm God's promise of God to covenant Israel. This Paul now sees as applying to the new community of God through Christ. When God includes someone in His people, He is committed to them and their welfare. The heart of this promise (note Paul's label τὰς ἐπαγγελίας, *the promises*, in 7:1) is not to

be an absentee god, but instead to manifest His divine Presence in their midst. They form the new temple of God as a community of believers. But this is the presence of an utterly holy God, and that carries serious implications for His people.

Implications (vv. 17-18). 17 διὸ ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν καὶ ἀφορίσθητε, λέγει κύριος, καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄπτεσθε· κἀγὼ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς 18 καὶ ἔσομαι ὑμῖν εἰς πατέρα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι εἰς υἱοὺς καὶ θυγατέρας, λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ. 17 *Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, 18 and I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.* Now Paul switches over to a modified form of Isa. 52:11.¹⁹⁸ The Isaiah text announces the end of the exile and the return of the remnant of Israelites back to their homeland and Jerusalem.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸Isa. 52:11 LXX. 11 ἀπόστητε ἀπόστητε ἐξέλθατε ἐκεῖθεν καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄπτεσθε, ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῆς ἀφορίσθητε, οἱ φέροντες τὰ σκεύη κυρίου·†

11 *Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of it, purify yourselves, you who carry the vessels of the Lord.*

¹⁹⁹“After inserting διὸ Paul cites a modified form of Isa. 52:11 (LXX) (see the earlier chart) which reads: ‘Depart, depart, come out from there and do not touch what is unclean. Come out from her [Babylon], be separate, you who carry the vessels of the LORD.’ The twice-repeated ‘Depart, depart’ is the last of four such repetitions⁶⁷ which are God’s responses to the human appeal to him, ‘Awake, awake! Clothe yourself with strength, O arm of the LORD’ (51:9). In Isaiah 52 God addresses the exiles in Babylon, announcing to them the ‘good news’ of their return to Jerusalem from exile, that is, their ‘redemption’ (52:3, 9). ἐξέλθατε occurs twice in 52:11, once followed by ἐκεῖθεν (‘from there’) and once

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), 511.]

¹⁹⁶Lev. 26:11-12 LXX. 11 καὶ θήσω τὴν διαθήκην μου ἐν ὑμῖν, καὶ οὐ βδελύξεται ἡ ψυχὴ μου ὑμᾶς·† 12 καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ ἔσομαι ὑμῶν θεός, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μου λαός·†

11 *I will place my dwelling in your midst, and I shall not abhor you. 12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people.*

¹⁹⁷Ezek. 37:27 LXX. 27 καὶ ἔσται ἡ κατασκήνωσις μου ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς θεός, καὶ αὐτοὶ μου ἔσονται λαός·†

27 *My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*



The implications both to ancient Israel and later to the Corinthian believers are that God is holy, His dwelling place on earth absolutely must not be corrupted by an unholy people, and that to be His people requires a commitment to this principle of holiness.

In the admonitions of v. 17 the demand is made for God's people to separate themselves from pagans: ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν καὶ ἀφορίσθητε, λέγει κύριος, **come out from among them and be separated, says the Lord.** In Isaiah this referred to the Babylonians and their religious practices. For the Corinthians it meant the pagan influences surrounding them in Corinth. For the exiled Israelites such was very challenging. They mostly were second generation exiles after 70 years of captivity. Babylon and Babylonian ways were 'home.' Jerusalem and the Promised Land were more religious fantasy and dreams, than reality. Consequently, in actuality only a small portion of the Jewish exiles actually left Babylon and returned back to Jerusalem and the Promised Land. But God through the prophet Isaiah admonished the Jewish exiles to return, but on His conditions of purging themselves of the corrupting influences found in Babylon. The third admonition, καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἅπτεσθε, **and the unclean do not touch,** reflects also the language of religious purity so central to the Torah of the OT, with special emphasis upon **avoiding idolatry.**²⁰⁰ **Babylonian idolatry was to be totally left** by ἐκ μέσου αὐτῆς [= Βαβυλωνίως; cf. Isa. 48:20]. Paul opted for the second ἐξέλθατε where the more specific αὐτῆς could be appropriately adapted to the Corinthian situation by being changed to αὐτῶν (= the ἄπιστοι of 6:14; cf. ἀπίστου, 6:15).⁶⁸ Also, by reproducing the second ἐξέλθατε he could place the intervening phrase καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἅπτεσθε that related to things ([τὸ] ἀκαθάρτου) after the two imperatives that related to people (αὐτῶν).⁶⁹ In its original context Isa. 52:11 was addressed to the nation of Israel as represented by the priests and Levites, 'you who carry the vessels of the LORD' that had been taken to Babylon (Ezra 1:7–11; 2 Chron. 36:10). By omitting the phrase οἱ φέροντες τὰ σκεύη κυρίου Paul makes the three imperatives applicable to Christians." [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), 507–508.]

²⁰⁰ Like the negated present imperative in v. 14a (see above), μὴ ἅπτεσθε could be enjoining an end to an action ('Stop touching,' Williams)⁷⁴ or the perpetual avoidance of an action ('Do not touch what is unclean' = 'touch nothing unclean' [many EVV] = 'touch no unclean thing,' NIV). In Isa. 52:11 [τοῦ] ἀκαθάρτου, 'what is unclean' (BAGD 29a), stands in contrast to τὰ σκεύη κυρίου, 'the (sacred) vessels of the LORD' and therefore probably refers to pagan religious objects associated with the idolatry of Babylon (cf. Gen. 31:19; 35:2; Josh. 24:23). In 2 Cor. 6:17, where the term stands alone, it bears a moral sense and refers to any association with paganism, and idolatry in particular, that might compromise Christian adherence to righteousness (cf. 6:14). As in the phrase παντὸς μολυσμοῦ in 7:1, the reference is non-specific, and while the whole injunction, 'touch nothing unclean,' would include the shunning of idolatry (1 Cor. 10:14), it is closer to 1 Thess. 5:22, 'Shun every form of evil.' Just as the priests and Lev-

ites and the Israelites in general were to leave behind in Babylon anything that might compromise their purity, so the Corinthians were to repudiate Gentile uncleanness of any type.⁷⁵ This apostolic command, then, looks back to 6:14a and forward to 7:1." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 508.]

behind in Babylon by the returning Jewish exiles. All things pagan must likewise be left behind when coming to Christ and into the community of believers.

In vv. 17b-18, the apostle turns mainly to Ezek. 20:34 (LXX) for the first of three promises.²⁰¹ The Ezekiel passage also was addressed to returning exiles from Babylon.²⁰² Also the influence of 2 Sam. 7:14 is noticeable here as well particularly in v. 18.²⁰³ This passage is a part of 2 Sam. 7:11-16, known as the 'Nathan oracle,' where God promises a continuing lineage to David, which Paul sees as being fulfilled in Christ and **the establishment of the Christian community.**²⁰⁴

ites and the Israelites in general were to leave behind in Babylon anything that might compromise their purity, so the Corinthians were to repudiate Gentile uncleanness of any type.⁷⁵ This apostolic command, then, looks back to 6:14a and forward to 7:1." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 508.]

²⁰¹ **Ezek. 20:34 LXX.** 34 καὶ ἐξάξω ὑμᾶς ἐκ τῶν λαῶν καὶ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς ἐκ τῶν χωρῶν, οὗ διεσκορπίσθητε ἐν αὐταῖς, ἐν χειρὶ κραταιᾷ καὶ ἐν βραχίονι ὑψηλῷ καὶ ἐν θυμῷ κεχυμένῳ·†

34 I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out;

²⁰² καὶ γὰρ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς derives from Ezek. 20:34 (LXX)77 and is the first of three divine promises that presuppose compliance with the preceding three imperatives (καί, 'then,' expressing a result; cf. BAGD 392 s.v. καὶ I.2.f.). If καὶ γὰρ (= καὶ ἐγὼ by crasis) results from the union of the καὶ of Ezek. 20:34b and the ἐγὼ of 2 Kgdms. 7:14a,⁷⁸ Paul has neatly coalesced the two passages. As was the case with Isa. 52:11, this phrase, 'then I will welcome you,'⁷⁹ occurs in a context where Yahweh promises to rescue his people from exile. 'I will bring you out from the nations, and I will gather you (καὶ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς) from the countries where you were scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with outpoured wrath' (Ezek. 20:34, LXX). Significantly, the emphasis on the wrath of God as effecting the judgment and purification of his redeemed people that is so pronounced in Ezek. 20:34–38 is noticeably absent from the Pauline passage, where the emphasis rests on the warm welcome that God promises to give those who have separated themselves from pagan ways. God's approval of his people is dependent on their obedience to his commands. Separation from the world (6:14, 17a–c) leads to fellowship with God (6:17d–18) (cf. Jas. 4:4)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 509.]

²⁰³ **2 Sam. 7:14 LXX.** 14 ἐγὼ ἔσομαι αὐτῷ εἰς πατέρα, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι εἰς υἱόν· καὶ ἐὰν ἔλθῃ ἡ ἀδικία αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐλέγξω αὐτὸν ἐν ῥάβδῳ ἀνδρῶν καὶ ἐν ἀφαῖς υἱῶν ἀνθρώπων·†

34 I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out;

²⁰⁴ In 2 Sam. 7:11–16, the heart of the so-called 'Nathan oracle,' God promises to David a royal dynasty that will last forever, including a special father-son relationship to Solomon and successive Davidic kings (2 Sam. 7:14). This unique divine-human



One should note that the image of ναός, temple, has now merged into family or people. The believers collectively not only stand as the dwelling place of God's Presence on earth, but also as God's family, His people in this world. The final marker λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ, *says the Lord Almighty*, is picked up from the beginning of the Nathan oracle in 2 Sam. 7:8.²⁰⁵

10.2.3.1.9.3 Implication, 7:1. Ταύτας οὖν ἔχοντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας, ἀγαπητοί, καθαρίσωμεν ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος, ἐπιτελοῦντες ἀγιωσύνην ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ. *Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and of spirit, making holiness perfect in the fear of God.*

7:1 οὖν
 Ταύτας ἔχοντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας,
 ἀγαπητοί,
127 καθαρίσωμεν ἑαυτοὺς
 ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος,
 ἐπιτελοῦντες ἀγιωσύνην
 ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ.

The inferential conjunction now οὖν brings out the point made especially in the OT texts of vv. 16b-18 in a manner similar to the role of διὸ in v. 17a. Verse one essentially returns to the point of the beginning admonition Μὴ γίνεσθε ἑτεροζυγοῦντες ἀπίστοις in v. 16a. The core admonition **καθαρίσωμεν ἑαυτοὺς**, *let us cleanse ourselves*, plays off especially the OT third admonition,

relationship, first promised to David's offspring and later extended to include the whole nation (Jer. 31:9, 'I am Israel's father, and Ephraim is my firstborn son'), now finds its fulfillment, Paul asserts, in the filial relationship of the Christian community to God as Father.⁸⁵ There is still only one Father, but now there are many sons. Then to show that women and girls have parity of status in God's family with men and boys (cf. Gal. 3:28), Paul adds 'and daughters' to the phrase 'you will be sons to me.'⁸⁶ καὶ θυγατέρας probably stems from Isa. 43:6 (LXX),⁸⁷ which reads, 'Bring my sons from a distant land and my daughters from the ends of the earth.' This verse and the previous one refer to the second exodus, so that this addition to the quotation from 2 Sam. 7:14 has the effect of linking the Davidic promise with the "restoration" theology of Ezek. 20:34.⁸⁸ [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), 510.]

²⁰⁵Paul concludes his final quotation with the formula λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ, the expression used in 2 Sam. (Kgdms.) 7:8 at the beginning of the Nathan oracle: 'This is what (τάδε) the LORD Almighty says.' παντοκράτωρ is formed from πάντα and κρατῶν, 'laying hold of all things' or 'exercising power over all things' (cf. BDF §119[1])⁹⁰ so that it is virtually equivalent to ὁ παντοδύναμος (cf. Wisd. 7:23), 'the One who is able to do all things,' 'the all-powerful One.' That κύριος here refers to God the Father (not Christ) is evident from the two uses of θεός in v. 16 and the reference to fatherhood in v. 18 (Capes 114). [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 510–511.]

ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἅπτεσθε, *an impure thing do not touch*, in v. 17. He states the demand as an inclusive requirement via the use of the first person plural, including himself with the Corinthians. The use of the vocative ἀγαπητοί, *beloved*, underscores this as well as signals a pastoral concern of Paul for his readers at Corinth. The image of cleaning oneself up is linked to purity, first of God and then that expected of the people of God, which is central to the OT allusions in vv. 16b-18, as well as the series of rhetorical questions in vv. 14b-16a.²⁰⁶ The Corinthian believers, especially the non-Jewish segment, had to make serious transitions out of their pagan background with their coming into Christianity.

Very high moral standards now became critical to their religious orientation. But in Christianity the achieving of those values took on a hugely different direction than from Judaism. Thus the Jewish Christians had a big challenge facing them as well.

Becoming holy as a believer was unachievable from one's own efforts (cf. 5:16-21). Instead holiness came about through complete surrender of one's entire being to God through Christ. The perfect holiness of Christ shields the believer from the utter purity of God as absolute Light (cf. 5:21). But equally important is that this divine holiness increasingly is embedded in our life through the Holy Spirit so that we become holy through God's holiness in us. Our part in this is utter commitment to God lived out daily. Thus the corrupting influences from the sinful world around us must be both jettisoned out of our life and never allowed to become a part of who we are as a καινὴ κτίσις, *new creature*, in Christ (5:17). Thus Paul's twin admonitions in 6:14a and 7:1 both admonishes the Corinthians to distance themselves from pagan ways and it reminds them that he and his associates are on the right path in ministry.

The three expansion elements to the core admonition καθαρίσωμεν ἑαυτοὺς add richness to the expression:

a) **Ταύτας ἔχοντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας**, *since having these promises*, This causal participle phrase is located in the sentence pre-field both to add emphasis and to link the admonition back to 6:14-18. The demonstrative

²⁰⁶What is fascinating that stands historically behind this concept of purity is the social history of physical cleanliness in the three major cultures present in Corinth. The Romans were obsessed with *physical cleanliness* with the tradition of daily baths. The Greeks were far less concerned with physical cleanliness. And one of the major reasons for Romans condemning the Jews was that they seldom ever took baths. Consequently they smelled awful to the Romans who took this as a sign of ignorance by the Jewish people. The only exception to this among the Jews were aristocratic Jews who had adopted Roman ways, but this would have amounted to barely one percent of the Jewish population, even in the Diaspora.



pronoun Ταύτας has 6:14-18 as its antecedent and is the very first word of the entire sentence. It modifies ἐπαγγελίας and with the pronoun adjective first and its reference as last, the two also serve as boundary markers for the participle phrase. Conceptually the possession by the Corinthians of these promises especially from the OT scriptures becomes the motivating foundation for cleaning up one's life. That God is holy and expects holiness from those He calls his children pushes us to take the need cleansing action.

b) ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος, *from every defilement of flesh and spirit*. The required cleansing action centers in putting ourselves at distance ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ, *from every defilement*. The noun μολυσμός, only used here in the NT, comes from the verb μολύνω which means to make something dirty. Religious usage carries the idea of becoming ritually impure or defiled. The moral emphasis is central especially with the noun.²⁰⁷ The ancient Greek culture focused on the literal meaning of smearing something with dirt, although by the beginning of the Christian era the figurative idea of moral filth shows up in a few Greek writers. It was the Jewish use of the term that especially extended the word to the figurative meaning of getting dirty morally and ceremonially.²⁰⁸

The dual objective genitive case nouns σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος²⁰⁹ is one ancient Greek way of designating every aspect outwardly and inwardly.²¹⁰ The demand

²⁰⁷It occurs in the NT only at 2 C. 7:1: καθαρῶμεν ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος ἐπιτελοῦντες ἀγιωσύνην ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ. As one would expect in the NT, the reference is to the moral defilement entailed by sharing a pagan way of life. The term is chosen in order to correspond to the earlier demand (6:14ff.) for separation from everything pagan." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 4:737.]

²⁰⁸The word [μολύνω] is rare in the LXX.1 It is used a. lit. of the feet in Cant. 5:3 (הַיָּגוּ), clothes in Gn. 37:31 (לְבָשֵׁי); Is. 59:3 (נִי לְאֵל). b. Fig. of cultic defilement, Jer. 23:11 (הַיָּהוּ) of a profaned priest, Is. 65:4 (לֶחֶם) of a vessel defiled by unclean food, Zech. 14:2 (לְשׁוֹן) of the ravishing of women, Ez. 7:17; 21:12 (הַיָּהוּ).2 In the apocr. of physical soiling in Sir. 13:1 (pitch) and cultic desecration in Tob 3:15 (the name of God), 1 Esdr. 8:80 (the land), Macc. 1:37; 2 Macc. 6:2 (the sanctuary of God); 14:3 (μειομολυσμένος ἐν τοῖς τῆς ἀμιξίας χρόνοις, of participating in what is pagan); of moral staining in Sir. 22:13; 21:28 (ὁ ψιθυρίζων); cf. Test. A. 4:4 (τὴν ψυχὴν μολυνεῖ)." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 4:736.]

²⁰⁹This reflects the virtually universal dualistic understanding of humans across the ancient world. The more common σῶμα καὶ ψυχή, *body and soul*, in secular Greek expression is avoided by Paul because of the undesirable philosophical baggage the expression possessed. σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος also possessed more natural Jewish tones.

²¹⁰Some have argued that since Paul often sets the terms σὰρξ and πνεῦμα in opposition (e.g., Gal. 5:16-17) and would never call

is to keep one's complete life from getting soiled by paganism.²¹¹ In the background stands the corrupting influences of the Corinthian paganism that Paul sensed was still impacting the lives of many of the church members.

c) ἐπιτελοῦντες ἀγιωσύνην ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ, *while bringing holiness to completion by fearing God*. The present participle ἐπιτελοῦντες from ἐπιτελέω denotes a process of bringing something to completion or maturity. Its adverbial modification of καθαρῶμεν defines the context for the cleansing action demanded. Cleaning up one's entire life can only be done in the context of the process of bringing ἀγιωσύνην, *holiness / sanctification* to the level of full maturity. Again, as the apostle made crystal clear in his own example in 5:11-21, this is not achieved through human effort. In conversion God began a process of transformation of the believer into the full δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, *righteousness of God*. The cleaning up of both the inward and outward aspects of one's living²¹² becomes a life long pilgrimage of spiritual

for the cleansing of the σὰρξ, only its crucifixion (cf. Gal. 5:19-21, 24), the expression μολυσμός σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος, where σὰρξ and πνεῦμα are conjoined, cannot be Pauline.⁹⁸ But there is evidence in Paul's letters of a non-pejorative use of σὰρξ where it is synonymous with σῶμα⁹⁹ and of a popular, non-theological use of σὰρξ and πνεῦμα where they refer, in a complementary not anti-theological way, to the outward and inward aspects of the person.¹⁰⁰ So we propose that σαρκὸς and πνεύματος are objective genitives after μολυσμοῦ¹⁰¹ and refer to the whole person viewed physically and spiritually, outwardly and inwardly.¹⁰² Paul is indicating that both body and spirit are defiled by pagan practices. 1 Cor. 6:15-17 expresses a similar sentiment: to defile one's body in immorality is also to defile one's spirit.¹⁰³

"This urgent call to avoid both physical and spiritual defilement restates the earlier entreaties to repudiate unholy alliances (6:14) and to reject the pagan way of life (6:17, three imperatives). In all these cases Paul seems to have uppermost in his mind the danger that the Corinthian believers constantly faced of idolatrous associations that would jeopardize their devotion to Christ (cf. 11:3). In 7:1, however, he includes himself in the exhortation and expands it to incorporate the rejection of every possible form of defilement, idolatry or otherwise, that might harm the believer."

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 512-513.]

²¹¹"Body and spirit is literally 'flesh and spirit.' Here the reference is to the body and the human spirit. Taken together, body and spirit refer to the whole human being, the outward and inward aspects of one's being. The use of these two terms makes it perfectly clear that Paul has in mind something more than mere ritual purity, which is so prominent in the Old Testament." [Roger L. Omanson and John Ellington, *A Handbook on Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 124-125.]

²¹²This is the heart of the idea behind ἀγιωσύνη used both here and in Rom. 1:4. The idea is virtually a synonym to ἀγιότης used in 2 Cor. 1:12 and Heb. 3:4. The purity of God permeates the life



growth and maturation that happens only through ever deeper surrender of the individual to Christ's control.²¹³ An important aspect is the getting rid of the corrupting influences of the old life under the control of sin. Much of this old life is reflected in the pagan influences coming from the non-Christian world around the believer. These must be resisted. Where discovered in one's life, they must be surrendered to Christ immediately.

How is this surrender achieved? Put another way: What establishes this contextual action of completing sanctification? The final prepositional phrase ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ spells out the answer.²¹⁴ The idea is of profound awe and respect for God as reflected in full submission of one's life to Him. This sense is derived from the phrase τὸν φόβον τοῦ κυρίου, *the fear of the Lord* (5:11) / φόβος θεοῦ, *fear of God* (Rom. 3:18).²¹⁵ As numerous

of the believer thus making him acceptable to the holy Presence of God. The image of the Christian community as the temple of God (6:16b) is prominent here.

²¹³“Whether we render ἐπιτελοῦντες by ‘complete’ or ‘bring to completion’ or ‘make perfect,’¹⁰⁸ a process of sanctification (ἀγιωσύνη) is involved (note the present tense of the participle), not the acquisition of perfect holiness.¹⁰⁹ The same person who affirmed that he had ‘not yet reached perfection’ and that his calling was perpetually to ‘press forward’ (Phil. 3:12–14) would hardly envisage a permanent arrival at holiness in the present age. From 1 Thess. 3:13 it is clear that believers are ‘unblameable in holiness’ or ‘faultlessly pure’ (Goodspeed) only at the second advent.” [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), 513.]

²¹⁴“In the phrase ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ, the genitive is clearly objective, but the preposition may be taken in three ways:

(1) causal: ‘because we fear God’ (NLT), ‘out of reverence for God’ (NIV) (cf. Eph. 5:21);¹¹⁰

(2) circumstantial: ‘all the while reverencing God,’ ‘in an atmosphere of reverential fear for God’; or

(3) instrumental: ‘by reverence for God’ (Goodspeed); ‘by living in awe of God’ (GNB).

“A preference may be expressed for the third option. One would expect that in speaking of so crucial an issue as the perfecting of holiness, Paul would indicate the means by which it could be achieved. And certainly a reverential awe and holy dread (φόβος) before God¹¹¹ would promote the pursuit of holiness in thought and action, particularly if the expression φόβος θεοῦ alludes to the final judgment and human accountability to God (note the phrase φόβος κυρίου [= Christ] in 5:11 after 5:10, and the title κύριος παντοκράτωρ in 6:18).”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 514.]

²¹⁵“The ‘fear of God’ is a principle of life found in Jewish wisdom literature (Pss 2:11; 5:7; Prov 1:7, 29, 8:13; Eccl 12:13; Sir 1:11–30). It is not clear whether the ἐν, ‘in,’ suggests the sphere in which the perfecting of holiness takes place or the means by which it is accomplished.¹³⁰⁹ Probably it is the former, in light of our discussion in 2 Cor 5:11. But the ethical demand is not lost. Christians must fulfill both the negative (cleanse their flesh and spirit) and

uses of φόβος make very clear (e.g., Mt. 28:8; Mk. 4:41; Lk 1:12; 2:9; 5:26; 7:16; 8:37; Acts 5:5, 11; 9:31 et als.) that reverential fear comes from the overpowering Presence of Almighty God. When God comes into our daily living with our conscious awareness of His Presence, nothing but full surrender to Him is appropriate. In this surrender the purity of God advances into every aspect of our life not just momentarily but continuously. We are wondrously changed and transformed in the process. And this is not from our doing but from God's action in us!

10.2.3.1.10 Ministry as rejoicing, 7:2-16

2 Χωρήσατε ἡμᾶς· οὐδένα ἠδίκησαμεν, οὐδένα ἐφθείραμεν, οὐδένα ἐπλεονεκτήσαμεν. 3 πρὸς κατάκρισιν οὐ λέγω· προείρηκα γὰρ ὅτι ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν ἔστε εἰς τὸ συναποθανεῖν καὶ συζῆν. 4 πολλή μοι παρρησία πρὸς ὑμᾶς, πολλή μοι καύχησις ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν· πεπλήρωμαι τῇ παρακλήσει, ὑπερπερισσεύομαι τῇ χαρᾷ ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν.

5 Καὶ γὰρ ἐλθόντων ἡμῶν εἰς Μακεδονίαν οὐδεμίαν ἔσχηκεν ἄνεσιν ἢ σὰρξ ἡμῶν ἀλλ’ ἐν παντὶ θλιβόμενοι· ἔξωθεν μάχαι, ἔσωθεν φόβοι. 6 ἀλλ’ ὁ παρακαλῶν τοὺς ταπεινοὺς παρεκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ Τίτου, 7 οὐ μόνον δὲ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει ἧ παρεκλήθη ἐφ’ ὑμῖν, ἀναγγέλλων ἡμῖν τὴν ὑμῶν ἐπιπόθησιν, τὸν ὑμῶν ὄδυρμόν, τὸν ὑμῶν ζῆλον ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ ὥστε με μᾶλλον χαρῆσαι. 8 Ὅτι εἰ καὶ ἐλύπησα ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ, οὐ μεταμέλομαι· εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην, βλέπω [γὰρ] ὅτι ἡ ἐπιστολή ἐκείνη εἰ καὶ πρὸς ὥραν ἐλύπησεν ὑμᾶς, 9 νῦν χαίρω, οὐχ ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε ἀλλ’ ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε εἰς μετάνοιαν· ἐλυπήθητε γὰρ κατὰ θεόν, ἵνα ἐν μηδενὶ ζημιωθῆτε ἐξ ἡμῶν. 10 ἢ γὰρ κατὰ θεὸν λύπη μετάνοιαν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀμεταμέλητον ἐργάζεται· ἢ δὲ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη θάνατον κατεργάζεται. 11 ἰδοὺ γὰρ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ κατὰ θεὸν λυπηθῆναι πόσην κατειργάσατο ὑμῖν σπουδὴν, ἀλλ’ ἀπολογίαν, ἀλλ’ ἀγανάκτησιν, ἀλλὰ φόβον, ἀλλ’ ἐπιπόθησιν, ἀλλὰ ζῆλον, ἀλλ’ ἐκδίκησιν. ἐν παντὶ συνεστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς ἀγνοῦς εἶναι τῷ πράγματι. 12 ἄρα εἰ καὶ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, οὐχ ἔνεκεν τοῦ ἀδικήσαντος οὐδὲ ἔνεκεν τοῦ ἀδικηθέντος ἀλλ’ ἔνεκεν τοῦ φανερωθῆναι τὴν σπουδὴν ὑμῶν τὴν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. 13 διὰ τοῦτο παρακεκλήμεθα. Ἐπὶ δὲ τῇ παρακλήσει ἡμῶν περισσοτέρως μᾶλλον ἐχάρημεν ἐπὶ τῇ χαρᾷ Τίτου, ὅτι ἀναπέπαυται τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ πάντων ὑμῶν. 14 ὅτι εἴ τι αὐτῷ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κεκαύχημαι, οὐ κατησχύνθη, ἀλλ’ ὡς πάντα ἐν ἀληθείᾳ ἐλαλήσαμεν ὑμῖν, οὕτως καὶ ἡ καύχησις ἡμῶν ἢ ἐπὶ Τίτου ἀλήθεια ἐγενήθη. 15 καὶ τὰ σπλάγχνα

the positive (complete their holiness) duty.¹³¹⁰ Above all, Pauline believers are summoned to make good their profession by heeding Paul's apostolic entreaty and ‘becoming what they are’.” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 376.]

αὐτοῦ περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐστὶν ἀναμνησκομένου τὴν πάντων ὑμῶν ὑπακοήν, ὡς μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου ἐδέξασθε αὐτόν. 16 χαίρω ὅτι ἐν παντὶ θαρρῶ ἐν ὑμῖν.

2 Make room in your hearts for us; we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. 3 I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. 4 I often boast about you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with consolation; I am overjoyed in all our affliction.

5 For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted in every way—disputes without and fears within. 6 But God, who consoles the downcast, consoled us by the arrival of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was consoled about you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more. 8 For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it (though I did regret it, for I see that I grieved you with that letter, though only briefly). 9 Now I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance; for you felt a godly grief, so that you were not harmed in any way by us. 10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death. 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.

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

128^{7.2} **Χωρήσατε ἡμᾶς ·**
 129 **οὐδένα ἠδικήσαμεν,**
 130 **οὐδένα ἐφθείραμεν,**
 131 **οὐδένα ἐπλεονεκτήσαμεν.**
 7.3 πρὸς κατάκρισιν
 132 **οὐ λέγω ·**
 γὰρ
 133 **προεῖρηκα**
 ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν
ὅτι... ἐστε
 εἰς τὸ συναποθανεῖν
 καὶ
 συζῆν.
 134^{7.4} **πολλή μοι παρρησία πρὸς ὑμᾶς,**
 135 **πολλή μοι καύχησις ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ·**
 136 **πεπλήρωμαι τῇ παρακλήσει,**
 137 **ὑπερπερισεύομαι τῇ χαρᾷ**
 ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν.
 7.5 γὰρ
 Καὶ
 ἐλθόντων ἡμῶν
 εἰς Μακεδονίαν
 138 **οὐδεμίαν ἔσχηκεν ἄνεσιν ἢ σὰρξ ἡμῶν**
 ἀλλ'
 ἐν παντὶ
 139 **(ἐσμέν) θλιβόμενοι ·**
 ἔξωθεν μάχαι,
 ἔσωθεν φόβοι.
 7.6 ἀλλ'
ὁ παρακαλῶν τοὺς ταπεινοὺς
 140 **παρεκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς**
 ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ Τίτου,
 7.7 δὲ
 141 **(παρεκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς)**
 οὐ μόνον ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ
 ἀλλὰ
 καὶ ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει
 ἣ παρεκλήθη ἐφ' ὑμῖν,
 ἀναγγέλλων ἡμῖν τὴν ὑμῶν ἐπιπόθησιν,
 τὸν ὑμῶν ὀδυρμόν,
 τὸν ὑμῶν ζῆλον
 ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ
 ὥστε με μᾶλλον χαρῆναι.
 7.8 Ὅτι εἰ καὶ ἐλύπησα ὑμᾶς
 ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ,
 142 **οὐ μεταμέλομαι ·**
 [γὰρ]
 εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην,



143 βλέπω
 εἰ καὶ πρὸς ὦραν
 ὅτι ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἐκεῖνη...ἐλύπησεν ὑμᾶς,

7.9 νῦν

144 χαίρω,
 οὐχ ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε
 ἀλλ'
 ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε
 εἰς μετάνοιαν·
 γὰρ

145 ἐλυπήθητε
 κατὰ θεόν,
 ἵνα ἐν μηδενὶ ζημιωθῆτε ἐξ ἡμῶν.

7.10 γὰρ
 εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀμεταμέλητον

146 ἡ κατὰ θεὸν λύπη μετάνοιαν...ἐργάζεται·
 δὲ

147 ἡ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη θάνατον κατεργάζεται.

7.11 γὰρ
 ἰδοῦ

148 αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ κατὰ θεὸν λυπηθῆναι πόσην κατειργάσατο ὑμῖν σπουδὴν,
 ἀλλ' ἀπολογίαν,
 ἀλλ' ἀγανάκτησιν,
 ἀλλὰ φόβον,
 ἀλλ' ἐπιπόθησιν,
 ἀλλὰ ζῆλον,
 ἀλλ' ἐκδίκησιν.

ἐν παντὶ

149 συνεστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς
 ἄγνοους εἶναι
 τῷ πράγματι.

7.12 ἄρα
 εἰ καὶ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν,

150 (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.

7.13 διὰ τοῦτο

151 παρακεκλήμεθα.
 δὲ
 Ἐπὶ τῇ παρακλήσει ἡμῶν
 περισσοτέρως μᾶλλον

152 ἐχάρημεν
 ἐπὶ τῇ χαρᾷ Τίτου,
 ὅτι ἀναπέπαυται τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ
 | ἀπὸ πάντων ὑμῶν·
 7.14 | εἶ τι αὐτῷ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κεκαύχημαι,
 ὅτι...οὐ κατησχύνθην,
 ἀλλ'

the more to you, as he remembers the obedience of all of you, and how you welcomed him with fear and trembling. 16 I rejoice, because I have complete confidence in you.

Whoever would translate this pericope had better be well boned up on his / her Greek grammar. The severe complexity of the syntax here will test your skills with ancient Greek more severely than will just about any other passage in all of Paul's writings. The really knowledgeable commentators readily admit to the unusual challenges found here. In ancient Greek rhetorical categories, vv. 2-16 form a *narratio* within the larger *probatio* section of 2:1-9:5.²¹⁶ That is, in the offering of evidences of the genuineness of his ministry especially to the Corinthians, one important signal of that is the arrival of

²¹⁶“The *narratio* transition (7:2–16) within the *probatio* (2:1–9:5), according to Long, focuses upon ‘Titus’ report and Paul’s own confidence in the Corinthians.”¹³¹² The present passage resumes the plea of Paul found in 6:11–13.” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 379.]

ὡς πάντα ἐν ἀληθείᾳ ἐλαλήσαμεν ὑμῖν,
οὕτως
καὶ

153 ἡ καύχησις ἡμῶν . . . ἀλήθεια ἐγενήθη.

ἡ ἐπὶ Τίτου
7.15 καὶ
τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ

περισσοτέρως
εἰς ὑμᾶς

154 ἐστὶν ἀναμιμνησκομένου τὴν πάντων ὑμῶν ὑπακοήν,
ὡς μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου ἐδέξασθε αὐτόν.

155 7.16 χαίρω
ὅτι ἐν παντὶ θαρρῶ ἐν ὑμῖν.

much joy to the apostle concerning the Corinthians.

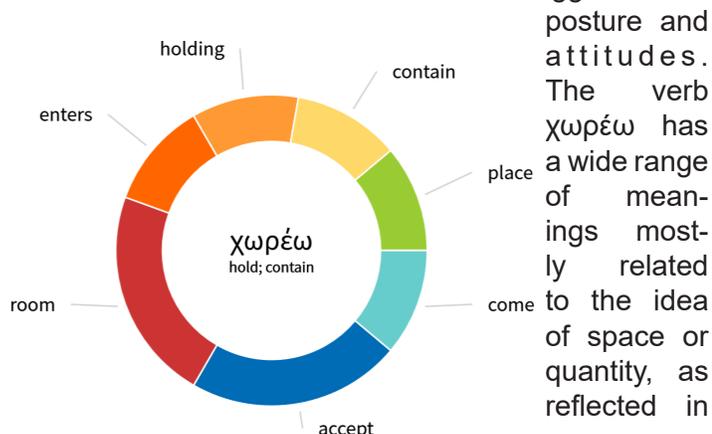
Although vv. 2-4 are often seen as a resumption of the need of warm relationships with the Corinthians stressed prior to 6:14, in reality the thrust of vv. 2-16 is considerably different from 5:11-6:13. It is better understood as additional defense of the genuineness of Paul's ministry, this time from personal experience in ministry both from the earlier letter sent to the church and its impact on the Corinthians as reported to Paul by Titus when he arrived in Macedonia from Corinth. It centers not so much on spiritual principle as on a specific stern action of the apostle toward the Corinthians and how God used this to turn the Corinthians away from the pagan influences of the city.

As the diagram illustrates, the internal structuring of ideas in vv. 2-16 is more challenging than we have thus far encountered inside Second Corinthians. Part of this is due to the narratio nature of the passage that narrates an event as evidence of some particular point being made by the author. One senses a great deal more emotion injected into the Greek text than is typical with Paul.

The following outlining of vv. 2-16 attempts to reflect this embedded structure inside the passage.

10.2.3.1.10.1 Appeal to the Corinthians, 7:2a.

Χωρήσατε ἡμᾶς, **Make room in your hearts for us.** The opening admonition Χωρήσατε ἡμᾶς literally urges the Corinthians to make Paul and his associates bigger in their posture and attitudes.



The verb χωρέω has a wide range of meanings mostly related to the idea of space or quantity, as reflected in

counts the historical event of Titus' arrival in Macedonia with good news about the situation in Corinth. Paul was overjoyed at hearing this news and additionally at being reassured by Titus' positive assessment of the Corinthian situation. Much of this centered in a letter that Paul had written to the Corinthians in which he had blistered them for their negative attitudes (cf. vv. 8-16). This now 'lost letter' was, however, used of God to confront the Corinthians with the wrongness of their stance. It played a pivotal role in pushing them into repentance for their attitude and actions against Paul.

10.2.3.1.10.2 Basis of the appeal, 7:2b-16. Two things matter here: Paul's already established relationship with the Corinthian (vv. 2b-4) and the report that Titus gave Paul when they met in Macedonia (vv. 5-16).

10.2.3.1.10.2.1 Paul's relationship with the Corinthians, 7:2b-4. οὐδένα ἠδικήσαμεν, οὐδένα ἐφθείραμεν, οὐδένα ἐπλεονεκτήσαμεν. 3 πρὸς κατάκρισιν οὐ λέγω· προείρηκα γὰρ ὅτι ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν ἐστε εἰς τὸ συναποθανεῖν καὶ συζῆν. 4 πολλή μοι παρρησία πρὸς ὑμᾶς, πολλή μοι καύχησις ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν· πεπλήρωμαι τῇ παρακλήσει, ὑπερπερισσεύομαι τῇ χαρᾷ ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν. *we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one.* 3 I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before *that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together.* 4 I often boast about you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with consolation; I am overjoyed in all our affliction.

He begins with three denials of having abused the Corinthians in any manner:

²¹⁷William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1094.

²¹⁸One secondary item to note that plays a role in understanding these verses is the shift between the first person singular "I" and the first person plural "we." Note the charting out of this:

"I" -- vv. 4, 7c-12a

"We"-- vv. 2-3, 5-7b, 12b-13

The 'we' references Paul and his associates and mostly designates general actions and reactions. The 'I' specifies Paul alone and relates to specific actions and attitudes that he takes responsibility for by himself.

129 οὐδένα ἠδικήσαμεν,
 no one have we wronged
 130 οὐδένα ἐφθείραμεν,
 no one have we corrupted
 131 οὐδένα ἐπλεονεκτήσαμεν.
 no one have we taken advantage of

Neither he nor any of his associates have done anything negative toward the Corinthians that would give them grounds for negative attitudes toward the apostle and his associates.²¹⁹ The three verbs ἀδικέω, φθείρω, and πλεονεκτέω with the accusative masculine negative pronoun - in front of each points to a tacit general denial of any kind of harm, rather than specific accusations made against him.²²⁰ The

²¹⁹“The fact that ἠδικήσαμεν, ‘we have wronged,’ ἐφθείραμεν, ‘we have ruined,’ ἐπλεονεκτήσαμεν, ‘we have taken advantage of,’ are all in the aorist tense (i.e., denoting point action in past time) and all are preceded by a negative substantive (οὐδένα, ‘no one’) may signify that in Paul’s mind there was not a single instance in which he harmed anyone. P. E. Hughes views this construction as pointing to a definite time when Paul was in Corinth.¹³²⁶ No doubt Paul is reacting to charges against him, the specifics of which are contained in 7:2b. This threefold denial of Paul, highlighted by the placing of οὐδένα, ‘no one,’ before each of the aorists, is an attempt to convince the Corinthians that there is no reason for them to be estranged from him.¹³²⁷” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 382–383.]

²²⁰“We might have expected a γάρ after the first οὐδένα, but by this asyndeton Paul perhaps betrays his quickening pace of dictation and his eagerness for full reconciliation.³ Notable too is the repeated οὐδένα and the successive aorists which could point to a single occasion or to three separate occasions, but, seen as consecutive aorists, probably have reference to no particular occasion, but view Paul’s past relations with the Corinthians summarily; thus ‘on no occasion did I wrong, corrupt, or defraud anyone.’ Paul could be defending himself against charges of a general or a specific nature. If general, the three verbs could be almost synonymous, describing Paul’s scrupulous respect of the Corinthians’ proper rights.⁴ On the other hand, if Paul is responding to particular accusations, οὐδένα ἠδικήσαμεν could allude to a charge that he had been too stern in dealing with the incestuous man of 1 Cor. 5:1–13 or with the offender mentioned in 2 Cor. 2:5–11; 7:12 (where the same verb is used, τοῦ ἀδικήσαντος). φθείρω here will mean either ‘ruin financially’⁵ or ‘corrupt’ in the matter of doctrine or morals. Correspondingly, behind οὐδένα ἐφθείραμεν may lie the charge that Paul had brought economic ruin on some believers at Corinth by insisting that certain business associations or practices were incompatible with Christian standards (cf. 1 Cor. 6:7; 15:33) or that Paul’s teaching on freedom in Christ had led some down the road of libertinism (cf. 1 Cor. 6:12–20). As for the third denial, οὐδένα ἐπλεονεκτήσαμεν, the twofold use of the same verb (πλεονεκτέω, ‘take advantage of,’ ‘exploit,’ ‘defraud’) in 12:17–18 in connection with accusations of financial exploitation, strongly suggests that the underlying charge may have been one of financial manipulation, perhaps in relation to the collection for the Jerusalem church (cf. 8:20–21).⁶” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 517.

tendency of a few commentators to assume specific charges is built more off speculation than any clear evidence.

133 γάρ
 προείρηκα
 ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν
 ὅτι... ἐστε
 εἰς τὸ συναποθανεῖν
 καὶ
 συζῆν.
 134 7.4 πολλή μοι παρρησία πρὸς ὑμᾶς,
 135 πολλή μοι καύχησις ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν·
 136 πεπλήρωμαι τῆ παρακλήσει,
 ὑπερπερὶσσεύομαι τῆ χαρᾶ
 ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν.

In vv. 3-4, the apostle shifts over to the first person singular in order to take personal responsibility for his comments. First, he qualifies what is intended by the previous three denials: πρὸς κατάκρισιν οὐ λέγω, **for condemnation I am not speaking**. That is, his words (in 2b) should not be taken as condemnation²²¹ of the Corinthians.²²² This is then followed a series of justifying

²²¹κατάκρισις, εὖς, ἡ (s. two prec. entries and next; Vett. Val. 108, 4; 117, 35; Syntipas P. 43, 11 θεόθεν κ. AcThom 84 [Aa II/2 P. 200, 9]; 128 [P. 236, 20]; 135 [P. 242, 10]; τοῦ ὄψεως κ. Theoph. Ant. 2, 23 [P. 56, 10]; Iren.; Did.) a **judicial verdict involving a penalty, condemnation** κατάκρισιν ἔχειν τινί bring condemnation for someone 2 Cl 15:5. πρὸς κ. οὐ λέγω I do not say this to condemn **2 Cor 7:3**. Of Mosaic cult and legislation: ἡ διακονία τῆς κατακρίσεως the ministry of condemnation (s. διακονία 3) **3:9**.—DELG s.v. κρίνω. M-M. TW

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 519.]

²²²“πρὸς κατάκρισιν οὐ λέγω, ‘I do not say this to condemn you.’ See Note a for this literary figure. It seems safe to assume that Paul realized that his previous work in Corinth had not been wasted on all. He was hoping that a relationship still existed between a father and his children (referring back to 6:13). Paul’s defense of his ministry has been in response to the attack of his opponents. But the response had been made as much to the Corinthians as to anyone, so as to keep the relationship with them in full view. This is what Paul cherished most of all. While the apostle has presented an apology in order to win back the hearts of the Corinthians, this statement was necessitated by an attempt on the part of his adversaries to discredit Paul. Since Paul has learned from Titus (7:7–16) of the Corinthians’ concern for him, he does not want to jeopardize this happy turn of events, and the bonheur, ‘advantage,’ thereby created. Though he has been hurt by the Corinthians, nevertheless he does not consider them his enemies. Rather, Paul wants to remind his audience that he is not condemning them (κατάκρισις, ‘condemnation,’ a forensic term; cf. 1 Cor 6:4). Since 7:2 probably



assertions still dominated by the first person singular perspective:

How far back προείρηκα, *I spoke previously*, goes back is not clear. For certain it reaches back to 6:11-13,²²³ and possibly to the last time Paul visited Corinth as well. His frank speaking to them came out of loving compassion for them, not out of spite or revenge for the wrongs dumped upon him. Remember the volitional meaning of the figurative use of καρδιά. Thus for Paul and his associates to have the Corinthians ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν, *in our hearts*, signaled clear, genuine commitment to the welfare of the Corinthians. The objective of this commitment to the Corinthians is spelled out with the purpose infinitive taken from Greek philosophy as well as from the OT: εἰς τὸ συναποθανεῖν καὶ συζῆν, *to die together and to live together*.²²⁴ His commitment to the Corinthians was unconditional. They should recognize this by now.

He continues his positive affirmation of them with four assertions in v. 4:

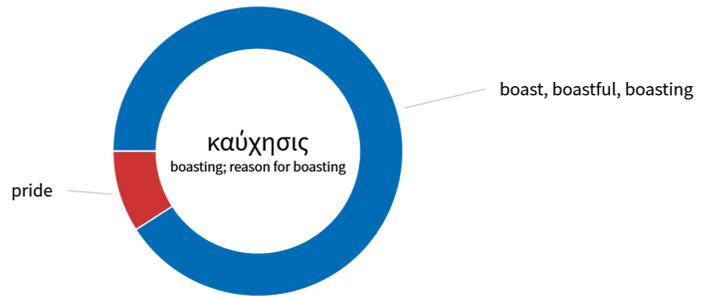
134^{7,4} πολλή μοι παρρησία πρὸς ὑμᾶς,
Much confidence from me toward you,

alludes to the insinuations of the false apostles,¹³⁴⁴ who were trading on Paul's severity, he goes out of his way to explain that the target of his wrath is not the Corinthians. Paul is seeking to clear himself, not to accuse the Corinthians.¹³⁴⁵ This chapter may well be ground plan for the more vigorous attack on his traducers in chaps. 10–13, as a more threatening situation emerged (11:4).” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 384–385.]

²²³**2 Cor. 6:11-13.** 11 Τὸ στόμα ἡμῶν ἀνέφηνεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, Κορίνθιοι, ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν πεπλάτυνται· 12 οὐ στενοχωρεῖσθε ἐν ἡμῖν, στενοχωρεῖσθε δὲ ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχθοις ὑμῶν· 13 τὴν δὲ αὐτὴν ἀντιμισθίαν, ὡς τέκνοις λέγω, πλατύνθητε καὶ ὑμεῖς.

11 We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. 12 There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. 13 In return—I speak as to children—open wide your hearts also.

²²⁴“He now extends and deepens this commitment to them by relating to what extent he will go to preserve the relationship intact. συναποθνήσκω, ‘die together,’¹³⁴⁶ and συζῶ, ‘live together,’ are two verbs that both tell how much the Corinthians mean to Paul. At first glance, this is not necessarily a thought that originated in Christian circles. Horace wrote of Lydia: *Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens*, ‘with you I would love to live, with you I would gladly die.’¹³⁴⁷ And Electra professes a similar sentiment to Orestes: σὺν σοὶ καὶ θανεῖν αἰρήσομαι καὶ ζῆν, ‘with you I shall choose to die and live.’¹³⁴⁸ But a closer parallel is Ittai’s protestation to David: ‘wherever my lord shall be, whether for death or for life [ἐὰν εἰς θάνατον καὶ ἐὰν εἰς ζωὴν], there also will your servant be’ (2 Sam 15:21 LXX).¹³⁴⁹ In a different context,¹³⁵⁰ Paul sees this thought as grounded in Christ and raised to a higher plane.¹³⁵¹ It is doubtful that Paul is speaking in necessarily theological terms here. Though he may be thinking of the concept of death and resurrection,¹³⁵² more likely he is simply explaining the degree of his love.¹³⁵³” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 385.]



135 πολλή μοι καύχησις ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ·
Much pride from me for you
136 πεπλήρωμαι τῇ παρακλήσει,
I am filled with encouragement
137 ὑπερπερισεσέομαι τῇ χαρᾷ
I am overjoyed with joy
in all our affliction.

His commitment to the Corinthians was deep and often expressed to others. The first two elliptical declarations (#s 134-135) heighten the expression of his positive feeling about the Corinthians, particularly with the quantitative adjective πολλή placed first in the parallel expressions. The nouns παρρησία and καύχησις, although not synonyms, are closely linked in meaning. The core meaning of παρρησία (noun) and παρρησιάζομαι (verb) has to do with courageous speaking even to censure others considered as friends. Then καύχησις²²⁵ speaks to an inner pride that can be expressed outwardly, often negatively²²⁶ in the English language sense of self boasting.²²⁷ On the pos-

²²⁵See the word group καυχᾶμαι, καύχημα, καύχησις, ἐγκανχᾶμαι, κατακαυχᾶμαι for the larger picture. [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:645.]

²²⁶This negative perspective, which is condemned in the NT, arises overwhelmingly from comparisons of oneself to others. This Paul refuses to do and instead centers on what has been accomplished due to the calling and working of God. He compares himself against himself in regard to how God has been able to work in and through him. Thus καύχησις arises out of πίστις, not out of self effort. That is, the more surrendered to Christ he is the more God can do and thus the deeper his καύχησις.

²²⁷“*The Basic Christian Attitude to Boasting.* In the NT καυχᾶσθαι (καύχημα, καύχησις) is characteristically used almost exclusively by Paul alone, in whom it is very common.³⁵ For Paul καυχᾶσθαι discloses the basic attitude of the Jew to be one of self-confidence which seeks glory before God and which relies upon itself. For this reason he sets in contrast to καυχᾶσθαι the attitude of → πίστις which is appropriate to man and which is made possible, and demanded, by Christ. It is worth noting that the first question after the first dogmatic exposition of χωρὶς νόμου and διὰ πίστεως (R. 3:21–26) is: ποῦ οὖν ἡ καύχησις; — ἐξεκλείσθη (v. 27). And the proof from Scripture begins with the statement that Abraham has no καύχημα before God (4:1f.).³⁶

“Paul notes that the boasting in God and the Law which Judaism requires has been perverted into an ἐπαναπαύεσθαι νόμῳ (R. 2:17, 23). This καυχᾶσθαι is in truth a πεποιθῆναι ἐν σαρκί (Phil.

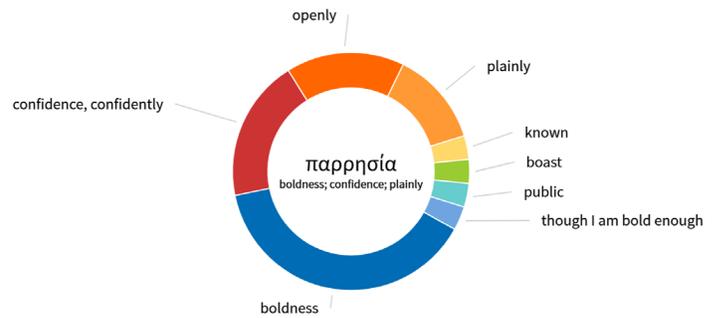


itive side, the idea centers on an inner sense of well being that surfaces as praise -- for Paul²²⁸ -- given to

3:3 f.). For Paul then, as for the OT and Philo, the element of trust contained in *καυχᾶσθαι* is primary.³⁷ This means that self-confidence is radically excluded from *καυχᾶσθαι ἐν τῷ θεῷ*, and there is only one legitimate *καυχᾶσθαι ἐν τῷ θεῷ*, namely, *διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* (R. 5:11). For in Christ God has brought to nothing all the greatness of both Jews and Gentiles (1 C. 1:25–31): ὅπως μὴ καυχήσηται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ (v. 29; cf. 2 C. 10:17); the saying in Jer. 9:22 f. is thus fulfilled (v. 31).³⁸ Hence the believer strictly knows only a *καυχᾶσθαι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* (Phil. 3:3), and this means that he has abandoned all self-boasting (Phil. 3:7–10), that he has accepted the cross of Christ, and that he says: ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι’ οὗ ἐμοὶ κόσμος ἐσταύρωται κἀγὼ κόσμῳ (Gl. 6:14).”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:648–649.]

²²⁸“The basic rejection of self-glorifying is not contradicted by passages in which Paul boasts of his work. When he boasts of the strength of a congregation as compared with others (2 C. 7:4, 14; 8:24; 9:2f.), this is not really self-glorifying. There is simply expressed in it his confidence in the congregation.⁴² Such mutual trust is not ruled out by faith; on the contrary, it is promoted in the fellowship of faith. It is not the self-glorifying of self-established man. The *καυχᾶσθαι* in which it finds expression stands in no contradiction to the *καυχᾶσθαι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*. Paul is well aware that the *καύχησις* which his apostolic activity confers on him is grounded only in what Christ does through him (R. 15:17 f.; 1 C. 15:10). He does not earn God’s favour by the results of his missionary work, but vice versa. For this reason, on the one occasion when he speaks with emotion of his *καύχησις*,⁴³ he adds at once: ἦν ἔχω ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν. Hence the *καύχησις* is strictly limited to the divinely imposed confines of his activity, 2 C. 10:13. That self-confidence is not herein expressed may be seen clearly from the fact that Paul does not attain to this boasting by comparing his work with that of others. It is not, then, the boasting of the arrogance which has more to show than others, 2 C. 10:12–16. As Paul rejects *συνιστάνειν ἑαυτόν*, 2 C. 3:1; 5:12; 10:18, and as he sees himself to be recommended by the fact that Christ works through him, 2 C. 3:2 f., and God commends him, 2 C. 10:18, as he can commend himself only by his proclamation of the truth, 2 C. 4:2, or paradoxically by the sufferings which envelop the greatness of his ministry, 2 C. 6:4–10, so he opposes the *καυχᾶσθαι* of his opponents which takes its strength from comparison with others. He argues that he measures himself only by himself, and therewith by the measure which God Himself has given him, 2 C. 10:12 f. This is no contradiction.⁴⁴ It is a genuinely Pauline thought which underlies the whole discussion in 2 C. 2:14–7:4. This thought is that the judgment of an apostle must be by the standard of his commission or office. Measuring by oneself is thus comparison of achievement with the divinely given task. But the measure of this is the *δύναμις* which works in the apostle, 2 C. 6:7; 13:4, and which may be seen in the results of his activity. Thus measuring by oneself implies assessment of *καυχᾶσθαι* in terms of the effective *δύναμις*, and it leads to *καυχᾶσθαι* of the *δύναμις* of God, 2 C. 4:7, i.e., to thanksgiving. In this sense Paul warns us in R. 11:18 against comparison with the unbelieving Jews: μὴ κατακαυχῶ τῶν κλάδων· εἰ δὲ κατακαυχᾶσαι (then consider), οὐ σὺ τὴν ρίζαν βαστάζεις, ἀλλὰ ἡ ρίζα σέ. And in the same sense he warns us in Gl. 6:4 that none can attain to his *καύχημα* by comparison with others, but on-



God and Christ for their working among believers. The verb form *καυχάομαι* emphasizes the speaking aspect, while the two nouns *καύχημα* and *καύχησις* stress the confidence within that leads to speaking. The apostle has spoken bluntly and boldly (*παρρησία πρὸς ὑμᾶς*) to the Corinthians. And this grows out of the awareness of how God is working both in and through his life and in that of the Corinthians (*καύχησις ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν*)

This means that he is filled with encouragement: *πεπλήρωμαι τῇ παρακλήσει*. Rather than speaking out of frustration and discouragement about the Corinthians, he instead speaks boldly to them out of the profound *encouragement*, *παρακλήσις*, coming from seeing God at work in this relationship with the Corinthians.

This then leads to deep joy from knowing that all of the hardships Paul and his associates have endured are worthwhile due to how God is working: *ὑπερπερισσεύομαι τῇ χαρᾷ ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν*. The verb *ὑπερπερισσεύω* means to superabound in something. Here with the present passive voice use *ὑπερπερισσεύομαι* the apostle indicates that superabundant *χαρά*, joy, is flooding into his life due to all the affliction that he and his associates are experiencing: *ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν*. Again Paul did not live in the pleasure oriented modern western world! He earlier in 6:4-10 described some of those hardships but as is clear from his language here and in 6:1-4, his excitement was not in the suffering nor the endurance of it. Instead, his excitement was in seeing how God used this suffering to give credibility to his preaching of the Gospel and in turning around the lives of those who accepted this message.

10.2.3.1.10.2.2 Titus’ positive report to Paul, 7:5-16. This unit of text largely continues the theme of excitement in ministry that dominates 7:2-16. And with *γὰρ* (v. 5a) introducing it, the passage stands as the second set of justifying declarations supporting the appeal *Χωρήσατε ἡμῶς. Make room for us, in v. 2a.*

ly by self-scrutiny, by measuring his achievement in terms of the task which he is set. As the context shows, to do this also implies self-criticism. If, then, occasion is given to glory, this glorying is also thanksgiving.⁴⁵”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:650–651.]

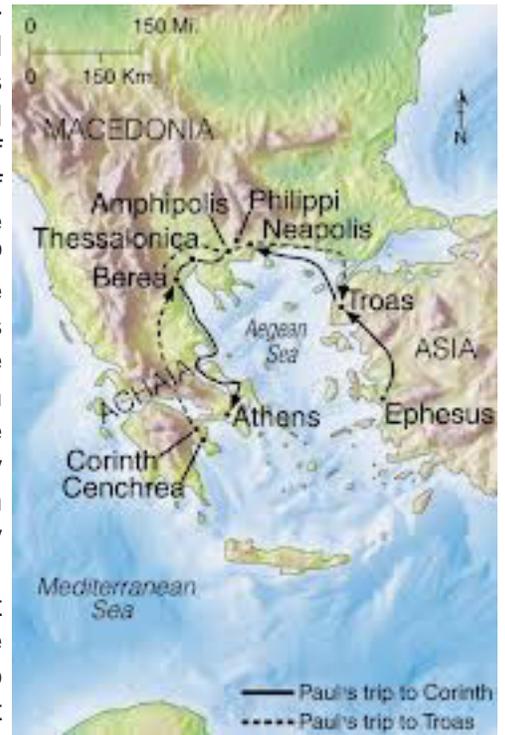
The arrangement of ideas inside the pericope flow around the central topic of the response of the Corinthians to the very blunt letter that Paul had written to them. This is particularly the point of vv. 5-13a where Titus had reported their response when he arrived in Macedonia. Added to that is Titus' own positive assessment of the Corinthians that the apostle refers to in vv. 13b-16. How much Paul valued the judgments of these associates like Titus comes out in this text.

a) Titus' report, vv. 5-13a. 5 Καὶ γὰρ ἐλθόντων ἡμῶν εἰς Μακεδονίαν οὐδεμίαν ἔσχηκεν ἄνεσιν ἢ σὰρξ ἡμῶν ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ θλιβόμενοι· ἔξωθεν μάχαι, ἔσωθεν φόβοι. 6 ἀλλ' ὁ παρακαλῶν τοὺς ταπεινοὺς παρεκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ Τίτου, 7 οὐ μόνον δὲ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει ἢ παρεκλήθη ἐφ' ὑμῖν, ἀναγγέλλων ἡμῖν τὴν ὑμῶν ἐπιτόθησιν, τὸν ὑμῶν ὀδυρμόν, τὸν ὑμῶν ζῆλον ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ ὥστε με μᾶλλον χαρῆσαι. 8 Ὅτι εἰ καὶ ἐλύπησα ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ, οὐ μεταμέλομαι· εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην, βλέπω [γὰρ] ὅτι ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἐκείνη εἰ καὶ πρὸς ὥραν ἐλύπησεν ὑμᾶς, 9 νῦν χαίρω, οὐχ ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε εἰς μετάνοιαν· ἐλυπήθητε γὰρ κατὰ θεόν, ἵνα ἐν μηδενὶ ζημιωθῆτε ἐξ ἡμῶν. 10 Ἡ γὰρ κατὰ θεὸν λύπη μετάνοιαν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀμεταμέλητον ἐργάζεται· ἡ δὲ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη θάνατον κατεργάζεται. 11 Ἴδου 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 ἀγνοοῦς εἶναι τῷ πράγματι. 12 Ἄρα εἰ καὶ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, οὐχ ἔνεκεν τοῦ ἀδικήσαντος οὐδὲ ἔνεκεν τοῦ ἀδικηθέντος ἀλλ' ἔνεκεν τοῦ φανερωθῆναι τὴν σπουδὴν ὑμῶν τὴν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. 13 διὰ τοῦτο παρακεκλήμεθα.

5 For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted in every way—disputes without and fears within. 6 But God, who consoles the downcast, consoled us by the arrival of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was consoled about you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more. 8 For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it (though I did regret it, for I see that I grieved you with that letter, though only briefly). 9 Now I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance; for you felt a godly grief, so that you were not harmed in any way by us. 10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death. 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.

One should note the complexity of the syntax in this pericope. At least partially, the deep emotions that Paul was feeling as he dictated this material to Timothy for written expression explains some of the complexity. Ellipsis in the extreme signals much of this complexity, which is much more extensive than typical for Paul's letters. He also reflects considerable apprehension about

how the Corinthians would respond to his harsh letter and then great relief at the report of their positive response.²²⁹ The challenge before Paul is to affirm divine leadership in writing what he did but a very human concern about how they would receive it. This came out of his deep love and devotion to the church at Corinth.



What is reflected here signals the dilemma of every pastor. There are times when the only divine direction for the pastor is very blunt criticism of the failures of his congregation. But whether or not the congregation will accept his words or not produces deep apprehension in the pastor. To be God's leader, the pastor must speak such words. And this is done with the prayer that the congregation will take these words as coming from God and out of the pastor's deep love for the people. When a congregation does respond positively and turns to God in repentance, the joy that fills the pastor upon learning of this goes beyond description. So describing such feelings of joy with a somewhat jumbled grammar is not too surprising.

Paul begins by referencing his coming to [Macedonia](#).²³⁰ From Ephesus Paul had sent Titus to Corinth

²²⁹One of the uncertainties is the precise content of the so-called 'harsh letter.' Was it a demand to take specific disciplinary action against one member (cf. 2:5-11)? Or, was it a response to the rejection of Paul by a segment of the church? Commentary opinion is very divided in answering this question.

²³⁰Somewhat helpful is a proposed chronological reconstruction provided by Harris in the NIGTC volume:

To help us trace the elements of Paul's thought in vv. 5–16, it may prove useful to set out in chronological order the various events and experiences referred to or implied in this passage.

1. Paul writes the "severe letter" (vv. 8, 12) in Ephesus.
2. He boasts to Titus about the Corinthians (v. 14).
3. Titus is sent to Corinth with the letter (cf. v. 6).
4. The Corinthians welcome Titus "with fear and trembling" (v. 15).
5. When they hear the letter, the Corinthians feel sorrow (vv. 8–9).
6. They repent of their inaction about the wrongdoer, rectify



toward the end of his lengthy stay in Ephesus in the mid-50s. Titus had instructions that when the problems in Corinth were resolved then he was to travel to Troas to report back to Paul. But Titus did not show up after a period of some months while Paul waited for him there. After some time passed, the apostle decided to go on to the Roman province of Macedonia hoping to meet up with Titus in one of the cities where churches had been established earlier. This was what happened as Paul mentions here in our passage. Precisely what city they met up with one another is never mentioned, although it seems likely that it was toward the end of a several month stay and this would place them in Berea.

The genitive absolute construction ἐλθόντων ἡμῶν εἰς Μακεδονίαν, when we came into Macedonia, picks up a historical narrative from 2:12-13.²³¹ Paul's experience in Macedonia was not easy: οὐδεμίαν ἔσχηκεν ἄνεσιν ἢ σὰρξ ἡμῶν ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ θλιβόμενοι· ἔξωθεν μάχαι, ἔσωθεν φόβοι, **our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted in every way—disputes without and fears within.** What is not clear from this is whether the apostle is describing turbulence just over Titus' absence or whether

added to this was persecution from folks in the cities of Macedonia where he visited. Probably it was a mixture of both dynamics. He did use similar language in 2:13 regarding Titus' absence: οὐκ ἔσχηκα ἄνεσιν τῷ πνεύματί μου, **I had no rest in my spirit.** The expression here in v. 5, οὐδεμίαν ἔσχηκεν ἄνεσιν ἢ σὰρξ ἡμῶν, **our flesh had no rest at all,** should be understood approximately the same way, even though the use of ἢ σὰρξ, **flesh,** is a bit unusual for the more expected τὸ σῶμα, **body.**²³² As he put it positively in 2:15, Χριστοῦ εὐωδία ἐσμέν τῷ θεῷ ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, **we are the aroma of Christ in God among those being saved and among those perishing.** The εὐωδία is that of burning flesh being sacrificed upon an altar. And that means personal sacrifice, which Paul spells out here ἐν παντὶ θλιβόμενοι· ἔξωθεν μάχαι, ἔσωθεν φόβοι, **in every way being afflicted, battles without, fears within.** This seems to be asserting that outwardly Paul faced difficulties in ministering to the churches as he traveled across Macedonia and inwardly he was troubled by the absence of Titus with some news about Corinth.

The elliptical phrase ἐν παντὶ θλιβόμενοι defines the full range of hardships, and then it is further defined as ἔξωθεν μάχαι, ἔσωθεν φόβοι which follow the participle as antecedents of παντὶ. Precisely what the ἔξωθεν μάχαι, **outwardly battles,** refers to is not spelled out. The most natural meaning in this context is quarrels with folks outside the Christian communities in Macedonia. Evidently the opposition to the Gospel that Paul preached did not slack off with the passing of time. The Jewish synagogues of Thessalonica and Berea had viciously opposed him on the second missionary journey when the churches were established in those regions (cf. Acts 17:1-15). Those connected to the pagan temples in Philippi had tried to have him killed (cf. Acts 16:11-40). From Paul's statement here in 7:5 that opposition had remained strong and very hostile to him each time he passed through the area. Given the implied assertions from the Acts account coupled with random statements from Paul's writings, it seems that

fy the situation, and show eager concern for Paul (vv. 7, 9, 11–12). (This is the most questionable part of the reconstruction. Clearly Harris links the letter to the offender in chapter two.)

7. From their response Titus derives refreshment and joy (v. 13b).
8. Paul (now in Macedonia) is downhearted owing to a combination of circumstances (vv. 5–6).
9. Paul and Titus meet somewhere in Macedonia (vv. 5–7).
10. Titus reports on the Corinthians' sorrow (vv. 8–11), repentance (vv. 7, 9), and obedience (v. 15), and feels his own affection for the Corinthians deepen as he gives his report (v. 15).
11. Hearing of the Corinthians' sorrow and grief, Paul at first regrets having written the letter (v. 8b), but his regret is short-lived (v. 8a) as he learns of their repentance.
12. Paul feels relief, comfort, and joy at the Corinthians' response to his letter (vv. 6–7, 9, 13, 16).
13. His joy is increased as he observes Titus's joy (v. 13b).
14. Paul feels relieved and grateful that his boasting to Titus about the Corinthians proved justified (v. 14).
15. Paul assures the Corinthians that they are now blameless with regard to the whole affair (v. 11) and that he now has complete confidence in them (v. 16).

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 523–524.]

²³¹**2 Cor. 2:12-13.** 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 εὐρεῖν με Τίτον τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, ἀλλ' ἀποταξάμενος αὐτοῖς ἐξῆλθον εἰς Μακεδονίαν.

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.

²³²In 2:13 Paul confessed οὐκ ἔσχηκα ἄνεσιν τῷ πνεύματί μου, 'I had no relief for my spirit.' It does appear that Paul, whether speaking of flesh (7:5) or spirit (2:13), is alluding to his human person as frail (as in 12:7). In our present context it appears that he uses πνεῦμα, 'spirit,' and σὰρξ, 'flesh,' as synonymous terms,¹³⁸² both reflecting his sense of agitation because of the absence of Titus. It is unfair to insist that Paul should use the same terms in always the same manner.¹³⁸³ Other translations for σὰρξ are 'bodies' (RSV, using a plural), 'flesh' (KJV/AV), and the simple pronoun 'I' or 'we.'¹³⁸⁴ In any case, the idea is of subjection to weariness and pain as endured by the physical body,¹³⁸⁵ but here occasioned by the non-arrival of Titus (2:13) as well as the trials spoken of in the verse." [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 389.]



the number of Christian communities over the province of Macedonia began a period of explosive growth after the second missionary journey.

The other expression ἔσωθεν φόβοι, **within fears**, evidently centers mainly on apprehension about Titus and the situation at Corinth.²³³ The depth of Paul's concern for the Corinthian church surfaces here in dramatic fashion. Although justified in writing harshly to them, he was concerned about them responding properly under God's leadership. Whether they loved or hated him was not particularly important. Far more important was whether their response would be led by God or based on human tendencies toward being criticized. That many of them would follow God's leadership was clear to Paul. But with the church filled with 'carnal' Christians (cf. 1 Cor. 3:1-3), it was not clear how these individuals would respond. The previous confrontational visit served to re-enforce that uncertainty (2:1-2). But in general the apostle was confident about the Corinthians (7:14). Yet while in Macedonia waiting for Titus,

²³³“Since his fears were allayed and replaced by joy (7:7, 9, 13) and comfort 7:6, 13) as a result of the safe arrival of Titus with good news about Corinth, we may fairly assume that these fears were various: a haunting uncertainty about Titus's reception

140 ὁ παρακαλῶν τοὺς ταπεινοὺς
 7.7 δὲ
 141 (παρακάλεισεν ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς)
 οὐ μόνον ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ
 ἀλλὰ
 καὶ ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει
 ἣ παρεκλήθη ἐφ' ὑμῖν,
 ἀναγγέλλων ἡμῖν τὴν ὑμῶν ἐπιπόθησιν,
 τὸν ὑμῶν ὀδυρμόν,
 τὸν ὑμῶν ζῆλον
 ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ
 ὥστε με μᾶλλον χαρῆσαι.

at Corinth (cf. 7:13, 15); a persistent apprehension about the Corinthian reaction to the 'letter of tears' delivered by Titus (cf. 7:11–12), especially given Titus's failure to meet Paul in Troas (2:13) and initially in Macedonia (7:5); anxiety that he had caused the Corinthians unnecessary pain by his 'severe letter' (cf. 7:8) with its call for disciplinary action against the wrongdoer; concern that his boasting to Titus about the Corinthians might prove unfounded and therefore acutely embarrassing (cf. 7:14); anxiety about the safety of Titus in travel (note the repeated ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ Τίτου/αὐτοῦ in 7:6–7); fear concerning the influence of his opponents on the Corinthian congregation (cf. 11:3); apprehension that on his forthcoming visit to Corinth he might find some members indulging in unchristian conduct (12:20–21). It was multiple and disconcerting fears such as these that led to Paul's self-confessed state of depression (cf. τοὺς ταπεινοὺς, 7:6).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 527.]

there were apprehensions inwardly for the apostle.

Titus' arrival brought a huge sense of relief to Paul (vv. 6-7): 6 ἀλλ' ὁ παρακαλῶν τοὺς ταπεινοὺς παρεκάλεισεν ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ Τίτου, 7 οὐ μόνον δὲ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει ἣ παρεκλήθη ἐφ' ὑμῖν, ἀναγγέλλων ἡμῖν τὴν ὑμῶν ἐπιπόθησιν, τὸν ὑμῶν ὀδυρμόν, τὸν ὑμῶν ζῆλον ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ ὥστε με μᾶλλον χαρῆσαι. 6 But God, who consoles the downcast, consoled us by the arrival of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was consoled about you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more.

As is reflected in the above diagram, the ellipsis is extensive here in this single sentence in the Greek text. Most importantly his φόβοι melted away when God who encourages τοὺς ταπεινοὺς, **the discouraged**, gave him encouragement at the arrival of Titus. In Paul's use here φόβοι, **fears**, and τοὺς ταπεινοὺς, **the pressed down**, are closely related to one another. But the cure for this is God ὁ παρακαλῶν, **who gives encouragement**. And how does He provide encouragement? Through a variety of means depending on what is appropriate to the situation! Here, getting Titus safely from Corinth to Macedonia was the means: ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ Τίτου, **at the arrival of Titus**.

The elliptical statement #141 (above) expands the previous core declaration (#140). Paul's devotion to those who worked with him in ministry was profound and is reflected οὐ μόνον δὲ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ, **and not only at his arrival**. Although this phrase is by content not as prominent as what follows, it does stand as an important expression of relief and joy. Just to see Titus again played an important role in the divine encouragement that God gave to the apostle.

What Titus had to tell Paul about the Corinthians was the primary source of relief to the apostle: ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει ἣ παρεκλήθη ἐφ' ὑμῖν, but also by the encouragement that was encouraged about you. This excessively literal translation seeks to preserve the play on words contained in Paul's statement where both the noun, τῇ παρακλήσει (< παράκλησις), and the aorist passive verb, παρεκλήθη (< παρακαλέω), from the same root form are used. The richness of the root idea of being called alongside of for aid in this compound stem παρα + καλέω defies translation by a single word. Thus encourage, comfort, admonish et als. surface in the pages of the NT. The particular English word is usually chosen to best reflect the individual setting of usage. The underlying point is that God always provides exactly what is

7.8 Ὅτι εἰ καὶ ἐλύπησα ὑμᾶς
ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ,
142 οὐ μεταμέλομαι·
[γὰρ]
εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην,
143 βλέπω
εἰ καὶ πρὸς ὦραν
ὅτι ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἐκείνη...ἐλύπησεν ὑμᾶς,
7.9 νῦν
144 χαίρω,
οὐχ ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε
ἀλλ'
ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε
εἰς μετάνοιαν·
γὰρ
145 ἐλυπήθητε
κατὰ θεόν,
ἵνα ἐν μηδενὶ ζημιωθῆτε ἐξ ἡμῶν.
7.10 γὰρ
εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀμεταμέλητον
146 ἡ κατὰ θεὸν λύπη μετάνοιαν...ἐργάζεται·
δὲ
147 ἡ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη θάνατον κατεργάζεται·

needed by the individual at that moment of need.

And indeed the report of Titus provided what Paul needed to hear in order to cheer him up: ἀναγγέλλων ἡμῖν τὴν ὑμῶν ἐπιπόθησιν, τὸν ὑμῶν ὄδυρμόν, τὸν ὑμῶν ζῆλον ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ, [reporting to us about your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me.](#)²³⁴ As Titus shared with Paul about the stance of the Corinthians, especially toward the apostle himself, he was encouraged beyond words. They had indeed sought and followed God's leadership in correcting their problems that he had dealt with in the 'harsh' letter.

Thus ὥστε με μᾶλλον χαρῆσαι, [so that I rejoiced all the more.](#) The result infinitive phrase here defines the impact of Titus' report on Paul. It relates conceptually to

²³⁴“The Corinthians were longing to see Paul and to reassure him of their love for him. They were mourning because of the strained relationship between themselves and Paul that occurred because of their failure to deal with the divisive issue (see 2:5–11). And they had a zeal for Paul. How their zeal was expressed is not stated, but it probably took the form of being eager to restore the broken relationship with Paul and to support and defend him. Following the form of the Greek, many translations do not state how they showed their zeal. Other translations such as TEV and FrCL ‘how ready you are to defend me’ do imply that the Corinthians wished to restore the broken relationship.

“The Greek is literally ‘your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me.’ Though only the last noun, *zeal*, has the words for me, Paul is most likely the implied object for the first two nouns also. It is also possible, however, that the implied object is the pronoun ‘us,’ that is, Paul and his co-workers.”

[Roger L. Omanson and John Ellington, *A Handbook on Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 130.]

ὑπερπερισεύομαι τῇ χαρῇ, [I am overjoyed with joy](#), in v. 4c.

This provided Paul with the sought after affirmation that his previous letter had indeed been used of God to help the Corinthians solve their problems. Verses 8 - 13a move to focus on that letter.

8“Ὅτι εἰ καὶ ἐλύπησα ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ, οὐ μεταμέλομαι· εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην, βλέπω [γὰρ] ὅτι ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἐκείνη εἰ καὶ πρὸς ὦραν ἐλύπησεν ὑμᾶς, 9 νῦν χαίρω, οὐχ ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε ἀλλ’ ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε εἰς μετάνοιαν· ἐλυπήθητε γὰρ κατὰ θεόν, ἵνα ἐν μηδενὶ ζημιωθῆτε ἐξ ἡμῶν. 10 ἡ γὰρ κατὰ θεὸν λύπη μετάνοιαν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀμεταμέλητον ἐργάζεται· ἡ δὲ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη θάνατον κατεργάζεται. 11 ἰδοὺ γὰρ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ κατὰ θεὸν λυπηθῆναι πόσην κατειργάσατο ὑμῖν σπουδὴν, ἀλλ’ ἀπολογία, ἀλλ’ ἀγανάκτησιν, ἀλλὰ φόβον, ἀλλ’ ἐπιπόθησιν, ἀλλὰ ζῆλον, ἀλλ’ ἐκδίκησιν. ἐν παντὶ συνεστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς ἀγνοοῦς εἶναι τῷ πράγματι. 12 ἄρα εἰ καὶ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, οὐχ ἔνεκεν τοῦ ἀδικήσαντος οὐδὲ ἔνεκεν τοῦ ἀδικηθέντος ἀλλ’ ἔνεκεν τοῦ φανερωθῆναι τὴν σπουδὴν ὑμῶν τὴν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. 13 διὰ τοῦτο παρακεκλήμεθα.

8 For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it (though I did regret it, for I see that I grieved you with that letter, though only briefly). 9 Now I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance; for you felt a godly grief, so that you were not harmed in any way by us. 10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death. 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.

The declaration διὰ τοῦτο παρακεκλήμεθα, *for this reason, I am encouraged* (v. 13a), forms a natural terminus point to this unit of text material.²³⁵ The use of the causal Ὅτι at the beginning of v. 8, rather than γάρ, allows the apostle to link this section back to vv. 5-7 but not at the primary level of causality that γάρ would.²³⁶ Unfortunately we have no such device in English. Thus the proportionality of the subunits of Greek text ideas disappears in the translation process.

Paul carefully sets forth a justification for the writing of the harsh letter to the Corinthians that stood behind the tension between him and them. He affirms the correctness of its writing, but regrets the resulting tension. Yet, he is not that sad even about the tension. To state this without sounding vengeful or arrogant is his challenge. Humanly speaking he could have taken an “I told you so” stance, but that would not have been proper nor encouraging to the Corinthians.

In v. 8 the apostle makes heavy use of a form of concessive sentence structure²³⁷ Note how Paul uses

²³⁵Paul provides the reader with some boundary marker signals in the wording of vv. 5-16. The use of παρακαλέω / παράκλησις and χαίρω / χαρά forms helps to connect up subunits of material inside this larger pericope; vv. 5-7, 8-13a, 13b-16.

²³⁶The setting up of two sets of subordinate conjunctions back to back as here, Ὅτι εἰ καὶ, (causal / concessive) is fairly typical in ancient Greek, both in classical and Koine expression. Such can't be done in English and in most other modern western languages; it has to be coordinate conjunction followed by subordinate conjunction, as is reflected in the NRSV *For even if*. The point made by Paul in this is the assertion that his discussion of the letter also justifies his sense of overwhelming joy toward the Corinthians. But it stands at a secondary level and not as important as Titus' report.

²³⁷The concessive sentence structure in ancient Greek is similar to the conditional sentence. Two primary elements form the foundation of both types of expressions: **protasis** and **apodosis**. The protasis is the dependent clause modifying the verb in the main clause which is the apodosis. In the four types of conditional sentence the essential idea is simply that if this happens/is correct (protasis), then that happens/is correct (apodosis). But in the concessive sentence if this happens (protasis) then in spite of it that happens (apodosis). For example in English: *If you tell me I can't do something, then I will do it in spite of what you say*. Most beginning Greek grammars written in English do not touch on this, because American English speaking students tend to know so little about the grammar of their own language that such a discussion would be meaningless. A major distinction between a conditional sentence and the concessive sentence is illustrated by recasting the above concessive example into a conditional form: *If you tell me not to do something, I won't do it*. The occurrence / correctness of the apodosis depends upon the occurrence / correctness of the protasis, not in spite of it.

In the simplified Koine forms found in the NT, the concessive sentence is broken down into three subcategories: logical concession with εἰ καὶ introducing the protasis; doubtful concession with ἔαν καὶ introducing the protasis; and emphatic concession with εἰ-

the Logical Concession structure here:

*εἰ καὶ ἐλύπησα ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ,
οὐ μεταμέλομαι·
εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην,
βλέπω [γὰρ]
ὅτι ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἐκείνη εἰ καὶ πρὸς ὥραν
ἐλύπησεν ὑμᾶς,
Even if I caused you grief by the letter,
I do not regret it.
even if I did regret it,
I see
that that letter, even if for an hour, caused
you grief.*

In these three uses of the concessive protasis εἰ καὶ the assumption is that his letter did cause the Corinthians grief (1 & 3), and that he did regret sending the letter afterwards. In the first sentence the apodosis asserts that in spite of the letter causing the Corinthians grief Paul does not now (present tense verb) regret. In the second sentence he acknowledges that after sending the letter he did regret it at least for a while. But in the dependent ὅτι clause he embeds a third elliptical εἰ καὶ protasis assuming that their grief was but for a limited time and not permanent.

What the apostle very cautiously declares by this is his sending of the harsh letter did cause grief to the Corinthians. At first afterwards he regretted sending it, but not now. What made the difference? The arrival of Titus. His report confirmed both the grief caused by the letter, and the positive outcome of that grief, as v. 9 declares: νῦν χαίρω, οὐχ ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε εἰς μετάνοιαν, *now I am rejoicing, not because you were caused grief but because you were caused grief leading to repentance*. The harsh words of the letter were written with the intention of provoking the Corinthians to deal with their problems by turning to God for a solution. Paul's anxieties afterwards were centered on whether or not the Corinthians would turn to God or not. Titus' report affirmed that indeed they did turn in repentance to God and this led them to even greater appreciation and admiration for Paul by his wisdom in challenging them to deal before God with their problems. Thus his and his associates' ministry to them found even deep-

ther καὶ ἔαν or καὶ εἰ introducing the concession. The precise sense of each of these three categories moves from virtual certainty to possibility to unlikely possibility.

For further help, see my [LEARNING BIBLICAL KOINE GREEK, Appendix Six: Guides for Classifying Sentences and Subordinate Clauses](#), at [cranfordville.com](#). Discussions of the details are located in lessons beginning with Lesson Thirteen. See [Appendix 8: Grammar Reference Index](#) for more details.



er confirmation to the Corinthians. In light of this, the apostle experienced profound rejoicing that these precious people had done what they needed to do.

Beginning in v. 9b through v. 11 the apostle puts a series of justifying statements on the table in order to elaborate on his joy over the Corinthians' repentance. The heart of these declarations is the difference between true repentance and false repentance.

The first justifying assertion (#145) is quite insightful about Paul: ἐλυπήθητε γὰρ κατὰ θεόν, ἵνα ἐν μηδενὶ ζημιωθῆτε ἐξ ἡμῶν, *for you were caused grief according to God's way so that in no way would you be harmed by us.* Paul's intention in writing the letter was to push the Corinthians to God, not in any way to cause them spiritual harm. Had he have been motivated by personal revenge, the Corinthians would have been driven away from God with increased anger and resentment of Paul. But because the apostle had only the best interests of the Corinthians in mind, God used his stern words of rebuke to point them to Himself in repentance.

The second justifying statement (#146; v. 10) then defines authentic re-

pentance: ἡ γὰρ κατὰ θεὸν λύπη μετάνοιαν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀμεταμέλητον ἐργάζεται, *for grief by God's way produces repentance leading to a deliverance without regrets.* One must see a deep sorrow (λύπη) over misdeeds etc. that leads to a turning around (μετάνοιαν) of one's thinking, life, and behavior. Also this process must originate from God in the convicting work of His Spirit. This is the only way to find deliverance from God's accountability imposed on us in a way that provides full moving away from these misdeeds etc. Only in this way is real distance put between us and our misdeeds etc. We are truly liberated from the burden of our sins.

The third justifying statement (#147), which is the second half of the compound sentence (#s146-147), contrasts true repentance with false repentance: ἡ δὲ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη θάνατον κατεργάζεται, but the grief of the world produces death. Sharp contrast is drawn between ἡ κατὰ θεὸν λύπη and ἡ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη. Godly grief produces (ἐργάζεται) repentance (μετάνοιαν), while worldly grief produces (κατεργάζεται) death (θάνατον). Repentance does not come out of grief generated by the world.

Now what is ἡ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη? It has some connection to κατὰ σάρκα and σαρκικὰ in 10:3-5.²³⁸ In this

²³⁸2 Cor. 10:3-5. 3 Ἐν σαρκὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦντες οὐ κατὰ σάρκα στρατευόμεθα, 4 τὰ γὰρ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ πρὸς καθαίρεσιν ὀχυρωμάτων, λογισμοὺς καθαιροῦντες 5 καὶ πᾶν ὑψωμα ἐπαιρόμενον κατὰ

assertion human standards are pitted against those of God. Most naturally via the context of vv. 5-16, ἡ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη refers to sorrow or grief not produced by the convicting presence of God. Instead, it is solely a humanly produced sorrow. Also it does not move into μετάνοια by which one's thinking and living is radically turned around. Although "I'm sorry I got caught" is included in this, ἡ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη includes far more than this popular understanding. It includes everything outside of the ἡ κατὰ θεὸν λύπη. The huge difference between the two then is where λύπη leads. The λύπη prompted by God produces repentance that leads to deliverance from responsibility for our misdeeds. The other λύπη, however, produces death both spiritual death in this life and eternal death in the world to come. Note carefully the shift in verbs from ἐργάζεται to the negative tone in κατεργάζεται. This highlights the distinction even further.

7.11	γὰρ	148	αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ κατὰ θεὸν λυπηθῆναι πόσῃν κατειργάσατο ὑμῖν σπουδῆν,	ἰδοῦ	
					ἀλλ' ἀπολογίαν,
					ἀλλ' ἀγανάκτησιν,
					ἀλλὰ φόβον,
					ἀλλ' ἐπιπόθησιν,
					ἀλλὰ ζῆλον,
					ἀλλ' ἐκδίκησιν.

The fourth justifying statement (#148; v. 11) highlights both the genuineness of the Corinthians λύπη, but Paul's rejoicing because of the outward signals of true repentance: ἰδοὺ γὰρ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ κατὰ θεὸν λυπηθῆναι πόσῃν κατειργάσατο ὑμῖν σπουδῆν, ἀλλ' ἀπολογίαν, ἀλλ' ἀγανάκτησιν, ἀλλὰ φόβον, ἀλλ' ἐπιπόθησιν, ἀλλὰ ζῆλον, ἀλλ' ἐκδίκησιν, *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!*

Packed with more classical Greek style ellipsis, the sentence is rich in its expression. The versatility of ancient Greek syntax is clearly illustrated by this very complex sentence structure.

Subject: τὸ κατὰ θεὸν λυπηθῆναι, *the being grieved by God's way*
Intensifying modifiers of subject: αὐτὸ τοῦτο, *this very same*

Verb: κατειργάσατο, *has fully produced*
Intensifying modifier of verb: ἰδοῦ, *indeed*

Direct Object: σπουδῆν, *eagerness*
Relative adjectival modifier of DO: πόσῃν, *what great*
Anticipates the string of DO amplifications:

τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ αἰχμαλωτίζοντες πᾶν νόημα εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

3 Indeed, we live as human beings, but we do not wage war according to human standards; 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not merely human, but they have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments 5 and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ.

ἀλλ' ἀπολογία, **what eagerness to clear yourselves**
 ἀλλ' ἀγανάκτησιν, **what indignation**
 ἀλλὰ φόβον, **what fear**
 ἀλλ' ἐπιτόθησιν, **what longing**
 ἀλλὰ ζῆλον, **what zeal**
 ἀλλ' ἐκδίκησιν, **what giving of justice**

The positioning of the elements of the sentence allows for emphasis points -- at the beginning and the end of the sentence.²³⁹ The multiple omissions of κατειργάσατο with the conjunction ἀλλὰ heightens emphasis. The use of the more classical Greek form πόσῃν from πόσος, -η, -ον as a quantitative, correlative relative pronoun sets up the string of amplifications that primarily expand the idea of σπουδῆν, the verbal object.

Central to the reaction of the Corinthians to Paul's stern letter to them was σπουδῆν, **eagerness**. The noun σπουδή is in the NT particularly a Pauline word with 7 of the 12 NT uses in Paul's letters (and 5 of these in 2 Cor.).²⁴⁰ With this declaration Paul affirms that the Corinthians responded quickly to the demands made in this prior letter. They didn't ignore it, nor write it off as of no importance. The apostle found in this kind of reaction a reason for rejoicing.

The various aspects of that quick response by the Corinthians is listed out in a string of amplifications that follows in elliptical expression.

ἀλλ'²⁴¹ ἀπολογία, **what eagerness to clear yourselves**, asserts some sort of defensiveness on their part. Their initial reaction may well have been to say, "That's too harsh a demand!"²⁴² Some of them perhaps fired back

²³⁹“This whole statement is rendered emphatic in a number of ways. There is the accumulation of terms descriptive of the Corinthians' attitude. Moreover, the ἀλλά repeated before each following item has intensifying force.⁴⁷ The αὐτὸ τοῦτο stresses the following τὸ κατὰ θεὸν λυπηθῆναι, and the opening ἰδοὺ draws attention to it, whilst the ἐν παντί underlines the final assertion of the Corinthians' innocence. The exclamatory force of the πόσῃν κατειργάσατο ὑμῖν σπουδῆν⁴⁸ also adds emphasis. Perhaps Paul's intention is to stress the extent of his joy by itemising its component parts. But it could be also that he wishes to remove all doubts about the measures he took, both from his own conscience and from the minds of the congregation.⁴⁹” [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), 493.]

²⁴⁰Of the 13 uses of the verb form σπουδάζω in the NT, 8 are in the Pauline writings. Its meaning ranges from **to hurry, to expedite, to being conscientious in discharging an obligation**.

241 ἀλλ' “= not only that, ‘but’ also” [Daniel J. Harrington, “Editor's Preface,” in *Second Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 8, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 131.]

²⁴²When one lives in western hemispheric culture, being defensive is often perceived negatively. But in the exceptionally direct, blunt ancient Greco-Roman culture -- and also the ancient Jewish culture as well -- criticism of another is given with the expectation and desire for the other person to defend themselves. No progress toward problem solving can happen without it. No clearer

criticisms of Paul. The exact nature of their ἀπολογία is not spelled out, since it is no longer relevant.

ἀλλ' ἀγανάκτησιν, **what indignation** (v. 11), asserts being upset with the assumption of wrong doing. The noun ἀγανάκτησις is found only here in the NT, but the parallel verb ἀγανακτέω, **I become/am indignant**, is found some 7 times, all in Matthew and Luke. Evidently Paul's harsh words in the previous letter provoked the Corinthians considerably. Sometimes the only way to get through to people is to provoke them in the hope that they will think seriously about your stern words. Seemingly the apostle got through to them and caused them to give serious consideration to his message in the letter.

ἀλλὰ φόβον, **what fear** (v. 11), asserts at minimum the reaction of alarm, but more likely is stronger as real fear that the letter generated. But fear of what? Earlier the apostle had warned them of the potential of his coming to Corinth ἐν ῥάβδῳ, **with a rod** (1 Cor. 4:21). Were the Corinthians fearful of an angry founder and of losing a relationship with him? Some commentators are convinced of this meaning for the expression.²⁴³ But φόβος quite often means reverence for God. What seems more likely is that Paul's letter raised the issue of their relationship to God and its legitimacy. The letter then caused them to reexamine their respect for God and His demands upon their lives.²⁴⁴

example of this in Jewish tradition can be found in the NT that the stinging criticism by Jesus of the Pharisees in Matt. 23. He repeated called them ὑποκριταί, hypocrites (vv. 13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29). Added to that is ὀδηγοὶ τυφλοῖ, blind guides (vv. 16, 24), μωροὶ καὶ τυφλοί, morons and blind (vv. 17, 26). The second person plural forms consistently through the passage make it clear that he was speaking directly to the Pharisees. Such blunt language was intended to generate a response from them that could initiate productive conversation and debate. Only in modern western Europe is this tradition maintained in the modern world. The social dynamic across the Atlantic is typically just the opposite. Blunt language is usually intended to hurt rather than heal. Thus interpretation of such texts in the NT must seriously consider how blunt language functions for the targeted audience.

²⁴³For example, “The reason for their ‘apprehension’ or ‘alarm’ (φόβος) may have been uncertainty about the effect of their disloyalty on Paul and on their own future as a small, struggling Christian congregation, or deep concern that unless they repented Paul would be forced to visit them ‘with a rod’ (1 Cor. 4:21).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 542.]

²⁴⁴“However, Paul could be speaking of the fear of God (5:11).¹⁵⁰⁴ The Corinthians had been in danger of inviting divine wrath, for they had mistreated God's representative. To be sure, Paul does use φόβος, ‘fear,’ with respect to both man and God, but Plummer is too minimizing when he cites the unlikelihood of Paul's putting ‘fear of himself in the foreground.’¹⁵⁰⁵ The use of fear suggests ‘reverential awe’ in the face of Paul's claim to be acting for God (5:20) as a ‘divine apostle.’” [Ralph

ἀλλ' ἐπιπόθησιν, *what longing* (v. 11), asserts, in the context of τὴν ὑμῶν ἐπιπόθησιν in v. 7, the Corinthians renewed desire to be reunited with Paul and to affirm their deep bonds of friendship with him. The tension between the two parties had proven to be too stressful for the Corinthians.

ἀλλὰ ζῆλον, *what zeal* (v. 11), asserts here, most likely, a deep desire to do God's bidding as the apostle had demanded in the prior letter.²⁴⁵ The provocative nature of his letter pushed them to reassess their commitment to God and His ways. Out of that came a renewed commitment to obey the Lord.

ἀλλ' ἐκδίκησιν, *what justice* (v. 11), asserts in this usage a sense of commitment to doing what God defenes as just or right. The noun ἐκδίκησις carries fundamentally the sense of punishment.²⁴⁶ Given the idea of justice and punishment as defined in scripture and not by the civil or criminal law of a country, what Paul seems to be stressing is the conviction of wrong doing by the Corinthians that pushed them to seek God's justice and forgiveness. Either 'justice' or 'punishment' in English falls well short of adequately conveying Paul's meaning here. Their ζῆλος pushed them to seek God's δικαίωσις, *justification*, knowing that God is δίκαιος, *just*, and that He dolls out ἐκδίκησις, *justice / punishment for misdeeds*.

In v. 11b, the apostle summarizes his appraisal of the Corinthian situation that he just described: ἐν παντὶ συνεστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς ἄγνους εἶναι τῷ πράγματι. *At every*

P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 402.]

²⁴⁵“The idea of zeal can be taken in either a good sense (Rom 10:2; 2 Cor 9:2; 11:2) or a bad one (as ‘jealousy, envy’; Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 13:4; 2 Cor 12:20; Jas 3:14, 16). Sometimes the sense is obscure (Gal 4:18). Most likely the former sense is meant by Paul here, especially since this list is one of positive attributes of the Corinthians. Nevertheless, the positive force can be aimed at several targets. On the one hand, Paul could now envision the Corinthians having zeal for him. The Corinthians now honor his apostolic authority and imitate his example.¹⁵⁰⁷ They are zealous for Paul and show it by their return to his gospel. On the other hand, the Corinthians exhibited zeal in that they were against the evil of the day, especially toward those who oppose Paul.¹⁵⁰⁸ Included in this zeal, of course, is zeal for God.¹⁵⁰⁹ The use of ‘concern’ for ζῆλος, ‘zeal,’ in the NIV is weak, missing almost entirely the depth of Paul’s emotion.” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 402.]

²⁴⁶It is a part of the word group ἐκδικέω, ἐκδικος, ἐκδίκησις in later ancient Greek denoting actions to equal out a situation, often in the sense of avenging personal insult or injury. Under the influence of the Jewish LXX they translate a series of Hebrew words referencing justice being meted out by God upon His people. [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:442.]

ἐν παντὶ
149 συνεστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς
ἀγνους εἶναι
τῷ πράγματι.

point you have proved yourselves guiltless in the matter.

One of the interpretive questions in this statement is what τῷ πράγματι refers to. This noun comes from πρᾶγμα which is a part of a word group²⁴⁷ containing the verb πράσσω with the basic meaning of doing something. The problem comes from this noun and verb being used to refer to either an event or an ongoing process. Action of some sort is always at the center of the meaning, but context must determine whether it is event or process kind of action. The tense used with the verb helps signal which is intended, but the noun doesn't delineate this so clearly. The NRSV among others leaves the ambiguity in place with the bland translation “in the matter.” Many commentators see this as referencing the initial failure to discipline but subsequent correction of the ‘offender’ mentioned in 2:5-11. But this overlooks the immediate context of 7:2-4 etc. where the problem is the Corinthians’ attitude and actions toward the apostle. This argues strongly that τῷ πράγματι references the relationship issue between Paul and the Corinthians with emphasis upon their actions. Thus the precise sense of τῷ πράγματι is “in regard to your action toward me.”

The ἐν παντὶ, *in every way*, at the beginning of the sentence balances τῷ πράγματι that comes at the end of the sentence. The antecedent of this neuter gender adjective παντὶ is the listing of the ἀλλ'... in the preceding sentence. The shifting of their stance toward the apostle reflects that they have demonstrated themselves (συνεστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς) ἄγνους εἶναι *to be holy* (people).²⁴⁸ The core meaning of ‘pure’ for this adjective ἄγνος, -ή, -όν remains central here. The motives of the Corinthians were pure; the actions they took were pure. All of this in the sense of alien stuff being mixed into the pie. They were truly genuine in repenting and reaching out to Paul.

In vv. 12-13a, the apostle asserts his motives for writing the earlier harsh letter to them: 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
²⁴⁷πράσσω, πρᾶγμα, πραγματεία, πραγματεύομαι, διαπραγματεύομαι, πράκτωρ, πράξις [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:632.]

²⁴⁸“When used of women, ἄγνος means ‘chaste’ (cf. 11:2); here it bears a forensic sense, ‘free of guilt,’ ‘innocent,’ ‘blameless.’” [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), 544.]

7.12 ἄρα
εἰ καὶ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν,
150 (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.

7.13 διὰ τοῦτο
151 παρακεκλήμεθα.

τοῦτο παρακεκλήμεθα. 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.²⁴⁹

The particle ἄρα here denotes result or consequence. What Paul then states is as a consequence of what he has just described about the response of the Corinthians that Titus reported to him. In the core expression the apostle sets up his ideas as a first class concessive expression with the core verb of the apodosis implied from the verb in the protasis (see above diagram). To the implied apodosis verb, ἔγραψα, I wrote, are added several qualifications in the pattern of οὐχ ἕνεκεν, *not because of...*; οὐδὲ ἕνεκεν, *neither because of...*; ἀλλ' ἕνεκεν, *but because of...* Two negative disavowals are followed by a contrastive positive claim. All three are set up as reasons by the causal preposition ἕνεκεν, *because of*. The elliptical protasis εἰ καὶ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, *even if I wrote to you*, sets up the obstacle to be overcome. Thus the sense is *in spite of writing to you, I did not do it either for this negative reason or that negative reason but instead for the positive reason*. The first class protasis assumes the writing of the letter. The apodosis asserts the real motive behind the writing of it.

Who is Paul alluding to with the first two disavowals, οὐχ ἕνεκεν τοῦ ἀδικήσαντος οὐδὲ ἕνεκεν τοῦ ἀδικηθέντος? The switch between the aorist active participle ἀδικήσαντος and the passive form of the same aorist participle ἀδικηθέντος is broad and alludes to the Corinthians doing the wrong and Paul being the victim of this wrong. But pettiness nor getting revenge, which is implied here, did not play any role whatsoever in the apostle's writing of the harsh letter.

To the contrary, what motivated the writing of this harsh letter is stated as ἀλλ' ἕνεκεν τοῦ φανερωθῆναι τὴν σπουδὴν ὑμῶν τὴν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. The core element of this infinitival phrase τοῦ φανερωθῆναι τὴν σπουδὴν ὑμῶν, *to bring to light your eagerness, goes back to σπουδῆν* in v. 11a which is then

²⁴⁹This is one of the countless illustrations of the human nature of the verse divisions which have no connection to the inspiration of the words of the text whatsoever. Failure to include the first sentence with what precedes and thus to place the verse division after the sentence instead of before it is unquestionably obvious here.

amplified by the series of ἀλλ'... expressions that follow. Paul's intention in the writing of the letter was that God could use it to bring to the surface the repentance and positive stance of the Corinthians. Note the use of the aorist passive infinitive φανερωθῆναι to highlight divine action in this process. The letter was meant to be a tool in God's hand for accomplishing this work.

Interesting are the final two prepositional phrases that modify the infinitive verbal expression (see above diagram): πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. First, Paul wanted the Corinthians' eagerness, τὴν σπουδὴν ὑμῶν, to be brought to light to the Corinthians themselves: πρὸς ὑμᾶς, *to you*. That is, he hoped that the Corinthians could and would recognize their wrong doing and repent of it. Thus the second prepositional phrase, ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ, *in the presence of God*, puts this as a divine matter with spiritual implications of relationship with God at stake. They needed to repent to God and seek His forgiveness, not just the apostle's. This was an issue much deeper than just between two groups of people.

The σπουδῆ of the Corinthians is now defined a second time (1st in v. 11b ἀλλ'... phrases) as τὴν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, *in behalf of us*. This defines the issue not as connected to the 'offender' in 2:5-11, but as connected to strained relations of the Corinthians with Paul. The use of ὑπὲρ, instead of πρὸς, avoids a back to back use of the same preposition with significantly different meanings. The construction τὴν σπουδὴν ὑμῶν τὴν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν carries with it the sense of *your eagerness to work in behalf of us*. Paul hoped that the Corinthians would turn to God in repentance and adopt a stance then toward him that served well the Gospel.

Indeed this hope was realized with Titus' report. Thus Paul concludes with διὰ τοῦτο παρακεκλήμεθα, *for this reason we have encouragement*. The use of the perfect passive voice verb παρακεκλήμεθα from παρακαλέω defies precise translation into most modern western languages. Titus' report that confirmed Paul's hopes for the harsh letter had brought him comfort and encouragement that would continue on into the future. The phrase διὰ τοῦτο with the neuter gender demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο reaches back to the discussion in vv. 5-12.

b) *Titus' personal assessment, vv. 13b-16.* Ἐπὶ δὲ τῇ παρακλήσει ἡμῶν περισσοτέρως μᾶλλον ἐχάρημεν ἐπὶ τῇ χαρᾷ Τίτου, ὅτι ἀναπέπαυται τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ πάντων ὑμῶν· 14 ὅτι εἶτι αὐτῷ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κεκαύχημαι, οὐ κατησχύνθη, ἀλλ' ὡς πάντα ἐν ἀληθείᾳ ἐλαλήσαμεν ὑμῖν, οὕτως καὶ ἡ καύχησις ἡμῶν ἢ ἐπὶ Τίτου ἀλήθεια ἐγενήθη. 15 καὶ τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐστὶν ἀναμνησκομένου τὴν πάντων ὑμῶν ὑπακοήν,



ὡς μετὰ φόβου
καὶ τρόμου
ἐδέξασθε αὐτόν.

16 χαίρω ὅτι ἐν
παντὶ θαρρῶ ἐν
ὑμῖν. In addition
to our own con-
solation, we re-
joiced still more
at the joy of Titus,
because his mind
has been set at
rest by all of you.

14 For if I have
been somewhat
boastful about
you to him, I was
not disgraced;
but just as every-
thing we said to
you was true, so
our boasting to
Titus has proved
true as well. 15

155 7.16 χαίρω
And his heart
goes out all the
more to you, as he remembers the obedience of all of you, and
how you welcomed him with fear and trembling. 16 I rejoice, be-
cause I have complete confidence in you.

With this pericope, the emphasis shifts from Titus' report concerning the impact of Paul's earlier harsh letter to Titus' own personal assessment of the Corinthian situation. The apostle highly valued the opinions of those who worked closely with him, and that clearly included Titus.

The three Greek sentences convey the deepest sense of joy from Paul regarding the situation at Corinth. The same verb -- ἐχάρημεν and χαίρω form the boundaries of the text unit, as well as set the tone of the thoughts expressed. The one distinction is that the rejoicing produced by Titus was a joy Paul shared with others around him in Macedonia (= we rejoiced). At the end the emphasis in χαίρω is first person singular emphasizing Paul's continuing joy over the situation in Corinth. In both instances the causal ὅτι clause provides the basis of Paul's having rejoiced and his continued rejoicing. His earlier rejoicing was based upon ὅτι ἀναπέπαυται τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ πάντων ὑμῶν, because his spirit was renewed from all of you. The reason for his continuing rejoicing is ὅτι ἐν παντὶ θαρρῶ ἐν ὑμῖν, because in every respect I have confidence in you.

The perspective of Titus is presented as adding Ἐπὶ δὲ τῇ παρακλήσει ἡμῶν, and to our encouragement. (v. 13b). The pre position of this prepositional phrase clearly alludes back to the previous encouragement described in vv. 8-13a. The report on the positive response to Paul's harsh letter was deeply encouraging to him because

δὲ

Ἐπὶ τῇ παρακλήσει ἡμῶν
περισσοτέρως μᾶλλον

ἐχάρημεν

ἐπὶ τῇ χαρᾷ Τίτου,
ὅτι ἀναπέπαυται τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ
| ἀπὸ πάντων ὑμῶν ·
7.14 | εἰ τι αὐτῷ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κεκαύχημαι,
ὅτι...οὐ κατησχύνθην,
ἀλλ'

ὡς πάντα ἐν ἀληθείᾳ ἐλαλήσαμεν ὑμῖν,
οὕτως
καὶ

153 ἡ καύχησις ἡμῶν . . . ἀλήθεια ἐγενήθη.
ἡ ἐπὶ Τίτου

7.15

καὶ

τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ

περισσοτέρως
εἰς ὑμᾶς

ἐστὶν ἀναμιμνησκομένου τὴν πάντων ὑμῶν ὑπακοήν,
ὡς μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου ἐδέξασθε αὐτόν.

the Corinthians had indeed reached out to God in repentance as a consequence of the letter. But now what was even more encouraging (περισσοτέρως μᾶλλον²⁵⁰) was τῇ χαρᾷ Τίτου, Titus' joy. That joy is defined within the framework of the next two ὅτι clauses (see above diagram). First is ὅτι ἀναπέπαυται τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ πάντων ὑμῶν, because his spirit is set at rest by all of you. From ἀναπαύω, the idea is to find renewing rest from intense labor or difficulty. Implicit in the use here is that as Titus made his way from Ephesus to Corinth on this assignment he had apprehension about what he would find at Corinth. But once he observed the Corinthians for a period of time after arriving, he found something different than what he had anticipated. And this set his mind at ease regarding the Corinthians.²⁵¹ Statement

²⁵⁰“The joyful demeanor of Titus was an additional reason for Paul's joy. Paul is so concerned to show how Titus's joy increased his that he gives us a pleonastic construction. He strengthens the comparative περισσοτέρως, ‘even more so’ (from περισσῶς, which means ‘beyond measure’), by adding the redundant μᾶλλον, ‘more.’ The combination of the two terms gives us the idea of ‘even much more’ (BDAG).¹⁵⁵⁴ This is not a unique construction, since we find similar examples in Mark (7:36) and Paul (Phil 1:23). Also, this is a construction found in classical Greek.¹⁵⁵⁵ The procedure of accumulating several comparatives was intended to heighten the comparison.” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 407.]

²⁵¹“ἐπὶ δὲ τῇ παρακλήσει ἡμῶν, ‘in addition to our encouragement.’ This sentence marks a new paragraph, as it reviews the past verses (6–7) and explains the course of events at greater depth.



154 in v. 15 provides some amplification here, as we will note below.

The second ὅτι clause picks up on this with amplification: ὅτι εἶ τι αὐτῷ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κεκαύχημαι, οὐ κατησχύνθην, **because since I had somewhat boasted to him about you, I was not embarrassed.**²⁵² In spite of becoming aware of harsh attitudes against Paul at Corinth, the apostle had spoken positively about them in giving Titus instructions for traveling to Corinth to seek to rectify the situation. Exactly what the apostle had told Titus about the Corinthians is not explained here. Probably it included some of the positive statements which are contained in this second letter to the church.

In sharp contrast to possible embarrassment for Paul about his optimism regarding the Corinthians stands ἀλλ' ὡς πάντα ἐν ἀληθείᾳ ἐλαλήσαμεν ὑμῖν, οὕτως καὶ ἡ καύχησις ἡμῶν ἢ ἐπὶ Τίτου ἀλήθεια ἐγενήθη, **but as we spoke all things in truth to you, so also our boasting to Titus became correct.**²⁵³ Paul

Paul has made it plain that he has been gladdened by the Corinthians in their 'repentance' (7:7, 9–12). And in this encouragement Paul was not thinking only of himself. As was explained in 7:6, Paul was also uplifted by both the person and the message of Titus. Once again the apostle returns to this thought. The placement of δέ, 'and,'¹⁵⁴⁸ overrules the attempt (in KJV/AV) to connect the following words in the Greek (note KJV/AV translates 'in your comfort') with the preceding. If the KJV/AV is followed, then the verse reads 'we were comforted in your comfort.' This reading does not fit the context (see Note n).” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 407.]

^{252c} ὅτι εἶ τι αὐτῷ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κεκαύχημαι, οὐ κατησχύνθην, 'for I boasted to him about you, and you did not embarrass me.' Paul elucidates further the reason why Titus's joy meant so much to him. No doubt since the report was positive, Paul had good feelings. And, since his companion rejoiced, Paul has a double reason to rejoice. But while this victory was important, it was more than just a triumph because of restored relationships. Paul had, so to speak, declared himself concerning the Corinthians. In essence, in spite of possible inner misgivings, Paul had boasted to Titus that all would be well, a bold endeavor at that time, to say the least.” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 409.]

^{253c} ἀλλ' ὡς πάντα ἐν ἀληθείᾳ ἐλαλήσαμεν ὑμῖν, 'and as we have spoken the truth in all things to you.' Paul reiterates what is to him the obvious. His speech is true.¹⁵⁷¹ The use of ἀλλά, 'but,' conveys the idea of 'on the contrary.'¹⁵⁷² Rather than leading to Paul's shame, what he had boasted to Titus has turned out to be true. The Corinthians would be reconciled to Paul. He had spoken to them ἐν ἀληθείᾳ, 'in truth.' No doubt Paul takes a polemical stab at his opponents, who questioned his credibility and reliability (1:13–14, 15–23). For, as Paul will say in 13:8, he is constrained by the truth, i.e., the apostolic message (4:2). So the issue, after all, is Paul's ap-

had confidence that the Corinthians would respond properly to his harsh letter and reach out to God in repentance. He had expressed this confidence (ἡ καύχησις ἡμῶν) to Titus and now he heard Titus reflect his own joy over how the Corinthians responded. What a relief for the apostle to not have misjudged the Corinthians! The harsh letter had been written correctly under God's leadership (πάντα ἐν ἀληθείᾳ ἐλαλήσαμεν ὑμῖν) and their proper response only validated the correctness of both what Paul had written and the confidence he had expressed about them to Titus earlier (οὕτως καὶ ἡ καύχησις ἡμῶν ἢ ἐπὶ Τίτου ἀλήθεια ἐγενήθη).

The extent of Titus' joy regarding the Corinthians is amplified in v. 15: καὶ τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐστὶν ἀναμνησκομένου τὴν πάντων ὑμῶν ὑπακοήν, ὡς μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου ἐδέξασθε αὐτόν, **And**

7.15 καὶ τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ

περισσοτέρως
εἰς ὑμᾶς

ἐστὶν

ἀναμνησκομένου τὴν πάντων ὑμῶν ὑπακοήν,
ὡς μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου ἐδέξασθε αὐτόν.

his sense of compassion toward you is all the more, as he remembers the obedience of all of you, when you received him with fear and trembling.

Titus' joy stands as greatly expanded compassion toward the Corinthians: καὶ τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐστὶν.²⁵⁴ This was prompted continually by ἀναμνησκομένου τὴν πάντων ὑμῶν ὑπακοήν, **in remembering the obedience of all of you.** Here the idea of ὑπακοήν signals the impact of the harsh letter in pushing the Corinthians to reach out to God to repent of their misdeeds. That ὑπακοήν came to expression clearly for Titus ὡς μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου ἐδέξασθε αὐτόν, **when you received him with fear and trembling.** Paul, contrary to many modern commentators, was not referring to how the Corinthians received Titus. Rather it references -- via ὡς with a past time verb like ἐδέξασθε -- what was demonstrated upon Titus' arrival in Corinth: μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου.²⁵⁵ The reverence and

ostolic standing at Corinth and his version of the kerygma.” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 409–410.]

²⁵⁴ Within the ancient perception that τὰ σπλάγχνα, **the guts**, were the seat of emotions and feelings, Paul literally asserts that his guts were spilling over due to the Corinthian reception of him. Figuratively, this meant a bubbling over of positive feelings of compassion toward the Corinthians.

^{255c} The phrase μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου, 'with fear and trembling,' is Pauline (but cf. Isa 19:16, from which it may be taken). We find it in no other NT writer (1 Cor 2:3; Phil 2:12; cf. Eph 6:5). This phrase appears to reflect the anxiety over the duty required



respect not just shown to Titus as Paul's representative but, more importantly, as reflecting true repentance to God brings deep joy to Titus every time he recounts it (ἀναμμνησκομένου), and especially as he shared it with the apostle in Macedonia. Thus Titus' joy amplifies Paul's joy over the Corinthians.

This he affirms in conclusion at v. 16: χαίρω ὅτι ἐν παντί θαρρῶ ἐν ὑμῖν, *I am rejoicing because in every way I have confidence in you*. This should not be taken to mean that all of the problems of the Corinthians were solved, as chapters ten through thirteen make very clear. The ancient Greek speaking world did not 'absolutize' things as the post Enlightenment western world tends to do. Thus the inclusive adjective πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν, used several times in these verbs, has more the sense of most every and not absolutely all. The adverbial form πάντως has the core sense of 'basically,' and not 'absolutely.' For the use of θαρρῶ as confidence see also its use in 5:6, 8 and 10:1-2. The sense of courage arising out of confidence is central of the core meaning of θαρρῶ.²⁵⁶ Thus the apostle will have the freedom to

of a person. But it is not in the sense of 'nervous panic'; rather, it betokens 'a solicitous anxiety lest we should fail in doing all that is required of us.'¹⁵⁸⁸ Filson¹⁵⁸⁹ suggests that even before Titus's arrival, guilt was beginning to work in the conscience of the Corinthians. So they may have opened their hearts up to Paul before Titus arrived. Or if the 'severe letter' arrived ahead of Titus, the rebuff of Paul could have weighed upon their minds. In either case, with 'reverence and respect,'¹⁵⁹⁰ the audience awaited the arrival of someone (maybe Paul), so that the church could demonstrate a changed heart to their human founder. Perhaps this verse reflects the alarm expressed in 7:11.¹⁵⁹¹ [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 411–412.]

²⁵⁶“The term occurs in the two forms θαρρέω, and θαρσέω of which θαρσέω is attested to be the earlier.¹ It has the basic sense of ‘to dare,’ ‘to be bold,’ and thence ‘to be of good courage,’ ‘to be cheerful,’ ‘to be confident,’ e.g., θάρρει, Xenoph. Cyrop., V, I, 6; also V, I, 17; Jos. Ant., 7, 266: θάρρει καὶ δείσης μηδὲν ὡς τεθνηξόμενος. This gives us the further main senses of *a. ‘to trust in something or someone,’ ‘to rely on,’* e.g., with the dat.: τεθαρησκότες τοῖς ὄρνισι, Hdt., III, 76; θαρρεῖν τοῖς χρήμασι αὐτοῦ, Greek Pap. from the Cairo Museum (ed. E. J. Goodspeed, 1902), 15, 19 (4th cent. A.D.); with the acc.: οὔτε Φίλιππος ἐθάρρει τούτους οὔθ’ οὔτοι Φίλιππον, Demosth., 3, 7; with prep.: ἅμα δὲ θαρρεῖν ἐφ’ ἐαυτῶ καὶ τῇ διαθέσει, Plut. Adulat., 28 (II, 69d); *b. ‘to be bold against someone or something,’ ‘to go out bravely to’:* θάρσει τὸ τοῦδὲ γ’ ἀνδρός, Soph. Oed. Col., 649: κρέσσον δὲ πάντα θαρσεόντα, Hdt., VII, 50. Except at Prv. 31:11 (θαρσεῖ ἐπ’ αὐτῇ ἢ καρδία τοῦ ἀνδρός αὐτῆς, θαρσεῖν = πρῶ) the LXX uses the term in the absol.² In the twelve passages in which it is a rendering from the Mas. it is used ten times for כָּזָבָה cum negatione and once for כָּזָבָה. It always means ‘to be of good courage,’ ‘to be confident,’ ‘not to be afraid.’ Almost always we have θαρσεῖν, θαρρεῖν being found only in Da. and 4 Macc.3 In the NT the Evangelists and Ac. have θαρσεῖν, and Pl. and Hb. θαρρεῖν.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:25.]

continue speaking bluntly to the Corinthians when the need is present. The present tense verb θαρρῶ asserts this. He knows that to speak God's message bluntly out of compassion is the only viable option in Christian ministry. The way the Corinthians responded to his harsh letter as reported to him by Titus has reconfirmed pragmatically that principle.

10.2.3.2 Ministry part two, 8:1-9:15

This larger unit of material centers on the collection of funds for the relief offering to benefit the believers in Judea and Jerusalem. Far too often one of two extremes in modern interpretive understanding surfaces. On the one extreme, chapters eight and nine are seen as the 'hinge point' of the entire letter, e.g., Betz's individual commentary on just these two chapters.²⁵⁷ In giv-

²⁵⁷“The fifth argument (8:1–9:15) of the probatio, according to Long, deals with Paul's integrity in respect to ‘the collection and the Corinthians' faith.’¹

“Studies on 2 Cor 8–9 are all indebted to Betz, who develops the judgment of Windisch, who writes,

Both letters (8–9) are “business letters”: but the way in which “business” is conducted, the motivation for the appeal, the presentation of the “business details,” as well as the ethical-religious exhortations connected with it—all this lifts Paul's epistles far above the level of ordinary business letters. Even in the business letter, Paul remains a human being, a minister, an apostle, and educator, and a witness.²

“Windisch's assessment is also endorsed by Georgi.³ More debatable is Betz's opening remark, ‘These chapters constitute the hinge on which everything else concerning 2 Corinthians turns, one way or the other,’ as is Meggitt's bid to describe the collection as ‘economic mutualism.’⁴

“Betz's rhetorical approach is subjected to scathing criticism by O'Mahony.⁵ In particular, he faults Betz's interpretation for the following key terms: παράκλησις, ‘official request or mandatum’ (71); παρακαλέω, ‘appoint’ (71); σπουδή, ‘characteristics of the ideal administrator’ (70); συμπέμπω, ‘to send something with someone’ (72); ὑπέρ, ‘authorization’ (79); ὑποταγή, ‘submission’ (122–23); and ὁμολογία, ‘contractual agreement.’⁶ Each of these terms is scrutinized carefully, and shown to have a meaning different from that proposed by Betz.

“Rather obviously, the presence of χάρις, ‘grace’ (but with a wide range of meanings),⁷ is so widespread in these chapters (10x) that this key to Paul's discussion is far more than anything expressible in economic or legalistic terms.⁸ More likely is Joubert's dictum that ‘[r]eligious reciprocity in 2 Corinthians 9:6–15 [is] generosity and gratitude as legitimate responses to the charis tou theou [‘grace of God’].’⁹ Also, he argues that Paul “intended to secure his own role as apostle and benefactor in the eyes of Jerusalem,”¹⁰ but with no idea of return, unlike Greco-Roman principles, for he is similar to Seneca.¹¹

“Concerning the significance of the collection, Lindgård writes that ‘the only concrete way of showing loyalty and acquaintance [sic] with Paul is to participate in the collection.’¹²”

[Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 416–417.]

ing this much importance to this theme, chapters one through seven are thus seen largely as ‘buttering up’ the Corinthians in order to get more money out of them. The obvious falseness of this is clear since it sees Paul without integrity and honesty in dealing with the Corinthians. If this were the case, then the Corinthians accusing Paul of just being after their money would have been correct (cf. 12:13-16). The argument of chapters one through seven is so powerfully opposite of this that such a view is ludicrous. An older but now largely discredited set of views is that chapters eight and nine originally stood as part of a separate letter, disconnected from either 2 Cor. 1-7 or 10-13.²⁵⁸ A multitude of differing proposals about how many ‘letters’ Second Corinthians represents were floated around during the last two centuries.²⁵⁹ What one learns from examining these proposals has far more to do with the commentators than with the scripture text. The fundamental unity of the entire text of Second Corinthians has been well and successfully defended in the last decades by scholars from a variety of theological viewpoints.²⁶⁰ And

²⁵⁸“At the beginning of this discussion it will be useful to recall the critical decisions made in Vol. I which may have some relevance to our understanding of the success or otherwise of Paul’s collection project. We have argued that chap. 8 belongs to the same letter as chaps. 1–7, which are themselves a unity.¹ Thus, chaps. 1–8 constitute a single letter which we regard as the second extant letter Paul wrote to the Corinthians. We take chap. 9 to be a separate letter which followed that of chaps. 1–8.² The letter of chaps. 10–13 we see as the final letter in the series.³ If this is the correct sequence, the last explicit picture we have of Paul’s relationship with the Corinthians is one of conflict. And this in turn might suggest that, although Corinth did make some contribution to the collection (Rom 15:26), it was not as substantial as Paul might have originally hoped. Whilst there could have been some renewal of support during his final stay in the city, this might not have been sufficient to make up for the initial loss of contributions from those members of the congregation who only earned (and doubtless spent) a weekly or a daily wage, and who had given up saving anything during the period of conflict. There is also the possibility that the contents of the letter of chaps. 10–13 might have become more widely known, and might have affected the attitude of the Jerusalem church towards the gift from the Pauline churches.” [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), 503.]

²⁵⁹“We have seen that the Pauline authorship of 2 Corinthians is a virtually universal assumption among NT scholars (see 1.a above). But when we turn to investigate the integrity, as opposed to the authenticity, of this letter, we are confronted with a complex array of data in the text, and, perhaps not surprisingly, with a bewildering variety of partition hypotheses.” [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), 8.]

²⁶⁰“We have discovered difficulties both with the Hausrath hypothesis (chs. 10–13 precede chs. 1–9 as part of a separate letter) and with the Semler hypothesis (chs. 10–13 follow chs. 1–9 as [part

this is the operating assumption behind the comments below. Also assumed is the unity between chapter eight and chapter nine. To be sure, the time of composition between these two chapters and also possibly with 1-7 and 10-13 may have varied somewhat. After all, the composition of a document as long as Second Corinthians would have always stretched itself out over a period of weeks and more likely months in Paul’s world. This does not in any way create multiple documents out of a single document.²⁶¹

The relevant question here is the internal structure of the content of these two chapters.²⁶² The process of

of] a separate letter). This prepares the way for an examination of the hypothesis that chs. 1–13 constitute a single document. Twentieth-century commentators who espoused this view¹⁰⁶ include Bernard (1903) 19–28; Lietzmann (1909) 139–40; Bachmann (1909) 3; Menzies (1912) xxxiv–xlii; Goudge (1927) xxxii–lvii; Schlatter (1934) 53–55 (in second ed., 1956); Allo (1936) l–lvi; Tasker (1958) 23–35; Hughes (1962) xxi–xxxv; de Boor (1972) 17, 196–97; Harris (1976) 303–6; Danker (1989) 18–20, 147 (tentatively); Wolff (1989) 1–3; Witherington (1995) 328–39; Belleville (1996) 23–33, 247–50; Kistemaker (1997) 14–15; Barnett (1997) 15–24, 450–56; Scott (1998) 4–7, 200; Lambrecht (1999) 7–9, 158–59; Garland (1999), 33–44; McCant (1999) 20–23, 101–2; and, more recently, Hafemann (2000) 31–33. Other twentieth-century supporters of the integrity of 2 Corinthians include: Jülicher (1900) 96–102; Michaelis (1946) 176–82 (in third ed., 1961); Wikenhauser (1958) 396–98; Munck (1959) 168–71; von Loewenich (1960) 121, 123; Guthrie (1961), Introduction 430–37 (in third ed., 1970); Price (1961) 370–72, 385; “Aspects” (1967) 95–106; Kümmel (1963), Introduction 287–93 (in second ed., 1975); Stephenson, “Theories” (1964) 639–46; “Integrity” (1965) 82–97; Bates (1965) 56–69; Prümm (1967) 1.404 n. 1, 547–62; Bahr (1968) 37–38; Hyldahl, “Einheit” (1973) 289–306; Chronologie 32–42; Dahl (1977) 38–39; 107 Black (1984) 88–91; Childs (1985) 286–89; Segalla (1988) 149–66; “Struttura” 189–218; and, more recently, Goulder, Mission (2001) 241–48.” [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), 42.]

²⁶¹Modern technical essays, including those I have written for publishers either in the US or Germany, were not created even inside the space of a month or less. A few represent the culmination of some years of research and continual writing. Formal letter writing in the ancient world of lengthy documents, such as Second Corinthians, were not different. This is why documents such as Philemon and Jude, two of the shortest letters in the NT, comprise less than half a page in modern formatting, and could have been written in a week or less. But not the longer documents of the NT.

²⁶²Somewhat differing perceptions of arrangement can be noted by comparing the paragraphing of this text material:

N-A 28th	NRSV	NIV (2011)	NLT	RSV
8:1-15	8:1-5	8:1-7	8:1-2	8:1-7
			8:3-5	
	8:6-15	8:8-9	8:6-7	
			8:8	8:8-15
			8:9	
		8:10-12	8:10-15	
		8:13-15		

diagramming the Greek text of these two chapters has been quite enlightening. The text reflects Paul's and his writing secretary's masterful use of ancient Koine Greek. Echoes of classical Greek surface along side Hellenistic Jewish Greek writing. The thought expression through this mixture of Greek styles also reflects the influences upon Paul's thinking from both his Greek and Jewish upbringing and heritage. The very personal nature of his subject in these two chapters adds complexity to the text expression. Doing fund raising while go to great lengths to avoid coming across as a con artist is a difficult balancing act to say the least. The apostle's genuineness and focus on helping others in need under God's leadership comes through strongly in this passage.

The block diagram suggests a four fold division of chapters eight and nine and this is reflected in the outline below of these two chapters.²⁶³

- 10.2.3.2.1 Motivated by others to give, 8:1-15
- 10.2.3.2.2 Role of Titus with the Corinthians, 8:16-24
- 10.2.3.2.3 Avoiding embarrassment, 9:1-5
- 10.2.3.2.4 Foundation spiritual principles of giving, 9:6-15

Something of a logical progression of thought can be

8:16-24	8:16-24	8:16-21	8:16-19	8:16-24
			8:20-21	
		8:22-24	8:22-24	
9:1-5	9:1-5	9:1-5	9:1-2	9:1-5
			9:3-5	
9:6-15	9:6-15	9:6-11	9:6-10	9:6-15
		9:12-15	9:11-12	
			9:13-15	

What one can observe is an essentially four fold division of the text of these two chapters. With each subunit moving the general theme of the collection forward along the lines of:

- 9:6-15, voluntary generosity to be blessed
- 9:1-5, needs of the believers in Jerusalem
- 8:16-24, emphasis upon Titus' role in helping
- 8:1-15, desire for the Corinthians to excel in giving

²⁶³“Section Heading: TEV ‘Christian Giving.’ Some interpreters consider chapters 8 and 9 to have been originally parts of separate letters (see ‘Translating 2 Corinthians’). But in the form of 2 Corinthians as it now exists, these two chapters together form a major section of the letter. Some translations (NJB, NAB, LPD, REB) group these two chapters together under a major section heading such as ‘The collection for the church [or the Christians] in Jerusalem’ (REB, LPD, NVSR). Other translations such as RSV and NRSV, which do not use section headings, indicate by leaving extra space before and after this section that these two chapters belong together.

“Within this larger unit most translations group verses 1–15 together as a section with a title similar to that in TEV, ‘Christian Giving.’ Perhaps more precise are the section headings in LPD and NVSR, which group 8:1–5 together and 8:6–15 together; this makes verses 1–5 and verses 6–15 two separate sections. The first is entitled ‘An example of generosity’ in LPD, while NVSR has ‘The example of the churches in Macedonia.’ The section heading for verses 6–15 is then ‘An appeal to the generosity of the Corinthians’.”

[Roger L. Omanson and John Ellington, *A Handbook on Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 140.]

traced although one should be cautious about seeing too much logic, especially from a post enlightenment sense of progression of thinking.

10.2.3.2.1 Motivated by others to give, 8:1-15

8.1 Γνωρίζομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δεδομένην ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας, 2 ὅτι ἐν πολλῇ δοκιμῇ θλίψεως ἢ περισσειά τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτῶν καὶ ἢ κατὰ βάθους πτωχεῖα αὐτῶν ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἀπλότητος αὐτῶν· 3 ὅτι κατὰ δύναμιν, μαρτυρῶ, καὶ παρὰ δύναμιν, αὐθαίρετοι 4 μετὰ πολλῆς παρακλήσεως δεόμενοι ἡμῶν τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἀγίους, 5 καὶ οὐ καθὼς ἠλπίσσαμεν ἀλλ’ ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ 6 εἰς τὸ παρακαλέσαι ἡμᾶς τίτον, ἵνα καθὼς προενήρξατο οὕτως καὶ ἐπιτελέσῃ εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ τὴν χάριν ταύτην. 7 Ἀλλ’ ὥσπερ ἐν παντὶ περισσεύετε, πίστει καὶ λόγῳ καὶ γνώσει καὶ πάσῃ σπουδῇ καὶ τῇ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν ἀγάπῃ, ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε. 8 Οὐ κατ’ ἐπιταγὴν λέγω ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἐτέρων σπουδῆς καὶ τὸ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγάπης γνήσιον δοκιμάζων· 9 γινώσκετε γὰρ τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτι δι’ ὑμᾶς ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος ὢν, ἵνα ὑμεῖς τῇ ἐκείνου πτωχεῖα πλουτήσητε. 10 καὶ γνώμην ἐν τούτῳ δίδωμι· τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν συμφέρει, οἵτινες οὐ μόνον τὸ ποιῆσαι ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ θέλειν προενήρξασθε ἀπὸ πέρους· 11 νυνὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ ποιῆσαι ἐπιτελέσατε, ὅπως καθάπερ ἢ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν, οὕτως καὶ τὸ ἐπιτελέσαι ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν. 12 εἰ γὰρ ἢ προθυμία πρόκειται, καθὼς ἐὰν ἔχη εὐπρόσδεκτος, οὐ καθὼς οὐκ ἔχει. 13 οὐ γὰρ ἵνα ἄλλοις ἄνεσις, ὑμῖν θλίψις, ἀλλ’ ἐξ ἰσότητος· 14 ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ τὸ ὑμῶν περισσευμα εἰς τὸ ἐκείνων ὑστέρημα, ἵνα καὶ τὸ ἐκείνων περισσευμα γένηται εἰς τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα, ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης, 15 καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ τὸ πολὺ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν, καὶ ὁ τὸ ὀλίγον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν.

8.1 We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; 2 for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. 3 For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, 4 begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints— 5 and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us, 6 so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you. 7 Now as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you — so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.

8 I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. 9 For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor,



so that by his poverty you might become rich. 10 And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something — 11 now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. 12 For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has — not according to what one does not have. 13 I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between 14 your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. 15 As it is written,

“The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little.”

Here a further division of thought is merited with two distinct units in vv. 1-6 and 7-15. In the first unit the central emphasis falls upon the example of the Macedonians in enthusiastically gathering in the financial collection for the Jerusalem believers. This expression of unusual generosity in giving motivated Paul to urge Titus to come ahead of the apostle to make sure that the Corinthians didn't drop the ball in their responsibility. Their initial enthusiasm for this project (cf. 9:2) needed to be carried out by completing the project in advance of Paul's arrival with members of the Macedonian churches. In vv. 7-15, the focus is on motivating the Corinthians to give not only generously but enthusiastically.

In vv. 16-24, the focus is on Titus' coming in order to help them complete this project. Mention is made of the sending also of an unnamed brother (v. 18) with Titus to help in the organizing of the collection. The point here is that this Christian leader has been appointed by the churches to make sure that all the money raised goes to the designated sources in Jerusalem. In Paul's world -- as much in our world also -- money raising projects were notorious for scaming people in order to pad the pockets of the money raisers.

10.2.3.2.1.1 The example of the Macedonians, 8:1-6

8.1 Γνωρίζομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δεδομένην ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας, 2 ὅτι ἐν πολλῇ δοκιμῇ θλίψεως ἢ περισσειᾶ τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτῶν καὶ ἡ κατὰ βάθους πτωχεῖα αὐτῶν ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἀπλότητος αὐτῶν· 3 ὅτι κατὰ δύναμιν, μαρτυρῶ, καὶ παρὰ δύναμιν, αὐθαίρετοι 4 μετὰ πολλῆς παρακλήσεως δεόμενοι ἡμῶν τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἀγίους, 5 καὶ οὐ καθὼς ἠλπίσασμεν ἀλλ' ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ 6 εἰς τὸ παρακαλέσαι ἡμᾶς τίτον, ἵνα καθὼς προενήρξατο οὕτως καὶ ἐπιτελέσῃ εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ τὴν χάριν ταύτην.

8.1 We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; 2 for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their

abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. 3 For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, 4 begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints— 5 and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us, 6 so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you. 7 Now as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you — so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.

The core idea set forth at the beginning in #156 defines the point of this unit: Paul seeks to amplify the meaning of God's grace to his readers at Corinth. The main clause Γνωρίζομεν δὲ ὑμῖν... stands as a typical topic shift in the writings of the apostle, as well as in Koine Greek generally. Also the vocative ἀδελφοί, brothers, functions the same way, although in Second Corinthians it is limited to 1:8; 8:1; and 13:11. Yet the preceding larger unit of 7:2-16 sets up this shift in emphasis through reaffirming Paul's caring concern for the Corinthians. To be sure, Γνωρίζομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ, *And we are making known to you, brothers, the grace of God*, does not imply that the Corinthians were unfamiliar with God's grace. The adjective relative clause τὴν δεδομένην ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας, *which has been given among the churches of Macedonia*, delimits the reference to a specific example of the outpouring of the dynamic grace of God: among the Macedonian congregations. The first causal ὅτι clause (v. 2) defines the impact of divine grace upon God's people. The combination of abundant joy in the midst of severe poverty²⁶⁴ produces a wealth of financial generosity *in giving to help others*.²⁶⁵ Here is clearly the dynam-

²⁶⁴“In itself πτωχεῖα signifies ‘great poverty.’ But to emphasize that the Macedonians had reached ‘the very depths of destitution’ (Barclay), Paul adds the remarkable qualification κατὰ βάθους, literally ‘down to the depth,’ referring not to ‘ever-deeper poverty,’ but ‘poverty at the deepest,’ ‘rock-bottom poverty’ (Barrett 216), ‘extreme/profound poverty.’³⁰ Betz observes that ‘ancient sources indicate that poverty was a way of life in Macedonia generally.’³¹ But the dire poverty of the believers there was undoubtedly linked with their θλίψις: in their case persecution created or at least aggravated their destitution. Also, we cannot doubt that the radical poverty of the Macedonian Christians gave them a special empathy with ‘the poor’ (οἱ πτωχοί) in the Jerusalem church (Rom. 15:26), just as their experience of suffering gave them a particular affinity with the churches of Judea which also had suffered at the hands of their own people (1 Thess. 2:14).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 562.]

²⁶⁵The basis of the dire need of the believers in Jerusalem is not spelled out in detail and is assumed to be a point of oral expla-



8.1 δὲ
156 Γνωρίζομεν ὑμῖν,
 | ἀδελφοί,
 | τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ
 | τὴν δεδομένην
 | ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας,
 | ἐν πολλῇ δοκιμῇ θλίψεως
 8.2 ὅτι... ἡ περισσεία τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτῶν
 | καὶ
 | ἢ κατὰ βάθους πτωχείας αὐτῶν
 | ἐπερίσσευσεν
 | εἰς τὸ πλοῦτος
 | τῆς ἀπλότητος αὐτῶν.
 8.3 ὅτι _____ κατὰ δύναμιν,
157¹ μαρτυρῶ, | |
 | | καὶ
 | παρὰ δύναμιν,
 (ἦσαν) ἀύθαρστοι
 8.4 | μετὰ πολλῆς παρακλήσεως
 (ἦσαν) δεόμενοι ἡμῶν τὴν χάριν
 καὶ
 τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας
 τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἀγίους,
 8.5 καὶ
158 οὐ (ἦσαν ἀύθαρστοι)
 καθὼς ἠλπίζαμεν
 ἀλλ'
159 ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ
 | καὶ
 | ἡμῖν
 διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ
 8.6 εἰς τὸ παρακαλέσαι ἡμᾶς Τίτον,
 | καθὼς προενήρξατο
 ἵνα... οὕτως καὶ ἐπιτελέσῃ _____
 εἰς ὑμᾶς |
 καὶ |
 τὴν χάριν ταύτην.

¹The parenthetical insertion of μαρτυρῶ as an oath expression interrupts the syntactical flow of supporting ὅτι clauses.

nation by Paul so that no need existed to go into those details in his written expressions, as per his statement in 2 Cor. 9:1. Note Harris' exploration of this point:

a. The Need at Jerusalem

Whether the collection was actually delivered to Jerusalem in A.D. 55 (Jeremias, *Abba* 237–38) or, as seems more probable, in A.D. 57 (Jewett, *Chronology* 101), there are numerous indications that there had been a persistent need for economic relief for impoverished members of the Jerusalem church since its inception.

(1) The constant influx of Jewish converts (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 6:7; 9:31; 21:20) put continual pressure on the resources of the church as it sought to care for those who were ostracized socially and economically as a result of their conversion (cf. Acts 8:1; 9:1–2; cf. Duncan 259–60). Also, there was a considerable number of needy widows in the church (Acts 6:1; cf. Mark 12:42; Luke 21:1–4).

(2) On two occasions Luke refers to the voluntary sharing of proceeds from the sale of goods and property (Acts 2:44–45; 4:34–35). This was no luxurious “experiment in communism” or reckless liquidation of capital assets, but an economic necessity to ensure corporate survival.²⁰⁸ But in the long run this communal sharing undoubtedly would have aggravated—though it did not cause (contra

ic grace of God at work in the life of the Macedonia

Dodd, *Romans* 230)—the poverty that had become endemic.

(3) Throughout the principate of Claudius (A.D. 41–54) there were droughts and famines (Suetonius, *Claudius* 18.2; see Bruce, *Acts* 276), the most severe and widespread spanning the years 45–47 (cf. Acts 11:28). This famine would have been prolonged and aggravated by the sabbatical year, beginning fall 47, when land had to lie fallow (Jeremias, *Jerusalem* 143; *Abba* 235 n. 15). Gapp rightly observes (261) that famine is always a class famine, affecting the poor before and more than the rich. “While all classes of society suffered serious economic discomfort during a shortage of grain, the actual hunger and starvation were restricted to the lower classes” (261), from which Christians (at least in Jerusalem) largely came.

(4) Living in Jerusalem was expensive in the first century. The city’s unfavorable geographical and commercial position meant that water was always in short supply, raw materials scarce, and food prices inflated.²⁰⁹ At the gates of Jerusalem custom duties were levied on agricultural produce for sale in the city (M. Stern in *Safrai* and Stern 333). Fruit purchased in Jerusalem cost three to six times its price in the country (Jeremias, *Jerusalem* 121). When a harvest



churches. The general poverty of this region economically is well documented.²⁶⁶ No wonder Paul was overjoyed. This is not mere human effort.

One should note that the core meaning of ἀπλότης, here translated as ‘generosity,’ is actually **simplicity** and **sincerity**.²⁶⁷ The basis for the derivative meaning of ‘gen-

erosity’ is well established in the ancient world, but the connection of this idea to the core idea of simplicity is never lost. The focus is not merely the amount of the giving but, more importantly, the way it is given, particularly the motivation behind the giving. The Macedonians sincerely desired to help the believers in Judea and Jerusalem through the hard times they were experiencing. The common experience of suffering shared between the Macedonian believers (ἐν πολλῇ δοκιμῇ θλίψεως) and those in Judea prompted the willingness to dip deeply in their pocketbooks to help out. Also very critical here is the overcoming of racial barriers with the dominantly non-Jewish Macedonian believers reaching out to the almost totally Jewish believers in Jerusalem.

failed, the normal prices—already inflated—could multiply up to sixteen times (*Jerusalem* 122–23). And Josephus mentions a house tax that was levied in Jerusalem (*Antiquities* 19.299).

(5) As the mother church of Christendom, the Jerusalem church was obliged to support a proportionately large number of teachers (cf. Acts 6:4; 1 Cor. 9:4–6) and probably to provide hospitality for frequent Christian visitors to the holy city (cf. Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9).

(6) Palestinian Jews were subject to a crippling twofold taxation—civil (Roman) and religious (Jewish)—which, in the time of Jesus, may have been between thirty and forty percent of total income (see Grant 87–105). During the reign of Tiberius (A.D. 14–37) Judea became overwhelmed by its tax burden and requested imperial relief (Tacitus, *Annals* 2.42).

[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), 88–89.]

²⁶⁶“Macedonia had been a Roman province since 146 B.C. The population was mostly Greek, largely rural, more or less Hellenized,⁸⁴ and organized along tribal lines. Michael I. Rostovtzeff has summed up the conditions in this way: ‘The ... province of MACEDONIA ... was never a land of intensive urbanization, apart from its Eastern coast. The strength of the Macedonian kingdom was based on the Macedonian peasantry, on the villages. During the Macedonian wars, the country suffered heavy losses. Under the rule of the Roman Republic, it experienced many disastrous invasions of barbarians. Then it became, with Thessaly, the main battle-field of the Roman generals during the civil wars. It was no wonder that this fertile land was less densely populated than it had been under its kings.’⁸⁵

“To make up for the loss of population, Augustus decided to establish Roman colonies in the province, thus introducing a Roman element. Roman veterans and civilians settled in the major cities (Dyrrhachium, Philippi, Dium, Pella, Cassandrea, Byblis), while other urban centers were given the status of Roman municipia (Beroea, Thessalonica, Stobi).⁸⁶ It is easy to understand why Paul called the Macedonians’ economic situation one of ‘rock-bottom poverty’ (8:2) because such was, proverbially, the condition of the country.⁸⁷ On the other hand, it is noteworthy that the churches known to have been founded by the apostle were located precisely in the Romanized cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Beroea. Could it be that the membership of these churches consisted in part of Roman settlers?”

[Hans Dieter Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*, ed. George W. MacRae, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 50.]

²⁶⁷“Here, too, the basic meaning is a. ‘simplicity’: 2 Βασ. 15:11; 3 Macc. 3:21; Jos. Bell., 2, 151. And again this leads to such value concepts as b. ‘noble simplicity,’ ‘characteristic of the psyche of heroes,’ 1 c. ‘purity’ or ‘singleness of heart’: Jos. Bell., 5, 319 and often in M. Ant., related to ἀλήθεια,² and d. ‘sufficiency’ which has something to spare for others, i.e., ‘generosity’: Jos. Ant., 7, 332; Test. Iss. 3:8: πάντα γὰρ πένησι καὶ θλιβομένοις παρεῖχον ... ἐν ἀπλότητι καρδίας μου.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey

erosity’ is well established in the ancient world, but the connection of this idea to the core idea of simplicity is never lost. The focus is not merely the amount of the giving but, more importantly, the way it is given, particularly the motivation behind the giving. The Macedonians sincerely desired to help the believers in Judea and Jerusalem through the hard times they were experiencing. The common experience of suffering shared between the Macedonian believers (ἐν πολλῇ δοκιμῇ θλίψεως) and those in Judea prompted the willingness to dip deeply in their pocketbooks to help out. Also very critical here is the overcoming of racial barriers with the dominantly non-Jewish Macedonian believers reaching out to the almost totally Jewish believers in Jerusalem.

The second ὅτι clause foundation for Paul’s informing the Corinthians of the divine grace poured out in Macedonia is the complex grammar expression in v. 3: ὅτι κατὰ δύνανμιν, μαρτυρῶ, καὶ παρὰ δύνανμιν, αὐθαίρετοι. . . . **for to the extent of ability -- I swear -- and beyond ability, they were voluntary givers.** Now the apostle focuses attention on the motivation behind the giving. No one, not even Paul, coerced the Macedonians to give so generously. As he stated at the outset, this kind of giving comes when God’s grace goes to work in the midst of His people. The Macedonians, and in particular the Philippian congregation, had a tendency toward generosity in helping others elsewhere.²⁶⁸ The double prepositional phrases κατὰ δύνανμιν, καὶ παρὰ δύνανμιν stresses first the framework of their giving (**within their means**, κατὰ δύνανμιν. That is, they gave out of what they possessed. But the second phrase underscores the extent of their giving: way beyond what their limited means would suggest that they might give (παρὰ δύνανμιν). Here we have Paul’s definition τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἀπλότητος αὐτῶν, **the wealth of their generos-**

W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:386–387.]

²⁶⁸“This was not the first time that the Macedonian believers had acted with warm generosity. Their record, as far as we can ascertain it, can be set out in four stages.

1. In about A.D. 50 the Christians in Philippi entered into a financial partnership with Paul sometime after his first visit (Phil. 1:5; 4:15), and even before he had left Macedonia they sent him a gift ‘more than once’ (Phil. 4:16).

2. Late in 50 Silas and Timothy brought financial aid from the Macedonians to Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:5; 2 Cor. 11:9).

3. Before the fall of 56 the Macedonians had contributed generously to Paul’s collection for Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:1–4; cf. Rom. 15:26).

4. In 60 or 61 the Philippians sent Epaphroditus to Rome to bring Paul relief supplies (Phil. 2:25; 4:18).”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 563–564.]



ity, in the preceding statement. The predicate adjective *αὐθαίρετοι* from *αὐθαίρετος*, -ον (itself from *αὐτός* and *αἰρέω* = I myself choose) stresses this giving was purely the decision of the Macedonians. Neither Paul nor others had pressured them to give x amount of money to the collection. Of course this does not preclude giving instructions or encouragement.²⁶⁹ Notice that specific amounts of giving in monetary terms is never mentioned in this discussion. Why? Because this was not the important point. Why they gave and how they gave was far more important than how much they gave.

Paul's insertion of the oath expression as a parenthesis, *μαρτυρῶ*, underscores his amazement over their giving to this collection. They surprised him by their sacrificial giving.²⁷⁰ This sets up the following statements on the Macedonians giving themselves first to the Lord (vv. 4-5).

The Macedonians passionately wanted to participate in the collection for Jerusalem, as is asserted by *μετὰ πολλῆς παρακλήσεως δεόμενοι ἡμῶν τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους*, with much encouragement begging us for this grace and participation in ministry for the saints. This elliptical expression continues the emphasis upon *αὐθαίρετοι*, voluntary givers. It amplifies this adjective with more details. The participle *δεόμενοι*, from *δέομαι*, references intense asking or requesting. This is heightened by the prepositional phrase modifier *μετὰ πολλῆς παρακλήσεως*. With the preposition *μετὰ* and the genitive case, the sense is with repeated requests. The compound direct objects *τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους* spells out the content of their pleas to the apostle. It was for this grace and this participation in ministry for the saints.²⁷¹ The genitive of personal object *ἡμῶν*, rath-

²⁶⁹Some two or more years earlier, the apostle laid down basic guidelines for this collection to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 16:1-4,

Περὶ δὲ τῆς λογείας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους ὡσπερ διέταξα ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιήσατε. 2 κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου ἕκαστος ὑμῶν παρ' ἑαυτῶν τιθέτω θησαυρίζων ὃ τι ἐὰν εὐδοῶται, ἵνα μὴ ὅταν ἔλθω τότε λογεῖται γίνωνται. 3 ὅταν δὲ παραγένωμαι, οὓς ἐὰν δοκιμάσητε, δι' ἐπιστολῶν τούτους πέμψω ἀπενεγκεῖν τὴν χάριν ὑμῶν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ. 4 ἐὰν δὲ ἄξιον ᾖ τοῦ κάμει πορεύεσθαι, σὺν ἐμοὶ πορεύονται.

Now concerning the collection for the saints: you should follow the directions I gave to the churches of Galatia. 2 On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come. 3 And when I arrive, I will send any whom you approve with letters to take your gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

²⁷⁰If you have ever pastored a congregation and followed patterns of financial giving in your church, you understand well the giving of the Macedonians. The best and most consistent givers in your church will be the senior citizens living on a modest fixed income. Those least able to give anything will give the most.

²⁷¹“*χάρις*, ‘privilege,’ *κοινωνία*, ‘sharing,’ and *διακονία*, ‘service,’ are three key words in this discussion.⁸⁴ We should refuse

er than the typical dative case, is common with *δέομαι*, and signals that their pleas were directed to Paul and his associates. Earlier in 1 Cor. 16:1, the apostle had labeled this offering as *τῆς λογείας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους*, the collection for the saints. The context makes it clear that he is referring to the believers in Jerusalem.²⁷² In 9:1,

to treat them as simple synonyms for the collection, though they do overlap in the range of their possible nuances. We have taken *χάρις*, ‘grace,’ here as a human ‘privilege,’ a gracious act, while recognizing that it has a theological underpinning; i.e., the Macedonians have acted in response to divine grace, which prompts and disposes all human endeavor. The thought goes back to 8:1.

“*κοινωνία*, ‘sharing,’ is not only a sharing or gaining of fellowship with others, but it conveys rather the idea of participation in the objective reality, the religious good,⁸⁵ which gives the basis and the norm by which the sharing is made possible and effective. In this case the proof of the Macedonians’ desire for sharing-in-fellowship was their active support of ‘the service,’ i.e., the collection.⁸⁶ So *διακονία*, ‘service,’ all commentators are agreed, stands for the offering that Paul was minded to collect from his people at Corinth to support the Jerusalem community. But, as we saw, since his apostolic standing was in question there and since too the collection from Gentile believers to aid Jerusalem would be regarded as a seal of his apostleship, he attached great significance to this act, giving it an ‘ecclesiological interpretation,’ as Hainz remarks.⁸⁷”

[Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 434.]

²⁷²One of the unresolved issues is Paul’s use of *οἱ πτωχοί*, the poverty stricken, in reference to the saints in Jerusalem. Is he labeling all the saints or just a segment of them in Jerusalem? Harris has an interesting discussion of this issue:

b. “The Poor” in Jerusalem

There are two Pauline passages where “the poor” (*οἱ πτωχοί*) at Jerusalem are mentioned in connection with monetary aid—Gal. 2:10 and Rom. 15:26.

Gal. 2:1–10 recounts a visit that Paul and Barnabas paid to Jerusalem during which they received from the three “pillars,” James, Cephas, and John, not only recognition of their role as missionaries to the Gentiles but also a single urgent request: “All they asked was that we should go on remembering (*ἵνα μνημονεύωμεν*) the poor—which in fact, was the very thing I had shown my eagerness (*ἔσπουδάσα*) to do” (Gal. 2:10).²¹⁰ If we equate this visit with the famine relief visit of Acts 11:30; 12:25 (see Fung, Galatians 10–28), Paul is not referring in v. 10b to his diligence after the visit in complying with the request to remember the poor but to the fact that he had already taken the initiative in this matter by helping to organize and deliver to Jerusalem the Antiochene famine relief; he was no puppet of the Twelve or the Three. This interpretation—certainly a contested one²¹¹—accords well with the central thrust of Galatians 1–2, where Paul emphasizes, not his dependence on Jerusalem as would be evidenced by obedience to a demand (“Remember the poor—and I did”), but his independence of the Jerusalem apostles especially with respect to his receipt of the gospel and his calling to proclaim it (1:1, 11–12, 15–19; 2:6–9).

But who were “the poor” to whom the “pillars” referred? It is certainly tempting to regard *οἱ πτωχοί* here as a technical term for Jerusalem Christians as a whole (thus Georgi 33–34), given the fact that at an earlier time the Qumranites called themselves



he will call it τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους, the ministry for the saints, while indicating that the Corinthians

hā'ebyonim, “the poor,” and at a later time Jewish Christians who claimed to be successors of the Jerusalem church were called Ebionites (from *'ebyonim*, “poor ones”). But there is no firm connection between οἱ πτωχοὶ of Jerusalem and the second-century Ebionites,²¹² and although Luke uses some nineteen different designations for Christians in Acts, never do we find “the poor” used in reference to any group of Christians.²¹³ In addition, if οἱ πτωχοὶ were a familiar title for the whole Jerusalem church, we would have expected Gal. 2:10 to read αὐτῶν τῶν πτωχῶν: “(only they requested us to remember) them, the poor.” There is thus no reason to depart from the common, literal sense of οἱ πτωχοὶ, particularly since it stands without a qualification such as τῷ πνεύματι (cf. Matt. 5:3).

In Rom. 15:22–29 Paul intimates his intention to visit Jerusalem with his relief aid for the believers before continuing on to Rome and Spain. This intended journey to Jerusalem may be identified with the projected departure for Syria mentioned in Acts 20:3 (cf. 21:3, 15) if Romans was written from Corinth (Acts 20:2–3). Paul states in v. 26 that the destination of the offering is οἱ πτωχοὶ τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ. The key issue here is whether this expression means “the poor who are the saints at Jerusalem” (τῶν ἁγίων being an exegetical genitive; thus K. Holl, 60) or “the poor among God’s people at Jerusalem” (NEB, REB, 214 τῶν ἁγίων being a partitive genitive). In other words, is the “poverty” referred to spiritual or economic?

In an influential essay written in 1928, Holl maintained (58–60) that “the poor” are not to be distinguished from “the saints,” the two titles being familiar and virtually synonymous self-designations of Jerusalem Christians, “the poor in spirit” (Matt. 5:3) and “the saints” par excellence.²¹⁵ He was unwilling to concede that when οἱ ἅγιοι is used in connection with the collection (e.g., Rom. 15:25; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1), it is an abbreviation of οἱ πτωχοὶ τῶν ἁγίων. With this longer description, then, Paul is speaking in a veiled manner because he is embarrassed to be involved in a collection that was in fact a tax imposed by and destined for the Jerusalem church as a whole (60). Against Holl we would urge that the most natural way to understand τῶν ἁγίων here is as a partitive genitive (thus also BAGD 728b), οἱ ἅγιοι ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ denoting the whole church in Jerusalem,²¹⁶ of which οἱ πτωχοὶ formed a part of an undisclosed size (so also Becker 259). Holl’s view would conform better with οἱ πτωχοὶ οἱ ἅγιοι or οἱ ἅγιοι οἱ πτωχοὶ or οἱ πτωχοὶ ἅγιοι. Other references to the collection support the view that οἱ πτωχοὶ in Rom. 15:26 is simply a sociological term, denoting those who are financially poor.²¹⁷

Against the backdrop of the quotation of Exod. 16:18 (the gathering of manna) in 2 Cor. 8:15, the περίσσευμα-ὕστερήμα antithesis of 8:14 must refer to economic plenty and want. 2 Cor. 9:12 shows that the immediate function of the collection was to supply “the (physical) necessities of the saints” (τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν ἁγίων). Also, since Paul’s speech to the Ephesian elders was delivered en route to Jerusalem with the collection, it seems natural to hear an allusion to the poor in Jerusalem when he speaks of the necessity of helping the weak (δεῖ ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενοῦντων, Acts 20:35), the economically depressed.

We conclude that in both Gal. 2:10 and Rom. 15:26 οἱ πτωχοὶ is not a title denoting all the Jerusalem Christians but a description of a group within the Jerusalem church who had urgent material needs.²¹⁸

[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), 89–91.]

are already informed about the details of the offering.²⁷³ The use of τῆς διακονίας stresses this monetary gift as spiritual ministry for the believers in Jerusalem.²⁷⁴ Modern Christianity would do well to remember this core principle in the teachings of the NT.

Statements # 158 and 159 (vv. 5-6) shed additional light on the surprise of Paul over the Macedonians: 5 καὶ οὐ καθὼς ἠλπίζαμεν ἀλλ’ ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ 6 εἰς τὸ παρακαλέσαι ἡμᾶς τίτον, ἵνα καθὼς προενηρξάτο οὕτως καὶ ἐπιτελέσῃ εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ τὴν χάριν ταύτην, 5 and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us, 6 so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you.

The οὐ... ἀλλ’ (not this...but that) structure in ellipsis here is central to understanding Paul’s idea in this part of the lengthy sentence. The first main clause is assumed and modified by the comparative dependent clause introduced by καθὼς. Out of the immediate context the assumed main clause runs along the lines of “they were not voluntary givers,” as we had expected. The negative sets up the following clause which suppresses the negative in the οὐ... ἀλλ’ structure. That is,

²⁷³“No clearer evidence exists of Paul’s commitment to social service and his abilities as a skilled strategist than the ‘collection for the poor’ to which he devoted a considerable part of his time and energy during A.D. 52–57. Of the three passages in which he discusses this collection (Rom. 15:25–32; 1 Cor. 16:1–4; 2 Corinthians 8–9), by far the longest is in 2 Corinthians (some 39 verses). We have already reviewed the various partition theories involving 2 Corinthians 8–9 (see A.3.d. above) and reached the conclusion that the objections that have been raised against the integrity of these two chapters are less potent than the evidence for their belonging together and their coherence with chs. 1–7. Their integrity within 2 Corinthians as a whole (see A.3.e.[3]) will therefore be assumed in the discussion that follows.” [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), 87.]

²⁷⁴“In referring to this collection Paul uses several designations. The fullest is found in Rom. 15:26, (κοινωνία ...) εἰς τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ, ‘(contribution) for the poor among God’s people in Jerusalem.’ Other descriptions seem to be abbreviations or modifications of this: ἡ διακονία ἢ εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους (2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1; cf. Rom. 15:25; 2 Cor. 9:12, ‘the relief aid/contribution/service for God’s people’), which may have been the official name for the whole enterprise (so Betz 46, 90), ἡ λογεῖα ἢ εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους (1 Cor. 16:1, ‘the collection for God’s people’), ἡ διακονία μου ἢ εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ (Rom. 15:31, ‘my service for Jerusalem’), ἡ χάρις ὑμῶν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ (1 Cor. 16:3, ‘your gift for Jerusalem’). From these data, we can see that either ‘Jerusalem’ or ‘God’s people’ (οἱ ἅγιοι) serve as abbreviations for the destination of the collection, ‘the poor among God’s people in Jerusalem.’” [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), 87–88.]



8.5 καὶ
158 οὐ (ἦσαν ἀυθαίρετοι)
καθὼς ἠλπίζαμεν
ἀλλ’
159 ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ
| καὶ
| **ἡμῖν**
διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ
8.6 εἰς τὸ παρακαλέσαι ἡμᾶς Τίτον,
καθὼς προενήρξατο
οὕτως καὶ
ἵνα...ἐπιτελέσῃ____
εἰς ὑμᾶς |
καὶ |
τὴν χάριν ταύτην.

rived in Corinth with the delegation from Macedonia.

When Titus first arrived in Corinth,²⁷⁵ he had made a beginning in organizing the relief offering among the Corinthians: καθὼς προενήρξατο, just as he had begun before-

the apostle had expected them to give generously out of his earlier encounter with them in their initial enthusiasm over the offering. But instead they did something far better than his expectation. And this is defined following the conjunction ἀλλ’ in vv. 5b-6 (#159 below).

The first thing the Macedonians did was ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν, **they gave themselves to the Lord first and to us**. Their generosity toward the saints in Jerusalem flowed out of their commitment to seek and do the will of God (διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ). A fundamental spiritual truth emerges from this. Giving to help others is not a human issue of money or special needs. For God’s people giving must always express obedience to God’s leadership. God is the one who determines how much and when we are to give to help others. For the worldly Christian such is a nightmare come true, since God will always decide on more than the individual wants to give. But when the believer honestly seeks God’s leadership in giving, he / she will discover that indeed “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). And this is spiritual, not material blessing that is promised in Paul’s quote of a saying of Jesus not found in the four gospels.

The generosity of the Macedonians provided the opportunity for urging Titus to complete the relief collection among the Corinthians: εἰς τὸ παρακαλέσαι ἡμᾶς Τίτον, ἵνα καθὼς προενήρξατο οὕτως καὶ ἐπιτελέσῃ εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ τὴν χάριν ταύτην, **so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you**. This lengthy infinitival result phrase applies the inspiration of the Macedonians to the situation at Corinth. The scenario being envisioned here by Paul is not when he first sent Titus to Corinth prior to the writing of Second Corinthians. Instead, it is contemporary with the writing of Second Corinthians, which Titus was to carry back to Corinth from Macedonia in advance of Paul’s arrival in the city. More details on this are given in 9:2-5. He wanted the Corinthian collection to be finished by the time he ar-

hand. The tense circumstances present when Titus first visited Corinth (cf. 2:1-4) that resulted in Paul’s harsh letter that Titus took to Corinth from Ephesus very likely threw cold water on the gathering of the relief offering. As Paul goes on to describe in vv. 7-15, the gathering of the offering was stalled and not complete at the writing of Second Corinthians.

Thus the enthusiasm of the Macedonians inspired Paul to urge Titus when he returned with this letter to Corinth to light a renewed fire among the Corinthians to finish what had been begun earlier: ἵνα...οὕτως καὶ ἐπιτελέσῃ εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ τὴν χάριν ταύτην, **that...so also he might complete even this ‘grace’ for you**. The language here carefully positions Titus as an organizing leader for the offering at Corinth.

Paul’s unique usage of τὴν χάριν ταύτην here stands as virtually impossible to translate accurately and thoroughly. The literal meaning of ‘this grace’ makes no real sense in English. And when standing as the direct object of the verb ἐπιτελέσῃ, **he might complete**, it becomes even more difficult to comprehend. Yet the idea, though rich and profound, is not that complicated. The offering and an enthusiasm for contributing to it is

²⁷⁵Harris details three trips of Titus to Corinth, which is probably accurate. Clearly at least two of these three are documented in 1-2 Corinthians.

On this view, Titus was Paul’s envoy to Corinth on three occasions:⁸⁰

1. After the receipt of 1 Corinthians at Corinth, to help to start the relief fund (8:6a; 12:18) (see Watson 333–35).
2. After Paul’s “painful visit,” to deliver the “severe letter” (7:6–15).
3. At some indefinite time after he had been reunited with Paul in Macedonia (7:6), to deliver 2 Corinthians and to help to complete the collection (8:6b, 16–17).

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 571–572.]

		ὥσπερ	
160	ἐν παντὶ	περισεύετε,	
	πίστει		
	καὶ		
	λόγῳ		
	καὶ		
	γνώσει		
	καὶ		
	πάσῃ σπουδῇ		
	καὶ		
	τῇ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν		ὑμῖν ἀγάπῃ,
			ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισεύητε.

an expression of the dynamic grace of God. This Paul made clear in v. 1 with τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δεδομένην ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας, [the grace of God given among the church of Macedonia](#). The demonstrative pronoun modifier ταύτην, [this](#), goes back to the reference in v. 1. How does Titus then ‘finish,’ ἐπιτελέσῃ, this grace of God? Assumed in this verb / object combination is the idea that Titus as an organizer of the offering must go about contacting each of the house church groups with explanation and encouragement of all the groups to take part in the offering.

Verse seven sets up a logical extension of this idea of the work of Titus and at the same time sets the parameters for the discussion in vv. 8-15: Ἄλλ’ ὥσπερ ἐν παντὶ περισεύετε, πίστει καὶ λόγῳ καὶ γνώσει καὶ πάσῃ σπουδῇ καὶ τῇ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν ἀγάπῃ, ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισεύητε. [Now as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you — so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.](#)

Again more very complex syntax in Paul’s statement here as the following diagram reflects. The impossibility of literal translation into American English is reflected in the complete reshuffling of the syntax in the NRSV translation: [Now as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you — so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.](#) The use of ὥσπερ as an adverbial comparative particle sets up a comparison, and often in the role of a subordinate conjunction as the protasis clause which is usually followed by the main clause as the apodosis. But not here. Instead what follows is the sub-final dependent ἵνα clause, probably here used substantivally as indirect command, which is a common function of the ἵνα conjunction. There is no way under Heaven to reproduce this syntax in correct English expression. The above NRSV gets about as close to the idea in Greek as is possible, but all of the subtle nuances of the expression are lost in translation.

The challenge for exegesis is to call attention to these details as best as is possible. The normally sharp contrast in the coordinate conjunction Ἄλλ’ is

stressing a shift of emphasis from the responsibility of Titus to that on the Corinthians. The burden of responsibility for contributing to the relief offering lay on the shoulders of the Corinthians, not on Titus. His task was to be used of God to activate divine grace in the Corinthian groups needing to contribute money to this offering. But it was up to the Corinthians to decide to contribute or not.

The comparative protasis highlights positive traits already present at Corinth: ὥσπερ ἐν παντὶ περισεύετε, πίστει καὶ λόγῳ καὶ γνώσει καὶ πάσῃ σπουδῇ καὶ τῇ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν ἀγάπῃ, [as in everything you abound, in faith and word and knowledge and in every endeavor and in the from us among you love.](#) The apostle specifies five areas of excellence present among the Corinthians. This sets up the sixth trait that they now need to excel in: καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι, [also in this grace.](#) Their faith commitment to Christ was commendable: πίστει. Also their eloquence in speaking the Gospel was good: καὶ λόγῳ. They had good understanding of the things of God: καὶ γνώσει. They were generally enthusiastic about serving God: καὶ πάσῃ σπουδῇ. The complex structure mentioning love has occasioned uncertainty since the third century.²⁷⁶ Most likely the love reference is that taught by Paul to the Corinthians from his initial ministry.²⁷⁷ That loving

²⁷⁶ὕμων ἐν ἡμῖν κ C D F G K L P Ψ 81. 365. 1241. 1505 M lat sy^h

| ὕμων εἰς ἡμᾶς 33

| ὕμων ἐν ὑμῖν 326. 629. 2464

| txt P⁴⁶ B 0243. 6. 104. 630. 1175. 1739. 1881 r sy^p co; Ambst [Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 567.]

²⁷⁷“8:7 ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν (from us for/in you) {C}

“The reading in the UBS4 text has the support of several early witnesses; and since it is also the more difficult reading, copyists would have been more likely to change it to ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐν ἡμῖν (from you for us) than vice versa. The interpretation of the reading in the text is by no means certain. According to NRSV (similarly TOB) it means ‘and in our love for you.’ It may also mean ‘and among you [ἐν ὑμῖν] there is that love that we have taught you to have [for all people]’ (similarly ITCL). Matera (II Corinthians, pp. 190–91) prefers this second interpretation, that Paul refers to the gift of love that his ministry brought to the Christians in Corinth. Compare ‘and in the love we have kindled in you’ (TNIV).

“At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the reading ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐν ἡμῖν (the love from you for us), which superficially is more appropriate in the context, had very wide circulation in the early church. The variant reading ‘your love for us’ is followed by a number of modern translations (for example, RSV, REB, TEV, NIV, NJB, FC, Seg).”

[Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual*



devotion to God has thrived at least among most of the Corinthians.

Now what needs to flourish fully among the Corinthians is their generosity for sharing in the relief offering: ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε. The structuring of this as a dependent ἵνα clause expresses the idea as both an objective and a polite nudge to get going.²⁷⁸ Titus' arrival at Corinth with Second Corinthians in hand for the church will hopefully be the catalyst to get them moving on this offering. Note again the consistent use of χάρις, grace, as a label for the offering: τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ (v. 1); τὴν χάριν (v. 4); τὴν χάριν ταύτην (v. 6); ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι (v. 7). Paul is not after their money! Instead, he is passionately concerned that the Corinthians do what the Macedonians did: give themselves first to God and then open their pocket books generously to help those in need. This he makes very clear in vv. 8-15.

10.2.3.2.1.2 Desire for Corinthians to excel, 8:8-15

8 Οὐ κατ' ἐπιταγὴν λέγω ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἐτέρων σπουδῆς καὶ τὸ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγάπης γνήσιον δοκιμάζων· 9 γινώσκετε γὰρ τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτι δι' ὑμᾶς ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος ὢν, ἵνα ὑμεῖς τῇ ἐκείνου πτωχεῖα πλουτήσητε. 10 καὶ γνώμην ἐν τούτῳ δίδωμι· τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν συμφέρει, οἵτινες οὐ μόνον τὸ ποιῆσαι ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ θέλειν προενήρξασθε ἀπὸ πέρυσι· 11 νυνὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ ποιῆσαι ἐπιτελέσατε, ὅπως καθάπερ ἡ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν, οὕτως καὶ τὸ ἐπιτελέσαι ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν. 12 εἰ γὰρ ἡ προθυμία πρόκειται, καθὸ ἐὰν ἔχη εὐπρόσδεκτος, οὐ καθὸ οὐκ ἔχει. 13 οὐ γὰρ ἵνα ἄλλοις ἄνεσις, ὑμῖν θλίψις, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἰσότητος· 14 ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ τὸ ὑμῶν περισσευμα εἰς τὸ ἐκείνων ὑστέρημα, ἵνα καὶ τὸ ἐκείνων περισσευμα γένηται εἰς τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα, ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης, 15 καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ τὸ πολὺ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν, καὶ ὁ τὸ ὀλίγον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν.

8 I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. 9 For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. 10 And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something — 11 now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. 12 For if the eagerness is there, the gift is accepted. *Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 365.]

²⁷⁸“So then, Paul uses a relatively uncommon construction¹¹ as a substitute for the imperative¹² as he entreats the Corinthians to match their rich giftedness with lavish giving.” [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), 575.]

able according to what one has — not according to what one does not have. 13 I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between 14 your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. 15 As it is written,

“The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little.”

The complex syntax continues in this unit, though not quite as deeply as in the preceding unit.²⁷⁹ The diagram below seeks to unravel this in visual expression of primary and secondary ideas in the passage. Careful examination reveals the pattern of making one or two assertions (#s 161-162; 164; 166) and then following this with one or more justifying statements (γὰρ; #s. 163; 165; 166-167, 169-171). The first two are closely linked by Οὐ... ἀλλὰ (not this...but that) in an elliptical expression (161-162). The highly elliptical expressions in #169, 170, 171 heighten emphasis dramatically. Sandwiched between is the unusual use of καθὸ twice in an anacoluthon pattern (v. 12; #s 167-168). The four assertions (#s 161-162; 164; 166) target the Corinthians while the seven justifying statements (γὰρ; #s. 163; 165; 166-167, 169-171) reach out mostly to basic spiritual principle as the foundational basis for the assertions.

The challenge facing the apostle was the difficulty of moving the Corinthians to give generously in light of the huge generosity from the Macedonian example. But the earlier enthusiasm of the Corinthians that had stalled out had been a point of emphasis to the Macedonians that prompted them in part to be so generous. Now Paul was planning on visiting the city and a delegation of Macedonian representatives of the churches would be with him. What an embarrassment for this group to show up and the Corinthians to not have completed the gathering of the relief offering. So the task before Paul is encourage the Corinthians to finish the job with the help of Titus upon his arrival and before the apostle gets there some weeks or months later. But Paul genuinely wants the gathering of the of-

²⁷⁹“The same group of literary features that we observed in 8:1–6 is in evidence in this section: certain anacolutha (e.g., in v 13, where the verb ‘to be’ has to be added), a cryptic style of writing seen in v 11, and in particular an ambiguous use of ἵνα, ‘that,’ to denote either final clauses or statements of command (v 7). All these items make for a confused passage, whose sense, while tolerably clear, is far from certain. There is a note of dialectic that has been traced in this Pauline argumentation.⁹²” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 437.]

Of course, one would recognize that critiques such as these reflect more the biased assumptions of an English speaking way of thinking, and not necessarily that of first century Greek ways of thinking.



161 ^{8.8} Οὐ κατ' ἐπιταγὴν λέγω
ἀλλὰ

162 (λέγω)
διὰ τῆς ἐτέρων σπουδῆς
καὶ
τὸ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγάπης γνήσιον δοκιμάζων·

^{8.9} γὰρ

163 γινώσκετε τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,
| δι' ὑμᾶς
ὅτι...ἐπιώχλευσεν
πλούσιος ὢν,
ἵνα ὑμεῖς τῆ ἐκεῖνου πτωχεῖα πλουτήσητε.

^{8.10} καὶ

164 γνώμην ἐν τούτῳ δίδωμι·
γὰρ

165 τοῦτο ὑμῖν συμφέρει,
οἵτινες οὐ μόνον τὸ ποιῆσαι
ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ θέλειν προενήρξασθε
ἀπὸ πέρυσι·

^{8.11} δὲ

νυνὶ
καὶ

166 τὸ ποιῆσαι ἐπιτελέσατε,
| καθάπερ ἡ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν,
| οὕτως καὶ
ὅπως...τὸ ἐπιτελέσαι
ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν.

^{8.12} γὰρ

εἰ ἡ προθυμία πρόκειται,
167 καθὸ ἐὰν ἔχη εὐπρόσδεκτος,
168 οὐ καθὸ οὐκ ἔχει.

^{8.13} γὰρ

169 (ἐστίν)
οὐ ἵνα ἄλλοις ἀνεσις, ὑμῖν θλίψις,
ἀλλ'

170 (ἐστίν)
ἐξ ἰσότητος·

^{8.14} ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ

171 (ἐστίν) τὸ ὑμῶν περίσσευμα
εἰς τὸ ἐκεῖνων ὑστέρημα,
ἵνα καὶ τὸ ἐκεῖνων περίσσευμα γένηται
εἰς τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα,
ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης,

^{8.15} καθὼς γέγραπται·
/-----|
ὁ τὸ πολὺ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν,
καὶ
ὁ τὸ ὀλίγον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν.

fering to be done properly as a voluntary contribution of a dedicated heart to God. He well understands that just giving money is ultimately worthless before God. He is not concerned as to how much money the Corinthians contribute, especially in comparison to what the Mace-

donian churches gave. Their example is the spirit in which they gave; not the amount they gave. He wants the Corinthians to follow this example. What can one say in order to achieve such an objective?

First we need to look at his assertions which form the core structure of his expression. Then the matching justifying statement(s) will follow each assertion(s).

1) *Οὐ κατ' ἐπιταγὴν λέγω ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἐτέρων σπουδῆς καὶ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγάπης γνήσιον δοκιμάζων, Not by command am I speaking, but through the eagerness of others and by testing the genuineness of your devotion to the Lord* (v. 8). The apostle is very transparent with the Corinthians from the outset. One doesn't command voluntary generosity to happen. It can be encouraged, as Paul does in this passage, but it can't be made to happen by any authoritative command.²⁸⁰ In 9:6-15, he goes into more detail here.

What Paul does indicate is that he speaks to them through the eagerness of the Macedonians (διὰ τῆς ἐτέρων σπουδῆς). The power of an inspirational example is significant, and far better than authoritative demand. This is just as true today as it was in the middle of the first Christian century.

Secondly the apostle freely acknowledges that he is 'putting the Corinthians under the microscope,' so to speak: καὶ τὸ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγάπης γνήσιον δοκιμάζων, *and putting the genuineness of your love to the test*. Later copyists -- D* F G -- in simplifying the grammar switched the participle δοκιμάζων over to the finite verb δοκιμάζω but the original participle preserves the secondary role of this in cautious linguistic expression. He politely reminds them that their initial enthusiasm must be matched by action if the enthusiasm is real. They claimed loving devotion to God and thus to their needy brothers. Now by completing the relief offering they have the opportunity to demonstrate that this claim is genuine.

²⁸⁰One should be very careful to distinguish Paul's language here from the somewhat similar language in 1 Cor. 7:6; Rom. 16:26; 1 Tim. 1:1; Tit. 1:3 where Paul differentiates between his opinion and a direct command from God. "The former negated phrase denotes Paul's refraining from dictatorial tactics (cf. 1:24) or from an assertion of his apostolic authority (cf. Phlm. 8-9). The latter qualified expression refers to the divine will or decree regarding salvation or Paul's apostleship. If in fact Paul was acknowledging in v. 8a the absence of any definitive command of the Lord regarding the collection, we would have expected ἐπιταγή to be qualified by κυρίου, as in 1 Cor. 7:25 (περὶ δὲ τῶν παρθένων ἐπιταγὴν κυρίου οὐχ ἔχω, γνώμην δὲ δίδωμι; cf. 1 Cor. 7:10; 2 Cor. 8:10a). As it is, Paul is not giving his instructions about the collection 'by way of command' (de Boor 178; Barrett 216) or 'in the spirit of a command' (Williams). He realized that if he resorted to issuing a series of commands that could be obeyed mechanically, his stress on the voluntary nature of Christian giving (see 8:3; 9:5, 7) would be compromised, he could lay himself open to the charge of domineering (cf. 1:24), and both his motivation for promoting the collection and the gift itself might become suspect in the eyes of the Corinthians and the recipients in Jerusalem." [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), 576.]

a) *Proof for Paul's assertion. γινώσκετε γὰρ τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτι δι' ὑμᾶς ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος ὢν, ἵνα ὑμεῖς τῇ ἐκείνου πτωχείᾳ πλουτήσητε, for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for your sakes He became poor even though being rich, so that you by the poverty of That One might become rich* (v. 9). The ultimate justification for Paul's speaking as he did (v. 8) is found in the action of Christ. As Paul has consistently spoken of the relief offering in terms of it being χάρις he now uses the same term in reference to the incarnation and crucifixion of Christ. This action of χάρις is defined by the verb ἐπτώχευσεν, *he impoverished himself*. The contrast is between Christ in Heaven πλούσιος ὢν, *although being rich*, and Christ on earth having become poverty stricken, τῇ ἐκείνου πτωχείᾳ. Spiritual riches verses material poverty is the assumption here. But the point of the contrast is the emphasis upon profound generosity in this action by Christ. As the purpose ἵνα clause asserts, by this action the Corinthians gained true spiritual wealth out of Christ's 'poverty' action of dying on the cross. Clearly here the core spiritual truth is that only in actions can we validate our claims to loving God. Christ demonstrated this; now it is time for the Corinthians to demonstrate it as well.

2) *καὶ γνώμην ἐν τούτῳ δίδωμι, and understanding by this I provide* (v. 10a). This second assertion made by Paul expands upon the first one by asserting in simple language that the apostle is giving γνώμην, that is, understanding in this matter (ἐν τούτῳ). He is not telling the Corinthians what they must do. Rather he is laying the issue of the relief offering and their history with it out in the open in the expectation that they will do what is proper. The antecedent of the neuter gender demonstrative pronouns τούτῳ and τοῦτο allude back to his recounting of the situation beginning in 8:1 and following. In a nutshell, the Corinthians initially showed great enthusiasm for the relief project a little over a year before (ἀπὸ πέρυσι). But for whatever the reason or reasons the work of gathering the offering had stalled and lay incomplete. Paul in this letter to them seeks to rekindle interest and commitment to this task, and tells them so here in direct expression.

b) *Proof for Paul's assertion. τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν συμφέρει, οἵτινες οὐ μόνον τὸ ποιῆσαι ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ θέλειν προενήρξασθε ἀπὸ πέρυσι· for this benefits you, who began not only to do but to desire last year* (v. 10b). The justification for this assertion that he is putting the issue on the table clearly for them to see is found in the second part of this compound sentence introduced by the causal conjunction γὰρ. The core expression τοῦτο ὑμῖν συμφέρει, *this is appropriate for you*, claims that his reminding them of their unfinished work is entirely in line with the actual situation. The root idea of the verb συμφέρω is to bring two items together in demonstration of harmony between

the two. The derivative idea is that such action can be very beneficial and advantageous. Paul sees this reminding of the Corinthians as potentially beneficial for the Corinthians.

Why? Because of whom he believes the Corinthians to be: οἵτινες οὐ μόνον τὸ ποιῆσαι ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ θέλειν προενήρξασθε ἀπὸ πέρυσι, *you are of such character as to have begun over a year ago not just what you did but also what you desired to achieve.*²⁸¹ The use of the qualitative relative pronoun οἵτινες from ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι, rather than the simple relative ὅς, -ῆ, -ὸ, adds a distinct quality to the reference that here asserts a character of the Corinthians that affirms Paul's confidence in them to carry out what they started. It had been over a year since they first expressed enthusiasm in this project (ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ θέλειν) and had begun collecting the offering (οὐ μόνον τὸ ποιῆσαι, note the inceptive aorist tense usage here). Now what remained was to finish it. The present tense infinitive τὸ θέλειν stresses the continuing desire to gather the offering. But with the arrival of Titus back in Corinth with this letter, the task should be completed without difficulty.

3) νυνὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ ποιῆσαι ἐπιτελέσατε, ὅπως καθάπερ ἡ

²⁸¹“Several aspects of this understanding of the verse merit more attention. Although in Biblical Greek the distinction between ὅς and ὅστις is not regularly maintained, sometimes the context supports a distinction, with ὅστις bearing a qualitative sense (‘being of such a character as to ...’) or a causal meaning (‘inasmuch as’).⁴¹ Here, either sense is suitable. The Corinthians were distinctive either as ‘people who ...’ or ‘seeing that you...’ The two articular infinitives, τὸ ποιῆσαι and τὸ θέλειν, are direct objects of προενήρξασθε⁴² and are anaphoric in import, pointing to well-known facts.⁴³ The difference in tense between the two infinitives (ποιῆσαι—θέλειν) is significant. The Corinthians’ active participation in the collection had been interrupted before the time of writing but their desire or will to contribute remained steady.⁴⁴ But why does Paul mention action before intent in a construction (οὐ μόνον ... ἀλλὰ καὶ)⁴⁵ that suggests that the second element is even more important than the first? The unexpected order reflects Paul’s emphasis throughout 2 Corinthians 8–9 on attitude and motivation rather than on the material result.⁴⁶ If intent remains present and with it motivation, from one viewpoint acting on one’s intent may be assumed to follow. On the other hand, if desire and motivation lapse, action becomes unlikely. By inverting the natural order, Paul is highlighting the priority of motivation in both time and importance⁴⁷ and also complimenting the Corinthians for their unwavering desire to participate in the project. We may explain the προ- in προενήρξασθε (literally, ‘you began earlier’) as ‘before other contributors’ or ‘before the Macedonians’ (who are not mentioned in 1 Cor. 16:1–4), or (BAGD 705b) as anticipating ἀπὸ πέρυσι. The same verb occurred in 8:6 (προενήρξατο) in reference to Titus’s role in helping to initiate contributions to the collection in Corinth. Here the verb refers to that same general time (‘last year’) but focuses on the Corinthians’ own dual role in ‘beginning’ the collection—their desire and decision to participate and their actual initial participation.⁴⁸” [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), 581–582.]

προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν, οὕτως καὶ τὸ ἐπιτελέσαι ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν. And now also complete what you started to do so according to the eagerness of wanting may also be completed out of what you have (v. 11). This third assertion turns into the imperative ἐπιτελέσατε in which Paul urges them to finish the job they had begun over a year before. The aorist imperative verb stresses the urgency of completing the task. With the gathering of this relief offering by the Corinthians the apostle uses three infinitive expressions. First, τὸ ποιῆσαι in vv. 10 and 11 defines the initial actions of collecting the offering. The use of the aorist tense in the infinitive makes this very clear. Second, τὸ θέλειν, *to be wanting to*, in v. 10 and then ἡ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν, *the eagerness of the wanting to*, in v. 11, with the present tense usage define the continuing high level desire of the Corinthians to participate in the relief offering. Third, τὸ ἐπιτελέσαι, *to finish*, with the aorist infinitive stresses their present obligation to complete the collection of the offering.

A positive picture of the Corinthians is painted here regarding their participation in the relief offering. And it is a realistic one as ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν, *out of what you have*, underscores. The apostle does not concern himself with setting some high amount of money as a goal. This point is then justified by more extensive expression in vv. 11-15.

c) **Proof a for Paul’s assertion.** *εἰ γὰρ ἡ προθυμία πρόκειται, καθὸ ἐὰν ἔχη εὐπρόσδεκτος, οὐ καθὸ οὐκ ἔχει, for since your eagerness is set up openly, do it acceptably according to what you have, not according to what you don’t have* (v. 12). The first of two sets of justification for his third point is put forth in v. 12. This very complex expression in Greek plays off adverbial comparisons that are introduced by καθὸ. The first class conditional protasis εἰ ἡ προθυμία πρόκειται, *since the eagerness is clearly present*, assumes the continuing interest by the Corinthians in participating in the relief offering as described in vv. 10-11. Now the completing of the gathering of the offering is to be done ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν, *out of what you have* (v. 11b). The justifying assertions in v. 12 base this one the spiritual principle of giving out of what one possesses, not out of what he doesn’t possess. Note the repeated use of ἔχω in ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν; ἐὰν ἔχη; and οὐκ ἔχει. The consistent use of the present tense of all three expressions underscores continual ownership of material things. Within the Corinthian community of believers a wide range of material wealth all the way from having little as slaves and peasants to a lot as wealthy persons (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26). The material level of each family defines the framework of proportional giving.²⁸² And as 1 Cor.

²⁸²“Several significant principles of Christian stewardship emerge from this verse.

“1. All giving is conducted under God’s omniscient gaze. Whatever is the motivation of the giver of a gift and whatever is



1:26 suggests the majority of the Corinthian believers were on the bottom end of the economic ladder. But when ἡ προθυμία, *eagerness*, is present the likelihood will be sacrificial giving as the Macedonian churches exemplified (cf. 8:3-4).

The connecting point of this principle is εὐπρόσδεκτος, *acceptable*. Given the LXX background usage in connection to offerings made to God at the temple, the sense of εὐπρόσδεκτος τῷ θεῷ, *acceptable to God*, is what Paul asserts.²⁸³ God's measuring standard for what we give is in part defined by what we have. No one is exempt from giving, but everyone is to give proportionally out of their means. Behind this adjective εὐπρόσδεκτος, -ον stands the verb προσδέχομαι meaning to *welcome*.

d) Proof b for Paul's assertion. οὐ γὰρ ἵνα ἄλλοις ἄνεσις, ὑμῖν θλίψις, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἰσότητος· ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ τὸ ὑμῶν περισσεύμα εἰς τὸ ἐκείνων ὑστέρημα, ἵνα καὶ τὸ ἐκείνων περισσεύμα γένηται εἰς τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα, ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης, καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ τὸ πολὺ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν, καὶ ὁ τὸ ὀλίγον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν. *For not that relief for others exists and affliction for you, but out of a fair balance. At present your abundance is for the needs of others so that also the abundance of others may become your need, this so that there may be bal-*

the reaction of its recipient, God is the final adjudicator of the gift's value.

"2. There are two criteria by which God assesses the acceptability of a gift. First, the gift must be an expression of an 'eager desire to give' (ἡ προθυμία [12] = ἡ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν [11]). In vv. 11–12 προθυμία is not merely a willingness or eagerness to give, but an enthusiastic willingness to give that results in actual giving.⁶⁹ The corollary of this criterion is that if gifts are reluctantly or grudgingly given (cf. 9:7), they do not receive the divine approval. Second, the gift should be in proportion to one's resources.⁷⁰ On this principle no person can claim an exemption from the obligation to give; no one is too poor to give—witness the case of the desperately poor Macedonians (8:2). In enunciating this principle of giving ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν (8:11) or καθὸ ἐὰν ἔχη (8:12), Paul is advocating prudence and the avoidance of recklessness in giving. However, occasional disproportionate giving, that is, giving beyond one's actual resources (παρὰ δύναμιν, 8:3), is a tribute and testimony to God's grace (8:1–2). Yet if such disproportionate giving were the norm, resources for giving would be rapidly depleted (9:10 notwithstanding).

"3. If Paul had advocated the practice of tithing, this would have been an appropriate place for him to mention or defend it. But so far from championing the practice of giving by percentage, he argues for proportional giving."

[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), 586–587.]

²⁸³For explicit reference to God in connection with pleasing 'sacrifices,' see Rom. 12:1 (θυσίαν ... εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ); Phil. 4:18 (θυσίαν δεκτὴν, εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ); Heb. 13:16 (τοιαύταις ... θυσίαις εὐαρεστεῖται ὁ θεός). [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).]

ance, just as it stands written, "the one having much may not have too much, and the one with little may not have too little" (vv. 13-15). This second justifying principle for the assertion in v. 11 develops the idea of ἰσότητος, *balance*.²⁸⁴ All three of the NT uses ἰσότης are Pauline (Col. 4:1; 2 Cor. 8:13, 14) and stress the idea of fairness.²⁸⁵ The idea of balance was a major theme in the Greco-Roman world of the Corinthians.²⁸⁶ In Christ, this principle took on new meaning in application to mutual assistance for one another, which was not very common in the patron-client driven Roman society.

But one needs to read this text carefully.²⁸⁷ It is

²⁸⁴The term ἰσότης, here and in v 14, means 'equality, fair dealing' and is linked with justice or righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) in Philo.¹⁴² But elsewhere in Philo¹⁴³ the term suggests divine power. Georgi, then, wants to see here an appeal to God's power as providing the basis for Paul's ideal, as if the text read 'from God [ἐκ θεοῦ].' This is possible on the ground that it makes sense of the following verse, where Paul will declare that in the future (to contrast with ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ, 'in the present age') Gentiles will be enriched by Jerusalem's overflow—and this hope is what Paul's heilsgeschichtlich, 'salvation-historical,' theology (Rom 9–11) promised as part of his understanding of how divine righteousness works. It is not simply a human sense of 'fair shares' all round, conceived as an altruistic feature. But this may be to overinterpret the text. Yet v 14 shows that Paul's thought is eschatologically controlled." [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 444.]

²⁸⁵The derivative adjective ἰσότημος, -ον meaning equal is found in 2 Pet. 1:1. The somewhat more common adjective ἴσος, η, ον is found seven times in the NT with the idea of "**being equivalent in number, size, quality, equal.**" [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 480.]

²⁸⁶'ἰσότης ('equality,' 'fair dealing') was an important concept in mathematics, law, philosophy, and political theory. 'The high regard of the Greeks for ἰσότης is reflected in its personification in Euripides (*Phoen.* 536) and in its evaluation by Aristotle as a means of fostering unity and solidarity in the state.'⁹ It was also seen as a key element in interpersonal relations, so that true friends were ἴσοι καὶ ὅμοιοι, equal in value, like-minded, and committed to each other.¹⁰ So when Paul appeals to the need for equality, he presupposes the Corinthians' commitment to the well-known principle of equality and fair dealing (cf. Col. 4:1) and in particular their awareness of the commonality, friendship, and solidarity in Christ that bound Gentile and Jewish Christians together." [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), 590.]

²⁸⁷Some tendency exists among commentators to look beyond the relief offering being discussed here to a theological principle of Gentiles and Jews. In part this seems to me to be a failure to grasp Paul's sense of abundance (περισσεύμα) and need (ὑστέρημα). By seeing these merely in terms of quantity there is the understanding of God's time of abundance for the Gentiles and deficiency for the Jews blinded by Torah obedience. But this is not what the apostle



stressing balance between the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ with the Corinthians at the moment (ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ²⁸⁸) being the haves and the Jerusalem believers as the have nots. This balance is needed for a future time of reversal when the Corinthians become the have nots: ἵνα καὶ τὸ ἐκείνων περίσσευμα γένηται εἰς τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα.²⁸⁹ Yet the controlling principle remains al- is stressing here. The Jewish Christian brothers in Jerusalem had material needs that the Gentile churches, even though mostly poor themselves, could help meet.

²⁸⁸“ ‘At the present moment your surplus can meet their deficiency.’ Paul now explains how the equality (ἰσότης) he has just mentioned will be achieved between the Corinthian and Jerusalemite believers at the present time (v. 14a) and in the indefinite future (v. 14b). In the phrase ὁ νῦν καιρός, the temporal adverb νῦν functions as an adjective (cf. τὸ νῦν, 5:16). Although the phrase in Romans (Rom. 3:26; 8:18; 11:5) refers to the present Christian dispensation, and not simply to ‘the present circumstances,’ there is no justification (*pace* Martin 267–70) for finding here in v. 14 a contrast between ‘the present time (= age)’ and ‘the age to come’ when God’s final purposes for the world will be fulfilled.¹¹ Corresponding to ‘at the present time’ is an implied indefinite time such as ‘later on’ (Weymouth) or ‘some day’ (Barclay) or ‘at some future date’.” [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), 590.]

²⁸⁹“ ἵνα καὶ τὸ ἐκείνων περίσσευμα γένηται εἰς τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα, ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης. ‘So that some day their surplus can in turn meet your deficiency, in order that there may be equality.’ At first sight it might appear that ἵνα points to a motive that could impel the Corinthians to meet the ‘deficiency’ at Jerusalem from their ‘surplus’ (v. 14a). That is, provided they contributed at the present time, they could rest assured that on some future occasion, in a reversal of circumstances and roles, those at Jerusalem would relieve their need. Such motivation, however, would fly in the face of Jesus’ call to do good, ‘expecting nothing in return’ (Luke 6:35). It is therefore preferable to treat ἵνα as introducing a divinely ordered purpose,¹⁸ or (better) as ecbatic in import, stating a consequence. On this latter view, the outcome of Corinthian giving according to their present resources would be reciprocity (cf. καί, ‘in turn’) if there were a change of economic circumstances in Corinth and Jerusalem. Certainly Paul is not predicting economic dearth in Corinth and prosperity in Jerusalem; indeed, the chronic poverty in Jerusalem and the long-standing prosperity of Corinth rendered it unlikely that there would ever be such an economic reversal. But it is the principle of reciprocal sharing that Paul is defending.

“But not all scholars understand the second περίσσευμα and ὑστέρημα in v. 14 as references to a financial surplus and shortfall. As a result of receiving financial aid from their Gentile brothers and sisters, Jerusalem believers would continue to supply them with their ‘surplus,’ the spiritual blessings of the gospel (cf. Rom. 15:27),¹⁹ including advice, example, and prayers. Such an interpretation is certainly admissible, but it has several disadvantages: (1) it compromises the parallelism between the two parts of v. 14 which is highlighted by καί, ‘in turn’; (2) it dilutes the implicit ‘now-then’ contrast in v. 14 that points to a purely future Jerusalem ‘surplus’; and (3) it does not cohere naturally with the OT allusion in v. 15 that describes purely material equality.”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testa-

ways: ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης, so that equality may exist.

The interesting foundation for this sense of ἰσότης is given in verse 15 as a citation from the Torah of the Old Testament (cf. Exod. 16:11–36). Paul only uses OT citations five times in Second Corinthians: 4:13; 6:2, 16–18; 8:15; 9:9. The introductory formula to introduce the OT reference, καθὼς γέγραπται, just as it stands written, is found also in 9:9, but is the most common way to introduce an OT text among the writers of the NT in general. It points to both the authoritative nature and permanency of the OT scripture texts. He draws upon the LXX text but also differs with in in wording at certain points.²⁹⁰ Exodus 16:18 is specifically used by the apostle here.²⁹¹ Paul chooses only the part that asserts his summarizing point and updates the Greek wording somewhat.

The background for the Exodus 16 text is the Exodus and God’s provision of mana to the Israelites. The situation between the Israelites in the dessert and the urban Corinthian congregation is very different from one another. Plus the apostle true to his training as a Pharisee sees a deeper spiritual principle at work that makes the Israelite experience relevant to the Corinthians. In the daily gathering of the manna some greedy Israelites harvested more than the defined allotment. ment Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 591–592.]

²⁹⁰“Paul’s citation is drawn from the LXX but differs from it in three respects.

LXX	Paul
καὶ μετρήσαντες τῷ γομῶρ ὁ τὸ πολὺ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν, καὶ ὁ τὸ ἔλαττον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν	οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν ὁ τὸ πολὺ, καὶ ὁ τὸ ὀλίγον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν

1. Paul omits ‘and when they measured it by the omer’ because this is not relevant to his central point of the equality of divine provision in spite of initial differences.

2. He moves ὁ τὸ πολὺ to the beginning of the sentence to create precise parallelism between the two parts.

3. He replaces ἔλαττον (‘less’) by ὀλίγον to emphasize the deep poverty of the Jerusalem poor.²⁶⁷

[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), 593.]

²⁹¹ וַיִּמְדוּ בַעֲמֶר וְלֹא הָיְתָה הַמַּחֲבֵה הַזֶּה לְהַמְנַמְנִישׁ לֹא הָיְתָה אִישׁ שֶׁפִּי-יִקְלָהוּ לְקַרֵּץ

LXX: καὶ μετρήσαντες τῷ γομῶρ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν ὁ τὸ πολὺ, καὶ ὁ τὸ ἔλαττον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν· ἕκαστος εἰς τοὺς καθήκοντας παρ’ ἑαυτῷ συνέλεξαν.†

NRSV: But when they measured it with an omer, those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as each of them needed.

2 Cor 8:15: καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ τὸ πολὺ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν, καὶ ὁ τὸ ὀλίγον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν.



and others were unable to gather enough to meet the allotment. But when each batch was measured by the omar size basket, the quantity miraculously turned out to be the same. God saw to that. Additionally some tried to squeeze by through not eating the daily allotment and save it up over night. But God saw to it that the extra was ruined the following day (vv. 19-21).

What the apostle saw in this Exodus wandering experience was the divinely mandated principle of *ισότης*, *equity* (v. 14c). This principle he then applied to the Corinthian and Jerusalem situation of his day. At the moment the Corinthians had an abundance and needed to share that with the Jerusalem church that was suffering in need. Plus a day could potentially come when the situation would be reversed and then it would be the responsibility of the Jerusalem church to share out of its abundance.

This is an interesting example of how the apostle utilized the Hebrew Bible as authoritative scripture. He could see how God was working in a very human circumstance and the parameters of human activity that God would and wouldn't tolerate. He did not see application as warning that God would slam the Corinthians hard for not sharing out of their 'abundance.' Nor did he make false promises about material blessings coming from sharing their abundance. Instead, he reminded them that the God whom they claimed now to serve as believers operates on the principle of *ισότης*, *equity* (v. 14c). That should be incentive enough to motivate them toward generosity in this relief offering.²⁹²

10.2.3.2.2 Role of Titus with the Corinthians, 8:16-24

16 Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ τῷ δόντι τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ Τίτου, 17 ὅτι τὴν μὲν παράκλησιν ἐδέξατο, σπουδαιότερος δὲ ὑπάρχων αὐθαίρετος ἐξήλθεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς. 18 συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ μετ' αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀδελφὸν οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, 19 οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ χειροτονηθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν συνέκδημος ἡμῶν σὺν τῇ χάριτι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένη ὑφ' ἡμῶν πρὸς τὴν [αὐτοῦ] τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν καὶ προθυμίαν

²⁹²Neither Paul, Jesus, or the other NT writers ever use sacred scripture as a 'rule book' for beating up on people like it was some kind of religious billy club. This approach to scripture comes much later in Christianity when it has largely lost sight of the power of divine grace transforming sinful lives that are walking in obedience to Christ.

Instead, the biblical approach is to appeal, sometimes passionately, to the divinely established framework within which God expects His people to live. Add to that a strong emphasis upon divine accountability particularly on Judgment Day. The expectation is that people who actual know God in relationship with Him will be motivated to shape their lives and living accordingly. Those who don't won't and coercing them into obedience with threats won't produce acceptable obedience to God anyway. Oh that modern Christianity could recover this approach of Jesus and the apostles!

ἡμῶν, 20 στελλόμενοι τοῦτο, μή τις ἡμᾶς μωμήσῃται ἐν τῇ ἀδρότητι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένη ὑφ' ἡμῶν. 21 προνοοῦμεν γὰρ καλὰ οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων. 22 συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ αὐτοῖς τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν ὃν ἐδοκιμάσαμεν ἐν πολλοῖς πολλαῖς σπουδαῖον ὄντα, νυνὶ δὲ πολὺ σπουδαιότερον πεποιθήσει πολλῇ τῇ εἰς ὑμᾶς. 23 εἶτε ὑπὲρ Τίτου, κοινωνὸς ἐμὸς καὶ εἰς ὑμᾶς συνεργός· εἶτε ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν, ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, δόξα Χριστοῦ. 24 τὴν οὖν ἔνδειξιν τῆς ἀγάπης ὑμῶν καὶ ἡμῶν καυχίσεως ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν εἰς αὐτοὺς ἐνδεικνύμενοι εἰς πρόσωπον τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν.

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

This next unit of text both continues and shifts the emphasis upon motivation treated in vv. 7-15. It also gives insight in how safeguarding the monetary offering was being done. When Paul mentions intending to do the right thing not only before God but also in the sight of others, he signals that contemporary customs about proprietary methods of raising money are important: προνοοῦμεν γὰρ καλὰ οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων, *for we intend to do what is right not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of others* (v. 21).

Consequently some examination of perspectives becomes helpful to understanding Paul's methods. This principle of pleasing both God and men in certain behaviors and procedures is relatively common in Jewish and early Christian literature.²⁹³ The use of envoys

²⁹³“Since the rule is found elsewhere in Jewish and Christian literature,³⁰⁶ and since its text is sufficiently different from that of Prov 3:4,³⁰⁷ it does not appear that Paul cited Scripture directly, but indirectly. That is to say, he knew and cited the saying as a proverb.³⁰⁸ The proverb was of use to Paul because it contained language typically employed in administration. The terms προνοεῖν and πρόνοια occur frequently in official letters, often in stereotypical phrases which describe forethought as a quality of an able of-



- 8.16 δε
- 172 Χάρις (ἐστὶν) τῷ θεῷ**
 | τῷ δόντι τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν
 | ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν
 | ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ Τίτου,
 8.17 ὅτι τὴν μὲν παράκλησιν ἐδέξατο,
 δε
 σπουδαιότερος ὑπάρχων ἀυθαίρετος
 --- ἐξήλθεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς.
- 8.18 δε
- 173 συνεπέψαμεν...τὸν ἀδελφὸν**
 μετ' αὐτοῦ οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν,
 8.19 δε
- 174 (ἐστὶν) οὐ μόνον,**
 ἀλλὰ
 καὶ
- 175 (ἐστὶν) χειροτονηθεῖς**
 ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν
 συνέκδημος ἡμῶν
 σὺν τῇ χάριτι ταύτῃ
 τῇ διακονουμένῃ
 ὑφ' ἡμῶν
 πρὸς τὴν [αὐτοῦ] τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν καὶ προθυμίαν ἡμῶν,
- 176** 8.20 **(συνεπέψαμεν...τὸν ἀδελφὸν)**
 στελλόμενοι τοῦτο,
 μή τις ἡμᾶς μωμήσῃται
 ἐν τῇ ἀδρότητι ταύτῃ
 τῇ διακονουμένῃ
 ὑφ' ἡμῶν·
- 8.21 γὰρ
- 177 προνοοῦμεν καλὰ**
 οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου
 ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων.
- 8.22 δε
- 178 συνεπέψαμεν αὐτοῖς τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν**
 ὃν ἐδοκιμάσαμεν
 ἐν πολλοῖς πολλαῖς
 σπουδαῖον ὄντα,
 δε
 νυνὶ
 πολὺ
- 179 (ἐστὶν) σπουδαιότερον**
 πεποιθήσει πολλῇ
 τῇ εἰς ὑμᾶς.
- 8.23 εἴτε
- 180 (ἐστὶν) κοινωνὸς ἐμὸς**
 καὶ
 εἰς ὑμᾶς
 συνεργός·
 εἴτε
 ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν,
- 181 (εἰσὶν) ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν,**
 δόξα Χριστοῦ.

τὴν ἐνδειξίν τῆς ἀγάπης ὑμῶν
 | καὶ
 | ἡμῶν καυχῆσεως
 | ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν

182 (εἰσίν) ἐνδεικνύμενοι--
 εἰς πρόσωπον τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν.

selected both by him and by the churches served as a precaution against charges of abuse or deceit. The principle stated here seems to be an adaptation of Prov. 3:4,

- 3 ἐλεημοσύνη καὶ πίστις μὴ ἐκλιπέτωσάν σε,
 ἄφαψαι δὲ αὐτάς ἐπὶ σῶ τραχήλῳ,
 καὶ εὐρήσεις χάριν.†
- 4 καὶ προνοοῦ καλὰ ἐνώπιον κυρίου καὶ ἀνθρώπων.†
- 3 Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you;
 bind them around your neck,
 write them on the tablet of your heart.
- 4 So you will find favor and good repute
 in the sight of God and of people

Most all ancient societies expected honorableness and trustworthiness from those entrusted with responsibilities. Religious charlatans were numerous in Paul's world with a sordid reputation for raising funds for 'noble causes,' but then pocketing the funds in personal enrichment.²⁹⁴ Thus the apostle is determined to make certain that no one can legitimately make accusations that this fund raising was done dishonestly.

What scenario then emerges from this text along with a few supplementary statements elsewhere? The primary focus of vv. 16-24 centers on the formation of a delegation of three individuals, including Titus, who were coming ahead of Paul to Corinth in order to complete the work of gathering the relief offering of the Corinthians. Titus receives most of the attention but the other two unnamed brothers are highly commended by

ficial: 'exercising all zeal and forethought ...' (ἅπασαν σπουδὴν καὶ πρόνοιαν ποιού[με]νος ...).³⁰⁹ This usage is also found in the speech of the orator Tertullus in Acts 24:2, who praises the forethought (πρόνοια) of Felix.³¹⁰ In the Egyptian government, there was an official who bore the title of 'curator,' or προνοητής, whose primary responsibility was the supervision of the fiscus.³¹¹ [Hans Dieter Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*, ed. George W. MacRae, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 77–78.]

²⁹⁴When Paul wrote 1 Thess 2:3–12, he was already obliged to draw a sharp distinction between himself and the religious charlatans who filled the Roman world. Such men had a reputation for raising funds for what were purported to be good causes, and then lining their own pockets.³⁰² [Hans Dieter Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*, ed. George W. MacRae, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 76.]

Paul to the Corinthians.²⁹⁵ Piecing together a timeline for their activities both prior and subsequent to the writing of this letter is not easy with the very limited information provided in the text.

The literary shape²⁹⁶ of vv. 16-24 comes close to

²⁹⁵We have argued in the Introduction (A.4) that Paul's main purpose in writing this letter was to prepare the way so that his imminent visit to Corinth would be enjoyable. One crucial aspect of that preparation was the dispatch to Corinth of Titus, his personal delegate, and two Christian brothers, appointees of the Macedonian churches, to facilitate arrangements for the completion of the collection. Now, finally, after more than seven chapters, Paul formally introduces and commends these three men who themselves will have delivered to the Corinthians for public reading this letter that announces that imminent visit. 8:16–23 forms Paul's own 'letter of commendation' (ἐπιστολή συστατική; cf. 3:1–3; 3 John 12), with a direct appeal to the Corinthians attached (8:24). Following traditional procedures for the commissioning of an emissary or delegate,¹ Paul mentions three items regarding each of the delegates—identification, relationship to the sender(s), and credentials for the intended role." [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), 595.]

²⁹⁶Lietzmann is not the only reader of these verses to remark on 'the complicated presentation' (die umständliche Vorstellung), as Paul recommends three Christian leaders en route to Corinth. The language he uses and the stylistic traits that are evident combine to produce a piece of writing that is overweighted with heavy content. Hainz offers a key to the style of writing, in his observation that the purpose is undoubtedly polemical,¹⁵⁹ with Paul having to meet opposition and suspicion on two fronts: (1) he must clear the air at Corinth of any remaining doubts regarding the integrity of his motives and actions, especially where money matters are concerned (vv 20–21; cf. 7:2; 11:20; 12:15–18), and (2) he must pave the way for the smooth transference of the collection from his Gentile congregations to Jerusalem, where again a favorable reception cannot be assumed (Rom 15:30–31). Hence the pericope of 8:16–24 is full of terms and ideas that not only indicate how trustworthy and duly accredited are the 'messengers' (ἀπόστολοι) of those Gentile churches, but — more important — how Paul is ready to distance himself from the collection itself lest it should be thought that he had a personal stake in the matter. Yet he cannot completely dissociate himself, as v 19 makes clear, though he expresses his involvement in a cumbrous, roundabout style (see Comment). He therefore goes out of his way to praise Titus's eagerness (vv 16–17) to approve the mission of an unnamed yet well-reputed 'brother' whom the congregations have elected to carry the money (vv 18–20) and to ensure that a third member of the party is a person who has great confidence in the Corinthians and who is also highly recommended as the churches' authorized representative (vv 22–23). A final thrust in this piece of writing is



being a letter of recommendation (esp. vv. 16-23) with the opening phrase in v. 16: Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ, **and praise be to God**. Vv. 16-17 begin the commendation of Titus and v. 23 ends with Titus as the focus of attention. Between in vv. 18-22 stands the commendation of the two unnamed Christian brothers well known to the Corinthians. Verse 24 then, via the inferential conjunction οὖν, draws the implication of an admonition to the Corinthians to warmly welcome these men as they travel to the city.

Very complementary and insightful references to these three men are used by Paul in praising them to the Corinthians.

	Titus:	2nd individual:	3rd individual:
v.17	αὐθαίρετος	X	generous
v.18	τὸν ἀδελφὸν	X	brother
v.19	χειροτονηθεὶς	X	hand chosen
v.22	τὸν ἀδελφὸν σπουδαῖον σπουδαιότερον		X brother X eager X more eager
v.23	κοινωνός	X	partner
	συνεργός	X	fellow worker
	ἀδελφοὶ	X	X brothers
	ἀπόστολοι	X	X messengers
v.24	αὐτοῦς	X	X them

This combination of noun reference and adjectival reference to all three individual paints a very positive **image of them in the thinking of the apostle Paul**.²⁹⁷ Their an exhortation to welcome these men, with a none-too-subtle undertone that in so doing Paul's readers will be proving the sincerity of their professed allegiance to the apostle himself and acting out their declared repentance and allegiance to him (7:7-16)." [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 451.]

²⁹⁷“There are three notable characteristics of Paul’s ‘letter of accreditation’ for these emissaries. First, the authorization is markedly personal. Titus shares Paul’s own zeal (τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν) for the Corinthians (8:16) and is his partner (κοινωνός ἐμός) and comrade in toil (συνεργός) (8:23). Both the unnamed brothers are being sent by Paul (συνεπέμψαμεν, 8:18, 22) and are his brothers in Christ (τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν, 8:22; ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν, 8:23). The first brother was appointed by the churches to be Paul’s traveling companion (συνέκδημος ἡμῶν, 8:19) in dealing with the collection, while Paul himself had verified the earnestness of the second brother in many ways and often (ἐδοκιμάσαμεν, 8:22). Second, the accreditation is not only personal but also ecclesial. Although Titus was going to Corinth as Paul’s personal envoy and as leader of the delegation (see on 8:16), the two associates who were accompanying him were delegates of the (Macedonian) churches (ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, 8:23), with the first brother highly respected throughout all the (Macedonian) churches (διὰ πᾶσων τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, 8:18) for his services to the gospel and duly appointed by them (χειροτονηθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, 8:19) to act as Paul’s traveling companion. Third, the authorization of the two brothers is christological. They were δόξα Χριστοῦ (8:23), men whose character and conduct were a credit to Christ and brought him honor. Moreover, we may fairly assume that, along with Paul about whom this is said, they were involved in the relief operation ‘to promote

intention was to serve Christ and they deeply wanted to help the Corinthians do the same through the relief offering.

Praise of Titus, vv. 16-17, 23. 16 Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ τῷ δόντι τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ Τίτου, 17 ὅτι τὴν μὲν παράκλησιν ἐδέξατο, σπουδαιότερος δὲ ὑπάρχων αὐθαίρετος ἐξήλθεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς. **16 But thanks be to God who put in the heart of Titus the same eagerness for you that I myself have. 17 For he not only accepted our appeal, but since he is more eager than ever, he is going to you of his own accord.** Titus receives the greater attention both here and in verse 23, most likely because he was the one chosen by the apostle to give leadership to the delegation and to the task of helping the Corinthians finish taking up their offering.²⁹⁸ He was already familiar with the situation at Corinth (cf. 8:6; 7:13b-15) and had assisted the Corinthians in this task earlier as well.

Three times in Second Corinthians Paul suddenly bursts forth in praise to God for some divine action, 2:14; 8:16; 9:15, with the expression Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ, **Praise be to God**. Although different terms are used, these echo the prayer of thanksgiving in the letter Proem in 1:3, Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ πατὴρ τῶν οἰκτιρῶν καὶ θεὸς πάσης παρακλήσεως, **Thanks be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort**. A prayer of thanksgiving in 1:3 and doxologies of praise in 2:14; 8:16; and 9:15. The praise centers on something that God has done for His people:

2:14, Τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ πάντοτε θριαμβεύοντι ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, **Praise be to God who always leads us in Christ...**

8:16, Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ τῷ δόντι τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν

the honor of the Lord himself’ (πρὸς τὴν αὐτοῦ τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν, 8:19). Already being men in whom Christ was glorified, they were aiming to honor him still further.” [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), 595–596.]

²⁹⁸“That Titus was the leader of the delegation seems indicated by several facts: he is mentioned first in vv. 16–22 and also in this summary in v. 23; he alone is explicitly Paul’s appointee (vv. 16–17, 23a), the other two being sent by Paul (vv. 18, 22) but appointed by the churches (vv. 19, 23); only he is named in this ‘letter of commendation’ (vv. 16–23); the contrast between ἐμός and ἡμῶν in v. 23, along with the εἶτε ... εἶτε differentiation, suggests a distinction between Titus and his two fellow envoys. [ἐστίν] κοινωνός ἐμός, ‘my associate/partner/colleague’ or my ‘friend-in-work’ (Ollrog 77), points to shared commitments in the whole gospel enterprise as well as in the relief aid for Jerusalem.⁵⁵ The phrase εἰς ὑμᾶς συνεργός denotes collaboration between Titus and Paul in ‘the work of the Lord’⁵⁶ at Corinth.” [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), 610.]



ὕπερ ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ Τίτου, **Praise be to God who gave the same eagerness for you in Titus' heart....**

9:15 Χάρις τῷ θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγίτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ,
Praise be to God for His indescribable gift.

This expression of praise to God in 8:16 amplifies the earlier depiction in 7:13b-16, where Titus' positive feeling about the Corinthians gave Paul considerable encouragement. The apostle was elated that God had put in Titus the same zeal and concern for the Corinthians as Paul felt (τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν). For this to be given from God to Titus ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ Τίτου, **in Titus' heart**, signals the same determination to minister to the Corinthians as Paul had. Thus Titus certainly merited acceptance by the Corinthians.

The causal ὅτι clause of v. 17 provides the foundation for Paul's praise by describing in greater detail Titus' σπουδὴν, eagerness, for helping the Corinthians: ὅτι τὴν μὲν παράκλησιν ἐδέξατο, σπουδαιότερος δὲ ὑπάρχων αὐθαίρετος ἐξήλθεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, **because he not only welcomed our appeal, but being more eager he generously is going out to you.** With this language Paul paints the picture of Titus being more than ready to return to Corinth in order to help them finish the offering.

In verse 23 Titus is further defined both in relationship to Paul -- **κοινωνὸς ἐμὸς καὶ εἰς ὑμᾶς συνεργός, my partner and fellow worker for you** -- and in relation to the churches -- **ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, messengers of the churches** -- and in relation to God -- **δόξα Χριστοῦ, the Presence of Christ.** The latter two sets also include the other two brothers.

The placing of the possessive adjective ἐμὸς next to the conjunction καὶ links it to both κοινωνὸς and συνεργός.²⁹⁹ The name Titus is mentioned 13 times in the NT, but only in Paul's writings and with nine of them being in Second Corinthians (2:13; 7:6, 13, 14; 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18 2x).³⁰⁰ Earlier he was with Paul in Jerusalem

²⁹⁹“Titus was Paul's co-worker or fellow laborer ‘in relation to’ (εἰς) the Corinthians, where that relation was one of service, although they had not served at Corinth at the same time.⁵⁷ Less probably, συν- indicates cooperation with God (cf. 6:1) or with the Corinthians (cf. 1:24) (so Ollrog 70).⁵⁸” [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), 610–611.]

³⁰⁰“Titus was a traveling companion of Paul by the time of the visit to Jerusalem recorded in Gal 2:1 (identified as either Acts 11:27–30; 12:25; or 15:1–29; see JERUSALEM, COUNCIL OF). From a Gentile background (Gal 2:3), possibly in Antioch, he may have come to faith in Christ through Paul (Titus 1:4). He accompanied Paul for some years on his travels. Paul speaks of him with great affection as “our brother” (2 Cor 2:13) and “my partner (κοινωνός) and coworker (synergos συνεργός)” (2 Cor 8:23), terms that Paul rarely or never uses for others. Thus Paul asks Titus to take on the tough assignment of going to CORINTH after the apostle himself had suffered a humiliating visit to that church (2 Cor 7:14–15; on Paul's visit, 2 Cor 2:1–13). Paul regards

(Gal. 2:1, 3) and latter in Crete (Tit. 1:4) and then in Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10). We know very little about him apart from these scattered references.³⁰¹

Praise of second brother, vv. 18-19. 18 συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ μετ' αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀδελφὸν οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, 19 οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ χειροτονηθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν συνέδεσμος ἡμῶν σὺν τῇ χάριτι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένῃ ὑφ' ἡμῶν πρὸς τὴν [αὐτοῦ] τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν καὶ προθυμίαν ἡμῶν, 18 **With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his proclaiming the good news; 19 and not only that, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us while we are administering this generous undertaking for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our goodwill.**

Who was this person?³⁰² Basic to this is why Paul

Titus as sharing his concerns (2 Cor 7:7), notably in Titus' desire to return to Corinth (2 Cor 8:17).” [Steve Walton and Thomas A. J. McGinn, “Titus,” ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 5:610.]

³⁰¹“Titus seems to have visited Corinth at least three times. First, he went after the sending of 1 Corinthians to begin arrangements for the collection on behalf of the Jerusalem church (1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 8:6a; see COLLECTION, THE). After Paul's ‘painful visit’ to Corinth (2 Cor 2:1), Titus was the bearer of Paul's ‘severe letter’ (2 Cor 7:8), which led to reconciliation between Paul and the Corinthian church (2 Cor 7:9–16). This visit may have been the occasion to revive interest in the collection, once it became clear that the ‘severe letter’ was received well (2 Cor 8:6b[?]). Finally, Titus delivered 2 Corinthians and thus was part of the delegation charged with completing the collection (2 Cor 8:16–24). As a key person in this difficult period, Titus seems to have acted with great diplomacy, for Paul describes Titus' conduct toward the Corinthians as exemplary (2 Cor 12:18).” [Steve Walton and Thomas A. J. McGinn, “Titus,” ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 5:610.]

³⁰²“συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ μετ' αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀδελφὸν οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν. ‘With him we are sending the brother who is praised throughout all the churches for his work for the gospel.’ In order to safeguard the integrity of the collection project in Corinth (cf. 8:20–21), Paul knew that he would need to send to Corinth more than his personal assistant, Titus (8:23). In vv. 18–19 we find his commendation of the first of the two extra envoys who would act as observers and thus as guarantors of the whole collection. πέμπω is Paul's usual term for the dispatch of an envoy to a church.¹⁰ The prefix συν- implies ‘togetherness,’ in the sense of both accompaniment and comradeship; Paul was sending this additional emissary as Titus's companion in travel and also as his colleague. As in v. 22, συνεπέμψαμεν is an epistolary aorist¹¹ and an epistolary plural (as throughout vv. 16–24, except for v. 23a), but in v. 22 no μετά follows the συν-.¹² ἀδελφός here signifies not only a fellow Christian but also a colleague in Christian work.¹³ The article τὸν does not here denote possession (‘his brother,’ Goodspeed)¹⁴ but either points to ‘the well-known brother’ (Williams) or has a forward reference (‘that brother who ...,’ Furnish 420; cf. BDF §258[1]).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press,



chose to omit the personal names of both these men. In reality, we do not know the answer to this question,³⁰³ although that hasn't slowed down commentary speculation about the identity of these two men.³⁰⁴ I suspect interest in a personal name reflects later western curiosity far more than in Paul's world. What is more significant to Paul's description is that this individual is well known generally for his work in the Gospel: οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, **whose praise exists in the Gospel by all the churches**. Most likely he was

2005), 600.]

³⁰³“So it would appear, except that we are kept guessing as to who was the individual in question. Souter wants to take the definite article in ὁ ἀδελφός, ‘the brother,’ seriously and regard the man as Titus’s own natural brother.¹⁷² But Barrett dismisses the inference of Souter since ‘brother’ is too well-known a name for believers,¹⁷³ and Héring asks why he is not named if he was Titus’s relative.¹⁷⁴ Other suggestions are no more convincing. The following have been proposed: (1) Luke;¹⁷⁵ (2) Barnabas;¹⁷⁶ (3) Aristarchus,¹⁷⁷ who was indeed a Macedonian and a companion of Paul according to Acts 19:29 (cf. Acts 20:4; 27:2). But if a more prominent figure is to be sought, we may offer (4) Apollos’s name as candidate (cf. Acts 18:24–28). For whatever reason, Paul has chosen not to reveal his name, but Lietzmann and Windisch have a point in maintaining that Paul’s letter must originally have had a name in its text, for one does not introduce unnamed persons. Yet Paul’s letters do have one parallel instance of not naming an individual for his own reasons, viz., Phil 4:2, if ‘true yoke fellow’ (γνήσιε σύζυγε) does not conceal a proper name. Nor can we share Héring’s somewhat uncharitable view that there was a name in the original text that the later church expunged because ‘the evangelist, whoever he was, forfeited his credit later on.’¹⁷⁸” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 453–454.]

³⁰⁴“But why are this ‘brother’ and the ‘brother’ mentioned in v. 22 not named, especially since they are so warmly commended by Paul? Some have suggested that these two men subsequently lost their good name at Corinth, so that their names were deleted from Paul’s letter.¹⁸ But rather than appealing to some putative deletion of the names by the Corinthian church or by the collector of the Pauline corpus, we should entertain the possibility that Paul himself chose to omit the names.¹⁹ Betz proposes that by the omission Paul was defending the primacy of Titus in the delegation and ensuring the limited role of the two ‘brothers’ who, as attendants (ἀκόλουθοι = Latin *legatorum comites*), lacked any authority to negotiate apart from Titus (73–74). There can be little doubt that Titus was the leader of the delegation (see on 8:23), but it is less clear that the churches, as opposed to Paul, took the initiative in the appointment of the two delegates (as Betz [73] suggests). Perhaps we can best account for the anonymity of the two brothers by submitting that although the Corinthians had heard about (at least) one of the brothers, they had not met either of the two, but since all three delegates were the bearers of the present letter, the two ἀδελφοί would be introduced to the church by Titus.²⁰ Numerous efforts have been made to identify the ‘brother’ of v. 18, but the very diversity of the suggestions indicates that certainty is impossible.²¹” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 601–602.]

a fellow believer who had been active in spreading the Gospel for a long time and may have traveled with Paul a good bit of this time. The context here points to πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, **all the churches**, meaning Christianity in general in the mid first century, rather than just the churches of Macedonia.³⁰⁵ But still limited mainly to those in both Macedonia and Asia, with Galatia included as well.

But what is more important than his being well known (οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ, **and not only thus but also...**) was that he had been hand chosen by the congregations to monitor the handing of the collection of the relief offering: χειροτονηθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν συνέδημος ἡμῶν σὺν τῇ χάριτι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένη ὑφ’ ἡμῶν πρὸς τὴν [αὐτοῦ] τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν καὶ προθυμίαν ἡμῶν, **he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us while we are administering this generous undertaking for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our goodwill**. This very interesting expression contains several insightful elements. First, this person was χειροτονηθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, **hand chosen by the churches**. That is, each of the congregations had individually elected him via the raising of the hand to represent them in the relief offering project.³⁰⁶ Thus the direct involvement of the churches in this project helped protect Paul and those with him against any charges of mishandling of the collected funds (cf. 7:2).

Second, this person was συνέδημος ἡμῶν, **our traveling companion**. The noun συνέδημος is only used here and in Acts 19:29 inside the NT. At Ephesus, Luke calls Gaius and Aristarchus Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia: Γάϊον καὶ Ἀρίσταρχον Μακεδόνας, συνεκδήμους Παύλου. This event is the riot that happened toward the end of Paul’s lengthy min-

³⁰⁵“The identity of the electing churches is uncertain: the more likely possibilities are the congregations of Asia or Macedonia, or both.²⁹³” [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), 549.]

³⁰⁶“Χειροτονεῖν is a technical term and describes the process of electing envoys by the raising of hands in the assembly.²⁸⁷ That such a process was known in the church at a later period is attested by the sources.²⁸⁸ But it is surprising to see it at work in the time of Paul. Paul’s treatment of the matter is remarkable, however, because of its conflicting nuances. On the one hand, the election is reported as a matter of course, but on the other hand, it is clear that this was not his own method of appointing envoys. His method, of which the appointment of Titus furnishes an example, seems to have been that of apostolic decree. By contrast, the churches in Greece seem to have operated in accordance with the democratic procedures employed in the society at large.” [Hans Dieter Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*, ed. George W. MacRae, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 74–75.]



istry in Ephesus prior to his departure for Troas and eventually Macedonia where he met up with Titus, the setting for Second Corinthians. If one or both of these men are the unnamed brothers here, it is interesting that their reputation for faithful service went much further than just their home province of Macedonia. But Luke's list of individuals who traveled from Corinth to Jerusalem with Paul in regard to this offering is much longer (Acts 20:4): *συνείπετο δὲ αὐτῷ Σώπατρος Πύρρου Βεροιαῖος, Θεσσαλονικέων δὲ Ἀρίσταρχος καὶ Σεκοῦνδος, καὶ Γάϊος Δερβαῖος καὶ Τιμόθεος, Ἀσιανοὶ δὲ Τύχικος καὶ Τρόφιμος, He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Beroea, by Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, by Gaius from Derbe, and by Timothy, as well as by Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia.* Thus some caution about linking any one of these individuals to the unnamed brother here is wise.

Third, the depiction of the relief offering here is quite fascinating: *σὺν τῇ χάριτι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένη ὑφ' ἡμῶν πρὸς τὴν [αὐτοῦ] τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν καὶ προθυμίαν ἡμῶν, together with this grace which is being ministered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself and for our goodwill.* Already in the gathering of the relief offering as been labeled *ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι, this grace*, in 8:7 as well as 8:6. In 8:4 it is also called *τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους, ministry for the saints*. Similarly in 1 Cor. 16:1, it is called *τῆς λογιᾶς τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους, the collection for the saints*. By using the label *χάρις* for the offering, the idea of generosity by the churches as a response to the generosity of God to them is injected into the understanding. Further, as seen in 8:1-6, it is the dynamic of God's grace at work that prompts the generous giving to the offering.

The objective (πρὸς is more likely purpose than result, contra Thrall in the ICC) for this ministry is two-fold: *πρὸς τὴν [αὐτοῦ] τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν καὶ προθυμίαν ἡμῶν, for the glory of the Lord Himself and for our goodwill.* The praise of the Lord through such an offering is easy to understand. These dominantly non-Jewish Christian churches were reaching out to the virtually exclusive Jewish Christian mother church in Jerusalem in a time of need. Given the huge racial tensions between Jews and non Jews, especially by Jews living in Judea, the power of the living Christ to transcend such racial barriers would be made very clear. That racial tension had plagued the Christian movement with the so-called 'Judaizing' actions that trailed the ministry of Paul during his three missionary journeys through the northeastern Mediterranean Sea region. For these Gentile churches to demonstrate traditional Jewish piety in helping the Jewish Christians in Judea would be a powerful message for the Gospel. It would stand in sharp contrast to the Jewish imposition of annual religious taxation on Diaspora Jews to contribute to the maintenance of

the temple in Jerusalem, which was controlled by the wealthy, elite Sadducees.³⁰⁷

The other objective, *καὶ προθυμίαν ἡμῶν*, also the second object of the preposition *πρὸς*,³⁰⁸ has posed more interpretive uncertainty. Four of the five NT uses of the noun *προθυμία* are in Second Corinthians 8-9. Three times Paul speaks of the *προθυμία* of the Corinthians to participate in this relief offering: 8:11, 12; 9:2. But here the *προθυμία* is that of him and his associates. The core idea of *προθυμία* is that of "exceptional interest in being of service."³⁰⁹ This offering was intended to demonstrate the good intentions of Paul in Gospel ministry. In part, it goes back to the stated agreement at the Jerusalem conference in AD 48 between Paul and the apostolic leaders in Jerusalem: *μόνον τῶν πτωχῶν ἵνα μνημονεύωμεν, ὃ καὶ ἐσπούδασα αὐτὸ τοῦτο ποιῆσαι, only the poor that we would remember them, which I have also endeavored this very thing to do* (Gal. 2:10).

Paul was very eager to promote mutual care and concern for all segments of the growing Christian movement that centered on the apostolic Gospel. The proper handing of this effort that brought glory to Christ would be a clear demonstration of the sincerity of all his efforts. One cannot read chapters eight and nine of this letter without realizing the huge logistical challenges of this project. Given the widespread tendency of religious and philosophical charlatans to con people into contributing to 'worthy causes' only to pocket the money themselves, the apostle was even more concerned that everything connected to this effort be transparent and above board.

Motivation behind the delegation, vv. 20-21. 20 *στελλόμενοι τοῦτο, μή τις ἡμᾶς μωμήσῃται ἐν τῇ ἀδρότητι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένη ὑφ' ἡμῶν. 21 προνοοῦμεν γὰρ καλὰ οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων. 20 We intend that no one should blame us about this generous gift that we are administering, 21 for we intend to do what is right not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of others.* This expression continues the idea inside the Greek sentence begun in verse eighteen and continuing to the end of verse twenty-one. The participle phrase modifies the core verb *συνεπέμψαμεν* in verse 18, as is illustrated in the above diagram. The sense is that Paul is sending the

³⁰⁷To be sure, Jewish benevolence did emphasize caring for fellow Jews in need. But the expectation even in the Diaspora was that local Jews took care of the needs of their fellow local Jews. Almsgiving both in Judea and the Diaspora was oriented this way.

³⁰⁸What unquestionably links the two nouns *δόξαν* and *προθυμίαν* is the single article *τὴν* modifying both nouns, along with the sequencing of *δόξαν καὶ προθυμίαν* back to back. Both nouns are parallel objects of the preposition *πρὸς*.

³⁰⁹William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 870.

brother with Titus for this very reason as expressed in τοῦτο, which in the neuter singular gender either goes back to the depiction of the unnamed brother as well known and elected to represent the churches. Or, more likely, it goes forward to the negative purpose clause μή τις ἡμᾶς μωμήσῃται ἐν τῇ ἀδρότητι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένῃ ὑφ' ἡμῶν, **that no one should blame us regarding this generous gift that is being administered by us.** Thus what Paul states in vv. 20-21 naturally comes out of vv. 18-19 and does not represent an interruption in the thought flow.

The use of appointed representatives of the churches served to safeguard the integrity of the collection process for the offering. This individual would certify to the churches the amounts collected and that the full amount had been delivered to its desination in Jerusalem. This would eliminate any potential charge that Paul or any of his associates had pocketed some of the money for their expenses. In vv. 20-21 the apostle makes it clear that such is the intention of those collecting the offering from the different churches.

Here Paul adds another label for the offering. The noun ἀδρότης is only used here inside the NT. Some 13 different terms for abundance are used just inside the NT (cf. topics 59.48 - 59.61 in the Louw-Nida Greek lexicon). Most likely because ἀδρότης had a *terminus technicus* sense defining a large sum of money.³¹⁰ From the lengthy list of individuals accompanying Paul from Corinth to Jerusalem in Acts 20:4, the guarding of the money by a group of individuals while traveling dangerous waters seems to have been a good idea.

The justification of this plan of taking care of the offering is given in the γάρ (causal) clause in v. 21, which completes the lengthy sentence of vv. 18-21: **προνοοῦμεν γὰρ καλὰ οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων, for we intend to do what is right not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of others.** The

^{8.21} γὰρ
177 προνοοῦμεν καλὰ
 οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου
 ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων.

³¹⁰“The mention of the large sums of money he expected to raise points in the same direction. The term ‘abundance’ (ἀδρότης) is found only here in the New Testament;³⁰³ and it is again a *terminus technicus*.³⁰⁴ Was polemical use made of the term by those who appointed the brothers? In any case, the large sums of money called for strict supervision, particularly in the event that complaints might be made.” [Hans Dieter Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*, ed. George W. MacRae, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 77.]

mental image of this twofold saying is put in front of Paul’s mind (προνοοῦμεν) as a continuing image to remind him of something very important.

The adaptation of Prov. 3:4, as [explained above](#), becomes the foundation for Paul’s strategy. Clearly the apostle is working from the LXX translation with his statement, since the Hebrew מְצַדִּיקִי literally means to “find favor”:

LXX: καὶ προνοοῦ καλὰ ἐνώπιον κυρίου καὶ ἀνθρώπων.

Paul: *προνοοῦμεν* γὰρ *καλὰ* οὐ μόνον *ἐνώπιον κυρίου* ἀλλὰ *καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων*.

The adaptations are driven by how the apostle uses the allusion as the basis for the preceding points (vv. 18-20) made about the relief offering. In the Proverbs context, this positive appraisal from both God and men comes in recognition of one’s loyalty to others of God’s people (v. 3). This scripture affirmation provides a solid foundation for how Paul approached the collection of the offering for the saints in Jerusalem.

^{8.22} δὲ
178 συνεπέμψαμεν αὐτοῖς τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν
 ὃν ἐδοκιμάσαμεν
 ἐν πολλοῖς πολλακίς
 σπουδαῖον ὄντα,
 δὲ
 νυνὶ
 πολὺ
179 (ἐστίν) σπουδαιότερον
 πεποιθήσει πολλῇ
 τῇ εἰς ὑμᾶς.

Praise of third brother, v. 22. *συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ αὐτοῖς τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν ὃν ἐδοκιμάσαμεν ἐν πολλοῖς πολλακίς σπουδαῖον ὄντα, νυνὶ δὲ πολὺ σπουδαιότερον πεποιθήσει πολλῇ τῇ εἰς ὑμᾶς.* **And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found eager in many matters, but who is now more eager than ever because of his great confidence in you.** A third member of this delegation is also unnamed by the apostle, but comes highly recommended by Paul.³¹¹ The same verb *συνεπέμψαμεν, we are sending together*, is use as in v. 18 and the plural *αὐτοῖς, with them*, referring back to Titus and the first unnamed brother. This τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν, *our brother*, is closely linked to Paul and **was evidently** chosen by the apostle to accompa-

³¹¹“The second ‘brother’ is one with whom Paul apparently has quite a history because he says of him, ‘We have tested him in many ways and many times, finding him zealous.’ But he is now even more zealous ‘because of his great confidence in you [the Corinthians]’ (8:22). So one brother has special connections with the Macedonian churches and is sent as their representative, and the other one has special connections with Paul—and apparently also with the Corinthians. Both will be traveling with Titus and are dubbed by Paul ‘representatives of the churches [ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν apostoloi ekklesiōn], the glory of Christ’ (8:23).” [J. Paul Sampley, “The Second Letter to the Corinthians,” in *New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck, vol. 11 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994–2004), 11:126.]

ny the other two. He has been put to the test many times, ὄν ἐδοκιμάσαμεν ἐν πολλοῖς πολλάκις, says Paul, regarding his σπουδαῖον ὄντα, **being eager** to do Christ's will. The use of the verb ἐδοκιμάσαμεν conveys not just testing but positive outcomes of testing.

But Paul indicates an much greater eagerness (πολύ σπουδαιότερον) to participate in this mission to Corinth. Does this imply that he had already traveled to Corinth, perhaps earlier with Titus? Perhaps, but we can't be absolutely certain. The reason for this heightened eagerness to go to Corinth is given as πεποιθήσει πολλῇ τῇ εἰς ὑμᾶς, **because of a great confidence in you** (Corinthians). If this doesn't imply first hand observation, it must mean that it came from Titus' report to Paul and others at the meeting in Macedonia. He was confident of the sincerity of the Corinthians renewed interest in the relief offering.

8.23 εἶτε
 ὑπὲρ Τίτου,
 180 (ἐστίν) κοινωνὸς ἐμὸς
 καὶ
 εἰς ὑμᾶς
 συνεργός·
 εἶτε
 ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν,
 181 (εἰσίν) ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν,
 δόξα Χριστοῦ.

In verse twenty-three, the apostle offers a summarizing statement including all three individuals: εἶτε ὑπὲρ Τίτου, κοινωνὸς ἐμὸς καὶ εἰς ὑμᾶς συνεργός· εἶτε ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν, ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, δόξα Χριστοῦ, **whether Titus, my partner and fellow worker for you, or our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the very Presence of Christ.**

The elliptical syntax here adds some interpretive challenges to precise understanding of what the apostle is saying, although the general sense is relatively clear. One of the difficulties is the insertion of the preposition ὑπὲρ with Titus' name, but the parallel ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν, our brothers, is without a matching preposition and thus in the nominative case. The double εἶτε... εἶτε normally establishes two parallel expressions, but such is not the case here. What does ὑπὲρ imply about Titus, that is not implied about the other two men? The general consensus of commentators is that it signals a leadership role for Titus in the delegation of three. Several factors beyond just the preposition, however, point this direction.³¹² Additional questions arise as to the intend-

³¹²Once again (cf. vv. 20–21) Paul is exercising forethought and taking a precautionary measure, anticipating issues that may arise when the delegation reaches Corinth. As often in 2 Corinthians, ὑπὲρ has the sense 'about' or 'concerning.'⁵⁴ That Titus was the leader of the delegation seems indicated by several facts: he is mentioned first in vv. 16–22 and also in this summary in v. 23; he alone is explicitly Paul's appointee (vv. 16–17, 23a), the other

reference to the predicate nominatives ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, δόξα Χριστοῦ, **messengers of the churches, the Presence of Christ.**³¹³ Contextually all three seem to be intended, but some consider that only ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν, **our brothers**, is included. This runs counter to only the first of the two unnamed brothers explicitly being designated as elected by the churches to represent them (cf. v. 19). The appositional δόξα Χριστοῦ is a reminder

two being sent by Paul (vv. 18, 22) but appointed by the churches (vv. 19, 23); only he is named in this 'letter of commendation' (vv. 16–23); the contrast between ἐμὸς and ἡμῶν in v. 23, along with the εἶτε ... εἶτε differentiation, suggests a distinction between Titus and his two fellow envoys. [ἐστίν] κοινωνὸς ἐμὸς, 'my associate/partner/colleague' or my 'friend-in-work' (Ollrog 77), points to shared commitments in the whole gospel enterprise as well as in the relief aid for Jerusalem.⁵⁵ The phrase εἰς ὑμᾶς συνεργός denotes collaboration between Titus and Paul in 'the work of the Lord'⁵⁶ at Corinth. Titus was Paul's co-worker or fellow laborer 'in relation to' (εἰς) the Corinthians, where that relation was one of service, although they had not served at Corinth at the same time.⁵⁷ [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), 610.]

³¹³εἶτε ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν, ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, δόξα Χριστοῦ. 'If our brothers are in question, they are envoys of the churches and an honor to Christ.' The balance between v. 23a and b is clear: in each case there is an identification followed by a double description. We might have expected ὑπὲρ ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν to match ὑπὲρ Τίτου, but the construction is broken in dictating (Plummer 251), with the nominative ἀδελφοὶ resuming κοινωνὸς and συνεργός. Since εἰσίν must be supplied with ἀπόστολοι, this word is predicative and accordingly anarthrous, so that there can be no objection to rendering ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν as 'the emissaries of the churches' (NJB) or 'the delegates of the congregations' (Martin 271), also bearing in mind the canon of Apollonius. By using the term ἀπόστολος of these two Christian brothers, Paul is not suggesting that they shared his status as ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (1:1), someone who, like the Twelve (Matt. 10:2; 1 Cor. 15:5, 7), had seen the risen Lord (1 Cor. 9:1) and had been commissioned directly by Christ to exercise a distinctive leadership role within the church (1 Cor. 15:9–11; Gal. 1:1). Rather than being ἀπόστολοι Χριστοῦ (11:13; cf. 1 Thess. 2:7; Jude 17), these men were ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν 'envoys belonging to, sent by, and representing the churches.'⁵⁹ In our discussion at 1:1 we distinguished three uses of the term ἀπόστολος in Paul—in reference to the Twelve and himself; of a limited number of church leaders who had a permanent but specific commission from Christ or the local church; and of those with a temporary and humanly approved commission, such as Epaphroditus, the envoy of the Philippian church (Phil. 2:25), and these two emissaries of 2 Cor. 8:23.⁶⁰ Which congregations appointed these two delegates is not known for sure,⁶¹ but although the churches of Judea have been proposed (see on v. 19), it was more probably the Macedonian churches (cf. 8:1, 19, 24). Significantly, it was the Christians from Macedonia who had offered Paul their services in connection with the collection project (8:5)." [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), 611.]

τὴν ἐνδειξιν τῆς ἀγάπης ὑμῶν
 | καὶ
 | ἡμῶν καυχήσεως
 | ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν
 εἰς αὐτοὺς |
 182 (ἔστε) ἐνδεικνύμενοι---
 εἰς πρόσωπον τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν.

the Corinthians to this delegation is defined first as τὴν ἐνδειξιν τῆς ἀγάπης ὑμῶν, *proof of your love*. How much they loved God would be reflected both in how they treated these representatives and how they contributed to the relief offering these men were

of the larger spiritual mission involved here, and follows the divine / human reference in v. 21. These men are doing the work of Christ for the praise of Christ in this mission to Corinth. This must never be overlooked. It was something far more than just raising money.

Admonition to welcome them, v. 24. τὴν οὖν ἐνδειξιν τῆς ἀγάπης ὑμῶν καὶ ἡμῶν καυχήσεως ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν εἰς αὐτοὺς ἐνδεικνύμενοι εἰς πρόσωπον τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν. *Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.*

Once more the ambiguity of Paul's statement leaves room for slightly different understandings of the precise meaning of his expression. Is Paul making a statement or issuing an admonition here? The latter seems more likely but is not certain. What lies behind the paronomasia in two words from the same root stem: ἐνδειξιν from ἐνδειξις (noun) and ἐνδεικνύμενοι from ἐνδείκνυμι (participle)? The core idea is to demonstrate or 'show out' something, usually as proof or evidence. It has no background from the LXX and is rare in the NT, only in Paul. The apparent meaning is along the lines of the Corinthians being obligated to show the demonstration of their love and the basis of Paul's pride in them. The sense of evidence or proof is also an important part of this verb and noun. The present tense participle demands much more than a friendly greeting when the delegation arrives in Corinth.³¹⁴ The εἰς αὐτοὺς, *to them*, refers to the above delegation sent to Corinth. The use of the prepositional phrase with εἰς sets this up as more than a simple indirect object of a transitive verb. Behind these delegates stands all the churches they represent and will report back to at some future point. Proper respect of these men will have far reaching consequences. This aspect is especially highlighted in the matching parallel prepositional phrase εἰς πρόσωπον τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, *to the face of the churches*. The Greek idiom used here means that these delegates are the 'face' of the churches, that is, that aspect which is visibly present and seeable at Corinth.

The demonstration / proof to be demonstrated by

³¹⁴ The later correction to ἐνδείξασθε represents an effort to 'improve' the grammar expression:

ἐνδείξασθε κ C D¹ K L P Ψ 0225. 0243. 81. 104. 365. 630. 1175. 1241. 1505. 1739. 1881. 2464 M lat

| txt B D* F G 33 b ρ vg^{ms}

[Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 568.]

seeking from them. In the NT writings, no distinction between loving God and loving others exists. In fact it is our love for others that demonstrates whether we are committed to God or not, since our obligation is to allow God's love to flow through us in good deeds to others (cf. Mt. 5:16). This also highlights the dynamic nature of Christian love. Passive love is not Christian love! Love is always action oriented.

The second area of proof to be demonstrated by the Corinthians is καὶ ἡμῶν καυχήσεως ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, *and our boasting about you*. What is intended here is made clear in the statement in 9:2, οἶδα γὰρ τὴν προθυμίαν ὑμῶν ἣν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καυχῶμαι Μακεδόσιν, ὅτι Ἀχαΐα παρεσκεύασται ἀπὸ πέρυσι, καὶ τὸ ὑμῶν ζῆλος ἠρέθισεν τοὺς πλείονας, *for I know your eagerness, which is the subject of my boasting about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year; and your zeal has stirred up most of them*. The earlier enthusiasm for participating in this offering by the Corinthians (cf. 8:10-11) had led the apostle to use them as an inspirational example to the churches in Macedonia for participating in the offering. Now Paul at one level, to use a modern idiom, was saying, "Don't you make a liar out of me." The waning interest in the offering prior to Titus' visit had left some uncertainty about the Corinthians. Titus, however, by the time he left Corinth to meet up with Paul in Macedonia was convinced of the Corinthians' desire to participate in this offering in a meaningful way. The task of the three men traveling to Corinth was to help and guide them to the completion of that participation in a way proper for the congregation.

10.2.3.2.3 Avoiding embarrassment, 9:1-5

9.1 Περὶ μὲν γὰρ τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους περισσόν μοί ἐστιν τὸ γράφειν ὑμῖν· 2 οἶδα γὰρ τὴν προθυμίαν ὑμῶν ἣν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καυχῶμαι Μακεδόσιν, ὅτι Ἀχαΐα παρεσκεύασται ἀπὸ πέρυσι, καὶ τὸ ὑμῶν ζῆλος ἠρέθισεν τοὺς πλείονας. 3 ἐπεμψα δὲ τοὺς ἀδελφούς, ἵνα μὴ τὸ καύχημα ἡμῶν τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κενωθῇ ἐν τῷ μέρει τούτῳ, ἵνα καθὼς ἔλεγον παρεσκευασμένοι ἦτε, 4 μή πως ἐὰν ἔλθωσιν σὺν ἐμοὶ Μακεδόνες καὶ εὐρωσιν ὑμᾶς ἀπαρασκευάστους κατασχυνθῶμεν ἡμεῖς, ἵνα μὴ λέγω ὑμεῖς, ἐν τῇ ὑποστάσει ταύτῃ. 5 ἀναγκαῖον οὖν ἠγησάμην παρακαλέσαι τοὺς ἀδελφούς, ἵνα προέλθωσιν εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ προκαταρτίσωσιν τὴν προεπηγγελμένην εὐλογίαν

9.1 γὰρ
 Περὶ μὲν τῆς διακονίας
 τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους
183 περισσόν μοί ἐστὶν τὸ γράφειν ὑμῖν·
 9.2 γὰρ
184 οἶδα τὴν προθυμίαν ὑμῶν
 ἣν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καυχῶμαι Μακεδόσιν,
 ὅτι Ἀχαΐα παρεσκεύασται
 ἀπὸ πέρυσσι,
 καὶ
 τὸ ὑμῶν ζῆλος ἠρέθισεν τοὺς πλείονας.
 9.3 δὲ
185 ἔπεμψα τοὺς ἀδελφούς,
 ἵνα μὴ τὸ καύχημα ἡμῶν... κενωθῆ
 τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν τῷ μέρει τοῦτω,
 καθὼς ἔλεγον
 ἵνα...παρεσκευασμένοι ᾦτε,
 9.4 ἐὰν ἔλθωσιν σὺν ἐμοὶ Μακεδόνες
 | καὶ
 | εὐρωσιν ὑμᾶς ἀπαρασκευάστους
 μὴ πως...καταισχυνθῶμεν ἡμεῖς,
 ἵνα μὴ λέγω ὑμεῖς,
 ἐν τῇ ὑποστάσει ταύτη.
 9.5 οὖν
186 ἀναγκαῖον ἠγησάμην
 παρακαλέσαι τοὺς ἀδελφούς,
 ἵνα προέλθωσιν
 εἰς ὑμᾶς
 καὶ
 προκαταρτίσωσιν τὴν προεπηγγελμένην εὐλογίαν ὑμῶν,
 ταύτην ἐτοίμην εἶναι
 οὕτως ὡς εὐλογίαν
 καὶ
 μὴ ὡς πλεονεξίαν.

This grows out of a host of partition theories about Second Corinthians arising over the past two centuries.³¹⁶ But such dissecting

8. On this view 9:1–5 belongs with 8:16–24 in dealing with one and the same ‘Mission of Titus and His Companions’ (8:16–9:5).” [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.; Pater-noster Press, 2005), 615.]

³¹⁶“We have seen that the Pauline authorship of 2 Corinthians is a virtually universal assumption among NT scholars (see 1.a above). But when we turn to investigate the integrity, as opposed to the authenticity, of this letter, we are confronted with a complex array of data in the text, and, perhaps not surprisingly, with a bewildering variety of partition hypotheses.

“A brief descriptive survey of the most influential or noteworthy theories which propose that our canonical 2 Corinthians is composed of more than two separate letters or of several dislocated parts will indicate the main areas of dispute.

“a. Complex Partition or Dislocation Theories

ὑμῶν, ταύτην ἐτοίμην εἶναι οὕτως ὡς εὐλογίαν καὶ μὴ ὡς πλεονεξίαν.

9.1 Now it is not necessary for me to write you about the ministry to the saints, 2 for I know your eagerness, which is the subject of my boasting about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year; and your zeal has stirred up most of them. 3 But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you may not prove to have been empty in this case, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be; 4 otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated — to say nothing of you — in this undertaking. 5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you, and arrange in advance for this bountiful gift that you have promised, so that it may be ready as a voluntary gift and not as an extortion.

One of the interpretive issues here centers on the connection of chapters eight and nine to each other.³¹⁵

³¹⁵“In our discussion of the integrity of chs. 8 and 9 (Introduction, A.3.d.), we sought to establish that these two chapters belong together and that ch. 9 continues and elaborates the themes of ch.

“Almost all twentieth-century hypotheses regarding the original letters or fragments that now form 2 Corinthians are based on nineteenth-century antecedents. Here we shall deal only with the main theories put forward in the twentieth century.14

“In his commentary published in 1904 A. Halmel identified three letters:

Letter A: 1:1–2; 1:8–2:13; 7:5–8:24; 13:13

Letter B: 10:1–13:10

Letter C: 1:3–7; 2:14–7:4; 9:1–15; 13:11–12

“The third of these, said Halmel, incorporated several interpolations (3:12–18; 4:3–4, 6; 6:14–7:1).

“Both in his major commentary on 1 Corinthians (1910) and in his two-volume *Urchristentum* (1914–1917; ETr Earliest Christianity), J. Weiss allocated the material in 2 Corinthians to four different letters:

Letter A (referred to in 1 Cor. 5:9), which included 6:14–7:1

A letter of commendation (8:1–24) sent with Titus and the two brothers, written between letters B1 and B2

Letter C: 2:14–6:13; 7:2–4; 10:1–13:13

Letter D: 1:1–2:13; 7:5–16; 9:1–15



Material in 1 Corinthians is found in letters A, B1, and B2 (see Weiss, *Christianity* 1.323–57, especially 356–57). Weiss’s influence may be traced in the similar reconstructions of J. T. Dean (11–14, 40–94), R. Bultmann (17–18, 52, 179–80, 256; *Probleme* 14 n. 16 = *Exegetica* 307 n. 17), E. Dinkler (“*Korintherbriefe*” 18, 22–23), and P. Vielhauer (*Geschichte* 150–55), especially in their linking of 2:14–7:4 (omitting 6:14–7:1) with the final four chapters as constituting the whole or the larger part of the “interim/tearful letter.”

Undoubtedly the most influential partition hypothesis proposed in the twentieth century was that of G. Bornkamm (*Aufsätze* 162–94; “*History*”; Paul 74–77, 244–46; *Guide* 100–103). He isolates five letters in 2 Corinthians, in addition to two (A and B) in 1 Corinthians.

Letter C (letter of defense): 2:14–6:13; 7:2–4

Letter D (letter of tears): 10:1–13:10

Letter E (letter of reconciliation): 1:1–2:13; 7:5–16

“Letter F: 8:1–24, a letter of commendation for Titus and the two brothers, whose relationship to the rest of Paul’s correspondence with Corinth cannot be finally determined, although it could be an appendix to the letter of reconciliation.

“Letter G: 9:1–15, a letter concerning arrangements for the collection.

“A redactor added 6:14–7:1, a non-Pauline fragment, to letter C, and the exhortation, greeting, and benediction of 13:11–13 to letter E. Bornkamm’s reconstruction has been followed, sometimes with minor alterations (such as the inclusion of ch. 8 [thus Lohse] or chs. 8 and 9 [thus Fuller and Becker] in the letter of reconciliation), by D. Georgi (75–79; *Opponents* 9–18; “2 Corinthians” 184), R. H. Fuller (48–49), H. D. Wendland (7–11), W. Marxsen (77–82), E. Lohse (72–73), N. Perrin (104–5), H. Koester (1.53–54; 2.126–30), F. T. Fallon (6–7), H. D. Betz (142–43; “Corinthians” 1149–50; “*Problem*” 40–46), M. Carrez (16–18), J. A. Crafton (49–53), J. Becker (216–21), and M. M. Mitchell (75–76). Bornkamm’s proposal has proved persuasive to many partly because he paid special attention to the reconstruction of Paul’s dealings with the Corinthians and endeavored to trace the stages by which the original five letters were combined to form the canonical 2 Corinthians.

“Finally, there is the view of W. Schmithals (1984),¹⁵ who finds portions of 2 Corinthians in seven (*) of thirteen pieces written by Paul to the Corinthian church (*Briefe* 19–85):

A: 1 Cor. 11:2, 17–34

B: 1 Cor. 9:24–10:22; 6:12–20

*C: 1 Cor. 6:1–11; 2 Cor. 6:14–7:1

D: 1 Cor. 15:1–58; 16:13–24

E (letter of response): 1 Cor. 11:3–16; 7:1–8:13; 9:19–22; 10:23–11:1; 12:1–31a; 14:1b–40; 12:31b–13:13; 16:1–12

F: 1 Cor. 1:1–3:23; 4:14–21

G: 1 Cor. 5:1–13

*H: 1 Cor. 4:1–5; 9:1b–18; 2 Cor. 6:3–13; 7:2–4a

*J: 2 Cor. 4:2–14

*K: 1 Cor. 4:7–13; 2 Cor. 2:14–3:18; 4:16–6:2; Rom. 13:12b–14

*L: (letter of tears): 2 Cor. 10:1–13:13

*M: (collection letter): 2 Cor. 8:1–24a

*N: (joyful letter): 2 Cor. 1:1–2:13; 7:5–7, 4b, 8–16; 9:1–15; Rom. 5:1b–10.

“Whether or not these complex partition theories are valid will become apparent in the following discussion of the four passages that have become the focus of dispute: 2:14–7:4; 6:14–7:1; 8:1–

of this document into small pieces is done without any external manuscript transmission support and is based solely on internal analysis of thought flow of the contents of Second Corinthians. Thus the subjectivity factor behind each of these proposals is very high and usually tells the reader more about the background and orientation of the commentator than of the scripture text itself.³¹⁷ Most of these proposals come out of an era when commentators very readily took scissors and paste to ancient texts in hunting for perceived sources standing behind the existing text. Most contemporary 9:15; 10:1–13:13. Only two comments are needed at this point. First, it is no argument against these partition hypotheses that their proponents do not agree in detail; at most we might say their disagreement shows that the arguments for dissection on which they rely fall short of demonstration. The best hypothesis is not necessarily the simplest—in this case one which posits the fewest partitions or else the integrity of the book—but rather that hypothesis which best accommodates all the evidence. Second, with this said, it remains true, in the absence of any MS tradition witnessing to textual dislocation, that the more intricate a partition theory, the more pressing and demanding the task of re-creating the possible circumstances in which 2 Corinthians as we know it was constructed from disparate letters or epistolary fragments.^{16”}

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 8–10.]

³¹⁷“On chaps. 8 and 9 as two letter fragments, see Betz’s commentary. However, Stowers maintains that 9:1–5 is logically connected with 8:24 and remarks that ‘[it is] most implausible to think of chapters 8 and 9 as fragments of two letters.’²¹⁶ Lambrecht agrees with seven points in favor of the unity of these two chapters:²¹⁷

1. γάρ, ‘for,’ in 9:1 links chap. 9 with the preceding material.

2. περισσόν μοί ἐστιν τὸ γράφειν, ‘there is no need for me to go on writing’ (for the interpretation, see point 3), in 9:1 is to be classified rhetorically as a praeteritio, ‘preterition.’

3. 9:1 means ‘there is no need for me to go on writing,’ with the article τῆς, ‘the,’ before διακονίας, ‘service,’ as anaphoric, referring to the subject matter of chap. 8.

4. μὲν (not translated) of 9:1 connects with the δέ, ‘but,’ of v 3, meaning ‘for although it is superfluous to go on writing—yet I still want to explain the implication of sending the brothers beforehand.’

5. 9:2–3 (to do with ‘boasting’) harks back to 8:24 (‘boast’).

6. There is no qualification of the brothers in 9:3, 5 because there is an implicit allusion to 8:16–23.

7. Achaia is mentioned in 9:2 because of a reference to the Macedonians.

“Also contra Barnett²¹⁸ and with a new angle on the subject, see Debanné,²¹⁹ who seeks to show that 2 Cor 8:24–9:2 is a passage spanning the extremities of both chapters as a paraenetic enthymeme, with 8:21–22 serving as a ratio or motivating factor. Both linking phrases, περὶ μὲν γάρ, ‘now concerning,’ and οἶδα γάρ, ‘for I know,’ indicate logical inference.”

[Ralph P. Martin, “The Relationship of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9,” in *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 462.]



scholars have become quite suspicious of such endeavor, particularly when based solely on the internal thought flow of the ancient document. That ancient writers in Greek did not think the same was as modern western scholars is rather self evident.

With chapters eight and nine, the issue revolves around whether these chapters represent fragments of two separate letters not connected to the rest of Second Corinthians,³¹⁸ or whether the two chapters are an integral part of the original composition of Second Corinthians, especially the first seven chapters.³¹⁹ To me

³¹⁸“When we survey scholarly opinion about the integrity of chs. 8 and 9, again we are confronted by a bewildering array of views,⁵⁸ which may be conveniently summarized as follows.

“(1) Partition Theories

“It is held by some scholars that chs. 8 and 9 were originally separate letters or fragments of separate letters, divorced from the rest of the extant Corinthian correspondence, and that ch. 8 was written before ch. 9 (H. Windisch 242–43, 268–71, 286–89; G. Bornkamm, Paul 245–46; H. D. Wendland 8–9, 167, 218, 222–23; D. Georgi 75–79; “Second Corinthians” 184; H. Koester 53–54; H. D. Betz, *passim*, especially 142–43; M. Carrez 17–18, 189). They usually argue that ch. 8 was a letter addressed to the Corinthian church alone, with ch. 9 written to Christians of Achaia (cf. 9:2) other than those in Corinth.

“Sometimes other parts of 2 Corinthians are associated with either of these two chapters:

“an ‘intermediate letter’ containing 2:14–7:4 (except 6:14–7:1); chs. 10–13; and ch. 9, followed by Paul’s last letter to Corinth, containing 1:1–2:13; 7:5–16; and ch. 8 (Bultmann 18, 256; but cf. *Probleme* 14 n. 6)

“the ‘letter of tears’ containing chs. 10–13; 2:14–7:4 (except 6:14–7:1); ch. 9; and 13:11–13, followed by the ‘letter of reconciliation’ containing 1:1–2:13; 7:5–16; and ch. 8 (Dinkler, “Korintherbriefe” 18)

“an ‘apologetic letter’ containing 2:14–7:4 (except 6:14–7:1) and ch. 9, the ‘letter of tears’ containing chs. 10–13, and the ‘letter of reconciliation’ containing 1:1–2:13; 7:5–16; and ch. 8 (Schenke and Fischer 1.108–23).

“ch. 8 as one letter, and ch. 9 with 1:1–2:13 and 7:5–16 constituting the ‘letter of reconciliation’ (Weiss, *Christianity* 1.356–57; Schmithals, *Briefe* 77–8559 [ch. 8 earlier than ch. 9]; Vielhauer, *Geschichte* 153 [the two letters written at the same time]60).

“ch. 9 as one letter, and ch. 8 linked with chs. 1–7 (Semler, *praefatio* to his *Paraphrasis* II; Goguel, *Introduction* 2.85–86 [without 6:14–7:1]; Nickle 17 and n. 17, 22 and n. 36; Héring xiii–xiv, 65; Thrall 36–43) or with the ‘letter of reconciliation,’ that is, 1:1–2:13; 7:5–16 (Dean 13, 57–59; Bornkamm 186–87;61 Suhl 260–63; E. Lohse 72–7362).

“Other scholars regard chs. 8 and 9 as part of the same letter to Corinth along with 13:11–13 (Schmiedel 226–27), with 1:1–2:13 and 7:5–16, that is, the “letter of reconciliation” (Fuller 48–49), with chs. 1–7 (excluding 6:14–7:1) and 13:11–13 (Clemen 1.75–85), or with chs. 1–7, with or without chs. 10–13 (most commentators).”

[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), 25–27.]

³¹⁹“A careful examination of these two chapters reveals a net-

work of specific links between them. Μέν in 9:1 points forward to the adversative δέ in 9:3 (‘although ... still ...’) so that 9:1–3 (or 9:1–4) forms a single thought-unit. Γάρ in 9:1, on the other hand, points back to 8:24 and introduces the reason for Paul’s request there that the Corinthians show by their ready response to the three-man delegation that his boasting about their responsiveness has been justified: ‘for (γάρ) although (μέν) ... it is superfluous for me to be writing to you like this (since [γάρ] I know your eager willingness which I am boasting about ...), yet (δέ) I am sending (ἔπεμψα) the brothers precisely so that our expressed pride about you should not prove to be unwarranted in this particular regard’ (9:1–3a). That is, this explanatory γάρ links ἡμῶν [ἡ] καύχησις ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν (8:24) with both τὴν προθυμίαν ὑμῶν ἣν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καυχῶμαι (9:2) and τὸ καύχημα ἡμῶν τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν (9:3). If 9:1 were in fact the beginning of an independent letter, we would have expected περὶ δέ (‘now concerning’), which regularly introduces a new topic (as in 1 Cor. 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12). The article τῆς before διακονίας may well be anaphoric (‘this service,’ NIV), especially since τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἀγίους (9:1a) is resumptive of the identical expression in 8:4b.63 Moreover, the present infinitive (τὸ) γράφειν suggests the meaning ‘continuing to write’ or ‘to be writing (like this).’ Then again, the unqualified reference to τοὺς ἀδελφούς (9:3, 5) presupposes some prior identification of these brothers, which is supplied by 8:6, 16–23. For other verbal links between the two chapters, see Carrez 190 (referring to the work of Rolland 76–77).

“The objections that have been brought against these two chapters originating together may all be satisfactorily answered. First, it is no evidence of the independence of the two chapters that 8:20 and 9:3–5 state differing purposes for the sending of the brothers (pace Windisch 271–72). The purposes are not mutually exclusive but complementary. In 8:18–20 Paul declares that the appointment by the churches of the renowned brother as Titus’s traveling companion and his dispatch of him with Titus were aimed at guarding against any criticism of his own handling of this charitable fund. In 9:3–5 Paul affirms that “the brothers” (presumably referring to Titus and the two anonymous envoys of the churches) were being sent to the Corinthians to show that his boasting about their willingness to contribute was fully justified (9:3), to avoid the personal embarrassment of finding them unprepared (9:4), and to ensure that arrangements for the gift were completed before his own arrival (9:5).

“Second, it has been argued that because ‘Achaia’ is found in ch. 9 but not in ch. 8 and because 1:1 distinguishes between believers in Corinth and ‘all God’s people who are in the whole of Achaia,’ ch. 9 is a circular letter addressed to churches in the province of Achaia other than at Corinth while the addressees in ch. 8 are the Corinthian Christians (Windisch 288; Georgi 77–78; similarly Betz 91–93, 139–40; Carrez 17–18, 189). But there is no need to exclude Corinth from the reference to Achaia. After all, Corinth was the capital of this province, and unlike 1:1, where the use of both ‘Corinth’ and ‘Achaia’ suggests that ‘Achaia’ excludes Corinth, 9:2 mentions only Achaia and ch. 8 mentions neither. Our options seem to be that in 9:2 ‘Achaia’ refers either to all the Christians scattered throughout the province of Achaia, including the numerically preponderant Corinthians, that is, both groups addressed in 1:1,64 or, more probably, to the Corinthians alone.⁶⁵

“Third, for some commentators (e.g., Bultmann 256) the content of Paul’s appeals is consistent only if the two letters are independent. In 8:1–5 Paul appeals to Macedonian generosity as a model for the Corinthians to follow, but in 9:2 Achaia forms the



the latter seems quite obvious.

Clearly the unit of 9:1-5 continues the discussion in 8:16-24 by signaling the second strategy in implementing the spiritual principles from Prov. 3:4 alluded to in 8:21. The first way of maintaining integrity regarding the collecting of funds at Corinth was for the three representatives of both Paul and the other participating churches to come ahead in advance to help the Corinthians finish the task (8:16-24). The second strategy was for the collecting of the offering to be completed by the time Paul and those traveling with him from Macedonia arrived in Corinth, the capital of Achaia

pattern for the Macedonians to follow. But this alleged inconsistency or circularity of argument is more apparent than real. Paul appeals to the Corinthians' preparedness of intention and their eagerness in initiating the collection (8:6, 10-11) as a good example in his effort to have the Macedonians advance their own contribution (9:2). Thus it was the Corinthians' ζήλος (9:2), not their ἐπιτελέσαι (8:11), which stirred up the majority of the Macedonians. On the other side, because, by the time of writing, the Macedonians had almost brought to a successful completion what they had enthusiastically begun under the stimulus of the Corinthian example, their exemplary action was a natural ground for Paul's appeal to the Corinthians to complete their offering (8:6, 11) in order that his initial boasting about their readiness to contribute might not prove unfounded when any Macedonians arrived (9:2-4).

"Fourth, Dean believes that ch. 9 breathes a different atmosphere than ch. 8. Whereas in ch. 8 Paul 'trusts to the impulse of the joy of reconciliation to stimulate them [the Corinthians]' (93) and appeals to lofty motives, in ch. 9 a certain anxiety and urgency is in evidence and Paul appeals to self-interest (93-94). But this contrast in tone is overdrawn. Urgency is evident in 8:6-7, 10-11, 24, and in 9:8-14 Paul confidently expects a positive and cheerful response. Appeal to exalted motives may be seen in 9:11b-13, 15 and an appeal to 'self-interest' in 8:14-15.

"(3) The Two Chapters Belong with Chapters 1-7

"Few will doubt that the transition from chs. 1-7 to ch. 8 is to a large extent a move from apologetic to exhortation. The change of tone — from relief and almost excessive exuberance regarding the recent past to somewhat embarrassed admonition concerning the immediate future — may be readily accounted for by the change of subject and purpose. After seeking to explain his pastoral conduct and defend his apostolic ministry (chs. 1-7), Paul takes up the challenge of reviving the flagging collection at Corinth (chs. 8-9). His reconciliation with the Corinthians affords the secure base from which to launch his appeal. It is psychologically probable that he would encourage the Corinthians to follow through on their initial enthusiasm for the project only when he was assured that he had regained their confidence on a personal level (cf. 7:4, 16).

"This leads us to conclude that once it is agreed that chs. 8 and 9 belong together, there is no difficulty in viewing them as a natural addition to chs. 1-7, given the apostle's desire to have the Corinthians revive and complete their relief aid for Jerusalem. Few scholars who hold to the integrity of 8-9 divorce these chapters from 1-766 (or parts of 1-7).⁶⁷"

[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), 27-29.]

(9:1-15).³²⁰ This way the apostle would not be directly involved in the gathering of the money for the offering. Thus 9:1-5 serves to continue Paul's transparency with the Corinthians in explaining openly what he was doing in the sending of these three men to Corinth ahead of him, and why he was doing it this way.

A level of openness about fund raising strategy is expressed here that should be exemplary for churches and religious organizations in the modern world to follow. When asking people to contribute money, absolutely everything about why, how, and what for should be kept completely clear to the contributors. Nothing should be withheld.

As the [above diagram](#) illustrates, the internal thought flow moves from two justifying (ὅτι) statements (#s 183-184; vv. 1-2) affirming the Corinthians, to a statement of Paul's plan to send the delegation on ahead (# 185; vv. 3-4), and then to the implication (οὕτως) of why he is doing it this way (# 186; v. 5). Statement #186 somewhat matches statement # 182 in 8:24 with both being introduced via the conjunction οὕτως. Both focus upon the Corinthians not embarrassing themselves by failing to get the offering ready in time. The three Greek sentences contain a lot of insight into what the apostle was doing. The ὅτι conjunction at the beginning in v. 1 ties vv. 1-5 especially back to the discussion in 8:16-24 especially and depends upon some things

³²⁰*In 8:21 Paul applies the general principle of Prov. 3:4 to his own conduct in organizing the collection: 'We are giving forethought to what is honorable, not only in the Lord's eyes but also in human eyes.' He planned to implement this principle in two ways. He was sending a three-man delegation to Corinth to oversee the finalization of the collection there and to guarantee the integrity of the process (8:16-24); and he was dispatching this delegation in advance of his own visit to Corinth (9:5), so that when he finally arrived contributions to the relief fund would not need to be made—the collection would be 'ready' (9:3) — and so that he himself could avoid all personal contact with the money involved. Again, in 8:24, in the course of encouraging the Corinthians to show love to the three delegates, Paul had referred to his boasting to these men about the Corinthians, presumably about their eager willingness and settled intent to contribute to the fund (cf. 8:10-11; 9:2). Now he expresses his nagging unease that if other Macedonians came to Corinth with him (perhaps bearing the completed Macedonian collection), and the Corinthian collection was discovered on their arrival to be still incomplete, Paul and the Corinthians would feel humiliated and ashamed because of his inappropriate boasting and improper confidence (9:2-4).¹ So, then, the emphasis in 9:1-5 is on a twofold need. First, the Corinthian need for "readiness" of completion before Paul's arrival, that is, the completion of their contribution to the relief fund with a willingly given and generous gift. Second, the need shared by Paul and the Corinthians to avoid the shame of having his boast about their 'readiness' of intent proved empty."² [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 615-616.]



said in 8:1-15.

One should note that in 9:1-5 the apostle switches from the dominating first person plural “we” narrative perspective found in 8:16-24 to the first person singular “I” in 9:1-5. Here he takes more personal responsibility for what is said as opposed to the decisions etc. in 8:16-24 reflecting both his and his associates view point. This shift is consistent with the idiomatic manner in which this scripture unit of 9:1-5 is introduced. The Corinthians need to clearly understand Paul’s own motives and reasoning for sending this group of men to them.

The discussion of the relief offering was introduced in 8:1 by Γνωρίζομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δεδομένην ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας, **And we are making known to you, brothers, the grace of God given among the churches of Macedonia....** In 8:7-24, the focus shifted to the Corinthians, and in 9:1-5 this focus continues. The discussion will finish along more theoretical lines with basic spiritual principles being discussed in 9:6-15 in relation to the Corinthians.

So the opening statement in 9:1, Περὶ μὲν γὰρ τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους περισσὸν μοί ἐστιν τὸ γράφειν ὑμῖν, **For indeed concerning the ministry to the saints it is extraneous for me to continue writing to you,** is not so much a new topic signal as it is the writer’s reassuring of his readers that what he is saying is not new to them.³²¹ Why then does Paul continue the discussion?³²² Primarily to be totally honest and above board with them about the sending of the three men on ahead of his arrival in Corinth. He went to extraordinary means to guarantee that no dishonesty about the offering would be possible. Given the wide spread dishonesty of traveling philosophers to use fund raising as a con job, the apostle was motivated to make sure that this project was totally distanced from such deception and misunderstanding. By introducing the discussion in this manner, he reassures his readers that he does not mistrust

³²¹“While the phrase *περὶ δέ* regularly introduces a new topic,⁴ there is no evidence in extant Greek literature that the phrase *περὶ μὲν γὰρ* ever has an introductory function.⁵ On the contrary, it always expresses a close relationship to what precedes.” [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), 617.]

³²²“When Paul comments ‘It is superfluous¹¹ for me to write any further to you about this act of service that is intended for (εἰς) God’s people,’ yet proceeds to speak further (in 9:2–15) about this charitable project, he is employing the rhetorical device known as *paraleipsis*.¹² In this ‘figure of thought’ (*σχῆμα διανοίας*) a speaker or writer professes to pass over a certain matter only to mention or expound it. Heb. 11:32–38 is the most celebrated NT example.” [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), 618.]

them and their willingness to keep their promises.

Note the repetition of the previous label for the relief offering: τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους, **of the ministry for the saints**. It exactly reproduces τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους in 8:4c, with τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους being taken from 1 Cor. 16:1b. The contextual sense of the present tense infinitive τὸ γράφειν ὑμῖν is “to go on writing to you,” denoting that the continued discussion is not going to add new information so much as to serve to remind the Corinthians of some things they should already recognize. The predicate adjective *περισσὸν* defines something that goes beyond being necessary or needed.³²³

The next assertion (#184 in v. 2) justifies (γὰρ) the initial one (#183) in verse one: οἶδα γὰρ τὴν προθυμίαν ὑμῶν ἦν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καυχῶμαι Μακεδόσιν..., **for I know your eagerness which I boasted about you to the Macedonians....** Once again this essentially repeats 8:11, *νυνὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ ποιῆσαι ἐπιτελέσατε, ὅπως καθάπερ ἡ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν, οὕτως καὶ τὸ ἐπιτελέσαι ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν, now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means.* Thus Paul reassures them that he is aware of their initial enthusiasm for this project. And then mentions that he had talked to the Macedonians about how eager the Corinthians were to participate.

In the amplifying ὅτι clause he includes the churches of the entire province of Achaia in this eagerness: ὅτι Ἀχαῖα παρεσκεύασται ἀπὸ πέρυσι, καὶ τὸ ὑμῶν ζῆλος ἠρέθισεν τοὺς πλείονας. **because Achaia has been ready since last year; and your zeal has stirred up most of them.** He told the Macedonians that Corinth and the other churches in the province had committed themselves (*παρεσκεύασται*) to this project over a year before (ἀπὸ πέρυσι). This (τὸ ὑμῶν ζῆλος) had inspired (ἠρέθισεν) most of the Macedonians (τοὺς πλείονας) to want to get involved. Paul wisely encouraged the Corinthians by reminding them, along with their fellow believers across the province of Achaia, of how God had used their initial enthusiasm to encourage others to participate.

Now they needed to come through in completing this project and do it in advance of Paul’s arrival at Corinth, as the second Greek sentence in vv. 3-4 affirm: 3 ἔπεμψα δὲ τοὺς ἀδελφούς, ἵνα μὴ τὸ καύχημα ἡμῶν τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κενωθῆ ἔν τῳ μέρει τούτῳ, ἵνα καθὼς ἔλεγον παρεσκευασμένοι ἦτε, 4 μὴ πως ἐὰν ἔλθωσιν σὺν

³²³“*superfluous, unnecessary* (Trag. et al.; cp. 2 Macc 12:44; TestJob 47:1) *περισσὸν μοί ἐστιν τὸ γράφειν ὑμῖν* it is unnecessary for me to write to you **2 Cor 9:1** (Mitt-Wilck. I/2, 238 II, 4 *περισσὸν ἡγοῦμαι διεξοδότερον ὑμῖν γράφειν*). *περισσὸν ἡγοῦμαι* I consider it superfluous (Appian, Prooem. 13 §50; Jos., Ant. 3, 215; cp. Philo, Agr. 59) Dg 2:10. W. ἄχρηστος 4:2.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 805.]



έμοι Μακεδόνες καὶ εὐρωσιν ὑμᾶς ἀπαρασκευάστους καταισχυνθῶμεν ἡμεῖς, ἵνα μὴ λέγω ὑμεῖς, ἐν τῇ ὑποστάσει ταύτῃ, 3 But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you may not prove to have been empty in this case, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be; 4 otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—in this undertaking.

Only two of the three men -- Titus and the second unnamed brother -- were operating directly under Paul's encouragement, while the first unnamed brother was authorized by the churches for monitoring the collection of the offering. But the first person singular epistolary aorist verb ἔπεμψα signals that Paul's leadership is a major motivating factor in these men (τοὺς ἀδελφούς) traveling to Corinth with their defined mission of helping the church finish raising the funds for the relief offering.

The two objectives stated for the sending of these men in v. 3b-c is ἵνα μὴ τὸ καύχημα ἡμῶν τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κενωθῆ ἐν τῷ μέρει τούτῳ, ἵνα καθὼς ἔλεγον παρεσκευασμένοι ἦτε, in order that our boasting about you may not prove to have been empty in this case, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be. In large part, they repeat and expand what was stated in 8:6-7 in the purpose infinitive phrase: εἰς τὸ παρακαλέσαι ἡμᾶς Τίτον, ἵνα καθὼς προενήρξατο οὕτως καὶ ἐπιτελέση εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ τὴν χάριν ταύτην. 7 Ἄλλ' ὡσπερ ἐν παντὶ περισσεύετε, πίστει καὶ λόγῳ καὶ γνώσει καὶ πάσῃ σπουδῇ καὶ τῇ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν ἀγάπῃ, ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε, 6 so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you. 7 Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking. It especially amplifies the second of the two 'demonstrations' in 8:24, τὴν ἔνδειξιν τῆς ἀγάπης ὑμῶν καὶ ἡμῶν καυχήσεως ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, the evidence of your love and of our boasting about you. The very personal nature of the expression in 9:3 underscores the openness and transparency of the apostle about the collection of this money. He had confidence in the Corinthians to keep their promise, and desires that this be done in a manner to does not bring any embarrassment to them, or to him in the confidence expressed about them.

The somewhat unusual phrase μὴ πως ἐάν, lest perhaps if..., sets up the remote possibility of the opposite scenario stated in the two previous ἵνα clauses in v. 3, especially the second one. Paul doesn't really envision it happening, but if it were to then καταισχυνθῶμεν ἡμεῖς, we would be embarrassed. Here both him, and his associates are included in the 'we.' The humiliation of the Corinthians is referenced explicitly by ἵνα μὴ λέγω ὑμεῖς, lest I say you.³²⁴ What then is this reverse scenar-

³²⁴When the apostle speaks of being embarrassed,

io?

The third class conditional protasis ἐάν ἔλθωσιν σὺν ἐμοὶ Μακεδόνες καὶ εὐρωσιν ὑμᾶς ἀπαρασκευάστους, when the Macedonians might come with me and find you unprepared, spells out the particulars. The apostle envisions the possibility of other Macedonians beyond the two unnamed brothers in the advance delegation accompanying the apostle from Macedonia to Corinth. At least some of those who did actually make the trip are indicated by Luke in Acts 20:4.³²⁵ Should they arrive in Corinth and discover that the Corinthians had not finished collecting the offering, serious questions about their integrity would be raised. And this would be particularly embarrassing to Paul and his associates who had bragged on the enthusiasm of the Corinthians for the offering, not to say the least for the Corinthians themselves. The adjective ἀπαρασκευάστος, -ον, used only here inside the NT, simply means not ready or unprepared. Contextually this refers to the collection not be in complete form at the arrival of these from Macedonia.

The label of the collecting of the offering, ἐν τῇ ὑποστάσει ταύτῃ, poses some translation challenges.³²⁶

καταισχυνθῶμεν ἡμεῖς, he speaks out of the context of the ancient sociological tradition of honor and shame. Modern western societies have very little perception of the huge dynamic that operated across the first century Greco-Roman world in the many ethnic versions of it. In the modern world, only those living by traditional Asian culture standards of honor and shame begin to grasp the powerfully significant impact of being publicly humiliated in some way. One early helpful secondary resource for grasping this is Matthews, Victor H., and Don C. Benjamin, eds. *Semeia* 68 (1995), which is devoted entirely to the issue of honor and shame in the first century world. For a list of related terms used in the NT see Louw-Nida, Greek Lexicon, topics 25.189-25.202 for shame, disgrace, and humiliation. Then topics 87.4 through 87.18 for honor or respect. Much of this was linked to a sense of status or rank in an exceedingly class conscious society.

³²⁵Acts 20:4. συνείπετο δὲ αὐτῷ Σώπατρος Πύρρου Βεροιαῖος, Θεσσαλονικέων δὲ Ἀρίσταρχος καὶ Σεκούνδος, καὶ Γάιος Δερβαῖος καὶ Τιμόθεος, Ἀσιανοὶ δὲ Τύχικος καὶ Τρόφιμος.

He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Beroea, by Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, by Gaius from Derbe, and by Timothy, as well as by Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia

³²⁶The word ὑπόστασις is a verbal subst. of ὑπίστημι. Yet it has hardly any senses corresponding to the act. ὑπίστημι. It is almost always to be understood in the light of the intr. and mid. ὑφίσταμαι.¹ But it reflects only one part of the varied meaning of ὑφίσταμαι.² Whereas the verb in the mid. and pass. can mean also 'to conjecture,' 'to agree,' 'to undertake,' 'to offer' etc., the noun corresponds only to the following senses, which can involve independent derivations of the noun from the verb: 1. 'to stand under (as a support),' 2. 'to place oneself under (concealment),' 3. 'to stand off from,' 'to deposit oneself as sediment on the ground,' and hence 'to be,' 'to exist,' 4. 'to promise.' From these meanings we get the following meanings of the noun: 1. 'support,' 2. 'ambush,' 3. 'deposit,' 'sediment,' trans. everything that settles, hence



Consequently quite a wide variety of translation words will be found in modern western languages. But the idea contextually for ὑπόστασις here seems to be an **undertaking** or **project** as one of the labels for the **collecting of the relief offering**.³²⁷ Thus the apostle puts the philosophical sense ‘existence,’ ‘reality,’ Lat. *substantia*,³ 4. ‘lease,’ a technical meaning found already in early Hell. pap. and arising independently from the verb in the 4th cent. B.C. → 579, 33 ff.

“Note should be taken of a special difficulty in assessing the use of ὑπόστασις. It is inadvisable and even misleading to start out from a gen. or indeed a biblical use,⁴ for the earliest examples are not in the least gen., but belong almost exclusively to the specialised vocabulary of science and medicine. In this sphere the word became a common tt. from Hippocr. and Aristot. One should also note the technical use in the pap. from the 3rd cent. B.C. → 579, 33 ff. In contrast, we have almost no examples of the non-technical use of the noun in everyday speech of the class. period, though the verb is common enough in class. lit.⁵ The only exceptions are Soph. Fr., 719 (Pearson) and Menand. Fr., 397 (Körte).⁶ While ὑπόστασις has in the first of these a sense not found elsewhere, that of ‘ambush,’⁷ ⁸ in the second the meaning seems to correspond to scientific usage.⁹ We are thus dealing with a word which was developed very early as a specialised scientific term.¹⁰ The philosophical use which grew up later is dependent on this early specialisation. Even later the range of meaning hardly goes beyond the scientific and related philosophical sense. But this means that for ὑπόστασις in its later gen. usage we must avoid deriving all kinds of senses etymologically from the different meanings of the verb ὑφίστημι/ὑφίσταμαι.”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:572–573.]

³²⁷“The two instances in Paul are both in 2 C. 115 2 C. 9:4 comes in the second of the two chapters on the collection.¹¹⁶ Paul has commended the Christians of Achaia for their zeal in the matter compared to the Macedonians, 2 C. 9:2. He has also sent on helpers to prepare the way so that his boasting (→ III, 650, 23 ff.) will not prove empty in this respect (v. 3) and he and the Macedonians who accompany him will not find the Achaians unready: ἐὰν ... εὐρωσιν ὑμᾶς ἀπαρασκευάστους κατασχυνθῶμεν ἡμεῖς, ἵνα μὴ λέγωμεν ὑμεῖς, ἐν τῇ ὑποστάσει ταύτη, 117 2 C. 9:4. It is natural to think that the expression takes up again the theme of boasting.¹¹⁸ If so, the point is that Paul will be disgraced because of his previous boasting, that he will be unmasked as a liar.¹¹⁹ But it is difficult to support this meaning of ὑπόστασις linguistically,¹²⁰ and it should also be noted that Paul is concerned about much more than whether his boasting had been right or wrong. He has expressed this concern already in v. 3. The following v. is not just a repetition of the same thought. Paul returns here to his real reason for sending on the brethren in advance. He wants to wind up the collection quickly and successfully. If he finds the Achaians unprepared, he will be confounded in his whole ‘plan,’ and not only he but the Achaians as well, since they have made this ‘project’ of the collection their own. Here, then, ὑπόστασις means ‘plan,’ ‘project,’ as often in general Greek usage (→ 588, 7 ff.) and the LXX (→ 582, 1 ff.).¹²¹ ὑπόστασις has the same sense in the second instance in Paul. In 2 C. 11:17 Paul introduces his own list of boasts with the words ὁ λαλῶ, οὐ κατὰ κύριον λαλῶ, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐν ἀφροσύνη, ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ὑποστάσει τῆς καυχίσεως. In a foolish comparison of himself with the Corinthian apostles he is not speaking of that which is his true glory but accepting a ‘purpose’ which is forced on him by his opponents. Hence he does not say ‘in what is my true

these scenarios of what he hopes will happen and what would happen otherwise.³²⁸

The inferential conjunction οὖν introducing **statement # 186** in v. 5 describes what Paul did in light of the scenarios put forth in vv. 3-4, ἀναγκαῖον οὖν ἠγησάμην παρακαλέσαι τοὺς ἀδελφούς, ἵνα προέλθωσιν εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ προκαταρτίσωσιν τὴν προεπηγγελμένην εὐλογίαν ὑμῶν, ταύτην ἐτοίμην εἶναι οὕτως ὡς εὐλογίαν καὶ μὴ ὡς πλεονεξίαν, **So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you, and arrange in advance for this bountiful gift that you have promised, so that it may be ready as a voluntary gift and not as an extortion.**

What Paul says here summarizes earlier statements in 8:6-7 and 8:11-12. Here it is made clear as to why this delegation of three brothers is being sent on ahead of Paul’s arrival at Corinth. Their task is ἵνα προέλθωσιν εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ προκαταρτίσωσιν τὴν προεπηγγελμένην εὐλογίαν ὑμῶν, **so that they may come ahead to you and make advance arrangements for your praiseworthy gift promised in advance.** The apostle makes it clear again, as in 8:12-15, that what the Corinthians contribute must be done

glory’ but ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ὑποστάσει τῆς καυχίσεως, ‘in this purpose of boasting (which is forced upon me).’¹²² It is plain that in this context ὑπόστασις is almost the very opposite of the reality.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:584–585.]

³²⁸“For being so confident: it is doubtful whether the meaning ‘confidence’ can be established for the Greek word translated as confident in RSV. TEV and most other English versions, however, follow the same meaning as RSV. The Greek word is better translated as ‘plan,’ ‘project,’ or ‘undertaking.’ The end of this verse should therefore be translated as ‘we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—in this undertaking’ (NRSV and AB).

“At the end of this verse, some manuscripts add the words ‘of this boasting’ (so REB footnote). The UBS Greek New Testament does not include these words, and the editors give a ‘B’ evaluation to the printed text, suggesting that the printed text is almost certainly correct. KJV is based on the manuscripts that have this addition: ‘should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.’ With the additional words the sense is clearly that Paul would be humiliated for having confidently boasted about the Corinthians (see 7:14 and 9:3). Some translations such as RSV and TEV have followed manuscripts that do not have these additional words; but the translators understand the sense to be the same, even without the addition.

“As already stated, however, the Greek word translated confident in RSV is more accurately translated ‘undertaking.’ The humiliation that Paul fears is not that he may have boasted in vain. Rather he will be humiliated if the undertaking of the fund—raising for the Christians in Jerusalem should fail. The following translation may serve as a model for this verse:

“However, if some people from Macedonia should come with me to Corinth and find out that you are not ready, how ashamed we [exclusive] would be if this project of collecting money should fail. And I will not even talk about your shame in this matter.”

[Roger L. Omanson and John Ellington, *A Handbook on Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 164–165.]



out of their eager desire to participate in the relief offering: ταύτην ἐτοιμὴν εἶναι οὕτως ὡς εὐλογίαν καὶ μὴ ὡς πλεονεξίαν, thus this will be prepared as praise worthy and not as extortion.

The delegation from Macedonia will help them get it ready, but will not force them to do it. The challenge for Paul was to motivate the Corinthians to finish the collection, but to do so out of enthusiasm for the project and not out of being shamed into giving. Key to the success of this mission is for the Corinthians to clearly understand how the collection is being handled by those in charge and what Paul's role in all of this is. Once they understand and trust the process, it will be easier to get re-excited about participating in the collection of the money. The genius of Paul's strategy is simple: be completely honest and open about how everything is being done. Don't hide any aspect of the collecting of the money. There's a lot modern day churches can learn from Paul here.

10.2.3.2.4 Foundation spiritual principles of giving, 9:6-15

6 Τοῦτο δέ, ὁ σπείρων φειδομένως φειδομένως καὶ θερίσει, καὶ ὁ σπείρων ἐπ' εὐλογίαις ἐπ' εὐλογίαις καὶ θερίσει. 7 ἕκαστος καθὼς προήρηται τῇ καρδίᾳ, μὴ ἐκ λύπης ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης· ἰλαρὸν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός. 8 δυνατεῖ δὲ ὁ θεὸς πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεῦσαι εἰς ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἐν παντὶ πάντοτε πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν ἔχοντες περισσεύητε εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν, 9 καθὼς γέγραπται·

ἐσκόρπισεν, ἔδωκεν τοῖς πένησιν,

ἢ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

10 ὁ δὲ ἐπιχορηγῶν σπόρον τῷ σπείροντι καὶ ἄρτον εἰς βρῶσιν χορηγήσει καὶ πληθυνεῖ τὸν σπόρον ὑμῶν καὶ αὐξήσει τὰ γενήματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν. 11 ἐν παντὶ πλουτιζόμενοι εἰς πᾶσαν ἀπλότητα, ἥτις κατεργάζεται δι' ἡμῶν εὐχαριστίαν τῷ θεῷ. 12 ὅτι ἡ διακονία τῆς λειτουργίας ταύτης οὐ μόνον ἐστὶν προσαναπληροῦσα τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν ἁγίων, ἀλλὰ καὶ περισσεύουσα διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστιῶν τῷ θεῷ. 13 διὰ τῆς δοκιμῆς τῆς διακονίας ταύτης δοξάζοντες τὸν θεὸν ἐπὶ τῇ ὑποταγῇ τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἀπλότητι τῆς κοινωνίας εἰς αὐτοὺς καὶ εἰς πάντας, 14 καὶ αὐτῶν δεήσει ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐπιποθούντων ὑμᾶς διὰ τὴν υπερβάλλουσαν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφ' ὑμῖν. 15 Χάρις τῷ θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγήτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ.

6 The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. 9 As it is written,

“He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor;

his righteousness endures forever.”

10 He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; 12 for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. 13 Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, 14 while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. 15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

In further amplification Paul turns more directly to general spiritual principles in 9:6-15 in order to complete his discussion of the relief offering. Exposition of the spiritual blessings of generosity forms the heart of this section somewhat along the lines of 8:1-15. The narrational point of view in 9:6-15 continues pretty consistently the first person singular perspective begun in 9:1-5. But the more prose orientation diminishes the historical aspects to application of the spiritual principles to the Corinthians themselves. In the background stands clearly the rich Jewish heritage of the OT teachings on the generosity of God in blessing His people in their obedience to His directives. The axiomatic saying alluded to in v. 6, although not taken from any specific OT text, effectively sums up much of the OT teaching. Then also comes the citation from Psalm 112:10 (LXX 111:10) from the Septuagint in v. 9. The initial section in vv. 6-8 lead up to the OT quote in v. 9 and then vv. 10-15 largely function as Jewish scribal exposition and application of the OT citation to the Corinthians.

The core theological point of the passage clearly is made in statement #190 (vv. 8-9) about God's ability to make every aspect of His grace abound toward His people. Everything leads up to this point (vv. 6-7) and then flows out of it in application to the Corinthians (vv. 10-14). Christian generosity in giving thus grows out of who our God is and how He touches our lives. The sowing and reaping principle here is spiritual, not crassly material in nature. It reflects our relationship to God. To understand this text in materialistic terms is the grossest of heresies and is to miss totally the point being made by Paul. The apostle speaks of God's material blessings only in terms of meeting our basic physical needs, and any extra is completely for generous sharing with others in need. The accumulation of material wealth for its own sake is always seen in scripture as sinful and disobedience to God.

The introductory Τοῦτο δέ is elliptical and has the sense of And this is the point: The idea is that what fol-

9.6 δέ,
187 Τοῦτο (ἐστίν)
 ὁ σπείρων
 φειδομένως
 φειδομένως
 καὶ
 θερίσει,
 καὶ
 ὁ σπείρων
 ἐπ' εὐλογίαις
 ἐπ' εὐλογίαις
 καὶ
 θερίσει.

9.7 καθὼς προήρηται
 τῇ καρδίᾳ
188 ἕκαστος (δώση),
 μὴ ἐκ λύπης
 ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης·
 γὰρ
189 ἰλαρὸν δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός.

9.8 δὲ
190 δυνατεῖ ὁ θεὸς πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεῦσαι
 εἰς ὑμᾶς,
 | ἐν παντὶ
 | πάντοτε
 | πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν ἔχοντες
 ἵνα...περισεύητε
 εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν,
 καθὼς γέγραπται·
 ἐσκόρπισεν,
 ἔδωκεν τοῖς πένησιν,
 ἢ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει
 /-----|
 εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

9.9
 9.10 δὲ
 ὁ ἐπιχορηγῶν σπόρον τῷ σπείροντι
 καὶ
 ἄρτον εἰς βρῶσιν
191 χορηγήσει
 καὶ
192 πληθυνεῖ τὸν σπόρον ὑμῶν
 καὶ
193 αὐξήσει τὰ γενήματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν.

9.11 ἐν παντὶ
194 (ἔστε) πλουτιζόμενοι
 εἰς πᾶσαν ἀπλότητα,
 | ἥτις κατεργάζεται...εὐχαριστίαν τῷ θεῷ·
 | δι' ἡμῶν

9.12 ὅτι ἡ διακονία... οὐ μόνον ἐστὶν προσαναπληροῦσα τὰ ὑστερήματα
 | τῆς λειτουργίας ταύτης τῶν ἁγίων,
 | ἀλλὰ
 | καὶ
 ----- περισσεύουσα
 διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστιῶν
 τῷ θεῷ.

9.13 διὰ τῆς δοκιμῆς
τῆς διακονίας ταύτης
195 (ἔστε) δοξάζοντες τὸν θεὸν
ἐπὶ τῇ ὑποταγῇ τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν
εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ
καὶ
ἀπλότητι τῆς κοινωνίας
εἰς αὐτοὺς
καὶ
εἰς πάντας,
καὶ
9.14 αὐτῶν δεήσει
ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν
ἐπιποθούντων ὑμᾶς
διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ
ἐφ' ὑμῖν.

196 9.15 **Χάρις (ἔστω) τῷ θεῷ**
ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγήτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ.

lows is in large measure summing up what preceded.³²⁹ This happens but in a somewhat different manner than mere repetition in briefer form. The primary antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun Τοῦτο, this, is the axiom that follows:

ὁ σπείρων φειδομένως φειδομένως καὶ θερίσει,
καὶ ὁ σπείρων ἐπ' εὐλογίαις ἐπ' εὐλογίαις καὶ θερίσει
**the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly,
and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bounti-
fully**

This is an agricultural image of sowing and harvesting.³³⁰ It has some linguistic affinity to Gal. 6:7-8,

³²⁹“τοῦτο δέ not only looks forward (‘And remember this,’ Cassirer; ‘Now this I say,’ NASB) but also backward, with the ‘sparingly-generously’ contrast restating the εὐλογίαν-πλεονεξίαν antithesis of v. 5 in reverse order, and the repeated ἐπ' εὐλογίαις reflecting the repeated εὐλογίαν also in v. 5. So τοῦτο δέ is appropriately rendered ‘What I mean is this’:1 or ‘The point is this’ (RSV, NRSV). Given the use of the full expression τοῦτο δέ φημι in 1 Cor. 7:29; 15:50, it is safe to assume that here φημί or λέγω can be supplied,² that τοῦτο is both prospective and retrospective,³ and that δέ is transitional, not adversative” [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), 633.]

³³⁰“No precise parallel is known to us; indeed, the φειδομένως-ἐπ' εὐλογίαις antithesis is probably a Pauline creation. But the general thought, ‘As you have sown, so you shall reap’ (Cicero, *De Oratore* 2.65 [261]), was a commonplace in contemporary morality,¹⁰ as also in the Jewish wisdom tradition (e.g., Job 4:8; Sir. 7:3), with the closest parallel being in the Greek Apocalypse of Baruch (= 3 Baruch), possibly a product of Syrian Judaism in the second century A.D., ‘Those who have sown well, also reap well’ (3 Baruch 15:2, Greek). But what prompted Paul to cite this axiom? Gale suggests (163) that it may have been Prov. 22:8 (LXX), ὁ σπείρων φαῦλα θερίσει κακά (‘the one who sows evil will reap trouble’), since Paul immediately goes on (in v. 7) to allude to the next sentence in Proverbs, ἄνδρα ἰλαρὸν καὶ δότιν εὐλογεῖ ὁ θεός (Prov. 22:8a, LXX) (on which see below).” [Murray J. Harris, *The*

7 Μὴ πλανᾶσθε, θεὸς οὐ μυκτηρίζεται.
ὁ γὰρ ἐὰν σπείρῃ ἄνθρωπος,
τοῦτο καὶ θερίσει·
8 ὅτι ὁ σπείρων εἰς τὴν σάρκα ἑαυτοῦ
ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς θερίσει φθοράν,
ὁ δὲ σπείρων εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα
ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος θερίσει ζωὴν αἰώνιον.
**7 Do not be deceived; God is not mocked,
for you reap
whatever you sow.
8 If you sow to your own flesh,
you will reap corruption from the flesh;
but if you sow to the Spirit,
you will reap eternal life from the Spirit.**

But the Corinthians expression is shorter and less specific than the Galatians version. Plus the application is very different between the two. In Galatians it is a generalized axiom of paraenesis targeting moral behavior. But in Corinthians the point is generosity in making an offering for fellow believers.

The central point is that generosity of sowing produces a generous harvest, and vica versa. At first glance it appears that Paul has compromised his previous emphasis upon quality (8:11-12) for quantity and is now seeking a large sum of money from the Corinthians. But such a reading is wrong and confuses the idea of generosity. Generosity is measured by sacrifice not by amount of money given. The greater the personal sacrifice in giving the greater the blessing of God upon both the giver and the recipient of the gift. God can do much more with a \$5 sacrificial gift than with a \$5,000 non-sacrificial gift! Verse seven comes back to make this point of the intended meaning of the axiom in verse

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), 634.]



six.

The contrast between sowing / reaping is φειδομένως and ἐπ' εὐλογίας. The adverb of manner φειδομένως comes out of the verb φείδομαι, I am a miser. Its opposite is ἐπ' εὐλογίας with the sense of multiple blessings. The prepositional phrase with ἐπί carries the sense of expecting a harvest based upon multiple blessings from God. Verses 8ff. unpack the details of the anticipated blessings from God, while verse 7 amplifies ἐπ' εὐλογίας sowing, i.e., giving to the relief offering. Although the negative side of the axiom in v. 6 stands in the background, Paul only treats the positive side in his amplification in vv. 7-15.

The desired sowing, ὁ σπειρών ἐπ' εὐλογίας, as opposed to its opposite in v. 6a, is then defined as cheerful giving in v. 7, ἕκαστος καθὼς προήρηται τῇ καρδίᾳ, μὴ ἐκ λύπης ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης, each person, just as he has determined in his mind should give not out of sadness or out of compulsion.³³¹ The example of the Macedonians in 8:1-5 illustrates clearly what Paul has in mind here. Each person should reach deeply inside himself to determine God's leadership in making a gift to help others. The giving should not be determined by sadness at turning loose of his money, nor should it be determined by outside pressures. Paul had earlier made this point in 1 Cor. 16:2, κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου ἕκαστος ὑμῶν παρ' ἑαυτῶ τιθέτω θησαυρίζων ὃ τι ἐὰν εὐοδῶται, ἵνα μὴ ὅταν ἔλθω τότε λογεῖται γίνωνται. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come. Also it corresponds to the earlier relief offering taken up in Antioch for the saints in Jerusalem (Acts 11:29): τῶν δὲ μαθητῶν, καθὼς εὐπορεῖτό τις, ὥρισαν ἕκαστος αὐτῶν εἰς διακονίαν πέμψαι τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἀδελφοῖς. The disciples determined that according to their ability, each

³³¹“Being both asyndetic and elliptical, this statement is correspondingly forceful. With ἕκαστος we may supply the aorist optative δόη (Lietzmann 138), ‘May each give,’ or some imperative such as δότω (Winer 587) or διδότω (Robertson, Pictures 248), ‘Let each give,’ or ποιείτω (Robertson, Pictures 248), ‘Let each act,’ ‘Let each do this [sow generously, v. 6].’ The omission of a verb serves to emphasize motivation for action (cf. καρδία, λύπη, ἀνάγκη) as opposed to the act of giving itself.¹¹ As in 1 Cor. 16:2 and Acts 11:29, both passages that describe financial giving, the use of ἕκαστος highlights individual responsibility to contribute to an offering that would in fact be sent as a single corporate gift.¹² If the meaning of καθὼς (‘as,’ ‘just as’) is expanded, it will carry the sense ‘what/as much as (he has decided).’ As the perfect of προαιρέομαι, ‘choose (for oneself),’ ‘decide,’ προήρηται points to a settled decision to contribute a certain amount to the collection, whether on a regular basis (as in 1 Cor. 16:2) or in a single gift.¹³ The decision was to be private (τῇ καρδίᾳ, locative dative), not public, and the giving was to be purposeful, not impulsive.¹⁴” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 635.]

would send relief to the believers living in Judea.³³²

The justification for this assertion on how to give in v. 7 comes in the γὰρ clause: ἰλαρὸν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός, for God loves a cheerful giver. This statement adapts Prov. 22:8-9 (LXX) especially v. 9: 8 ἄνδρα ἰλαρὸν καὶ δότην εὐλογεῖ ὁ θεός, ματαιότητα δὲ ἔργων αὐτοῦ συντελέσει. 9 ὁ ἐλεῶν πτωχὸν αὐτὸς διατραφήσεται· τῶν γὰρ ἑαυτοῦ ἄρτων ἔδωκεν τῷ πτωχῷ. 8 Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity, and the rod of anger will fail. 9 Those who are generous are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor. The sense of voluntary generosity in giving pleases God who has acted toward His people in the same manner. Thus their actions reflect His character and presence in their lives. This point is made dramatically in vv. 8-15.

God is the source of blessings to givers, vv. 8-15. The mentioning of God loving cheerful gives in v. 7 prompts the expansion in the following verses on the role of God in relief offerings gathered by His people. The Greek sentence in vv. 8-9 asserts the fundamental truth of God's capacity to bless. This leads up to the citation of Psalm 112:9 (=LXX 111:9) with the standard formula introduction of scripture citation, καθὼς γέγραπται, just as it stands written. Then in typical Jewish scribal fashion, Paul ‘exegetes’ the citation with the dominate focus on its application to the Corinthians in vv. 10-14. Verse 15 climaxes with a doxological type praise expression already used in this discussion in these two chapters at 8:16. Titus’ very positive assessment of the Corinthians prompts the first outburst of praise. Here, emphasis upon what God can do through the Corinthians prompts this second outburst.

The core assertion in v. 8a lays the conceptual foundation for everything else: δυνατεῖ δὲ ὁ θεὸς πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεῦσαι εἰς ὑμᾶς, And God is able to make every grace abound for you. When the Corinthians begin contemplating giving to the relief offering, they must first look to God as the Macedonians did. Their giving must originate out of the dynamic grace of God working in their lives. Our giving must become an expression of divine grace at work in us. This is the only way to become a ἰλαρὸν δότην, cheerful giver.

The objective of “grace giving” is not, however, for us. Rather ἵνα ἐν παντὶ πάντοτε πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν ἔχοντες

³³²“The contemporary analogy for this Jerusalem collection was not the obligatory annual Temple tax that was levied on all adult male Jews,¹⁷ but the voluntary offerings that Jews, proselytes, and even Gentiles made in Jerusalem.¹⁸ More remotely, the closest OT analogy is the ‘freewill offerings’ of money and materials given by the Israelites for the construction of the tabernacle (Exod. 25:1-9; 35:4-9, 20-29; 36:2-7).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 635-636.]



9.8 δὲ
190 δυνατεῖ ὁ θεὸς πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεῦσαι
 εἰς ὑμᾶς,
 | ἐν παντὶ
 | πάντοτε
 | πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν ἔχοντες
 ἵνα...περισσεύητε
 εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν,
 9.9 καθὼς γέγραπται·
 ἐσκόρπισεν,
 ἔδωκεν τοῖς πένησιν,
 ἢ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει
 /-----|
 εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

περισσεύητε εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν, so that in every way at all times every sufficiency having you may abound for every good deed. This rather clumsy translation seeks to preserve the very emphatic repeated use of the adjective πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν.³³³ First modal: ἐν παντὶ, in every way. Then temporal: πάντοτε, at all times. Then predicate adjectival twice: πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν, every sufficiency, and πᾶν ἔργον, every deed. The point is the absolute ability of God to fill every good deed with His powerful presence and blessing. Here with deed alluding to money contributed to the offering, Paul's point is what God can do with every amount given through His enabling. The monetary gift thus becomes a 'grace gift' from God, not some point of human bragging about having done something noteworthy.

This kind of giving matches (καθὼς γέγραπται) what the psalmist acknowledged about God's actions in this world, especially to the poor: καθὼς γέγραπται· ἐσκόρπισεν, ἔδωκεν τοῖς πένησιν, ἢ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, just as it stands written, He distributes generously, He gives to the poor, His righteousness remains forever. God is not the god of the rich. Instead He treats all, and especially the poor, with generosity. This is due to His righteous character that is a permanent part of His being. From the context of this sentence in vv. 8-9, it appears that the citation of Psalm 112 intends God as the subject of the verbs in the first line and divine righteousness in the second line. Clearly God is the subject in the following sentence beginning in verse 10. But this may not actually be the case with the Psalm reference.

Quite interestingly in Paul's use of Psalm 112:9 (LXX 111:9), the actions of a righteous person reaching

³³³“Besides the verb *perisseuō*, the word *pas* (‘all, each’) appears four times and *pantote* (‘always’) once. Without any doubt, the p-alliteration is intended; cf. especially *en panti pantote pasan*. Paul's speaking of God here is solemn and impressive indeed.” [Daniel J. Harrington, *Second Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 8, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 147.]

out in generosity to the poor is the point in both the Hebrew text and also in the Greek LXX which Paul draws upon here.³³⁴ Verse six defines the subject of these verbs as δίκαιος, the righteous man. Thus in a somewhat awkward manner the citation focuses upon divine promises to the righteous person who is generous to those in need. Clearly in the mind of the psalmist, God does bless the righteous in their generosity to the poor. This is the point that Paul seems to pick up on from the citation.

In verses 10-14, the three Greek sentences amplify his core assertion in vv. 8-9 about God's ability to bless those helping the poor. He makes it clear that the divine principle expressed in the psalm applies fully to the Corinthian believers.

In fairly standardized but yet creative Jewish scribal fashion, the apostle amplifies the words of the psalmist in application to the Corinthians. In so doing he will make allusion to other OT scriptural concepts in order to make his point even stronger.

First in v. 10, Paul returns to the farming image of verse six with the axiom: ὁ δὲ ἐπιχορηγῶν σπόρον τῷ σπείροντι καὶ ἄρτον εἰς βρώσιν χορηγήσει καὶ πληθυνεῖ τὸν σπόρον ὑμῶν καὶ αὐξήσει τὰ γενήματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν. Now the One supplying seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and multiply your seed³³⁵ and will increase the harvest bounty of your righteousness.³³⁶ Here the apostle draws upon Isa. 55:10c for

³³⁴Psalm 112:9 (LXX 111:9). ἐσκόρπισεν, ἔδωκεν τοῖς πένησιν· ἢ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, τὸ κέρας αὐτοῦ ὑψωθήσεται ἐν δόξῃ.

He distributes generously, he gives to the poor; his righteousness remains forever, his horn is lifted up in honor.

³³⁵Paul switches the more general σπέρμα, seed, in the LXX, to σπόρον, planting seed.

³³⁶“What God bountifully supplies is σπόρον τῷ σπείροντι καὶ ἄρτον εἰς βρώσιν. Since this very phrase occurs in Isa. 55:10 (LXX) (with σπέρμα instead of σπόρον), there can be little doubt that Paul is quoting this passage (see NA27); no introductory formula occurs since the citation is fragmentary. Yahweh's declaration in Isa.



ὁ ἐπιχορηγῶν σπόρον τῷ σπείροντι
καὶ
ἄρτον εἰς βρῶσιν

191 χορηγήσει
καὶ
192 πληθυνεῖ τὸν σπόρον ὑμῶν
καὶ
193 αὐξήσει τὰ γενήματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν.

background imagery.³³⁷ God's generosity is affirmed in numerous ways in Second Corinthians: 1:4; 7:6 (ὁ παρακαλῶν); 1:9 (ὁ ἐγείρων); 1:21 (ὁ βεβαιῶν ... καὶ χρίσας); 1:22 (ὁ σφραγισάμενος ... καὶ δούς); 2:14 (ὁ θριαμβεύων); 5:5 (ὁ κατεργασάμενος ... ὁ δούς); 8:16 (ὁ δούς).³³⁸ The point to the Corinthians is that the generous gift of the Corinthians for the poor in Jerusalem God will turn into 'planting seed' which will produce an abundant harvest of blessing both for them and for the Jerusalem saints. Whatever the amount they give, in God's hands it becomes an bountiful harvest of goodness for the recipients.

This same point is made in the second sentence in vv. 11-12 in more direct language: 11 ἐν παντὶ πλουτιζόμενοι εἰς πᾶσαν ἀπλότητα, ἥτις κατεργάζεται δι' ἡμῶν εὐχαριστίαν τῷ θεῷ. 12 ὅτι ἡ διακονία τῆς λειτουργίας ταύτης οὐ μόνον ἐστὶν προσαναπληροῦσα τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν ἀγίων, ἀλλὰ καὶ περισσεύουσα διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστιῶν τῷ θεῷ. 11 You

55:10–11 is that his word, his decree (cf. Isa. 45:23; 55:12–13), is as invariably effective as the rain and snow when they slowly and silently water and transform the earth. After precipitation falls, the earth buds and flourishes and yields 'seed for the sower and bread for eating.' What this text says the earth does, Paul affirms God himself does. εἰς βρῶσιν is parallel to τῷ σπείροντι, and βρῶσις refers to 'the act of eating,' not to 'food' (βρῶμα, as NAB2). This suggests that τῷ σπείροντι (literally, 'for the sower') may be a case of 'concrete for abstract,' meaning 'for sowing.'³⁵⁰ There is no reason to construe ἄρτον εἰς βρῶσιν with χορηγήσει, given the conjunction of these two words (σπόρον, βρῶσιν) in Isaiah as the joint objects of a single verb (δῶ [LXX], 'yields'). [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), 642.]

³³⁷Isa. 55:10-11 (LXX). 10 ὡς γὰρ ἐὰν καταβῆ ὑετὸς ἡ χιῶν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ οὐ μὴ ἀποστραφῆ, ἕως ἂν μεθύσῃ τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐκτέκῃ καὶ ἐκβλαστήσῃ καὶ δῶ σπέρμα τῷ σπείροντι καὶ ἄρτον εἰς βρῶσιν,† 11 οὕτως ἔσται τὸ ῥῆμά μου, ὃ ἐὰν ἐξέλθῃ ἐκ τοῦ στόματός μου, οὐ μὴ ἀποστραφῆ, ἕως ἂν συντελεσθῆ ὅσα ἠθέλησα καὶ εὐοδώσω τὰς ὁδοὺς σου καὶ τὰ ἐντάλματά μου.†

10 For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

³³⁸Murray 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), 642.

will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; 12 for the rendering of this

ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.

Here Paul reaffirms the ultimate purpose of the offering is to bring glory to God (cf. 8:29), and the Corinthians have the opportunity to do just that through their generosity. Although the elliptical syntax makes the grammar more difficult to grasp, the central idea is pretty clear.³³⁹ The main clause (#194) asserts simply that the lives of the Corinthians is being 'enriched,' that is, made immensely more profound spiritually (πλουτιζόμενοι)³⁴⁰ because of their very generous par-

³³⁹44The nominative participle πλουτιζόμενοι has been explained in three ways.

"1. As being in apposition to ἔχοντες (v. 8), with vv. 9 and 10 forming a parenthesis (Bernard 93; WH; KJV). But this is a long grammatical parenthesis and vv. 9–10 naturally develop v. 8 (see on vv. 9–10).

"2. As anacoluthic (Meyer 608), with the nominative derived from the preceding genitive ὑμῶν with which it ought grammatically to agree (Plummer 264). In the exigencies of dictation 'Paul has forgotten how the sentence is going' (Barrett 239).

"3. As standing for a finite verb (Zerwick, *Analysis* 407; Moule 179; Allo 235), that is, as being a participle used absolutely (Lietzmann 138; Robertson, *Pictures* 249). Within this category one must decide on the person and mood of the finite verb or independent participle. Betz translates 'we are wealthy,' seeing a reference to God's abundant care for humankind in general (115). But if v. 11 sums up v. 8 and in a more general sense vv. 6–10 (so Furnish 450), it is improbable that πλουτιζόμενοι has a wider referent than the Corinthians (thus second person plural, 'you'). As for mood, there are three possibilities:

"(a) imperative (Moulton 181–82, but see 181 n. 3; BDF §468 (2), apparently; Turner, *Insights* 166; Style 89 [supplying ἔστω]; Zerwick and Grosvenor 553);

"(b) optative: 'May you be abundantly enriched' (Weymouth, who, however, takes the preceding three verbs as futures, not optatives; see Textual Note e.);

"(c) indicative, either the present ("you are enriched")⁵⁹ or the future ("you will be enriched").⁶⁰

"To take πλουτιζόμενοι as standing for a future indicative seems preferable, given the three preceding futures. As in 6:10 the verb πλουτιζω is figurative, but whereas in 6:10 it is used in the active voice ('cause to become rich'), here it is passive ('be made rich,' 'be enriched')."

[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), 644–645.]

³⁴⁰An additional implication of πλουτιζόμενοι in the present



9.11	ἐν παντὶ	
194	(ἔστε) πλουτιζόμενοι	
	εἰς πᾶσαν ἀπλότητα,	
		ἥτις κατεργάζεται...εὐχαριστίαν τῷ θεῷ·
		δι' ἡμῶν
9.12	ὅτι ἡ διακονία... οὐ μόνον ἐστὶν προσαναπληροῦσα τὰ ὑστερήματα	
		τῆς λειτουργίας ταύτης τῶν ἁγίων,
		ἀλλὰ
		καὶ
	- - - - -	----- περισσεύουσα
		διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστιῶν
		τῷ θεῷ.

participation in this offering (εἰς πᾶσαν ἀπλότητα). This is an inclusive blessing from God (ἐν παντὶ). This is structured in the Greek in the present tense which here assumes the participation of the Corinthians by completing the gathering of the offering with the help of Titus and the two other brothers coming to Corinth (9:5).

The generosity, ἀπλότης, of the Macedonians sets the example (8:2). When the Corinthians match the same level of ἀπλότης as the Macedonians, praise to God will be produced: ἥτις κατεργάζεται δι' ἡμῶν εὐχαριστίαν τῷ θεῷ.³⁴¹ The interesting δι' ἡμῶν, *through us*, is added to the relative clause statement. The arrangements for and the ultimate responsibility for the relief offering go to back to Paul and his associates who have encouraged all of the churches from Galatia to Asia to Macedonia and now to Achaia to contribute to it. From the outset the objective has been to glorify God through the gathering of this offering for the saints in Jerusalem. As the Corinthians do their part, praise to God will be produced from Corinth and Achaia.

The lengthy but elliptical ὅτι clause in v. 12 lays the basis for the above assertion of divine blessings to come to the Corinthians. Additionally the parallel causal expression here as a dependent clause to the causal prepositional phrase εἰς πᾶσαν ἀπλότητα establishes an amplification of the latter by the statements in v. 12 in particular.

The internal structure, as illustrated in the above diagram, revolves around the subject of both verbs: ἡ διακονία τῆς λειτουργίας ταύτης, *the ministry of this service*. Both nouns, διακονία and λειτουργία, are virtual synonyms in meaning, but the LXX use of λειτουργία highlights service done to God. Used together as here the point moves toward the action of service with implication of consequences achieved. Of course the phrase is another label for the relief offering that has

passive participle form is that God would give them the needed resources in order to make a generous contribution to the relief offering. This plays off the Psalm quote in v. 9 with the commentary on it given in verse 10: πληθυνεῖ τὸν σπόρον ὑμῶν, *God will multiply your planting seed*.

³⁴¹The use of the qualitative form of the relative pronoun here, ἥτις, rather than the direct relative ἡ, underscores the fundamental nature of proper generosity; it leads to praise to God.

been described in a variety of ways in these two chapters. Perhaps the twofold terminology anticipates the dual accomplishments of this offering. Note the standard “not only this...but also that” structure in οὐ μόνον... ἀλλὰ καὶ.

First, this offering ἐστὶν προσαναπληροῦσα τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν ἁγίων, *is supplying the needs of the saints*. The periphrastic present tense construction ἐστὶν προσαναπληροῦσα highlights continuation of action over an extended period of time. Three times in these two chapters the apostle alludes to the ὑστέρημα, *need*, of the saints in Jerusalem: 8:14 (2x) and 9:12. The core idea is the absence of basic needs for existence. It closely relates to the label τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ, *the poor among the saints in Jerusalem* (Rom. 15:26). These Gentile dominated churches established in Paul’s missionary ministry would be helping relieve the physical suffering of fellow believers in Jerusalem who were dominantly Jewish. Crossing those very great ethnic barriers would be a great witness to the power of the Gospel for uniting all peoples of the earth around common commitment to Christ. Nothing like this ever took place in the Greco-Roman world and would certainly catch the attention of many people living in the first century, not to mention the religious Jews living in Judea outside of Christianity.

Second, this offering περισσεύουσα διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστιῶν τῷ θεῷ, *is abounding through many expressions of thanksgiving to God*.³⁴² The ellipsis assumes the

³⁴²Hence, whilst it will supply the wants¹⁶⁴ of the Jerusalem Christians, it will do more than that. There will be an abundance of good effects. What does this ‘abundance’ consist of? Chrysostom suggests that the contributors to the collection will furnish its recipients with even more than they need,¹⁶⁵ but this is unlikely in view of what has been said in 8:13–15. Might Paul have in view the ‘fulness of blessing’ to be accorded to his missionary labours (Rom 15:29)? The following verses might suggest this, if for the Jerusalem Christians the collection is to be an expression of the obedience of the Gentiles to the gospel.¹⁶⁶ This is possible perhaps.¹⁶⁷ But if the introductory ὅτι be taken seriously, v. 12 is explanatory of v. 11, and v. 11 concludes with the assertion that the Corinthians’ generosity produces thanksgiving to God. Consequently, the most likely content of the ‘abundance’ or ‘surplus’ will be this thanksgiving itself.¹⁶⁸ It is ‘by means of’ (διὰ)¹⁶⁹ this expected multitude



ity to δοξάζοντες τὸν θεὸν rests upon two items as set forth by the preposition ἐπὶ. First is ἐπὶ τῇ ὑποταγῇ τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, **upon obedience to your confession in the Gospel of Christ**. In coming to Christ in conversion, the Corinthians made a public confession of faith commitment to Christ within the framework of the apostolic Gospel that was proclaimed to them.³⁴⁴ A life lived in obedience to Christ is the sole basis of glorifying God. But this obedience flows exclusively out of a specific confession of commitment that is defined by the apostolic Gospel message.

The second part of the prepositional phrase is καὶ ἀπλότητι τῆς κοινωνίας εἰς αὐτοὺς καὶ εἰς πάντας, **and upon generosity of participation for them and for all**.³⁴⁵ What glorifies God is **generosity**, ἀπλότης. Again the English word conveys the implication of amount, or quantity. But ἀπλότης more basically means simplicity and sincerity, thus stressing the idea of quality of action. God is glorified by obedience that also reflects sincerity and genuineness of commitment to help others in the name of God.

The dual prepositional phrases εἰς αὐτοὺς καὶ εἰς πάντας, **for them and for all**, specifies the target of the generosity. It identifies both the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and Judea, as well as broadens the scope **to include all people in need of help**.³⁴⁶ Additionally,

³⁴⁴Contextually τῇ ὑποταγῇ τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν means most certainly the subjective role for τῆς ὁμολογίας, thus **an obedience produced by confession**. The preposition εἰς links back to ὑποταγῇ, i.e., **obedience to...** The Gospel message about Christ is what obedience links to. The confessor commits himself / herself to obey Christ within the framework of the apostolic Gospel. Confession ‘steps into’ (εἰς) this message to embrace every aspect of it.

³⁴⁵A basic rule of ancient Greek grammar is that an article governs two nouns when connected by καὶ. Here τῇ ὑποταγῇ . . . καὶ ἀπλότητι, **upon obedience...and generosity**. These two items are flip sides of the same coin. The foundation principle of both Judaism and Christianity is preserved here in the vertical / horizontal linkage. One cannot obey God without reaching out to others, and reaching out to others must be linked to obedient commitment to God. Humanitarianism is not Christianity! But there is no Christianity without humanitarian concern.

³⁴⁶Martin’s (WBC) observations here seem a bit odd: “Strangely, Paul rounds off the phrase after κοινωνίας εἰς αὐτοὺς, ‘partnership with them,’ with the supplementary phrase καὶ εἰς πάντας, ‘and with everyone.’ This should strictly mean that the Gentile congregations raised money gifts for other churches and worthy causes other than the needs of the people at Jerusalem. But we have no knowledge of these actions. So we must take the phrase to be a general one in praise of the generous spirit that moves the readers and would move them wherever there may be need.”²⁸⁸ [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 474–475. [Perhaps this reflects on his own experience more than anything else.

Harris’ (NIGTC) comments seem more natural to the text in its context: “On occasion the πάντας in καὶ ἐπὶ πάντας is restricted to fellow Christians (Barnett 446) or to other churches (Bernard

participation in the offering is labeled as τῆς κοινωνίας, **of this partnership**. It is not an unequal contributing of those better to those in need. Instead, it is a partnership of mutual assistance of believers who all stand on the same ground before God.³⁴⁷

The third and final modifier of (ἐστὶν) δοξάζοντες comes in v. 14 as a genitive absolute construction: καὶ αὐτῶν δεήσει ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐπιποθούτων ὑμᾶς διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσιν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφ’ ὑμῖν, **and while they, in prayer for you, long for you because of the abundantly surpassing grace of God because of you**. A simple English translation of this rather complex Greek expression omits most of the rich meaning contained in it. God is being glorified by the Corinthian action while something wonderful is happening on the receiving end of this relief offering. Paul states this using present tense verbals to stress ongoing actions that are anticipated when the relief offering arrives in Jerusalem. The verb ἐπιποθέω denotes an intense longing for someone who is needed

94; Georgi 106), or is taken to mean that when relief is given to the mother church all Christians benefit indirectly,⁴⁷ presumably by the example of Christian fellowship thus afforded or by the cementing of Jew-Gentile relations. But such a restriction seems unwarranted. V. 8 has already envisaged a situation of benevolence beyond the charitable offering for Jerusalem, when God would provide the Corinthians with ‘every kind of blessing in abundance’ so that they would have ‘ample resources for every kind of good work’ (εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν). So πάντας would appear to refer to ‘everyone else in need,’ whether believer or unbeliever.⁴⁸ Such an interpretation finds support in the close parallel in Gal. 6:10, ‘As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people (πρὸς πάντας), especially to those who belong to the family of faith (πρὸς τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως).’ In both verses πάντας is all-embracing.” [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), 655.]

³⁴⁷“At 8:2 we discussed the meaning of ἀπλότης and saw that although in Pauline usage it sometimes means ‘sincerity’ or ‘simplicity,’ in Rom. 12:8 and the three occurrences in 2 Corinthians 8–9 (8:2; 9:11, 13) it has the sense of ‘generosity.’⁴³ It would be a generosity ‘displayed in sharing’ (τῆς κοινωνίας)⁴⁴ material resources with the poor in the Jerusalem church (εἰς αὐτούς) and also ‘with everyone’ (ἐπὶ πάντας). Some, however, give κοινωνία a more specific sense arising from the present context, ‘(the generosity of) your contribution’ (RSV, NAB2).⁴⁵ While support for this sense may be found in the expression κοινωνίαν τινά (‘some contribution’) in Rom. 15:26 in connection with the same collection, the difficulty in the present case is that Paul adds καὶ ἐπὶ πάντας, which seems to imply a wider circle that will, on other occasions, benefit from the Corinthians’ κοινωνία.⁴⁶ It is better, therefore, to give this term a broader sense such as ‘sharing’ or ‘fellowship’ or ‘partnership’ or even (cf. BAGD 439b) ‘altruism.’” [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), 655.]



and important to the one longing.³⁴⁸

That sense of needing the Gentile Christian communities outside Judea by these Jewish believers in Jerusalem Paul asserts is being expressed *δεήσει ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν*, *in prayer for you*, Corinthians. The basis of this longing is declared through the causal prepositional phrase introduced with *διὰ*. The lengthy but enormously rich expression here is impossible to adequately translate with simple English expression. The object of *διὰ* is *τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ*, *because of God's grace*. Quite eloquently the apostle *χάρις* to refer simultaneously to divine favor but favor from God expressed in the concrete relief offering of the Corinthians to Jerusalem. The word *χάρις* has been used as a label for this offering in 8:1, 4, 6, 7, 19 and 9:14. But also in dominate reference to divine favor in 8:16 and 9:15. All through the discussion of this offering in chapters eight and nine, the giving of money by the churches to help their fellow believers in Judea has been seen as the action of God moving in the hearts of the members of these Gentile dominated churches.

Here rich qualification of *χάρις* is made through the adjectival present tense participle *ὑπερβάλλουσιν* with its modifier *ἐφ' ὑμῖν*. This divine grace is abounding astonishingly because of you Corinthians and Achaian believers. Their anticipated generosity is opening the flood gates of divine favor. This comes out of the affectionate sense of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem needing the Gentile believers in Achaia.

In light of this beautiful picture of Jewish / Gentile Christians deeply felt need of one another and helping one another, it is easy to understand why Paul breaks forth in doxological praise at the end of this discussion: *Χάρις τῷ θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγήτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ*, *Praise be to God for His indescribable gift!* In 8:16 Paul expressed similar praise to God for how He had moved Titus' thinking about the Corinthians. Now praise is expressed over the anticipated blessing from God that will come out of this relief offering. Don't overlook the ingenious play on *χάρις* all through this discussion. Believers acting in generosity to help others is seen as divine favor in action and that which then brings praise to God Himself. Had we lived in the bitter animosity between Jew and Gentile that Paul experienced, the idea of God overcoming all this in Christ would also have seemed a miracle of God demanding praise of Him.

Summary of chapters eight and nine:

The profound importance of Paul's discussion of the relief offering necessitates some attempt at a theological summation of the relevant spiritual principles of

³⁴⁸It is a part of numerous words denoting affection and compassion in the NT as the Louw-Nida lexicon topics 25.33 to 25.58 underscore. This compound form, *ἐπιτοθέω*, stresses intense affection for.

financial contribution inside Christian churches.

First, the scenario of this relief offering needs to be pulled together from the available data³⁴⁹ so as to form a foundation for interpretive understanding and application.

In the late 40s at the leadership meeting in Jerusalem (Acts 15; Gal. 2), Paul and Barnabas had agreed with the Jerusalem leadership of apostles and elders to remember to see after the poor, *μόνον τῶν πτωχῶν ἵνα μνημονεύωμεν, ὃ καὶ ἐσπούδασα αὐτὸ τοῦτο ποιῆσαι*, *only the poor that we would remember, which very thing we also have endeavored to do* (Gal. 2:10). This basic religious trait of Judaism was to be preserved inside Christianity.

At that time, Paul had no way of knowing that this agreement would funnel into a major objective for his third missionary journey covering the churches established on the first two trips. But as he left Antioch in 52 AD to revisit the churches in the Roman provinces of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia, the Lord guided him in setting up a massive collection of money from these churches in order to help *τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἐν Ἰερουσαλήμ*, *the poor among the saints in Jerusalem* (Rom. 15:26). Elsewhere the reference is simply *εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους*, *for the saints* (ex., 1 Cor. 16:1). This leaves some uncertainty about whether the relief offering was intended for all the believers in Jerusalem and Judea who were suffering poverty, or just those in dire need across the Christian communities there.³⁵⁰ Yet the es-

³⁴⁹Inside the NT the following passages contain direct references to the relief offering: 2 Cor. 8 - 9; Rom. 15:25-26; 1 Cor. 16:1-4. Galatians 2:10 is an indirect reference to this offering. The concept for giving to those in need stands as an important principle in the Jewish religious heritage that came to Christianity in its beginning. Acts 20:24 and 24:17 contain probable allusions to this offering.

One helpful secondary discussion of this topic is Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993. Sic, "Collection for the Saints." The major failure of the article is the linking of Gal. 2:1-10 to Acts 11:27-30 rather than the obvious linkage of it to Acts 15.

Other detailed studies on this include C. H. Buck, 'The Collection for the Saints', *HTR* 43, 1950, pp. 1ff.; D. Georgi, *Die Geschichte der Kollekte des Paulus für Jerusalem*, 1965; K. Holl, 'Der Kirchenbegriff des Paulus in seinem Verhältnis zu dem der Urgemeinde', *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte* 2, 1928, pp. 44ff.; A. J. Mattill, 'The Purpose of Acts: Schneckenburger Reconsidered', in *Apostolic History and the Gospel*, ed. W. W. Gasque and R. P. Martin, 1970, pp. 108ff.; K. F. Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy*, 1966. F. F. Bruce, "Collection (Pauline Churches)," ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 214.

³⁵⁰The reason for drawing some conclusion on this becomes rather clear. If the entire Christian community were suffering poverty, it means that some kind of famine had swept through the region. Or else, that economic persecution against Christians in



established pattern that occurred in Jerusalem is described by Luke in Acts 4:32-5:11.³⁵¹ The have generously shared with the have nots inside the community of believers. The expectation would naturally be that the relief offering brought by Paul would be handled the same way.

Another example in the background for this project was the earlier collection of a relief offering by the church in Antioch that was carried to Jerusalem by Paul, which Luke describes in Acts 11:27-30. Not much detail is provided by Luke but its general depiction seems consistent with the procedural details in 2 Cor. 8-9 for this later, more massive undertaking.

In the non-Jewish Diaspora world outside Judea, sophist itinerant philosophers were notorious for sham fund raising projects. In order to protect the integrity of the offering and the reputation of the Christian leaders involved in collecting and delivering it to Jerusalem, extensive precautions were taken to avoid any appearance of this project being anything remotely connected

Judea had broken out. For the commentators adopting this assumption, a search of secular records for signals of famines and/or persecutions against Christians becomes imperative.

But in light of the almost non-existing evidence for either of these in the middle east during the middle of the first century, the second, alternative understanding becomes more certain. This offering was in line with the previously existing pattern defined in Acts 4 and did not arise from extensive famine or persecution of the Jewish Christian communities in Judea. As such not only did it preserve in part the Jerusalem conference agreement (Gal. 2:10) but served to validate that Pauline Christianity was not ignoring legitimate aspects of its Jewish religious heritage. Benevolent caring for those in need lay at the heart of Jesus' teaching in Matt. 6:1-4 et als. and also formed an important part of the emerging Gentile Christian movement under Paul's leadership.

³⁵¹Acts 4:32-37. 32 Τοῦ δὲ πλήθους τῶν πιστευσάντων ἦν καρδιά καὶ ψυχὴ μία , καὶ οὐδὲ εἷς τι τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῶ ἔλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι ἀλλ' ἦν αὐτοῖς ἅπαντα κοινά. 33 καὶ δυνάμει μεγάλη ἀπεδίδουν τὸ μαρτύριον οἱ ἀπόστολοι τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, χάρις τε μεγάλη ἦν ἐπὶ πάντας αὐτούς. 34 οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐνδεής τις ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς· ὅσοι γὰρ κτήτορες χωρίων ἢ οἰκιῶν ὑπῆρχον, πωλοῦντες ἔφερον τὰς τιμὰς τῶν πιπρασκομένων 35 καὶ ἐτίθουν παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τῶν ἀποστόλων, διεδίδοτο δὲ ἐκάστῳ καθότι ἂν τις χρεῖαν εἶχεν. 36 Ἰωσήφ δὲ ὁ ἐπικληθεὶς Βαρναβᾶς ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων, ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνευόμενον υἱὸς παρακλήσεως, Λευίτης, Κύπριος τῷ γένει, 37 ὑπάρχοντος αὐτῷ ἀγροῦ πωλήσας ἤνεγκεν τὸ χρῆμα καὶ ἔθηκεν πρὸς τοὺς πόδας τῶν ἀποστόλων.

32 Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. 33 With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. 35 They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. 36 There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"). 37 He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

to one of the sham projects by deceitful teachers. Apart from some awareness of this secular background in his day, one cannot understand why Paul went to the lengths that he did in order to not directly come in contact with the money raising. Some suspicions of this evidently had arisen at Corinth from Gentile Christians expecting this money raising project to be like what they were accustomed to outside their Christian faith (2 Cor. 8:20-21).

The project was also carried out against the backdrop of the annual Jewish temple tax that was collected each year from all of the Jewish communities across the Roman empire. The region of most of the Pauline churches in the northeastern Mediterranean area was populated with hundreds of thousands of Jewish residents. The annual gathering of the religious tax by local leaders to be carried to Jerusalem usually at Passover or Pentecost celebrations provided a heritage for the Jewish Christians to understand the procedure for collecting the offering.

The scope of the offering was substantial. It began as Paul and his assistants passed through Galatia (1 Cor. 16:1) at the beginning of the third missionary journey in 52 AD. It culminated in being delivered to the leaders in Jerusalem in the summer of 57 AD about the time of the Jewish festival of Pentecost. Money was collected from churches in the four Roman provinces of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia. These covered the entire region from the Greek areas of Macedonia and Achaia eastward to the western half of what is now modern Turkey. No amount for the offering is ever provided, but general depictions suggest that it was a very large sum of money. By this point in time, dozens of Christian communities had sprung up over these provinces from the earlier work of Paul and his assistants on the first and second missionary journeys.

As funds were collected from the Christian communities in these provinces, the churches authorized representatives to join the missionary group in order to eventually travel to Jerusalem to represent their community in giving the offering to the Jewish Christian leaders in Jerusalem. See Acts 20:4 for a partial listing of some in this delegation. This large group additionally served as protectors of the money collected so that it would not be stolen or the group robbed. Such was the common Jewish practice for the annual trip back to Jerusalem carrying the temple tax. In fact, the dangers linked to making this trip from Corinth back to Jerusalem in time for Passover when thousands of Jewish groups were traveling is what prompted a plan B by Paul to go back through Macedonia on the way to Jerusalem and thus delay his arrival until Pentecost, some 50 days after Passover (cf. Acts 20:1-6).

Of course, over this five year period typical missionary teaching and preaching of the Gospel took place. Interestingly, at least three of these five years were spent in Ephesus as home base for the Pauline ministry (cf. Acts 19:1-20:1). The first mentioning of the relief offering comes in 1 Cor. 16:1-2 which was written about half way through this lengthy ministry in Ephesus. The final mentioning of it comes in Rom. 15:25-26 written in Corinth shortly before Paul left for Jerusalem via Macedonia to deliver the offering.

Some insight can be gained from looking at the many ways this offering is labeled in the NT, and especially in Paul's references to it.³⁵² The more literal term for this project³⁵³ in ancient Greek is λογεία, *collection*, which is only used twice in 1 Cor. 16:1-2.³⁵⁴ But the rare

³⁵²In his references to the carefully planned collection from the different churches St. Paul uses seven different words. All these occur in his letters to the Corinthians and Romans, and are as follows: λογία (1 Co 16:1), χάρις (16:3, 2 Co 8:4), κοινωνία (Ro 15:26, 2 Co 8:4, etc.), ἀδροτής (8:20), εὐλογία (9:5), λειτουργία (9:12), διακονία (8:4; 9:1, 12f.; cf. Ac 11:29). In the report of his defence before Felix two other words occur in the same connexion (ἐλεημοσύνη and προσφοραί [Ac 24:17]). The word λογία occurs nowhere else in the NT, and is of obscure origin. By some it is supposed to be used here for the first time in Greek literature, and probably to have been coined by St. Paul for his purpose (T. C. Edwards, *Com. on 1 Cor. 2*, 1885, P. 462). A variation (λογεία), however, is found in the papyrus documents from the 3rd cent. onwards and in the compound words ἀνδρολογία, παραλογία (A. Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, Eng. tr., 1901, pp. 142f., 219f.). It is also found associated with the Pauline word λειτουργία (F. G. Kenyon, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, 1893, i. 46), and is frequently employed 'in papyri, ostraca, and inscriptions from Egypt and elsewhere,' when the writer is speaking of 'religious collections for a god, a temple, etc.' (see Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*. Eng. tr. 2, 1911, P. 104ff.). The Codex Vaticanus (B) has the form λογεία, but as this MS shows a tendency to orthographical changes in this direction its evidence must be discounted (see Westcott, *Introd. to NT in Greek*, 1882, P. 306). It also appears in a compound form in Jewish literature (κατ' ἀνδρολογεῖον, 2 Mac 12:43) where the question of the collection of money-supplies is alluded to." [J. R. Willis, "Collection," ed. James Hastings, *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* (2 Vols.) (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916-1918), 224.]

³⁵³The collecting or gathering of people is referenced by other ancient Greek terms: "Collection of persons: P. and V. σύλλογος, ὁ, σύνοδος, ἡ, ὄχλος, ὁ," [S. C. Woodhouse, *English-Greek Dictionary: A Vocabulary of the Attic Language* (London: George Routledge & Sons, Limited, 1910), 143.]

Ancient Latin was very distinct in its use of terminology at this point: "collection n (persons) *coetus* m, *conventus* m; (things) *congeriēs* f; (money) *exactiō* f." [Collins *Latin Dictionary Plus Grammar* (Glasgow: HarperCollins, 1997), 16.]

³⁵⁴λογεία and the related verb λογεύω¹ are not found in literary speech.² Thus prior to acquaintance with the pap. a natural attempt was made to derive the word λογεία direct from λέγω.³ In reality both words go back to λόγος in the sense (for which there is no direct evidence) of 'collection' and 'to engage (officially) in collection.'⁴ In pap. and inscr. from Egypt and Asia Minor from the 3rd cent. B.C. on there are many instances of both words.

use of this term highlights the religious and spiritual nature of this project rather than the mechanical process of collecting money. This is reflected in Rom. 15:25-26, 25 Νυνὶ δὲ πορεύομαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ διακονῶν τοῖς ἁγίοις. 26 εὐδόκησαν γὰρ Μακεδονία καὶ Ἀχαΐα κοινωνίαν τινὰ ποιήσασθαι εἰς τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ, 25 At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem in a ministry to the saints; 26 for Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to share their resources with the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. The detailed accounting in 2 Corinthians 8-9 make it abundantly clear that this project was not merely gathering up money to give to poor people. Additionally, it is clear that this was something far deeper than the Jewish tradition of almsgiving which by the first century was an egocentric motivation intended to earn 'brown points' with God (cf. Matt. 6:1-4).³⁵⁵ In the Second Corinthians discussion, the lead term and one of the commonly used labels for this project was τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ, *the grace of God* (8:1, 4, 6, 7, 19). The believer's giving of funds was indeed not a human effort but rather the working of God's grace in the life of the follower of Christ. Also the related religious labels of ἀδροτής (8:20), εὐλογία (9:5), λειτουργία (9:12), διακονία (8:4; 9:1, 12f.; cf. Acts 11:29) stress this spiritual understanding of the project.

Second, the relevance of this relief offering to Christians and Christian organizations in our world is important to see. Below is a listing of some of the possible links of this scriptural discussion to us today. Also remember that these are insights limited to the Pauline

λογεῖω, 'I collect,' P. Rev., 4, 1; 39, 14; 52, 20 (258 B.C.); CIG, III, 4956 (49 A.D.) etc.⁵ λογεία, 'collection,' 'collection of money,' 'tax,' the oldest example P. Hibeh, I, 51, 2 (245 B.C.), esp., as it seems, in the sense of an extraordinary tax, cf. P. Oxy., II, 239, 8: ὀμνύω ... μηδεμίαν λογεῖαν γεγονέναι ὑπ' ἐμοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ κόμῃ.⁶ BGU, II, 515, 7: τὰ ὑπὲρ λογίας [ἐπ]ιβληθέντα as distinct from σιτικά δημόσια. Often a 'sacral collection of money,' 'collection,'⁷ e.g., Ostraka, II, 413 (August 4th, 63 A.D.): ἀπέχω παρὰ σοῦ (δραχμᾶς) δ ὀβολ(όν) τὴν λογίαν Ἴσιδος περὶ τῶν δημοσίων (collection of Isis, contribution for official services),⁸ cf. also No. 402, 412, 415-418, 420; Ditt. Syll.3, 996, 26 (Smyrna, 1st cent. A.D.): κλεῖν κεχρυσωμένην καὶ ἐμπεφασμένην⁹ πρὸς τὴν λογήαν καὶ πομπὴν τῶν θεῶν, 'a vessel which is gilded ... for the collection and procession of the gods.'¹⁰ [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 4:282.]

³⁵⁵In Paul's defense of his ministry before the Roman governor Felix in Acts 24:17 the traditional Jewish labels in Greek ἐλεημοσύνη and προσφοραί, *alms and offerings*, are appropriately used before the governor with a Jewish audience present listening to him speak. Even though the standard theological stance on benevolence was not adopted by Paul, the terms would clearly be understood to refer to monetary funds being brought to Jerusalem to help Jewish people. This Felix was very familiar with. And to the Jewish listeners present in the room, Paul's depiction would seem very legitimately Jewish. Hundreds of Diaspora Jews performed such actions yearly.



relief offering, and not a comprehensive analysis of the fuller biblical picture on money in religious usage.

a) Collecting money and giving money for religious purposes must never be viewed as a mere mechanical process for taking up money. This point surfaces repeatedly by the way the project is referenced in the Pauline materials of Romans and 1-2 Corinthians. Additionally the more abstract, theological depiction in 2 Cor. 9:6-15 goes into great detail about this. Christian giving of funds stands as an important test of the genuineness of our confession of faith in conversion (9:13-14). The presentation of opportunities for believers to contribute funds likewise must always come from this understanding of the nature of giving. Paul stands as the primary example on how to encourage people to give properly.

This biblical approach should prompt careful reflection on the setting of monetary goals for various projects. They may not inherently conflict with the biblical teaching but they easily can turn Christian fund raising projects into very secularized money gathering strategies. This clearly nullifies the principle of 9:10 of God's ability to bless properly given funds. He can accomplish more with \$5 given properly than with \$5,000 given inappropriately.

Remember: God doesn't give a flip about how much is given, but He cares passionately about how it is given. The term ἀπλότης, translated as **generosity** in 8:2, 9:11, 13, is a qualitative term rather than a quantitative term. That is, motivation behind giving as reflecting sincerity, rather than large amounts of giving, is what matters to God. It determines whether our giving is generous or not.

b) The core spiritual perspective on giving and collecting money must always remain central both in understanding and motivation. The constant danger with fund raising is that it centers on money. Money and the love for it is a big temptation to God's people that the scripture warns against numerous times and in **different ways**.³⁵⁶ This tempts Christian groups just as

³⁵⁶**1 Tim. 6:6-10.** ὁ ἕστιν δὲ πορισμὸς μέγας ἢ εὐσέβεια μετὰ αὐταρκείας· 7 οὐδὲν γὰρ εἰσηνέγκαμεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον, ὅτι οὐδὲ ἐξενεγκεῖν τι δυνάμεθα· 8 ἔχοντες δὲ διατροφὰς καὶ σκεπάσματα, τούτοις ἄρκεθησόμεθα· 9 οἱ δὲ βουλόμενοι πλουτεῖν ἐμπίπτουσιν εἰς πειρασμὸν καὶ παγίδα καὶ ἐπιθυμίας πολλὰς ἀνοήτους καὶ βλαβεράς, αἵτινες βυθίζουσιν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους εἰς ὄλεθρον καὶ ἀπώλειαν· 10 ῥίζα γὰρ πάντων τῶν κακῶν ἐστὶν ἡ φιλαργυρία, ἧς τινες ὀρεγόμενοι ἀπεπλανήθησαν ἀπὸ τῆς πίστεως καὶ ἑαυτοὺς περιέπειραν ὀδύνας πολλὰς.

6 Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; 7 for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; 8 but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. 9 But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced

much as individuals. Modern church life may well face even larger temptations because of church budgets to be met, buildings to be maintained etc.

None of these concerns were faced by believers in the apostolic world. Local leaders, οἱ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ διάκονοι, were volunteer leaders without pay. The more global leaders such as ἀπόστολοι were supported by different Christian communities, and that mostly only when individual leaders were present in the region of the community (cf. 1 Cor. 9:1-18). Such entities as a set salary didn't exist in their world.

But in our modern world 'church' is a large monetary operation requiring huge sums of money that has to be raised.³⁵⁷ In most cases appeals to the church members to contribute to underwriting this cost is the dominant means of raising needed funding. And here is where the temptation of money becomes very real both to those doing the fund raising and to those giving funds.

If the fund raising that Paul did, as described in 2 Cor. 8-9, teaches us anything it is that the spiritual objectives for such projects must always remain uppermost in the appeals made for contributing money. To be sure there were flesh and blood folks back in Jerusalem who did not have enough to eat and wear (cf. τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ, **the poor among the saints in Jerusalem**, Rom. 15:26). And their needs prompted the contributions of the various Gentile churches. But the driving motivation for contributing and for raising these funds was always the leadership of God working by His grace to prompt believers to contribute (cf. καὶ οὐ καθὼς ἠλπίζαμεν ἀλλ' ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ, **and not only as we expected but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us through the will of God**, 2 Cor. 8:5). What we give, how it is used, -- every aspect must be prompted and guided by God. Every thing should point πρὸς τὴν αὐτοῦ τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν, **to the glory of the Lord Himself** (2 Cor. 8:19).

c) Extreme caution must be taken to keep the process of collecting money fully open and transparent in order to avoid any possibility of improper motives or objectives. When the apostle began the process of collecting the relief offering, several models for how to do it stood in the background. In the Greco-Roman world the model out of the patron - client

themselves with many pains.

³⁵⁷What I have discovered through living in various parts of the world over the past half century is how dramatically different are the ways of raising financial support for churches. The US is virtually the only country in the world where government support of the churches doesn't come into the picture in some way. Whether that's good or bad can be debated both directions. But the simple reality is that operating churches costs money. And this money has to be raised by some means.



social pattern was clearly available. But its class oriented structure of aristocrat down to peasant stood in contradiction to Christian principles of equality before God. The notorious example of the sophist itinerant philosopher using fund raising for needy people as a scam to cheat people out of their money had to be avoided at all costs. The Diaspora Jewish collection of the annual temple tax offered a little more positive model but it was packed full of problems for a Christian based project. It was mandatory both in requirement and specification of amounts that had to be contributed. Plus it went to maintain the Jerusalem temple under the control of the arrogant aristocratic Sadducees. It also held out the false claim of earning significant 'browny points' with God. In the Jewish heritage, however, was the deeply ingrained tradition of almsgiving for helping the poor. To be sure, many of the same theological problems with the temple tax spilled over on to the practice of alms in first century Judaism. Plus it was local in focus. Each synagogue community was to take care of its own poor and needy. But the core principle of God's love of the poor and the responsibility of His people to help them in time of need provided the solid religious foundation upon which to build a Christian based fund raising project.

This project, however, needed to be distinctly Christian from top to bottom. Christian principles of integrity and genuine caring prompted by the working of God through Christ needed to guide its structure, appeal, and carrying out. Very importantly the situation of need here meant that Jewish Christians in need back in Jerusalem were going to be cared for by largely non-Jewish oriented Christian churches outside Judea. This crossing of ethnic barriers, despised by most Jews, was symbolical of the universal message of salvation in the apostolic Gospel (cf. Rom. 15:27). Paul's preaching had strongly stressed that οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλληνα, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, there is no Jew or Greek, there is no slave or freedman, there is no male or female, for you all are one in Christ (Gal. 3:28). This spiritual principle was no meaningless abstraction! It had functional implications for every aspect of Christian living. The relief offering presented a wonderful occasion to apply this principle in very meaningful fashion.

Consequently everything connected to the project must be done in the open and be completely transparent to all, believers and unbelievers alike. Paul especially as concerned with the integrity of this project, as he wrote to the Corinthians, 20 στελλόμενοι τοῦτο, μή τις ἡμᾶς μωμῆσθαι ἐν τῇ ἀδρότητι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένῃ ὑφ' ἡμῶν· 21 προνοοῦμεν γὰρ καλὰ οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων, 20 *We intend that no one should blame us about this generous gift that we are*

administering, 21 for we intend to do what is right not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of others. (2 Cor. 8:20-21).

An important aspect of this integrity was the appointment of church representatives from every contributing congregation by the congregations themselves to travel together to take care of the money that was raised (cf. 2 Cor. 8:18-19; 9:4). These representatives also would collectively present the offering to the Christian leadership in Jerusalem. Afterwards upon returning to their home congregations they would report the details to their own church group. They would be able to verify that everything was carried out properly and as promised by Paul and those working closely with him.

When a church or religious organization sets about raising funds for some project these principles of integrity and openness are absolutely essential. In some ways even more necessary in our world than in Paul's. Modern society is plagued with charitable groups appealing for money to help this or that need. Then large portions are siphoned off to be given to the fund raisers, if not the total amount of what is contributed. TV preachers are for the most part clever con artists after the money of naive viewers. Open and honest reporting of every penny collected and spent is the only Christian approach to fund raising! Paul's example and teaching powerfully underscores this.

d) Religious leaders such as local church pastors must never be directly involved in handling funds collected. The situation with the Corinthians underscores another critically important principle for modern Christian leaders. Paul felt strongly that his role in the project was to give impetus to it, encourage the churches to contribute, and make sure that the wishes of the churches were faithfully carried out. But he strongly felt it important that he as a Christian leader not be directly involved in the handling of the funds contributed by the churches. He made it very clear to the Corinthians that he had no willingness to directly get involved in the contributing of money by the different house church groups at Corinth. Titus had previously helped them get started on the project about a year before the writing of Second Corinthians (2 Cor. 8:10). Now not only Titus but two other brothers were being sent ahead of Paul to Corinth to assist the church there to have the gathering of the offering completed prior to Paul's arrival with the delegation from the Macedonian churches (2 Cor. 8:6-7, 16-24; 9:4-5). In the beginning of this process the apostle was unsure whether or not he would even go to Jerusalem with the group to deliver the offering (1 Cor. 16:4). By the time of completing the collection at Corinth, it had become clear to him that God intended him to go with the group on to Jeru-

salem in order to deliver it to the leaders in Jerusalem (Rom. 15:28). By keeping his distance from the handling of the collected funds Paul preserved his integrity and reputation to all that he wasn't after the money of these churches for his own use and purposes.

There is much to be learned by Christian leaders today from Paul's example. *The closer the preacher gets to the money the more likely suspicions about his integrity will arise.* Paul had to deal with such even with keeping his distance (8:20-21). During my years as a local church pastor I never knew what any individual member of my church contributed. And we provided to every member a monthly detailed accounting down to every penny of what was contributed and precisely how it was spent. Consequently the churches never had "money problems," even though they had been troubled with them in their past.

e) *The giving of funds by individual believers must always flow out of commitment to God and be guided by God.* When a person comes to Christ in conversion, his pocketbook comes along with him. Christ is to be Lord over all in every believer's life. And this includes his / her money as well. Contributing to the support of the Gospel is one way of reflecting that lordship of Christ. We give back to God in acknowledgement of His sovereignty over our lives.

In the Hebrew religion of the Old Testament a tithe, i.e., ten percent, was consistently seen as the starting point of contribution. But as careful analysis of just the Old Testament texts alone will reveal, this was worked out in many different and sometimes contradictory ways. And usually meant more than ten percent in the final analysis. During the intertestament period of 400 years when Judaism took basic shape and form, the system of contributing money and goods evolved into very complex systems as advocated by different Jewish groups. Even more importantly the motivation shifted from contributing out of gratitude to God to that of seeking 'browny points' of religious merit in the eyes of giving. Jesus' soundly condemns such in Matt. 6:1-4 et als.

It is interesting to watch how studiously the apostle avoids mentioned specific amounts in his discussion. It begins with the principle in 1 Cor. 16:2, κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου ἕκαστος ὑμῶν **παρ' ἑαυτῶ** τιθέτω **θησαυρίζων** ὃ τι ἐάν εὐοδῶται, ἵνα μὴ ὅταν ἔλθω τότε λογεῖται γίνωνται, **On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come.** In 2 Cor. 8:12, a similar principle is expressed: εἰ γὰρ ἡ προθυμία πρόκειται, καθὸ ἐὰν ἔχη εὐπρόσδεκτος, οὐ καθὸ οὐκ ἔχει. **For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has—not according to what one does not have.**

This is amplified around the motif of ἀπλότης in 9:6-

15. The challenge here is that the English word 'generosity' is usually used to translate this Greek word. And generosity in English normally implies amount of giving. The core meaning of ἀπλότης is unquestionably sincerity and simplicity all through ancient Greek. Thus ἀπλότης giving for Paul is centered on motivation in giving, not on amount contributed. What Paul had in mind was earlier illustrated by the Macedonian churches in 8:1-7. They gave themselves to the Lord when considering their response to the offering. Then their giving flowed out of their commitment to Christ. It enabled Paul to characterize their contribution as τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δεδομένην ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας, **the grace of God given among the churches of Macedonia** (8:1). What the Macedonians then contributed was in reality the grace of God working in their lives and surfacing in their giving. This determined how much they contributed, rather than some externally set amount.

Christian giving must always be an expression of commitment to God and be guided by His leadership. We are not seeking to please people, or even God, for that matter. Instead, we are seeking to know and obey His leadership over our lives. Then and only then does praise and glory go to God. Others thus see God at work in our lives and recognize who He is. This is authentic Gospel witness at work!

f) *The giving of funds by individual believers must always be voluntary and reflect no coercion from religious leaders.* Another key term in Paul's discussion of the relief offering is αὐθαίρετοι, the adjective from αὐθαίρετος, -ον (8:3, 17), translated as **volunteers**. Further amplification in 8:7-15 stresses γνήσιον from γνήσιος, -α, -ον, **authentic, genuine** (8:8), and ἡ προθυμία, **eagerness** (8:11, 12, 19; 9:2). Paul expressly tells them that he is not commanding them to give to the offering (8:8a): Οὐ κατ' ἐπιταγὴν λέγω, **Not by commandment do I speak.** The very familiar declaration comes in 9:7, ἕκαστος καθὼς προήρηται τῇ καρδίᾳ, μὴ ἐκ λύπης ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης· ἰλαρὸν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός, **Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.** The Corinthians are to contribute to the offering because they genuinely want to participate, and not because they have been coerced into giving by Paul or anyone else.

Here is where extreme caution must be exercised in the modern setting, particularly at the point of making appeals for people to give. The TV con artist preachers of our day are experts at both putting false 'guilt trips' on their viewers as well as for making outrageous promises of what the givers will get back in their giving. For most people, Christians included, money is a sensitive topic. Many look for excuses to not give and un-

justified pressure applied in an appeal is just the thing to enable them to walk away from genuine needs and opportunities.

To be sure, the opportunity to give is indeed τὸ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγάπης γνήσιον δοκιμάζων, *validating the genuineness of your love* (8:8b). Paul characterizes the opportunity to give as the chance for believers to prove clearly that they love God and others. He goes on to assert that the standard by which this is measured is Christ's sacrificial love for us (8:9). Giving to help others in need reflects that Jesus' sacrificial love has taken root in our lives as His followers.

This same idea is essentially repeated in 9:13-14, 13 διὰ τῆς δοκιμῆς τῆς διακονίας ταύτης δοξάζοντες τὸν θεὸν ἐπὶ τῇ ὑποταγῇ τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἀπλότητι τῆς κοινωνίας εἰς αὐτοὺς καὶ εἰς πάντας, 14 καὶ αὐτῶν δεήσει ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐπιποθοῦντων ὑμᾶς διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφ' ὑμῖν, 13 *Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, 14 while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you.* Giving to help others is one of those actions prompted by the lordship of Christ that signals a genuine confession of faith in conversion. One of the inherent aspects of such giving is how beautifully it builds relationships that cross over cultural and ethnic barriers. Paul's depiction is marvelous and in the Jewish / Gentile world of his day miraculous.

What God seeks most of all is a life joyfully and genuinely committed to Him. Such a life He can guide into actions that not only bring glory to His name but bless the lives of other people profoundly. Giving that comes for any other reason and in any other manner than this is not glorifying of God and is of no real help to other people. God clearly is not accepting of such alternative giving.

Twice in 8:16 and 9:15 Paul bursts forth in doxological praise with Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ, *And thanks be to God...* Both occasions surface out of the apostle's excitement over the adoption of proper commitment to participating in the relief offering. Titus was convinced that they had 'gotten their act' together regarding this offering. The depiction of how God desires to work through the giving of His people to help others generates words of praise lifted verbally up to God.

Oh how we in today's world need to understand this kind of giving to the cause of Christ! In over half a century of church involvement and serving in Christian institutions of higher education, I have far too often seen Christian groups miss the mark here severely. But in those isolated instances where they have 'gotten it' right, what a blessing giving money becomes. Truly

when Paul was making his way from Corinth to Jerusalem with this offering, he quoted to the Ephesian leaders at Miletus the saying of Jesus (not found in any of the four gospels): πάντα ὑπέδειξα ὑμῖν ὅτι οὕτως κοπιῶντας δεῖ ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενούντων, μνημονεύειν τε τῶν λόγων τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ὅτι αὐτὸς εἶπεν· μακάριόν ἐστιν μᾶλλον διδόναι ἢ λαμβάνειν. *In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."* The correctness of these words from Christ Paul knew well out of his own experience. Indeed the opportunity for modern Christian groups and individuals to make this same discovery stands before every fund raising effort.

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

This section of Second Corinthians also has a controversial interpretive history. Many over the past two centuries have been convinced that it actually is what is left of the so-called 'severe letter' written from Ephesus after his 'sorrowful visit' (cf. 2 Cor. 2:1; 12:14; 13:1-2; 2:4; 7:8). Or perhaps it comes after chapters 1 - 9 as a followup letter targeting specifically his opponents at Corinth. In my estimation, the most defensible view is to view Second Corinthians as we have it as a unified document with three or four major sections in the letter body (appx. chaps. 1-7, 8-9, 10-13).³⁵⁸

³⁵⁸After the warmhearted appeals of chs. 8 and 9, the change of tone at 10:1-2 to vigorous and sustained self-defense, self-assertion, and polemic comes as 'a bolt from the blue.'¹ This difference in tone and technique between chs. 1-9 and chs. 10-13 may be easily overdrawn, for there are elements of remonstrance in the earlier chapters (e.g., 2:17; 5:12; 6:14) and reassurances of warm affection in the last four chapters (e.g., 11:2; 12:14b-15a). Nevertheless, the suddenness of the change at 10:1 calls for some explanation. No special explanation is required, of course, for those who argue that 2 Corinthians 10-13 is part of the earlier 'severe letter' (the 'Hausrath hypothesis') or 'part perhaps nearly the whole' (Furnish 459) of a letter later than 2 Corinthians 1-9 (the 'Semler hypothesis'), for in those cases a totally different occasion and purpose is postulated for these four chapters. It is those who defend the integrity of 2 Corinthians who must suggest adequate reasons for the change of tone and style. Nine such explanations are mentioned in the Introduction (P. 30 above). It is my contention (see above, pp. 30-31, 50-51, 104-5) that chs. 1-9 were written in stages over a considerable period and that after Paul had written these chapters, he received distressing news of further problems at Corinth that prompted him to write chs. 10-13 and then send off all thirteen chapters as a single letter.² What this news might have been can only be conjectured. We may suppose that the intruders from Judea had become more open and aggressive in their effort to discredit Paul and that the Corinthians in general had become more receptive to their teaching and more open to their influence. On this view 2 Corinthians 10-13 is Paul's response to more intense opposition at Corinth.³ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Milton Keynes,

In the assumption that these four letters belong with the first nine chapters as the letter body (1:12-13:10), one will look for internal signals of what prompts these more stern words in comparison to the less severe tone of most of the previous chapters.³⁵⁹

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

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

The real issue is not of some theoretical issue of authority. That, I suspect, is an issue born mostly of the modern western world's preoccupation with power and control, both inside Christianity and in the surrounding world as well.³⁶⁰ What at stake in Second Corinthians is Paul's relationship with the community as its founder and influence upon the community as a teacher of the

UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 661.]

³⁵⁹Again modern interpreters must severely guard against turning Paul into a post-enlightenment thinker who could not both praise and reprimand his readers in the same letter. The apostle was a product of his own world in both the Jewish and Hellenistic aspects of it. If that means anything, it signals that his thought patterns are in not way going to follow modern trends of thinking. Just a cursory reading of the Greek text of Second Corinthians dramatically illustrates not just this, but also that his thinking when dictating this letter did not function much like it did in most of the rest of his letters, including First Corinthians. The very distinct circumstances behind this letter mandated a different approach to dealing with the Christian community at Corinth at this point in his long term relationship with them. The letter is very personal, it is very emotional, it is packed full of Paul's reaching out to the Corinthians in both positive and negative ways that should characterize one who cared for the Corinthians as much as he did.

³⁶⁰The playing off of these chapters as an issue of apostolic authority has made the maize of partition theories easier for some to adopt.

Gospel. It is very important to note that Paul's claims of power are in reality claims of God's working in his ministry and also in the church.

Observing the way he goes about defending his consistency and faithfulness to the Gospel reflects the wisdom of couching an argument in meaningful and persuasive tones to one's readership, the Corinthians. Much military language is employed by Paul in these chapters, as an example.³⁶¹ What is especially fascinating is the similarities of argument strategy often used by the Greek philosophers against the sophists.³⁶²

One of the really challenging issues in these four

³⁶¹"Metaphors abound in these few verses. There are appeals to the language of military installations (v 4) and soldiers' campaigns (v 5: αἰχμαλωτίζοντες, 'making captive')—these terms seem drawn from the "wars of the Maccabees" literature (see Comment); allusions to the rhetorical schools with their cultivation of arguments (v 5) and reasonings (v 5); and the familiar idiom of the twin ideas of erecting a building and demolishing it (v 8), the latter verb linked with the idea of v 4.37 And possibly a use is made of forensic terminology (v 6: 'to punish every disobedience'; cf. Rom 13:4). This section is carefully crafted, as we see from the assonance of καθαιρούντες, 'demolishing' (v 4), and ἐπιρόμενον, 'opposing' (v 5), and of ὑπακοή, 'obedience' (vv 5–6), and παρακοή, "disobedience" (v 6); the quick succession of metaphors, sometimes mixed (v 5); and the thoughtful positioning of the words, e.g., in the chiasmus of v 11." [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 483.]

³⁶²Also, Paul uses here a style of writing parallel with the devices used by the philosophers in their debate with the sophists.³² In this 'letter of apology' we have several exchanges of arguments used by which the true philosopher was distinguished from the false one or by which genuine leaders in Attic Greece were marked off from the boastful charlatan (γόης, ἀλαζών). The popular way in which such distinctions were drawn included the employment of sarcasm, irony, and parody. (1) Examples of sarcasm and the stronger feature of invective will be seen throughout these chapters, especially in the section 11:1–12:10,33 where Paul's boasting (καύχησις) is designed to show him as self-consciously taking the role of the 'fool' in a highly contrived way.³⁴ Paul's ridicule of his opponents is seen in 10:1–11 in his exaggerated descriptions of their positions as 'fortified vantage points' (v 4), a military metaphor for 'lofty ideas' (v 4) that need to be 'pulled down' (v 4, as Paul has the right to do [v 8]). (2) His irony comes through as he does not directly negate what the opponents say about him; rather he accepts it in an ad hominem way and turns their negative and prejudicial assessment of him into an affirmation of positive and personal credit (e.g., his 'timidity' is a commitment to his preaching of a humiliated, now exalted, Lord.³⁵) (3) The style of parody is illustrated (more clearly in 11:16–33) in the way Paul uses imitatively the literary expressions of his opponents but turns their evaluation of him on its head—a favorite trick of the true philosopher who, like Socrates, appeared innocently to disclaim knowledge of the truth in order to mock his rivals. " [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 483.]



chapters is the identity of those who oppose Paul at Corinth.³⁶³ It is clear that some in Corinth oppose Paul. But it is also clear that some opponents come from outside Corinth and have influenced the thinking of some in the Christian community there. Whether they have a connection to the Judaizers that opposed Paul's preaching and inclusion of Gentiles and were based in Jerusalem or not is debated among commentators.

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

10.2.3.3.1 Apostolic Leadership, 10:1-18

In this initial section, the emphasis falls upon Paul explaining why he is the same person whether absent

³⁶³Note the charting out of references by Harris in the NIGTC:

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

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

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

or present (cf. summary sentence in 10:11). And that such a person does have the ability to speak demandingly the truth of God to the Corinthians. In the discussion of vv. 1-18 especially, the apostle is answering a charge made against him by some in the Corinthian church that he only speaks strongly through his letters because he is not physically present, since when present he is weak and lacks confidence. The core accusation against him is κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας, *living by human standards* (v. 2c). This is linked closely to περί τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν, *about our authorization* (v. 8).³⁶⁴ Not until 12:11 does the possible issue of apostleship surface even indirectly in the discussion with the labeling of his opponents as τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων, *super apostles*. The heart of the issue revolves around his right to treat them as his spiritual children since the Christian community in Corinth originated out of his missionary endeavors, and not those of someone else (10:13-16).

The internal flow of thought goes in two basic directions. Verses 1-11 introduces and defines with broad strokes the core issue of Paul's supposed bold/timid personality. This is especially the focus in vv. 1-6, and the contention of its falseness comes in vv. 7-11. Verses 12-18 then contrasts Paul's legitimate boasting to the illegitimate boasting of his opponents. The difference: Paul boasts about what God is doing, while his opponents boast about their accomplishments.

10.2.3.3.1.1 Consistent boldness from Paul, 10:1-11

In this section the apostle responds to accusations made against him by some in the church at Corinth. First, he defines the content of the accusation (vv. 1-2) and asserts how he functions (vv. 3-6). Then he asserts his consistency between being present and being absent from his readers at Corinth (vv. 7-11).

a) *The accusation, vv. 1-6*

10.1 Αὐτὸς δὲ ἐγὼ Παῦλος παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς διὰ τῆς πραΰτητος καὶ ἐπιεικείας τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς κατὰ πρόσωπον μὲν ταπεινὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀπὼν δὲ θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς· 2 δέομαι δὲ τὸ μὴ παρῶν θαρρῆσαι τῇ πεποιθήσει ἢ λογίζομαι τολμῆσαι ἐπὶ τινὰς τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς ὡς κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας. 3 Ἐν σαρκὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦντες οὐ κατὰ σάρκα στρατευόμεθα, 4 τὰ γὰρ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ πρὸς καθαίρεσιν ὀχυρωμάτων, λογισμοὺς καθαιροῦντες 5 καὶ πᾶν ὕψωμα ἐπαιρόμενον κατὰ τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ

³⁶⁴The English translation of ἐξουσία as "authority" is very misleading and even theologically dangerous. God never transfers His power to another individual. But He does authorize (ἐξουσία) some to act in His behalf under His authority, so long as they carry out His will exclusively. Paul's argument in these chapters hinges completely on his claim to function under God's authorization and leadership, in opposition to the claims of his opponents.



10.1 δὲ
197 **Αὐτὸς ἐγὼ Παῦλος παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς**
 | διὰ τῆς πραΰτητος καὶ ἐπιεικειᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ*,
 | κατὰ πρόσωπον
 ὁς...μὲν ταπεινὸς (ἐστὶν)
 | ἐν ὑμῖν,
 | ἀπῶν
 -- δὲ...θαρρῶ
 εἰς ὑμᾶς·

10.2 δὲ
198 **δέομαι**
 παρῶν
τὸ μὴ...θαρρῆσαι
 τῇ πεποιθήσει
 ἧ λογίζομαι τολμῆσαι
 ἐπὶ τινὰς τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς
 κατὰ σάρκα
 ὡς...περιπατοῦντας.

10.3 γὰρ
 Ἐν σαρκὶ περιπατοῦντες
 οὐ κατὰ σάρκα

199 **στρατευόμεθα,**

10.4 γὰρ
200 **τὰ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ (ἐστὶν)**

ἀλλὰ

201 **--- ----- δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ (ἐστὶν)**
 πρὸς καθάρσεις ὀχυρωμάτων,

202 **λογισμοὺς καθαιροῦντες (ἐσμεν)**

10.5 καὶ
 πᾶν ὑψωμα
 | ἐπαιρόμενον
 | κατὰ τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ,
 | καὶ

203 **αἰχμαλωτίζοντες πᾶν νόημα (ἐσμεν)**
 εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ,
 10.6 καὶ
 ἐν ἑτοίμῳ

204 **(ἐσμεν) ἔχοντες**
 ἐκδικῆσαι πᾶσαν παρακοήν,
 ὅταν πληρωθῇ ὑμῶν ἡ ὑπακοή.

αἰχμαλωτίζοντες πᾶν νόημα εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 6 καὶ ἐν ἑτοίμῳ ἔχοντες ἐκδικῆσαι πᾶσαν παρακοήν, ὅταν πληρωθῇ ὑμῶν ἡ ὑπακοή.

10.1 I myself, Paul, appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ — I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away! — 2 I ask that when I am present I need not show boldness by daring to oppose those who think we are acting according to human standards. 3 Indeed, we live as human beings, but we do not wage war according to human standards; 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not merely human, but they have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments 5 and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ. 6 We are ready to punish every disobedience when your obedience is complete.

The introductory statements in #s 197 and 198 lay the issue on the table with a touch of sarcasm. The very intense beginning expression stresses the high level of importance attached to what Paul is about to say: Αὐτὸς δὲ ἐγὼ Παῦλος παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς..., *And I myself Paul am exhorting you....* One should note that παρακαλέω defines an appeal and not a demand. To read this as introducing apostolic authority is very much in error.³⁶⁵ The

³⁶⁵There is less a note of authoritarian command and more of entreaty (as in Rom 12:1; 15:30; 1 Cor 1:10). Bjerkelund⁴¹ has concluded in regard to Paul's use of clauses with παρακαλέω, 'appeal,' that there the verb has neither a sense of commanding (ἐπιτάσσω) nor a sense of entreaty (δέομαι). παρακαλέω is used by Paul when the question of authority is unproblematic and the apostle can speak to the members of the congregation as his brothers and sisters, knowing that they will acknowledge him as apostle. What is



means of the appeal, διὰ τῆς πραΰτητος καὶ ἐπιεικείας τοῦ Χριστοῦ, **through the meekness and gentleness of Christ**, reinforces the tone of appeal rather than authoritative demand. Paul comes to his Corinthian readers as a spiritual brother and father, not as an authoritative apostle. His objective is to win over these opponents if possible and not to coerce conformity out of them. It has a somewhat similar tone to the appeal of the Macedonians for permission to participate in the relief offering as depicted in 8:4, μετὰ πολλῆς παρακλήσεως δεόμενοι ἡμῶν. The model of Christ's submissiveness to the Father and His gentleness in dealing with others becomes the defining framework for Paul's appeal to the Corinthians.

The heart of the accusation is stated elliptically in a compound relative clause expression: ὃς κατὰ πρόσωπον μὲν ταπεινὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀπὼν δὲ θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς, **who face to face on the one hand am humble in your midst, but when not present am bold toward you**. The ellipsis coupled with an implicit third person frame of reference introduces some sarcasm into the depiction. It is off this relative clause that most of the amplification in the following statements is developed. The concept of ταπεινός is generally considered positive from a biblical perspective (cf. Jas. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5) in the sense of humility as asserted by the noun ταπεινοφροσύνη and the verb ταπεινοφρονέω. But in the Greco-Roman world of Paul it typically was considered to be a weakness and appropriate for compliant slaves and peasants. The adjective ταπεινός, -ή, -όν even in the secular literature can suggest inferior status in society.

The verb θαρρῶ asserts here boldness while not present with the Corinthians (ἀπὼν) ³⁶⁶ Appropriate in view is a type of admonition that takes into account the moral judgment and spiritual independence of the churches.⁴²⁷ [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 484.]. It is interesting to note Martin's internal contradiction of introducing this as "Paul is preparing to assume the mantle of apostolic authority, which is the central theme of concern in these four chapters."

³⁶⁶The term occurs in the two forms θαρρέω, and θαρσέω of which θαρσέω is attested to be the earlier.¹ It has the basic sense of 'to dare,' 'to be bold,' and thence 'to be of good courage,' 'to be cheerful,' 'to be confident,' e.g., θάρρει, Xenoph. *Cyrop.*, V, I, 6; also V, I, 17; Jos. Ant., 7, 266: θάρρει καὶ δεισιγῆς μηδὲν ὡς τεθνηζόμενος. This gives us the further main senses of a. 'to trust in something or someone,' 'to rely on,' e.g., with the dat.: τεθαρσηκότες τοῖς ὄρνισι, Hdt., III, 76; θαρρεῖν τοῖς χρήμασι αὐτοῦ, Greek Pap. from the Cairo Museum (ed. E. J. Goodspeed, 1902), 15, 19 (4th cent. A.D.); with the acc.: οὔτε Φίλιππος ἐθάρρει τούτους οὐθ' οὔτοι Φίλιππον, Demosth., 3, 7; with prep.: ἅμα δὲ θαρρεῖν ἐφ' ἐαντῶ καὶ τῇ διαθέσει, Plut. *Adulat.*, 28 (II, 69d); b. 'to be bold against someone or something,' 'to go out bravely to': θάρρει τὸ τοῦδέ γ' ἀνδρός, Soph. *Oed. Col.*, 649: κρέσσον δὲ πάντα θαρσεόντα, Hdt., VII, 50. Except at Prv. 31:11 (θαρσεῖ ἐπ' αὐτῇ ἢ καρδία τοῦ ἀνδρός αὐτῆς, θαρσεῖν == πρᾶ) the LXX uses the term in the absol.² In the twelve passages in which it is a rendering from the Mas. it is used

confidence is positive, but here the context suggests more the Greco-Roman "take charge" kind of personality. Paul does not spell out whether the implication behind this accusation was that of cowardice or of deception, either of which could be behind this contradictory stance. Some of his further statements may imply incompetence to stand up to opposing arguments face to face. The amplification in vv. 7-11 points in the direction of uncertainty in dealing with people face to face.³⁶⁷ It could well be that each of his responses to this charge targets some aspect that stood behind the accusation of inconsistency. But considerable caution should be exercised to not "psychologize" the text in trying to understand it.

The second assertion (# 198) is more challenging to clearly understand: δέομαι δὲ τὸ μὴ παρῶν θαρρῆσαι τῇ πεποιθήσει ἢ λογίζομαι τολμῆσαι ἐπὶ τινὰς τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς ὡς κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας, **I ask that when I am present I need not show boldness by daring to oppose those who think we are acting according to human standards**. The core verb δέομαι seems unusual here since it denotes rather intensive requesting made to someone. The aorist infinitive phrase, τὸ μὴ παρῶν θαρρῆσαι, used as the direct object to δέομαι is very complexly structured. The negative μὴ links to the infinitive θαρρῆσαι with the literal sense of **to not be courageous**. The temporal present participle παρῶν means **while being present**. Thus far the expression seems to be moving along the lines of Paul asking the Corinthians to allow him 'his timidity' when he is present at Corinth.

The phrase τὸ μὴ παρῶν θαρρῆσαι is then qualified by the impersonal agency idea of τῇ πεποιθήσει with the literal sense of **by boldness**. This noun modifier is then itself modified by the relative clause ἢ λογίζομαι τολμῆσαι ἐπὶ τινὰς τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς ὡς κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας, **by which I am considering to dare to oppose certain ones considering us to be living by the flesh**. At least part of what Paul is getting at seems to be a request of the Corinthians to not force him to be intensely stern with his critics. Implicit in this is the desire to be able to respond to them based on the needs of a face to face encounter, rather than the Corinthians demanding that Paul "mow them down" when he gets to Corinth. The

ten times for καὶ cum negatione and once for πρᾶ. It always means 'to be of good courage,' 'to be confident,' 'not to be afraid.' Almost always we have θαρσεῖν, θαρρεῖν being found only in Da. and 4 Macc.³ In the NT the Evangelists and Ac. have θαρσεῖν, and Pl. and Hb. θαρρεῖν." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 3:25.]

³⁶⁷The early church traditions about his ongoing health issues having severely scared his physical appearance may well have arisen from a particular understanding of this face-to-face timidity. But again concrete evidence of this is lacking.



apostle is more interested in winning them over than in defeating them, and wants the freedom to respond as the situation merits rather than fulfill a set expectations by evidently the majority of the church members, or at least the house church leaders in the city. He refuses to turn this into an 'us vs. them' contest.

Their criticism of Paul grew out of the charge that he and his associates were *κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας*, *living by the flesh*. Precisely what this implies beyond not being in obedience to God is difficult to assess. Perhaps it relates to accusations of Paul using some of the relief offering for himself rather than giving it all to the Jerusalem Christians (cf. chaps 8-9). In 11:4, the apostle accuses at least some in the church have readily adopted a very different version of the Gospel than the one he has preached consistently in his ministry. And the source of this alternative gospel seemingly has come from outsiders arriving in the city rather than being a home grown twisting of the apostolic Gospel. If, as some commentators think, this alludes to Judaizing influences from Jerusalem similar to what Paul faced in the churches of Galatia (Gal. 1:6-9). Then the failure to obey the Torah charge there now equals here *κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας*, *living by worldly standards*.

If the apostle did not move on to more narrowly define what he meant, this broad equating to the two situations would be more workable. But the bold/timid accusation does not fit the equating of these two situations. No such charge against Paul was ever made by the Judaizers at Galatia. The accusations made in Corinth seem to be different from those made against Paul by the Judaizers in Galatia. Plus Paul's response is very different in Second Corinthians than it was in Galatians.

Who these opponents (τινας τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς, *some calculating against us*) were remains as difficult as ever to identify. What they were saying about Paul was identified in verse one with *ὃς κατὰ πρόσωπον μὲν ταπεινὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀπὼν δὲ θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς*, *who is humble/lowly face to face in your midst but when absent is courageous toward you*. This seems to be more a personality issue being judged by worldly standards than any kind of religious teaching issue. Additionally, this surfaces in the accusation against Paul in 10:10, *ὅτι αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν, φησὶν, βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί, ἡ δὲ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενής καὶ ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος*, *For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."* This criticism of his physical appearance could possibly imply that the apostle was scarred or in some way unappealing in his appearance.³⁶⁸ But just as possible is the mean-

³⁶⁸παρουσία ('presence') may refer simply to 'being present,' with τοῦ σώματος emphasizing the actual or personal nature of the presence and ἀσθενής meaning 'weak' in the sense of 'feeble' or 'puny.' Thus, 'when he is actually present he is weak' (Furnish

ing that in his oral delivery the apostle lacked a forceful 'presence' that commanded respect from listeners. Given the Greek emphasis upon rhetorical skills of oral persuasion, this idea is a likely meaning of the accusation leveled at Paul.³⁶⁹ Paul's oratorical skills were perceived to be subpar.

But was this actually true? The exceptional use of very sophisticated Greek rhetorical skills in his writings would argue against this. Also the very existence of the Corinthian Christian community in large part due to his oral preaching of the Gospel would question the validity of this accusation. Yet one must not overlook Paul's earlier depreciation of his oratorical skills in 1 Cor. 2:3-5.³⁷⁰ To be sure, he does not indicate that he could not use them if he had desired to (as 2:6-16 elaborates³⁷¹),

465) or 'when he appears in person he is seen to be but a feeble man' (Cassirer).¹⁷⁶ ἀσθενής would then be almost synonymous with ταπεινός in v. 1. Alternatively, παρουσία may bear a broader meaning that includes the ideas of appearance and demeanor (cf. the English word 'presence'). In this case, as an adjectival or Semitic genitive, τοῦ σώματος will mean 'bodily,' 'personal' or 'physical'¹⁷⁷ and ἀσθενής 'insignificant' or 'unimpressive.' Thus, 'his personal appearance is insignificant' (TCNT, Goodspeed) or 'his personal presence is unimpressive' (Weymouth, NASB).¹⁷⁸ If this whole phrase relates to one of the accepted qualifications for oratorical prowess (see below),¹⁷⁹ this second, alternative view is to be preferred." [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), 699.]

³⁶⁹In the ancient rhetorical handbooks ὑπόκρισις denoted an orator's 'delivery,' which included not only his verbal and elocutionary skills but also his bodily 'presence,' the impression made by his physical appearance, his dress, and his general demeanor.¹⁸² The dual allegation of Paul's adversaries reflects these two aspects of ὑπόκρισις.¹⁸³ [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), 700.]

³⁷⁰1 Cor. 2:1-5. 2.1 Κάγω ἐλθὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἦλθον οὐ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ. 2 οὐ γὰρ ἔκρινά τι εἶδέναι ἐν ὑμῖν εἰ μὴ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον. 3 κάγω ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ καὶ ἐν φόβῳ καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ πολλῷ ἐγενόμην πρὸς ὑμᾶς, 4 καὶ ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου οὐκ ἐν πειθοῦς σοφίας λόγοις ἀλλ' ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως, 5 ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾗ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ.

2.1 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. 4 My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

³⁷¹Yet 2 Cor. 11:6 seems to go the opposite direction: *εἰ δὲ καὶ ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ*, ἀλλ' οὐ τῇ γνώσει, ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ φανερώσαντες ἐν πᾶσιν εἰς ὑμᾶς. *I may be untrained in speech*, but not in knowledge; certainly in every way and in all things we have made this



but he opted to focus on the Gospel contents and let the Holy Spirit take his very human words and turn them into conviction that produced faith commitment to Christ. If this accusation against Paul at Corinth had a non-Jewish Greek source, it came out of the pure Greek culture that put premium emphasis upon oratorical eloquence. Some diaspora Jews might be expecting this, but a religious teacher would more likely be expected to present ideas in the manner of a scribal Jew, which differed dramatically from the Greek expectation.

After getting the issue on the table in vv. 1-2, the apostle begins responding to it in vv. 3-6, a single Greek sentence introduced by γάρ. This sets up the response as justification for raising the issue in the sentence of vv. 1-2.

The first justification comes in statement #199 in v. 3: Ἐν σαρκὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦντες οὐ κατὰ σάρκα στρατευόμεθα, **for although living in the flesh not by the flesh do we wage war.**

10.3 γὰρ
Ἐν σαρκὶ περιπατοῦντες
οὐ κατὰ σάρκα
199 στρατευόμεθα,

Here a sharp contrast between living (περιπατοῦντες) and fighting (στρατευόμεθα) is made. It centers in the two prepositional phrases Ἐν σαρκὶ and οὐ κατὰ σάρκα. The use of the noun σάρξ back to back but in different senses of meaning is effective and dramatic. Also the adjective σαρκικὰ (v. 4) from σαρκικός, -ή, -όν is in the pot as well. The sense of σάρξ here is not literally flesh, nor merely human. The English word physical doesn't translate it well either. To be sure σάρξ stands in contrast to πνεῦμα for Paul. But σάρξ is the depraved human condition as lived out as a human in a physical manner.

In responding the apostle acknowledges that life lived out in the world is Ἐν σαρκὶ for certain. Even though redeemed as long as we physically live (βιώμεν) we live in a tainted body subject to temptation and sin. Only death at the end of our life frees us from this. This Paul acknowledges in the special way he sets up the contrast.

But what believers do not have to do is to fight for right with such human limitations. This is the central point of the main clause οὐ κατὰ σάρκα στρατευόμεθα, **not with the flesh do we fight.** The shift over to a military

evident to you.

But Paul may be using hyperbole here and adopting the side of his opponents for the sake of argument in regard to his oratorical skills. Clearly in his 'boasting' in chapters eleven through thirteen, he does not claim superior oratorical skills to his opponents. Rather he focuses on superior spiritual insights and more extensive suffering of abuse for preaching the Gospel as validation of God's working in his ministry.

image underscores the seriousness of Paul's preaching the Gospel.³⁷² Of course, physical violence is excluded by this statement, in spite of many of Paul's enemies resorting to physical violence against him (cf. 12:23-27). So far as we know, these were non-professing Christian enemies, often from the Jewish synagogue. A dependency upon human oratorical skills of persuasion are also excluded by Paul as he made clear in 1 Cor. 2:3-5.

In the label τὰ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν, **the weapons of our warfare**, no specific weapons are named. Instead, they are characterized first negatively and then positively: οὐ σαρκικὰ ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ, **are not fleshly but powers of God.** The military background for ὄπλον, which is mostly used in the plural ὄπλα as here, denotes mainly siege instruments but was also a generalized term for 'weapons' that included spears, swords, siege engines et als. The term denoted weapons used in both offensive attack and defense. It is in Paul's writings where the term denotes spiritual weapons in a figurative use.³⁷³ The one NT use outside of Paul is in John 18:3 with the literal meaning of soldiers' weapons. The depiction here in 10:4 gives more details than any of the other uses.³⁷⁴

³⁷²The depiction of the Christian life as a military operation (στρατεία, v. 4) is a common theme in Paul.⁶⁶ What is distinctive about 10:3-6 is (1) that the struggle is not simply 'against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms' (Eph. 6:12) but in particular against his rivals at Corinth, and (2) that the military metaphor is sustained, using technical vocabulary drawn from siege warfare.⁶⁷ [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), 676.]

³⁷³**Rom. 6:13** μηδὲ παριστάνετε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὄπλα ἀδικίας τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ, ἀλλὰ παραστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θεῷ ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας καὶ τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὄπλα δικαιοσύνης τῷ θεῷ. **No longer present your members as weapons of unrighteousness leading to sin, but present yourselves to God as those living out of death and your members as weapons for righteousness to God.**

Rom. 13:12 ἡ νύξ προέκοψεν, ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν. ἀποθώμεθα οὖν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκοτοῦς, ἐνδυσώμεθα δὲ τὰ ὄπλα τοῦ φωτός. **The night is far spent. Therefore let us put aside the deeds of darkness and clothe ourselves with the weapons of light.**

2 Cor. 6:7 6 ἐν ἀγνότητι, ἐν γνώσει, ἐν μακροθυμίᾳ, ἐν χρηστότητι, ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ, ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἀνυποκρίτῳ, 7 ἐν λόγῳ ἀληθείας, ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ· διὰ τῶν ὄπλων τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῶν δεξιῶν καὶ ἀριστερῶν, **by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love 7 truthful speech, and the power of God; through the weapons of righteousness for right hands and left,**

2 Cor. 10:4 τὰ γὰρ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ πρὸς καθαίρειν ὀχυρωμάτων, λογισμοὺς καθαιροῦντες, **for the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly but powers of God to bring down strongholds, by destroying arguments.**

³⁷⁴In the NT and early Christian literature ὄπλον is always in the plur. (except at Barn., 12, 2) and it is always used in sense



10.4 γάρ
 200 τὰ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ (ἐστὶν)
 ἀλλὰ
 201 --- ---- ---- ---- ---- δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ (ἐστὶν)
 πρὸς καθαιρέσιν ὀχυρωμάτων,

The negative character asserts that the weapons Paul uses are οὐ σαρκικά, *not fleshly*. At the most basic level of meaning they are not human weapons, either literal weapons used by soldiers, nor figurative weapons such as human rhetoric etc. Implicit clearly in this is a criticism of the accusations against Paul being based on human standards of evaluation. Verse 7-11 amplify what Paul is getting at here.

The positive character of his weapons is that they are δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ, *powers of God*. The possessive dative case use of τῷ θεῷ is unusual. In one sense, his depiction in Rom. 6:13 τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν 202 ὄπλα δικαιοσύνης τῷ θεῷ, *your members as weapons of righteousness to God*, underscores body parts like the tongue as instruments promoting righteousness to God's glory. Here, however, 203 τὰ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν, *denotes weapons for planning and conducting warfare*. The apostle in ministry aggressively confronted false thinking as 204 he found it in his world by presenting the Gospel of Christ as the exclusive solution to the human dilemma. This

confrontation, although done with the tongue and the hand by speaking and writing, was saturated with divine power and leadership. And it was solely seeking to glorify God not any human.

The objective for using these weapons is πρὸς καθαιρέσιν ὀχυρωμάτων, *for the tearing down of strongholds*. This military image pictures the false thinking that Paul encountered in ministry as a well fortified fortress that needs to be destroyed. This one use of ὀχύρωμα inside the NT may very well play off the LXX use of it to refer to the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:3).³⁷⁵

202 λογισμοὺς καθαιροῦντες (ἐσμεν)
 10.5 καὶ
 πᾶν ὑψωμα
 | ἐπαιρόμενον
 | κατὰ τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ,
 | καὶ
 203 αἰχμαλωτίζοντες πᾶν νόημα (ἐσμεν)
 εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ,
 10.6 καὶ
 ἐν ἐτοιμίῳ
 204 (ἐσμεν) ἔχοντες
 ἐκδικῆσαι πᾶσαν παρακοήν,
 ὅταν πληρωθῇ ὑμῶν ἡ ὑπακοή.

3. ('weapon'), lit. only in Jn. 18:3; Barn., 12, 2; Mart. Pol., 7, 1; Cl. Al. Strom., I, 24, 159, 3, otherwise fig., in the NT only in Paul. Paul repeatedly describes his missionary service as *militia Christi* (→ στρατιώτης). In 2 C. 10:4 he emphasises the efficacy of his weapons: τὰ γὰρ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ πρὸς καθαιρέσιν ὀχυρωμάτων. The use of ὄπλα for siege-engines, though not common, is understandable in view of the basic sense. In 2 C. 6:7 the stress is on moral blamelessness: διὰ (= with, → II, 66) τῶν ὄπλων τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῶν δεξιῶν καὶ ἀριστερῶν (weapons of offence and defence). But the *militia Christi* is the task of all the baptised. Hence the admonition: 'Yield not your members as weapons² of unrighteousness (gen. qualitatis = unrighteous weapons) unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as weapons of righteousness unto God,' R. 6:13. Cf. also R. 13:12: 'Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on (on ἐνδύεσθαι τὰ ὄπλα → 293) the weapons³ of light,' i.e., the weapons which are in keeping with the dawning day, cf. 1 Th. 5:8. The proximity of the parousia does not mean feeble peace but final conflict. This fig. use, though prepared in many ways → 293, is characteristic of the NT. The reference is not to the constant battle in the world between reason and what is unnatural, and on that ground immoral, though this may be found in Paul (1 C. 11:13 ff.). It is rather to the transcendental conflict between God and satanic powers, in which man is both passively and actively involved." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 5:294.]

³⁷⁵ ὀχύρωμα is a military tt. for 'fortified place.' It is not used in a transf. sense in class. lit. or the pap.¹ But similar concepts are applied to God in the OT. Mostly the LXX brings out the theological point of comparison, καταφυγή for πῖτϛ in ψ 30:3; 70:3 (A ὀχύρωμα), for צִבְרָה Ps. 9:9 (Σ ὀχυρωμα), ἰσχύς for ἰν, Is. 49:5; Jer. 16:19; βοηθός for ἰν ψ 27:7; 58:17. This method of transl. may be regarded as a concession to Greek modes of thought, which find such comparisons strange.² In three instances, however, the LXX has a fig. sense (as compared with 70 instances of the lit.): at 2 Bas. 22:2 for πῖτϛ, at Job 19:6 for ἰτϛ, and with no Mas. requirement at Prv. 10:29 for ἰτϛ, cf. also ψ 70:3: τόπος ὀχυρός (Heb. uncertain). The ref. is always to God, not to men, as in 2 C. 10:4. On the other hand, there is a ref. to men in Philo Conf. Ling., 129 f., where in a striking linguistic par. and material approximation to Paul ὀχύρωμα denotes the tower of Babel (Gn. 11:3)³ or the tower at Penuel (Ju. 8:9), and vaunting reason is compared with this bastion: τὸ γὰρ κατεσκευασμένον ὀχύρωμα διὰ τῆς τῶς γόγων πιθανότητος οὐδενὸς ἕνεκα ἐτέρου κατεσκευάζετο ἢ τοῦ μετατραπήναι καὶ μετακλιθῆναι διάνοιαν ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ τιμῆς· οὐ τι ἂν γένοιτο ἀδικώτερον; ἀλλὰ πρὸς γε τὴν τοῦ ὀχυρώματος τούτου καθαιρέσιν ὁ πειρατῆς τῆς ἀδικίας καὶ φωνῶν αἰεὶ κατ' αὐτῆς εὐτρέπισται ...

"It is possible that Paul, too, is alluding to the tower of Babel. At any rate his usage corresponds to the LXX. The comparison is designed to bring out the suitability of his spiritual weapons and the apparent strength of the philosophical structure (vv. 4ff.) and of the pretended repute of his opponents in Corinth (1f., 7ff.)."

The participle phrases that follow --καθαιρούντες, αἰχμαλωτίζοντες, and ἔχοντες (vv. 4b-6) amplify and define both the strongholds and the tearing them down by Paul's warfare. The one point that comes through clearly is that the 'strongholds' Paul sets out to tear down are thought / idea strongholds, not physical fortresses.³⁷⁶

The participles standing isolated from a regular verb as the connection base pose a grammar issue, particularly for modern western translators since the Koine Greek is doing something impossible to do in any modern western language grammatically. Modern grammars of ancient Greek will often speak of a Nominative Absolute construction. It is very doubtful that ancient Greek writers and readers would have thought this way. The most natural linkage in this expression is that the three nominative masculine plural participles go back to the first person plural regular verb στρατευόμεθα, *we wage warfare* in v. 3c. Yet the lengthy γὰρ in v. 4a-b stands between the verb and these participle modifiers. For translation this poses a significant barrier. The KJV and a few others place the γὰρ statement in parentheses as a solution. But this incorrectly de-emphasizes the grammatical role of this statement. The alternative is represented in the diagram on the left, but is not completely satisfactory either because the clear linkage to στρατευόμεθα is not fully emphasized either.

Another grammatical issue is the role πᾶν ὑψωμα. Clearly it is in a direct object function but of which participle? καθαιρούντες, or αἰχμαλωτίζοντες? That is, is every obstacle being torn down or taken captive? The parallelism of πᾶν ὑψωμα with πᾶν νόημα is generally ignored by most commentators and results in πᾶν ὑψωμα being set up parallel to λογισμούς. Ultimately the difference in meaning between these two understandings is very little. My view is that the clear parallelism between πᾶν ὑψωμα and πᾶν νόημα links them together as the double direct object of αἰχμαλωτίζοντες.

When taken all together, the general sense of Paul's expression becomes clear. The three participle direct objects -- λογισμούς, πᾶν ὑψωμα, and πᾶν νόημα -- represent aspects of the ὀχυρωμάτων, *strong holds*, that Paul wages war against. They are λογισμούς, i.e., *arguments or reasonings*. The apostle stands fully prepared to shred all the counter arguments against the apostolic Gospel that he comes across, whether

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 5:590-591.]

³⁷⁶This text, for example, provided no basis for western Christianity's crusades in the middle ages by reading strongholds as literal rather than as figurative. In the same way it provides no excuse for right wing extremism in the name of Christianity to burn down churches etc. that are different.

in the Jewish synagogue, in the Greek market place, or in house church groups inside the Christian community. The advocates see these as an ὀχύρωμα, *a fortress*, giving them religious security. But Paul is ready for καθαίρω, the tearing down into destruction of all of these λογισμούς.

Also he is fully prepared for another ὀχύρωμα. He is committed to αἰχμαλωτίζοντες, *capturing*, πᾶν ὑψωμα ἐπαιρόμενον κατὰ τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, *every arrogant obstacle rising up against the knowledge of God*. The noun ὑψωμα literally is 'high thing.' As a military term, it is very close in meaning to ὀχύρωμα since most all fortresses in Paul's world were located on high points of ground. But it also often was an astronomical term referring to perceived deities etc. located above the earth in the religious thinking of that world. Plus in pure figurative use it was close to ἀλαζονεία, *arrogance / pride*, i.e., a bloated sense of self importance. Both the Torah advocates in the synagogues and the philosophy advocates among the Greeks and Romans would have claimed superior knowledge and understanding to the foolishness (μωρία) of the Gospel (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18). But the apostle was ready to overrun in defeating those falling prey to such thinking. They possessed no τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, *knowledge of God*, in spite of their claims. He was ready to take them captive for the Gospel.

Also another ὀχύρωμα was πᾶν νόημα, *every thought / thinking*. The range of meaning for νόημα is extensive and covers the idea of thought, but the process of thinking is covered, along with plans and intentions coming out of thinking. The word is used by Paul in 2 Cor. 2:11; 3:14; 4:4; 10:5; 11:3 in all of these meanings. The ὑψωμα, *arrogant place*, stands as the product of the νόημα, *thinking*, of such people. But the apostle is hunting out such false thinking and is fully prepared to take them / it captive εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *for obedience to Christ*. With the adjective modifier πᾶν added to both nouns it becomes clear that his intention is not just taking a few prisoners in his warfare, but to take capture every one and all their thinking. He well knew that πίστις, *saving faith*, means total surrender to Christ. Achieving this objective was his plan and passion in preaching the Gospel message. And such a surrender means living in obedience to Christ.

This emphasis upon τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *obedience to Christ*, leads to the final ὀχύρωμα, that of πᾶσαν παρακοήν, *every disobedience*. This participle phrase builds off the previous two and centers on confronting an insider ὀχύρωμα. καὶ ἐν ἐτοιμίῳ ἔχοντες ἐκδικῆσαι πᾶσαν παρακοήν, ὅταν πληρωθῇ ὑμῶν ἡ ὑπακοή, *And in readiness possessing the willingness to punish every disobedience, whenever your obedience has reached fullness*. Idiomatic speech dominates here, and thus urges cau-

tion about precise meaning determination. The core expression ἐν ἐτοιμῳ ἔχοντες... seems to be a probable Latinism equivalent to *in promptu habere*. The sense is *I am prepared to...*

Two key parts of it need primary attention first. What does he mean by ἐκδικῆσαι, [to punish](#)? Also, what is the nature of the qualification of this infinitive in the modifying indefinite temporal clause introduced by ὅταν?

The phrase ἐκδικῆσαι πᾶσαν παρακοήν, [to punish every disobedience](#), is intriguing. Paul possessed no ecclesiastical powers enabling him to instigate any kind of punishment on anyone. His influence from example and teaching was the only leverage available to him. Clearly at Corinth, and generally in most of the Pauline churches, the individual house church groups possessed the ability to exclude from participation in the group anyone deemed a trouble maker.³⁷⁷ From the modern western hemisphere perspective of intensive individualism, the potency of exclusion is difficult to grasp adequately. But in the collective orientation of society rather universally in Paul's world, exclusion from participation took on powerful implications. In that world, one did not possess inherit worth. It was determined totally by the social connections the individual possessed. The harshest form of discipline then became exclusion from a group regarded as important.

In 1 Cor. 5, Paul had demanded that an immoral member of the Corinthian community be excluded from participation. In 2 Cor. 2:5-11, the apostle urged the Corinthians to reinstate an offending member who had properly repented of his misdeeds. He focused attention not on himself or his supposed authority. But rather the focus was whether or not individuals were obeying Christ within the teachings of the apostolic Gospel. And it was ultimately up to the house church group and the unity it had with the other groups of believers in the region as to what action they would take. Paul's 'punishment' then was to use his influence with the group to exclude offending members at Corinth. And perhaps also the outsider missionaries who came with a corrupting message to Corinth (cf. 11:12-15). He was

³⁷⁷“διχοστασία. ‘Division,’ ‘disunity,’ ‘contention’: Hdt., V, 75; Plut. Aud. Poet., 4 (II, 20c). Esp. ‘political revolt’ or ‘party dissension’: Solon Fr., 3, 37 (Diehl, I, 24); Theogn., 78 (Diehl, I, 121). LXX, 1 Macc. 3:29: καὶ οἱ φορολόγοι τῆς χώρας ὀλίγοι χάριν τῆς διχοστασίας καὶ πληγῆς ἧς κατεσκεύασεν ἐν τῇ γῆ ...

“In the NT it signifies ‘objective disunity’ in the community. In R. 16:17 it occurs in connection with the σκάνδαλα περὶ τὴν διδασχὴν; in 1 C. 3:3 in B K alongside ζῆλος καὶ ἔρις = τὰ σχίσματα of 1:10; in Gl. 5:20 between ἐριθεῖαι and αἰρέσεις to denote general parties within the church. Probably in these passages, too, διχοστασία has a limited ‘political’ sense. It is within the ἐκκλησία that διχοστασία arise.”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:514.]

committed to helping them turn to Christ in complete obedience. To turn this into a modern day ‘us vs. them’ power play dynamic is to completely miss the point of Paul's words here.

What then does ὅταν πληρωθῇ ὑμῶν ἡ ὑπακοή imply? The indefinite temporal nature of the relative conjunction ὅταν (from ὅτε + ἄν) sets up an undefined time of compliance for the carrying out of his readiness to take disciplinary action. The antonyms παρακοήν, [disobedience](#), and ὑπακοή, [obedience](#), are critical here. Some commentators see in this contrast a clear signal that Paul's readiness to discipline is targeting only the outsider missionaries who will be punished once the wayward Corinthians have gotten their act together. But this doesn't work, since the discipline Paul is ready to take only includes urging the Corinthians to exclude individuals from participating. This corrupting influence must be in order for the Corinthians to come to full obedience to Christ. Far more likely is that the temporal subordinate clause doesn't mark off a future point in time for Corinthian obedience. Instead, it marks off what is essential for compliance that avoids disciplinary action. The apostle then asserts his willingness to work hard against every action of disobedience knowing that eliminating it is essential for gaining full obedience to Christ. His appeals in this letter are part of that opposition to disobedience. His approaching personal visit to Corinth will be another part of it (chap. 13). Then both in his writing and oral speaking directly to the Corinthian community he is fully prepared to oppose strongly every disobedient action he encounters. This is an important part of his στρατεύομεθα (v. 3), waging war against those opposing the Gospel of Christ.

b) Consistency, vv. 7-11

7 Τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον βλέπετε. εἴ τις πέποιθεν ἑαυτῷ Χριστοῦ εἶναι, τοῦτο λογιζέσθω πάλιν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ, ὅτι καθὼς αὐτὸς Χριστοῦ, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς. 8 ἐάν τε γὰρ περισσώτερόν τι καυχῆσωμαι περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν ἢ ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν ὑμῶν, οὐκ αἰσχυνοθήσομαι. 9 ἵνα μὴ δόξω ὡς ἂν ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν· 10 ὅτι αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν, φησὶν, βαρεταὶ καὶ ἰσχυραὶ, ἡ δὲ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενῆς καὶ ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος. 11 τοῦτο λογιζέσθω ὁ τοιοῦτος, ὅτι οἱ οἱ ἐσμεν τῷ λόγῳ δι' ἐπιστολῶν ἀπόντες, τοιοῦτοι καὶ παρόντες τῷ ἔργῳ.

7 Look at what is before your eyes. If you are confident that you belong to Christ, remind yourself of this, that just as you belong to Christ, so also do we. 8 Now, even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it. 9 I do not want to seem as though I am trying to frighten you with my letters. 10 For he says, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and

205^{10.7} **Τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον βλέπετε.**

εἶ τις πέποιθεν ἑαυτῷ Χριστοῦ εἶναι,
206 **τοῦτο λογιζέσθω**
| πάλιν
| ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ,
| καθὼς αὐτὸς Χριστοῦ (ἐστὶν)
ὅτι...οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς (ἐσμεν).

10.8 γὰρ
ἐάν τε περισσότερόν τι καυχήσωμαι
| περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν
| ἧς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος
| εἰς οἰκοδομὴν
| καὶ
| οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν ὑμῶν,

207 **οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι**

10.9 ἵνα μὴ δόξω
ὡς ἂν ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς
διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν·
10.10 ὅτι...φησίν,
αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν (εἰσὶν) βαρεῖαι
καὶ
ἰσχυραί,
δὲ
ἡ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος (ἐστὶν) ἀσθενῆς
καὶ
ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος (ἐστὶν).

208^{10.11} **τοῦτο λογιζέσθω ὁ τοιοῦτος,**

| τῷ λόγῳ
| δι' ἐπιστολῶν
ὅτι οἷοί ἐσμεν...ἀπόντες,
καὶ
τοιοῦτοι (ἐσμεν) παρόντες
τῷ ἔργῳ.

his speech contemptible.” 11 Let such people understand that what we say by letter when absent, we will also do when present.

The apostle now builds off the previous point, especially in vv. 3-6, to assert his genuineness of commitment to Christ and calling to ministry. He does it very distinctly here and in confrontation with opponents in Corinth who are questioning Paul’s Christian claims.³⁷⁸

The internal thought structure is built around the first two assertions (#s 205 & 206) followed by a defense of them (#s 207 & 208). A challenge first to all his readers (# 205) is followed by challenges to his opponents at Corinth (#s 206, 208).

378 “The Corinthians’ preoccupation with outward appearances matched that of sophists concerned with proper and persuasive speech, but true philosophers constantly ridiculed this attitude (4:16–18). The more well-to-do members of the Corinthian church were enamored with Greek philosophy; Paul thus rebukes them on their own terms here.” [Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 2 Co 10:7.]

The initial assertion in statement # 205 (v. 7a) can be taken grammatically three ways: a declaration, a question, or a command.³⁷⁹ The last option is pref-

³⁷⁹“Τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον βλέπετε. “Look at what is staring you in the face.” In relation to its object, βλέπετε has been understood in three ways:

“1. As an indicative, expressing a question. ‘Do you look to what can be seen outwardly (Bultmann 187)?’¹⁰⁵ Whether the clause is rendered this way, or, as Isaacs proposes in his paraphrase, ‘Have you regard only for that which meets the eye?’ the implied reproof may allude to 5:12 with its reference to those who pride themselves on appearances and externals.

“2. As an indicative, making a statement. ‘You are looking at the outward appearance of things’ (GNB),¹⁰⁶ again with a possible allusion to 5:12. The Corinthians’ failure was that they had restricted vision, seeing only externals; they needed to look below the surface and see deeper realities. Their preoccupation with the confident claims of the Judaizing interlopers regarding their commendation from Jerusalem (cf. 3:1), their status as servants of Christ and of righteousness (11:15, 23), and their pure pedigree (11:22), needed to be replaced by sane judgment based on more adequate criteria for determining genuine apostleship. This interpretation



erable because the second plural idiomatic usage of βλέπετε is uniformly the present imperative spelling of the verb elsewhere in Paul's writings. Its general nature also sets up the other two admonitions directed specifically to individual opponents at Corinth.

Both the indicative and interrogative understandings of the verb mood of βλέπετε require a meaning for τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον that is different and less likely. The sense becomes the outward things or appearances. This has to be understood against the backdrop of his accusation in 5:12 referring to some at Corinth τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους καὶ μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ, **who are boasting of outward appearances rather than looking in the heart.** But the broader neuter plural τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον here rather than the masculine plural τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους (5:12), along with different prepositions, further argues for the consistent imperative use of the verb rather than either the declarative or interrogative use. The neuter gender form thus becomes literally: **look at the things in front of your face!**³⁸⁰ These things are then defined in the following statements.

The second assertion in # 206 challenges individuals in opposition to Paul at Corinth to acknowledge that he knows the Lord just as well as they claim. Actually, the first person plural ἡμεῖς signals that the accusations were being leveled at Paul's associates along with him.

206 εἴ τις πέποιθεν ἑαυτῷ Χριστοῦ εἶναι,
 τοῦτο λογιζέσθω
 | πάλιν
 | ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ,
 | καθὼς αὐτὸς Χριστοῦ (ἐστίν)
 ὅτι...οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς (ἐσμεν).

recalculate. This then becomes the key launch pad for the much more detailed causal expression introduced by the causal γάρ (v. 8) that is found in vv. 8-10.³⁸¹

accords with the wider context but has one drawback. If Paul were contrasting how the Corinthians were viewing matters (v. 7a) with how they ought to be (v. 7b), an adversative such as ἀλλά might have been expected in v. 7b (cf. Héring 71).

"3. As an imperative. 'Look at what is before your eyes' (RSV, NRSV) or 'Look facts in the face' (NEB, REB).¹⁰⁷ Strong support for this view comes from the fact that the verbal form βλέπετε is always imperatival in Paul. Elsewhere it stands first in its clause,¹⁰⁸ but we may account for the unusual word order here by assuming that Paul wishes to emphasize the stark reality of the evidence confronting the Corinthians. This imperative may mean 'Look at!' 'Notice!' (BAGD 143d), or 'Be alert to' (Furnish 465).¹⁰⁹"

[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), 686–687.]

³⁸⁰The difference can perhaps be seen more clearly in the diagramming of the two expressions:

5:12, ἐν προσώπω
 τοὺς...καυχωμένους
 καὶ
 ----- μὴ (καυχωμένους)
 ἐν καρδίᾳ
 10:7
 Τὰ
 κατὰ πρόσωπον

The attempt was to discredit the apostolic Gospel in favor of a corrupt view of the teaching of Christ. Thus Paul and all associated with him were targets.

At this point Paul doesn't dismiss these people as phony Christians but rather comes at the issue from a different angle: τοῦτο λογιζέσθω πάλιν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ, ὅτι καθὼς αὐτὸς Χριστοῦ, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς. **Let him calculate this again for himself, that just as he belongs to Christ so also do we.** To his Corinthian critics he speaks individually challenging them to acknowledge a second time, as they already have earlier (πάλιν), that Paul and his associates are true followers and messengers of Christ just as each critic claims to be. The first class conditional protasis εἴ τις πέποιθεν ἑαυτῷ Χριστοῦ makes the assumption that the individual critics are claiming Christianity for themselves. Since they are clearly making this claim, the challenge is to reaffirm acknowledgment of Paul and his associates' Christian commitment just as they did earlier.

The ὅτι clause here in Greek has a multifaceted role that is impossible to preserve in English translation. Grammatically it stands as the antecedent to the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο defining what the critic is challenged to calculate (λογιζέσθω) for himself (ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ). But the dominate causal role for ὅτι also allows it to state a foundational basis for the challenge to

8 εἰάν τε γὰρ περισσώτερόν τι καυχῆσωμαι περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν, ἢς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν ὑμῶν, οὐκ αἰσχυρθήσωμαι, 9 ἵνα μὴ δόξω ὡς ἂν ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν· 10 ὅτι Αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν, φησὶν, βαρεῖται καὶ ἰσχυραί, ἡ δὲ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενῆς καὶ ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος.³⁸²

8 Now, even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for tearing

³⁸¹The incorrect placing of a period (major stop) after αἰσχυρθήσωμαι by N-A 28th makes no sense whatsoever. Clearly the subordinate negative purpose clause introduced by ἵνα μὴ... modifies αἰσχυρθήσωμαι, as is illustrated in the above [diagram of vv. 7-11](#). A comma should have been used (minor stop) instead. See the *SBL Greek New Testament* edition for the correct punctuation here.

³⁸²The Greek text cited here is from Holmes, Michael W. *The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition*. Lexham Press; Society of Biblical Literature, 2011–2013. This edition does a better job punctuating these expressions with modern punctuation marks. Remember that the original text composed in uncial letters had no punctuation indications of any kind. There were just unending rows of Greek capital uncial letters with no spaces between words or punctuation marks of any kind.

10.8	γάρ	ἐάν τε περισσότερον τι καυχῆσωμαι	περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν
			ἧς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος
			εἰς οἰκοδομὴν
			καὶ
			οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν ὑμῶν,
207	οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι		
10.9	ἵνα μὴ δόξω	ὡς ἂν ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς	
		διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν·	
10.10		ὅτι...φησίν,	αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν...(εἰσὶν) βαρεῖται
			καὶ
			ἰσχυραί,
			δὲ
		ἡ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος (ἐστὶν) ἀσθενῆς	
		καὶ	
		ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος (ἐστὶν).	

you down, I will not be ashamed of it. 9 I do not want to seem as though I am trying to frighten you with my letters. 10 For they say, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.”

The NRSV translation above does what is necessary in translating, i.e., it breaks down the not overly long Greek sentence into three much shorter English sentences. Critical in such a translation process is to try to preserve as much as possible the inner connections of what is isolated out into a single English sentence to the rest of the single Greek sentence. Although some distortion occurs in this process here, it isn't nearly as bad as one often finds in Bible translations. The primary distortion occurs in maintaining proper balance between secondary and primary level idea expression contained in the original Greek sentence.³⁸³

The clear core affirmation as shown in the diagram is Paul's declaration οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι, **I will not be ashamed / embarrassed**. One must remember that Paul's assertion comes against the backdrop of the honor / **shame cultural** dynamic of his first century world.³⁸⁴ To

³⁸³English translations get away with this distortion in large part because English language readers typically are not trained to listen for this conceptual balance of thoughts. But in ancient Greek rhetoric this was a very important aspect of both public speaking and formal writing. The final revision of a written text before being released was the hardest and most time consuming, that of shifting around words and phrases in order to achieve the best rhetorical balancing of ideas possible.

³⁸⁴“The binary pair ‘honour and shame’, or ‘shame and guilt’, familiar from anthropological studies, has begun to appear in interpretations of ancient literature with increasing frequency. Some important examples on literature from Classical Greece, for instance, include Dodds’s chapter ‘From Shame-Culture to Guilt-Culture’ in his *The Greeks and the Irrational* (1951); Winkler’s *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (1990); Fisher’s *Hybris: A Study in the Values of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greece* (1993); Gérard’s *The Phaedra Syndrome: Of Shame and Guilt in Drama* (1993); and Cairns’s *Aidōs: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek*

be sure differing cultural dynamics across the Mediterranean world of the first century defined the content of both honor and shame by way of actions and appearances reflecting either and appropriate responses to these reflections.³⁸⁵ Very few items would be held in **common across these cultures**.³⁸⁶ But at least two *dys* *Literature* (1993). Biblical literature, too, has become a focus—especially since the 1990s. Particularly in interpretations of the New Testament and Apocrypha, both the pairing of shame with honour and the argument that the social structures described in modern Mediterranean field studies reach far back in time and are discernible in biblical texts, persist. With regard to the Hebrew Bible, the reception of anthropological evaluations has been moderately more reserved.” [Johanna Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible: The Prophetic Contribution*, vol. 346, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (London; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 29.]

³⁸⁵“The honor-shame value complex was very much a part of the everyday lives of men and women in the ancient Mediterranean world. People found their places in society based upon factors such as status, gender, reputation, and their networks of associations. Moreover, there was very little social mobility. People of the higher classes generally remained there for their entire lives, enjoying the privilege that came with their social rank. Likewise, those among the lower classes normally lived out their lives within the confines of their station. Yet it was possible to challenge the criteria by which people were assigned their places in society. Specific groups could, so to speak, change the rules of the honor-shame game. Within a particular group, the common markers of high honor and status might be rejected in favor of new criteria. “[David F. Watson, *Honor among Christians: The Cultural Key to the Messianic Secret* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 64.]

³⁸⁶For further study on this sociological dynamic in the ancient world see:

A. W. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960); D. A. deSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (SBLDS 152; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995a); idem, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000); idem, *The Hope of Glory: Honor Dis-*

namics were universal in Paul's world.³⁸⁷ The collective

course and New Testament Interpretation (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999); idem, "Investigating Honor Discourse: Guidelines from Classical Rhetoricians," *SBLSP* 36 (1997) 491–525; idem, "The Noble Contest: Honor, Shame and the Rhetorical Strategy of 4 Maccabees," *JSP* 13 (1995b) 31–57; idem, "The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Honor, Shame and the Maintenance of the Values of a Minority Culture," *CBQ* 58 (1996a) 433–55; idem, "Worthy of His Kingdom: Honor Discourse and Social Engineering in 1 Thessalonians," *JSNT* 64 (1996b) 49–79; E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966); B. J. Malina and J. H. Neyrey, "Conflict in Luke-Acts: Labeling and Deviance Theory," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. J. H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991a) 97–124; idem, "Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. J. H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991b) 25–66; H. Moxnes, "Honor and Righteousness in Romans," *JSNT* 32 (1988b) 61–77; idem, "Honor and Shame," *BTB* 23 (1993) 167–76; idem, "Honor, Shame and the Outside World in Paul's Letter to the Romans," in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism*, ed. J. Neusner et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988a) 207–18; J. H. Neyrey, "Despising the Shame of the Cross: Honor and Shame in the Johannine Passion Narrative," *Semeia* 68 (1996) 113–37; idem, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998); idem, *2 Peter, Jude* (AB 37C; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1993); J. Pitt-Rivers, "Honor and Social Status," in *Honor and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. J. G. Peristiany (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1965) 21–77; B. Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1993).

[D. A. deSilva, "Honor and Shame," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 521–522.]

³⁸⁷ Greco-Roman manuals on rhetoric attest to the importance of honor and to the way an orator would play on the audience's desire for honor in order to achieve persuasion (deSilva 1995a; 1995b; 1999). An audience could be won to the orator's recommended course of action (deliberative rhetoric) if the orator demonstrated that it would lead to honor or to greater honor than an alternative course being promoted by a rival (Aristotle *Rhet.* 1.9.35–36; *Eth. Nic.* 2.3.7; *Quintilian Inst. Orat.* 3.7.28; 3.8.1; *Pseudo-Cicero Rhet. Ad Herenn.* 3.2.3). Conversely, showing how a certain course of action would result in dishonor created a strong deterrent. Another rhetorical genre, epideictic rhetoric, was associated with the praise and censure of particular individuals or groups. Orators reinforced society's values by holding up as praiseworthy those people who had exemplified a particular value. Hearing others praised—that is, honored—led the hearers to recommit themselves to the virtue or behavior that led to praise. Similarly, hearing some person censured or reproached would lead hearers to beware of falling into those behaviors that led to reproach and loss of honor. The two genres often work together, as orators, including the NT authors, use examples to illustrate the benefits of following or dangers of departing from the course they promote." [D. A. deSilva, "Honor and Shame," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 519.]

culture defined honor and shame by the society and not the individual.³⁸⁸ The separate individual did not determine either what constituted these nor whether he or she might possess either honor or shame. One's status in any of the societies was powerfully determined by perceived honor and/or shame by the society.³⁸⁹ Func-

388 "Honor refers to the public acknowledgment of a person's worth, granted on the basis of how fully that individual embodies qualities and behaviors valued by the group. First-century Mediterranean people were oriented from early childhood to seek honor and avoid disgrace, meaning that they would be sensitive to public recognition or reproach. Where different cultures with different values existed side by side, it became extremely important to insulate one's own group members against the desire for honor or avoidance of dishonor in the eyes of outsiders, since only by so doing could one remain wholly committed to the distinctive culture and values of the group. This struggle is particularly evident in the NT, as church leaders seek to affirm the honor of Christians on the basis of their adherence to Jesus while insulating them from the disapproval they face from non-Christian Jews and Gentiles alike." [D. A. deSilva, "Honor and Shame," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 518.]

³⁸⁹ The first-century Mediterranean was far from monolithic: within a dominant Romanized Hellenistic culture, one found the ethnic subculture of Judaism, philosophical schools and the Christian minority culture, among others. All of these groups defined what was honorable or dishonorable in different ways. Even if groups agreed that piety was an essential virtue and component of honor, different groups defined piety quite differently (respect for the traditional gods and the emperor; worship of the God of Israel through observance of Torah; worship of the God of Jews and Gentiles through obedience to Jesus). Even within groups, there would be differences (e.g., Paul's conflicts with Christian Judaizers).

"In such a world, it became essential to define carefully who constituted one's group of significant others—those people whose approval or disapproval mattered—and to insulate group members from concern about the honor or dishonor in which they were held by outsiders (Seneca *Const.* 13.2, 5; Epictetus *Ench.* 24.1; Moxnes 1993). If one seeks status in the eyes of the larger society, one will seek to maintain the values and fulfill the expectations of the dominant (pagan) culture. If one has been brought into a minority culture (e.g., a philosophical school or a voluntary association like the early Christian community) or has been born into an ethnic subculture (such as Judaism), then one's adherence to the group's values and ideals will remain strong only if one redefines the constituency of one's circle of significant others. The court of reputation must be limited to group members, who will support the group values in their grants of honor and censure (Plato *Cri.* 46C–47D). Including some suprasocial entity in this group (e.g., God, reason or nature) offsets the minority (and therefore deviant) status of the group's opinion. The opinion of one's fellow group members is thus fortified by and anchored in a higher court of reputation, whose judgments are of greater importance and more lasting consequence than the opinion of the disapproving majority or the dominant culture (Plato *Gorg.* 526D–527A; Epictetus *Diss.* 1.30.1; *Sir* 2:15–17; 23:18–19; *Wis* 2:12–3:5; 4:16–5:8; 4 *Macc* 13:3, 17; 17:5). Both Greco-Roman philosophers and Jewish authors routinely point to the opinion of God as a support for the minority culture's values.



tioning in shame would at minimum bring some level of exclusion from the society along with often very punitive physical punishments, e.g., the wife having her hand cut off because of trying to defend her husband a certain way (cf. Deut. 25:11-12).

To deny shame against a public accusation of it was complicated in Paul's world. This is exactly what the apostle is seeking to do here in 10:8-10. Both persuasive speech and appeal to what was already known about him were critical strategies in winning over his critics in the church at Corinth. Ancient Greek rhetoric had pretty much defined both the content and framing of persuasive speech for Paul's world outside Judea. To understand Paul then requires some awareness of what this was, especially because much of what was persuasive in Paul's day would not be considered so in modern western society.

Such an analysis must consider whether the speaker is speaking to definitions of honor and shame held by the minority group he is addressing. Or, whether he is affirming honor within the definition of honor by the larger society that he and his listeners belong to.³⁹⁰ Also

Both admonish group members to remain committed to the group's values, for that is what God looks for and honors in a person." [D. A. deSilva, "Honor and Shame," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 519–520.]

³⁹⁰"Honor is depicted in the NT as the result of a life of loyalty to Jesus and obedience to his teachings and example (Mt 10:32–33; Jn 12:26; 2 Tim 4:7–8). Commitment and service to fellow believers (Mt 20:25–28), witnessing to the favor of God in Christ (Rev 20:4–6) and embodying the mind of Christ, which seeks the interest of others (Phil 2:5–11), are promoted as the path to honor. The approval of God and God's Messiah, typically announced at a last judgment but also affirmed in the present by early Christian authors, alone matters for the establishment of one's honor (Mt 25:14–46; 2 Cor 5:9–10). Believers are urged to encourage and honor one another as each embodies the attributes of Christian discipleship (Phil 2:29–30; 1 Thess 5:12–13; Heb 10:24–25) and are reminded frequently of the honor they have inherited as "children of God" (Jn 1:12–13; Rom 8:14–17; Gal 3:26; Heb 2:10; 1 Jn 3:1–2) and "partners of Christ" (Heb 3:6, 14). They were called as well to honor their divine Patron and their Mediator in their lives (1 Cor 6:20) and to take care not to show contempt for the Giver by undervaluing the gift as this would result in their own dishonor before God's court (Heb 10:26–31).

"The Greco-Roman society frequently reacts against these communities, often informally by insulting, reproaching, abusing and harassing the Christians (Heb 10:32–34; 1 Pet 2:11–12; 4:1–4). These represent society's attempts to draw the believers back to a life in line with traditional Greco-Roman virtues (e.g., piety, expressions of civic loyalty through cult). Similar pressures could be brought to bear on Christian Jews by the synagogue (Jn 12:42–43; Acts 5:40–41; Rev 2:9). Christian authors, however, sought to insulate the believers from these attempts at shaming by presenting persecution as expected (Mt 10:24–25; 24:9–10; Jn 16:2–4; 1 Thess 3:3–4), as a contest in which an honorable victory may be won (Heb 12:1–4; Rev 2:26–28; 12:10–11) or as an imitation of

is the speaker accepting definitions of honor held by his minority group listeners? Or, is he advocating new definitions of honor and shame to be adopted by his minority group listeners? Motivations for seeking honor and avoiding shame must be analyzed. In Paul's world, those motivations usually centered around gaining and/or avoiding the loss of personal power and wealth. That is, they tended to be particularly self serving for the individual rather than concerned for the welfare of the group. But such pretensions had to be cleverly disguised in the presentation.³⁹¹

the passion of Jesus that held the assurance of the same vindication Jesus enjoyed (Mt 5:11–12; Rom 8:17; Phil 1:29; 2:5–11; 3:10–11; 2 Tim 2:11–12; Heb 12:1–2; 1 Pet 3:18–22; 4:13–14). Close bonds between believers (e.g., as 'brothers and sisters') were essential, for relationships within the group had to be of greater importance for the individual than relationships outside the group. Exhortations directed at augmenting love, encouragement and support within the group (1 Thess 4:9–10; 5:11, 14; Heb 3:13; 10:24–25; 13:1–3) aim at making the Christian court of reputation stronger than the opinion of the outside world, so that individual believers might remain committed to the way of the cross."

[D. A. deSilva, "Honor and Shame," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 521.]

³⁹¹"Where the values and commitments of a minority culture differ from those of a dominant or other alternative culture, members of that minority culture must be moved to disregard the opinion of nonmembers about their behavior (Seneca Const. 11.2–12.1; Epictetus Diss. 1.29.50–54). All groups will seek to use honor and disgrace to enforce the values of their particular culture, so each group must insulate its members from the pull of the opinion of nonmembers. Those who do not hold to the values and the construals of reality embodied in the group are excluded from the court of reputation as shameless or errant—approval or disapproval in their eyes must count for nothing, as it rests on error, and the representative of the minority culture can look forward to the vindication of his or her honor when the extent of that error is revealed (e.g., at a last judgment; 4 Macc 11:4–6; 12:11–13). When, for example, the dominant Greco-Roman culture holds a group like the Jews in contempt, the effect is a constant pressure upon individual Jews to give up their Jewishness and join in those behaviors that will then be greeted as honorable by the members of the dominant culture. Jewish authors will urge their fellow Jews to set their hearts on the opinion of the congregation and the opinion of God and so be able to resist the pull of the Gentile world.

"Members of this clearly defined court of reputation must have frequent and meaningful interaction within the group. They must encourage one another to pursue group values and ideals and honor one another on that basis. Those who begin to show signs of slackening in their commitment to the values of the group out of a growing regard for the opinion of outsiders must be made to feel ashamed by the members of the group and thus pulled back from assimilation. Such people will need reminders that the realm outside the group is also outside the sphere of God's approval (Moxnes 1988). Encouragement within the group must outweigh the discouragement that comes to the individual from outside the group. Relationships within the group—the sense of connectedness and belonging so essential to the social being—must offset



10.9 ἵνα μὴ δόξω

ὡς ἂν ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς

διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν·

10.10

ὅτι...φησίν,

αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν...(εἰσὶν) βαρεῖαι

καὶ

ἰσχυραί,

δὲ

ἡ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος (ἐστὶν) ἀσθενῆς

καὶ

ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος (ἐστὶν).

Thus the contextual sense of οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι is **I will not be shamed** for talking about the authorization from God to ministry that I received. The third class protasis defines the point of potential shaming of Paul by his Corinthian opponents: **ἐάν τε γὰρ περισσότερόν τι καυχῆσομαι περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν ἣς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν ὑμῶν, for if indeed I boast somewhat overly concerning our authorization which the Lord gave for building up and not for tearing you down.** The third class protasis in the conditional sentence in a polemical setting like here presents a hypothetical scenario as possible. Very wisely the ball is put in the court of his readers to decide whether he is boasting περισσότερόν τι, **somewhat overly**. Also the framing of the potential point of shaming is presented in such a positive way that his opponents would be questioning God, if they sought to shame Paul.³⁹² Some evidently

the sense of disconnectedness and alienation from the society that, in the case of converts, formerly provided one's primary reference group. The negative opinion of outsiders may even be transformed into a badge of honor within the group, often through the use of athletic metaphors: insult and abuse become a competition in which the minority culture's members must endure unto victory (4 Macc 16:16; 17:11–16; Heb 10:32). Group members are still encouraged to fulfill their desire for honor, but in terms of how the group defines honorable behavior. Thus Jews, for example, are encouraged to seek honor through obedience to Torah and enabled to resist the pressure exerted upon them by the dominant culture's contempt (Sir 10:19–24; 25:10–11; 41:6–8; deSilva 1996a)."

[D. A. deSilva, "Honor and Shame," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 520–521.]

³⁹²Against the backdrop of larger society values of honor and also minority group values of honor, Paul's critics at Corinth were claiming his lack of honor by his so-called weak physical presence when among them. This represents traditional Roman and Greek shaming values since honor values means a person in leadership must be strong, forceful, and very much in charge. For Paul to not come in with gang buster methods meant he was weak and lacking proper honor, from a secular Greek perspective. For him to then adopt the 'strong' stance just through his letters when not present among them represented great shaming of himself in their eyes. Such destroyed any credibility he had when present among them -- at least in their thinking. At minimum it exposed inconsistency and thus negated any honoring of him.

The apostle vigorously attacks this system of honoring and

had questioned his divine calling and saw it only as destructive to them. But Paul insists that his divine calling was intended **εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν ὑμῶν, for building up and not tearing you down.** God in no way authorized him to shut down churches by preaching the Gospel. Just the opposite. And past history in his ministry, even at Corinth, confirmed this even to his harshest critics. Plus this building up remains behind his words of exhortation and rebuke to them even in this letter.

The negative purpose clause in verse nine negates any shaming criticism about the blunt tone of his letters to them: **ἵνα μὴ δόξω ὡς ἂν³⁹³ ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν, lest I seem as though frightening you through the letters.**

The key here is the infinitive ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς, **to be frightening you.**³⁹⁴ The verb ἐκφοβέω is only used here in the NT, and the parallel adjective form ἐκφοβος, -ον is not used by Paul (2x in NT: Mk. 9:6 and Heb. 12:21).³⁹⁵ The

shaming by contending it doesn't understand what he is seeking to achieve both in the letters and also in the personal visits. A completely new set of honor/shame values must be adopted by the minority Christian group at Corinth. And the core value principle of evaluating honor / shame must revolve around whether Paul was carrying out his divine authorization (τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν ἣς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος) for ministry properly both in his letters and in his visits. Note that the first plural 'our' includes his associates in this process as well.

³⁹³ὡς ἂν, sometimes written ὡσάν, may be translated in any one of three ways: 'as if,' where ἂν probably = ἐάν (Robertson 959), 'as it were' (Moulton 167), or 'so to speak' (Thrall 597). The expression should be construed with ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς, toning down the effect of that strong verb, 'to be trying to scare you to death,¹⁵⁴ so to speak,' rather than with δόξω, 'give the appearance as it were.'¹⁵⁵ [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), 696.]

³⁹⁴ἐκφοβέω *einschüchtern; erschrecken*

ἐκφοβος, ον *erschreckt; verstört*"

Rudolf Kassühlke and Barclay M. Newman, *Kleines Wörterbuch Zum Neuen Testament: Griechisch-Deutsch* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997), 59.]

³⁹⁵ἐκφοβεῖν is a NT hapax legomenon although it is not uncommon in the LXX (fourteen uses) where on six occasions it is found in the stylized phrase οὐκ ἔσται ὁ ἐκφοβῶν, 'no one will terrify you.'¹⁵³ The prefix ἐκ- may have a causative force (Robert-



sense is of intense fright and/or shock.³⁹⁶ Paul disavows the use of ‘shock therapy’ of any kind in order to get the Corinthians to obey Christ. That is, a true servant of God does not try to scare people into serving God! His bluntness in his letters is not intended to frighten but to lay the bare truth on the table before the Corinthians. The spiritual shift from the apostolic Gospel to the twisted teaching of his opponents was far greater and dangerous than his readers understood. He would have been less than honest to have not called this to their attention. Add to that the dynamism of the issues being treated from the time of his last visits to the writing of the letters³⁹⁷ necessitated different response emphases.

The subordinate causal clause introduced by ὅτι provides most naturally an explanation for his not wanting to frighten the Corinthians.³⁹⁸ The core ὅτι...φησίν, **because...he is saying**, alludes to the criticism of his Corinthian opponents, perhaps echoing that of his outsider critics. Very unlikely in my opinion is the nebulous “man sagt” or “it is said.”³⁹⁹ The third plural alternative

son 597), ‘cause to be afraid,’ ‘frighten,’ but more probably it is intensive, ‘terrify’ or ‘frighten to distraction’ (Hughes 361 n. 17), ‘scare to death’ (Furnish 468). In this case the rendering ‘overawe’ (TCNT, Moffatt, Cassirer) or ‘intimidate’ (NAB1; Thrall 597) is perhaps too mild.” [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), 695–696.]

³⁹⁶ἐκφοβέω 1 aor. ἐξεφόβησα; pf. pass. ptc. ἐκπεφοβημένος LXX (s. φοβέομαι and next entry; Trag., Thu. et al.; PLond II, 342, 9 P. 174 [185 A.D.]; Sb 4284, 10 ἐκφοβῶν ἡμᾶς; LXX; En; TestAbr A 16 P. 97, 5 [Stone P. 42]; Jos., Bell. 1, 492, Ant. 2, 82) **to cause to be intensely afraid, frighten, terrify** τινὰ διὰ τινος someone w. someth. **2 Cor 10:9**.—DELG s.v. φέβομαι II. M-M.

ἐκφοβος, **ov pert. to being intensely afraid, terrified** (s. ἐκφοβέω; Aristot., Physiogn. 6 P. 812b, 29; Plut., Fab. 178 [6, 8]) ἐκφοβοὶ ἐγένοντο they became terrified **Mk 9:6**; w. ἔντρομος **Hb 12:21** (cp. Dt 9:19).—S. Frisk s.v. φέβομαι. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 312.]

³⁹⁷“The letters referred to in vv. 9 and 10 could include the ‘previous letter’ of 1 Cor. 5:9, 11 and 1 Corinthians itself, but the main allusion will be to the ‘severe letter’ mentioned in 2 Cor. 2:3–4; 7:12 with its apparent demand for the summary punishment of the offending church member.¹⁶⁵⁷” [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), 698.]

³⁹⁸The ὅτι could possibly link back to δόξω or οὐκ αἰσχυρθήσομαι, but most naturally in the grammar the closest possible modifying candidate is the best choice.

³⁹⁹“The singular verb (φησίν) could point to the allegation of an imaginary objector, in the tradition of the ‘diatribe’,¹⁶⁶ thus ‘Someone will say’ (GNB). Paul is certainly capable of creating a lengthy and detailed theological objection to be answered (see,

reading φάσαν certainly points to an early understanding of it referencing his opponents.⁴⁰⁰ The third singular φησίν maintains the consistent reference to his opposition ὁ τοιοῦτος, **such a person**, in v. 11. That he has a group of people in mind is clear from τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοῦς συνιστανόντων, **some of those commending themselves** (v. 12) and τινὰς τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς, **some evaluating us** (v. 2). The third singular focuses on a single voice for the critics. Whether a spokesman for this group is envisioned by the singular form cannot be determined. Also undefined is whether the ultimate source of the criticism comes from within the Corinthian community, or from the outside false teachers who had come to Corinth. It was, however, being voiced against Paul from the Corinthian opponents.

What was the criticism? The content of the ὅτι clause defines it in fair detail: ὅτι αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν, φησίν, βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραὶ, ἡ δὲ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενῆς καὶ ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος. **His letters, on the one hand, they say, are weighty and strong, but on the other hand his physical presence is weak and his message is contemptible.**

This more detailed expression repeats the shorter stating in v. 1, ὃς κατὰ πρόσωπον μὲν ταπεινὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀπὼν δὲ θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς, **who am humble face to face with you but when absent am bold toward you**. The contrast between ταπεινὸς and θαρρῶ now is framed βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραὶ along with ἀσθενῆς and ἐξουθενημένος. Also κατὰ πρόσωπον, **face to face**, becomes ἡ δὲ παρουσία, **his presence**, and ὁ λόγος, **his speaking**. Then ἀπὼν, **although not present**, becomes αἱ ἐπιστολαί, **his letters**.⁴⁰¹

e.g., Rom. 3:7), but it seems inconceivable that he would provide such a convenient tool of self-disparagement for his antagonists to use against him, when he normally avoids citing the criticism of his detractors verbatim, lest the very repetition of a charge should actually reinforce it. Rather, φησίν may bear an impersonal sense, ‘it is said’ (NEB, REB; Furnish 468) like the German ‘sagt man’ (Wendland 229; de Boor 202) or the French “dit-on” (Carrez 201), or refer to Paul’s critics in general, both Corinthians and intruders, as represented by a particular spokesman (B reads φασίν; see Textual Note i.); thus ‘to quote my opponents’ (Barclay) or ‘some are saying.’” [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), 698.]

⁴⁰⁰φασιν B lat sy

— P⁴⁶vid 1881 b bo^{ms}; Ambst

[Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 571.]

⁴⁰¹Charted out, it looks like this:

	Presence:	Absence:
v. 1	κατὰ πρόσωπον μὲν ταπεινὸς ἐν ὑμῖν,	ἀπὼν δὲ θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς
v. 10	δὲ ἡ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος	μὲν αἱ ἐπιστολαί



The thoughts are framed around the dual contrasts of μέν and δέ. The second side is then stated in a two-fold manner with καὶ linking them, as illustrated in the above diagram. It attacks both Paul's physical appearance and his speaking skills. One should also note the sarcastic tone to the 'complementary' statement about his letters. This is intended only to heighten the inconsistency between physical presence and writing while not present. Note the ellipsis in omitting verbs in order to heighten the criticism.

His letters: αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί, his letters weighty and strong. In 10:1 the introductory depiction stressed boldness: ἀπὼν δὲ θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς, **but when absent I am bold toward you.** The verb θαρρέω (often in the alternative spelling θαρσέω) stresses being confident in what one believes and expresses. In the subsequent statement of 10:2, it denotes willingness to be confrontational against those with opposing views. In this, he alludes to the ὡς κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας, **as living according to flesh,** standards as a definitional benchmark for defining courage especially by his opponents. His Corinthian opponents were using worldly standards in evaluating his courage (τινας τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς).

But in the more detailed depiction in 10:10, it is his αἱ ἐπιστολαί, letters, that are judged βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί, **weighty and strong.** What does this mean? Is this what 2 Peter 3:15-16 was alluding to?⁴⁰² In Paul's letters there

ἀσθενῆς βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί
καὶ
ὁ λόγος
ἐξουθενημένος

Note the informal chiasm present here:

- A Presence (1a): κατὰ πρόσωπον
- B Absence (1b): ἀπὼν
- B' Absence (10a): αἱ ἐπιστολαί
- A Presence (10b): ἡ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος

Such a thought construct is a very Jewish kind of ancient thinking. It does focus attention on his ability to speak forcefully through his letters.

The use of γάρ in vv. 3-6 and vv. 12-18 to defend and amplify functions rhetorically the same way each time. He attacks the criticism and then defends his attacks. Clearly it is powerful rhetoric. But in the summary statement of v. 11 Paul asserts the ability, if needed, to be just as blunt and direct in person as he is in his writings.

⁴⁰²**2 Pet. 3:15-16.** 15 καὶ τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν μακροθυμίαν σωτηρίαν ἠγεῖσθε, καθὼς καὶ ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἡμῶν ἀδελφὸς Παῦλος κατὰ τὴν δοθεῖσαν αὐτῷ σοφίαν ἔγραψεν ὑμῖν, 16 ὡς καὶ ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς λαλῶν ἐν αὐταῖς περὶ τούτων ἐν αἷς ἐστὶν δυσνόητά τινα ἃ οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι στρεβλώσουσιν ὡς καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς γραφὰς πρὸς τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτῶν ἀπώλειαν.

15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16 speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other writings.

are ἐν αἷς ἐστὶν δυσνόητά τινα, **some things that are hard to understand.**⁴⁰³ Does this imply obscurity in writing? The church father [Origen](#), writing in a period in the early 200s when Paul was not highly popular in Christian circles, thought so.⁴⁰⁴ He felt that the apostle was incapable of expressing his ideas clearly and thus his writings always required the expert interpretation of later scholars when being read. But this is a virtually impossible view to defend. The adjectives used in 10:10, βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί, point the opposite direction and they come from opponents at the time. They are consistent with the more generalized θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς in 10:1, also reflecting an opposition viewpoint. Second Peter's observation that ἃ οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι στρεβλώσουσιν ὡς καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς γραφὰς πρὸς τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτῶν ἀπώλειαν, **which the uninstructed and unstable twist to their own destruction like they also do the other writings,** assumes an understanding of Paul's words but a clear rejection of their proper meaning. Thus the sense of δυσνόητά is more **hard to accept** than **hard to understand.** And it is applied only to some of his writings in the statement: ἐν αἷς...τινα. That is, the demands for commitment made by Paul in some of his writings go well beyond what most Christians want to accept as required of God. But to twist them (στρεβλώσουσιν) with watered down false meanings brings destruction to such an interpreter.

At this point, the idea in Second Peter intersects the situation in Corinth in that false meaning, or at least improper motivation, is given to Paul's words by some at Corinth. This then prompts the twin sets of γάρ amplifications in vv. 3-6 and 12-18 defending what and why he did what he did when both present and speaking, as well as when absent and writing. The Corinthian opponents who sought to drive a wedge between Paul's being absent and present are challenged as at

⁴⁰³“δυσνόητά τινα ἃ οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι στρεβλοῦσιν, ‘some things that are hard to understand, which the uninstructed and unstable people distort.’ δυσνόητος (‘hard to understand’) is a rare word, used of texts which are difficult to interpret (Diogenes Laertes, Vit. Phil. 9.13) and by Hermas of his symbolic visions (Herm. Sim. 9:14:4). It is no qualification of Paul's ‘wisdom’ (v 15) to admit that Paul's writings contain difficult passages, since it is only the ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι (‘uninstructed and unstable people’) who will be liable to misinterpret them, and they also misinterpret the ‘other scriptures’ (see below; cf. Lindemann, Paulus, 94). The reference is probably therefore to passages which are liable to be misunderstood unless they are interpreted in the light of the rest of Paul's teaching and of the apostolic teaching generally, rather than to passages which are simply obscure. (The point is therefore different from that made by Origen, *Comm. in. Rom. 6*, who attributes the variety of interpretations of Paul to the fact that he was unable to express himself clearly.) For the correct interpretation of such passages some instruction in Christian teaching is required.” [Richard J. Bauckham, *2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 50, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 331.]

⁴⁰⁴This view was expressed in his commentary on Romans 6.



least among οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι, **the uninstructed and unstable**, spoken of in Second Peter. Their Greek culturalized version of the gospel was not legitimate.

His appearance: ἡ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενής his physical presence weak. The genitive case modifier τοῦ σώματος defines ἡ παρουσία as his **physical presence**. Also it amplifies κατὰ πρόσωπον, **face to face**, in 10:1. What is intended by this? Very likely it centers on his physical appearance as not being up to par with the definitions of that of a Greek or Roman leader. To be sure, later church tradition⁴⁰⁵ paints the apostle's physical appearance as being woefully poor due to abnormal shortness of height, and ongoing deformities from diseases that he suffered (perhaps alluded to in Gal. 4:13-14⁴⁰⁶). But with the twofold negative assessment of Paul's presence, also to be included is what would be labeled in our world as his *personae*. The assessment of it being ἀσθενής, **weak**, would certainly cover not just physical weakness but personality weakness as well.⁴⁰⁷ **He was** not a powerful orator when speaking.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁵For example, here is one illustration: "And he saw Paul coming, a man little of stature, thin-haired upon the head, crooked in the legs, of good state of body, with eyebrows joining, and nose somewhat hooked, full of grace: for sometimes he appeared like a man, and sometimes he had the face of an angel." [*Acts of Paul and Thecla*, earlychristianwritings.com.]

⁴⁰⁶Gal. 4:13-14. 13 οἴδατε δὲ ὅτι δι' ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν τὸ πρότερον, 14 καὶ τὸν πειρασμὸν ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου οὐκ ἐξουθενήσατε οὐδὲ ἐξεπτύσατε, ἀλλ' ὡς ἄγγελον θεοῦ ἐδέξασθέ με, ὡς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν.

13 You know that it was because of a physical infirmity that I first announced the gospel to you; 14 though my condition put you to the test, you did not scorn or despise me, but welcomed me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.

⁴⁰⁷The other prejudicial side to this tribute is that the report offsets the power of his letters by an adverse comment on his physical presence (παρουσία) and his abilities of public speech (λόγος). The former is branded as ἀσθενής, 'weak,' probably including the sense of being sickly and infirm, retiring in the face of vigorous opposition.¹²² But this view of ἀσθενής, 'weak,' is not exclusively or primarily so, as Betz shows.¹²³ The latter argues that what is in mind is Paul's ταπεινός, 'humiliatingly poor,' appearance as deficient in those essential traits of the gnostic πνευματικός, 'spiritual one,' namely, δύναμις, 'power,' ἐξουσία, 'rights to be exercised,' replete with ἀπόδειξις, 'demonstration,' and λόγος, 'rhetorical skill.' Above all, Paul lacked ἀρετή, 'divine power,'¹²⁴ and πνεῦμα, 'spirit,' thought of as a dynamic and impressive force to convey powerfully the triumph and effectiveness of his message. They charged that Paul was, by contrast, ἰδιώτης, 'incapable of pneumatic speech,' i.e., glossolalia (11:6)¹²⁵ or rhetorical finesse; and perhaps, if we return to the witness of 12:1-10, he was unable to heal himself of the malady that rendered him so weak.¹²⁶ [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 494-495.]

⁴⁰⁸1 Cor. 2:1-5. 2.1 Κάγω ἐλθὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἦλθον οὐ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ. 2 οὐ γὰρ ἔκρινά τι εἰδέναι ἐν ὑμῖν εἰ μὴ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον. 3 κάγω ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ καὶ ἐν φόβῳ καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ πολλῷ ἐγενόμην πρὸς ὑμᾶς, 4 καὶ ὁ

This would clearly fit the ταπεινός ἐν ὑμῖν, **humble among you**, in 10:1. Note how Luke contrasts Apollos as having most of the oratorical traits that Paul is accused of not having.⁴⁰⁹ The successful leader in Greco-Roman traditions needed to be virtually the opposite of what is ascribed to Paul.⁴¹⁰ This cultural heritage evidently shaped a negative view of Paul in the minds of some in the church at Corinth.

His message: ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος, his speaking contemptible. This second negative assessment of his physical presence centers on his speaking skills, or lack thereof in the opinion of his critics. The very widely used word ὁ λόγος carried many different meanings across the ancient Greek speaking world. When used in regard to the act of oral speaking, the meaning usually captured both how the speaking was done and the content of what was spoken. We struggle in English to find a single word that can gather up both these meanings. The word 'speaking' is somewhat neutral and can go either direction but not usually both at the same time.

The very negative trait attributed to ὁ λόγος here is ἐξουθενημένος. Stated not in adjectival form but as a perfect tense passive participle in a predicate adjective role, the trait has a particularly stinging bite built into it.

λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖς σοφίας λόγοις ἀλλ' ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως, 5 ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾖ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ.

2.1 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. 4 My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

⁴⁰⁹Acts 18:24-26. 24 Ἰουδαῖος δὲ τις Ἀπολλῶς ὀνόματι, Ἀλεξανδρεὺς τῷ γένει, ἀνὴρ λόγιος, κατήνησεν εἰς Ἐφεσον, δυνατὸς ὢν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς. 25 οὗτος ἦν κατηχημένος τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ζέων τῷ πνεύματι ἐλάλει καὶ ἐδίδασκεν ἀκριβῶς τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ἐπιστάμενος μόνον τὸ βάπτισμα Ἰωάννου. 26 οὗτος τε ἤρξατο παρρησιάζεσθαι ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ. ἀκούσαντες δὲ αὐτοῦ Πρίσκιλλα καὶ Ἀκύλας προσελάβοντο αὐτὸν καὶ ἀκριβέστερον αὐτῷ ἐξέθεντο τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ θεοῦ.

24 Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately.

⁴¹⁰The modern image of a successful preacher is largely shaped by the American TV preachers. Can you image any of them succeeding if they dressed in cheap clothes, didn't wear layers of TV makeup, and were deformed in some visual way by illness? Both Paul and Jesus wouldn't get to first base on the American scene.



208 ¹⁰⁻¹¹ τοῦτο λογιζέσθω ὁ τοιοῦτος,
 | τῷ λόγῳ
 | δι' ἐπιστολῶν
 ὅτι οἳ οἱ ἐσμεν... ἀπόντες,
 καὶ
 τοιοῦτοι (ἐσμεν) παρόντες
 τῷ ἔργῳ.

Taken from the verb ἐξουθενέω / ἐξουθενόω, the meaning is very strong: “to despise someone or something on the basis that it is worthless or of no value—‘to despise.’ ὅτι εἰσὶν δίκαιοι καὶ ἐξουθενοῦντας τοὺς λοιποὺς ‘and they were righteous and despised everyone else’ Lk 18:9; ὁ ἐσθίων τὸν μὴ ἐσθίοντα μὴ ἐξουθενείτω ‘the one who eats should not despise the one who does not eat’ Ro 14:3.”⁴¹¹ It is used 11 times inside the NT designating both people and things often scorned or despised. In this context here the sense captures the λόγος of Paul as both not worth listening to both due to his inept speaking ability and to the utter lack of content in his speaking. The perfect tense participle intensifies this disdain greatly.⁴¹²

In the summary statement of verse 11, the apostle sets out his core rebuttal: τοῦτο λογιζέσθω ὁ τοιοῦτος, ὅτι οἳ οἱ ἐσμεν τῷ λόγῳ δι' ἐπιστολῶν ἀπόντες, τοιοῦτοι καὶ παρόντες τῷ ἔργῳ. *Let such people understand that what we say by letter when absent, we will also do when present.*

His opponents have been doing some ‘calculating’ (τοὺς λογιζομένους) in order to criticize Paul and his associates (v. 1). Now in using the third singular (ὁ τοιοῦτος) to reach back to each critic he challenges them to do some more ‘calculating’ (λογιζέσθω; v. 11). But this time to calculate things correctly. His weighty and strong (βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί) written words will turn into weighty and strong oral words and actions when he arrives at Corinth: ὅτι οἳ οἱ ἐσμεν τῷ λόγῳ δι' ἐπιστολῶν ἀπόντες, τοιοῦτοι καὶ παρόντες τῷ ἔργῳ. This they need to understand.

The correlative adjective function of τοιοῦτος, -αύτη, -οῦτον / -οῦτο with the masculine singular ὁ τοιοῦτος here alludes back to the person in φησίν, he says, in v. 10. That is, ‘such a one who says such things against me.’ The demonstrative τοῦτο, this, anticipates its antecedent in the subsequent ὅτι clause, rather than reaching back to something said before. The neuter singular form is appropriate to a phrase or clause rather than a single word standing as the antecedent of a pronoun. The correlative pronoun τοιοῦτοι, *such things*, reaches back to the relative οἳ οἱ, *what*. The masculine gender is used with both pronouns in drawing from ὁ λόγος in a plural summation of Paul’s words as οἱ λόγοι. It alludes

⁴¹¹Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 1:762.

⁴¹²Don’t forget that this is Paul depicting what his opponents were saying about him. The very highly insulting nature of this accusation reflects the apostle’s honesty in reporting their accusations and then facing them in equally strong rebuttal.

to Paul speaking both through writing (δι' ἐπιστολῶν ἀπόντες) and in deeds (παρόντες τῷ ἔργῳ). The contrastive elements are ἀπόντες, words spoken *while absent*, and παρόντες, words spoken *while present*. The further contrast τῷ λόγῳ, *by word*, and τῷ ἔργῳ, *by deed*, underscores the inclusiveness of Paul’s strategy.

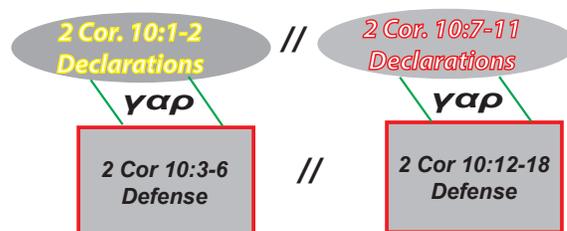
Everything he says and does, whether through writing or through personal presence, has the fundamental consistency of βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί, *weightiness and strength*. But this weightiness and strength is by God’s standards and not by human standards (cf. v. 4). Thus on some occasions his physical presence may not have appeared strong and forceful, but only if measured by human standards. In following God’s leadership this is a time to be forceful and also a time to be mild. It all depends upon the needs of each situation. Following divine direction in each situation is always weighty and strong.

In vv. 4-6, he explained that his warfare was not fought with human weapons. That is, he was acutely aware that the struggle was not over personalities and loyalties to human beings. It instead was a struggle against the powers of evil originating with the devil himself and ultimately it was God’s battles that were being fought. Beginning in vv. 12-18 that explanation will be expanded even further. Thus he will limit his ‘boasting’ (καυχησόμεθα) to appropriate boundaries rather than indulge into human standards (ὡς κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας, v. 2b).

10.2.3.3.1.2 Limits of boasting, 10:12-18

12 Οὐ γὰρ τολμῶμεν ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι ἑαυτοῦς τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοῦς συνιστανόντων, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἑαυτοῦς μετροῦντες καὶ συγκρίνοντες ἑαυτοῦς ἑαυτοῖς οὐ συνιάσιν. 13 ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχησόμεθα ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος οὗ ἐμέρισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρον, ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν. 14 οὐ γὰρ ὡς μὴ

Second Corinthians 10:1-18
 Rhetorical Structure
 by Lorin L. Cranford



Just as the opening declarations in vv. 1-2 are then defended and amplified in vv. 3-6, so also the declarations in vv. 7-11 are defended and amplified in vv. 12-18. The two sets of declarations/justifications stand parallel to one another as an combined assertion of Paul’s differing strategys when either present or away from Corinth. Together these form a powerful response to criticism against him by some in the Corinthian church.

10.12	γάρ	
209	Οὐ τοιμῶμεν	ἐγκρίναι
		ἢ
		συγκρίναι ἑαυτούς
		τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστανόντων,
	ἀλλ’	ἐν ἑαυτοῖς
		ἑαυτοὺς μετροῦντες
		καὶ
		συγκρίνοντες ἑαυτοὺς ἑαυτοῖς
210	αὐτοὶ...οὐ συνιᾶσιν.	
10.13	δὲ	εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα
211	ἡμεῖς οὐκ...καυχησόμεθα	
	ἀλλὰ	
212	(ἡμεῖς καυχησόμεθα)	κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος
		οὗ ἠμέρισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρον,
		ἐφικέσθαι
		ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν.
10.14	γάρ	
	οὐ	
	ὡς μὴ ἐφικνούμενοι	
		εἰς ὑμᾶς
213	ὑπερεκτείνομεν ἑαυτούς,	
	γάρ	
	ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν	
214	ἐφθάσαμεν	ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ,
10.15	οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχώμενοι	
		ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις κόποις,
		δὲ
	ἐλπίδα ἔχοντες	
		αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν
		ἐν ὑμῖν
		μεγαλυνθῆναι
		κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν
		εἰς περισσεΐαν
10.16		εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν
		εὐαγγελίσασθαι,
		οὐκ ἐν ἀλλοτρίῳ κανόνι
		εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα
		καυχήσασθαι.
10.17	δὲ	
215	Ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω·	
10.18	γάρ	
	ὁ ἑαυτὸν συνιστάνων,	
216	οὐ...ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος,	
	ἀλλ’	
	ὄν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν	
217		(ἐστιν δόκιμος) .

μεγαλυνθῆναι κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν εἰς περισσεΐαν 16 εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν εὐαγγελίσασθαι, οὐκ ἐν ἀλλοτρίῳ κανόνι εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα καυχήσασθαι. 17 Ὁ δὲ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω· 18 οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἑαυτὸν συνιστάνων, ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος, ἀλλ’ ὄν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν.

12 We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves with one another, they do not show good sense. 13 We, however, will not boast beyond limits, but will keep within the field that God has assigned to us, to reach out even as far as you. 14 For we were not overstepping our limits when we reached you; we were the first to come all the way to you with the good news of Christ. 15 We do not boast beyond limits, that is, in the labors of others; but our hope is that, as your faith increases, our sphere of action among you may be greatly enlarged, 16 so that we may proclaim the good news in lands beyond you, without boasting of work already done in someone else’s sphere of action. 17 “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.” 18 For it is not those who commend themselves that are approved, but those whom the Lord commends.

The literary contextual role for vv. 12-18 is to provide a series of justifications for Paul’s position articulated in vv. 7-11. This is signaled clearly by the repeated use of γάρ in these verses, cf. statements #s 209, 213, 214, and 216 in the above diagram. Also vv. 12-18 should be seen as a continuation of the justifications set forth in vv. 3-6 as well. In this initial section the reasons for his actions are broadly defined religiously with a claim for their effectiveness in countering every opponent to God.

The justification strategy in 12-18 then amplifies the different standards of measuring used by the apostle from those used by his Corinthian opponents. In statement #s 209 and 210

ἐφικνούμενοι εἰς ὑμᾶς ὑπερεκτείνομεν ἑαυτούς, ἄχρι γὰρ καὶ ὑμῶν ἐφθάσαμεν ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 15 οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχώμενοι ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις κόποις, ἐλπίδα δὲ ἔχοντες αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν

(two Greek short sentences) the apostle rejects the worldly standards of measuring oneself against what

others are doing. Then in the third sentence (vv. 14-16) in statements #s 213 - 214, he defines proper measurement by God's standards. Statements #s 215 - 217 (vv. 17-18) form the fourth sentence that challenges everyone to use God's standards (# 215) because the only approval that counts is from God (#s 216 - 217). This is the bottom line reason for his use of these different measuring standards. And this assertion will provide the conceptual foundation for the next major segment in 11:1 - 12:13.⁴¹³

The four Greek sentences in vv. 12-18 (vv. 12-13; 14-16; 17-18) provide the most natural internal organizing structure for understanding what Paul is saying. They provide three clearly defined reasons for Paul's different approach to the Corinthians in his writing and in his personal presence with them. Also they completely evaporate the basis for his critics in Corinth speaking against him. At the close in v. 18 comes the base line reason behind Paul's strategy: God's approval is the only one that ultimately matters.

a) Not worldly based comparisons, vv. 12-13.

12 Οὐ γὰρ τολμῶμεν ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι ἑαυτοὺς τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοῦς συνιστανόντων, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἑαυτοὺς μετροῦντες καὶ συγκρίνοντες ἑαυτοὺς ἑαυτοῖς οὐ συνιάσιν. 13 ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχησόμεθα ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος οὗ ἐμέρισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρου, ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν. **12 We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves with one another, they do not show good sense. 13 We, however, will not boast beyond limits, but will keep within the field that God has assigned to us, to reach out even as far as you.**

In this first subunit of defense Paul disavows the use of worldly standards of comparison that his opponents are using (v. 12). But he comes right back to claim a legitimate basis for boasting that is established by God and not by humans (v. 13).

Οὐ γὰρ τολμῶμεν ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι ἑαυτοὺς τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοῦς συνιστανόντων. The core verb expression Οὐ τολμῶμεν sets the tone and continues in elaboration

⁴¹³This inter connectivity between units of idea expression are so typical of the former Jewish Pharisee trained in scribal patterns of thinking. The following unit builds off the preceding unit in some particular manner. Sometimes the nature of this connectivity is signaled overtly by coordinate conjunctions such as γὰρ, but at other times it must be concluded from the nature of the content inside the two adjacent units of text material.

of the disavowal of human standards mentioned in vv. 3-6. What did he mean by οὐ κατὰ σάρκα στρατευόμεθα, **not according to fleshly standards do we wage war**, in v. 3? In v. 12, we know one key component of those human

10.12 γὰρ
 209 Οὐ τολμῶμεν
 ἐγκρίναι
 ἢ
 συγκρίναι ἑαυτοὺς
 τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοῦς συνιστανόντων,
 ἀλλ'
 ἐν ἑαυτοῖς
 ἑαυτοὺς μετροῦντες
 καὶ
 συγκρίνοντες ἑαυτοὺς ἑαυτοῖς
 210 αὐτοῖ...οὐ συνιάσιν.

standards: measuring our achievements over against those of other preachers. Paul states that he and his associates (first person plural verb) dare not do that! Note the compound complementary infinitive objects of the verb τολμῶμεν with ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι ἑαυτοὺς..., **to evaluate or compare ourselves with...** The play on κρίνω, **to judge**, with the compound forms ἐγκρίναι from ἐν + κρίνω and συγκρίναι from σύν + κρίνω dramatically underscores comparing two individuals with drawing conclusions about who is the better or worse of the two. Here the two sets of comparisons are ἑαυτοὺς, **ourselves**, and τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοῦς συνιστανόντων, **some of those who are commending themselves**.⁴¹⁴ Note the continued use of the singular number form first in τις (v. 7), then φησὶν (v. 10), and ὁ τοιοῦτος (v. 11). This particularizes the plural use τινες, **some** (v. 2).⁴¹⁵ This heightened stress on anyone daring to make such comparisons emphasizes the wrongness of such actions.⁴¹⁶ The la-

⁴¹⁴Perhaps there is a subtle tone of forcefulness in the plural 'we' against the singular 'someone' among the opponents. Rhetoric would utilize every potential nuance of persuasion possible.

⁴¹⁵Most English translations uniformly use the plural 'some' for the sake of clarity of identifying contextually who is being referenced as opponents. But in the second tier of assertion and defense (vv. 7-18) the plural reference in the first (vv. 1-6) becomes individualized for emphasis sake.

There was no need for Paul to name by name any of these individuals. Their egocentric self commendation would have exposed their identity to the readers of this letter. Besides Paul was attacking worldly ways not people in this.

⁴¹⁶His tactic is to adopt a stance of mock humility: I really cannot rise to the level of these people so that I can rightly join myself to them (ἐγκρίνω) or compare myself with them (συγκρίνω). With an obvious play on words, which may owe something to an anti-rhetorical and anti-sophistic posture—opposing comparison (σύγκρισις) with a denial of superiority (ὑπεροχή; cf. 1 Cor 2:1) adopted by popular philosophy,¹⁵⁵ Paul answers those who said that he was boastful (3:1; 10:1). In the game of self-praise, he retorts, I haven't the skill to play (see 11:6: ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ, 'untrained in public speaking')." [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P.



bel of this opponent as τῶν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστανόντων, of commending themselves reaches back to 5:12 (cf. also 3:1; 4:2; 6:4; 7:11; 10:18; 12:11), where Paul indicates avoidance of such actions.⁴¹⁷ The idea of συνίστημι here is of setting oneself in front of another so they can recognize validity. This is not in itself wrong as the other uses of συνίστημι in Second Corinthians reflect. But here in chapter ten the setting of one's credentials before the gathered church groups was done by stressing one's superiority to others by questioning the values of one's opponents. This Paul rejects. Neither he nor Titus or any other of his associates will claim exceptional achievements over those of the opponents at the Corinthian church. He refuses to play the game of 'one upmanship'!⁴¹⁸ This is not God's way of credentializing one of His servants.

Instead (= ἀλλ'), as statement # 210 (v. 12b) asserts, engaging in such comparisons shows lack of judgment and good sense: ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἑαυτοὺς μετροῦντες καὶ συγκρίνοντες ἑαυτοὺς ἑαυτοῖς οὐ συνιᾶσιν. *But when they measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves with one another, they do not show good sense.* Here we discover some more about how his opponents were making the comparisons, as well as Paul's assessment of such actions.

The actions of his opponents²¹¹ are described as ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἑαυτοὺς μετροῦντες καὶ συγκρίνοντες ἑαυτοὺς ἑαυτοῖς, *among themselves measuring themselves and comparing themselves to themselves.*⁴¹⁹ After completely re-

Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 502.]

⁴¹⁷2 Cor. 5:12. οὐ πάλιν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστάνομεν ὑμῖν ἀλλ' ἀφορμὴν διδόντες ὑμῖν καυχήματος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ἵνα ἔχητε πρὸς τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους καὶ μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ. *We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart.*

⁴¹⁸Any political campaign will reflect this negative strategy of comparisons. Every politician must decide how to approach campaigning. Whether to focus on his/her own values and commitments or whether to claim superiority to one's opponents assumed lack of worthy values and commitments. When such becomes a strategy inside the church immediately there is loss of credibility and high values by the church.

⁴¹⁹The divisiveness in the Corinthian community depicted in 1 Cor. 1:10-17 most likely had some connection to what Paul addresses here in 2 Cor. 10:12-18. His comments in vv. 12-13 assume human based comparisons:

12 λέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει· ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι Παύλου, ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ. 13 μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός; μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἢ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε; 12 *What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ."* 13 *Has Christ been divided? Was*

jecting comparisons to others as legitimate measuring of one's achievements (v. 12a), Paul now asserts the craziness of such comparisons being done by his opponents. The twin participles μετροῦντες καὶ συγκρίνοντες flanked on either side by the objects ἑαυτοὺς stresses both methodology (μετροῦντες) and results (συγκρίνοντες) in this comparative based evaluation. Paul's assessment is that conclusions reached like this indicate that such individuals οὐ συνιᾶσιν, *do not have any sense.* The idea of συνίημι here in the present tense third plural spelling is the lack of realization that no legitimate conclusions can ever be reached through such flawed methodology.

He then proceeds in vv. 13-16 to explain to his readers the only legitimate base for making evaluative judgments about achievements. This is done in two Greek sentences, the first stating how Paul does it (v. 13; #s 211-212) and the second why he does it this way (vv. 14-16; #s 213 - 214).

V. 13, ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχήσομεθα ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος οὗ ἐμέρισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρον, ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν. *We, however, will not boast beyond limits, but will keep within the field that God has assigned to us, to reach out even as far as you.*

εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα

ἡμεῖς οὐκ...καυχήσομεθα

ἀλλὰ

(ἡμεῖς καυχήσομεθα)

κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος

οὗ ἐμέρισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρον,

ἐφικέσθαι

ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν.

The contrastive assertions are set up by οὐκ... ἀλλὰ beginning with the negative assertion and followed by the positive: not this...but that. The core concept is established as καυχήσομεθα, *we will boast*, from καυχάομαι. The translation dilemma is how to express the idea. The English word 'boast' is commonly used but the more precise idea of καυχάομαι is closer to 'take pride in.' The inner sense of good feeling is normally articulated verbally, and neither of these English language ideas really gathers this up clearly and obviously.

Paul asserts that he and his associates will not καυχάομαι εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα, *into the immeasurable areas.* The word group μέτρον, ἄμετρος, μετρέω in ancient Greek defined weights and balances along with the action of weighing something. Based upon this literal meaning came the figurative use that defined in philosophy that which had value, e.g., the idiom μέτρον πάντων *the measure of all things.* Out of this came the LXX use to translate the Hebrew הָרָמָה with a strong tone of divine

Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?



judgment.⁴²⁰ The background meaning of divine judgment stands behind most of the NT uses of this word group as well.⁴²¹ This language used here by Paul hints

⁴²⁰“μέτρον (from Hom. Il., 7, 471; 12, 422; Od., 2, 355; 9, 209 etc.) means a. ‘measure’ as an instrument of measuring (whether cubic or of length); b. ‘proportion,’ ‘order’ (common in the class. poets, also the pap.); c. ‘measure of verse or syllables’; d. ‘what is measured as the result of measuring,’ ‘the measured part’ (place, road, time), both literally and figuratively.

“The term μέτρον became particularly significant in Gk. philosophy. The μέτρον πάντων, the abs. measure of all things, esp. of values, was set by Protagoras exclusively in men: πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστιν, τῶν δὲ οὐκ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν (Fr., I [II, 263, 3 ff., Diels5]). In contrast, Plato finds it only in God (Leg., IV, 716c: ὁ δὴ θεὸς ἡμῖν πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἂν εἴη μάλιστα, καὶ πολλὸν μᾶλλον ἢ πού τις, ὡς φασιν, ἄνθρωπος). This thought is particularly important in Neo-Platonism: Plot. Enn., I, 8, 3; cf. VI, 8, 18: περιλήψις πάντων καὶ μέτρον; V, 5, 4: μέτρον γὰρ αὐτὸ καὶ οὐ μετροῦμενον.

“In the LXX μέτρον is mostly used for מִדְּוָה, apart from some secular refs.: 1. with ref. to the cultic measurements of the tabernacle and temple, esp. Ez. 40–48; 2. of correct measures and weights which stand under God’s protection and are superintended in the temple, Lv. 19:35; Dt. 25:14 f.; Prv. 20:10; Am. 8:5; 1 Ch. 23:29; 3. of the measures of the world as an expression of the belief in creation: Job 11:9; 28:25; 38:5; Wis. 11:20; 4. in threats of destruction and judgment sayings: 4 Bασ. 21:13; Is. 5:10; Ez. 4:11, 16; Lam. 2:8; ψ 79:5; Zech. 5:6 ff.; 5. in the salvation saying in Zech. 1:16.

“μετρέω (at least from Hom.: Od., 3, 179) means a. ‘to measure,’ ‘to traverse’ (the sea); fig. ‘to evaluate,’ ‘to judge’; b. in the phrase τινί τι, ‘to measure something to someone’ (from Eur. and Aristoph.). In the LXX μετρέω is used for מִדְּוָה, e.g., Ex. 16:18. It is found in the pap.2”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:632.]

⁴²¹“The passages which characterise the NT use of μέτρον and μετρέω refer a. to the judicial work of God in the Last Judgment and b. to the gift of grace allotted to us.

“a. In the proverbial expression ἐν ᾧ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε μετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν in Mt. 7:2 (cf. Mk. 4:24 and Lk. 6:38b) there comes to full expression the eschatological seriousness with which Jesus establishes the μὴ κρίνετε by reference to the divine judgment corresponding to human judging. The rule finds in Rabbinic writings many parallels in wording or meaning; in Sota, 1, 7 it runs: לֹךְ מִדְּוָה בְּהַ מִדְּוָה שְׂפָאָה הִמְּוָה, ‘with the measure with which a man measures, one (i.e., God) will measure to him.’²⁵ Nevertheless, in the application of the norm there is a fundamental difference between Jesus and the Rabbis. With the help of this rule the latter establish and regulate human judging; Jesus, however, rejects all judging, and His prohibition is absolute: μὴ κρίνετε. ‘The reason for this contradictory use of the same principle is that Jesus did not see the one and ultimate will of God in the norm which demands retribution.’²⁶ The reverse side of κρίνετε is forgiveness, which Jesus requires of His disciples in view of God’s readiness to forgive.

“At the end of a series of sayings in which the positive duty of exercising forgiveness is set in juxtaposition with the prohibition of judging, Lk. 6:38b has the words: ᾧ γὰρ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε ἀντιμετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν. These seem first to be the basis of the divine reward which is certain for those who show mercy. But they should not be related only to v. 38a. They refer to the whole group of sayings, including the μὴ κρίνετε κτλ. of v. 37. This solves the

at the gaping hole in how the Corinthians were ‘measuring.’ They were doing it by human standards and not by God’s standards. The point then of ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχησόμεθα is that Paul and his associates would not venture into measurements beyond those established by God. Note the doubly strong emphasis upon ‘we’ with the stating of ἡμεῖς and the placing of it first in the sentence. In verse 15 where the phrase is repeated but with the addition of ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις κόποις, in the labors of others, the meaning centers on the places that God assigns His servants to go. God had assigned Paul to preach the Gospel in Corinth and he was faithful to that divine assignment.⁴²²

difficulty which seems to be presented by the fact that in the preceding words: μέτρον καλὸν πεπιεσμένον κτλ. (v. 38a), emphasis is laid on the superabundant reward of God, whereas the saying ᾧ γὰρ μέτρῳ κτλ. stresses ‘the quantitative equivalence of retribution.’²⁷ The form of the text in Mt. and Mk. is more original than that in Lk.⁸

“b. But the figure of the μέτρον is also used to express the diversity and manifoldness of the gifts of grace allotted to each man, Eph. 4:7 (with emphasis on the ἐνότης, as in 1 C. 12);⁹ Eph. 4:16; R. 12:3. To show what is the one final goal of the members of the community—the goal which the various gifts must serve—μέτρον is then used in the sense of full measure in Eph. 4:13 (→ 633). In 2 C. 10:13, in contrast to the unmeasured boasting of his opponents in Corinth, the measure by which Paul would be measured is the sphere of missionary activity which God has assigned to him as an apostle. This measure is not human; it is indicated by God.

“If it is true of all the gifts of Christians that they have a measure and limit, Christ Himself has received the gift of the Spirit from God without measure or restriction. This is the meaning of Jn. 3:34: οὐ γὰρ ἐκ μέτρον δίδωσιν τὸ πνεῦμα.¹⁰ Although the present δίδωσιν might lead us to take the statement as a general rule, the context shows that it refers only to Christ, and according to the context again God alone can be the subject.¹¹ This is shown plainly both by what precedes (v. 34a) and what follows (v. 35).

“c. μετρέω has a distinctive sense in Rev. 11:1 f. In this vision, which is influenced by Ez. 40:3 ff., μετρέω in v. 1, considered along with v. 2, takes on the sense ‘to preserve.’¹² The temple of God is to be measured, i.e., preserved, but the outer court, which is not to be measured, will not be preserved.”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:633–634.]

⁴²²To some extent the agreement described in Gal. 2:9 stands behind this: καὶ γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι, Ἰάκωβος καὶ Κηφᾶς καὶ Ἰωάννης, οἱ δοκοῦντες στύλοι εἶναι, δεξιὰς ἔδωκαν ἔμοι καὶ Βαρναβᾶ κοινωνίας, ἵνα ἡμεῖς εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, αὐτοὶ δὲ εἰς τὴν περιτομήν· and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

But one should resist pressing this geographically and too exclusively. The subsequent ministries of Paul, Barnabas, Peter, and John described inside the NT would suggest a broad understanding here that meant dominate orientation but not exclusive orientation.

Yet one can say that with the positive assertion in v. 12b the



This is the central point of the positive assertion in v. 13b (# 212). Legitimate καυχώμενοι could then take place κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος οὗ ἐμέρισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρου, ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν, according to the limits of the assignment where God who measures has measured, to reach out even to you also. The apostle did take immense pride in what God was doing in his ministry that sought to go exactly where God directed. And this included the Corinthians (ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν).

b) Limited appropriate boastings, vv. 14-16.

In the second justifying assertion (γάρ in vv. 12, 14a, 14b), Paul defends his coming to Corinth as being within the limits of God’s assignment: 14 οὐ γὰρ ὡς μὴ ἐφικνούμενοι εἰς ὑμᾶς ὑπερεκτείνομεν ἑαυτοὺς, ἄχρι γὰρ καὶ ὑμῶν ἐφθάσαμεν ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 15 οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχώμενοι ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις κόποις, ἐλπίδα δὲ ἔχοντες αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν μεγαλυνθῆναι κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν εἰς περισσεῖαν 16 εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν εὐαγγελίσασθαι, οὐκ ἐν ἀλλοτρίῳ κανόνι εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα καυχῆσασθαι. 14 For we were not overstepping our limits when we reached you; we were the first to come all the way to you with the good news of Christ. 15 We do not boast beyond limits, that is, in the labors of others; but our hope is that, as your faith increases, our sphere of action among you may be greatly enlarged, 16 so that we may proclaim the good news in lands beyond you, without boasting of work already done in someone else’s sphere of action.

10.14 γὰρ
οὐ
ὡς μὴ ἐφικνούμενοι
εἰς ὑμᾶς
213 ὑπερεκτείνομεν ἑαυτοὺς,
γὰρ
ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν
214 ἐφθάσαμεν
10.15 ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ,
οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχώμενοι
| ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις κόποις,
| δὲ
ἐλπίδα ἔχοντες
| | αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν
| | ἐν ὑμῖν
| μεγαλυνθῆναι
| κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν
| εἰς περισσεῖαν
10.16 | εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν
εὐαγγελίσασθαι,
| οὐκ ἐν ἀλλοτρίῳ κανόνι
| εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα
καυχῆσασθαι.

The first justifying declaration (#213) asserts the legitimacy of Paul and his associates’ coming to Corinth, and the next justifying declaration (#214) affirms his expectation of being able to move on to new places assuming the spiritual growth of the Corinthians under his instruction. Just what is he saying by these observations?

It is difficult, to say the least, to understand clearly the point being made. The figurative usage of terms rather than direct literal language complicates the process of understanding. Add to that are cultural dynamics coming most likely out of the Greek philosophical traditions that bear little resemblance to anything in modern western culture. But with careful analysis we will attempt to make sense out of these assertions.

Coming to Corinth, v. 14a. οὐ γὰρ ὡς μὴ ἐφικνούμενοι εἰς ὑμᾶς ὑπερεκτείνομεν ἑαυτοὺς, For we were not overstepping our limits when we reached you.⁴²³

10.14 γὰρ
οὐ
ὡς μὴ ἐφικνούμενοι
εἰς ὑμᾶς
213 ὑπερεκτείνομεν ἑαυτοὺς,

As the diagram shows, the primary point made here is οὐ...ὑπερεκτείνομεν ἑαυτοὺς, we are not over extending ourselves. Everything else attaches defining limits on this base idea. First comes ὡς μὴ ἐφικνούμενοι εἰς ὑμᾶς, as we should be if we had not already come to you.⁴²⁴ This temporal participle phrase asserts that the apostle was the first commissioned apostle to

⁴²³“With its two negative statements (οὐ and μὴ), the first part of v. 14 restates as an elucidation (γὰρ) what is said positively in v. 13. ‘We are not overreaching ourselves’ corresponds to ‘[we will boast] in accordance with our limit’ (v. 13b), while ‘as if we do not reach you’ matches ‘(an assignment) that certainly reaches as far as you’ (v. 13c). Because v. 14 is explanatory (γὰρ) and the expression οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχῆσόμεθα (v. 13) is repeated in v. 15 (with οὐκ ... καυχώμενοι), some treat v. 14 as parenthetical.⁵⁰ This is possible, but the link between v. 14b and v. 15a suggests otherwise: Paul’s reaching Corinth with the gospel shows that his boasting about Corinth is not beyond proper limits and in someone else’s labors.” [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), 716–717.]

⁴²⁴The translation and thus interpretation of the unit in vv. 14-16 depends heavily upon the placement of the second negative μὴ. If it modifies the participle ἐφικνούμενοι -- the most natural understanding -- then it produces a translation along the lines of the above rendering (Martin, WBC, vol. 40, P. 504). But if it qualifies as an elliptically understood verb the translation should follow as “as it should not be since we already began coming to you.”

phrase ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν does have some geographical implications. Corinth was the western most point of Paul’s three missionary journeys, and he was planning the next stage to be from Rome to Spain as he indicated in Romans 15: 18-29.

reach Corinth and this fact gives his mission there validity. He is not treading on someone else's territory. Very likely standing behind this is the criticism from the outsiders having come into Corinth claiming a superior authority from the Jerusalem apostles to counterman Paul's preaching of the Gospel. Paul had just stated in v. 13, ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχησόμεθα ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος οὗ ἔμερισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρου, **But we will not boast beyond proper limits and instead will keep to the limits that God has assigned us.** Those assigned limits, τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος, included Corinth: ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν. Thus in coming to Corinth before any other apostle did with the Gospel -- ἐφικνόμενοι εἰς ὑμᾶς -- means that Paul can legitimately boast over the Corinthians. In no way then had he overstepped the boundaries of his divine assignment, as his opponents were charging.

γὰρ
 ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν
214 ἐφθάσαμεν
 10.15 ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ,
 οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχώμενοι
 | ἐν ἄλλοτρίοις κόποις,
 | δὲ
 ἐλπίδα ἔχοντες
 | | αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν
 | | ἐν ὑμῖν
 | μεγαλυνθῆναι
 | κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν
 | εἰς περισσεῖαν
 10.16 | εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν
 εὐαγγελίσασθαι,
 | οὐκ ἐν ἄλλοτρίῳ κανόνι
 | εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα
 καυχήσασθαι.

Moving beyond Corinth, vv. 14b-16. 14b ἄχρι γὰρ καὶ ὑμῶν ἐφθάσαμεν ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 15 οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχώμενοι ἐν ἄλλοτρίοις κόποις, ἐλπίδα δὲ ἔχοντες αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν μεγαλυνθῆναι κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν εἰς περισσεῖαν 16 εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν εὐαγγελίσασθαι, οὐκ ἐν ἄλλοτρίῳ κανόνι εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα καυχήσασθαι. **14b for we were the first to come all the way to you with the good news of Christ. 15 We do not boast beyond limits, that is, in the labors of others; but our hope is that, as your faith increases, our sphere of action among you may be greatly enlarged, 16 so that we may proclaim the good news in lands beyond you, without boasting of work already done in someone else's sphere of action.**

This second justifying expression (vv. 14b-16) extends the first one (v. 14a) and further defends the claims in v. 13 of limited boasting. Proper understanding of the claims in v. 13 thus depends upon the explanation given in vv. 14b-16.

The key verb is ἐφθάσαμεν from φθάνω with the

sense of **reaching ahead of or arriving before others.** The aorist first plural indicative spelling stresses Paul and his associates having reached the Corinthians (ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν) ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, **with the Gospel,** before the arrival of these outsiders. Thus boasting about the Corinthians was well within Paul's legitimate rights as an apostolic messenger.

He goes on (v. 15a) to assert that he will not boast (=take credit for) about the labors of other apostolic messengers: οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχώμενοι ἐν ἄλλοτρίοις κόποις, **not boasting into the limits beyond, in the labors of others.** Behind this evidently stands the Jerusalem agreement with the Twelve depicted in Gal. 2:9, καὶ γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι, Ἰάκωβος καὶ Κηφᾶς καὶ Ἰωάννης, οἱ δοκοῦντες στῦλοι εἶναι, δεξιὰς ἔδωκαν ἐμοὶ καὶ Βαρναβᾶ κοινωνίας, **ἵνα ἡμεῖς εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, αὐτοὶ δὲ εἰς τὴν περιτομήν·** and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing **that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.** The apostle was keen to take the Gospel to 'virgin' territories where no other apostle had already worked in (cf. Rom. 15:20-21). If they wanted to work in 'his fields' after him, then their labors that built on the foundation that he had laid was fine (cf. 1 Cor. 3:5-9). But they must not try to undo his work and replace it with something different (cf. Gal. 1:6-10). From all indications this was exactly what the outsiders who came to Corinth were seeking to do. Whether or not they represented the same mentality that Paul had to deal with among the Galatian churches is far less

clear. Superficially some similarities seem to be present. But the honest truth is that not enough information about what these people stood for is given to draw any substantive conclusions. Chapters eleven and twelve provide about the only information available. Keeping the characterization of them separate from those inside the Corinthian church who didn't care for Paul is one of the interpretive barriers that is difficult to scale successfully.

Standing in contrast to the existing situation is Paul's expectation of the future growing out of Corinth (vv. 15b-16): ἐλπίδα δὲ ἔχοντες αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν μεγαλυνθῆναι κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν εἰς περισσεῖαν 16 εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν εὐαγγελίσασθαι, οὐκ ἐν ἄλλοτρίῳ κανόνι εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα καυχήσασθαι, **but having expectation that your faith will grow, our boundaries of action may then be enlarged extensively so that we can preach the Gospel well beyond you without boasting in the work of others in their defined boundaries.**

The apostle saw his primary calling from God to be a church planter rather than an ongoing pastor. To be sure, he felt deep pastoral responsibility for the churches established under his ministry, as his extensive letter writing ministry affirms. But at the top of the priority list was to plant churches in brand new territory where no other apostolic messenger had gone. The primary limitation on that objective was the spiritual health of his previously established churches.

How quickly and how much he would be able to achieve this depended in part on the progress of the church at Corinth. Does this imply his desire to use Corinth as a 'home base' for expanded missionary work? Clearly from Luke's account in Acts, Antioch of Syria had functioned in this capacity. And in Romans 15:24 which was written from Corinth after Paul's arrival there, he anticipated the church at Rome functioning as home base for a missionary strategy for the western Mediterranean activity. To take Paul's statement here as presupposing such a role for Corinth is not credible.

His anticipated expanded ministry -- ἐν ὑμῖν μεγαλυνθῆναι -- depends upon the successful conclusion of the issues raised by his opponents at Corinth -- ἐλπίδα δὲ ἔχοντες ἀύξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν. The foundational assumption under this is that evangelistic ministry in new fields depends upon successful pastoral ministry in existing fields. One does not -- and should not -- establish new fields of ministry until existing fields are stable and spiritually healthy. Otherwise, the entire endeavor is headed for collapse. Another aspect of the enlargement of ministry -- μεγαλυνθῆναι -- here is getting the entire community on board with the apostolic Gospel and weaned off of the corruption of the Gospel from the outsiders. When this could be achieved, then his ambition of moving on to new fields of missionary activity would be possible.

c) The bottom line basis for boasting, vv. 17-18.

17 Ὁ δὲ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω· 18 οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἑαυτὸν συνιστάνων, ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος, ἀλλ' ὃν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν. 17 "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." 18 For it is not those who commend themselves that are approved, but those whom the Lord commends.

10.17 δὲ
215 Ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω·
 10.18 γὰρ
 216 οὐ... ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος,
 ἀλλ'
 ὃν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν
217 (ἐστὶν δόκιμος).

The apostle concludes this discussion by resorting to general axioms based on scriptural citation.⁴²⁵ The

⁴²⁵In a typically Pauline mannerism, the writer clinches his point with an OT citation, followed (in v 18) with an explanatory

scripture is taken from Jeremiah 9:23-24 (LXX 9:22-23):⁴²⁶

22 Τάδε λέγει κύριος Μὴ καυχάσθω ὁ σοφὸς ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ αὐτοῦ, καὶ μὴ καυχάσθω ὁ ἰσχυρὸς ἐν τῇ ἰσχύϊ αὐτοῦ, καὶ μὴ καυχάσθω ὁ πλούσιος ἐν τῷ πλούτῳ αὐτοῦ,† 23 ἀλλ' ἢ ἐν τούτῳ καυχάσθω ὁ καυχώμενος, συνίειν καὶ γινώσκειν ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι κύριος ποιῶν ἔλεος καὶ κρίμα καὶ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἐν τούτοις τὸ θέλημά μου, λέγει κύριος.†

23 Thus says the Lord: Do not let the wise boast in their wisdom, do not let the mighty boast in their might, do not let the wealthy boast in their wealth; 24 but let those who boast boast in this, that they understand and know me, that I am the Lord; I act with steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, says the Lord.

Clearly Paul's declaration Ὁ δὲ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω, and the one boasting let him be boasting in the Lord (#215), is at best a summarizing of Jeremiah's longer declaration in the Lord's behalf. It is not an exact quotation, but it does capture the essence of Jeremiah's text. If there is any pride to be talked about it must be pride in what God is doing rather than pride in what the individual is doing. This foundational axiom underlies everything that Paul has claimed in this discussion in chapter ten. It especially comes full circle to the opening assertion in this subunit in vv. 12-18, Οὐ γὰρ τολῶμεν ἐγκρῖναι ἢ συγκρῖναι ἑαυτοὺς τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστανόντων, for we dare not classify or compare ourselves to some who are commending themselves (v. 12). Those doing this at Corinth, Paul asserts, do not possess good sense (οὐ συνιᾶσιν; v. 12b).

In typical Jewish scribal fashion the apostle then proceeds to amplify and apply this in the justifying declarations in v. 18 (#s 216 - 217): οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἑαυτὸν συνιστάνων, ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος, ἀλλ' ὃν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν, For it is not the one who commends himself that is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends. The bottom line is that divine approval is the only matter than counts. And

comment, which in turn binds together the initial part of his discussion in v 12 with its conclusion in v 18 in a 'ring composition.' The hook-word is συνίστημι, 'commend/recommend.' The issue at stake is κανὼν, 'sphere,' and its demarcation, whether it is (1) the product of human endeavor, thus deserving the praise or blame that a person seeks either to gain or avoid for the work done in mission service, or (2) an assignment from 'the Lord,' who gives it validity and so is the only one who can rightly commend it as 'approved' (δόκιμος).^{188*} [Ralph P. Martin, 2 Corinthians, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 508.]

⁴²⁶The variation in verse references is caused by differing versification in the English translation that follows the original Hebrew text, from that in the Greek translation of the Septuagint (LXX). Often the LXX counts beginning text unit titles as the beginning verse while the Hebrew text doesn't. Here the versification gets messed up in 9:8 with the LXX splitting it into two verses.



those He approves He also commends to the saints of God.

The phrasing of this in vv. 17-18 in the third person singular rather than the expected third person plural from v. 12b underscores the axiomatic nature of Paul's declaration here. It also ties these statements closely to the τις in vv. 7-11. To be sure, it is the spiritual principle that Paul and his associates follow as vv. 12-16 claims. But it isn't what anyone of the Corinthian opponents of Paul were following (vv. 7-11). A slight shift in narrative perspective but a huge stinging accusation against his opponents at Corinth.

The actions of *boasting* (καυχώμενος / καυχάσθω) and of *commending / recommending* (συνιστάνων / συνίστησιν) have legitimacy only when focused on the Lord who approves the actions (δόκιμος). In the parallelism between ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος, *that one is approved*, and ὃν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν, *whom the Lord commends*, reflects the Jewish step parallelistic structure. That is, divine approval leads to divine commendation. The contrastive ἀλλ' highlights the 'step up' in this structure to the higher level of God's recommendation of such a person who is boasting in the Lord. Self commendation forfeits divine approval (οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἑαυτὸν συνιστάνων, ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος).

This understanding of Jeremiah by Paul places him squarely in the category of having divine approval, while his opponents by their self commendation have forfeited God's approval and recommendation. I'm quite confident when this letter was read in the house church groups at Corinth where some of these opposing individuals were present, there were no amens of affirmation of Paul. Had they been using the Hebrew scriptures to somehow justify their actions, Paul's straightforward interpretation of Jeremiah 9 powerfully contradicted them.

Ministry Applied

How does this apply to believers in the modern world? Not just vv. 17-18 but 10:1-18? Modern western culture is a highly competitive culture. Competition exists only by comparison of oneself to others. One clear example of this is in the field of athletics.⁴²⁷ To be sure,

⁴²⁷Both structurally and pragmatically modern athletics stresses intense comparison between individuals, teams of athletes etc. It is interesting that in a few areas of athletic competition competitiveness is de-emphasized, namely in children's T-ball baseball games where no scores are kept and the emphasis is upon learning the rules of the game and developing skills to play the game. But by middle school age, the kids are structured increasingly into competitiveness to establish who is better skilled at playing the game. Personal excellence then becomes the top priority for the youngster. Competitive excellence has the twin brother of discrimination against those with lesser skills. They become the 'bench warmers' who eventually drop out of sports completely. The psychological damage done by this instilling of inferiority into their psyche often causes life long hurt and harm.

the level of competitiveness is much higher in the western hemisphere than in Europe. And this largely due to much greater emphasis upon individualism rather than collectivism in society. What Paul advocates for believers is diametrically opposed to our western cultural mind-set. Here is one of those places where scriptural principle intensely clashes with modern cultural values. The modern Christian is then caught in a dilemma between two very opposing demands. One must live in this comparative world but must not be guided by it. Not easy to do at all.

Can we be non-competitive in our Christian life but competitive everywhere else?⁴²⁸ Is it enough to give 'sportsmanship awards' in athletics after championship awards have been handed out? What living in radically different cultures in different parts of the world has taught me is that how to be a faithful believer in a competitive culture necessitates differing responses depending upon the particular culture one finds him/herself in. The cultural diversity of the modern world is astounding.⁴²⁹

The first step in making application is to conclude a listing of general principles set forth in chapter ten. From this potential points of application will emerge more easily. What are some of these general principles?

1) *Ministry should be customized.*

That is, different situations require differing responses. In 10:1-5, the criticism of inconsistency against Paul was answered by his asserting differing needs between the time of his being with the Corinthians in person and other times when a letter to them was necessitated. Anyone who has been engaged in

⁴²⁸It has been an interesting pilgrimage for me to come out of Texas culture where sports is the major religion of the vast majority of people to live in Europe, and Germany in particular, where sports are relegated to independent clubs with no connection to schools at any level from primary through university life in Germany. Transitioning between these two opposite ends of the cultural poles has often been a challenge for me. But I have seen up close that a far less competitive culture can value excellence apart from competitiveness. And typically that excellence is greater than what is produced in the highly competitive society of the US.

This can and typically does mean that Christian excellence has greater substance because the believer is freer to focus on God and His approval apart from the approval or disapproval of other individuals around him / her. And ironically I have observed that the role of the group takes on a different more spiritually healthy role of encourager more so than critic. Even criticism in this setting has a different tone. It is meant to help rather than tear down. Learning all this for me has been both one of the greatest challenges and best divine blessings of my seven decades plus long life.

⁴²⁹Of course one of the foundational principles of interpretation is that the closer the application setting matches the setting of the biblical text being applied the easier it is to find clear application of biblical text based principles.



Christian ministry for any amount of time knows well that specific ministry depends heavily upon very individualized situations that seldom ever are the same. *The effective minister knows how to take eternal values and apply them to each particular situation.*

Not everyone will understand this.⁴³⁰ People may superficially think the minister is not being consistent or fair across the board. But *'one size does not fit all'* in Gospel ministry ever. Any pastor or preacher who advocates rigid rules, usually falsely depicted as "laws of God," to every situation is a minister to be avoided at all costs. He clearly has no experience in divine grace nor possess the wisdom of God!

2) Ministry often necessitates challenging cultural norms.

The background of the criticism of the apostle especially emphasized in 10:1-6 was that of the conventional Greco-Roman standards of honor and shame. The apostle in response to the critics' human based evaluations was to insist on new definitions of honor and shame based on eternal principles. One's actions must not be judged proper or improper by man made standards. Rather, they must be measured against divine standards. Central to this shift of definition is the criterium of whether ministry genuinely helps people come into a saving knowledge of God or not. Does what the minister says and does point them to deeper awareness of God (cf. v. 4)?

Ministry is good or bad not based upon human judgments, but rather solely on the basis of divine criteria. Paul passionately sought to get this point across to his Corinthian readers. Modern day churches and church members would do well to hear him carefully and affirmatively. Far too often the success or failure of a local church pastor is measured along the same lines as the local high school football coach. If the pastor has a "winning season" -- lots of additions, high levels of financial giving to the church, popularity in the community et als. -- then he or she is considered a successful pastor. If not, then the need for the pastor to move on to a new church is verbalized increasingly among the members. The scripture principles advocated in chapter ten utterly condemn such as of the Devil himself!

The biblical demand is that we evaluate our spiritual leaders by God's criteria and not by those of the world around us. And central to the divine criteria is whether the spiritual leader is leading people to deeper awareness of God in their lives. To do this genuinely will necessitate 'rocking the boat' on occasion and up-

⁴³⁰The divisive mess earlier at Corinth addressed in 1 Cor. 1:10-17 had reflected an early tendency at Corinth to adopt man made values over divinely established values. And worse still to tout these man made values (ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, v. 17) as being superior to God's wisdom. In 1:18-31, Paul leveled a devastating condemnation of this nonsense by the Corinthians.

setting carnal Christians who are ruining their lives in disobedience to God. Paul had done this more than once at Corinth. But he always communicated his love and commitment for the very best spiritually for them. His bluntness was that of agape, not flushing personal anger over being criticized. It was easier to communicate this compassion in person rather than through letters evidently for Paul. His critics at Corinth twisted this into inconsistency on his part that disqualified him from being a spiritual leader.⁴³¹

3) Ministry must be carried out under divine authorization.

In 10:7-11, speaks of his ministry being done under assignment of God. His varying actions and approaches -- insistency asserted by his Corinthian critics -- in actually reflected God's leadership in his ministry. Paul speaks of ἐξουσία from God. One common mistake made by modern commentators and translators is to render this Greek word as 'authority.' In reality it connotes the idea of 'authorization' instead. As a consequence of this mistake much discussion then is given to the pastor's authority in ministry. Such modern cultural twisting of Paul's words then puts false words in his mouth and fails to understand some far deeper and more spiritually liberating ideas that are being communicated in the text.

The spiritual reality in Paul's words affirms God's credentializing of him to minister in the Lord's behalf in order to build up the Corinthian community spiritually (εἰς οἰκοδομήν), rather than tear them down in advocating divisiveness, as his opponents in Corinth were doing. What stands behind the apostle's claim to consistency in v. 11 is a consistent following of God's leadership. His critics may see him as skilled in writing but inept in speaking (v. 10), but they are missing the point by using their human criteria. Thus Paul refuses their shaming efforts (οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι v. 8b), because they have no validity spiritually.

For the minister in today's world, one of his or her greatest moments of temptation to turn to worldly standards comes not on Sunday but on Monday at the weekly ministerial alliance meeting. Areas pastors come together and far too often are guilty of bragging about their 'successes' the day before on purely worldly bases. "I really blew the top out in my sermon yesterday!" "I had a huge number of public decisions yesterday!" Just to name a few of the comments I've heard over the

⁴³¹As noted in the earlier exegesis, we should avoid reading 'cowardice' into this criticism. Such is a modern western culturally encouraged reading that has no basis at all in the scripture text. The honor / shame standards of Greco-Roman culture coupled with the Roman leadership profile of a very aggressive 'take charge' personality always is what is standing behind the Corinthian criticism of Paul.

years. Far too many of those that I have attended in over half a century plus of ministry were among the most secular bragging sessions that you would ever find taking place. They stand as the modern reflection of Paul's opponents at Corinth in their gatherings.

What the apostle concerned himself with centered on whether or not he was submissive to God's leadership and said God's words to the people or not. How they responded to it was their responsibility. His was to speak faithfully what the Lord prompted him to say.⁴³²

To be sure, there exists a false twisting of the disdain for being influenced by others. Usually it goes under the label of being "prophetic" and becomes an expression of arrogant pride and elitism by the religious leader.

Watch several of the US TV preachers to get a real life picture of what I'm describing. They typify this phony piety very closely. Deep in their personality is huge insecurity and self doubt, and their human based coping mechanism is repugnant assertiveness. But it has to be covered up with layers of phony piety that claims to be doing God's will. The more they thunderously scream down God's wrath on sin, the more popular they become with many people in their audience. Their meetings are textbook examples of people manipulation based on worldly standards.

4) Standards of ministry success must never be based on comparison to others.

In verses 12-18, the apostle intensely condemns the evaluative standards of his opponents at Corinth. They found a pseudo superiority in comparing themselves to others around them: ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι ἑαυτούς τισιν (v. 12a). This in turn led to self recommendation of themselves to the Christian community: τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοῦς συνιστανόντων (v. 12b). When I evaluate myself and then sell myself as superior based on that self evaluation, Paul indicates, I am not demonstrating good sense: οὐ συνιᾶσιν (v. 12c). Such should be clear. The apostle utterly shuns such comparisons: Οὐ γὰρ τολμῶμεν ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι ἑαυτοῦς (v. 12a).

Crucial to understanding vv. 12-18 is making a proper connection between συνιστανόντων (commending / recommending) and καυχησόμεθα (boasting / taking pride in). In modern western culture if one is to sell himself as superior to some group, he must boast about his superior accomplishments. Some modern commentators struggle with Paul's terminology -- which is very rarely found in the NT -- because of their modern cultural conditioning. The idea of commending oneself here comes out of the verb συνίστημι which etymologically

⁴³²It is a lame copout to excuse yourself from this passionate commitment to doing God's will by claiming that Paul did not have mortgage payments to make or a family to support. Such avoidance to obedience reflects an ungodly compromise with worldly values in denial of biblical values.

means to place oneself before others in a comparison to some standard of evaluation. Crucial then is what standard of comparison is being used and who is doing the commending. Paul's opponents were commending themselves based on human standards to comparison, i.e., the worldly wisdom detailed in 1 Cor. 1:26-31. Paul argues that commendation needs to come from God and is measured by His standards alone (10:13-16). Only then can boasting (καυχησόμεθα) become legitimate. How? Because it centers on the superior accomplishments of God and not on what the religious leader has done. Paul advocates a Christianity that centers on helping others, while his opponents centered their emphasis upon a 'meism' egocentric Christianity.

In our present times the self-centered tendencies of western culture dominate social life heavily. Media channels used by religious leaders such as TV tend to foster and encourage this mind-set among Christians. The mega growth in numbers of some churches cultivates this with worship more as religious entertainment than as demanding surrender to God. The resulting hypocrisy and the rapidly growing gulf between the lifestyle of Christians today and the teachings of Jesus plays a significant role in the rapid decline of Christianity in western societies.⁴³³ Young adults in the US are abandoning church life in large numbers largely due to this contradiction. Paul's insights in chapter ten on how to do ministry properly as self-sacrificing focus on helping others is critically needed in church life today.

5) Boasting about ministry poses substantial dangers.

Also in vv. 12-18, as well as 20 times in Second Corinthians, the verb καυχάομαι⁴³⁴ surfaces as an im-

⁴³³The eye catching introduction to Robert P. Jones' *THE END OF WHITE CHRISTIAN AMERICA*, published in July 2016, captures this point dramatically by couching it in the literary form of an obituary:

"After a long life spanning nearly two hundred and forty years, White Christian America -- a prominent cultural force in the nations' history -- has died. WCA first began to exhibit troubling symptoms in the 1960s when white mainline Protestant denominations began to shrink, but showed signs of rallying with the rise of the Christian Right in the 1980s. Following the 2004 presidential election, however, it became clear that WCA's powers were falling. Although examiners have not been able to pinpoint the exact time of death, the best evidence suggests that WCA finally succumbed in the latter part of the first decade of the twenty-first century" [P. 1]

Jones goes on to provide massive demographic data to make the case for this contention.

⁴³⁴Added to this verb usage stands the noun usage of καύχημα (3x) and καύχησις (6x) also in Second Corinthians. All deal with the idea of boasting and pride. For more details see topics 33.368-33.373 in the Louw-Nida Greek lexicon based on semantic domains.



portant theme for Paul in this letter. The tension inherent here between secular cultural perceptions and biblical principle regarding *καυχάομαι* is very noticeable. In commending themselves Paul's opponents were boasting about their own accomplishments and superiority. Paul steadfastly argues that boasting, *καυχάομαι*, must center on God and His accomplishments. His own spiritual journey had taught him well that individuals can never stack up enough accomplishments to merit God's acceptance. Everything in the Christian life revolves around what God does to make us acceptable to Himself. Ministry to others done legitimately then centers on the guidance and power of God flowing through the individual believer and the believing community to positively impact the lives of others. This is God's working, not ours. We are His arms, legs, tongue etc. enabling God to draw others to Himself in redemption.

Now exactly what is *καυχάομαι* when done legitimately? The root stem *καυχ-* conveys an inward perspective that is normally expressed verbally toward others. The inner sense can be described as pride and a sense of well being. The verbalization of this inner perspective is the boasting aspect. Proper *καυχάομαι* then centers its pride not on itself⁴³⁵ but on God and then verbalizes that in praise and adoration of God.

The apostle saw the fatal flaw in the self boasting of his opponents at Corinth. It is a denial of the very core of the Christian Gospel. Christianity is not about the individual at all. It is completely about God. Self-boasting treats God as a Coke machine who exists to satisfy our wants and desires. Such an approach is spiritual suicide! Therefore the apostle's pleas to the Corinthians, including his opponents, were to abandon such self-boasting and focus on God. Unless modern Christianity adopts Paul's perspective it will doom itself in spiritual suicide as well.

There is much for us to learn from chapter ten in Second Corinthians. The above just touches the tip of the iceberg in what is contained in these eighteen verses.

10.2.3.3.2 Apostolic Boasting, 11:1-12:13

In this second section of apostolic ministry emphasis in chaps. 10-13, the apostle first touches on his opponents in vv. 1-15 and then on the guiding qualities of his ministry in 11:16-12:13. These are the dominating emphases although his opponents are brought into the picture as well. The identity of these opponents is important to remember. Verse four is important because here a strong signal is given that the people Paul has

⁴³⁵Note James' observation on self boasting (4:16): *νῦν δὲ καυχᾶσθε ἐν ταῖς ἀλαζονείαις ὑμῶν· πᾶσα καύχησις τοιαύτη πονηρὰ ἐστίν. As it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.*

in mind now are not primarily, or at all, Corinthians from inside the church in the city. Instead they are the outsiders who have come to Corinth, perhaps from Judea, and have linked up with the Corinthian opponents inside the church.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In this beginning pericope, the apostle sets up a contrast between the motivations behind his devotion to the Corinthians and those of the outsiders who have come to Corinth to undermine Paul's preaching of the Gospel. He stands as their spiritual father, while these

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

people come as seducers of the Corinthians. The family image is an important backdrop to what Paul asserts here.

The key verb, repeated three times here, is ἀνείχεσθέ (v. 1); ἀνέχεσθέ (v. 1); ἀνέχεσθε (v. 4), all forms from ἀνέχω. Five of the 15 total uses in the entire NT

are found here in Second Corinthians chapter eleven. It has the sense of enduring something unpleasant. In the imperfect tense form ἀνείχεσθέ (v. 1) and the present imperative form ἀνέχεσθέ (v. 1) the genitive case direct object of both verbs is μου, *me*. The volutative usage of the imperfect tense here expresses a wish of the apostle Paul, and particularly in connection to the use of ὄφελον, a particle of modality with the sense of “oh that...”. Combined, the two words generate the meaning of *oh that you would put up with me*. Implicit in the expression is the assumption that the Corinthians likely will not be patient with Paul in what he is about to say.⁴³⁶ There is a certain reluctance in even asking them to endure his statements which he will then characterize as ἀφροσύνη, *foolishness*, in 11:1, 16, 17, 19, 21, 12: 6, 11.

The adverb μικρόν qualifies the verb ἀνείχεσθέ and asks the Corinthians for just a small amount of endurance. The τι ἀφροσύνης, *in some foolishness*, provides the reference point of what they need to endure Paul regarding.⁴³⁷ The accusative demon-

⁴³⁶“The sentence joins two contrasting statements: an unrealizable wish (ὄφελον; a fixed form, functioning as a particle to introduce an unattainable wish [BAGD]) and—by contrast (ἀλλά) but more a concession—a declaration that Paul’s wish is to be granted, ‘yes, do what I cannot really ask.’ The middle term is the verb ἀνέχομαι, ‘endure, bear with, put up with.’ Clearly something like the last-mentioned translation is required here (as in Mark 9:19: ἕως πότε ἀνέξομαι ὑμῶν, ‘how long am I to bear with you?’). Paul can hardly bring himself to ask for this indulgence, that the Corinthians will put up with his display of ‘folly’ (ἀφροσύνη; ‘the decisive catchword for this sentence,’ and what is to come—see v 4—in the entire ‘Fool’s Discourse’).²¹⁴” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids,

MI: Zondervan, 2014), 516.]

⁴³⁷Some will combine μου μικρόν τι ἀφροσύνης in taking τι as the direct object of the verb. The resulting meaning is *endure my little foolishness*. But the verb virtually never takes its object in the accusative case. Thus making such an understanding highly unlikely. This accounts for a substantial tendency of copyists to



strative pronoun followed by the genitive of identity noun highlights even further Paul's hesitation with the literal sense of *in some of foolishness*.

But he asks them anyway: ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνέχεσθέ μου, *but do bear with me*. This request in part plays off another reality mentioned in verse four, καλῶς ἀνέχεσθε, *you are enduring them readily*.⁴³⁸ These are the false teachers who are coming to Corinth with a twisted version of the Gospel (v. 4a). The Corinthians ironically were listening to them while not so willing to listen to Paul. At least some of the Corinthians were. The self boasting of these teachers had appealed to those inclined to be hostile to Paul.

Paul justifies his request for a little toleration of him from the Corinthians in two ways with γὰρ in vv. 2-3 (#s 220-222) and 4 (#223). The first centers on the nature of his relationship to them and the second targets the appeal of the false teachers. These will pave the way for more detailed defense of his actions that follow beginning in v. 5.

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

The father / daughter image in v. 2 is interesting: ζηλῶ γὰρ ὑμᾶς θεοῦ ζήλω, ἡρμοσάμην γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἐνὶ ἀνδρὶ παρθένον ἀγνήν παραστῆσαι τῷ Χριστῷ, *for I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*. The apostle's founding of the church stands as the basis of this image. As the responsible father he had arranged for the Corinthians to have a husband, Christ.⁴³⁹ The marriage contract had already been signed. The Corinthians were betrothed to Christ as their spiritual husband and they His bride. Paul stresses his fatherly concern for his 'daughter' as a divine mandate: θεοῦ ζήλω.⁴⁴⁰

omit τὶ in the copying of the text: F G H K L P 81. 104. 630. 1175. 1241. 1505. 2464 *M* it; Lcf Ambst [Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 571.]

⁴³⁸His sarcasm toward the Corinthians becomes more pointed in vv. 19-20.

⁴³⁹The details of the father / daughter image are developed completely within the first century almost universal tradition that it was the father who determined who would be the husband of his daughter, and not the daughter herself. Of course, the modern western pattern today is drastically different. Thus the application of the image to our time is rather limited. But the father having the best interests in mind for his daughter remains at the core of both the image in Paul's world as well as in ours. One big difference is that the Roman world of Paul would define the daughter's best interests largely in terms of what would advance her birth family, rather than exclusively on her own personal interests.

⁴⁴⁰We have seen that in vv. 2-5 Paul gives three substantial reasons for his appeal for tolerance (ἀνέχεσθέ, v. 1b), thereby in-

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

The depicting of the evangelizing of the Corinthians as a spiritual betrothal of people to Christ is quite interesting. The background for the image most likely comes out of the OT depiction of God as Israel's heavenly husband and her as a bride: Isa 50:1-2; 54:1-8; 62:5; Ezek 16; Hos 1-3. But the image is different from Paul's in that God is the husband, rather than the father.⁴⁴¹ But the chastity of Israel as a bride stands as a

dicating his considerable unease in embarking on this journey of boasting and his clear realization of the considerable danger in imitating the worldly tactics of his opponents. His first reason is his jealous concern for his converts. ζηλῶ here could mean simply 'I am deeply concerned about you' (cf. BAGD 338a) or 'I care deeply for you' (Furnish 484), but the following reference to the need for pre-nuptial purity (παρθένον ἀγνήν) suggests that the more intensive and specialized meaning, 'I am jealous' (= ζηλοτυπέω, Meyer 639) or 'I am jealously concerned' (Thrall 656), is intended in the context, particularly since the character of Paul's ζήλος is described as being θεοῦ. In the phrase θεοῦ ζήλω, the dative expresses manner (sometimes called the "associative dative") and the construction ζηλῶ ... ζήλω imitates the Hebrew absolute infinitive,¹⁶ although there is some precedent for the construction in Classical Greek.¹⁷ For its part the genitive θεοῦ has been seen as subjective ('with a jealousy God inspires [in me]'¹⁸), qualitative ('a divine jealousy'¹⁹), or possessive ('God's own jealousy,²⁰ or 'a jealousy which God has'²¹). However, Paul is not simply indicating the source of his ζήλος although God is undoubtedly its ultimate origin, nor is he merely affirming that it is supernaturally strong (one possible sense of 'divine'). He is claiming to have a jealousy such as God himself has, or a jealousy that has the characteristics of God's jealousy (a 'godly' or 'divine' jealousy). The OT depicts Yahweh not simply as a jealous God (Deut. 4:24), one consumed with holy zeal for his name, but as a God whose very name is Jealous (Exod. 34:14). His jealous anger burns against sin (Exod. 20:5; Ezek. 23:25), especially idolatry (Deut. 6:15; Josh. 24:19-20; Nah. 1:2), yet his jealous care protects his people (Ps. 17:7-8; Prov. 18:10; Isa. 41:10). As the verse goes on to show, Paul's godly jealousy for his spiritual daughter (the Corinthian congregation) is evidenced in his passionate concern to protect her purity from being violated by potential paramours in the period between her betrothal and her wedding day. No rivals to her one husband, Christ, would be tolerated.²² If she were caused to fall, he would burn with jealous anger (cf. 11:29)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 734-735.]

⁴⁴¹Martin (WBC, vol. 40, P. 517), misses the point of the image by seeing Paul not as father but as 'best man.' Only the father could betroth a daughter. This exclusive role for the father was universal across the ancient Roman world of Paul.

major emphasis in the Jewish image. Plus the jealousy of God for Israel provides a helpful comparison to Paul in his concern for the Corinthians.

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

The challenge for the bride's father was *παρθένον ἀγνήν παραστήσαι τῷ Χριστῷ, a chaste virgin to present to Christ*. Because the wedding day was a long time away from the betrothal date, the father's duty was to keep his daughter morally pure for her official wedding day.⁴⁴² Paul found himself in the predicament of many fathers both ancient and modern: how to keep daughter's morally pure for their wedding date.

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

His apprehension is expressed in *φοβοῦμαι δὲ μή πως, but I am fearful lest...* In the NT, this construction is

⁴⁴²“*παραστήσαι* defines the aim of the betrothal (ἡρμοσάμην) and is used with a *τινὰ τινι* (‘someone to someone’) construction: ‘in order to present you as a pure maiden to Christ himself.’³⁸ This verb points to a solemn or formal presentation, as when the infant Jesus was ‘presented’ to the Lord by his parents in the Temple (Luke 2:22).³⁹ Since the same verb is used in 4:14 of God’s ‘presentation’ of believers to himself or to Christ or before Christ’s tribunal after the resurrection (ἐγερεῖ καὶ παραστήσει), we may safely conclude that Paul’s ‘presentation’ of the Corinthians to Christ would also occur on the last Day.⁴⁰ Confirmation of this may be found in the use of *παρίστημι* in Eph. 5:27; Col. 1:22 in reference to the church’s being presented before God or Christ in unblemished purity at the parousia. *παρθένον ἀγνήν* stands in apposition to an implied *ὑμᾶς*, the direct object of *παραστήσαι* (cf. Wolff 209). Perhaps sensing that the adjective *ἀγνήν* is pleonastic with *παρθένον* (‘chaste virgin’) and that wedding symbolism is dominant, some render this phrase ‘pure bride’ (Goodspeed, RSV; Furnish 484) or ‘faithful bride’ (Weymouth). But the pleonasm is not stark, for on occasion *παρθένος* could denote an unmarried woman who was not a virgin.⁴¹ Clearly, *παρθένον ἀγνήν* emphasizes undefiled virginity. *τῷ Χριστῷ* is emphatic by position and should not be construed with *ἡρμοσάμην* (so RSV, NEB, REB); the sense is ‘... to one husband ... I refer, of course, to Christ.’” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 737–738.]

found only here and in 12:20 where a similar fear about the conduct of the Corinthians is expressed in more direct language.⁴⁴³ Here in 11:3 the apostle’s apprehension about the Corinthians centers on *τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν, your thoughts*. A *νόημα* is both the mind that thinks and also the thoughts that it thinks.⁴⁴⁴ Among ancient Semitic peoples in particular, this was located not in the head, but in the heart anatomically.

The comparison to the deception of Eve in the garden is made for clarification: *ὡς ὁ ὄφις ἐξηπάτησεν Εὐάν ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ αὐτοῦ, like the serpent deceived Eve by its cunning*.⁴⁴⁵ Satan as the snake misled Eve by trick-

⁴⁴³2 Cor. 12:20. *φοβοῦμαι γὰρ μή πως ἐλθὼν οὐχ οἴους θέλω εὐρῶ ὑμᾶς κἀγὼ εὐρεθῶ ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐ θέλετε· μή πως ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθειᾶι, καταλαλιάι, ψιθυρισμοί, φυσιώσεις, ἀκαταστασίαι·*

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

⁴⁴⁴It is connected to a large complex of Greek words having to do with thinking and human facilities for thinking: *νοέω, νοῦς, νόημα, ἀνόητος, ἄνοια, δυσνόητος, διάνοια, διανόημα, ἔννοια, εὐνοέω, εὐνοια, κατανοέω, μετανοέω, μετάνοια, ἀμετανόητος, προνοέω, πρόνοια, ὑπονοέω, ὑπόνοια, νοουθετέω, νοουθεσία*. [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:948.]

This listing is only of those words with some connection to early Christianity. A secular Greek listing is much longer, as is reflected in Liddell, H.G. *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon*. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996, and Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones, and Roderick McKenzie. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. Additionally, other related word groups existed as well, cf. Louw-Nida, *Greek Lexicon*, topics. 26.1 - 26.16.

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

⁴⁴⁵“With the expression ‘just as the snake deceived Eve by his cunning’ Paul states a precedent that informs his fear. It would appear that he intends his hearers to recognize three parallels between the record of Eve’s temptation by the snake in Gen. 3:1–13 and the situation he himself faced in Corinth.

“First, just as Eve was deceived in her thinking (Gen. 3:1–6) and so lost her innocence (Gen. 3:7),⁵⁴ so too the Corinthian church was at risk of being deluded in thought (*φθαρῆ τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν*) and so losing her virginity (*ἀπὸ ... τῆς ἀγνότητος*). In response to



ery. The comparative ὡς, as, sets up this OT deception

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

"Second, just as Eve's deception was carried out by the snake (= the devil),⁵⁷ so too the cause of any enticement toward disloyalty among the Corinthians was Satan. Although no agent is expressed with the passive φθαρῆ (τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν), the parallelism in the verse and the explicit reference to ὁ Σατανᾶς in v. 14 indicate that we should take Satan to be the one who corrupts the thinking of the Corinthians. If Satan, as 'the god of this (present) age,' is capable of blinding the minds (νοήματα) of unbelievers (4:4), it is not unjustified to assume that he could also pervert the thoughts of believers. Moreover, he has the ability to gain the advantage over believers by means of his stratagems (2:11) and to trick them by masquerading as an angel of light (11:14). In each case the sphere of his most virulent attack is the mind. But in the case of the Corinthians it was through his deputies that Satan would accomplish his purposes of deceiving the mind (cf. 11:13–15).

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

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

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

Here τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν focuses on decisions made out of being led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ: φθαρῆ τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀπλότητος καὶ τῆς ἀγνότητος τῆς εἰς τὸν Χριστόν. The core verb φθείρω here denotes the idea of corruption and destruction contextually of the inner life⁴⁴⁶ through making false decisions based on the misinformation gained from the false teachers. The impact of these false decisions is to move their target ἀπὸ τῆς ἀπλότητος καὶ τῆς ἀγνότητος εἰς τὸν Χριστόν, away from sincere and pure devotion to Christ. The central idea of ἀπλότης is of something simple and uncomplicated by corrupting influences. Closely related is ἀγνότης with the meaning of pure and undiluted. It is important to note that these two traits are expressed in concrete actions. The deception of the false teachers then was having clear impact on the morality and spiritual living of those infected with it. This anticipates the later apprehension of Paul in 12:20 discovering upon arriving in the city the presence of μή πως ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθεΐαι, καταλαλαί, ψιθυρισμοί,

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

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

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

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1054.]

φυσιώσεις, ἀκαταστασίαι, *quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder*. The apostle had some specific misdeeds in mind with his assertion. Individuals engaging in such actions have no claim to being genuinely Christian.

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

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

First, the false teacher, ὁ ἐρχόμενος, reference follows the singular reference as in the earlier pattern in τις (10:7); φησὶν (10:10); ὁ τοιοῦτος (10:11); ἐκεῖνός (10:18).⁴⁴⁷The one difference is the participle ὁ ἐρχόμενος implies here coming into the church from the outside.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁷In other contexts ὁ ἐρχόμενος ('he who comes') is a title of the Messiah,⁶¹ but here it means 'your visitor'⁶² (anaphoric article) or 'some interloper'⁶³ (generic article), the implication being that this person comes from outside Corinth. He comes on the scene at Corinth as an intruder.⁶⁴ Simply because the singular is used we need not assume that an isolated individual is in mind. He may be the ringleader or spokesman of the visitors, or the reference may be generic.⁶⁵ This latter possibility is to be preferred in light of the use of ὁ τοιοῦτος (10:11), φησὶν (10:10), and τις (10:7, 12; 11:20, five times) in the immediate context, alongside the plurals οἱ τοιοῦτοι (11:13), πολλοί (11:18), and εἰσὶν (11:22–23, four times). This substantival participle ὁ ἐρχόμενος is equivalent to a substantival adjective with a generic sense (ὁ δίκαιος = οἱ δίκαιοι).⁶⁶ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 742–743.]

⁴⁴⁸Paul does draw some distinction between his opponents inside the church at Corinth (mostly in chapter ten) and the outsider false teachers (mostly in chapters eleven and twelve). But due to the attraction of the Corinthian opponents to the false message of the outsiders, the boundary lines are not drawn sharply since a common message links the two groups together. The corrupted message is far more important for Paul than the personalities involved. The sharpest distinction is that Paul adamantly contends the outsiders are false Christians and servants of Satan, but he leaves the door somewhat open regarding the spiritual condition of the insider opponents within the Corinthian church. Whether they are real or not solely depends on the fruit they produce. At the time

His orally preached message (κηρύσσει) is of ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν, *another Jesus*, who is different from the Jesus preached by Paul and his associates earlier to the Corinthians (ὃν οὐκ ἐκηρύξαμεν).⁴⁴⁹ No details are provided about the profile of this alternative Jesus being advocated, beyond the fact the picture did not match the real Jesus that Paul preached.

The second and third charges reverse the angle to stress what the Corinthians have accepted as opposed to what was presented to them (κηρύσσει / ἐκηρύξαμεν). A contrast between now and back then is highlighted with λαμβάνετε (present tense) and ἐλάβετε as well as ἐδέξασθε (both aorist verbs).⁴⁵⁰

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

Thus the apostle bundles together into a single package: Jesus-Holy Spirit-Gospel. This he and his associates first preached to the Corinthians (ἐκηρύξαμεν) and in their conversion the Corinthians accepted (ἐλάβετε / ἐδέξασθε). But now a very different message is being presented to them by these outsiders and they seem to be inclined to accept it in place of the apostolic Gospel first presented by Paul.⁴⁵¹ It is idle speculation

of the writing of this letter this was an open question for Paul.

⁴⁴⁹In the conditional sentence εἰ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ... κηρύσσει ..., καλῶς ἀνέχεσθε, the protasis states a present reality ('if, as is the case'), not some hypothetical possibility ('if it were the case that' = εἰ ... ἐκήρυσσεν) (as Munck 176–78). The condition is assumed to be true (cf. Zerwick §311); a certain type of proclamation was actually being made at Corinth at the time Paul was writing (note κηρύσσει, not ἐκήρυσεν). [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 742.]

⁴⁵⁰Also, we may assume that λαμβάνετε ('you receive') is to be supplied in the third phrase on the basis of the second, and that the three aorists in the ἄλλον/ἕτερον ... ὃν/ὃ οὐκ construction, viz. ἐκηρύξαμεν, ἐλάβετε, ἐδέξασθε, refer to the time of the Corinthians' conversion (1:19). ἐδέξασθε is probably a synonym for ἐλάβετε, with the distinction being not in the verb used but in what is received, the gift of the Spirit or the teaching contained in the gospel. Similarly, ἕτερος should here be probably considered synonymous with ἄλλος,⁶⁷ used for stylistic variety,⁶⁸ although one would not want to disallow a distinction between the two words in Gal. 1:6–7.⁶⁹ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 743.]

⁴⁵¹Jesus-Spirit-gospel is an apt summary of Christianity (cf. Windisch 327), and what Paul himself signified by these key terms



to attempt to detail this alternative message since the apostle provides no details of it himself.⁴⁵² What was

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

"But it is a hazardous—indeed, an impossible—undertaking to try to specify the precise content of the opponents' message. Proposals are not in short supply⁷⁸ and are comparably divergent. To illustrate this latter point from two recent commentators, according to Barnett (505) Paul uses the name 'Jesus' (cf. 'Christ' in vv. 2–3) because his 'historic Jewish persona was being emphasized at the expense of his risen Lordship.' Thrall, on the other hand, believes that the 'another Jesus' proclaimed by Paul's rivals was 'a splendid figure of post-resurrection glory by contrast with the Pauline gospel of the crucified Christ' (940; cf. 669–70).⁷⁹ Certainly Paul's concern is not with the details of the 'different gospel' being propounded—he offers no rebuttal—but with the Corinthians' response to the rival message and to his own ('you receive ... you received ... [you receive] ... you embraced') and with the consequences of a total Corinthian capitulation to this alien gospel (11:3).⁸⁰ It was not merely the presence of rivals at Corinth that aroused Paul's anger, the fact that they had invaded foreign territory (10:13–16), but their arrival in Corinth as purported agents of Christ (11:13, 23) declaring a gospel that he knew to be not only different in emphasis from the gospel that he had preached and to which the Corinthians had responded, but so different in content that it could be described only as a 'totally other,' that is, a false gospel (cf. Gal. 1:6–7)."

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

⁴⁵²The most flimsy excuse for exegesis as useless speculation is found in Thrall, ICC, P. 667:

The obvious item of evidence for the Judaizing theory is the parallel with Gal 1:6, where the apostle marvels that his readers have so quickly transferred their loyalties εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον. For Windisch, Bruce, and others this would be a message which devalued grace, and presented the appropriation of Christ's salvific work as dependent upon human meritorious achievement.⁸⁷ The 'other Jesus' is then seen as a more 'Jewish' character,⁸⁸ believed to require the imposition of obedience to the law.⁸⁹ The 'alternative Spirit' might be identified with the 'spirit of bondage' of Rom 8:15.⁹⁰ More recent interpretation of the situation in Galatia sees the Judaizers' promotion of circumcision as differently motivated. Circumcision would ensure full membership of God's covenant people. It would symbolise acceptance of the obligation to maintain the distinctiveness of the chosen nation.⁹¹ Neither interpretation of Galatians, however, would appear transferable to the situation in Corinth. There is no reference in 2 Cor 10–13 either specifically to

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

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

As the third justifying expression (γὰρ) for the

224	^{11.5} γὰρ Λογίζομαι μηδὲν ὑστερηκέναί τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων. ^{11.6} δὲ εἰ καὶ ἰδιώτης (εἰμί) τῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλ' τῆ γνώσει οὐ... (εἰμί), ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ 225 (ἔσμεν) φανερώσαντες ἐν πᾶσιν εἰς ὑμᾶς.
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circumcision or to the law in general.⁹² Lack of reference to the law might also tell, as additional evidence, against a variation of the Judaizing theory proposed by Oostendorp. He suggests that the rival missionaries, who have links with the Palestinian church, claim that there is soon to be a fulfilment of God's promise to establish his kingdom in Zion. They call their message εὐαγγέλιον, on the basis of Isa 52:7–8, where the participle of the cognate verb (εὐαγγελιζόμενος) describes the activity of the messenger who proclaims this imminent fulfilment.⁹³ For them, Jesus is the Christ who has 'introduced a new era in which the primacy of Israel over the Gentiles' is to be made evident: see 11:18, 20, 22.⁹⁴ The 'other Spirit' refers to a gift of the Spirit which will result in the recipients' observance of the law of Moses, as in Ezek 36:26–27.⁹⁵ But nothing can be deduced from the occurrence here of the word εὐαγγέλιον, which is Paul's frequent term for his own apostolic message (1 Cor 4:15; 9:12, 14, 18, 23; 15:1; 2 Cor 2:12; 4:3–4; 8:18; 9:13), and had the opposition been concerned with the primacy of Israel he would surely have broached the subject directly.

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



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

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

The initial declaration is short and to the point: Λογίζομαι γὰρ μηδὲν ὑστερηκέμαι τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων. For I calculate that I am in no way inferior to these super apostles. Thus the Corinthians should allow the apostle to do some calculation using 'proper math.' Two interesting expressions play pivotal roles in the precise sense of this statement (# 224 in diagram). The perfect tense infinitive ὑστερηκέμαι as the direct object in indirect discourse of λογίζομαι is from ὑστερέω with the sense of being deficient of something. In regard to what the super apostles (τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων) poses Paul asserts, "I lack nothing" (μηδὲν ὑστερηκέμαι). The use of the perfect tense form here is untranslatable into English easily. Paul asserts that no deficiency exist that would cause inferiority to be present in his life.

What does Paul mean by the label τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων? Some commentators, going back to Chrysostom among the church fathers, see the label as respectful, and thus referencing Peter, James, and John.⁴⁵³ But the sarcastic tone clearly in the larger con-

⁴⁵³In favour of this interpretation there are the following arguments:

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

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

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

"(d) The letters of recommendation brought by the oppo-

text argues against such a positive understanding.⁴⁵⁴

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

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

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

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

454 "Each of these arguments has in turn been countered as follows:

"(a) Not only is there general agreement that the appellation is ironical, but there is substantial agreement also that the irony is too strong to allow for an allusion to the Jerusalem apostles. It is described as sarcastic, contemptuous,¹¹⁹ and derisive.¹²⁰

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

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



Very likely they represent the kind of deceptive claim to apostolic authorization described by Paul as happening at Antioch in Gal. 2:11-14, πρὸ τοῦ γὰρ ἐλθεῖν τινὰς ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου, *before some came from James* (v. 12a). These same kind of people then weaseled their way into the churches of Galatia and caused havoc: διὰ δὲ τοὺς παρεισάκτους ψευδαδέλφους, οἵτινες παρεισήλθον κατασκοπῆσαι τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἡμῶν ἣν ἔχομεν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα ἡμᾶς καταδουλώσουσιν, *but because of the sneaking in of these false brothers to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ in order to re-enslave us* (Gal. 2:4). They first made their appearance at the Jerusalem conference, described both in Gal. 2:1-10 and Acts 15, and then later in the province of Galatia. Luke in Acts 15:1-2, 5 as Pharisees who seemingly converted to Christianity: τινες τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αἰρέσεως τῶν Φαρισαίων πεπιστευότες, *some believers from the sect of the Pharisees*.

But those outsiders now in Corinth are not the Jerusalem apostles, but rather individuals perhaps claiming to represent them although this is not entirely clear.⁴⁵⁵

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

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

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

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

⁴⁵⁵ “In favour of this interpretation it might be said:

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

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

The uncertainty of the identity of these outsider individuals now at Corinth urges caution about drawing hard conclusions. The most natural meaning of τῶν ὑπερλίαν⁴⁵⁶ ἀποστόλων (both in 11:5 and 12:11) is that it refers to the outsider individuals themselves, not someone they claim to represent back in Jerusalem, contrary to Thrall’s conclusion (“*iii Conclusion*,” ICC, 674). The tone of sarcasm most not be overlooked, as well as the secondary meaning of ἀπόστολος as missionary. This would allow the understanding the τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων as *these supposedly super great missionaries*. The validating marks of a genuine missionary are clearly what Paul zeros in on with the statements that follow through chapter twelve. Much of the modern commentary about this phrase focuses on the issue of valid apostolic authority. But Paul is much more concerned about a valid message of the true Gospel being accepted by the Corinthians. Who preached it was very secondary. His contention is that this authentic message came from him and his associates and not from

orators than he—certainly not in Greek (note Acts 4:13).¹³¹

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

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

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

“(b) Käsemann finds it possible to suppose that the people to whom Paul refers in v. 5 are different from those with whom he is by implication comparing himself in v. 6. In v. 5 there is a reference to the Jerusalem apostles, whilst in v. 6, as in v. 4, he has, the rival missionaries in view. Thus, we cannot use what is said in v. 6 to identify the ‘super-apostles’ of v. 5. There is a dialectical quality, Käsemann claims, in the polemic of chaps. 10–13. Paul does not respect the intruding missionaries, and attacks them harshly, yet at the same time he is restrained by the thought of the authorities standing behind them, with whom he does not wish to come into conflict, and with whom, also, he wishes simply to assert his equality. He refers to the former group in 11:4, 6, and to the latter in 11:5 and 12:11.¹³⁴”

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

⁴⁵⁶The adverb ὑπερλίαν, used adjectivally here, comes as a compound from ὑπέρ + λίαν, beyond great, and is only found in this twice occurring phrase in Second Corinthians inside the NT. The impact of modifying ἀποστόλων is to create the idea of someone beyond the level of just apostolic greatness. Few commentators seem to catch this nuanced meaning of τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων.



these outsiders. Their experiences reflected the hand of God on their missionary preaching, something these outsiders could not claim.

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

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

The highly elliptical concessive protasis introduced by εἰ καὶ, **even if**, assumes the existent of two things one negative and one positive: ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλ' οὐ τῇ γνώσει, **an idiot⁴⁵⁷ in speech but not in knowledge**. It is presented in a reversed angle admitting deficiencies in rhetorical skills but affirming full competency in understanding of spiritual things.

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

⁴⁵⁷Originally, an ἰδιώτης was a person whose interests and concerns were restricted to his own affairs (τὰ ἴδια) and who took no active part in public life.⁹⁸ Then it came to be applied to someone without formal rank (such as a private as opposed to an officer, or a layman as opposed to a priest) or someone without specialized training (the amateur as opposed to the professional). But although technically a 'non-professional,' an ἰδιώτης could be knowledgeable in a particular field. The term 'does not rule out the individual's informal acquaintance with a subject or practice in it.'⁹⁹ So then, when Paul concedes that he is ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ (dative of respect) he is not denying that he has any knowledge of rhetoric. As Judge observes, there is no unambiguous evidence that Paul had mastered the arts of rhetoric through tertiary-level training under a recognized sophist, but even if he was not formally trained in rhetoric, he must have been familiar with the rhetorical fashions of his time and area, that is, the more florid 'Asiatic' type of rhetoric.¹⁰⁰ If, as we have suggested, ὁ λόγος in 10:10 refers to Paul's speaking ability, including adroitness in extempore speech, it is likely that τῷ λόγῳ has a similar reference, 'public speaking' (NJB), 'rhetoric' (Berkeley) or 'oratory' (Thrall 656).¹⁰¹ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 748–749.]

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

The primary point, however, in the core assertion of this sentence comes with the elliptical ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ φανερώσαντες ἐν πᾶσιν εἰς ὑμᾶς, **but in every way making this clear in all matters to you**. It wasn't so much that Paul's deep understanding existed, as it was that such was being made clear to the Corinthians in every conceivable way. Note the subtle shift from the singular "I" in the elliptical protasis -ης to the plural "we" in the apodosis -σαντες. In what really mattered, **spiritual understanding**, τῇ γνώσει, the apostle and his associates measured up thoroughly. Here they possessed absolutely no gaps or deficiencies: μηδὲν ὑστερηκέαι. And the Corinthians well knew this.

The dual ἐν παντὶ and ἐν πᾶσιν stresses the totality of clarity regarding the possession of deep spiritual understanding.⁴⁵⁸ Thus from every possible angle Paul and his associates were not amateurs (ἰδιώτης) in spiritual understanding. The opponents has wrongly concluded this by the superficial judging of rhetorical skills. **They should have been concerned about the**

⁴⁵⁸The prima facie tautology of ἐν παντὶ ... ἐν πᾶσιν¹¹⁵ might suggest that this is merely an emphatic way of saying 'in every conceivable way' (NAB¹), but the two phrases are separated by φανερώσαντες and should be distinguished, with ἐν παντὶ indicating means ('in every way') and ἐν πᾶσιν extent ('in all circumstances' or 'in all matters' [Young and Ford ²⁷²]). Some EVV, however, take (ἐν) πᾶσιν as masculine rather than neuter, which produces the meaning 'among all men' (RV, Montgomery),¹¹⁶ 'before everyone' (NJB), or 'in the sight of all men' (BAGD 852d), that is, openly not secretly. On our view ('in every way and in all circumstances'), Paul is emphasizing the comprehensiveness of his demonstration in his dealings with the Corinthians that he was no layman with regard to true γνώσις, that he was very competent in understanding and communicating the divine truth that was enshrined in the gospel." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 750.]



substance of ideas, not the manner of communication (cf. v. 4). Even the heroic classical Greek philosophers knew this much.

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

10.2.3.3.2 Paul's independence, 11:7-11

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

7 Did I commit a sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I proclaimed God's good news to you free of charge? 8 I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. 9 And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for my needs were supplied by the friends who came from Mace-

11.7 Ἡ
226 ἀμαρτίαν ἐποίησα
ἑμαυτὸν ταπεινῶν
ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑψωθῆτε,
ὅτι δωρεὰν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν;
227 11.8 ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας ἐσύλησα
λαβῶν ὀψώνιον
πρὸς τὴν ὑμῶν διακονίαν,
11.9 καὶ
παρῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς
καὶ
ὑστερηθεὶς
228 οὐ κατενάρκησα οὐθενός·
γὰρ
229 τὸ ὑστέρημά μου προσανεπλήρωσαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ
ἐλθόντες
ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας,
καὶ
ἐν παντὶ
ἀβαρῆ
230 ἑμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα
καὶ
231 τηρήσω.
232 11.10 ἔστιν ἀλήθεια Χριστοῦ
ἐν ἐμοὶ
ὅτι ἡ καύχησις αὕτη οὐ φραγήσεται
εἰς ἐμέ
ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τῆς Ἀχαΐας.
11.11 διὰ τί
233 (ἐστίν);
234 (ἐστίν)
ὅτι οὐκ ἀγαπῶ ὑμᾶς;
235 ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν.

donia. So I refrained and will continue to refrain from burdening you in any way. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boast of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. 11 And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

After making his appeal to the Corinthians to give him due consideration to explain himself in v. 1, the superior knowledge of Paul and his associates (v. 6) will now be demonstrated by recounting several aspects of ministry to the Gospel. The first of these comes from the unusual, but pragmatic angle: money.⁴⁵⁹ While the

⁴⁵⁹Money matters have already been alluded to in this letter, in each case in a negative context. Paul was not in the habit of making profit from the word of God (2:17); he had 'exploited' no one (7:2; cf. 12:17-18, where the same verb, *πλεονεκτέω*, is used); and he had repudiated underhand and disgraceful ways (4:2). But some eighteen months earlier he had dealt explicitly and at some length with the issue of his financial relationship to the Corinthian community (1 Cor. 9:3-18). There he is at pains to defend himself—both his apostolic authority (cf. 1 Cor. 9:1-2) and his financial conduct—against those who were in the process of investigating him



norm for religious workers was to expect and receive funding from the people they ministered to (as laid out in 1 Cor. 9:3-18), the apostle refused to follow the expected pattern. In the earlier discussion in First Corinthians (9:3-18) the apostle had claimed both the right to receive support from the Corinthians (1 Cor. 9:4-12a, 13-14) and also the right to forgo that option if he so chose (1 Cor. 9:12b, 15-18).⁴⁶⁰ The non-Christian world of Paul

or trying to examine him (1 Cor. 9:3; cf. 1 Cor. 4:3).¹ He establishes two basic principles—his right as an apostle to receive support from those who benefited from the spiritual seed he had sown (1 Cor. 9:4-12a, 13-14), and his right to forgo that support if there were practical or theological reasons for doing so (1 Cor. 9:12b, 15-18).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 751.]

⁴⁶⁰“The early Christians (= Christian messianic Jews) also shared the missionary impulse. Traveling evangelists were everywhere present. Matt 10, Luke 10, and Mark 6 all contain instructions for such missionaries. The Acts of the Apostles presents us with a narrative of evangelistic outreach. Second John 10; 3 John 5-8, 10; Didache 11-12 also attest the itinerant Christian evangelist. Luke 10:9; Mark 6:12-13; Acts 6:8-10; 8:6-8; 14:8-18 link miracle and proclamation in this itinerant ministry. Paul himself was such a traveling missionary (Rom 15:18-32), as were his rivals in 2 Corinthians. Like pagans and non-messianic Jews, the early Christians also used certain dimensions of their public worship to evangelize (cf. 1 Cor 14:23-25). Christian Messianists also used the household as a means of evangelization, as texts such as Romans 16:23, Colossians 4:15, Philemon 1-2, and Acts 16 and 34 show. The implication of this evidence for our understanding of 2 Corinthians is that neither Paul nor his apostolic rivals in Corinth were singular figures in antiquity, but were typical of a large number of missionaries in the early church and also were Christian examples of a general cultural phenomenon in Greco-Roman and Jewish antiquity—the itinerant evangelist-missionary.

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

“Given the diversity of early Christianity, it is not surprising that different types of apostles should exist. One obvious difference between Paul and the interlopers was that Paul worked where no one else had yet gone (Rom 15:20; 2 Cor 10:15-16), while the subsequent visitors to Corinth worked where churches had already been established (cf. similar apostles in Didache 11). Another difference, as will be seen, is that Paul did not accept money from the Corinthians for his ministry, while the visitors did (2 Cor

outside of Judea lived under a system of patronage by which wealthy individuals financially supported others to do various jobs etc.⁴⁶¹ For a worker to forgo such support was a serious breach of obligation in the world of the Corinthians. Whether such lay behind the situation at Corinth is unclear. Also in the social background of first century Corinth was the widespread pattern of sophist philosophers to travel from city to city fleecing naive audiences of every bit of money they could get.⁴⁶²

12:11-13). A more difficult difference to clarify is theological. Yet Paul felt it was so great that he called the interlopers preachers of another gospel (11:4). They were, he believed, false apostles (11:13). This difference can only be clarified as one reads through 2 Corinthians. The one thing that can be said at this point is negative. Contra Georgi, the difference was not that the visitors were miracle workers while Paul was a suffering speaker of the word. In any case, these visiting apostles were being held up by one member of the Corinthian church and his sympathizers as the model for true apostleship. By comparison, Paul allegedly came off second best.”

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

⁴⁶¹“We cannot be sure what prompted the Corinthians to criticize Paul’s decision not to accept their offer of support (1 Cor. 9:12b, 15). Perhaps they felt that his manual labor (Acts 18:3; 1 Cor. 4:12) was inconsistent with his apostolic status. Or they may have thought that he had breached the conventions of patronage according to which a visiting teacher would be fully supported by wealthy patrons.² Marshall argues that certain wealthy people that formed one of the Corinthian factions offered money to Paul as a gesture of friendship, not as the payment of wages, and that his rejection of this offer amounted to a declaration of ‘enmity,’³ so that thereafter ‘Paul was engaged in ritual enmity with certain Corinthians and their associates.’⁴ But one wonders whether in personal relationships, even against a first-century backdrop of the reciprocity of benefactions, there are not more than two possible options, friendship or enmity.⁵ Paul does not accuse any of the Corinthians of active enmity, but he does chide them for their lack of overt love for him, for their constricted affections (6:12-13; 12:15; cf. 8:7-8, 24). It was a matter of intensity of love. ‘If I love you the more, am I loved [by you] the less?’ (12:15). We should not equate the absence of strong love or of expressions of love with the presence of virulent animosity. As for himself, Paul is anxious to reassure the Corinthians of his paternal love for them (2:4; 6:6, 11-13; 7:3; 11:11; 12:15). Cf. Savage ⁹⁰.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 751-752.]

⁴⁶²“The first item of background information that needs to be supplied concerns the visiting apostles with whom Paul had been disparagingly compared by the Corinthian challenger and his sympathizers. Whereas 1 Corinthians dealt with problems that were indigenous to the church in Corinth, in 2 Corinthians there is the additional matter of visiting apostles whose style was different enough from Paul’s that, in the minds of some, he came off second best. The charges against Paul’s apostolic authority, made because of his behavior in the intermediate visit, were not only that in person he was not a powerful apostle but also that by comparison to



Some of this seems to stand behind Paul's simplistic preaching of the Gospel to the Corinthians as set forth in 1 Cor. 2:1-5, as well as in 9:1-18. He does mention in 1 Cor. 9:3-7 that the other apostles expected the churches they visited to provide support for both them and their families traveling with them. It could well be that the criticism of Paul's not claiming financial support the interlopers he came off second best. This is why he faced the need to deal with the matter of the other apostles. Both Paul and his apostolic rivals are best understood in terms of the larger cultural context (Georgi, 1986, ch. 2).

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

"Non-messianic streams of Middle Judaism shared this missionary zeal. At Antioch the Jews made converts of a great number of Greeks perpetually (Josephus *War* 7.3.3 §45); at Damascus the wives of almost all were addicted to the Jewish religion (Josephus *War* 2.20.2 §561); at Alexandria Jews needed the emperor's reminder to keep their own laws and not show contempt for the observances of others (Josephus *Antiquities* 19.5.3 §290); in Rome Jewish men (Josephus *Antiquities* 18.3.5 §81) and women (Juvenal *Satires* 6.541-47) alike strove for converts. Jewish legend told not only of the last king of Babylon, Nabonidus, being evangelized through a healing and pardoning of sins by a Jewish exorcist of the exile (Prayer of Nabonidus 1.4), but also of the conversion of queen Helena of Adiabene and her son Izates by at least three different Jews (Josephus *Antiquities* 20.2.3-4 §142) and of the conversion of Aseneth, daughter of a prominent pagan family of Egypt (Joseph and Aseneth). With these witnesses one may compare Matt 23:15. The strategies for evangelization included not only itinerant miracle workers (Josephus *Antiquities* 8.2.5 §45-49; Acts 19:13-16), teachers (Juvenal *Satires* 6.542-47), and merchants (Josephus *Antiquities* 20.2.3-4 §142), but also the synagogue service (Philo *Moses* 2.17-25). In addition, patrons also established conventicles in their own homes and invited others to participate. This was true of Dionysian, Mithraic, Sarapian, and Agdistian worship as well as the philosophical schools. (Maier, 1991, 19-23, provides primary data.)

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

came from the critics in the church who gladly financed the work of the outsider false teachers.⁴⁶³

Paul in claiming the right to forgo the Corinthians financial support signals a different set of standards from the cultural based standards shaping the negative feelings of the Corinthian critics. The Greco-Roman patronage system constrained the beneficiaries to not offend and challenge their benefactors. The apostle adamantly was not willing to give up his freedom to follow God's leadership in his preaching of the Gospel.⁴⁶⁴

The internal flow of thought in vv. 7-11 can be traced from the above diagram. A rhetorical question is posed at the beginning (# 226; v. 7) raising the issue perhaps leveled at Paul by his critics: "Ἡ ἀμαρτίαν ἐποίησα ἑμαυτὸν ταπεινῶν ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑψωθῆτε, ὅτι δωρεὰν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν; **Did I commit a sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I proclaimed God's good news to you free of charge?** Verses 8-11 (#s 227-235) constitute his answer to this question.⁴⁶⁵ Parts of his answer probably implies impli-

⁴⁶³ A further complication was the apparent willingness of Paul's rivals to accept financial support from at least some of the Corinthians. These rivals were evidently among the οἱ πολλοί who were making a petty trade out of preaching (2:17). They were 'devouring' (κατεσθίει, 11:20) the Corinthians in the sense of eating them 'out of house and home' (Barrett 291). Also, in 12:13 Paul states emphatically (αὐτὸς ἐγὼ) that he himself (ἐγὼ) for his part (αὐτός) had not been a burden on them, implying that others had been. See also the commentary on 11:12. This receipt of support from a local Christian community was probably regarded by the intruders (and possibly by the Corinthians) as evidence of their apostolic legitimacy." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 752-753.]

⁴⁶⁴ As he resumes his ἀπολογία from 1 Cor. 9:3, Paul does not restate his right to support (although this is implied in 11:9) but focuses on his reasons for financial independence of the Corinthians — to preach the gospel to them 'free of charge' (11:7) and to avoid being a financial burden on them (11:9)—and his unwavering determination to remain independent (11:9-10, 12)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 753.]

⁴⁶⁵ Whether this is sufficiently defined rhetorically to be labeled propositio (v. 7) and argumentatio (vv. 8-11) is somewhat doubtful, despite some commentators' assertion:

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

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



cations of different aspects of the criticism leveled at Paul by his Corinthian critics. The answer given in vv. 8-11 is a series of declarations of what he has done in the past, as well as what he intends to continue doing in the future. In essence, he has never been a financial burden to the Corinthians and never will. But this in no way reflects negatively on his love for them.

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

The core statement "Ἡ ἀμαρτίαν ἐποίησα ἑμαυτὸν, **Or, did I make myself a sin?**"⁴⁶⁶ poses an interesting issue. Does it imply that Paul's critics were accusing him of sinful actions? Probably not since the stated means of 'sinning' is ταπεινῶν ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑψωθῆτε, **by humbling myself so that you might be elevated.** The instrumental of means use of the participle ταπεινῶν, **by humbling,** defines the 'vehicle' of his 'sinning' with irenic sarcasm. This is very similar to the statement in 12:13, τί γὰρ ἐστὶν ὃ ἡσσώθητε ὑπὲρ τὰς λοιπὰς ἐκκλησίας, εἰ μὴ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν; χαρίσασθέ μοι τὴν ἀδικίαν ταύτην. **How have you been worse off than the other churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!** The sense is 'surely I didn't fail you by living without so that you might be lifted up to the grace of God.'⁴⁶⁷ The Corinthians' 'being lifted up,' ὑμεῖς ὑψωθῆτε, alludes to preaching the Gospel to them in conversion, and Paul's humbling himself by refusing

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

⁴⁶⁶ Apart from 5:21 and 11:7 Paul never uses the expression 'commit (a) sin' (ἀμαρτίαν ποιέω)." [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).]

⁴⁶⁷ This self-humbling of Paul probably involved three elements — his renouncing of the apostolic right to support (cf. 1 Cor. 9:6, 11–12a, 14); his support of himself by manual labor (Acts 20:34; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8; 1 Cor. 4:12); and his contentment (cf. Phil. 4:11–12) with the Spartan lifestyle and scant means of the first-century artisan (cf. Hock 34–35). A philosopher or teacher of the Hellenistic age could gain his financial support in five ways:¹³ by begging; by charging fees for his instruction; by becoming a resident in a patron's household where he received regular wages for teaching the patron's sons; by accepting voluntary contributions from followers; and by his own physical labor. Apparently Paul's normal means of support was to engage in his trade of making tents and other leather goods (cf. σκηνοποιός, Acts 18:314) as he pursued his evangelistic and pastoral work, but on occasion he accepted aid from fellow believers (Phil. 4:15–16; 2 Cor. 11:8–9).¹⁵ The first three possible ways of gaining a livelihood were totally foreign to Paul's modus operandi.¹⁶ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 754–755.]

funds from them and thus living at a lower economic level.⁴⁶⁸

The causal ὅτι clause defines the 'freebie' nature of Paul's preaching of the Gospel at Corinth: ὅτι δωρεὰν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, **because freely the Good News of God I proclaimed to you.** Key here is the adverb δωρεὰν with the meaning 'without charge.'⁴⁶⁹ Helpful to be noticed is the comparison of lowered / elevated with poverty / riches in 6:10 and 8:9. This pattern follows the example set by Christ (cf. 8:9), and such should be noted by the Corinthians.

The consistently pointed focus on the singular "I" in vv. 7-11 probably signals that the harshest criticism was leveled at Paul rather than at his associates. He was singled out since he had adopted this lifestyle and his associates followed his example.⁴⁷⁰ Ironically,

⁴⁶⁸ One must read the full sarcasm in these words that have hyperbolic meaning. Luke describes Paul's initial ministry in Corinth in terms of him first staying in the home of Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:1-4), and later on with Titius Justus (18:7-11). Both of these families were not poor by any stretch of the imagination. Out of friendship and shared love for God they had opened their homes to Paul and his associates. No pressure or influence to curb his preaching ever came from them. Given the rather detailed legacy of the Greco-Roman patronage system in place that defined relations between beneficiary and benefactor in that day, one suspects jealousy and possible envy by some in the emerging Christian community at not being able to have Paul in their home and thereby exerting some influence over his ministry.

⁴⁶⁹ **1. pert. to being freely given, as a gift, without payment, gratis** (so, in addition to the ref. in Nägeli 35f and Poland 496 note **, GDI 2569, 4 [Delphi]; PSI 400, 16; 543, 19 al. [both III B.C.]; 1401, 8; PTebt 5, 187; 250 [both II B.C.]; Gen 29:15; Ex 21:11 δωρεὰν ἄνευ ἀργυρίου al.; Tat. 19, 1) δ. λαμβάνειν (Jos., Vi. 425), δίδοναι (Bell. 1, 274, Vi. 38) receive or give without payment **Mt 10:8** (cp. Sextus 242; of an emissary who paid his own traveling expenses IPriene 108, 165); cp. Rv 21:6; 22:17; δ. εὐαγγελισασθαι **2 Cor 11:7.** δικαιούμενοι δ. justified, made upright, as a gift **Ro 3:24.** οὐδὲ δ. ἄρτον ἐφάγομεν παρά τινος we have not eaten bread with (or from) anyone without paying for it **2 Th 3:8.**" [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 266.]

⁴⁷⁰ We may account for the singular εὐηγγελισάμην, in contrast with ἐκηρύξαμεν (11:4) and the explicit reference in 1:19 to Silvanus and Timothy as fellow evangelists at Corinth, by assuming that the present charge of fiscal insensitivity was directed at Paul alone or at Paul in particular. In its position τοῦ θεοῦ is emphatic; elsewhere we always find τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ when articles are used.²³ The implication is that the rival missionaries are not preaching God's gospel (cf. 11:4) and are accepting payment (cf. δωρεὰν) for preaching even their own gospel! Whether τὸ εὐαγγέλιον is qualified by τοῦ θεοῦ (only here in 2 Corinthians) or by τοῦ Χριστοῦ (2:12; 9:13; 10:14²⁴), the genitive is probably both subjective ('from God/Christ') and objective ('concerning God/Christ')." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 756.]



his critics turned to pagan cultural norms in 227 their world rather than to Christ's example in order to criticize the apostle. Additionally the phonetical play on similar word sounds among δωρεάν ... εὐαγγέλιον εὐηγγελισάμην asserts the Gospel offered as a divine gift of salvation and should then be proclaimed without charge to those needing it.⁴⁷¹

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

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

His introductory assertion in vv. 8-9 is composed of two claims (#s 227-228) and the backed up (γάρ) by three declarations (#s 229-231). The diagram below most clearly presents this structure. 8 ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας ἐσύλησα λαβὼν ὀψώνιον πρὸς τὴν ὑμῶν διακονίαν, 9 καὶ παρῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑστερηθεῖς οὐ κατενάρκησα οὐθενός· τὸ γὰρ ὑστέρημά μου προσανεπλήρωσαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἀβαρῆ ἑμαυτὸν

11.8 ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας ἐσύλησα
λαβὼν ὀψώνιον
πρὸς τὴν ὑμῶν διακονίαν,
11.9 καὶ
παρῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς
καὶ
ὑστερηθεῖς
228 οὐ κατενάρκησα οὐθενός·
γάρ
τὸ ὑστέρημά μου προσανεπλήρωσαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ
ἐλθόντες
ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας,
καὶ
ἐν παντὶ
ἀβαρῆ
230 ἑμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα
καὶ
231 τηρήσω.

ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα καὶ τηρήσω. 8 I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. 9 And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for my needs were supplied by the friends who came from Macedonia. So I refrained and will continue to refrain from burdening you in any way.

The initial statement in v. 8 is obviously hyperbolic and stands in stark contrast to the preceding statement in v. 7: ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας ἐσύλησα λαβὼν ὀψώνιον πρὸς τὴν ὑμῶν διακονίαν, I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. The exaggeration is deliberate with a note of sarcasm.⁴⁷² The practice of Paul was not to ask for support, especially from those he ministered to at the moment (cf. 1 Thess. 2:9). If later the newly emerging congregation voluntarily sought to support his ministry, he would and did receive the funds gladly.

The second statement in v. 9 alludes to what Luke depicts in Acts 18:5, Ὡς δὲ κατήλθον ἀπὸ τῆς Μακεδονίας ὁ τε Σιλᾶς καὶ ὁ Τιμόθεος, συνείχετο τῷ λόγῳ ὁ Παῦλος

⁴⁷²“As is sometimes the case with asyndetic sentences such as this, a contrast with what precedes is implied (cf. 7:2). ‘Rather than accepting payment from you for my preaching (cf. v. 7b), I plundered other churches...’ συλλάω, found only here and (in the LXX) in Epistle of Jeremiah 17 (EVV, 18), means ‘strip off,’ ‘plunder,’ ‘carry off as booty’ (in the latter sense it means the same as συλαγωγέω [Col. 2:8], another NT hapax), and was frequently used in Classical Greek of the despoiling of the enemy, in particular the act of stripping off armor from a slain enemy.²⁸ In the papyri it denotes the theft of tools and the pillaging of the contents of a house (MM 596d).²⁹ When the apostle ‘confesses’ to having despoiled or robbed churches, the expression is clearly figurative (as the following two words, λαβὼν ὀψώνιον, show), hyperbolic, ironical, and certainly surprising, given his earlier defense (7:2) against the charge of exploitation.³⁰ He is probably not repeating a Corinthian charge.³¹” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 757.]

⁴⁷¹“What made it totally appropriate for Paul to proclaim the good news δωρεάν (the accusative of δωρεά, used adverbially), ‘free of charge,’ ‘without fee or reward,’ was the fact that this gospel of God is essentially the offer of a gift (δωρεά), the gift of righteousness (ἡ δωρεά τῆς δικαιοσύνης, Rom. 5:17). The repetition and the juxtaposition of εὐ(αγγέλιον) and εὐ(ηγγελισάμην) draw attention to the goodness and value of God’s good news, which nonetheless Paul preaches at no charge to the hearer.²⁵ This correlation between the gospel offered as a gift and its being proclaimed ‘free of charge’ (δωρεάν = ἀδάπανον, 1 Cor. 9:18) doubtless appealed to Paul’s sense of theological congruity, so much so that he viewed payment for declaring the good news as putting ‘an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ’ (1 Cor. 9:12b). But there were also practical reasons for his settled determination never to become a burden on his converts. Such a practice effectively distinguished him from the peripatetic lecturers, some of them notorious for their rapacity, who charged fees for their instruction.²⁶ Again, to remain financially independent meant freedom from any assumed special obligation to donors (cf. 1 Thess. 4:11–12) and from the temptation and danger of showing partiality to one segment of the church in return for their generosity.²⁷ Finally, ‘such disinterestedness enhanced his credibility, because it showed that he preached out of utter conviction; necessity was laid upon him and he had no choice (1 Cor. 9:16)’ (Murphy-O’Connor 111).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 756–757.]



διαμαρτυρόμενος τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις εἶναι τὸν χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, *When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus.* Without explicitly so stating why, Luke implies that up to that point of time when Paul was in Corinth on the second missionary journey, he was somewhat restricted in his missionary activity in the Jewish synagogue to just during the Friday evening sabbath gatherings (18:1-4). Most of every week day was spent earning funding through working with Aquila and Priscilla. But Silas and Timothy's arrival enabled him to devote more time and effort to preaching the Gospel. This extra time led to the explosion of opposition that forced him to set up shop next door in the home of Titius Justus (cf. 18:6-11). Paul's second statement here in 11:9 indicates a major reason for being freer to give more time to ministry: Timothy and Silas brought a very generous love offering from the churches in Macedonia: καὶ παρῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑστερηθεὶς οὐ κατενάρκησα οὐθενός.⁴⁷³ τὸ γὰρ ὑστέρημά μου προσανεπλήρωσαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, *And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for my needs were supplied by the friends who came from Macedonia.* In Phil. 4:15-16, written much later than Second Corinthians, the apostle makes reference to the generous support of the Philippians beginning with the early days of the church: 15 οἶδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, Φιλιππησίου, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινώνησεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι, 16 ὅτι καὶ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη καὶ ἄπαξ καὶ δις εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι ἐπέμψατε, *15 You Philippians indeed know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. 16 For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs more than once.* To be sure some tension exists between the plural churches (ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας) in 2 Cor. 8:8 and οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία...εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι, *no church except you only.* But given the very different reasons for each of these references, no major problem should be read into this.

The primary point in # 228 is to underscore that during his time with them and when he was in need to support he absolutely refused to 'burden them' with his

⁴⁷³473 The forms οὐθείς [Hs 9, 5, 6], οὐθέν [Lk 23:14; Ac 15:9; 19:27; 26:26; 1 Cor 13:2; Hm 4, 2, 1], οὐθενός [Lk 22:35; Ac 20:33 v.l.; 2 Cor 11:9] for which οὐδ-is freq. read as v.l. in mss. and edd., appear in the lit. since Aristotle [Jos., Ant. 5, 250; 6, 47 al.], in ins [Meisterhans3-Schw. 258f], and in pap [Mayser 181f], PStras II, 125, 4 [5/4 B.C.]; on the forms s. B-D-F §33; W-S. §5, 27f and note 62; Mlt-H. 111f; JWackernagel, Hellenistica 1907, 23; New Docs 2, 83; 4, 164f.—The LXX usage in Thackeray P. 58–62.) [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 735.]

needs.⁴⁷⁴ Even though his expression is emphatic, Luke does make it clear that housing and food were provided for him by Aquila and Priscilla, as well as Titius Justus. The apostle's point is clearly that he did not 'sponge' off anyone in Corinth. His work as a σκηνοποιός (Acts 18:3) provided needed funding until the support from Macedonia arrived. Paul's deep concern was to avoid causing Christianity to appear as nothing more than a scamming philosophy advocated by the sophist itinerant preachers. To the non-Jews in Corinth both sets of preachers would have appeared the same when viewed superficially.

Paul completes this Greek sentence in vv. 8-9 with the assertion: καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἀβαρῆ ἐμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα καὶ τηρήσω, *and in every way from being a burden to you myself I kept and I will keep.* This rather literalistic translation highlights what Paul highlighted in the underlying Greek expression. The ἐν παντὶ ἀβαρῆ, *in every way from being a burden,* comes at the outset and in the most prominent position in an independent clause. The adjective from ἀβαρής, -ές stresses *not being heavy* and helps define the sense of οὐ κατενάρκησα in the preceding independent clause. He would not allow himself to become dependent materially on the Corinthians while seeking to establish a believing community there. What this references is further defined by τὸ ὑστέρημά μου, *my needs,* also in this sentence.⁴⁷⁵ What was needed

⁴⁷⁴474 One of the most expressive words in 2 Corinthians is καταναρκάω, a verb found only three times in the Greek Bible, here and in 12:13–14. The simplex form ναρκάω, 'grow stiff/numb,' occurs five times in the LXX,⁴⁷ while the cognate noun νάρκη denotes the 'numbness' caused (for example) by palsy or by fright, but also refers to the 'torpedo' or electric ray that benumbs anyone who touches it, so that the Egyptian eel that numbed its victims by an electric ray was called νάρκη ποταμία.⁴⁸ As a medical term, the compound form καταναρκάω (in the passive) means 'grow numb,' 'be anaesthetized.'⁴⁹ In Paul's three uses of this verb it is in the active voice and is used figuratively, meaning 'be a burden to'⁵⁰ or 'encumber,' so that κατενάρκησα will not differ in meaning from κατεβάρησα (12:16) or ἐβάρυνα (cf. ἐβαρής in 11:9).⁵¹ According to Jerome, this figurative use of καταναρκάω was a Cilician idiom for the Latin *gravare*, 'weigh down, burden.'⁵² In the present context the 'burden' that Paul refrained from imposing on the Corinthians was financial or economic,⁵³ but if he was aware of the medical use of the verb his intended meaning may be 'I benumbed no one by becoming a financial parasite.'⁵⁴ οὐθείς, from οὐτε εἶς, is a variant form of οὐδεῖς. The two negatives οὐ ... οὐθενός strengthen each other,⁵⁵ 'no one at all,' 'not a soul.' Paul 'burdened no one' at Corinth in that he neither asked anyone for monetary support nor accepted gifts from anyone." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 760.]

⁴⁷⁵475 4. The nouns ὑστέρημα and ὑστέρησις are very rare in ancient lit. apart from the LXX and Chr. writings. For ὑστέρημα cf. Corp. Herm., 4, 10; αὐτὴ διαφορά τοῦ ὁμοίου πρὸς τὸ ἀνόμοιον, Page 229



by Paul while in Corinth was supplied by the Macedonians.⁴⁷⁶ Not only did Paul not solicit the Corinthians'

καὶ τῷ ἀνομοίῳ ὑστέρημα πρὸς τὸ ὅμοιον, 13, 1, where the initiate asks the mystagogue: σὺ δέ μου καὶ τὰ ὑστερήματα ἀναπλήρωσον οἷς ἔφης μοι παλιγγενεσίας <γένεσιν> παραδοῦναι προθέμενος ἐκ φωνῆς ἢ κρυβήν. We have here the underlying expression ἀναπληροῦν ὑστέρημα 'to fill up what is lacking,' which is also found in Chr. lit. → 598, 33 ff.; 600, 19 ff. Similarly Test. B. 11:5 (text uncertain): Αὐτὸς ἀναπληρώσει τὰ ὑστερήματα τῆς φυλῆς σου. Cf. also ἀναπληρώσειν τὸ λείπον, Jos. Ant., 5, 214. With 'what is missing' ὑστέρημα can also mean 'want' like ἥσσημα opp. προτέρημα, though there are only two late examples in secular Gk.: Achmes, *Oneyrocriticon*,⁵ 152 with par. λείψις and Eutecnius Παράφρασις εἰς τὰ τοῦ Ὀππιανοῦ κυνηγητικά, IV6 with opp. πλεονέκτημα. ὑστερήσις always means 'want,' 'need'." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:593.]

⁴⁷⁶In Mk. 12:44 cf. Lk. 21:4 Jesus lauds the poor widow who has put two mites in the offering box: πάντες γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ περισσεύοντος αὐτοῖς ἔβαλον, οὗτη δὲ ἐκ τῆς ὑστερήσεως (Lk. τοῦ ὑστερήματος) αὐτῆς πάντα ὅσα εἶχεν ἔβαλεν, ὅλον τὸν βίον αὐτῆς. Here, then, ὑστέρημα or ὑστερήσις as the opposite of περισσεῦον does not denote the lack of something, a remaining something needed for completion, but rather want in general, or poverty. This is Paul's usage too. In the collection which he organises in his churches for the saints in Jerusalem, there should be a balance between them: ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ τὸ ὑμῶν περισσεύμα εἰς τὸ ἐκείνων ὑστέρημα, ἵνα καὶ τὸ ἐκείνων περισσεύμα γένηται εἰς τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα, 2 C. 8:14 → VI, 266, 5 ff. As the Gentile Christians should share the surplus of their earthly goods with the Jewish Christians in their time of physical poverty, so the latter should share their surplus of spiritual goods with the former, cf. R. 15:2727 → VI, 63, 21 ff. The collection, then, is not just designed to relieve the distress of the Jerusalem saints (προσαναπληροῦσα τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν ἁγίων). It is also designed (→ III, 348, 21 ff.; IV, 283, 1 ff.) to lead the Jerusalem Christians to praise God for the obedience of faith of the Gentiles, who demonstrate here-with their fellowship with the Jews, 2 C. 9:12 f.²⁸ When Paul in Corinth would not take any gifts for his support from that congregation, the churches of Macedonia sent him gifts: τὸ γὰρ ὑστέρημά μου προσαναπλήρωσαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, 2 C. 11:9. The point of ὑστέρημα may be seen clearly from the ὑστερηθεῖς of the preceding clause. What Paul did not take from the Corinthians, he received from the Macedonian brethren.²⁹ The expression (προσ-)ἀναπληρῶ τὸ ὑστέρημά τινος—the genitive denotes the person who suffers the lack—seems to have been specially developed → 593, 35 ff.; 601, 18 ff. It is found in the same sense in 1 C. 16:17 and Phil. 2:30 too → VI, 306, 21 ff. In both cases the meaning is that someone in direct fellowship with Paul fills a lack for his community. This lack consists in the momentary spatial distance between the community itself and Paul.³⁰ Paul himself stresses the fact that he did not expect gifts from his churches, so that the utterance of his great joy at what is received is not meant καθ' ὑστερήσιν (Phil. 4:11), i.e., it is not the joy of a poor person whose need has been met. Paul, as one who is basically in the position περισσεῦειν καὶ ὑστερεῖσθαι (4:12 → n. 24), rejoices rather at the sharing of his church in his present distress (4:14), which, as often before, the present gift expresses, 4:15–18." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:598–599.]

support during his time of need, he will not ever seek it. Perhaps this grew out of a Corinthian criticism that he was 'plundering' the churches



which he mentioned at the beginning of this sentence: ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας ἐσύλησα λαβὼν ὀψώνιον, other churches I plundered by taking support (v. 8a). But this is not clear, since the apostle's statement seems to be more sarcastic hyperbole than repeating a criticism leveled against him. But elsewhere signals are given suggesting similar criticisms leveled against him: 2 Cor. 12:16; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8; 1 Tim. 5:16.

In verse ten, Paul comes back with an assertion couched in axiomatic principle⁴⁷⁷ form:⁴⁷⁸ ἔστιν ἀλήθεια Χριστοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ ὅτι ἡ καύχησις αὐτῆ οὐ φραγήσεται εἰς

⁴⁷⁷The opening words are an oath formula (Schwurformel),³⁵⁰ as in Rom 9:1, and Χριστοῦ, 'of Christ,' is subjective genitive, 'Christ's truth,' since it is Christ speaking through the apostle as in 13:3 (cf. 5:20 similarly, with a change of the divine name)." [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 533.]

⁴⁷⁸ἔστιν ἀλήθεια Χριστοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ ὅτι ἡ καύχησις αὐτῆ οὐ φραγήσεται εἰς ἐμὲ ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τῆς Ἀχαΐας. 'As Christ's truth is in me, as far as I am concerned this boasting of mine will not be silenced throughout the districts of Achaia.' This is an expansion and confirmation of ἐν παντὶ ἀβαρῆ ἐμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ... τηρήσω (v. 9), with the future φραγήσεται corresponding to τηρήσω. If we define a biblical 'oath of confirmation' broadly as a direct or indirect appeal to the deity as the guarantor of the truth of a statement, especially one that the readers cannot verify for themselves, this verse constitutes an oath (cf. 1:18, 23; 11:11, 31; 12:2–3),⁶¹ 'By Christ's truth in me' (GNB). But on a narrower definition of an 'oath of confirmation' which would require an introductory verb of swearing (cf. ὡμοσεν ἐν ... ὅτι, Rev. 10:6) or a direct invocation (cf. μάρτυρα τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλοῦμαι, 1:23), this verse is simply a solemn declaration.⁶² Either way, the affirmation is even stronger than κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν (2:17; 12:19), and may be rendered 'As surely as the truth of Christ is in me' (NEB, REB). That is, 'the truth of Christ dwells in me and will testify to and guarantee my truthfulness when I say that....' Paul's appeal is not to 'truth about Christ' (objective genitive) that is communicated in his preaching but to divine 'truth given by Christ' (subjective genitive) that he has personally appropriated and is therefore in him (cf. 13:3) in the same way that the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16) and the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9) dwell in him.⁶³ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 763.]

ἐμὲ ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τῆς Ἀχαΐας, *Truth from Christ is in me that this boasting will not be silenced for me among the regions of Achaia*. The epexegetical ὅτι clause defines the content of the oath as the Truth of Christ in Paul. The sense of φραγήσεται in the future passive voice from φράσσω is literally ‘will not be fenced in’ with the contextual tone of silencing or stopping. What will not be stopped is ἡ καύχησις αὕτη, *this boasting*, which goes back his not asking the Corinthians for money (vv. 8-9). The prepositional phrase εἰς ἐμὲ defines the connection of the boasting as in regard to Paul’s stance. Where this boasting would not be silenced is ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τῆς Ἀχαΐας, *among the regions of Achaia*.⁴⁷⁹ The plural τοῖς κλίμασιν has the sense of the entirety of the Roman province of Achaia that included Athens as well as Corinth. Note in the above map the coverage of the province in the mid-first century.

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

In verse eleven Paul addresses the final point: διὰ τί; ὅτι οὐκ ἀγαπῶ ὑμᾶς; ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν. *Why? Because I don’t love you? God knows!* In some way Paul’s refusal to take money from the Corinthians was interpreted as a sign of lack of love for them by the apostle. This is the point made by the introductory question διὰ τί;, literally, *Because of what?* His own answer, ὅτι οὐκ ἀγαπῶ ὑμᾶς;, *because I don’t love you?*, defines the assumed reason behind the questioning of his refusal to take funding support from them. He doesn’t try to explain or justify his devotion to the Corinthians.⁴⁸⁰ Instead, he simply

⁴⁷⁹“ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τῆς Ἀχαΐας, ‘throughout the districts⁶⁷ of Achaia,’ is not designed to imply that in other places Paul might restrict or reverse his policy, but simply mentions the general region that corresponds to the destination of the letter, the Corinthian church along with believers throughout Achaia (1:2), in places such as Cenchreae and Athens.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 765.]

⁴⁸⁰“It appears that some at Corinth — whether native Corinthians or intruders, or both — had maliciously suggested that the reason for Paul’s adamant refusal to accept support was his lack of love for his supposed friends. Why else would he not reciprocate their overtures of friendship? If this verse were not a reply to a charge, we would expect Paul to have answered his own question (διὰ τί;) by ὅτι ἀγαπῶ ὑμᾶς ὡς ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν. He himself would never make the suggestion that he was loveless. See, to the contrary, 6:11–13; 7:3; 12:15. As in Rom. 9:32, ὅτι following the interrogative διὰ τί; means ‘because’ rather than ‘that.’⁷⁵” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 766–767.]

asserts that God knows that he loves them: ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν. That should be sufficient. Although not quite in the form of an oath as v. 10, it expresses strong emotion from the apostle.⁴⁸¹ Ἀγαπή is proven in action, not by words claiming it. The Corinthians should be able to tell from Paul’s continuing efforts to help them that he possesses genuine devotion to them.

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

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

1. Paul always refused financial aid for himself from those to whom he was currently ministering. He himself gives three reasons for this stance. First, he wished to avoid being a financial encumbrance, an economic parasite, on his converts (11:9; 12:13–14, 16; 1 Thess. 2:9). He probably saw this as an evidence of his love (cf. 11:11; 12:15). Second, by offering the “price-less” good news totally free of charge, he was dramatizing in his own conduct the very appeal of the gospel as the good news of God’s free grace (cf. 11:7; 1 Cor. 9:12b, 18). Third, he wanted to maintain an advantage over any rivals who accepted payment for their services (11:12). No one could accuse Paul of preaching for profit. We may speculate on further reasons for his vigorous independence. Fourth, he may have wished to avoid entering a relationship that could be construed as a patron-client contract which placed him under certain social obligations to a restricted segment of a church (cf. 1 Thess. 4:11–12).⁶⁹ Fifth, with respect to the Corinthians, Savage proposes that Paul was aiming at weaning them away from their eagerness to boast about their generosity in giving (96, 98). Sixth, financial independence may have appealed to a natural desire for self-sufficiency. H. W. Heidland comments (TDNT 5.592): “Not claiming the ὀψώνιον is an act of freedom on the apostle’s part in relation to the churches

⁴⁸¹“Faced with such a hurtful accusation and aware that any further attempt to justify his motives would be fruitless, the apostle invokes the omniscience of God to testify to the reality and depth of his love for the Corinthians, just as in the previous verse he had appealed to ‘the truth of Christ’ as the guarantee of the truthfulness of his boast. In both verses he is employing oath formulas, as also in 1:18, 23; 11:31; 12:2–3. A fuller form of the abbreviated formula ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν is found in 11:31, ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ οἶδεν ... ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι, although in 11:11 the content of the divine knowledge (‘God knows’) is not ‘that I do not lie,’ but may be assumed to be ‘that I do love you,’ or possibly ‘the truth about that’ (Barrett 270) or ‘whether that is true or not’ (Plummer 301).⁷⁶ Such an appeal to God’s all-knowingness presupposes a belief that God is καρδιογνώστης (Acts 15:8), ‘the One who knows people’s hearts.’⁷⁷ God read Paul’s heart and knew the intensity of his love as well as the motives for his actions that he had outlined in vv. 7–10. We may sense the ardor of Paul’s agitated emotions here by the successive oaths in vv. 10–11 and the extraordinary brevity of the two questions and one affirmation in v. 11.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 767.]

and also a venture of faith, which refuses any assured basis of subsistence.” Closely related to Paul’s motivation for being financially independent of his converts were his motives for choosing to support himself by manual labor⁷⁰—his wish to provide his converts with a model of self-support by hard work (2 Thess. 3:6–9; cf. 1 Thess. 4:11) and of earning money in order to give to the needy (Eph. 4:28; cf. Acts 20:35), and his desire to be distinguished from fee-charging traveling lecturers.

2. Paul sometimes accepted gifts from distant fellow believers (11:8–9; Phil. 4:16) or as he was leaving a region (1:16; Rom. 15:24; 1 Cor. 16:6), in each case to enable him to pursue new evangelistic or pastoral opportunities, not as payment for services already rendered. We have seen (at 1:16) that the verb προπέμπω means not only “accompany,” “escort,”⁷¹ but also “help forward,” “send on one’s way” (BAGD 709 s.v.), in reference to equipping a person with provisions for a journey,⁷² such as food and money and possibly also transport, traveling companions, and letters of introduction. According to his stated plans Paul hoped to receive such gifts when he set out from Corinth (1 Cor. 16:6; 2 Cor. 1:16) and Rome (Rom. 15:24).⁷³ Whether his hopes were realized, we do not know, but these texts in which προπέμπω is used witness to his expectation of receiving provisions for travel and further service. But the question then arises: How can he say to the Corinthians, in reference to the past, ἐν παντὶ ἀβαρῆ ἑμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα (11:9), and with regard to the future, ἢ καύχησις αὐτῆ οὐ φραγήσεται εἰς ἐμέ? Perhaps the answer lies in distinguishing carefully between the two principles outlined above. In 11:9–10, 12; 12:14 Paul says that he will not⁷⁴ accept financial support from the Corinthians, that is, while he is present with them; οὐ φραγήσεται and the other futures have special but not exclusive reference to the upcoming third visit. In 11:9; 12:13, 16 he affirms that he was not a financial burden while with them, that is, during his first and second visits. But when he writes οὐ φραγήσεται (11:10) or οὐ καταναρκήσω (12:14; see also 11:9, 12) he is not excluding the future possibility of accepting aid from the Corinthians, if it were offered, for service outside Corinth. Nor did his financial independence mean he refused to accept the gift of hospitality from anyone at Corinth. On the contrary, he stayed with Aquila and Priscilla during his first visit (Acts 18:3), and on his third visit he was a guest in the home of Gaius (Rom. 16:23, written from Corinth).⁴⁸²

The apostle walked a delicate line here particularly with the Corinthians. Seemingly the other churches he established did not pose such issues that caused the difficulty found at Corinth. The unique nature then of the Corinthian situation urges considerable caution about making modern applications.⁴⁸³

⁴⁸²Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 765–766.

⁴⁸³One phony application in the modern US Protestant tradition is found in some mega churches. Several decades ago W.A. Criswell caused quite a stir in Southern Baptist life when he announced that following Paul’s example he would return all of his salary from the First Baptist Church of Dallas back to the church. Naive reporters interpreted this as generosity but didn’t realize

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

10.2.3.3.2.3 Servants of the devil, 11:12-15

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

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

In this final subunit of vv. 12-15, the apostle turns on the outsider false teachers who had come into Corinth and weaseled their way into influence over some of the believers. The unit stands as a part of the larger ‘self-praise’ literary unit in 11:1-12:13 which is discussed extensively in ancient Greek and Latin man-

how they were being manipulated by this pastor. In no shape, form, or fashion was Criswell doing what Paul did in connection to the Corinthians. Criswell never gave up his luxurious life style in his multi-million dollar mansion in north Dallas with one of the largest art collections in the city. His earnings from book royalties, outside speaking engagements etc. provided many times over what his church salary was. All this action did was to give him a much bigger income tax deduction from his multi-million dollar income. Not one of Paul’s principles were followed. In fact, Criswell’s actions reflected more the ‘peddlers of the Gospel’ that Paul severely condemns in chapter eleven of Second Corinthians. And it is a modern textbook illustration of what Paul was passionately seeking to avoid.

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

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

uals of rhetoric.⁴⁸⁴ What becomes clear is that although

⁴⁸⁴The second item of background information that may facilitate one's understanding of 2 Cor 11:1–12:13 concerns its literary form, self-praise. Self-praise was the stock-in-trade of many ancient teachers. It was viewed negatively by the Old Testament (e.g., 1 Kgs 20:11; Prov 27:2; Jer 9:23–24) and by certain philosophical circles (e.g., Philostratus apologizes for inserting the philosopher's defense speech before Domitian because it made him sound like a rhetorician [*Life of Apollonius* 8.7]). It was this tradition partially reflected by Paul in 2 Cor 10:12–18. But by the time of the New Testament period certain self-praise was considered all right. Plutarch says self-praise is permissible when defending one's good name, when on trial, and when one is wronged or slandered (On Inoffensive Self-Praise). Given his circumstances in 2 Cor 10–13 (e.g., 12:11; 10:1–11), Paul would have received Plutarch's permission to engage in self-praise.

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

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

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

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



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

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

The core assertion, Ὁ δὲ ποιῶ, καὶ ποιήσω, *And what I am doing, I also will continue doing*, effectively summarizes vv. 7-11 in order to provide a basis for the twin purpose statements introduced by the subordinate conjunction ἵνα. Here Paul distances himself from the outsiders with strong condemnation of them as false teachers. Thus he will continue to refuse support from the Corinthians and all other newly established works while being created. The objective is not just the integrity of the Gospel (v. 10) but in order to demonstrate the corrupting motives behind these outsiders. The more distance between them and himself that Paul can put the clearer it will be for the Corinthians to understand just who these people are.

He condemns them with blunt, strong language in the two purpose statements in v. 12. First, ἵνα ἐκκόψω τὴν ἀφορμὴν τῶν θελόντων ἀφορμὴν, *so that I may chop off the opportunity of those desiring an opportunity*. The outsiders seek ἀφορμὴν, *opportunity*. The content of this opportunity is defined in the second ἵνα clause, which we will discuss below.⁴⁸⁵

[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), 145–147.]

^{485a}The second ἵνα, 'that'-clause is dependent on τῶν θελόντων ἀφορμὴν, 'those men who are seeking such an opportunity,' and gives the substance of what constitutes their 'opportunity.'³⁶² they desire, literally, to be 'seen or regarded' (ἵνα ... εὐρεθῶσιν; perhaps the element of surprise is contained in the verb, as in Gal 2:17)³⁶³ in that which is their boast (ἐν ᾧ καυχῶνται) as doing the same work as we do (καθὼς καὶ ἡμεῖς). A number of interpretations may be reviewed. (1) The underlying objection Paul has against them is their 'pride' (καυχάομαι) in laying claim to the same mission territory as he believes he has, i.e., at Corinth. So they are interlopers who have entered on a field of mission service where they do not belong. As long as Paul persists in his mission work based on a crucified Jesus and a gospel freely offered (the δωρεάν-principle [Grundsatz]),³⁶⁴ they will not have room to maneuver in Corinth. He will effectively check their activity as poachers on his field of operation.

"Other interpretations are: (2) They were standing on their

The background meaning of ἀφορμή is informative. It is a part of the word group ὄρμη, ὄρμημα, ὄρμάω, ἀφορμή⁴⁸⁶ The positive words ὄρμη, ὄρμημα, ὄρμάω connote the idea literally of propelling a stream into motion, either physically or abstractly.⁴⁸⁷ Its opposite assumed dignity as true apostolic missionaries, and they were a burden to the Corinthians. So Paul wants to ease his readers of just that burden by resisting the intruders.³⁶⁵ (3) They were guilty of jealousy³⁶⁶ and sought to win the Corinthians — perhaps in the name of the Jerusalem mother church to whose jurisdiction, they asserted, the Corinthians rightly belonged—or at least to capture them to their side (see v 20). (4) What was at stake was apostolic support that they claimed was rightfully theirs (their καύχησις, 'boasting').³⁶⁷ So when Paul does not permit himself to be supported by the community, he robs his opponents of the occasion to boast of their apostolic office (Apostelamt). (5) Yet another interpretation wishes to retain the second ἵνα, 'that'-clause as dependent on the main verb ἐκκόψω, 'I may cut off.'³⁶⁸ The translation follows: 'in order to cut off the opportunity from those who would like an opportunity (and) in order that in what they boast they may be found even as we are,' i.e., fools. The point is that they seek an opportunity to place Paul on the same level as themselves by using categories of validation for their ministry (commendations from other churches, impressive speech, miracle powers, demonstrations of 'spirit,' the right of maintenance). But it is hard to see how Paul's action in not receiving aid would deny that course to them, which is what the joining of ἐκκόψω, 'I may cut off,' and the second ἵνα, 'that,' requires.³⁶⁹

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

⁴⁸⁶Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:467.

^{487a}ὄρμη seems to be linked to the Indo-European root *ser*, 'to stream,' Sanskrit *sárma-h*, 'flowing.'¹ The word develops many meanings² which mostly denote the beginning of a swift and even hostile movement, i.e., 'start' or 'starting.' It is often used psychologically with ref. to various impulses and strivings. The derived ὄρμημα (Hom., Hell., LXX) can also denote psychical as well as physical processes, emotions of anger or temper. The verb ὄρμάω means trans. 'to set in rapid motion,' 'to impel,' intr. 'to go out from,' 'to storm out,' 'to originate.' The group is common in description of military and other movements, Xenoph HistGraec., I, 6, 20; An., IV, 3, 31; Ditt. Syll.3, 700, 24 (117 B.C.); P. Strassb., 100, 17 (2nd cent. B.C.); P. Oxy., IX, 1216, 20 (2nd/3rd cent. A.D.); VI, 906, 63 (336 A.D.). Trans. ἐφορμάω, Hom. Od., 7, 272; Il., 3, 165. For psychological movements, Il., 13, 74; 21, 572 (inspiration); Od., 8, 499; ὀρμηθεὶς θεοῦ, Soph. Ant., 133: νίκην ὀρμῶμ' ἀλαλάξαι, cf. Fr., 619 (TGF, 279) ἐφορμᾶν κακά. In Plato we read in Leg., IX, 875b: ἐπὶ πλεονεξίαν ... φύσις αὐσίς αὐτὸν ὀρμήσει (cf. V 5, p 468 Ep. Ar., 270); 4 Symp., 181d ὀρμᾶσθαι ὑπὸ ἔρωτος. Gorg., 502c refers, not to impulses, but to the essential determination of tragedy (ὄρμηται). For impulse to virtue cf. Xen. An., III, 1, 24, for the natural demand for a response of love Mem., II, 6, 28, for preparation for sickness, or even striving after it, Epict. Diss., II, 6, 10. The verb is used for ordered motion in the cosmos, Plato Pol., 273a; intellectual striving is denoted in Soph., 228c; Parm., 135d. ὀρμή is often used of divine or demonic power which impels man irresistibly. Soph. Ant., 135 f.: μαινομένα ξὺν ὀρμᾷ βακχεύον



is ἀφορμή which carries the literal sense of impulse, inclination, opportunity et als.⁴⁸⁸ In the usual negative

ἐπέπενει, Hdt., VII, 18: δαιμονίη ὁρμή, Plat. Phaedr., 279a: ὁρμή θειότερα. ὁρμή seems almost synon. with ἐπιθυμία in Phileb., 35d. For the further development of the term in Gk. philosophy Plato's basic def. of θυμός as ὁρμή βίαιος ἄνευ λογισμοῦ in Def., 415e is important. Aristot. often uses ὁρμή for unconscious impulses. He thus explains the famous fundamental principle ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον in Pol., I, 2, P. 1253a, 29: φύσει μὲν οὖν ἡ ὁρμή ἐν πᾶσιν ἐπὶ τὴν τοιαύτην κοινωνίαν. ὁρμή is also associated with φύσις in An. Post., II, 11, P. 95a, 1. Whereas ὁρμή is impulsive will, προαίρεσις denotes the considered activity of the will, preference and choice, Metaph., IV, 5, P. 1015a, 27. In the sphere of ὁρμή there is no free decision, Eth. M., I, 16, P. 1188b, 25: ὁρμή is the same as ὄρεξις which divides into εἶδη τρία: ἐπιθυμία, θυμός, βούλησις, ibid., I, 12, P. 1187b. Even the last is no true expression of free will, for uncontrolled men take up what they desire into their will, I, 13, P. 1188a, 28. Their longings are also set on what is contradictory, Eth. Nic., I, 13, P. 1102b, 21. On the basis of Hom. Eth. Nic., III, 11, P. 1116b, 30 elucidates the nature of θυμός, cf. VII, 7, P. 1149a, 31, and on the other hand De Virtutibus et Vitiis, 4, P. 1250a, 41 on πραότης. As it may be said of θυμός: ὁρμᾶ πρὸς τὴν τιμωρίαν, so of ἐπιθυμία: ὁρμᾶ πρὸς τὴν ἀπόλαυσιν, Eth. Nic., VII, 7, P. 1149a, 35; cf. De Virtutibus et Vitiis, 2, P. 1250a, 11; 5, P. 1250b, 13." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:467–468.]

⁴⁸⁸"This is in Gk. a purely formal term for 'start,' 'origin,' 'cause,' 'stimulus,' 'impulse,' 'undertaking,' 'pretext,' 'possibility,' 'inclination,' also as a Stoic word 'aversion' as the opp. of ὁρμή. Aristot. Cael., II, 12, P. 292a, 16 has it for 'means of assistance.' In Pol., VI, 5, P. 1320a, 39, b, 8 it means 'opportunity' for trade or agriculture, or more generally for work with a view to overcoming unemployment. 'Logical starting-point' is the sense in Ps.-Aristot. Rhet. Al., 3, P. 1423a, 33; b, 14, 32; 39, P. 1445b, 29; in Eur. Hec., 1238 f. we also find the sense 'pretext': βροτοῖσιν ὡς τὰ χρηστὰ πράγματα χρηστώδων ἀφορμὰς ἐνδίδωσ' αἰεὶ λόγων, cf. also Phoen., 199 f. In the commonly quoted Polyb., I 3, 7, 5; 32, 7; 4, 58, 8 the term is used in the sense of 'cause' or 'starting-point.' Similarly in an edict of Caracalla (215 A.D.) in P. Giess., I, 40, 2, 11 there is ref. to ἐπιτηδεύματα ἀφορμῆ alongside δειλίαις αἰτία.² In a derogatory sense ἀφορμή occurs along with δόλος in a 3rd cent. pap.,³ and in P. Oxy. I, 34, III, 1 f. (127 A.D.) we read: τοὺς παραβάντας καὶ τοὺς διὰ ἀπειθίαν καὶ ὡς ἀφορμὴν ζητοῦντας ἀμαρτημάτων τιμωρήσομαι.⁴ In particular in the pap. the word has the sense of 'occasion,' 'cause,' 'suitable opportunity.' In many cases it is hardly or not at all distinguishable from ὁρμή. Thus in Poimandres, 25⁵ the ἀφορμαὶ κακαὶ are obviously the same as the ὁρμαὶ ἄλλοιοι in Philo. It is also worth noting that θυμός and ἐπιθυμία are mentioned in the same context. But the word can have many different meanings in Philo:⁶ Decal., 17: πρὸς τὸ εὖ ζῆν, Migr., 2: εἰς σωτηρίαν, Jos., 258: εἰς ἀργυρισμόν, Leg. All., III, 66: εἰς ἀπολογία. It means 'logical starting-point' in Plant., 36. It is used with ἀρχή in Conf. Ling., 68 and with πηγή in Op. Mund., 47.

"The only OT occurrence with a Heb. original is at Ez. 5:7. Here it stands for גְּמִיָּה The Mas. means: 'On account of your raging more than the Gentiles ...' The Gk. translators, however, establish a connection with the Gentiles (syr-hex): ἀνθ' ὧν τὸ πλεῖθος ὑμῶν ἐγένετο ἐκ τῶν ἐθνῶν, cf. Hier.: *quia multitudo vestra fuit e gentibus. A: eo quod numerati estis in gentibus.* In the LXX. too, ἀφορμή refers here not merely to orientation of thought (Θ λογισμοί) under Gentile influence, but to origin. Herewith the historical fact of the

use of the term inside the NT with Paul's writings, the idea of 'starting point' is the general sense.⁴⁸⁹ Paul uses

derivation of many of the Jews of the Hell. Roman period from the Gentiles is at least correctly perceived.⁸ In Prv. 9:9 the LXX adds ἀφορμή in elucidation: δίδου σοφῶ ἀφορμὴν καὶ σοφώτερος ἔσται. In 3 Macc. 3:2 the word is used in the sense of 'cause,' so, too, Sir. Prologue, 29 vl.: μικρὰν παιδείας ἀφορμὴν."

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

⁴⁸⁹"In the NT ἀφορμή occurs in the usual texts only in the Pauline corpus. In D there is also a vl. at Lk. 11:54: ζητοῦντες ἀφορμὴν τινα λαβεῖν αὐτοῦ = *occasionem aliquam invenire de illo* (it syrc).⁹ This is an old reading¹⁰ in which the word has the same derogatory sense as in Paul. This negative sense, however, is not present in 2 C. 5:12, where Paul says that his aim in the passage is to give the Corinthians ἀφορμὴν καυχήματος, a 'basis' or 'possibility' of boasting. ἀφορμή is thus "the 'occasion' or 'starting-point' of something inasmuch as it evokes a movement of will and also provides the material which is exploited in this movement."¹¹

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

"In Gl. 5:13 the σάρξ occupies the position of the malicious opponent and seeks a 'pretext' in ἐλευθερία. In 1 Tm. 5:14 it is ἀντικείμενος and in R. 7:8, 11 ἀμαρτία. What offers a 'starting-point' or 'occasion' is not in itself bad, whether it be the apostolic right to support (2 C. 11:12), widowhood (1 Tm. 5:14), Christian freedom (Gl. 5:13) or the Law, God's commandment (R. 7:8, 11). In 1 Tm. 5:14, on the analogy of the other verses, that which gives an 'occasion' or 'pretext' for Jewish or Christian opponents to slander the Christian community or to take other hostile action is not a possible seduction of the young widows,¹⁷ but the state of widowhood itself, which offers Satan¹⁸ an occasion for tempting widows. This alone justifies the radical requirement that widows should marry again. In this way barriers are set up which eliminate the occasion and thus remove the danger outwardly, though they do not overcome it inwardly. R. 7:8, 11 tells us once and for all that neither the erection of such barriers nor any law can act as a safeguard against the abuse of freedom. The very Law itself, God's commandment, can be an occasion for sin. In this respect the Law has a specific task: *detexit in me omnem concupiscentiam, quae dum lateret, quodam modo nulla esse videbatur.*¹⁹ Desire is thus unmasked in its true colours. As Origen expressed it in familiar Philonic terms, ὄρεξις ἄλογος γινομένη κατὰ ὁρμὴν πλεονάζουσαν παράλογον. From its opposition to the commandment sin receives an impe-



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

What was the positive thing that the outsiders were seeking to use as a starting point of influence over the Corinthians? The second purpose clause defines it: ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καυχῶνται εὐρεθῶσιν καθὼς καὶ ἡμεῖς, *so that they may be discovered in that which they are boasting, i.e., that they are just as we are.* Careful consideration of the immediate context signals the answer. They wanted ‘apostolic status’ claimed by Paul but one that included full financial support from the Corinthians.⁴⁹⁰ Paul’s refusal to lead men astray into covetousness.²⁰ God’s commandment with its authority incites sin to open resistance to God.²¹ In so

doing the Law is as little guilty of the instigation of sin by its coming as is the tree in Paradise guilty of the disobedience of Adam, or the coming of Christ guilty of the sin of those who rejected Him (Jn. 15:22; cf. also Hb. 10:29). An ancient Greek commentator,²² who already draws attention to these parallels, has in view especially the greatness of the punishment. In fact the opponents of the Christian community, the power of Satan, sin and the flesh which lies behind them, take the good gifts of God in creation, or indeed the Christian freedom which is the dawn of eternal salvation, and make them into a deceitful occasion²³ for leading men astray. In this way they themselves are given a fresh impulse to resist God.²⁴ The devil in some sense uses the precepts of the Law as materials with which to work.²⁵ It belongs to the inscrutability of the divine counsel that the good gifts of God, including the gift of salvation itself, begin by giving a fresh impetus to sin so that they can then unmask it as such. In this way, however, the formal concept of ὀφορμή takes on in the NT a specifically material character. It comes to be grouped with ‘offence’ and ‘temptation’ and figures of speech like ‘nets’ and ‘snares.’²⁶

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

⁴⁹⁰“As well as comparing themselves with one another (10:12), Paul’s opponents were apparently comparing themselves with Paul himself with regard to their respective financial relations with the Corinthians; they accepted support (see the introduction to this section), but Paul did not. In all probability they regarded themselves as on a par with Paul or superior to him (cf. 10:7, 10; 11:6, 22–23) in every area except one acutely embarrassing respect — he was financially independent of the Corinthians and not a burden on them. His resolute stance on financial support effectively

to accept the Corinthians’ support threw a huge ‘monkey wrench’ in their objectives of making a living off the Corinthians and displacing Paul and his associates.

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

The first reason (# 237) includes the outsiders but

237	11.13 γὰρ οἱ τοιοῦτοι (εἰσὶν)	ψευδαπόστολοι, ἐργάται δόλιοι, μετασχηματιζόμενοι εἰς ἀποστόλους Χριστοῦ.
238	11.14 καὶ οὐ θαῦμα	
239	γὰρ αὐτὸς ὁ σατανᾶς μετασχηματίζεται	εἰς ἄγγελον φωτός.
240	11.15 οὐ μὲγα (ἐστίν)	εἰ καὶ οἱ διάκονοι αὐτοῦ μετασχηματίζονται ὡς διάκονοι δικαιοσύνης ὧν τὸ τέλος ἔσται κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν.

also encompasses all similar individuals: οἱ γὰρ τοιοῦτοι ψευδαπόστολοι, ἐργάται δόλιοι, μετασχηματιζόμενοι εἰς ἀποστόλους Χριστοῦ, *for such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.* In this mini-vice list the apostles levels harsh condemnation of these outsiders. Now did they say this about themselves? Certainly not! Their claims were the opposite of what Paul asserts.⁴⁹¹

deprived them of the opportunity to be known as those who were working at Corinth on precisely the same terms as he was. Recognizing their desire for parity of status, Paul simply reaffirms here in v. 12 his choice of independence and thus frustrates their longing for equality.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 767–768.]

⁴⁹¹“The explicit or implied antitheses between their claims (cf. μετασχηματίζομαι in vv. 13, 15) and the real situation may be set out as follows.1

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

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



See 10:7 for the first acknowledgement of their claims: *ἑαυτῷ Χριστοῦ εἶναι*. Also 11:23 for another acknowledgment of their claim: *διάκονοι Χριστοῦ*. The distinction between these two acknowledgments of what they claimed and what Paul asserts here in vv. 12-15 lies in how each set is presented. In 10:7 and 11:23, their claim is structured around the rhetorical structure of if they claim these things I also claim them. They are not superior to me. But in 11:12-15 the pressing of differences is central. The assertions are uniformly negative with Paul evidently turning their positive claim on its head by negative assertion about who they really are. His argumentative strategy here shifts to blunt condemning language. Most likely this is because he knows their weakness in regard to demanding money from the Corinthians in stark distinction to his unwillingness to take money from the church. It is this difference that unmasks the true identity of the outsiders. This is exactly why Paul declares that he will continue following his policy of not accepting money from the Corinthians, and other believing communities in the process of being set up through evangelization.

First, he labels these people as *ψευδαπόστολοι*, **false apostles**. This is the exclusive use of *ψευδαπόστολος* inside the NT. The NT writers including Paul prefer the label *ψευδοπροφήτης*, **false prophet**, with some eleven uses for personal labels of individuals falsely teaching God's truth.⁴⁹² One should note that across the NT more emphasis is placed on false testimony and the action of speaking it.⁴⁹³ Here Paul is dealing with individuals claiming the status of *ἀπόστολος* and thus the personal label *ψευδαπόστολοι* is more appropriate.⁴⁹⁴

One of the open questions is whether *ψευδαπόστολοι*

⁴⁹²Other related personal labels include *ψεύστης*, **liar** (12x); *ψευδόχριστος*, **false messiah** (2x); *ψευδόμαρτυς*, **false witness** (2x); *ψευδοδιδάσκαλος*, **false teacher** (1x); *ψευδάδελφος*, **false brother** (2x).

⁴⁹³*ψευδής*, **lying** (3x); *ψευδολόγος*, **lying** (1x); *ψεύδομαι*, **I lie** (16x); *ψευδομαρτυρέω*, **I give false witness** (6x); *ψευδομαρτυρία*, **false testimony** (2x); *ψεύδος*, **lie** (20x); *ψευδώνυμος*, **falsely labeled** (1x); *ψεύσμα*, **lying** (1x). For the words with the *ψευδο-* prefix see Louw-Nida Greek lexicon topics 33.253-255.

⁴⁹⁴“That Paul's opponents claimed to be genuine *ἀπόστολοι* is evident from the latter part of this verse. He bluntly rejects their claim by calling them *ψευδαπόστολοι*, ‘false apostles,’⁷³ a NT hapax legomenon and probably also a Pauline coinage.⁴ In Paul's view they were ‘false’ because: they lacked the authorization of Christ (cf. 1:1); they preached a ‘different gospel’ (11:4); they were trespassing on foreign territory, Paul's own domain in Corinth (cf. 10:15–16); they used cunning, deceptive techniques (cf. *δόλιοι*, 11:13) to achieve their goals (cf. 4:2); they assumed disguises (*μετασχηματίζομαι*, 11:13, 15); they excelled in domination (11:20), not service (cf. 11:8), and so failed to reflect the character of Christ (cf. 10:1; 13:4).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 772.]

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

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

Sandwiched between *ψευδαπόστολοι* and *μετασχηματιζόμενοι εἰς ἀποστόλους Χριστοῦ* stands *ἐργάται δόλιοι*, **deceitful workers**. The adjective *δόλιος*, -ία, -ον, although used only here in the NT, denotes the meaning of **deceitful and treacherous**. It belongs to a much more extensively used word group with the meaning of **deceit**, as Louw-Nida, *The Greek Lexicon*, topics 88.152-88.159 illustrate. This label highlights the nature of the work of these *ψευδαπόστολοι* as **deceiving the Corinthians into believing they were authentic messengers of Christ**.⁴⁹⁵ Thus the issue of credibility for

⁴⁹⁵“In the early church *ἐργάτης* (‘worker’) was a technical term denoting a person engaged in Christian service,⁶ particularly missionary activity.⁷ No doubt Paul's rivals saw themselves as *ἐργάται* in this sense, but for him they were ‘workers’ only in the rudimentary sense that they were ‘at work’ within the Corinthian church. Because this *ἔργον* was marked by deceit, treachery, and cunning, they are called *ἐργάται δόλιοι*, ‘deceitful workers,’ ‘dishonest workmen’ (BAGD 203b; Goodspeed), ‘crooked in all their practices’ (NEB).⁸ Isaacs' rendering, ‘industrious schemers,’ neatly highlights (by inversion) the significant word in the expression. Just as certain agitators in Rome did not serve the Lord Christ but were slaves to their own appetites and deceived (*ἐξαπατῶσιν*) the hearts of innocent people with their smooth and flattering words (Rom. 16:17–18), so at about the same time (the mid-50's) these ‘workers’ in Corinth were similarly self-serving, deceiving the minds of the Corinthians (cf. 11:3), diverting their affections from Christ (cf. 11:3), and seeking to reduce them to subservience



Paul as a called apostle was being raised at Corinth. He then puts distance between himself and these false outsiders and appeals to their insistence on receiving support from the Corinthians and his refusal to take money from them as marking the difference between legitimacy and illegitimacy. These people share the deceitfulness of the sophist philosophers seeking to con listeners out of their money.

The second justifying statement in v. 14 is structured with classical Greek eloquence. The elliptical phrase καὶ οὐ θαῦμα, **and no wonder!** is idiomatic with ἔστιν implied.⁴⁹⁶ The interjection functions as a transition into the second justifying declaration. The readers of this letter should not be surprised that the outsiders are false since they are servants of Satan himself who has the ability to disguise himself as an angel of light.

This second declaration, αὐτὸς γὰρ ὁ σατανᾶς μετασχηματίζεται εἰς ἄγγελον φωτός, **for Satan himself disguises himself into an angel of light**, picks up a motif out of Diaspora Jewish writings regarding Satan's ability to 'restructure himself' (μετασχηματίζω) into an angel of light.⁴⁹⁷ Yet Paul in using this Jewish motif does not

(11:20).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 772–773.]

⁴⁹⁶“ἔστιν is frequently omitted in exclamations (‘And no wonder!’ REB).¹² θαῦμα, from θάομαι, ‘I gaze at in wonder,’ refers to what prompts amazement, so that τὰ θαύματα is used of jugglers’ tricks.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 773.]

⁴⁹⁷“The motif of Satan’s disguising himself as an angel is found in Jewish sources. In the *Life of Adam and Eve*, in the story of Satan’s second temptation of Eve, after the Fall, we read: ‘Then Satan was angry and transformed himself into the brightness of angels and went away to the Tigris River to Eve.’²⁷⁵ And in the *Apocalypse of Moses* he appears to Eve over the wall of paradise, ‘in the form of an angel.’²⁷⁶ Windisch suggests that Paul will have known the legend somewhat in the form in which it occurs in the *Life of Adam and Eve*.²⁷⁷ Other commentators likewise suppose that some form of it lies in the background of the apostle’s thinking in this verse.²⁷⁸ Plümmer, however, claims that it is unnecessary to suppose Paul to be referring to any such legend. He argues that the use of the present tense μετασχηματίζεται points to Satan’s habitual activity, not to any specific instance of it, and that the Corinthians (few of whom were Jews) could not be expected to understand such an allusion to Jewish legend.²⁷⁹ But reference to Satan’s habitual activity may well have been extrapolated from the story of a particular occasion of it, and the force of what Paul is saying does not absolutely depend upon his readers’ knowledge of its legendary background. The precise expression ἄγγελος φωτός appears to be unique to this context, although it derives, no doubt, from the general idea that angels make their appearance in a state of radiant glory: see, e.g., Lk 2:9; 24:4.²⁸⁰ The phrase could be Paul’s own formulation,²⁸¹ but this is not certain.²⁸²” [Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New

York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 695–696.]
depend on the legend’s credibility for his claim here.⁴⁹⁸ The phrase ἄγγελον φωτός has several possible meanings, the clearest and most likely one is that of a heavenly messenger.⁴⁹⁹ In reality he represents darkness but seeks to present this as divine enlightenment to morals.⁵⁰⁰

York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 695–696.]

⁴⁹⁸“What is the source of this description of one of Satan’s techniques?¹⁴ Neither Gen. 3:1–5 nor Job 1:6–12 nor 1 Kgs. 22:19–23 offers a precise parallel.¹⁵ It is in the pseudepigrapha that we find the closest conceptual parallels. For the idea of Satan or the devil adopting a disguise, we find in the *Testament of Job* (first century B.C. or A.D.) no fewer than four different disguises mentioned—as a beggar (6:4), as the king of the Persians (17:2), as a great whirlwind (20:5), and as a bread seller (23:1).¹⁶ The notion of an angelic disguise is found in two places (first century A.D.). In the *Life of Adam and Eve (Vita)* 9:1 Satan transforms himself ‘into the brightness of angels’ before beguiling Eve for a second time. In the Greek text of the *Life*, the *Apocalypse of Moses*, Satan comes to Eve over the walls of Paradise ‘in the form of an angel (ἐν εἶδει ἀγγέλου)’ (*Apocalypse of Moses* 17:1) and tempts her to disobey God’s command (cf. Gen. 3:3). But we need not posit Paul’s reliance on these Jewish traditions for the expression ἄγγελος φωτός.¹⁷ It could be a Pauline coinage, prompted on the one hand by the common association of Satan with darkness (6:14–15) and deception (4:4) and of God or Christ with light and illumination (4:6; Rom. 13:12, 14; Eph. 5:11–14), and on the other hand by his own experience and observation of Satan’s various stratagems (2:11).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 774–775.]

⁴⁹⁹“ἄγγελον φωτός could be rendered in four ways (here listed in ascending order of probability).

1. ‘A messenger from God’ (cf. Schlatter 647), where φῶς is metonymy for ‘God’ and the genitive is subjective.
2. ‘A messenger of [the world of] light’ (cf. BAGD 871d, 513c), where φωτός is either a possessive genitive (‘belonging to’) or a genitive of source (‘from’).
3. ‘A shining angel’ (Goodspeed), where φωτός is an adjectival or Semitic genitive, equivalent to φωτεινόν (‘shining’) (cf. Moule 175, ‘perhaps’).
4. ‘An angel of light’ (most EVV) or ‘a messenger of light’ (Martin 327), where the genitive is adjectival (‘characterized by light’) or possibly objective (‘bringing light’).

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

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

⁵⁰⁰σαταν, ὁ indecl. and σατανᾶς, ᾧ, ὁ (the former=Hebr. שָׂטָן 3 Km 11:14; Just., D. 103, 5; the latter Sir 21:27, also TestSol 1:1 D al.; TestJob; Test12Patr; ApcMos 17; Just.=Aram. ܫܬܪܨܐ; for σατανος Lk 11:18 P⁷⁵ read σατανας) literally ‘adversary’, in our lit.



240 οὐ μέγα (ἐστίν)

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

ἔσται κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν, thus it's not anything great if his ministers disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be

The inferential conjunction οὖν, then, in v. 15 draws an inference out of the preceding statement to make it explicit. And this is the connection of Satan to the outsiders at Corinth: οὐ μέγα οὖν εἰ καὶ οἱ διάκονοι αὐτοῦ μετασχηματίζονται ὡς διάκονοι δικαιοσύνης· ὣν τὸ τέλος only as title or name: **(the) Satan**, in a very special sense, the enemy of God and all of those who belong to God, simply **Satan, the Enemy** (on the concept of Satan s. the lit. s.v. διάβολος 2), almost always w. the art. (B-D-F §254, 1), without it only in **Mk 3:23; Lk 22:3; 2 Cor 12:7** and in personal address.—**Mt 4:10** (here, as well as in the two passages from Mt and Mk near the end of this entry, without the art. and in the voc.); **Mk 1:13; 3:26; Lk 11:18; 22:31**. W. διάβολος of the same being **Rv 20:2**; cp. **2:9f**; Pol 7:1 (Just., A I, 28, 1 al.). The *Lawless One* (Antichrist) appears κατ' ἐνέργειαν τοῦ σατανᾶ **2 Th 2:9**. He incites people to evil (cp. Homeric usage LfgRE s.v. δαμόνι[ος] col. 198; TestJob 41:5 Ἐλίους ἐμπνευσθεὶς ἐν τῷ Σ. ; 23:11 ὁ Σ. ... ἐπλαγίαζεν αὐτῆς τὴν καρδίαν; cp. 26:6) **Mk 4:15; Ac 5:3; 1 Cor 7:5; 2 Cor 2:11; Rv 12:9**. Esp. guilty of instigating Judas' evil deed by entering into this disciple **Lk 22:3; J 13:27**. Causing sickness **Lk 13:16** (s. δέω 1b, end). Hence driven out in healings **Mt 12:26; Mk 3:23**. Hindering the apostle in his work **1 Th 2:18** (cp. Julian., Ep. 40 [68] P. 46, 19 Bidez-Cumont εἰ μὴ τι δαμόνιον γένοιτο κώλυμα). Causing false beliefs to arise **1 Ti 5:15**; hence the one who denies the resurrection and judgment is called πρωτότοκος τοῦ σ. Pol 7:1; Polycarp uses the same expr. in speaking of Marcion, Epil Mosq 3. Persecutions of Christians are also inspired by Satan **Rv 2:13ab** (on the θρόνος τοῦ σ. s. θρόνος 1bε); hence certain Judeans who were hostile to Christians are called συναγωγὴ τοῦ σ. **Rv 2:9; 3:9**. God will crush him **Ro 16:20**. Jesus saw Satan falling (or fallen) fr. heaven **Lk 10:18** (Burton, Moods and Tenses §146 [deZwaan §148]; FSpitta, ZNW 9, 1908, 160–63; CWebster, ET 57, '45/46, 52f: πᾶς. is timeless and means 'I watched him fall'). Imprisoned, but freed again after a thousand years **Rv 20:7**. ὁ σ. μετασχηματίζεται εἰς ἄγγελον φωτός Satan disguises himself as an angel of light **2 Cor 11:14** (TestJob 6:4 μετασχηματισθεὶς εἰς ἐπαίτην a beggar; ArcMos 17 ἐγένετο ἐν εἶδει ἀγγέλου; s. μετασχηματίζω; on the subject s. Windisch ad loc.). ἄγγελος σατανᾶ **2 Cor 12:7** (UHeckel, ZNW 84, '93, 69–75); ἄγγελοι τοῦ σ. B 18:1 (ἄγγελος 2c). αἱ δυνάμεις τοῦ σ. IEph 13:1 (δύναμις 5). τὰ βαθέα τοῦ σ. **Rv 2:24** (s. βαθύς 2). ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ σ. the power of Satan **Ac 26:18**; ending of Mk in the Freer ms. ln. 6 (ἐξουσία 2); ibid. ln. 2 ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος ... ὑπὸ τὸν σ. ἐστίν.—παραδοῦναι τινα τῷ σ. **1 Cor 5:5** (s. ὄλεθρος; cp. the Christ. ins New Docs 3, 83); **1 Ti 1:20** (s. on both passages παραδίδωμι 1b).—In **Mt 16:23; Mk 8:33** Peter is called Satan by Jesus, because his attempt to turn Jesus aside fr. his divine assignment to accept the consequences of his involvement with humanity has made him a tempter of a diabolical sort, who might thwart the divine plan of salvation. This metaph. usage relates to the striking verdict **Rv 2:9; 3:9** above (cp. διάβολος J 6:70; 8:44).—BNoack, Satanás u. Sotería '48. 1369–80 (lit.). DBS XII 1–47. DNP III 269. DELG. M-M. EDNT. TRE III 608f. TW.

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

according to their deeds.

The introductory οὐ μέγα parallels οὐ θαῦμα in v. 14 as idiomatic expressions with similar meanings. οὐ θαῦμα is *no wonder* while οὐ μέγα is *no great thing*. Both convey the sense of *it shouldn't be surprising that...*⁵⁰¹ This pair of idioms serve to link the two statements close together. This connection is defined directly by οὖν, the inferential coordinate conjunction. Verse 15 makes explicit something considered implicit in verse 14.

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

As Satan's servants, they will suffer the same eternal fate of Satan, eternal damnation: ὣν τὸ τέλος ἐστὶν κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν, *whose end will be according to their works*. The apostle makes it very clear by this declaration that he does not consider these outsiders at Corinth to be genuine Christians, even though they claimed to be Christian leaders.⁵⁰²

⁵⁰¹“As with οὐ θαῦμα in v. 14, ἐστὶ is to be supplied with οὐ μέγα, which is litotes for ‘a simple thing’ (NEB) or ‘easy enough’ (REB).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 775.]

⁵⁰²“Having outlined the charges against his opponents (vv. 13–15a), Paul concludes with an oblique indication of their sentence (v. 15b).²⁷ Three comparable statements from later Pauline letters shed light on his meaning.

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

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

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

“From a comparison of these passages with 11:15b it becomes clear that at the future Great Unmasking of disguises it is the Lord



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

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

10.2.3.3.2.4 Boasting from suffering, 11:16-33

16 Πάλιν λέγω, μή τις με δόξη ἄφρονα εἶναι· εἰ δὲ μή γε, κἂν ὡς ἄφρονα δέξασθέ με, ἵνα κἀγὼ μικρόν τι καυχῆσωμαι. 17 ὁ λαῶν, οὐ κατὰ κύριον λαλῶ ἀλλ' ὡς ἐν ἀφροσύνῃ, ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ὑποστάσει τῆς καυχήσεως. 18 ἐπεὶ πολλοὶ καυχῶνται κατὰ σάρκα, κἀγὼ καυχῆσομαι. 19 ἡδέως γὰρ ἀνέχεσθε τῶν ἀφρόνων φρόνιμοι ὄντες· 20 ἀνέχεσθε γὰρ εἴ τις ὑμᾶς καταδουλοῖ, εἴ τις κατεσθίει, εἴ τις λαμβάνει, εἴ τις ἐπαίρεται, εἴ τις εἰς πρόσωπον ὑμᾶς δέρει. 21 κατὰ ἀτιμίαν λέγω, ὡς ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἠσθενήκαμεν.

Ἐν ᾧ δ' ἂν τις τολμᾷ, ἐν ἀφροσύνῃ λέγω, τολμῶ κἀγὼ. 22 Ἐβραῖοί εἰσιν; κἀγὼ. Ἰσραηλιταί εἰσιν; κἀγὼ. σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ εἰσιν; κἀγὼ. 23 διάκονοι Χριστοῦ εἰσιν; παραφρονῶν λαλῶ, ὑπὲρ ἐγὼ· ἐν κόποις περισσοτέρως, ἐν φυλακαῖς περισσοτέρως, ἐν πληγαῖς ὑπερβαλλόντως, ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις. 24 Ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων πεντάκις τεσσεράκοντα παρὰ μίαν ἔλαβον, 25 τρις ἔρραβδίσθην, ἅπαξ ἐλιθάσθην, τρις ἐναυάγησα, νυχθήμερον ἐν τῷ βυθῷ πεποίηκα· 26 ὁδοιπορίαις πολλάκις, κινδύνοις ποταμῶν, κινδύνοις ληστῶν, κινδύνοις ἐκ γένους, κινδύνοις ἐξ ἔθνων, κινδύνοις ἐν πόλει, κινδύνοις ἐν ἐρημίᾳ, κινδύνοις

Jesus himself (cf. 1 Cor. 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:6; 2 Thess. 1:8) who will preside and pass a sentence that determines the 'end' or 'final destiny' (τέλος) of Satan's agents. That sentence will involve their 'destruction' just as they themselves were destroying the temple of God at Corinth (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16-17), and it will be 'just' since the recompense meted out will accord with actual deeds performed (cf. 5:10),²⁸ not with false external appearances (cf. μετασηματίζομαι in vv. 13, 15)."

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

ἐν θαλάσῃ, κινδύνοις ἐν ψευδαδέλφοις, 27 κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ, ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις πολλάκις, ἐν λιμῶ καὶ δίψει, ἐν νηστείαις πολλάκις, ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι. 28 χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτὸς ἢ ἐπίστασις μοι ἢ καθ' ἡμέραν, ἢ μέριμνα πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν. 29 τίς ἀσθενεῖ καὶ οὐκ ἀσθενῶ; τίς σκανδαλίζεται καὶ οὐκ ἐγὼ πυροῦμαι; 30 Εἰ καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, τὰ τῆς ἀσθενείας μου καυχῆσομαι. 31 ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ οἶδεν, ὁ ὢν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι. 32 ἐν Δαμασκῶ ὁ ἐθνάρχης Ἀρέτα τοῦ βασιλέως ἐφρούρει τὴν πόλιν Δαμασκηνῶν πιάσαι με, 33 καὶ διὰ θυρίδος ἐν σαργάνῃ ἐχαλάσθην διὰ τοῦ τείχους καὶ ἐξέφυγον τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ.

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

But whatever anyone dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they ministers of Christ? I am talking like a madman—I am a better one: with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless floggings, and often near death. 24 Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; 26 on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers and sisters;e 27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked. 28 And, besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I am not indignant?

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

This subunit continues the discussion but with a more central focus on Paul's own experience. The initial statement (# 241) sets up the discussion. Then amplification follows in statement #s 242-244. Then a pair of justifying statements (#s 245-246) support these declarations. An acknowledgement of weakness in #

241 ^{11.16} Πάλιν λέγω,
μή τις με δόξη ἄφρονα εἶναι·
δὲ
εἰ μή γε,
κἂν ὡς ἄφρονα
δέξασθέ με,
ἵνα κἀγὼ μικρόν τι καυχῆσωμαι.

11.17 ὁ λαλῶ,
οὐ κατὰ κύριον

242 λαλῶ
ἀλλ’

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

11.18 ἐπεὶ πολλοὶ καυχῶνται
κατὰ σάρκα,

244 κἀγὼ καυχῆσομαι.

11.19 γὰρ
ἡδέως

245 ἀνέχεσθε τῶν ἀφρόνων
φρόνιμοι ὄντες·

11.20 γὰρ

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

11.21 κατὰ ἀτιμίαν

247 λέγω,
ὡς ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἡσθενήκαμεν.
Ἐν ᾧ δ’ ἂν τις τολμᾷ,
ἐν ἀφροσύνη λέγω,

248 τολμῶ κἀγώ.

249 ^{11.22} Ἑβραῖοί εἰσιν;
250 κἀγώ.

251 Ἰσραηλιταί εἰσιν;
252 κἀγώ.

253 σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ εἰσιν;
254 κἀγώ.

255 ^{11.23} διάκονοι Χριστοῦ εἰσιν;
παραφρονῶν

256 λαλῶ,
257 ὑπὲρ ἐγώ (εἰμί)·
ἐν κόποις
περισσοτέρως,
ἐν φυλακαῖς
περισσοτέρως,
ἐν πληγαῖς
ὑπερβαλλόντως,
ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις.

247 finishes up the first unit of vv. 16-20. The second small unit of thought expression begins in v. 21b (#248). This topic sentence sets up the following discussion of boasting in weakness in statements #s 249-274 (vv. 22-33).

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

The literary character of 11:1-12:10 has been investigated extensively again the backdrop of classical Greek patterns of rhetorical argumentation.⁵⁰³ This exploration is

⁵⁰³“The form of this section of the letter has been the subject of some investigation as part of a wider interest in Paul’s use of Greek rhetorical patterns and devices. The features we are concerned with are chiefly irony, invective, parody, diatribe, antithesis, paradox, lists of trials, and expostulation. Chaps. 10–13 contain several examples of these, but it is in 11:1–12:11 that Paul’s writing takes on the cast of an extended appeal, best described as a ‘Fool’s Speech’ (Narrenrede; the limits of the passage are set by the catchword ἀφροσύνη, ‘foolishness,’ in 11:1 and 12:11 [ἄφρων], and so an example of *inclusio*). Zmijewski has offered the latest and most detailed treatment, providing a useful overview of study,⁴¹⁴ since Weiss.⁴¹⁵ The landmark contributions may be set down as these:

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

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

“(3) Bultmann explored Paul’s use of the argumentative feature of diatribe, especially with reference to Epictetus,⁴¹⁸ whose works had been the study of Bonhöffer.⁴¹⁹ In particular, Bultmann noted that diatribe is a considerable feature of rhetorical antithesis,⁴²⁰ but it was left to later investigators⁴²¹ to devel-



11.24 πεντάκις τεσσεράκοντα ὕπὸ Τουδαίων
258 παρὰ μίαν ἔλαβον,
 11.25 τρὶς
259 ἔρραβδίσθην,
 ἅπαξ
260 ἐλιθάσθην,
 τρὶς
261 ἐναυάγησα,
 νυχθήμερον
 ἐν τῷ βυθῷ
262 πεποίηκα·
263 11.26 (ἡμῶν)
 ὁδοιπορίαις πολλάκις,
 κινδύνοις ποταμῶν,
 κινδύνοις ληστῶν,
 κινδύνοις ἐκ γένους,
 κινδύνοις ἐξ ἔθνων,
 κινδύνοις ἐν πόλει,
 κινδύνοις ἐν ἐρημίᾳ,
 κινδύνοις ἐν θαλάσσει,
 κινδύνοις ἐν ψευδαδέλφοις,
 11.27 κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ,
 ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις πολλάκις,
 ἐν λιμῷ καὶ δίψει,
 ἐν νηστείαις πολλάκις,
 ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι·
 11.28 χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτὸς
264 (εἰμί) ἢ ἐπίστασίς μοι
 ἢ καθ' ἡμέραν,
265 (εἰμί) ἢ μέριμνα πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν.
266 11.29 τίς ἀσθενεῖ
 καὶ
267 οὐκ ἀσθενῶ;
268 τίς σκανδαλίζεται
 καὶ
269 οὐκ ἐγὼ πυροῦμαι;
 11.30 Εἰ καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ,
270 τὰ τῆς ἀσθενείας μου καυχῆσομαι.
271 11.31 ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ οἶδεν,
 ὁ ὧν εὐλόγητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας,
 ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι.
 11.32 ἐν Δαμασκῷ
272 ὁ ἐθνάρχης Ἀρέτα τοῦ βασιλέως ἐφρούρει τὴν πόλιν Δαμασκηνῶν
 πιάσαι με,
 11.33 καὶ
 διὰ θυρίδος
 ἐν σαργάνῃ
273 ἐχαλάσθην
 διὰ τοῦ τείχους
 καὶ
274 ἐξέφυγον τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ.

op the theological purpose served by this rhetorical figura, 'form.'

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

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

“(6) Bujard offered to explore a threefold step into Paul’s spiritual and literary background:⁴²⁴ the likenesses and differences seen when his career was influenced by (a) his ancestral home, (b) his synagogue training and experience, and (c) his life in Tarsus. The author’s hope was to secure a ‘unified perspective’ based on his style, i.e., sentence formation, flow of thought, and rhetorical engagement.⁴²⁵

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

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

“(b) H. D. Betz’s is a monograph devoted to the last four chapters of 2 Corinthians, which section he finds best designated ‘an apology in letter-form,’ sharing the literary features of ‘anti-sophist tendency.’⁴²⁸ The opponents of Paul are cast in the role of sophists, while Paul himself is portrayed as the philosopher in this debate.⁴²⁹ As far as the setting and interpretation of 2 Cor

10–13 are concerned, Betz makes three points central: (i) the entire ‘praise speech,’ where Paul is ‘boasting,’ is conformed to the rhetorical model of περιαντολογία, ‘speaking about oneself,’ known from Plutarch;⁴³⁰ (ii) the ‘catalogue of trials’ (περιστάσεις; see on 6:4) in 11:23–33 shares in the literary form of the Cynic-Stoic diatribe; (iii) the section 12:2–4 is a parody on a ‘journey to heaven’ motif, portrayed in highly ironic tones, while 12:7b–10 is a parodied ‘aretalogy,’ an encomium of praise devoted to gods, heroes, and illustrious people in Greco-Roman society by extolling their virtues and powers.⁴³¹ Paul uses the form of this topos only to offset it by the ‘signs of the apostle’ in 12:12 (see Comment on 12:1–10), a verse which highlights his ‘endurance’ and leads to his ‘weaknesses’ (13:1–3). This is the ‘proof’ (δοκιμή) or evidence he brings out to refute their appeal to their ‘signs’ or credentials. He plays the part of the ‘wise fool’ to answer the charge that he is a false apostle.

“In Hellenistic debate between the sophist and the philosopher (typified in Socrates), the latter is often caricatured as ‘a fool’ because he was believed to have lost the measure (μέτρον) of himself and his world. This appears to be the charge against Paul, who replies in the style of the philosopher responding to the sophist. He will not boast of himself; but if he does, it is to show up his opponents who claimed ecstatic experiences, including an ‘ascent to heaven,’ as part of their special equipment. Paul recalls that he too can ‘boast’ of this experience, but he argues that even this paranormal event proves nothing regarding his credibility as an apostle, and in any case he refuses to divulge the mystic secrets he overheard (12:4). Only in his weakness will he glory; and that becomes the criterion of his apostolate. His adopting the language and thought-forms of his opponents serves only to undercut the value they gave to the sophists’ role (12:1; regarding καυχᾶσθαι, ‘boast’: ‘there is nothing to be gained by it’).⁴³²

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

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

“(e) Judge, with Forbes and P. Marshall, has set Paul’s boasting on the background of his appeal to a sophisticated, rhetorically trained congregation at Corinth. Paul’s use of set forms is no accident since he is one of them (in spite of 10:10), and his adopting the role of a fool is explained as a tactic of ‘non-conformity’ (Marshall’s term). When he disavows rhetoric, he does so self-consciously since he believes such display would be incongruent with his gospel and his idea of apostleship. But he is at heart a Hellenist who differs from his opponents and the Corinthians only on the single point that he is moderate in the claims he makes, while they (the opponents in 11:6; 12:11) are men of ὕβρις, ‘pride’ (but they accepted this character since for them it was a virtue).⁴³⁷ The rivals

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

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

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

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

The English words *foolish, fool*, are quite misleading as translations of ἄφρονα.⁵⁰⁴ Interestingly φρήν literally specifies the body part diaphragm, which in Paul’s world was considered to be the location of mental activity for

of Paul are ‘hybrists’—but this is not a pejorative term so much as a tribute to the self-praise that was native to Greek self-esteem. Marshall questions whether or not Paul knew how to handle them. Yet his self-chosen response to exclude Paul’s theology is a weakness in an otherwise illuminating study.”

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

⁵⁰⁴Part of the word group † φρήν, † ἄφρων, † ἀφροσύνη, φρονέω, φρόνημα, † φρόνησις, † φρόνημος [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:220.]

humans. The diaphragm controlled the breath and thus was understood to control mental activities along with the breath. The derivative meaning of φρήν then came to be mind.⁵⁰⁵ The concept evolves into probes of sick minds or sound minds and how the φρήν functions either positively or negatively. By the time of the classical philosophers pure intellectual thinking shifts to σοφία, while φρήν and its cognates define less intellectual and more 'practical' thinking. This is not inherently bad thinking, but neither is it intellectual thinking which is the ultimate virtue to seek. The derivative noun φρόνησις comes to be used dominantly in reference to this.

In the Greek speaking Jewish background of the LXX and other writings μωρός occurs more often as human intellect over against God's understanding. Several negative formations of φρήν, such as ἄφρων, ἀφροσύνη, ἄφρονες et als., surface in designating those who deny God and are called scoffers. Thus φρόνησις and its positive cognates comes to be associated with God and the knowledge of Him.⁵⁰⁶ It is the divine gift produced by

⁵⁰⁵ φρήν, usually plur. φρένες 'diaphragm,'¹ was early regarded as the seat of intellectual and spiritual activity. The diaphragm determines the nature and strength of the breath and hence also the human spirit and its emotions. In Hom. φρένες² means 'inner part,' 'mind,' 'consciousness,' 'understanding' etc. and like the other terms for inner organs it is the agent of spiritual and intellectual experiences. φρένες and derivatives soon lost altogether (or almost so) their physical sense. In Hom.³ the group is nearly always used for purely intellectual activity: θυμός ref. to emotion or impulse with no rational components, and ἦτορ or καρδιά to the disposition. Expressions like κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν, Il., 1, 193; 11, 411; Od., 1, 294; 4, 117 etc. are for Hom. typical means of denoting clearly intellectual and emotional involvement.⁴

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

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

⁵⁰⁶ As true φρόνησις is from God, God's φρόνησις is unsearchable, Is. 40:28, cf. Is. 40:14 ἌΣΘ (LXX σύνεσις). In His power (ισχύς) God has established the earth, in His 'wisdom' (σοφία) He has set up the inhabited world, in His 'understanding' (φρόνησις) He has spread out heaven, Jer. 10:12. The three terms are to be seen as a unity in view of the Hbr. parallelism. At Prv. 3:19 f. we have σοφία, φρόνησις, αἴσθησις, 'wisdom,' 'understanding' and 'knowledge,'³⁶ three virtues which in their theoretically intellectual and practically ethical character cannot be separated conceptually in the OT, or systematically integrated into a doctrine of virtues, even though the Gk. reader or translator might be inclined

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

The negative terms ἄφρων and ἀφροσύνη then in Paul's writings in the NT take on the idea of failure to use the divine gift of φρόνησις for making correct, helpful decisions.⁵⁰⁷

to do this under philosophical influence. Rather, the heaping up of terms is an indication of the many-sidedness of aspects. Thus φρόνησις and σοφία and many synon. finally constitute a unity as a depiction of the religiously determined practical wisdom of the OT. The same applies correspondingly to their negative counterparts. φρόνησις is the principle of creation; God gives man a share in the wisdom of the divine Creator, cf. esp. Prv. 1–9. When חכמה is transl. by φρόνησις, emphasis on practical reason seems to be in view. Even proverbs which have in the first instance a profane character, e.g., Prv. 10:20 Σ; 12:8 Σ; 11:12; 14:6, 29; 17:27; 18:15; 19:8 etc. acquire in the religiously stressed context their true and definitive significance, for acc. to Prv. 10:23 LXX (HT different) eternal σοφία produces 'understanding' φρόνησις in man, cf. 9:6b. Acc. to 8:14 wisdom claims 'understanding' as its possession, while the HT sees the two to be identical, cf. 8:1.37 In both cases LXX subordinates φρόνησις to σοφία.

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

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

⁵⁰⁷ In R. 2:17–20 Paul enumerates the religious and moral claims of Judaism so that he can test the reality by them.⁶⁵ Thus the phrase παιδευτής ἀφρόνων is not in the first instance Pauline usage. Rather, ἄφρονες along with νήπιοι (→ IV, 919, 31 ff.) contains from the standpoint of the pious Jew a judgment on the pagan world around which is designed to express the accusation of ungodliness → IV, 845, 20 ff.; V, 619, 35 ff. In 1 Cor. 15:36 Paul is not pronouncing a definitive judgment with his ἄφρων. It is a rhetorical appeal for true understanding. To cling to the negative view is to adopt the position of the ἄφρων which is close to that of ungodliness, cf. R. 1:22; 1 C. 1:18 ff.; → IV, 845, 12 ff.

"In 2 C. 11 and 12 ἄφρων and ἀφροσύνη are used in self-criticism. The apostle's ἀφροσύνη is that in the difficult conflicts with the church or congregation he apparently or provisionally sets himself on the carnal plane of self-boasting rather than on the spiritual plane. This is what Paul has in view when he speaks





confidence | 2 of 5

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

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

undertaking | 1 of 5

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

very being | 1 of 5

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

assurance | 1 of 5

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

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

When Paul then indicates his intention to play the role of ἄφρων, it is against this background that his words have meaning. The modern English word fool normally conveys the idea of being ignorant or dumb, i.e., having no understanding. But ἄφρων conveys something very different. One clearly possesses φρόνησις as a divine gift, but has chosen to misuse it to make bad decisions which then becomes ἀφροσύνη (11:1, 17) and ἄφρων (11:16). Paul momentarily 'plays the fool' here not out of ignorance but out of making

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

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

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

dumb decisions following the example of the Corinthian outsiders. The deliberate rejection of God's gift of φρόνησις in the background Jewish heritage adds a jab and harshness of tone to what Paul says.

This lays underneath Paul's reluctance to venture into playing the roll of the fool (v. 16b): εἰ δὲ μή γε, κἂν ὡς ἄφρονα δέξασθέ με, ἵνα κἀγὼ μικρὸν τι καυχῆσωμαι, But if indeed someone does, receive me as though I were foolish, so that I may do a little bit of boasting. He asks for their momentary indulgence of him to boast like the Corinthian outsiders. He will quickly move beyond this as 12:11 asserts: Γέγονα ἄφρων, ὑμεῖς με ἠναγκάσατε. ἐγὼ γὰρ ὠφειλον ὑφ' ὑμῶν συνίστασθαι· οὐδὲν γὰρ ὑστέρησα τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων εἰ καὶ οὐδὲν εἰμι, I have been a fool! You forced me to it. Indeed you should have been the ones commending me, for I am not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing. But between 11:16 and 12:11 the fool's role centers on two things: boasting about his weakness (11:17-33) and about extraordinary spiritual experiences (12:1-10). Very importantly this material is Paul 'playing the fool's role' and not something he ordinarily would do. He saw this a deliberately rejecting the divinely given φρόνησις like his opponents the Corinthian outsiders. The words μικρὸν τι, a little bit of, underscore his intention to only barely play the fool's role. He has no intention to get deeply into boasting like the outsiders were. Plus this tactic enables him to take a surprising direction in boasting that was opposite to that of his opponents: to boast about his weaknesses, rather than his strengths.

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

First, Paul disconnects what he is saying from the



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

Thus what Paul is saying here is labeled as ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ὑποστάσει, *in this situation.* The noun ὑπόστασις, used some five times in the NT, has an unusual background in ancient Greek that throws a lot of light onto its meaning here.⁵⁰⁸ The sense contextually here is references the situation of boasting (= τῆς καυχήσεως) as seen supporting one's viewpoint. In the obviously satirical setting established in v. 16b especially, the expression defines what Paul is saying in this unit of material (ὁ λαλῶ) as speaking ἐν ἀφροσύνη, *in foolishness,* which then is labeled ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ὑποστάσει τῆς καυχήσεως, *in this situation of boasting.* The genitive of identity function of τῆς καυχήσεως further defines the situation as that of boasting, thus linking this to the larger topic of boasting throughout chapter eleven.⁵⁰⁹ His outsider Corinthian opponents are boasting of their accomplishments and supposedly superior status. Now it's Paul turn to respond. But he does so in satire and without seriousness, almost mocking them.

His beginning qualification οὐ κατὰ κύριον λαλῶ, *not according to the Lord do I speak,* evidently anticipates misunderstanding of his words by his Corinthian readers.⁵¹⁰ The present tense λαλῶ limits the content to the

⁵⁰⁸“The word ὑπόστασις is a verbal subst. of ὑπίστημι. Yet it has hardly any senses corresponding to the act. ὑπίστημι. It is almost always to be understood in the light of the intr. and mid. ὑφίσταμαι.¹ But it reflects only one part of the varied meaning of ὑφίσταμαι.² Whereas the verb in the mid. and pass. can mean also ‘to conjecture,’ ‘to agree,’ ‘to undertake,’ ‘to offer’ etc., the noun corresponds only to the following senses, which can involve independent derivations of the noun from the verb: 1. ‘to stand under (as a support),’ 2. ‘to place oneself under (concealment),’ 3. ‘to stand off from,’ ‘to deposit oneself as sediment on the ground,’ and hence ‘to be,’ ‘to exist,’ 4. ‘to promise.’ From these meanings we get the following meanings of the noun: 1. ‘support,’ 2. ‘ambush,’ 3. ‘deposit,’ ‘sediment,’ trans. everything that settles, hence the philosophical sense ‘existence,’ ‘reality,’ Lat. *substantia*,³ 4. ‘lease,’ a technical meaning found already in early Hell. pap. and arising independently from the verb in the 4th cent. B.C. → 579, 33 ff.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:572.]

⁵⁰⁹Cf. the references of καύχησις in 11:10 and 11:17 (5 uses in 2 Cor.) along with the verb καυχάομαι in 11:12, 16, 18, 30 (2x) out of the 20 uses in Second Corinthians. Also see καύχημα in 2 Cor. 1:14; 5:12; and 9:3. For the larger picture see Louw-Nida, *Greek Lexicon*, topics 33:368-33.363.

⁵¹⁰“As in v. 16, Paul is here anticipating a possible misinterpretation of the boasting he will shortly undertake. There the mis-

immediate words of Paul in this document. Although the phrase κατὰ κύριον, *according to the Lord,* is subject to differing nuanced understandings, it essentially denies a connection of the Lord to the boasting that Paul is about to do here in this setting.⁵¹¹ He certainly does not want to give the impression that he is stooping to the base level of boasting that his opponent operated from. All of this ‘disqualification’ of what he is about to

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

⁵¹¹“The abbreviated phrase κατὰ κύριον (“according to the Lord [Jesus]”) has been understood in several ways:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



do should set the listener to these words up to expect something different in Paul's boasting from that repeatedly heard from the outsiders at Corinth. This is the point in the causal clause introduced by ἐπεὶ (v. 18): ἐπεὶ πολλοὶ καυχῶνται κατὰ σάρκα, κἀγὼ καυχῆσομαι, since many are boasting according to fleshly (standards), I will also boast. Still Paul builds anticipation in the minds of the readers and listeners to these words at Corinth.⁵¹² "Is he really going to do some bragging?" The answer is both yes and no. Bragging yes, but by human standards, no!

One basis pushing him to engage in this 'foolish boasting' is the Corinthians themselves as vv.

⁵¹²“This verse looks back to δέξασθέ με in v. 16 (Bultmann 211) and supplies one reason for Paul's request that the Corinthians accept him in his boasting. If πολλοὶ refers only to Paul's rivals, it is a derogatory 'overstatement,' but more probably it focuses attention on them within a wider group of boasters (including some Corinthians) who sought human adulation through self-praise. κατὰ σάρκα stands in contrast to κατὰ κύριον (v. 17) and in parallelism to ἐν ἀφροσύνῃ (v. 17).²⁵ As with οἱ καυχόμενοι mentioned in 5:12, who boasted 'about appearance and not character' (ἐν προσώπῳ καὶ μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ), these boasters evaluated themselves and others from a purely human and worldly viewpoint, without due regard for the divine perspective, and so prided themselves on outward and natural advantages of ancestry and privilege (cf. v. 22). κατὰ σάρκα, then, describes both the type of boasting (foolish, worldly) and its content (outward appearances, human advantages).

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

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

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

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

In v. 20 given as a second causal declaration (γὰρ) the verb ἀνέχεσθε, you put up with, is repeated from v. 19, and this pair of uses matches the two uses of the same verb in verse one: Ὁφελον ἀνείχεσθέ μου μικρόν τι ἀφροσύνης· ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνέχεσθέ μου. I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! The intent of Paul is to demand 'equal time' for himself that the Corinthians were giving to the outsiders. Their 'enduring' the outsiders was producing chaos inside the church. The least they could do was to hear Paul who would offer a solution to clean up the mess created by these outsiders. The mess is alluded to with ἀνέχεσθε γὰρ εἴ τις ὑμᾶς καταδουλοῖ*, εἴ τις κατεσθίει, εἴ τις λαμβάνει, εἴ τις ἐπαίρεται, εἴ τις εἰς πρόσωπον ὑμᾶς δέρει. for since someone re-enslaves you, since someone preys on you, since someone takes advantage of you, since someone puts on the airs around you, since someone slaps you in the face. In this first class conditional sentence structure five different assumed scenarios are presented by εἴ τις... In each of them, the response of the Corinthians in the apodosis is ἀνέχεσθε, you put up with.⁵¹³ Close ex-

⁵¹³“In the five examples of this abuse that Paul proceeds to document, the reader or hearer is struck by the fivefold repetition of εἴ τις ('if someone') (cf. 1 Tim. 5:10). This has the effect of letting each item stand on its own, thus increasing the paradox step by step and hammering home the message, 'You are in the habit of tolerating anything from anyone.'³⁶ But in spite of this unexpected repetition, the focus of the verse is not on the abusers³⁷ with



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

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

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

2. *Exploitation* (κατεσθίει) Once again, the prefix κατα- may have a “perfective” sense; thus “eat something till it is finished,”⁴⁰ “eat up.” Paul’s only other use of this verb is in Gal. 5:15 in reference to the in-fighting and party strife of the Galatians. “If you persist in biting one another and tearing one another to pieces (κατεσθίετε), watch out that you are not annihilated by one another.” Jesus denounced the scribes as “those who devour (οἱ κατεσθίωντες) widows’ houses” (Mark 12:40), referring to illegal appropriation of property (BAGD 422b). When Paul uses this verb of his rivals’ actions, he is probably not referring to their creating or fostering party strife, but to their parasitical attachment to the Corinthians, their living “on” or “off” them (cf. Goodspeed), that is, at the Corinthians’ expense (cf. Weymouth), demanding and receiving payment for “services rendered,” eating them “out of house and home.”⁴¹ Against the background of 11:7–12, it is hard not to discern in κατεσθίει an allusion to the intruders’ financial dependence on

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

believers at Corinth.

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

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

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

this way meekly tolerated the indignity (ἀνέχεσθε).⁵¹⁴

The collective picture painted here by Paul is that these Corinthian outsiders had come into the church with the clear intent of taking complete control of the various house church groups, and then using the groups as a source of financial support for their arrogant, lavish lifestyle.⁵¹⁵ These false teachers stood for everything destructive to the spiritual life and well being of the church, as well as totally opposite of Paul's self-sacrificing care for the church.

At this point, 'boasting' was the key issue and Paul needed the chance to do some himself to them at Corinth. But he signals in v. 21 a totally opposite direction in his boasting: κατὰ ἀτιμίαν λέγω, ὡς ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἡσθενήκαμεν, *To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that!* His boasting was not in a quest for power and control over the church at Corinth. Not at all. Just the opposite. His boasting is going to be about him being 'dishonored' (ἀτιμίαν) in the eyes of the world as validation of God's approval of him and his approach to ministry.⁵¹⁶ Paul's use of the perfect tense verb ἡσθενήκαμεν

⁵¹⁴Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 784–786.

⁵¹⁵“Looking back over these five indictments, we notice, first of all, their similarity—all represent actions or attitudes of domineering, callous κύριοι (cf. καταδουλοῖ), bent on having their own way, with this end justifying any means used. Indeed, the last four indictments could be regarded as elucidations of the first (Barrett 291). Someone who has been reduced to slavery (καταδουλοῖ) would expect to be exploited (κατεσθίει), taken advantage of (λαμβάνει), treated arrogantly (ἐπαίρεται), and physically abused (δέρει). Second, the conduct of the intruders is the antithesis of pastoral service; it was not πρὸς τὴν ὑμῶν διακονίαν (11:8). Paul doubtless hoped that his converts would make the obvious comparison between his way of operating and that of the rival missionaries. He was their δοῦλος, not their κύριος (4:5); he had remained financially independent (11:7–12); he had refused to act with unscrupulous cunning (4:2); he did not lord it over them and their faith (1:24); he was committed to protecting them from spiritual violation (11:2).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 786–787.]

⁵¹⁶“After recounting the misguided tolerance that the Corinthians in their ‘wisdom’ (v. 19) had shown toward the imperious interlopers (v. 20), Paul makes an ironical contrast between his own conduct toward the Corinthians and the behavior of his rivals.

“Sometimes the ἀτιμία is thought to be the shame of the Corinthians. They ought to feel ashamed that they so readily tolerated the despotism and exploitation of the intruders,⁵⁰ or ashamed that Paul had shown such weakness in comparison.⁵¹ In the former case the shame is defined by v. 20; in the latter, the shame explained by ὡς κτλ., and the statement is intensely ironical. But if Paul was referring to the Corinthians’ shame, we would expect κατὰ τὴν ἀτιμίαν ὑμῶν or κατὰ τὴν ἀτιμίαν or ὑμῖν λέγω (cf. 1 Cor. 6:5; 15:34).⁵² With ἀτιμία or λέγω unqualified in one of these ways,

conveys ideas not easily expressed in English, since the perfect tense in Greek functioned completely different than its English counter point.⁵¹⁷ The stinging irony of ‘weak’ signals that he was to ‘weak’ to exploit and take over control of the Corinthians, as these outsiders were desiring to do. That is, he had integrity and they didn’t.

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

The single episode appealed to in vv. 30-33, the escape at Damascus after conversion, is provided as a sign of his weakness (v. 30). What lies behind Paul's emphasis upon his human weakness and suffering as validation of being a minister of Christ? Given several grammatical constructions signaling divisions, the material can be divided naturally into two units with some subdivisions.⁵¹⁸ This division combines the grammati-

it is more natural to relate κατὰ ἀτιμίαν to Paul's own ‘shame.’⁵³”

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

⁵¹⁷ἡσθενήκαμεν may be treated as an aoristic perfect (so Turner 70), ‘we were weak’;⁶⁰ or as a ‘perfect of resulting state’ (so Fanning 291–92), with the emphasis on the present condition rather than on the implied anterior action, ‘we are weak’;⁶¹ or, preferably, as a perfect that encompasses both past and present, with the emphasis in the context falling on the past, ‘we have been weak.’⁶² That is, from his first contact with the Corinthians right up to the time of writing, Paul had shown himself to be ‘weak,’⁶³ not merely in the sense of being ‘timid’ (cf. ταπεινός, 10:1) or having an ‘unimpressive’ (ἀσθενής) personal ‘presence’ (10:10) but mainly in the sense that he had been too ‘weak’ to dominate and exploit the Corinthians as his rivals had been doing (11:20). The contrast with his rivals is made clear by the emphatic ἡμεῖς. Accordingly, ἡσθενήκαμεν will mean ‘we have been too weak (for that)’ (Lambrecht 187)⁶⁴ or ‘we seem to have been weaklings in comparison’ (Furnish 485). This stinging irony⁶⁵ is made all the more potent by the stark brevity of ἡσθενήκαμεν.⁶⁶ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 788–789.]

⁵¹⁸Analysis of 11:21b–29 by Construction

1. Repetition of τολμάω (v. 21b)

ἐν ᾧ δ’ ἄν τις τολμᾷ, ...
τολμῶ κάγώ.

BOLD
CLAIMS

2. Four questions (εἰσίν; vv. 22–23a)



cal structure and the content of the text into two logical divisions.⁵¹⁹ These are structured around claims

Ἐβραῖοί	εἰσιν;	κἀγώ.	PEDIGREE
Ἰσραηλιταί	εἰσιν;	κἀγώ.	
σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ	εἰσιν;	κἀγώ.	
διάκονοι Χριστοῦ	εἰσιν;	ὑπὲρ ἐγώ.	
3. ἐν + dative plural + adverb (v. 23b)			
ἐν	κόποις	περισσότερως,	GENERAL
ἐν	φυλακαῖς	περισσότερως,	SUFFERING
ἐν	πληγαῖς	ὑπερβαλλόντως,	
ἐν	θανάτοις	πολλάκις.	
4. Numeral adverb + aorist (vv. 24–25), illustrating ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις (v. 23b)			
ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων	πεντάκις ...	ἔλαβον,	REPEATED
	τρὶς	ἐραβδίσθην,	EXPOSURE
	ἅπαξ	ἐλιθάσθην,	TO
	τρὶς	ἐνανάγησα,	DEATH
	[ἅπαξ] ...	πεποίηκα· (perfect)	
5. Κινδύνοις (“dangers”), illustrating ὁδοιπορίας πολλάκις (v. 26)			
(a) followed by genitive plural (source)			
κινδύνοις ποταμῶν,			
κινδύνοις ληστῶν,			SPECIFIC
(b) followed by ἐκ (source)			
κινδύνοις ἐκ γένους,			DANGERS
κινδύνοις ἐξ ἔθνων,			associated with
(c) followed by ἐν (location)			
κινδύνοις ἐν πόλει,			TRAVEL
κινδύνοις ἐν ἔρημίᾳ			
κινδύνοις ἐν θαλάσσει,			
κινδύνοις ἐν ψευδαδέλφοις,			
6. Pairs of dative singular, separated by ἐν + dative plural + adverb (v. 27; cf. v. 23b)			
κόπω καὶ μόχθῳ,			
ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις	πολλάκις,		TOIL
ἐν λιμῷ καὶ δίψει,			and
ἐν νηστείαις	πολλάκις,		DEPRIVATION
ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι.			
7. Two substantival phrases in exegetical apposition (v. 28)			
... ἡ ἐπίστασις μοι	ἡ καθ’ ἡμέραν,		ANXIOUS
ἡ μέριμνα	πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν.		CONCERN
			for churches
8. Two rhetorical questions (τίς ... καὶ οὐκ ...) (v. 29)			
τίς ἀσθενεῖ,	καὶ	οὐκ ἀσθενῶ;	ANXIOUS
τίς σκανδαλίζεται,	καὶ	οὐκ ἐγὼ πυροῦμαι	CONCERN
			for individuals

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

^{519a}In this whole section there is an extended comparison between Paul and his rivals at Corinth. The two key expressions are κἀγώ (‘I too’; four uses in vv. 21b–22) and ὑπὲρ ἐγώ (‘I more’; v. 23a), the former pointing to his equality with his rivals in certain limited respects, the latter to his vast superiority.¹ From this perspective we may divide 11:21b–29 into three sections of unequal length.

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

^{21b} Yet in whatever way any of them is bold—I speak in pure folly—I am just as bold myself.

2. Equality in nationality and heritage (v. 22)

²² Are they Hebrews?

So am I.

	Ἐν ᾧ δ’ ἂν τις τολμᾷ,	
	ἐν ἀφροσύνῃ λέγω,	
248	τολμῷ κἀγώ.	
249	^{11.22} Ἐβραῖοί εἰσιν;	
250	κἀγώ.	
251	Ἰσραηλιταί εἰσιν;	
252	κἀγώ.	
253	σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ εἰσιν;	
254	κἀγώ.	

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

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

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

²⁹ Who is weak, and I am not weak?

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

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



evident.

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

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

V. 21b, # 248 sets up the challenge to make comparisons between the outsiders and himself.⁵²⁰ The complex structure of this is complicated by the parenthetical insertion of ἐν ἀφροσύνη λέγω, *in foolishness I am talking*. This repeats the use of ἀφροσύνη in vv. 1 and 17, as a reminder of the perspective here that Paul is using. It is the satirical 'fool's perspective' rather than the proper viewpoint coming from the Lord (v. 17). The use of this rhetorical device, though considered valid in Greek and Roman rhetoric, played off human based standards in Paul's minds and thus had very questionable value. But a little of it seemed required in order to communicate to the Corinthian readers in a manner that they could comprehend with their secularized mind-set, and particularly was this the case of Paul's critics inside the church.

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

The idea behind τολμᾷ and τολμῶ from τολμάω is defined as "to show boldness or resolution in the face of danger, opposition, or a problem, **dare, bring oneself to** (do someth.)"⁵²¹ The motivation behind the action can be

⁵²⁰Older printed Greek texts inserted a Greek semicolon after ἡσθενήκαμεν and before Ἐν ᾧ thus implying a continuation of the sentence begun in the first half of verse 21. This was based upon the connecting nature of the relative pronoun ᾧ, but ignored the literal role of λέγω in vv. 16 and 21a as *inclusios* that indicate subject boundaries for text units, over against the repeated use λαλῶ inside this unit of vv. 16-21a. The shift to the verb τολμῶ in v. 21b clearly signals the beginning of a new text unit. The connecting role of the relative is maintained in the realization that the neuter singular ᾧ reaches back to all of vv. 16-21a, and not to v. 21a only. Thus the insertion of a period, a major break, after ἡσθενήκαμεν is entirely appropriate and correctly reflects the thought flow of this passage.

⁵²¹William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1010.

legitimate or very improper, depending on the circumstance. Here both are played off of by Paul, speaking in 'the fool's speech.'

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

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

These initial rhetorical questions collectively claim a Jewish heritage for these outsiders. How could their claiming to be Jewish be an advantage over Paul who obviously was Jewish himself? The most likely historical answer in Acts 6:1, Ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις πληθύνοντων τῶν μαθητῶν ἐγένετο γογγυσμὸς τῶν Ἑλληνιστῶν πρὸς τοὺς Ἑβραίους, ὅτι παρεθεωροῦντο ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ τῇ καθημερινῇ αἱ χῆραι αὐτῶν, *Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food.* In the Judaism of this era there existed a long standing bitter dispute over superiority between the Jews living in Judea and rigidly adhering to the Torah and the Diaspora Jews who had freely adopted many Greco-Roman customs etc. in their practice of Judaism.⁵²² To be sure, in the Diaspora, one would find pockets of Hebraistic Jews, but the overwhelming majority were Hellenistic Jews. Add to that, he had not known Jesus during his earthly life, and to their mind this gave him second class status.

The term Ἑβραῖοί, *Hebraists*, is found only here, Phil. 3:5, and Acts 6:1 inside the NT. The claim to be a Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων, *Hebrew of the Hebrews*, in Phil.

⁵²²“Since vv. 22–23a are a set of comparisons between Paul and his rivals, it is fair to assume that Paul's repeated claim (κάγω) is in fact a counterclaim; he can match their claims at every point. If so, εἰσιν; has the sense ‘Are they, in their claims, ...?’ His opponents would have known that they could not deny that Paul was Jewish by birth¹⁵ and spoke both Hebrew and Aramaic,¹⁶ but, if we may hypothesize about their claims concerning themselves and their observations regarding Paul, they may have pointed to their own ‘pure’ Jewish descent and to Paul's less than pure lineage as a Diaspora ‘Hellenist’—he was not born in Israel, but outside the borders of the ‘holy land’; he was not normally resident in Judea, and so more affected by Hellenistic influences; he had not been a companion or early disciple of Jesus, and so had been denied the benefits of firsthand acquaintance with Jesus.¹⁷ That is, they may have defined ‘pure’ lineage in reference to birth and residence in Israel and personal knowledge of the earthly Jesus.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 794.]

3:5 represents a claim of descent from a Palestinian Jewish family. Thus his family roots reach to Palestine, and nullify the outsiders assumption of superiority with their claim of being Ἑβραῖοι.⁵²³ If anything he could have claimed superiority to them with his credentials as a Pharisee who had been trained by Gamaliel, one of the legendary scribes of first century Judaism.

The emphasis found in the label Ἰσραηλιταί, *Israelites*, is that of belonging to Covenant Israel.⁵²⁴ This is a much more exclusivistic term than the much more common Ἰουδαῖος, *Jew*, in NT usage. It carries with it the assumption of belonging to the chosen of God as His unique people.

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

⁵²³“Ἑβραῖοι. This term is found only here and in Phil. 3:5 (twice) and Acts 6:1.18 In the latter passage it is contrasted with Ἑλληνισταί (‘Hellenists,’ ‘Grecian Jews’) and therefore probably points to both linguistic and cultural distinctiveness, referring to Aramaic-speaking Jews of the Jerusalem church who attended synagogues where Hebrew was used and yet could converse in Greek. Both by inclination and by training their affinities lay with Palestinian orthodoxy. The Hellenists, on the other hand, spoke only Greek and attended a separate synagogue where Greek was used (such as ‘the Synagogue of the Freedmen,’ Acts 6:9).¹⁹ Their intellectual and cultural roots lay in the Diaspora.²⁰ In Phil. 3:5 there is no explicit contrast between Ἑβραῖος and Ἑλληνιστής so that the linguistic associations of the term Ἑβραῖος are not to the fore. When Paul asserts he is ‘a Hebrew with Hebrew parents’ (Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων), he ‘is claiming, not merely Jewish nationality, but descent from a Palestinian family. This factor, along with the Pharaic orientation of the family (Ac. 22:3), is the reason why Aramaic is his mother tongue; it is not because he speaks Aramaic that he calls himself Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων.’²¹ Similarly, in 11:22 κἀγὼ [εἰμι Ἑβραῖος] should be given a geographical sense. Paul is affirming his status as ‘a Jew of Palestinian descent.’²² But not only were Paul’s family roots in Palestine. According to Acts 22:3 he had spent his formative years in Jerusalem, receiving both his elementary and his higher education there.²³ He begins his address to the Jerusalem Jews with the words, ‘I am a Jew, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city [= Jerusalem], educated under the teaching of Gamaliel according to the strict interpretation of our ancestral law.’ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 794–795.]

⁵²⁴“Ἰσραηλιταί. Like Ἑβραῖοι, this is an archaizing term with a nuance of special solemnity. It denotes those who belong to Israel, the chosen, covenant people of Yahweh.²⁴ Israelites are citizens of ‘the commonwealth of Israel’ (Eph. 2:12). ‘Israel’ was the name God gave to Jacob that was also applied to his descendants (Gen. 32:28, 32). As opposed to the more general term for Jews, namely Ἰουδαῖος (195 NT uses, including v. 24 in the present context),²⁵ Ἰσραηλίτης is used rarely in the NT (nine uses), of which three are in Paul (Rom. 9:4; 11:1; 2 Cor. 11:22) and in two of these (Rom. 11:1; 2 Cor. 11:22) this term is associated with the expression σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ.²⁶ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 795.]

cance.⁵²⁵ As descendents of Abraham, the divine promises made to Abraham would be claimed as their exclusive possession.

Is there any particular significance to the threefold claims made by the outsiders and answered by Paul?⁵²⁶ Many commentators would say no. A few would see the threefold expression as an intense affirmation of Jewishness by both the outsiders and Paul. Still a few others see a progressive intensity in the sequencing of the threefold set of claims. It is not clear which of these stand behind Paul’s threefold listing. But it is clear that the claims of these outsiders to superiority to Paul on the basis of Jewish heritage were exceedingly false and could be easily matched by the apostle. Whether they made these claims in ignorance or Paul’s background, or in intentional efforts to deceive a perceived ignorance on the part of the Corinthians, is not clear. In either case, Paul calls their hand on this deception.

b) Claims to superiority, vv. 23-29

23 διάκονοι Χριστοῦ εἰσιν; παραφρονῶν λαλῶ, ὑπὲρ ἐγὼ· ἐν κόποις περισσοτέρως, ἐν φυλακαῖς περισσοτέρως, ἐν πληγαῖς ὑπερβαλλόντως, ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις. 24 Ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων πεντάκις τεσσαράκοντα παρὰ μίαν ἔλαβον, 25 τρίς ἔρραβδίσθην, ἅπαξ ἐλιθάσθην, τρίς ἐναυάγησα, νυχθήμερον ἐν τῷ βυθῷ πεποιήκα· 26 ὁδοιπορίαὶς πολλάκις, κινδύνοις ποταμῶν, κινδύνοις ληστῶν, κινδύνοις

⁵²⁵“σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ (literally ‘seed of Abraham’).²⁷ Elsewhere Paul applies this concept to Jesus as the promised Messiah (Gal. 3:16, 19), but as used here in v. 22 it refers to Jews as heirs of the promises that God made to Abraham—the promise of an everlasting covenant in which he would be Abraham’s God and the God of his descendants (Gen. 17:7), and the promise of blessing to all nations through his descendants (Gen. 22:18). There is no reason to think that Paul’s adversaries were using this expression in a distinctly Christian sense to refer to those who belong to Christ as ‘Abraham’s seed’ (Gal. 3:29)²⁸ or were impressing on the Corinthians Paul’s point that ‘not all of Abraham’s children are his true descendants’ (Rom. 9:7, NRSV). In all three designations in 11:22, genuine Jewishness is the point under consideration in the mind of Paul’s rivals and of Paul himself.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 795–796.]

⁵²⁶“Even if we allow, with Lietzmann (150), that we have in v. 22 ‘three descriptions of the same idea of ‘full-blooded Jew,’ ’ we need not agree with Bultmann that ‘any differentiation is scarcely intended’ (214). There seems to be a progression of privilege,²⁹ whether we express this as a movement of thought from nationality to theocracy to messianic privilege (so Meyer 658), or from racial to religious/salvation-historical to theological categories (so Lambrecht 190, 197), or from descent to citizenship to heritage.³⁰ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 796.]



ἐκ γένους, κινδύνους ἐξ ἔθνῶν, κινδύνους ἐν πόλει, κινδύνους ἐν ἐρημίᾳ, κινδύνους ἐν θαλάσῃ, κινδύνους ἐν ψευδαδέλφοις, 27 κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ, ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις πολλάκις, ἐν λιμῷ καὶ δίψει, ἐν νηστείαις πολλάκις, ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι· 28 χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτὸς ἢ ἐπίστασις μοι ἢ καθ' ἡμέραν, ἢ μέριμνα πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν. 29 τίς ἀσθενεῖ καὶ οὐκ ἀσθενῶ; τίς σκανδαλίζεται καὶ οὐκ ἐγὼ πυροῦμαι;

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

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

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

One should note other listings of sufferings in Second Corinthians as well. These listings contain some overlap among these four listings.⁵²⁷ The twenty-six

255 ^{11.23} **διάκονοι Χριστοῦ εἰσιν;**
παραφρονῶν
256 **λαῶ,**
257 **ὑπὲρ ἐγῶ (εἰμί) ·**
ἐν κόποις
περισσοτέρως,
ἐν φυλακαῖς
περισσοτέρως,
ἐν πληγαῖς
ὑπερβαλλόντως,
ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις.

11.24 Ὑπὸ Τουδαίων

πεντάκις τεσσαράκοντα

παρὰ μίαν
ἐλαβον,

258
11.25 **τρὶς**
ἐρραβδίσθην,
ἅπαξ
259 **ἐλιθάσθην,**
τρὶς
260 **ἐναυάγησα,**
νυχθήμερον
ἐν τῷ βυθῷ
262 **πεποίηκα ·**
263 ^{11.26} **(ἡμῖν)**
ὁδοιπορίαις πολλάκις,
κινδύνους ποταμῶν,
κινδύνους ληστῶν,
κινδύνους ἐκ γένους,
κινδύνους ἐξ ἔθνῶν,
κινδύνους ἐν πόλει,
κινδύνους ἐν ἐρημίᾳ,
κινδύνους ἐν θαλάσῃ,
κινδύνους ἐν ψευδαδέλφοις,
11.27 **κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ,**
ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις πολλάκις,
ἐν λιμῷ καὶ δίψει,
ἐν νηστείαις πολλάκις,
ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι ·
11.28 **χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτὸς**
(εἰμί) ἢ ἐπίστασις μοι
ἢ καθ' ἡμέραν,
(εἰμί) ἢ μέριμνα πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν.

266 ^{11.29} **τίς ἀσθενεῖ**
καὶ
267 **οὐκ ἀσθενῶ;**

268 **τίς σκανδαλίζεται**
καὶ
269 **οὐκ ἐγὼ πυροῦμαι;**

⁵²⁷That no distinction is intended is clear from the fact that five items are common to the two lists: ἐν κόποις, ἐν φυλακαῖς, ἐν πληγαῖς (11:22 and 6:5), ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις, ἐν νηστείαις (11:27 and 6:5). Vv. 23b–29 are an avalanche of hardships that sweeps the reader along in dazed disbelief. Yet Paul's focus is not on any stoical indifference to suffering or even patient endurance of affliction but on Christ's grace in upholding him in the midst of his weakness

(11:30; 12:9–10; cf. 1 Cor. 15:10), or, as he has expressed it earlier, on God's power in leading him in triumphal procession through his union with Christ (2:14). What must have surprised the Corinthians was that Paul seeks to establish his superiority in Christ's service by tabulating his adversities rather than by appealing to his



items here clearly is the longest and most detailed of any of them.⁵²⁸

The elliptical idiomatic phrase *ὑπὲρ ἐγώ*, *I more*,⁵²⁹ sets up the series of references that follow.⁵³⁰ First are

success in founding congregations in strategically important centers around the Aegean, or by referring to the number of converts won, or by citing miracles performed. Rather, appeal is made to evidence of his shame and dishonor. ‘What he has endured is the seal of his Apostleship’ (Plummer 322). ‘He ... does not view his suffering as an apostle as a tedious detour; it is rather the main highway’ (Garland 307).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 798.]

⁵²⁸“Each of the twenty-six items in the catalogue contributes to the evidence for Paul’s ‘superiority,’ so the meaning is not substantially altered whether we render the four instances of ἐν by ‘in (the midst of)’ (local ἐν; cf. 6:4b–5; 11:26), ‘with’ (circumstantial or causal), ‘with respect to’ (referential), or ‘because of’ (causal). κόπος (‘toil,’ ‘labor’) was the tradesman’s term for the strenuous exertions of those engaged in manual labor and the word may refer to this in 6:5 (see the commentary there), but here too it probably also describes Paul’s evangelistic and pastoral work (cf. its use in 10:15),⁴¹ with the same connotation of rigorous and exhausting toil, toil that could prove a burden (11:28), even if it was prompted by love (1 Thess. 1:3).⁴² The plural κόποις may be generalizing (‘labor’) or may refer to individual acts (BAGD 443d). The adverb *περισσότερως* is the comparative of *περισσῶς* (‘exceedingly’). After *ὑπὲρ ἐγώ* (‘I more’), it probably retains a comparative force, with the sense ‘far more (labors),’⁴³ just as in the following phrase it seems to mean ‘far more (imprisonments).’⁴⁴ Now it is true that we have no knowledge that Paul’s rivals had ever been imprisoned (or flogged or shipwrecked!), so that the comparison cannot involve numeration.⁴⁵ Moreover, the next two adverbs, *ὑπερβαλλόντως* and *πολλάκις*, need not involve a comparison. But that is not to say that any notion of comparison after *ὑπὲρ ἐγώ* is irrelevant or that the comparison is simply with the majority of Christ’s servants. The implications of *ὑπὲρ ἐγώ* must be taken seriously even if we acknowledge that Paul is not engaged in specific comparisons but is establishing his general credentials as a *διάκονος Χριστοῦ* over against the groundless claim to that title made by his opponents. A title beneath the picture of Paul’s hardships found in vv. 23b–29 would read *διάκονος Χριστοῦ γέγονα*.⁴⁶” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 798–799.]

⁵²⁹“*ὑπὲρ* is here used adverbially (see Moulton and Howard 326), ‘more,’ reflecting the fact that prepositions were originally adjuncts to verbs, ‘ad-verbs.’³³ ‘I more,’ ‘I, to a higher degree’ (cf. BDF §230) (= *ἐγὼ μᾶλλον*; cf. Phil. 3:4) is an abbreviated form of ‘I am so even more (than they)’ (BAGD 839c), or ‘I am/have been a better servant of Christ than they claim to have been.’³⁴ For the sake of the comparison that follows, Paul is allowing his rivals’ estimate of themselves as *διάκονοι Χριστοῦ* and claiming to be vastly superior to them in that role.³⁵” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 797.]

⁵³⁰In such an elliptical listing as this one is not surprised by a

those introduced by the locational preposition ἐν... in verse twenty-three b. Then comes the listing emphasizing how many times various things happened to Paul in vv. 24–26a. He next shifts over to the key word *κινδύνοις*, *dangers*, for the third series in vv. 26b. In v. 27 is a mixture grammatically of several items that he suffered. All these signal different kinds of hardships that the apostle had experienced in doing ministry as a *διάκονος Χριστοῦ*. Absolutely none of the outsiders either could or would admit to such difficulties serving Christ. To them, these were signals of inferiority, rather than superiority. This listing leads up to the climatic declaration in v. 30 which both sums up vv. 23b–29 and introduces vv. 31–33: *Εἰ καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, τὰ τῆς ἀσθενείας μου καυχῆσομαι*, *since it is necessary to boast, I will boast*

variety of alternative readings for portions of vv. 24–29, as Murray (NIGTC) outlines:

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

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

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

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

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

(5) ἐν πληγαῖς ὑπερβαλλόντως (Clement)

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

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

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

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

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



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

in those things connected to my weakness.

First comes those experiences defined locationally with ἐν.⁵³¹ The two adverbs περισσοτέρως and ὑπερβαλλόντως are functional synonyms although περισσοτέρως is quantitative in the sense of “a much greater degree, for more, far greater” and ὑπερβαλλόντως as the adverbial form of the present participle of ὑπερβάλλω has the sense of *exceedingly, immeasurably* but also can be used comparatively as here with the sense of *surpassingly*. The comparative aspect is stronger with περισσοτέρως, as the comparative suffix -τέρ- signals. Thus the outsiders are more in the picture with ἐν κόποις, *in labors*, and ἐν φυλακαῖς, *in imprisonments*. The comparative element begins to fade with ἐν πληγαῖς ὑπερβαλλόντως, *in floggings far more often*. It fades out of the picture with ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις, *many times facing death*. The cycle of difficulties begins with hard work situations, κόποις. It moves to persecution with φυλακαῖς and πληγαῖς. It concludes with facing death in many situations, θανάτοις. These are situations basically coming at Paul from the outside of the Christian communities.

Regarding ἐν φυλακαῖς περισσοτέρως, *in imprisonments far more*, we know of only one account up to the

⁵³¹“At this point Paul begins the third and longest of his four lists of sufferings found in 2 Corinthians.³⁶ Whereas in 6:4b–5, 8–10 the sufferings befall him as θεοῦ διάκονος (cf. 6:4b), in 11:23b–29 they come to him as διάκονος Χριστοῦ (cf. 11:23a).³⁷ That no distinction is intended is clear from the fact that five items are common to the two lists: ἐν κόποις, ἐν φυλακαῖς, ἐν πληγαῖς (11:22 and 6:5), ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις, ἐν νηστείαις (11:27 and 6:5). Vv. 23b–29 are an avalanche of hardships that sweeps the reader along in dazed disbelief. Yet Paul’s focus is not on any stoical indifference to suffering or even patient endurance of affliction but on Christ’s grace in upholding him in the midst of his weakness (11:30; 12:9–10; cf. 1 Cor. 15:10), or, as he has expressed it earlier, on God’s power in leading him in triumphal procession through his union with Christ (2:14). What must have surprised the Corinthians was that Paul seeks to establish his superiority in Christ’s service by tabulating his adversities rather than by appealing to his success in founding congregations in strategically important centers around the Aegean, or by referring to the number of converts won, or by citing miracles performed. Rather, appeal is made to evidence of his shame and dishonor. ‘What he has endured is the seal of his Apostleship’ (Plummer 322). ‘He ... does not view his suffering as an apostle as a tedious detour; it is rather the main highway’ (Garland 307).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 797–798.]

time of the writing of this letter. It is the imprisonment at Philippi of Paul and Silas in Acts 16:23-40. This plural reference by Paul here of multiple instances is a good reminder of how very selective Luke is in his historical account in Acts.⁵³² The designation ἐν πληγαῖς ὑπερβαλλόντως designates numerous beatings and could well include the stoning described at Lystra in Acts 14:19 (cf. 2 Cor. 11:25).⁵³³ “The competitor in boxing (ἀγωνιστής) boasted of injuries inflicted on his opponent; Paul, of wounds received in his own body.”⁵³⁴

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

This listing of four items suggests a gradual increase in severity, although one should be cautious about drawing this conclusion too strongly.⁵³⁵

The second set of experiences that are numbered (vv. 24-26a)⁵³⁶ and then those introduced by κινδύνοις,

⁵³²The second century church father Clement mentions seven imprisonments of Paul in 1 Clement 5:6,

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

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

⁵³³Acts 14:19. Ἐπῆλθαν δὲ ἀπὸ Ἀντιοχείας καὶ Ἰκονίου Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ πείσαντες τοὺς ὄχλους καὶ λιθάσαντες τὸν Παῦλον ἔσυρον ἔξω τῆς πόλεως νομίζοντες αὐτὸν τεθνηκέναι. *But Jews came there from Antioch and Iconium and won over the crowds. Then they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.*

⁵³⁴Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 800.

⁵³⁵“It is possible that the apostle has mentioned these four general categories of hardship in a progression of increasing severity of suffering: toil-imprisonment-beatings-encounters with death. But if so, the categories are not mutually exclusive, for a beating could be linked with an imprisonment (as at Philippi, Acts 16:22–23), and exposure to death could be the result of a beating (see on vv. 24–25). With more confidence we may argue that the phrase ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις is illustrated in vv. 24–25, just as ὁδοπορίαῖς πολλάκις (v. 26a) is illustrated in the remainder of v. 26.52 See above, ‘Analysis of 11:21b–29 by Construction.’” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 800.]

⁵³⁶Note the numbered experiences:

in dangers (v. 26b),⁵³⁷ seem to amplify the reference to ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις, near death many times (v. 23c). Clearly they reference the various near death experiences that Paul had experience through the mid-50s of the first century. The detectable pattern is that the last item in one listing sets up the following listing. Once again the hugely selective history of Luke in Acts does not include the vast majority of these experiences of Paul.

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

24 Ἦπό Ἰουδαίων πεντάκις τεσσεράκοντα παρά μίαν ἔλαβον,

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

25 τρίς ἔραβδίσθην,

25 Three times I was beaten with rods.

ἄπαξ ἐλιθάσθην,

Once I received a stoning.

τρὶς ἐναυάγησα,

Three times I was shipwrecked;

νυχθήμερον ἐν τῷ βυθῷ πεποίηκα·

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

26 ὁδοιπορίαις πολλάκις,

26 on frequent journeys,....

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

23b ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις

26 ὁδοιπορίαις πολλάκις,

Those items that follow served to amplify the individual headers.

What kind of frequent near death experiences did Paul have then? The 39 stripes beating was the official Jewish synagogue flogging for various offenses.⁵³⁸The

often at death's door;

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

²⁵ three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones,

three times I was shipwrecked,

a night and a day I have spent adrift at sea;

⁵³⁷Note the specific dangers mainly from traveling:

²⁶ on frequent journeys, exposed to

dangers from rivers,

dangers from bandits,

dangers from my people,

dangers from Gentiles,

dangers in the city,

dangers in the desert,

dangers on the sea,

dangers among false brothers;

⁵³⁸“The thirty-nine stripes’ was the official punishment of the synagogue, alluded to by Jesus when he warned his disciples that some of them would be handed over to local Jewish councils (συνέδρια) and scourged ‘in their synagogues’ (ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν, Matt. 10:17; cf. 23:34). This punishment has its origin in the regulations of Deut. 25:2–3 concerning the penalty to be meted out to the guilty person who deserved a flogging. The number of

phrasing of the number 39 here is rather rare and unusual for first century Koine Greek.⁵³⁹ The expression should not be taken as a general indictment of the Jewish people of all time for abusing the apostle on these five separate instances (πεντάκις), as much of Catholic interpretation understood until our day. Not one of these synagogue floggings is mentioned in Acts, but it’s not difficult from Paul’s lifestyle to deduce why these are imposed on him.⁵⁴⁰ The acknowledgement of these

lashes was to correspond to the gravity of the offense, but in no case was it to exceed forty lest the offender should suffer gross public humiliation. We may explain the change from forty to thirty-nine strokes as the maximum permissible penalty as resulting from (1) a concern to avoid a miscount that would infringe a commandment; or (2) the fact that the instrument of punishment had three straps, so that thirteen strokes was the maximum permitted; or (3) an interpretation of the juxtaposed words bemispār ‘arbā’im (LXX, ἀριθμῶ τεσσαράκοντα), literally, ‘by number forty,’ in Deut. 25:2–3 to mean ‘a number near to forty’ (m. Makkot 3:10). Josephus also refers to the ‘forty stripes minus one’ (*Antiquities* 4:238, 248); clearly the later comparable reference in the Mishnaic tractate Makkot (“Stripes”) reflects practice that dates back at least to the first century A.D.⁵⁴¹ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 801.]

⁵³⁹“In the expression τεσσεράκοντα παρά μίαν, we note that the preposition παρά has the unusual sense of ‘less’ (BDF §236[4]) or ‘minus’; that πληγὰς (“strokes”) must be supplied (as in Luke 12:47) with τεσσεράκοντα, or πληγὴν with μίαν; that τεσσεράκοντα was more often spelled τεσσαράκοντα until the Byzantine period.⁵⁵⁷ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 801.]

⁵⁴⁰“None of the floggings is mentioned in Acts, and where and when they occurred is unknown.⁵⁸ Nor can we know precisely why Paul was given these synagogal punishments;⁵⁹ but possible reasons are not difficult to find, such as disregard of food laws by eating unclean food (cf. m. Makkot 3:2) and encouraging other Jews to do so (cf. 1 Cor. 10:25, 27),⁶⁰ or the rejection of the need for circumcision by male Gentiles as a sign of inclusion within the people of God (cf. Gal. 5:11). But an even more probable reason would have been a charge of blasphemy, understood either as ‘defiant sin,’⁶¹ which could involve the two offenses already mentioned, or as the dishonoring of God and his people by promulgating a messianism that focused on a crucified Jesus of Nazareth and affirmed his deity.⁶² The punishment for blasphemy was removal from the community (Num. 15:30–31, and at a later period m. Keritot 1:1), but from the Mishnah we learn that scourging could be a substitute for ‘extirpation’ (m. Makkot 3:15). If this was true also in the first century, Paul’s ‘blasphemy’ that merited permanent removal from the synagogue could have been punished instead by flogging.⁶³ Nor should we forget that he may have been punished for more than one reason on each of the five occasions. We may gauge the seriousness with which Paul’s offense was viewed on each occasion from the fact that he incurred the maximum penalty each time.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary



beatings has significance for Paul's ministry.⁵⁴¹ It ironically validates beyond question his Jewishness, for no non-Jew would have ever put up with such abuse. The full brunt of the Roman system would have been brought down on the synagogue and the punishers for such.

But Paul suffered Roman punishment three times by being beaten with a rod: τρις ἔρραβδίσθην.⁵⁴² The episode with the slave girl in Philippi recorded in Acts 16:19-24 is one example of this kind of beating.⁵⁴³

(Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 801–802.]

⁵⁴¹“Paul’s testimony regarding his five beatings is significant in several ways.

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

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

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

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

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

⁵⁴²“If the thirty-nine stripes, a Jewish punishment, was one example of πλιγαί (v. 23), being beaten with rods, a Roman punishment, was another. ῥαβδίζω (Latin *virgis caedere*) means ‘beat with a rod (ῥάβδος) (or rods).’ ῥαβδοῦχοι (Latin *lictores*), literally ‘rod-carriers’ (EVV ‘*lictors*’), were officials who attended Roman magistrates and carried as symbols of authority bundles of rods (Latin *fasces*) of elm or birch wood with an axe (Latin *securis*) inserted among them, signifying magistrates’ right to inflict either corporal or capital punishment. One of the three times Paul was beaten with the lictors’ rods was at Philippi in about A.D. 50 (Acts 16:19–24). After Paul had exorcised a divining spirit from a certain slave girl there, the girl’s owners brought Paul and Silas before the two local magistrates (ἄρχοντες) or ‘praetors’ (στρατηγοί), who summarily stripped them and ordered the lictors ‘to beat them with rods’ (ῥαβδίζειν, Acts 16:22). Nothing is known from Acts of the other two comparable beatings; Paul’s catalogue of trials provides significant biographical data that complement and supplement the information found in Acts.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 803.]

⁵⁴³“Generally a Roman citizen such as Paul⁶⁵ was exempt from this punishment, but this right was not always upheld in the provinces,⁶⁶ and the local magistrates involved in the three cases

The single stoning of Paul, ἅπαξ ἐλιθάσθην, is recorded in Acts 14:19-20. It happened at Lystra and was administered by locals who had been stirred up to do it by neighboring Jewish synagogue leaders.⁵⁴⁴

Paul mentions being shipwrecked three times, τρις ἐναυάγησα, and having spent a night and a day in the sea, συχθήμερον ἐν τῷ βυθῷ πεποίηκα. The shipwreck that is described in Acts 27:30-44 happened some years after the writing of Second Corinthians and thus is not a part of Paul’s reference here. But some nine sea voyages are referenced prior to Acts 20 which provide abundant occasion for these wrecks to have taken place.⁵⁴⁵

in question might have considered Paul’s behavior to be a minor offense, in which case a public flogging was not illegal.⁶⁷ With this said, the question remains why, at least in the case at Philippi, Paul did not inform the authorities of his Roman citizenship before he was flogged. Perhaps he wished to be identified with Christ in his suffering (cf. 1:5; 4:7–11; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24). Perhaps he wanted to provide his converts who would face persecution with an example of patient suffering (cf. 2 Tim. 3:10–11); at least he would not want to be seen to be using a convenient escape-hatch that was unavailable to some or most of his converts.⁶⁸ And is it possible that at Philippi, caught up in a rapid succession of events (Acts 16:18–22), Paul and Silas judged that it would be to the advantage of the infant church if they remained silent about their Roman citizenship until the incident was over, so that the praetors, obliged to give an official apology yet fearing a complaint to Rome about their conduct (cf. Acts 16:38–39), would be less willing to persecute the new converts?⁶⁹ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 803–804.]

⁵⁴⁴“The single instance of stoning referred to by ἅπαξ ἐλιθάσθην occurred at Lystra (Acts 14:19–20).⁷⁰ That this stoning was not a carefully calculated penalty for alleged blasphemy (cf. Lev. 24:16) inflicted by the Jews of Antioch and Iconium but rather a spontaneous action of an incited crowd (Acts 14:19) seems clear from: (1) the rapid reversal of the Lystrans’ attitude to Paul and Barnabas, from adoration (Acts 14:11–13) to animosity; and (2) the fact that Paul survived the pelting with stones (Acts 14:20), which would not have been the case if it were a judicial penalty (cf. Lev. 24:16).⁷¹” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 804.]

⁵⁴⁵“Acts makes no mention of the three shipwrecks Paul refers to. The shipwreck described in Acts 27:39–44 occurred after 2 Corinthians was written (that is, at the time represented by Acts 20:2a). Hughes (411) lists some nine sea voyages mentioned in Acts that Paul undertook before Acts 20, to which we may add the return journey of Ephesus-Corinth-Ephesus that is called the ‘painful visit’ (see on 1:16; 2:1), and probably a coastal voyage from Troas to Neapolis (2:13; 7:5), journeys not recorded in Acts.⁷² The sailing vessels Paul traveled in were probably not renowned for their seaworthiness, being wooden, leaky, and without life rafts. In the ancient world all sea voyages, including coastal journeys, were viewed with trepidation and as potentially life-threatening.⁷³ Inscriptions and votive tablets that are addressed to various deities





context of wide spread traveling by Paul: ὁδοιπορίαὶς πολλάκις, *in journeys often*. It must never be forgotten that traveling around in the first century world bears hardly any resemblance to traveling in the modern twenty-first century. Ancient travelers faced all kinds of dangers and risks. To be sure, the Romans built a system of well designed roads across the empire, but they were strictly for military and government courier usage. Others faced severe penalties for attempted use of these roads. Many, however, did risk penalty by using them but always would duck out of sight at the appearance of any government official or traveling group. Mountains, rivers with no bridges, unsea worthy boats, bandits, pirates, little or no places to stay along the way -- all these were but a few of the hazards of first century travel. Yet Paul and his associates were 'on the road' almost all the time apart from short stays in some of the major cities of ministry like Corinth.

Paul lists eight κινδύνους, *dangers*, encountered in connection to his travels. The identifying header κινδύνοις from κίνδυνος, only used here and in Rom. 8:35 inside the NT, denotes a situation that poses something of risk to the individual. The genitive (ablative of source) noun following it, especially with ἐκ, defines the source or the danger. But with ἐν, the location of the danger is noted. This pattern below suggests a two fold division of 4 + 4 dangers. Different organizing structures have been proposed by commentators.⁵⁴⁶ Yet the grammar arrangement into two sets of four seem most natural.

κινδύνους ποταμῶν, dangers from rivers.
κινδύνους ληστῶν, dangers from bandits.

The connection between rivers and bandits most likely had to do with river crossings as one of the favorite places of attack by bandits of land travelers.⁵⁴⁷ Par-

⁵⁴⁶“At first sight the eight dangers seem to be arranged neatly in four pairs: rivers-robbers, Jews-Gentiles, city-wilderness, sea-false brothers.⁷⁸ The second and third pairs form natural contrasts, and the two items in the first pair would be naturally associated in Paul’s mind as he recalled the perils of crossing the Taurus mountain range between Perga and Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14; 14:24), a journey notorious for cascading torrents and hidden bandits. Because the last pair (sea-false brothers) seem oddly matched, some have suggested an alternative arrangement of the eight pairs. Windisch envisages that ἐν ψευδαδέλοις has been accidentally displaced, so that the original order was rivers-robbers, Jews-Gentiles-false brothers, city-wilderness-sea (= the whole world); that is, one pair and two triplets (358). More satisfactory is Thrall’s proposed arrangement: two pairs (rivers-bandits, Jews-Gentiles), a triplet (city-desert-sea), and a climactic ‘amongst pseudo-Christians’ (722, 742–43).⁷⁹” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 805–806.]

⁵⁴⁷“Both ποταμῶν and ληστῶν are genitives of source: ‘(dan-

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

The last item, as noted above, functions to transition to the subsequent listing and sets these items in the (e.g., ‘to Pan of the Successful Journey,’ Πανὶ Εὐδόῳ), thanking them for deliverance from the dangers of the sea, bear eloquent testimony to this fear and to the relief felt upon reaching harbor safely.⁷⁴

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

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

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

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

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

κινδύνους ἐκ γένους, dangers from my own people.

κινδύνους ἐξ ἔθνῶν, dangers from Gentiles.

The connection of Jews and non-Jews both opposing Paul and his work is easy to understand. From his conversion to his death some 35 years later, he faced persecution from Jewish leaders and Roman governmental leaders.⁵⁴⁸ Outside of Jerusalem, the Jewish opposition came from the Diaspora synagogues. Yet Paul did manage to convince some of these leaders to

gers) from rivers ... from bandits.⁵⁸⁴ These 'dangers from rivers' are those encountered while trying to cross rivers (bridges being uncommon in remote areas) or while seeking to avoid being swept away by the sudden flooding of rivers.⁸⁵ Plummer notes (326) that Frederick I (Barbarossa) was drowned in the river Calycadnus in Cilicia, not far from Tarsus, in 1190 during the Third Crusade. λησταί (from ληίζομαι, 'seize as booty') are 'bandits,' 'brigands,' or even 'pirates,'⁸⁶ not light-fingered thieves but strong-arm thugs. Although the *Pax Romana* greatly reduced brigandage, 'in Asia Minor, brigandage was never eliminated; not only were the mountainous regions particularly conducive to it, but its coastline provided choice sites for piracy, 'brigandage at sea.'⁸⁷' [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 806–807.]

⁵⁴⁸Acts is replete with examples of the dangers Paul faced from his fellow countrymen (ἐκ γένους, 'at the hands of the people/my countrymen' = Jews; cf. BAGD 156c).⁸⁸ Even after his initial preaching in the synagogues of Damascus following his conversion (Acts 9:20–22), 'the Jews conspired to kill him' (Acts 9:23). Such persecution, although not always murderous in intent, was to become the pattern of his ministry.⁸⁹ It was not only his message of a crucified and exalted Messiah who fulfilled OT promises that provoked intense opposition from his fellow Jews. There was also his 'success' in luring away from Judaism to 'the Nazarene sect' (Acts 24:7) many Gentile 'God-fearers' (e.g., Acts 13:26; 14:16; 17:4), who, attracted by the monotheism of the Jewish faith and its rigorous ethical demands, regularly attended the synagogue. Such converts formed the nucleus of Paul's churches. But opposition to Paul was not restricted to his fellow countrymen; there were perils 'at the hands of Gentiles' (ἐξ ἔθνῶν). Acts records two notable examples, the disturbance at Philippi that led to his flogging and imprisonment (along with Silas) (Acts 16:16–24) and the Demetrius riot at Ephesus that prompted his departure from that city (Acts 19:23–20:1). On one occasion, in Iconium, Jews and Gentiles acted in unison in endangering Paul's life (Acts 14:5). That Paul did not court persecution is clear from his action on this occasion, for as soon as he and Barnabas heard of the plot to mistreat them and stone them, 'they made their escape' (κατέφυγον, Acts 14:6).⁹⁰' [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 807.]

become Christians. Also there were isolated successes at winning regional Roman government leaders, such as Sergius Paulus, the proconsul over Cyprus (Acts 13: 4–12). The intent of most of this was to kill Paul and at minimum to beat him into unconsciousness.

κινδύνους ἐν πόλει, dangers in the city.

κινδύνους ἐν ἔρημιά, dangers in the wilderness.

κινδύνους ἐν θαλάσση, dangers in the sea.

These three sets seem to go together due to the natural locations of city, countryside, and sea.⁵⁴⁹ The effect of these is to assert that Paul was not free from danger any where that he traveled.

κινδύνους ἐν ψευδαδέλφοις, dangers among false brothers.

Does this final set of dangers represent the most challenging set of all eight? Perhaps so, because these came from inside the Christian communities rather than from outside it.⁵⁵⁰ They sought to tear down the church-

⁵⁴⁹“The next three perils belong together, as places where Paul met danger. Just as 'Jews' and 'Gentiles' encompass all people, so 'city,' 'desert,' and 'sea' incorporate every area on earth. Paul was unsafe wherever he went. The contrast between ἐν πόλει and ἐν ἔρημιά is that between inhabited and largely uninhabited regions, between 'the crowded city' and 'the lonely desert' (A. P. Stanley), between city streets and the open country. 'Dangers on the sea' is not simply a repetition of v. 25b. 'There are other κίνδυνοι ἐν θαλάσση besides shipwreck and exposure in the sea, such as bodily injury, fire, loss of property' (Plummer [CGT] 182).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 807–808.]

⁵⁵⁰“Dangers among false brothers' stands alone at the end of Paul's list (see Thrall's structural analysis [742–43] mentioned above), probably because he viewed it as the most hurtful and insidious peril of all. External dangers that threatened his own life were one thing; treacherous opposition that undermined his work was quite another thing. He could cope with life-threatening hazards from without more easily than with work-undermining perils from within. ψευδάδελφοι are 'false brothers,' 'counterfeit Christians,' 'people masquerading as brothers' (NJB). The only other use of the term is in Gal. 2:4 in reference to Judaizers who had been 'smuggled in' (παρεισάκτους) and then had 'infiltrated' (παρεισήλθον) into Paul's company 'in order to spy out' (κατασκοπήσαι) the freedom Paul and others enjoyed 'in the fellowship of Christ Jesus.' Their ultimate aim was to impose on Gentile converts the obligation to observe the Mosaic Law, and in particular, the rite of circumcision. Apparently, connotations of furtive action and treachery attached to the term ψευδάδελφος in Paul's mind. Héring suggests that these 'false brothers' may have been traitors who denounced Paul before civic or religious authorities (86). By writing ἐν ψευδαδέλφοις, not ἐκ ψευδαδέλφων (which would be parallel to ἐκ γένους and ἐξ ἔθνῶν), Paul may be indicating that while other perils came and went, the danger of having his ministry compromised by the machinations of false Christians was ever present. Since he terms his rivals at Corinth ψευδαπόστολοι (11:13), he may include them within these ψευδάδελφοι, but the latter has a wider reference in this context.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek



es established by the apostolic Gospel, to compromise that Gospel message in order to avoid opposition from the Jewish synagogues, to destroy everything positive that Paul had accomplished. Fighting battles with outside enemies is to be expected, but not having a second battle line from inside the Christian communities against these false brothers.

Perhaps also the literary function of this last set is to transition into the final grouping of hardships that Paul faced in his ministry (vv. 27-28): 27 κόπω καὶ μόχθῳ, ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις πολλάκις, ἐν λιμῷ καὶ δίψει, ἐν νηστείαις πολλάκις, ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι. 28 χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτὸς ἢ ἐπίστασις μοι ἢ καθ' ἡμέραν, ἢ μέριμνα πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, 27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked. 28 And, besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the churches.⁵⁵¹

Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 808.]

⁵⁵¹“On the expression ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις, see 6:5, where the same phrase occurs. I argued there that these ‘sleepless nights’ (ἀγρυπνίαι; BAGD 14b) were voluntary,⁹⁴ as Paul pursued his missionary tasks and engaged in manual labor to support himself. The tasks that led to ‘many a sleepless night’ (TCNT) may have included prayer vigils as well as preaching engagements (cf. Acts 20:7, 9, 11, 31). All the instances of ἐν in this verse should be seen as circumstantial (‘with’) or locative (‘in,’ ‘in conditions of’), comparable to the significance of the two datives κόπω and μόχθῳ.

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

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

“ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι, literally, ‘with/in cold and nakedness,’ ‘cold and virtually naked,’ refers to conditions Paul faced as a craftsman,¹⁰¹ or, more probably, as a regular traveler and occasional prisoner. As Paul dictated this phrase, memories of be-

While the false brothers lived well off the support demanded from the churches, Paul and his associates struggled to get by on the most modest of means.⁵⁵² They worked long and hard, and often had little, if any, food and shelter.⁵⁵³ Add to that the burden of young churches going through all kinds of ‘growing crises’ in learning how to be truly Christian. But the expression χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτὸς ἢ ἐπίστασις μοι ἢ καθ' ἡμέραν, ἢ μέριμνα πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν (v. 28) is subject to diverse understanding.⁵⁵⁴ Yet the richness of his expres-

ing drenched in rivers or at sea, of being assailed by bandits, or of languishing in freezing prisons may have arisen in his mind. It is possible that the phrase is a case of hendiadys, ‘frozen from want of clothing’ (Wand), ‘cold because of near-nakedness.’ Also, γυμνότης may stand for ‘destitution’ (Martin 367) or ‘exposure’ (NEB, REB) by metonymy.”

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

⁵⁵²The repetition of πολλάκις in ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις πολλάκις and ἐν νηστείαις πολλάκις (v. 27), although containing the same meaning of ‘often’ does not function literary wise as a header, as it did earlier.

⁵⁵³“V. 26 has specified eight dangers Paul encountered on his ‘frequent travels.’ Now he mentions six hardships or deprivations that result from the ‘labor and toil’ he expends in his missionary endeavors. In this general sense κόπω καὶ μόχθῳ stands as a heading for what follows (Peterson 120). Whereas κόπος occurs eighteen times in the NT (eleven in Paul), μόχθος is found only three times, always in conjunction with κόπος and always standing second (11:27; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8). Both words can mean ‘exertion’ or ‘effort,’ referring to arduous toil, but only κόπος can also denote the ‘weariness’ or ‘exhaustion’ that results from this profound strenuous labor.⁹¹ But if it were Paul’s intent to allude to this ‘exhaustion’ in his three uses of this phrase, we would expect the order μόχθος καὶ κόπος. So we should assume that the words are used here as virtual synonyms,⁹² signifying the ‘labor and toil’ that Paul expended in supporting himself by plying his trade and in fulfilling his missionary vocation (see the comments on κόπος at 6:5; 11:23). The assonance of ο-φ may be reproduced in the archaic English phrase ‘toil and moil’ (Plummer 327). The two datives denote accompanying circumstances (‘with’), as in the case of ὁδοιπορίαίς and κινδύνοις in v. 26.⁹³” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 808–809.]

⁵⁵⁴“There are five main exegetical issues in this verse and each issue may be conveniently raised by means of a question.

“How is this verse related to what precedes? That is, does χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτὸς mean ‘Apart from what is external’ or ‘Apart from what I leave unmentioned’?¹⁰² As an improper preposition παρεκτὸς means ‘besides,’ ‘apart from,’ ‘except for.’¹⁰³ But here it is an adverb meaning ‘besides,’ ‘outside’ (BAGD 625a) and is used adjectivally with the article. If Paul had wanted to speak of ‘things outside,’ ‘external matters,’¹⁰⁴ we might have expected him to write χωρὶς τῶν ἔξω or χωρὶς τῶν ἔξωθεν.¹⁰⁵ We follow those exegetes and EVV that take τῶν παρεκτὸς to mean ‘things besides,’ that is, ‘other things, which I pass over’ (Weymouth), ‘what I leave



unmentioned' (Bultmann 217, supplying γινόμενων),¹⁰⁶ or simply 'other things'¹⁰⁷ or 'other matters.'¹⁰⁸ On this understanding, 'the things omitted' (τὰ παραλειφθέντα, Chrysostom) would refer to additional examples of suffering,¹⁰⁹ while the 'other things' could be either further instances of suffering or (as Thrall 749) things other than the pressure of anxiety. If, then, Paul has chosen not to mention any more trials, we may infer that he saw vv. 23b–27 as an illustrative and not an exhaustive list of his apostolic afflictions. As we move from vv. 23b–27 to vv. 28–29 we are not merely progressing from external to internal hardships but from various intermittent physical hardships that lay in the past to a single constant spiritual burden of the present.

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

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

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

"Does πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν refer only to the churches Paul founded (so Wolff 236)?¹¹⁶ It is possible that the article is posses-

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

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

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

The two pairs of questions play off the lengthy listing of sufferings and hardship that preceded. The evident implicit assertion is simply, "if anyone is weak, it is I," and "if anyone is offended it is I." Yet, many questions arise from these questions.⁵⁵⁵ Clearly a contrast is be-

sive, so that the sense is 'all our congregations' (NEB). 1 Cor. 7:17 might seem to support this view: οὕτως ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις πάσαις διατάσσομαι. But there it is clearly a matter of Paul's own pastoral rule (διατάσσομαι) and therefore his own churches. Certainly Paul's primary concern was always with his own congregations—their unity, their adherence to the apostolic gospel, their Christian behavior—and he was preoccupied with pioneer evangelism (Rom. 15:20), not with visiting various churches. But his deep pastoral concern for churches other than those he had personally founded seems undeniable. He wrote letters to such churches (Colossae, Laodicea [Col. 4:16], Rome); he reports that he 'struggled earnestly' (perhaps principally through intercessory prayer) for believers whom he did not know personally (Col. 2:1–2); he arranged for the exchange of his pastoral letters between Colossae and Laodicea (Col. 4:16); he visited the Jerusalem church several times after his conversion,¹¹⁷ sometimes visiting other Christian groups on his way (e.g., Acts 15:3); among his own churches he organized a collection to relieve need among destitute believers in the Jerusalem church (Rom. 15:25–26). Also, it would be an anomaly if Paul had 'great sorrow and unceasing anguish' (λύπη ... μεγάλη καὶ ἀδιάλειπτος ὁδύνη) for all his fellow Jews, his kindred by race (Rom. 9:1–3), but lacked μέριμνα for all his fellow believers in Christ, his kindred by faith, wherever they were found. Knowledge of the situation of believers outside his immediate orbit would reach him through Christian travelers.¹¹⁸ We conclude that although the primary reference in πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν is to churches in which Paul exercised pastoral care, a wider reference to other Christian congregations should not be excluded.¹¹⁹

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

⁵⁵⁵There is certainly no unanimity among commentators and others concerning the meaning of the three verbs in this verse. ἀσθενεῖ could be given a physical sense, describing the weakness that results from illness (cf. Phil. 2:26–27) or from persecution. If it is given a moral or psychological meaning, it could depict a person who was faint-hearted and fearful (BAGD 115c) or bur-



dened down with the ‘anxieties of the world’ (αἰ μέριμνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, Mark 4:19; cf. 1 Cor. 7:33). Some find sociological overtones in the verb, a reference to those who lack power and status.¹²³ Again, if ἀσθενεῖ bears a religious sense, it may mean ‘weak in conscience’ (so Bruce 244) or ‘weak in faith or life’ (Plummer 313). σκανδαλίζεται has been taken to mean ‘is offended’ (Barrett 288), ‘is tripped up’ (Martin 367), ‘(Whose conscience) is hurt’ (Goodspeed), or ‘is led into sin’ (Thrall 722). Finally, we may find in πυροῦμαι (literally, ‘I am on fire’) an allusion to burning with shame (Barclay) that Christ was dishonored or as if the sin were one’s own, or with distress (GNB, Cassirer) at the fall of a fellow believer, or with a longing to restore the person whose faith has been ‘upset’ (Phillips), or with anger (REB) or indignation (TCNT, Weymouth, Moffatt, RSV, NEB, NAB¹, NAB², NRSV) at the person who caused another to sin.

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

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

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

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

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testa-

ing set up by each pair, but who is being contrasted? The outsiders and Paul? Doesn’t seem likely. Instead, is it Paul’s opposition inside the church and Paul? More likely. When the immediate context of v. 28 is given serious consideration, one aspect becomes clear: Paul’s reactions to the two specified situations of ἀσθενεῖ and σκανδαλίζεται is a pastoral concern type of response.

This means that ἀσθενεῖ in the first pair takes on a double meaning: **who is vulnerable to sinning and I don’t feel a helplessness to prevent it?** Then the play between σκανδαλίζεται and πυροῦμαι takes on the sense of **Who is being led into sin and I am not enraged by it?** The previous play on ἀσθενεῖ and σκανδαλίζεται in 1 Cor. 8:7-13 clearly points this usage here in the above direction of meaning.⁵⁵⁶ Paul’s burden of caring for the churches means that he hurts (οὐκ ἀσθενῶ) every time one of the members falls into sin, and especially if he is led into sin by false teachers, this angers (οὐκ ἐγὼ πυροῦμαι)⁵⁵⁷ the apostle greatly. The wording of both pairs of questions assumes a positive agreement with Paul in his responses. Not only should Paul have these responses, but the Corinthian readers should respond the same way.

ment Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 813–815.]

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

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

⁵⁵⁷The literal level of meaning of πυρόω is to burn, and to cause to burn. At the figurative level of meaning here it denotes to burn with anger. To see one of the Corinthians led into sin by the false teachers infuriates the apostle.



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

11.31 ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ οἶδεν,
ὁ ὢν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας,
ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι .

11.32 ἐν Δαμασκῷ
272 ὁ ἐθνάρχης Ἀρέτα τοῦ βασιλέως ἐφρούρει τὴν πόλιν Δαμασκηνῶν
πιάσαι με,

11.33 καὶ
διὰ θυρίδος
ἐν σαργάνῃ
273 ἐχαλάσθην
διὰ τοῦ τείχους
καὶ
274 ἐξέφυγον τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ .

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

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

Contextually the escape episode in vv. 30-33 makes good sense despite some commentators treating it as an illogical interruption to Paul's thought.⁵⁵⁸ It provides an early example of Paul's own weakness and necessary dependence on God to use newly es-

⁵⁵⁸“Sometimes the account of Paul's escape from the clutches of Aretas (in vv. 32–33) is seen as being ‘out of context, out of style, quite out of connexion.’²⁷ But if the position of this pericope is so inappropriate, it is difficult to imagine what prompted Paul's amanuensis or a scribe to insert the story at this point. It is decidedly more satisfactory to regard this pericope as an instance of Paul's weakness and humiliation (v. 30),²⁸ and as a demonstration of God's intervention (through Paul's friends in Damascus) to preserve his chosen instrument (cf. Acts 9:15) from danger, that is, as an evidence of God's or Christ's power operating in the midst of human weakness (4:7; 12:9–10). Paul may have had additional reasons for including this episode. Because it was probably the first attempt on his life, it had been indelibly impressed on his memory. Also, his detractors may have pointed to it as unassailable proof of his cowardice (cf. 10:1, 10). Whatever the reasons for its inclusion at this point, the episode, narrated here with remarkable economy of language, forms a striking literary backdrop for what follows: first, an embarrassing descent to escape the hands of men, then an exhilarating ascent into the presence of God (12:2–4).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 820–821.]

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

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

The expression καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, here as the protasis of the first class conditional sentence (#270), assumes the reality of boasting happening. But more than this, it asserts the evident necessity of it happening, with the use of δεῖ. Was this due to the attitude of the Corinthi-

ans who felt that such boasting was necessary to one's credentializing of himself? It seems thusly.⁵⁵⁹

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

What follows in # 271 in v. 31 is a traditional **oath formula** combined with elements of a *doxological formula*: ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ οἶδεν, ὁ ὢν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁹ BAGD (172b) classify this use of δεῖ as denoting 'an inner necessity, growing out of a given situation.' In the present case the 'given situation' that necessitated Paul's use of boasting was not merely the Corinthians' ready acceptance of boasters (cf. 10:12–18; 11:12, 18), but in particular his recognition that they would regain their original undivided allegiance to Christ (cf. 11:3) only by his own skilled use of his rivals' successful but worldly technique of boasting. So strong was the Corinthians' own penchant for boasting (1 Cor. 1:26–29; 4:6–7)⁴ that καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, 'boasting is a necessity,' may have been one of their watchwords.⁵ εἰ points to an assumption ('if, as is the case'), not a mere possibility, so that it bears the sense of ἐπεὶ, 'since.' In the context the present tense of καυχᾶσθαι and the future tense of καυχῆσομαι are probably of special significance, as indicating durative and punctiliar action (respectively): 'If I must go on boasting, then I shall change tack and boast no longer of my hardships (11:21b–29) but of my weakness.'⁶ Boasting κατὰ σάρκα (11:18) gives place to boasting κατὰ πνεῦμα, so to speak, for boasting about one's weakness amounts to 'boasting in the Lord' (10:17) since acknowledged human weakness is the scene of Christ's power (12:9).⁷ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 817.]

⁵⁶⁰ Here we have a traditional oath formula combined with a traditional doxological formula. Given this formal combination, it is not altogether adequate to explain this oath as 'an example of horkou schema [ὄρκου σχῆμα] or *figura iusiurandi*, a recognized rhetorical ornament' (Judge 47). At 11:10 we defined a biblical 'oath of confirmation' in broad terms as 'a direct or indirect appeal to the deity as the guarantor of the truth of a statement, especially one that the readers cannot verify for themselves.' Here, as opposed to 1:23 (Ἐγὼ ... μάρτυρα τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλοῦμαι), the appeal is indirect; here, as opposed to 11:11, the fuller form of the abbreviated formula, ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, is found. 'God ... knows that I am not lying' is equivalent to 'God ... is witness to the truth of what I say' (Wand). The negative and positive are combined in Rom. 9:1 (Ἀλήθειαν λέγω ἐν Χριστῷ, οὐ ψεύδομαι) and 1 Tim. 2:7 (ἀλήθειαν λέγω οὐ ψεύδομαι). What is it that Paul has said or will say that has divine validation as to its truthfulness? Some refer the oath to Paul's litany of trials (11:23b–29),⁹ others to the preceding verse (11:30) with its paradoxical claim that he will boast only about his weaknesses,¹⁰ while yet others discover a forward reference to 11:32–33. Hughes is probably right in applying the oath both to v. 30 and to the instances of Paul's weakness cited in 11:32–33 (his escape from Damascus) and 12:7–8 (his 'thorn in the flesh') (419–20).¹² To Paul, an oath seemed demanded because of the extraordinary circumstances that gave rise to these two inci-

The fuller oath expression here, ὁ θεὸς...οἶδεν ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι, *God knows...that I am not lying*, completes the shorter elliptical version in v. 11, ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, *God knows*. The greater solemnity of the oath here comes with the added formula expression, καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, *and Father of the Lord Jesus*.⁵⁶¹ It reflects the more solemn expression ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, in 1:3 with the letter Proem formula. This was no frivolous oath forbidden by Christ in Mt. 5:33–37 or in James 5:12.

The doxological element has two parallels in Paul's writings:⁵⁶²

2 Cor. 11:31 ὁ θεὸς ..., ὁ ὢν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ...

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

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

The nominative masculine participle ὁ ὢν can be taken either as adjective, *who is*, or substantival apposition, *the One being*. Either is possible and the meaning

depends (the animosity of King Aretas and the ascent into paradise) and because the trustworthiness of his word had been impugned (cf. 1:17–18). This solemn appeal to God's knowledge of his truthfulness (cf. 11:11) was not, of course, a repudiation of Christ's ban on unnecessary or frivolous oath-taking (cf. Matt. 5:33–37; cf. Jas. 5:12).⁷ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 818.]

⁵⁶¹ The expression ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ also occurs in 1:3 (with the addition of ἡμῶν and Χριστοῦ). As coordinated personal nouns standing under the nexus of a single article, θεὸς and πατὴρ have a single referent; 'God' is none other than 'the Father of the Lord Jesus.' This identity of person is also made clear by the phrase ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν in 1:2 where πατρὸς stands in exegetical apposition to θεοῦ, 'from God (who is) our Father.' If, then, θεὸς and πατὴρ are linked together by a single article yet separated by καί, the probability is that the dependent genitive τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ is related as much to θεὸς as to πατὴρ. That is, God is not only the Father of the Lord Jesus but also the God of the Lord Jesus.¹³ So it is preferable to render the whole expression by 'the God and Father of the Lord Jesus,'¹⁴ rather than by 'God, the Father of the Lord Jesus.'¹⁵ To express this latter sense we would expect ὁ θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ κτλ. or ὁ θεὸς πατὴρ κτλ.¹⁶ It is true that the unambiguous statement 'the God of our Lord Jesus Christ' (ὁ θεὸς τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) is found only in Eph. 1:17, but for the grammatical reason given above we may legitimately infer from the expression ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου (ἡμῶν) Ἰησοῦ (Χριστοῦ) found in Rom. 15:6; 2 Cor. 1:3; 11:31; Eph. 1:3 (also 1 Pet. 1:3) that the Father is the 'God of Jesus.'¹⁷ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 818–819.]

⁵⁶² Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 819.



remains the same only with the substantival function giving more emphasis on God. The continual praising of God as being worthy of such is the essential point made here.⁵⁶³

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

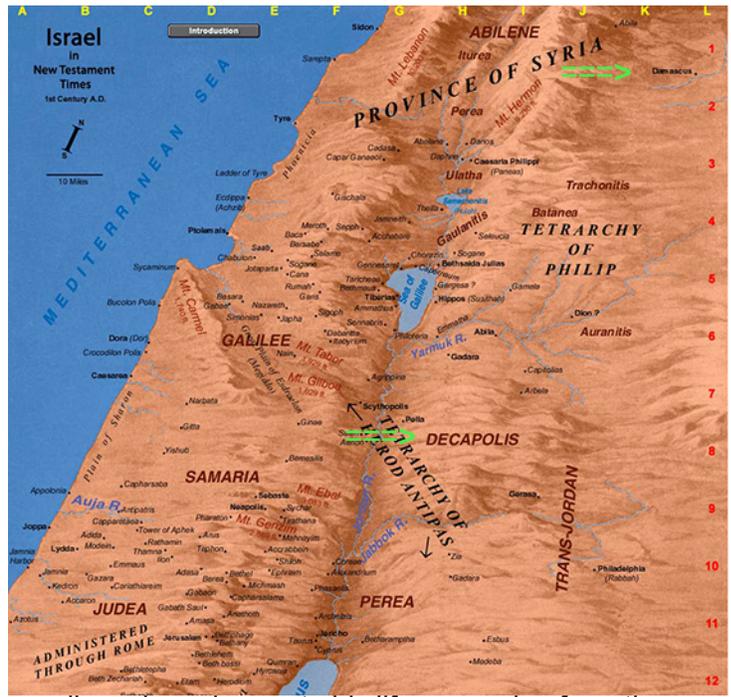
23 Ὡς δὲ ἐπληροῦντο ἡμέραι ἱκαναί, συνεβουλεύσαντο οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀνελεῖν αὐτόν· 24 ἐγνώσθη δὲ τῷ Σαύλ ἡ ἐπιβουλὴ αὐτῶν. παρετηροῦντο δὲ καὶ τὰς πύλας ἡμέρας τε καὶ νυκτὸς ὅπως αὐτὸν ἀνέλωσιν· 25 λαβόντες δὲ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ νυκτὸς διὰ τοῦ τείχους καθῆκαν αὐτὸν χαλάσαντες ἐν σφυρίδι.

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

Luke's narrative emphasizes the Jewish hostility to Paul's conversion and preaching of the Gospel. They perceived him as a traitor to everything Jewish. But Paul's account emphasizes the governmental hostility to Paul as a criminal troublemaker. No contradiction exists between the two accounts since they both play off common objective facts: 1) Paul's conversion produced controversy and thus opposition; 2) this hostility took place in the ancient city of Damascus; 3) he made his escape at night with the help of Christian friends through an opening in the city wall. That one account stresses the Jewish efforts to seize him and another governmental authority efforts only heightens the danger that Paul found himself in. Luke evidently wanted to stress Jewish hostility,⁵⁶⁴ while Paul perceived the

⁵⁶³“This articular participle should be seen as introducing a descriptive, not a volitive, doxology;²² it means ‘(he) who is,’ not ‘(blessed) be he’ (NRSV²³). εὐλογητός, ‘blessed,’ has the sense ‘worthy and entitled to receive worship and praise from every sentient being, whether angelic, human, or demonic.’²⁴ Being an epithet that is applied only to God or Christ, it may (with the article) stand as a periphrasis for the divine name (Mark 14:61). It scarcely does justice to the phrase εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας to render it ‘ever (-blessed)’ (Martin 367), for it is an abbreviation of εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων (Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Tim. 4:18) and may be rendered ‘to all eternity’ (BAGD 27c; cf. BDF §141[1]).²⁵ As H. Sasse observes (TDNT 1.199), this plural use of αἰών in doxologies ‘is simply designed to emphasize the idea of eternity which is contained but often blurred in the sing[ular] αἰών.’ Paul has inserted this doxology in the middle of the sentence (thus no ἀμήν; cf. Rom. 1:25; 9:5) perhaps because he is about to appeal boldly and once more (cf. 11:11) to the divine omniscience (οἶδεν). Some EVV reflect this unusual position of the doxology between subject and verb by making it a parenthesis, using either brackets or dashes.²⁶ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 819–820.]

⁵⁶⁴The underlying theme of Jewish hostility to Christianity



really serious danger to his life as coming from the governmental authorities.

The details of Paul's brief summary are quite interesting. The ancient city of Damascus, Δαμασκόσ / τὴν πόλιν Δαμασκηῶν, Heb. variations: *dammeśeq* (דַּמְשֶׁק), *dūmmeśeq* (דַּמְשֶׁקִּי), *darmeśeq* (דַּרְמְשֶׁקִּי), is “a city of S Syria, which is not only the capital of modern Syria, but was the capital of the nation of Aram during the 10th through 8th centuries B.C.E. Aram was a constant rival to, and sometimes an ally of Israel, until it was incorporated in the Assyrian Empire in 732 B.C.E. See ARAM (PLACE). It is the city to which Paul went after his encounter with the risen Christ, and it is where he became converted to Christianity (Acts 9).”⁵⁶⁵

“The city fluctuated between Seleucid and Ptolemaic control until the Nabateans took advantage of the growing weakness of the Seleucids and moved into Syria about 85 B.C. and took control of Damascus. In 63 B.C. Rome entered the arena of conflict with Pompey mounting an expedition against the kingdom of the Nabateans to restore order to Syria's perpetual anarchy and to the civil war in Judea. He allowed the king of the Nabateans to remain in control of Damascus, but after the victory of Octavian and Mark Antony over Cassius and Brutus, Antony gave Damascus to Cleopatra (34 B.C.). After the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra, the city, along with all of Syria and Palestine, remained under the control of Rome.”⁵⁶⁶

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

⁵⁶⁵David Noel Freedman, ed., “Damascus (Place),” *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:5..

⁵⁶⁶John McRay, “Damascus (Place): The Greco-Roman Period,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:8.

The Nabateans had dominated the region east of the Jordan and northeast of the Sea of Galilee for some centuries before Paul came along. The Ναβάταιοι were a “people from the Arab kingdom of Nabatea, which played an important role in the history of Palestine as early as the 2d century B.C., supporting the Maccabeans Judas and Jonathan (1 Macc 5:24–28; 9:35). The Nabatean king Aretas IV is mentioned in 2 Cor 11:32–33. This kingdom, with its capital at Petra, flourished during the late Hellenistic and early Roman imperial periods. The Nabateans (or ‘Nabataeans’) designated themselves as the Nabaṭû (*nbṭw*), and are known either as the Nabataioi or as ‘Arabs’ by Greek writers. Their territory embraced parts of modern S Syria, Jordan, the Negeb of Israel, the Sinai, portions of the E deserts of Egypt, and the NW region of Saudi Arabia. Within this region, over 1,000 archaeological sites have been cataloged as being Nabatean or containing remains described as Nabatean (Wenning 1987; Gatier and Salles 1988). The expanding corpus of Nabatean Aramaic inscriptions has also reached over 4,000, although most of these are merely graffiti and the longer ones consist mainly of stereotyped funerary phrases. The reconstruction of their history is dependent on Greek, Latin, and Jewish classical sources (Starcky DB-Sup 7: 886–1017; Hammond 1973; and Bowersock 1983 are fundamental).⁵⁶⁷ The name Aretas is more a title than an individual’s name.⁵⁶⁸ The Aretas in power at Paul’s conversion in 33 AD was Aretas IV (9-8 B.C. -- AD 40-41).⁵⁶⁹ His actual name was Syllaeus. In the thirties

⁵⁶⁷David F. Graf, “Nabateans,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:970.

⁵⁶⁸“Dynastic name of at least four kings of the royal house of Nabatea located at Petra. The earliest Nabatean Aramaic inscription from Elusa on the Petra-Gaza road in the Negev mentions an ‘Aretas, King of the Nabateans.’ Proposals for a date of the inscription vary from the beginning to the end of the 2d century B.C. (see Wenning 1987: 141). The Aramaic spelling of the name, *hrtt*, occurs rarely and is of disputed etymology, but it does appear as a personal name occasionally in *Safaitic* (Harding 1971: 282). It has been associated with the common Arabic name of *ḥariṭa*, ‘ploughman’ (al-Khaysheh 1986: 93) and it is interesting that the name ‘*ḥariṭat*, king of Hagar’ appears in Aramaic on coins of the mid-2d century B.C. found at Susa (Robin 1974: 110). Hagar has been connected with the Agraioi of Greek sources, a people who controlled the E sector of the caravan route leading from Babylon through Dumat al-Jandal (Jauf) to Petra and the Mediterranean port at Gaza (Eratosthenes apud Strabo 16.4.2). The proposal that the original homeland of the Nabateans was located in this same region of the Persian Gulf (Milik 1982) offers some support to these connections and may help explain other features of Nabatean culture, e.g., the use of Aramaic and the name of ‘Hagiru’ for the queens and princesses of the Nabatean royal house (as known from coins; see Meshorer 1975: 79).” [David F. Graf, “Aretas,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 373–1:374.]

⁵⁶⁹“*Aretas IV* (9–8 B.C.–A.D. 40–41). The zenith of Nabatean political and economic fortunes took place during the almost half-century of his lengthy reign. After the death of Obodas III in 9 B.C., Syllaeus, ‘the brother of the king’ and chief administrator

of the kingdom, assumed control of the state and even issued coinage depicting him as the monarch (Meshorer 1975: 36–40). Augustus recognized him as the official ruler, but an Aeneas assumed control of the throne at Petra under the name of Aretas (IV) and sent an embassy to Rome to plead his case and condemn Syllaeus. Although not a direct descendant of Obodas III, Aeneas appears to have been from a collateral line of the royal house, related to Malichus I (58–30 B.C.). However, the Roman emperor dismissed Aretas’ claims, sending his envoys and their gifts back to Nabatea, as he had failed to request the emperor’s permission before assuming rule. In spite of his initial rejection of Aretas’ petition, Augustus found other complaints about Syllaeus more persuasive. These were issued by Herod the Great through his agent Nicolaus of Damascus. As a result, Syllaeus was condemned and later executed by Augustus, who reluctantly recognized Aretas as the legitimate ruler of Nabatea (Jos. Ant 16.9.1–4 §271–99 and 12.8–9 §335–55).

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

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



when this event took place the Nabatean influence was at its peak. Whether they controlled Damascus or not is

“Aretas had at least two wives during his lengthy reign: Huldu (from 9 B.C.–A.D. 16) and Shuqailat (from A.D. 18). They are not designated his ‘sisters’ (*ht*) on coins during his reign, in contrast to the wives of his royal successors Malichus II (A.D. 40–70) and Rabbel II (A.D. 71–106), but inscriptions indicate that both Huldu (CIS II 158) and Shuqailat (CIS II 354; Khairy 1981) were entitled his ‘sister.’ The ‘title’ has been taken literally, but it may only represent an important rank in the hierarchy of the royal court of Nabatea (Meshorer 1975: 61). Syllaueus was also called the ‘brother of the king [i.e., Obodas II],’ although he was the son of Teimu, not Obodas II. The members of the royal family of Aretas IV late in his reign are listed in a recent inscription found at Wadi Musa (Khairy 1981). It names four sons (Malichus II, Obodas, Rabbel, and Phasaël) and four daughters (Sha‘dat, Shaqilat II, Gamilat, and Hageru); the latter princess was also the mother of a child named Aretas, the grandson of Aretas IV. Intermarriages between the royal families of the various monarchies were common in the East and existed in the relations of the Petraean royal house with the Herodian dynasty: one of Aretas’ daughters — perhaps Sha‘udat (Starcky DBSup 7: 914) — was married to the tetrarch Herod Antipas before he divorced her to marry Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Herod Philip. John the Baptist condemned the action and was imprisoned and finally executed by Antipas around A.D. 29 (Matt 14:3–12 and par.). Aretas’ anger found revenge only later, in A.D. 36, when he attacked and defeated the army of Antipas. Tiberius sent Vitellius the governor of Syria to punish Aretas for his action, but the Roman emperor’s death in A.D. 36–37 canceled the expedition (Ant 18.5.1–3 §109–25).

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

highly debated. The phrase used by Paul ὁ ἐθνάρχης Ἀρέτα τοῦ βασιλέως seems best translated as **the ethnarch of Aretas the King**.⁵⁷⁰ This signals a common phe-

⁵⁷⁰“There are three main ways of understanding the historical background to v. 32, and they correspond to the three possible meanings of ἐθνάρχης.

“1. Tribal chief. On this view the ‘ethnarch’ was a Bedouin sheikh of some Nabatean tribe, lying in wait outside the walls of Damascus to arrest Paul when he exited.³⁰ But there are two difficulties: Paul’s escape down the city wall (v. 32) implies that the danger lay within the city, not outside; at this stage in their history the Nabateans were no longer nomadic (Riesner 85).

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

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

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

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



as if ἐθνάρχης were equivalent to στρατηγός. It may refer to a simple ‘seizing’ by those guarding the city exits.⁴¹

‘If, with many EVV,⁴² we translate the genitive Ἀρέτα τοῦ βασιλέως by ‘under King Aretas,’ ‘under’ may have the sense ‘at the time of’ or ‘appointed by’ (Wand). But probably more is implied: the ethnarch was ‘acting for’ Aretas (Isaacs) or even ‘acting by King Aretas’ order’ (Phillips).⁴³ However that be, some reason must be given for the virulent opposition of Aretas or his ethnarch. It could have been prompted by Paul’s evangelistic activity in Damascus itself, but it seems more likely, in the light of Paul’s argument in Galatians 1, that his visit to Arabia (Gal. 1:17) was undertaken to begin fulfilling his commission to ‘preach him [the Son of God] among the Gentiles’ (Gal. 1:16). Commenting on Gal. 1:16–17, Lake observes that ‘the antithesis is not between conferring with flesh and blood in Jerusalem, and conferring with God in the desert, but between obeying immediately the commission of God to preach to the Gentiles, and going to some human source in Jerusalem in order to obtain authority or additional instruction. St. Paul’s argument seems to me to require the sense ‘As soon as I received my divine commission, I acted upon it at once, without consulting any one, and began to preach in Arabia’ (320–21).⁴⁴

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

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

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

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A*

nomina in the ancient world that may seem strange in our world. Powerful neighboring rulers often worked out agreements with their counter parts where large ethnic enclaves of their people existed in the neighboring rulership. In such agreements a ‘governor,’ i.e., ἐθνάρχης would be appointed administrator and representative of the king from the homeland of those in the enclave. He reported back to this ruler, not to the ruler over the city or region where he was located. Individuals perceived as criminals or troublemakers ‘back home’ could not flee to such an enclave and escape the hand of the ruler.

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

The statement (v. 33) καὶ διὰ θυρίδος ἐν σαργάνῃ ἐχαλάσθην διὰ τοῦ τείχους καὶ ἐξέφυγον τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ, and through an opening with a basket I was let down through the wall and escaped his hands, depicts the dramatic action. It compares with the similar Acts 9:25 depiction: λαβόντες δὲ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ νυκτὸς διὰ τοῦ τείχους καθῆκαν αὐτὸν χαλάσαντες ἐν σπυρίδι, and taking him his disciples during night they let him down by lowering him with a basket. Some of his converts in Damascus facilitated Paul’s escape from the city in this account.⁵⁷¹

This is the illustration of Paul’s weakness: his life was not in his own hands but rather in the hands of newly established friends who were committed to God and willing to risk themselves to help Paul. And very likely those desiring his death were provoked by his preaching the Gospel to Jews, both in Damascus and in Arabia. The Jews in Damascus had been prepared before his conversion outside the city to enthusiastic-

Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 821–824.]

⁵⁷¹If this narrative was intended by Paul as a parody of the Roman *corona muralis*, the ‘wall crown’ award, given to the first soldier to scale a wall of the enemy during an attack, then Paul’s point was to denigrate worldly boasting by being the first ‘wall downer’ rather than ‘wall climber.’ But this ironic twist is not clearly signaled in the text.

ly welcome him into their midst as the great protector of the Jewish traditions. Now they wanted him dead.

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

Modern American church life far too often reflects the American cultural mentality of the heroic. The dramatic touch down catch in the Super Bowl that succeeds against all odds is the stuff of the heroic. So the modern pastor must dramatically build churches big and rapidly if he is to be a super preacher. The making of heroes in our culture today knows little or nothing about a preacher running for his life to escape the clutches of his opponents out to kill him. This is the making of a despicable coward in our world. But the real heroes in God's eyes are those whose own weakness is readily apparent and who gladly allow God to use others for their deliverance from danger and harm. It is fascinating to see how quickly Christian leaders in the ancient world lost sight of Paul's insight and by the middle of the second century the Greco-Roman secular god-man image became the filter through which Christian heroes had to be shaped. The Corin-

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

12 Καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, οὐ συμφέρον μὲν, ἐλεύσομαι (279) δὲ εἰς ὄπτασίαις καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου. 2 οἶδα ἄνθρωπον ἐν Χριστῷ πρὸ ἐτῶν δεκατεσσάρων, εἴτε ἐν σώματι οὐκ οἶδα, εἴτε ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα, ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, ἀρπαγέντα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ. 3 καὶ οἶδα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον, εἴτε ἐν σώματι εἴτε χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα, ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, 4 ὅτι ἤρπαγεν εἰς τὸν παράδεισον καὶ ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι.

5 ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιοῦτου καυχῆσομαι, ὑπὲρ δὲ ἑμαυτοῦ οὐ καυχῆσομαι εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις. 6 Ἐὰν γὰρ θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι, οὐκ ἔσομαι ἄφρων, ἀλήθειαν γὰρ ἐρῶ· φείδομαι δέ, μὴ τις εἰς ἐμέ λογισθῆται ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με ἢ ἀκούει τι ἐξ ἐμοῦ 7 καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων. διὸ ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί, ἄγγελος σατανᾶ, ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι. 8 ὑπὲρ τούτου τρίς τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα ἵνα ἀποστῆ ἀπ' ἐμοῦ. 9 καὶ εἶρηκέν μοι· ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου, ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται. Ἡδιστα οὖν μᾶλλον καυχῆσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ ἐπ' ἐμέ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ. 10 διὸ εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὕβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις, ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ· ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατός εἰμι.

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

275 ^{12.1} Καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ,
276 οὐ συμφέρον
μὲν,
δὲ
277 ἐλεύσομαι
εἰς ὄπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου.
278 ^{12.2} οἶδα ἄνθρωπον
ἐν Χριστῷ
πρὸ ἐτῶν δεκατεσσάρων,
εἴτε ἐν σώματι οὐκ οἶδα,
εἴτε ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα,
ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν,
ἀρπαγέντα τὸν τοιοῦτον
ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ.
καὶ
280 ^{12.3} οἶδα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον,
εἴτε ἐν σώματι
εἴτε χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα,
(281) ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν,
^{12.4} ὅτι ἤρπαγεν
εἰς τὸν παράδεισον
καὶ
--- ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα
ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι.

sidering the exceptional character of the revelations. 282 Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. 8 Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, 9 but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

This continues the boasting in weakness begun in 11:21b, as Paul asserts in 12:5. Here is the strange juxtapositioning of exceptional spiritual opportunities against severe physical limitations. The weakness of the physical limitation opened the door for unusual spiritual blessing to Paul. First, Paul mentions knowing a person who experienced unusual spiritual experiences. This he sees as a privilege but he quickly disavows talking about any such experiences personally. Instead, he will only focus on his personal weaknesses so that others may not elevate him to some super saint spiritual level. That would cast him in an impossible situation to be a messenger of Christ. Then he talks about an illness as a 'thorn in the flesh' to keep him properly humble before God. Lots of questions arise from his brief description of this contrary situation in his ministry.

The coordinate conjunctions help give structure to this subunit. No conjunction in v. 1 tying the subunit back to the preceding, but the repetition of *καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ*, along with *οὐ συμφέρον μὲν*, establishes unquestionable links back to vv. 21b-33 and 16-21a. The contrastive *δὲ* in v. 1b sets the third assertion in contrast to the second one and thus links them together as a pair. In the next two sentences in vv. 2-4, the preposition of *οἶδα ἄνθρωπον*, I know a man (v. 2a), and then *καὶ οἶδα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον*, and I know such a man, connects up these two sentences. Then *τοῦ τοιοῦτου*, of such a one, in the next sentence (v. 5) links back to the unnamed individual in vv. 2-4. The third class protasis with *καυχήσασθαι* in vv. 6-7 reaches back to *καυχῆσομαι* in v. 5 and this connection is defined by *γὰρ* repeated twice in the longer sentence of vv. 6-7.⁵⁷² Through the neuter gender antecede-

⁵⁷²Differences of viewpoint will surface in the commentaries over where to place the externally imposed paragraph points. Does the *γὰρ* in v. 6 signal a new subunit as understood by the editors of the N-A Greek testament 28th edi-

282 ^{12.5} ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιοῦτου καυχῆσομαι,
δὲ
283 ὑπὲρ ἑμαυτοῦ οὐ καυχῆσομαι
εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις.

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

ent of τούτου, **this**, in v. 8 a link is established to the entire thought in vv. 6-7. In verse 9a καὶ links this sentence back to v. 8 as God's response to Paul's prayer prayed three times. The inferential conjunction οὖν in the v. 9b sentence makes explicit a point considered implicit in v. 9a. Also the stronger inferential conjunction διὸ in v. 10 draws out conclusions to the entire discussion of vv. 1-9.

A discussion of boasting, punctuated by hesitations to boast, begins by pointing to someone that Paul knows with unusual spiritual experiences. The apostle refuses to discuss such experiences of his own since it would cast him in the wrong light and limit ministry to Christ. Instead, his boasting will center on his weaknesses, and the one mentioned is some kind of serious illness simply labeled a thorn in the flesh. The humility and dependency on Christ's strength for ministry is highlighted by this. And this is what Paul rejoices about. This clearly illustrates his superiority to the Corinthian outsiders who depended on human accomplishments and recommendations for their claims. His concluding assertion in v. 10 is one of the most profound declarations of ministry commitment in the entire Bible!

Now for a close inspection of this discussion.

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

12 Καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, οὐ συμφέρον μὲν, ἐλεύσομαι δὲ

tion? Or does διὸ in the middle of v. 7 signal a new unit? Arguments can be made both directions. The omission of διὸ in B 6. 1175*. 1739 sy^h bo; Ir urges some caution with this option, although very strong support for including it exists: Ɀ A D F G K L P Ψ 0278. 33. 81. 104. 365. 630. 1175^c. 1241. 1505. 1881. 2464 M latt sy^p sa. [Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. *revidierte Auflage*. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 575.]

275	12.1	Καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ,
276		οὐ συμφέρον μὲν, δὲ
277		ἐλεύσομαι εἰς ὄπτασίης καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου.
278	12.2	οἶδα ἄνθρωπον ἐν Χριστῷ πρὸ ἐτῶν δεκατεσσάρων, εἴτε ἐν σώματι οὐκ οἶδα, εἴτε ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα,
(279)		ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, ἀρπαγέντα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ.
	12.3	καὶ
280		οἶδα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον, εἴτε ἐν σώματι εἴτε χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα,
(281)		ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, 12.4 ὅτι ἠρπάγη εἰς τὸν παράδεισον καὶ --- ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι.
282	12.5	ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιοῦτου καυχῆσομαι, δὲ
283		ὑπὲρ ἑμαυτοῦ οὐ καυχῆσομαι εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις.
	12.6	γὰρ Ἐὰν θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι, 284 οὐκ ἔσομαι ἄφρων, γὰρ
285		ἀλήθειαν ἐρῶ·
		δὲ
286		φείδομαι, μὴ τις εἰς ἐμὲ λογίσηται ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με ἢ ἀκούει τι ἐξ ἐμοῦ
	12.7	καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων.

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



ὑπερβολῆ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων.

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

282 ^{12.5} ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιούτου καυχῆσομαι,
δὲ
283 ὑπὲρ ἑμαυτοῦ οὐ καυχῆσομαι
εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις.

^{12.6} γὰρ
Ἐὰν θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι,
284 οὐκ ἔσομαι ἄφρων,
γὰρ
285 ἀλήθειαν ἐρῶ.

δὲ
286 φείδομαι,
μὴ τις εἰς ἐμὲ λογίσηται
ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με
ἢ
ἀκούει τι ἐξ ἐμοῦ

^{12.7} καὶ
τῆ ὑπερβολῆ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων.

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

But Paul quickly note that little is to be gained from it: οὐ συμφέρον μὲν, it does not profit, on the one hand. The verb συμφέρω literally means to bring together into a heap, usually with the figurative sense of being advantageous or helpful. The negative οὐ means that bringing something together is not helpful or advantageous. What is being brought together? Καυχᾶσθαι defines this as taking actions etc. and stacking them up in a orally expressed pile for boasting purposes.

The particle μὲν is often used with the conjunction δὲ to juxtapose two competing dynamics against each other. Here the other dynamic set up opposite of boasting is not advantageous is ἐλεύσομαι δὲ εἰς ὄπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου, but I will go into visions and revela-

tions from the Lord. After just saying that boasting is unprofitable, why does Paul indicate that he will go ahead and do it anyway? The impersonal verb δεῖ is key here. Unavoidable necessity demands that he go ahead with his boasting, in spite of its limited profitability. That necessity seems to be the expectation of the Corinthians for Paul to respond to the boasts of the outsider false teachers at Corinth. Not to be overlooked is the religious use of δεῖ to connote a divinely mandated necessity. Here it would be Paul’s having secured God’s green light to go ahead with the boasting.

What the apostle signals is to be the topic of this particular boasting is ὄπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου, visions and revelations from the Lord. Exactly what is he talking about here? The anarthrous construction here, i.e., no articles, leaves a certain ambiguity in the phrase:

εἰς ὄπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου.⁵⁷³ The two terms do not equal one another. One can have a ἀποκάλυψις, revelation, without having a ὄπτασία, vision, but not the other way, since all ὄπτασίαι, visions, are ἀποκαλύψεις, revelations. Visions are visual disclosures of God, while revelations include all disclosures of God and His will, whether visually or not. Although

⁵⁷³“ὄπτασίαι and ἀποκαλύψεις should not be regarded as virtually synonymous¹⁰ nor as forming a hendiadys (‘visionary revelations,’ or ‘revelatory visions’). Of the two terms, ‘revelation’ is the broader. A vision is always seen, whereas a revelation may be seen or may be received in some other way; all visions are also revelations, but not all revelations come through visions. A vision, however, is a common way of receiving a revelation.¹¹ The fact that the term ἀποκαλύψεις stands alone in v. 7 (τῆ ὑπερβολῆ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων) suggests that ‘revelations,’ not ‘visions,’ are the principal focus in vv. 2–4. This is borne out by the verbs ἤκουσεν and λαλήσαι

in v. 4, although a visual recognition of the third heaven and paradise is obviously implied (vv. 2, 4). It might seem strange that although Paul cites only a single ascent to heaven in vv. 2–4,¹² he speaks in the plural of ‘visions’ (v. 1) and of ‘revelations’ (vv. 1, 7). Michaelis suggests that Paul has simply adduced a ‘selected example’ (TDNT 5.353), while Lincoln opines that Paul originally intended to relate several visionary experiences but decided to refrain (72, 76). It is certainly inappropriate to deduce that Paul is here referring to ‘his many ‘visions and revelations’ ’ (Tabor 21, 36; italics his), although the book of Acts mentions numerous visions Paul had.¹³ The plurals may be generalizing or categorical (see Zerwick §7), a view supported by the anarthrous state of these two nouns in v. 1. Paul is proceeding to discuss the topic, ‘visions and revelations granted by the Lord,’ not moving on to treat ‘the various visions and revelations granted to me by the Lord.’¹⁴ Paul’s discussion of this topic was probably prompted by his opponents’ claims to spiritual experiences of this type in response to a Corinthian ‘insistence on ‘spiritual’ and ecstatic phenomena as the marks of apostleship.’¹⁵ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 831–832.]



κυρίου is theoretically possible to understand as ‘about the Lord,’ the context here favors the alternative ‘from the Lord.’ And via context most likely κυρίου refers to Christ rather than God the Father.

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

What the original listeners to the reading of this letter in their house church groups most likely expected to hear next was the apostle talking about his having more visions and revelations than did his opponents. But he goes an entirely different unexpected direction. But what is that direction? Understandings differ.⁵⁷⁴

In vv. 2-4, Paul refers to ἄνθρωπον, a man, who was caught up ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ, **into a third heaven**, some **14 years earlier**, πρὸ ἐτῶν δεκατεσσάρων. He knew, οἶδα, this man ἐν Χριστῷ, **in Christ**. But he didn’t know whether the being caught included his body or just his mind: εἴτε ἐν σώματι οὐκ οἶδα, εἴτε ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα, **whether in body I do not know, whether out of the body I do not know**. In v. 3, he essentially repeats the first depiction: καὶ οἶδα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον, εἴτε ἐν σώματι εἴτε χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος οὐκ οἶδα, ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, **and I know such a man -- whether in body, whether out of the body I do not know; God knows...**⁵⁷⁵ This is done to set up the

⁵⁷⁴In apologetic form 12:1–6a appears as an aretology, i.e., a tribute of praise in honor of a great man as well as of a Hellenistic deity. Paul seems to be building up this person only to point out that such a self-commendation is not the sign of a true apostle. Paul’s picture here of a spectacular or even semi-divine worker is reminiscent of the sophists.⁶⁵⁶ Paul seems to be attacking this way of promoting the gospel, for 12:7–10 will lead the reader to see that expressing one’s weakness is the only acceptable way to follow Christ in his service.⁶⁵⁷ This final point is not confined only to the last part of 12:1–10. But in an opening irony, Paul introduces the thought in 12:1 that while he must continue boasting, there is nothing to be gained by it.⁶⁵⁸ [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 581–582.]

⁵⁷⁵The relationship of vv. 3–4 to v. 2 is most clearly seen in tabular form. Differences are indicated by italics.

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

epetetical functioning ὅτι clause (v. 4) that introduces explanation of ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ, **into a third heaven** from the first depiction (v. 2). The core structure then becomes: καὶ οἶδα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον... ὅτι ἥρπᾳγη εἰς τὸν παράδεισον καὶ ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι, **And I know such a man ... that was snatched into Paradise and heard unutterable words which are not permitted for a person to speak**.

The identity of this individual that Paul describes is hotly debated among interpreters. Is this a literary shift narrationally to a third person depiction as describing what he himself had experienced? Or, is this merely another individual who was an acquaintance with Paul? This is the interpretive uncertainty here. The described event took place some 14 years before the writing of this letter, which would place it around 41-42 AD. During that period Paul was back home in Tarsus, from the Acts narrative in 9:30-31, or else in Antioch of Syria (Acts 13:1-3; 14:26-30). In Gal. 2:1, Paul mentions going to Jerusalem κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν, **according to revelation**, some **14 years**, διὰ δεκατεσσάρων ἐτῶν, after his conversion. But this would be around 47 AD. In Acts 11:27-30, Luke describes ‘prophets’ coming from Jerusalem to Antioch with Agabus speaking of a coming famine in Jerusalem through the help of the Holy Spirit. This was some years prior to the Jerusalem conference in 47-48 AD. Could Paul be referring to Agabus here as the man he knew about? If so, then prior to speaking to the church, this Christian ‘prophet’ had some kind of revelatory experience with God in which understanding of the coming famine was given to him. One potential weakness here is that Paul describes this individual as hearing unutterable words not permitted to speak to others, ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι (v. 4b). Of course, these forbidden words may well refer to other aspects of the revelation beyond the instruction to warn the church in Antioch that they needed to help their brothers in Jerusalem. And this explanation assumes that Paul is talking about someone else rather than about himself.

But a large number of modern commentators take the position that Paul is indirectly describing one of his own experiences.⁵⁷⁶ The appeal is made to a literary

ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι.

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

⁵⁷⁶“To show the Corinthians that he was not at all deficient in ecstatic experiences, as some imagined, Paul now begins to describe an ascent to heaven that occurred many years previously. First, he identifies the person who ascended, then successively the time, the circumstances, and the destination of the ascent.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary



device or devices known in the secular Greco-Roman world of rhetoric, as well as in some Jewish circles of that era.⁵⁷⁷ The intent of these possible devices was self-praise without seeming arrogant in so doing.⁵⁷⁸ It's much like the fictional person who supposedly commits the bad deeds that the child is accused of doing. That is, Paul sees a vision but can't say what he heard. When his opponents claimed visionary experience, they communicated what they saw and heard, thus appearing superior to Paul. This version of Paul's response, in which what he saw and heard is an unrepeatable secret, seems to me to be rather questionable.

A closer look at some of the details of the depiction may help us better understand what Paul is attempting to communicate in vv. 2-4. οἶδα, **I know**, is repeated four times, plus twice as ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, **God knows**. Paul knows of a person (2x) but doesn't know whether his spiritual experience was in or out of his body (2x), although God knows (2x). The use of οἶδα rather than γινώσκω for **I know** signals that this is not experiential (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 833.]

⁵⁷⁷In 12:2-4 Paul reveals autobiographical information known before only to him and God. Fourteen years earlier (see Comment for a discussion of the date of this vision) Paul was taken up into the third heaven, namely, paradise. The apostle relates twice that he is yet unsure as to whether this experience took place in the body or outside of it, i.e., with or without sensory perception. All the time he is describing this experience (though his description is vague and mysterious) he uses the third person. This may reflect Paul's Jewish background, or it may simply suggest that he wants his readers to see that though he experiences visions and revelations like his opponents, nevertheless the man about whom Paul speaks is not the one he desires to emulate. Windisch describes the pericope as Bescheidenheitsstil, a 'style' that trades on the speaker's "modesty,"⁵⁵⁹ but this is to be questioned.⁶⁶⁰ It is doubtful too that Paul is engaged in "the objectifying of the I,"⁶⁶¹ nor is he employing the convention of the pseudonymity of the apocalyptic, in which an anonymous seer transfers his personal experience to a well-known figure.⁶⁶² Paul is neither one who sells his teaching for profit nor one who baffles his hearers with mystical language simply for pride (like the sophists). Rather, in polemical fashion, 12:4 speaks of the things he knows as an apostle. He has heard inexpressible words. This paradoxical statement could not be verified by the Corinthians. The point is that Paul wants his readers to evaluate him on the basis of nothing except what they can see and hear of him (12:6; i.e., the demonstrable evidence of his wretched experiences; see above). If Paul can convince them that this is the correct way, then, in turn, they should ask his opponents to provide similar tangible evidence. This is the challenge first posed in 11:21-23. And he trusts that his contest will lead the Corinthians to see that these opponents are indeed false in the sight of God." [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 582.]

⁵⁷⁸Harris, NIGTC, P. 834, gives five reasons to conclude that Paul is talking about himself rather than some other person. But everyone of these five reasons has a counter explanation equally plausible, if not more so, that suggests he was talking about someone else.

understanding but mental awareness most like coming from a depiction given to him by a second party. ἄνθρωπον (v. 2) / τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον (v. 3): these refer clearly to the same individual with the demonstrative adjective τοιοῦτον linking the second reference back to the first. The identity of this individual is the chief issue in this text unit in vv. 2-4. Somewhat debatable is whether ἐν Χριστῷ, in Christ, modifies ἄνθρωπον adjectivally or οἶδα the more natural adverbial role. The clear adjectival function of an inherently adverbial role for prepositional phrases would necessitate ἄνθρωπον τὸν ἐν Χριστῷ, but typically adverbs in Greek precede what they modify rather than follow it. The difference in meaning is between saying, "In Christ I knew a man," and "I knew a man in Christ." Had either the direct object ἄνθρωπον or the prepositional phrase ἐν Χριστῷ been placed in the prefield in front of the verb, no question of modification would arise. Most modern commentators will assume the adjective role.

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

πρὸ ἐτῶν δεκατεσσάρων, **fourteen years ago**, gives specific dating to this man's experience. Assuming with reasonable certainty that Second Corinthians was written in late 56 to early 57 AD, this would place the experience around 43 - 44 AD. Where was Paul then? Still in Tarsus? Or, in Antioch of Syria? This time frame rules out either the Damascus Road experience or the Jerusalem temple experience that Paul mentions in his defense before the Sanhedrin in Acts 22:6-21 (cf. also 26:12-18). The best that can be deduced from available data is that this happened sometime prior to the first missionary journey, when Paul was either still in Tarsus or after he arrived in Antioch to help Barnabas. The leaves open the Agabus association mentioned above, but does not prove it.

εἴτε ἐν σώματι...εἴτε ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος / εἴτε ἐν σώματι εἴτε χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος; **whether in body...whether out of the body / whether in body, whether apart from the body**. This terminology, although strange to us, was normal in Paul's world to describe ecstatic experiences.⁵⁷⁹ These expressions contextually are intended to

⁵⁷⁹Modern science plays a powerfully shaping role in western culture's defining and understanding of ecstasy. It will always lay a foundational perspective for how the ancient world along with the biblical text, is understood. But the ancient world must be understood on its own terms, and the biblical text must be viewed against that ancient self-understanding. Otherwise, incorrect modern terms



will be used in translation leading to false and misleading conclusions.

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

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

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

Ecstasy often, though not necessarily always, includes rapture, frenzy, euphoria, extremely strong emotion, and sometimes appears to imply the loss of “rational” thought and self-control. Trance, on the other hand, suggests a hypnotic or dazed state. While the proposed characteristics are present in some experiences of ecstasy and trance, respectively, they are not always present. Thus each case needs to be examined on its own merits. Since each is an ASC, ecstasy and trance can be considered interchangeable though not synonymous terms.

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

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

describe ὄπτασις καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου, *visions and revelations from the Lord* (v. 1) and ἀποκαλύψεων, *revelations* (v. 7). Why would the body be connected to such an experience? The Greek word for trance is ἔκστασις, which literally means ‘standing outside the body.’⁵⁸⁰ In

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

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

⁵⁸⁰“TRANCE [חֶזֶן *nirdam*; ἔκστασις *ekstasis*]. To be outside or beside oneself, implying dissociation. The Greek words used for trance are also translated ‘confused,’ ‘amazed,’ or ‘outside of oneself’ (Mark 5:42; compare Gen 27:33 [LXX]; Ezek 26:16 [LXX]; 27:35 [LXX]; Mark 16:8; Luke 5:26; Acts 3:10). The trances of Peter and Paul (Acts 10:10; 11:5; 22:17) are described as ecstasies or receptive states for visions (compare 2 Cor 12:1–4).

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

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



the 7 NT uses in the gospels (3x) and Acts (4x) it is translated as either 'amazement' (4x) or 'trance' (3x). It is related to Paul only in Acts 22:17 when Luke uses ἔκστασις in Paul's sermon to describe his temple vision in Jerusalem. Paul alludes to this in his single use of the verb ἐξίστημι in 2 Cor. 5:13, εἴτε γὰρ ἐξέσθημεν, θεῶ· εἴτε σωφρονοῦμεν, ὑμῖν, for whether we are out of body, to God; whether we are in our mind, for you. Thus for Paul, σωφρονέω represents the opposite of ἐξίστημι. Etymologically, ἐξίστημι denotes, in a derivative meaning in Greek, the soul standing outside the body in some kind of trance based on its etymological origins,⁵⁸¹ while

1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23). Indeed the stillness and majesty of the desert may aid in the production of religious consciousness.

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

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

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

⁵⁸¹"Literally 'change of place,' Aristot. An., I, 3, P. 406b, 13: κίνησις ἔκστασις ἐστὶ τοῦ κινουμένου; Hippocr. De Articulis, 56: faulty position of the thigh, b. Figur. 'renunciation of goods' (cessio bonorum), a techn. term in the pap. (BGU, III, 914, 6; P. Oxy., III, 472, 43); c. Figur. 'degeneration'; Theophr. De Causis Plantarum, III, 1, 6: ἔκστασις τῆς φύσεως, esp. 'confusion of spirit,' νοῦ, Plot., V, 3, 7 (opp. ἡσυχία); abs. Hippocr. Aphorismi, VII, 5; in astonishment or fear: τὰ μηδὲ προσδοκώμεν ἔκστασιν φέρει, Menand. Fr., 149 (CAF, III, 44); in envy, Test. S. 4:8; 'alienation,' ἔκστασις μανικὴ, Aristot. Cat., 8, P. 10a, 1; not always, but often in the sense of almost convulsive, transitory excitement: ἔκστασις φύσεως καὶ εἰκῶν θανάτου, Test. R. 3:1; 'transport,' Cornut. De Natura Deorum, 30, cf. Philo Ebr., 15: μέθην, τὴν ἐκστάσεως καὶ παραφροσύνης αἰτίαν. To the extent that the one alienated or transported is full of God, or inspired, or gifted with power, it thus means d. 'ecstasy.' Plato in Phaedr., 244a speaks of μανία, θεία δόσει διδομένη, and in 256b of θεία μανία Philo distinguishes 4 senses of ἔκστασις: 1. alienation (cf. Spec. Leg. III, 99, Cher., 69); 2. astonishment and fear (Israel at Sinai); 3. perfect rest, sleep, stupor (Adam in Gn. 2:21, cf. Leg. All. II 31, Plant., 147); and 4. Ἡ δὲ πασῶν ἀρίστη ἐνθεος κατοκωχὴ (inspiration) τε καὶ μανία, ἣ τὸ προφητικὸν γένος χρῆται (Abraham, Gn. 15:12), ἐνθουσιῶντος καὶ θεοφορητοῦ τὸ πάθος (Rer. Div. Her., 258, cf. 264). There is originally no idea of the soul being outside the body for a period. This comes in later, Rer. Div. Her., 69. Cf. Leg. All. III, 40 f." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:449–450.]

σωφρονέω⁵⁸² denotes the thinking process coming together with some idea or event properly and understandably. But these are only accurate in a limited manner.⁵⁸³ No literal translation of these terms is possible without seriously misleading the reader.

In Paul's world "exceptional states of soul attributed to supernatural causes are widespread throughout the whole race."⁵⁸⁴ States of ecstasy in the ancient world were commonly understood to happen when contact with certain deities was made.⁵⁸⁵ The Greek tradition

⁵⁸²The word group is † σώφρων, † σωφρονέω, † σωφρονίζω, † σωφρονισμός, † σωφροσύνη. [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 7:1097.]

⁵⁸³"σώφρων, contracted from Hom. σάοφρων (so also later in poets, cf. IG, II/III 2 3, 1 [1935], 3632, 11; 3753), means first 'of sound (σάος, σῶς, σῶος) mind' (φρένες). Hom. Od., 23, 13. 30 has the abstract σαοφροσύνη = σωφροσύνη² and from the 5th cent. B.C. we find the verb σωφρονέω, Aesch. Prom., 982; Pers., 829; Hdt., III, 35, 2. Etym. is no gt. help and can easily lead to misunderstanding of the group. It should be noted that transl. of this group which is so characteristic of Gk. thought is almost impossible. Lexicographically one can only describe its meaning by certain catchwords. It denotes a. 'the rational' in the sense of what is intellectually sound (opp. μανία), Xenoph. Mem., I, 1, 16; Plat. Prot., 323b; Phaedr., 244a; Plat. Resp., I, 331c.3 It then denotes b. 'rational' without illusion, Thuc., I, 80, 2; III, 43, 5. It can also mean c. 'rational' in the sense of purposeful, Thuc., VI, 6, 2. Another sense is d. 'discretion' in the sense of moderation and self-control, Thrasymachus Fr., 1 (Diels, II. 323, 7); Plat. Resp., IV, 430e; Plat. Phaed., 68c; Plat. Symp., 196c; Diog. L., III, 91; cf. 4 Macc. 1:3. Again, it may mean e. 'discretion' as prudent reserve, Thuc., I, 32, 4. Another sense is f. 'modesty' and decorum, Eur. Iph. Aul., 1159; Plat. Leg., VI, 784e; Dio Chrys. Or., 15, 4; Stob. Ecl., IV, 588, 17–593, 11.4 Then there is g. 'discretion' as discipline and order politically, Thuc., III, 37, 3; VIII, 64, 5, also h. as 'wisdom' as opp. to, e.g., ἄβουλος, Hdt., III, 71, 3, cf. esp. σοφίην ... σωφρόνως, IV, 77, 1, also Thuc., I, 79, 2; IV, 18, 4. The σώφρων is also contrasted with the ἄφρων and νήπιος in Theogn., 431, 483, 497, 665." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 7:1097–1098.]

⁵⁸⁴Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:450.

⁵⁸⁵"Though the boundary between ecstasy and illusion may seem to us to be very tenuous, the same distinction, as also between ecstasy and possession, was made at an early period.² Ecstasy in the narrower sense involves beneficial apprehension and infilling by a higher power which may sometimes be experienced as an impersonal substance and sometimes as a personal being. Indeed, the two may be combined, as when a god puts man in a state of ecstasy, not by entering into him, but by breathing upon him.

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



links ecstasy as frenzied excitement to the god Dionysus who was something of an outsider to the Olypyian tradition. But in the Anthesteria festival in the Ionian Delphi celebration Dionysus competes with Apollo for the loyalty of the people, but they both need each other for complete comprehension of existence.⁵⁸⁶ The idea of ecstasy as an 'out of body' experience is derived from later evolving of these early concepts. In the Greek dichotomy between **soul and body**, ψυχή καὶ σῶμα, where the eternal abhors contact with the contaminate material body, the soul must then temporarily leave the body for contacts with the divine to be made.⁵⁸⁷ In such encounters can come visions as well as auditions. Thus prophesy becomes in the Greek tradition the communication of what was received in these ecstatic encounters with the gods.⁵⁸⁸

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

⁵⁸⁶Historically known forms are thought to have come from the Orient at the very earliest in the 8th cent. More recently, however, this has been contested in the case of Dionysus.⁶ He is known to Homer.⁷ But he does not fit into the Olympic system and therefore he is largely ignored in the chivalrous epic. The Anthesteria festival common to the Ionians seems to prove that Dionysus was at home in the Gk. world from at least the end of the second millennium. The location of his grave in Delphi seems to indicate a long tradition. We thus cannot assume a cultic union of two deities in which Apollo sought his own advantage when threatened by a usurper. We are rather dealing with a basic factor in Gk. religion. The distant Olympian and the god of frenzy complement and seek out one another. Together they comprehend the totality of the world as the Gks. experienced it." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:451.]

⁵⁸⁷"The idea that God is in man (χωρεῖν τὸν θεόν, Iambl. Myst., III, 11) alternates with that of the ἐνθεον γίγνεσθαι or ἐνθουσιασμός (Plat. Tim., 71e). The apparent contradiction was not felt in view of the more neutral conception of ἐν and the more fluid and less personal view of god. To both ideas there corresponds a third, that of the temporary separation of the soul from the body. A place must be found for the entering deity. But the soul itself, liberated from the body, can also attain to vision. It may thus be a hindrance to ecstasy, as the body always is. But it may also be an organ." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:453.]

⁵⁸⁸ Different views follow in rapid succession in the Mithras Lit. The ἀνθρωπίνη ψυχική δύναμις must give place for a short time (ὑπεξεστάναι, Preis. Zaub., IV, 523 f.). There follows rapture with a view to the vision of God, primarily in the body divested of the weight of earth (ibid., 538 ff.). Yet cf. 725 f.: ὑπέκλυτος δὲ ἔσει τῆ ψυχῆ καὶ οὐκ ἐν σεαυτῷ ἔσει. (Cf. also 2 C. 12:2 f., → ἀναβαίνω, I, 521). The power of God is mystically portrayed as the true being of man: 'First becoming of my becoming, first beginning of my beginning, spirit of the spirit, first of the spirit in me' (488 ff.). But it is also drawn in with the breath: 'Breathe in the breath (πνεῦμα) of the rays, drawing in three times to thy fullest extent' (537 ff.; cf. 628 f.: ἔλκε ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ... εἰς σεαυτὸν τὸ πνεῦμα). It finally confronts the ecstatic in personal and bodily

But the Jewish heritage plays a formative role in understanding ecstasy in the ancient world as well. Apostolic Christian perceptions, especially in regard to the role of the body, in ecstasy cannot be grasped without awareness of the Jewish influences. In the era of the OT, the early prophetic traditions stressed ecstasy strongly.⁵⁸⁹ In this background then stands a de-em-

form (635 ff.; 695 ff.). Cic. Divin., I, 50, 114: *Ergo et ii, quorum animi spretis corporibus evolvant atque excurrunt foras, ardore aliquo inflammati atque incitati cernunt illis profecto, quae vaticinantes pronuntiant, multisque rebus inflammantur tales animi, qui corporibus non inhaerent, ut ii, qui song quodam vocum et Phrygiis cantibus excitantur* (cf. 51, 115). Chrys. Hom. in Ac. XXII, 1 (MPG, 60, 172): τί ἐστὶν ἔκστασις; πνευματική, φησί, θεωρία γέγονεν αὐτῷ τοῦ σώματος, ὡς ἂν εἶποι τις, ἐξέστη ἡ ψυχὴ. The word ἔκστασις, originally understood of holy frenzy, seems later to have taken on the sense of rapture.²³

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

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

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

⁵⁸⁹The unusual and eccentric aspect forms the starting-point. Pathological features are not uncommon (Nu. 24:15 ff.; Ez. 3:25 f.; 4:4 ff.). The root נבנ seems to have the original sense of 'to speak with frenzy.' Prophets are repeatedly described as mad (2 K. 9:11; Jer. 29:26; Hos. 9:7), and though this comes from opponents we cannot fail to see the connection.

"In the OT, so far as we can see, we have at the beginning the man of God who disposes of supernatural power, and the seer who is gifted with supernatural knowledge, the latter being a seer rather than an ecstatic (Nu. 24:3; 1 S. 2:27; 9:6 ff.; 2 S. 24:11; 1 K. 13:1; 17:18; 2 K. 4:7 etc.). He can pass on his gifts etc. to others (2 K. 6:15 ff.). There are also true ecstasies like Deborah (Ju. 4:4). These are the givers of oracles both for everyday occasions (1 S. 9:6 ff.; 1 K. 14:1 ff.) and for more important, including political (2 S. 24:11), like the soothsayers of the Philistines (1 S. 6:2) and the Aramic ורין of the inscription of King Zakir of Hamath (8th cent. B.C.). This



phasis upon out of body ecstatic communication with God. But in the Judaism of Paul's day the perceptions were mixed. The apocalyptic traditions, mostly of Diaspora Hellenistic Judaism, de-emphasized strongly the ecstatic element as necessary for receiving visions etc. But the developing scribal and then rabbinic Judaism went the opposite direction with lots of emphasis upon out of body experiences to transport one momentar-

does not exhaust their work, however, for increasingly they come to declare the will of Yahweh and to enforce His ethical demands. Nor are we dealing only with great figures like Samuel (1 S. 15:22) and Nathan (2 S. 12:1 ff.), but also with lesser figures (1 S. 2:27). At the beginning of the monarchy there arises the new phenomenon of group ecstasy.²⁷ Renouncing everyday life, swarms of nebiim wander through the land to the sound of the harp, cymbal, flute and zither. Unasked, they announce the future, often in the form of judgment and disaster. Their ecstasy is infectious, and grips even those who stand aloof (1 S. 10:5 ff.; 19:20 ff.). Men like Elisha stand out from the rest (2 K. 2:5; 4:38). If there are primitive features and a certain amount of corruption, nebiism cannot simply be interpreted and dismissed as a Canaanitish intrusion into Yahweh religion. The sacred dance of the Yahweh cult left room for it, and in the main the nebiim are opposed to cultural degeneration. They represent the strict ethical majesty of the wilderness God (1 K. 18; 21:17 ff.; 2 K. 5:26 f.; for the connection of Elijah with nebiism, cf. 2 K. 2:5, and of Elisha apart from the passages already mentioned, cf. 2 K. 6:1 ff.; 9:1 ff.). They have a constant sense of the historical leading of the people by Yahweh. It is not improbable that their proclamation also has eschatological features. The feeling of distance in relation to the Godhead is characteristic. Yahweh Himself does not enter into men; He works in them through His Spirit (רוח).

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

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

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

ily into the presence of Yahweh.⁵⁹⁰ But as the ancient primary sources suggest the views were not cleanly divided between Hellenistic and Hebraistic Judaism. Multiplicity of viewpoints existed throughout first century Judaism.

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

Paul's consistent denial of knowing whether the individual had his experience εἴτε ἐν σώματι εἴτε χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος, **whether in body, whether apart from the body** (v. 3; also cf. v. 2), should be understood as avoiding an unsolvable debate over validity of the revelation depending upon the role of the individual's physical body in this experience. The Greek mind-set in the Corinthian church would have seen the out of body experience as necessary to a valid experience. The Jewish Christian members, and potentially the outsiders at Corinth with a strong Hebraistic Jewish heritage, would have potentially been on the opposite side of the fence in the

⁵⁹⁰ For all the abundance of visions, developed apocalyptic really attests a decline in ecstatic experiences. The visions of the pseudepigraphical writers are artificial products of the study. This does not mean, however, that the ecstatic element had completely vanished. Later Judaism certainly places inspiration in the past and in the Messianic future (dramatically so in 1 Macc. 4:46; 9:27; 14:41). Yet descriptions of Messianic experiences show that they still take place (→ I, 724). The apocalyptic writer does not reject all such experiences as false. Philo continually claims to be an ecstatic, and we have no reason to distrust his statements.²⁸ For all his Hellenism, he is a true Jew in the sense that he does not think of God entering into man, but rather of the injection of divine powers and intermediaries.

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

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



in/out of body experience view. In recounting the experience Paul simply denies knowing what role the body played in the experience. He insists that God knew but absolutely denies that he knew. Thus a major source of debate over whether this person had a valid experience or not is shut off before it can get started. Then the body played no role in the validity of the experience. What counted with the encounter with God in Paradise.

Additionally, the significance of the audition is de-emphasized as well by remaining uncommunicated: ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι, **he heard unrecountable words which are not allow to be spoken to a person.**⁵⁹¹ Many are persuaded that these ἄρρητα ῥήματα, **unspeakable words**, denote the prohibited names of God in Hebrew that are not to be orally spoken. The single use here of the adjective ἄρρητος, -ον denotes either what is beyond human ability to be verbalized or what is expressly forbidden to humans

⁵⁹¹“The second part of v. 4, καὶ ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι, contains four exegetical ambiguities. First, ῥήματα may bear its usual sense of ‘words,’ or, under the influence of its Hebrew equivalent (*dehārīm*) which may mean ‘words’ or ‘things’/‘matters,’ it may mean ‘things.’⁷² Second, like the English adjective ‘ineffable,’ ἄρρητος can mean either ‘that cannot be expressed’ or ‘that must not be expressed’ (see BAGD 109 s.v.). That is, it may refer to either impossibility or impermissibility, or, as Spittler (264) expresses it, the term may describe what is ‘inexpressible by nature’ or what is ‘inexpressible by prohibition.’⁷³ Third, the relative clause introduced by ἃ may define what is meant by ἄρρητα ῥήματα, or it may give a second characterization of the ῥήματα (in addition to ἄρρητα). Fourth, ἐξόν, the participle of ἐξεστί, is used only twice in the NT, both times in the nominative (Robertson 491), once with ἦν (Matt. 12:4) and here with ἐστίν understood.⁷⁴ Like ἐξεστί, ἐξόν [ἐστίν] may mean ‘it is permitted’ or (less commonly) ‘it is possible.’

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

1. Referring both ἄρρητα and οὐκ ἐξόν to impermissibility, with ἃ κτλ. virtually exegetical.
 - ‘things that must not be divulged, which it is forbidden a human being to repeat’ (Furnish 513).⁷⁵
 - ‘things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat’ (NRSV).
2. Referring ἄρρητα to impermissibility and οὐκ ἐξόν to impossibility.
 - ‘things which must not and cannot be put into human language’ (JB).
3. Referring ἄρρητα to impossibility and οὐκ ἐξόν to impermissibility.⁷⁶
 - ‘things which cannot be put into words, things that human lips may not speak’ (GNB).⁷⁷
 - ‘words said that cannot and may not be spoken by any human being’ (NJB).⁷⁸
 - “inexpressible⁷⁹ words that a human is not permitted to utter.”⁸⁰

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

to verbalize. Most take the relative clause modifier of ῥήματα, **orally spoken words**, to favor the second understanding of ἄρρητα. Clearly the unspeakable names of God in Hebrew stand as a possible meaning of Paul’s statement. But this may not be what Paul had in mind with this expression.

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

But Paul’s ἄρρητα ῥήματα, unrecountable words, are presented differently here.⁵⁹² Some isolated later copies attempt to answer the dilemma here with text emendations.⁵⁹³ The truth of the matter, the mystery of

⁵⁹²“There is an advantage in retaining ‘words’ for ῥήματα, since Paul probably intended ἄρρητα ῥήματα to be oxymoronic, ‘unutterable utterances’ (Young and Ford 274) or ‘utterances unutterable’ (Cassirer), that is, divine words that cannot be expressed in human language. The relative clause ἃ κτλ. adds a second characteristic of the ῥήματα. They were not only beyond the reaches of human language; God does not, in any case, permit human beings to clothe these transcendent heavenly utterances in the puny garb of earthly language.⁸¹ Paul gives no indication of the content of these ‘unutterable utterances’ that he was privileged to hear. Tentative proposals include angelic praise,⁸² perhaps expressed in ‘the tongues of angels’ (1 Cor. 13:1), the mysteries of God’s person (1 Cor. 2:10–11),⁸³ unutterable divine names,⁸⁴ and disclosures about the end of the world,⁸⁵ including the blessings of the Age to Come. But in the final analysis, we must be content with Theodoret’s conclusion: ‘the person [Paul] who has seen these things—he knows.’⁸⁶ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 844.]

⁵⁹³“αὐτὸς οἶδεν ὁ ταῦτα τεθεαμένος (cited by Meyer 677, without reference). Paul’s ‘failure’ to disclose the content of the ῥήματα was remedied (!) by a second-century Coptic Apocalypse of Paul (*Nag Hammadi Gnostic Codices* V.2), on which see Klauck, “Himmelfahrt” 151–90; and a fourth-century Latin *Apocalypse of Paul* (found in Hennecke and Schneemelcher 755–98), on which see Young 95–103. In the latter work the author overcomes the difficulty of the ἄρρητα ῥήματα by distinguishing (in ch. 12) between what Paul was permitted to relate and what he could not disclose.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), P. 884, fn. 86.]



what was heard remains a mystery, since Paul makes no effort to disclose the content of these words. And also left unanswered is assessment of why mention was made to the Corinthians of the hearing of words that could not be communicated to mortals, either because of the nature of the words or/and because of divine prohibition against telling about them.

One aspect that may be important is the likelihood that in his vision he saw the risen Christ and heard Him speak directly.⁵⁹⁴ On the Damascus Road, the Risen Christ had spoken to Paul from Heaven while Paul remained on earth (Acts 9:3–6; 22:6–8, 10; 26:13–18). But this time this man, possibly Paul, was snatched from earth and taken into Heaven in visionary experience: ἀρπαγέντα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ, / ἥρπάγη εἰς τὸν παράδεισον; **such a person having been snatch up to the third heaven / he was snatched into Paradise.** The aorist passive forms used here of ἀρπάζω denote *quick grabbing of something or someone to take control over them*. It often in ancient literature referred to the quick arrest of someone in taking them prisoner before resistance could be put up. Typically in Jewish visionary language, the recipient always remains on earth and is permitted to look into Heaven while remaining on earth. For an individual to be transported to heaven for a vision is quite unusual. In fact, only this individual **here and John** in Revelation are recorded to have had

⁵⁹⁴“We conclude, then, that in 12:4 Paul refers to his visit to the ‘hidden’ paradise, the dwelling place of the righteous dead, which is located within the third (= the highest) heaven, the abode of God.

“If this conclusion is right, it might seem inevitable that on his visit to paradise Paul saw the exalted Christ, for he believed that the righteous dead were ‘with the Lord’ (5:8) or ‘with Christ’ (Phil. 1:23), and that Christ was now at God’s right hand in heaven (Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1).⁹⁴ The difficulty, however, is that Paul refers only to what he heard (ἤκουσεν), not to anything he saw. True, he must have seen something that indicated he was in paradise, unless this too was announced to him. But it would be extraordinary if he had actually seen Christ at this time and yet not have mentioned the fact (cf. 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8), for such an experience would have been unique for him. At Damascus he had been confronted by the risen Christ who spoke from heaven (Acts 9:3–6; 22:6–8, 10; 26:13–18), while Paul himself was on earth. In the present case he would have seen the exalted Lord while he too was in heaven, an experience that anticipated the final destiny of believers (1 Thess. 4:17).⁹⁵ In view of Paul’s silence about what he saw during his time in paradise,⁹⁶ and his silence about the identity of the speaker of the ῥήματα, it is not inappropriate to assume that he heard the sound of words which he understood but did not see the form of the speaker or speakers (cf. Deut. 4:12). But this is not to suggest that the experience had a minimal impact on him. On the contrary, after his conversion encounter with the living Christ, probably no event had a greater influence in strengthening his motivation for serving and pleasing Christ (5:9, 15) and his fortitude for enduring suffering (cf. Acts 9:16; Rom. 8:18).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 845–846.]

such an experience in the entire Bible. This may well be a very significant undertone meaning behind being ‘snatched up’ to/into heaven.

One of the interpretive issues is whether ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ, **up to the third heaven**, equals εἰς τὸν παράδεισον, **into Paradise**.⁵⁹⁵ Most likely they refer to the same location, *the abode of God*. Perhaps, what was experienced here relates to what John saw at the opening of the fifth seal, ὑποκάτω τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἐσφαγμένων διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἣν εἶχον, **under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered for the word of God and for the testimony they had given** (Rev. 6:9). If so, Paul wasn’t permitted to talk about it, but John was. Clearly ἄ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι, **which are not permitted for a person to speak**, denotes a divinely mandated prohibition against talking about the words which were heard. The impersonal verb with the negative οὐκ ἐξὸν denotes the lack of permission for some action, here λαλῆσαι, **to speak**.

Thus evidently for some fourteen years the apostle had not mentioned this experience to anyone until now. The pressure from the outsiders who claimed superior visions and revelations in some kind of frenzied religious experience pushed the apostle to speak of this earlier experience. Whether a description of someone he knew or a third person portrayal of his own earlier experience, Paul was hugely reluctant to go into any meaningful details about the experience.

While vv. 2-4 describe the incident, vv. 5-7 give Paul’s interpretation of the event. Verse 5 essentially states his position, which is then justified (γὰρ) in elaboration in vv. 6-7a.

5 ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιοῦτου καυχῆσομαι, ὑπὲρ δὲ ἑμαυτοῦ οὐ καυχῆσομαι εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις. 6 Ἐὰν γὰρ θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι, οὐκ ἔσομαι ἄφρων, ἀλήθειαν γὰρ ἐρῶ· φειδομαι δέ, μὴ τις εἰς ἐμὲ λογίσθῃ ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με ἢ ἀκούει τι ἐξ ἐμοῦ 7 καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων. **5 On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf**

⁵⁹⁵“As for the relation of παράδεισος and τρίτος οὐρανός, there are three possibilities. For those who discern two stages in Paul’s ascent to paradise, the two expressions are, of course, distinct.⁹⁰ But we have argued above (under v. 3) in favor of seeing a single event in vv. 2–4. Accordingly, paradise may be seen as a synonym for the third (highest) heaven,⁹¹ or, as in 2 Enoch (A) 8:1; Apocalypse of Moses 40:1 and probably 37:5, it can be regarded as within the third heaven.⁹² Perhaps the different prepositions used in vv. 2 and 4 support this latter option, ‘as far as (ἕως) the third heaven,’ indicating the ‘height’ of Paul’s rapture, and ‘into (εἰς) paradise,’ specifying its ‘depth.’⁹³ We conclude, then, that in 12:4 Paul refers to his visit to the ‘hidden’ paradise, the dwelling place of the righteous dead, which is located within the third (= the highest) heaven, the abode of God.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 845.]



I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. 6 But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, 7 even considering the exceptional character of the revelations.

The twofold assertion (#s 282-283) position the apostle as boasting about this person's experience but refusing to boast about his own experiences, except for his weaknesses. Precisely how this is taken depends upon who the other person is that is described in vv. 2-4. If this individual is another individual just known by Paul, then the natural meanings of the statements in verse five are the correct way to understand them. He would talk about other people's experiences to what ever degree was appropriate. But regarding himself, he would only take pride in his weaknesses, not perceived strengths.

But if Paul is speaking indirectly of himself in the experience in vv. 2-4 -- as most commentators believe -- then the words in v. 5 assume a more complex meaning. The first assertion (#282), ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιούτου καυχῆσομαι, *in behalf of such a person I will boast*, reflects accuracy only to the extent that the 'fools speech' can reflect accuracy. The understood literary device thus used by the apostle distances Paul from this previous experience as something he takes pride in. It only signals that his 'spiritual' experiences are in no way inferior to those claimed by the Corinthian outsiders. But it's not something that Paul actually takes pride in.

What he actually relishes in comes in the second assertion (#283): ὑπὲρ δὲ ἑμαυτοῦ οὐ καυχῆσομαι εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις, *but in my own behalf I will not boast, except in the weaknesses*. Notice carefully how he words this expression. He contrasts this statement with the preceding one appropriately using δὲ, *but*. Just as the interests of the other person were placed in the sentence prefield, ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιούτου, so also his direct interests are listed in the prefield parallel to the first: ὑπὲρ ἑμαυτοῦ. That is, when it comes to his personal accomplishments the apostle says emphatically that he will not take pride in them. Even his boasting in behalf of the other person actually stresses not what this person actually did, but what happened to him through divine action.⁵⁹⁶ If Paul is going to talk about himself, he will not talk about his accomplishments. Instead, οὐ καυχῆσομαι εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις, *I will not boast except in regard to the weaknesses*.⁵⁹⁷ The most natural meaning

⁵⁹⁶Both ἀρπαγέντα and ἡρπάγη as aorist passive forms stress that the snatching up action was a divinely accomplished activity that happened to the individual. Not something the individual planned and accomplished on his own initiative.

⁵⁹⁷After καυχῆσομαι, the preposition ἐν introduces the object of the boasting, 'about,' 'of,' in which case it is synonymous with the two preceding cases of ὑπὲρ (= περί).¹⁰⁰ In the expression ταῖς ἀσθενείαις the article is possessive, 'my weaknesses' (so most EVV; see Textual Note h.), and the plural may be generalizing

of the plural ταῖς ἀσθενείαις, *the weaknesses*, is a signaling of events, situations, conditions etc. that point to absolute dependency needed upon God's presence and intervening power. The Damascus escape was one kind of example (11:30-33). The upcoming reference to his 'thorn in the flesh' (12:7b-10) will be another. Nothing in the context necessitates alternative understandings.

The causal γὰρ statements in vv. 6-7a both justify and amplify the point of οὐ καυχῆσομαι εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις, *I will not boast except in regard to the weaknesses* in v. 5b. 6 Ἐὰν γὰρ θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι, οὐκ ἔσομαι ἄφρων, ἀλήθειαν γὰρ ἐρῶ· φείδομαι δέ, μὴ τις εἰς ἐμὲ λογίσσεται ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με ἢ ἀκούει τι ἐξ ἐμοῦ 7 καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων. 6 *But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, 7 even considering the exceptional character of the revelations.*

	12.6	γὰρ	Ἐὰν θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι,
284		οὐκ ἔσομαι ἄφρων,	
		γὰρ	
285		ἀλήθειαν ἐρῶ·	
		δέ	
286		φείδομαι,	
		μὴ τις εἰς ἐμὲ λογίσσεται	ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με
			ἢ
			ἀκούει τι ἐξ ἐμοῦ
	12.7	καὶ	
		τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων.	

The foundational statement (# 284) sets up the justifying declaration as a third class conditional statement. This plays off the previous οὐ καυχῆσομαι (v. 5b) in the protasis clause Ἐὰν θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι, with a qualifying scenario: *I won't boast. But in the unlikely situation that I decided to boast, I wouldn't do it as a fool*. Note that ἄφρων here contextually carries both a popular meaning and a technical meaning. These are defined in large part by the second γὰρ statement: ἀλήθειαν γὰρ ἐρῶ, *for I would be speaking the truth*. At the popular level ἄφρων would carry the level of foolishness or ('weakness,' Lang 346; cf. v. 9a) or may refer to 'times of weakness' (cf. BAGD 115b) or simply 'weaknesses' (as in vv. 9b, 10), that is, 'the things that show how weak I am' (GNB). The Damascus escape was one such instance (11:32-33); the debilitating 'thorn' (vv. 7-8) was another. Black regards καυχῆσθαι ἐν ἀσθενείαις as the general theme of chs. 10-13, with δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ (12:9) forming the specific theme (147).'' [[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 847-848.]



foolishly. At the technical level ἄφρων would have the sense of *I would not be continuing the fool's speech*. Everything would be spoken ἀλήθειαν, that is, accurately and directly so as to compare with God's assessment. Thus Paul injects a 'what if' scenario here probably to avoid any misunderstanding. Boasting by him certainly would be possible to do, even along the pagan lines of the Corinthian outsiders. That is, boasting about their religious accomplishments and credentials. And that he opted for emphasizing weaknesses not because he had no 'strengths' to talk about. Nothing of the sort should enter their minds!

But Paul goes on to declare (#286): φείδομαι δέ, μή τις εἰς ἐμέ λογίσθαι ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με ἢ ἀκούει τι ἐξ ἐμοῦ, *But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me*. The present tense verb φείδομαι carries both the sense of *sparing others from someone or something distasteful*, and of *refraining from doing something distasteful*. The second meaning is most likely dominate here, although 1:23 uses it clearly with the first meaning. Most likely the ideas of both meanings are present in the usage here. Yet, it is mainly Paul who finds bragging about oneself to be distasteful. So he will not do it. The implicit object of the verb here is *καυχῆσασθαι*, the aorist infinitive in the first part of the sentence.

The reason for refraining from bragging is given in the negative purpose clause: μή τις εἰς ἐμέ λογίσθαι ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με ἢ ἀκούει τι ἐξ ἐμοῦ, *lest someone evaluate me beyond what he sees in me or something he hears from me*. The apostle fully realizes that the Corinthians are 'sizing him up' (λογίσθαι), and he wants the calculations to be based on reality rather than abstract claims.⁵⁹⁸ That means, they know what he looks like and that he is no 'prized specimen' physically, as he mentioning the 'thorn in the flesh' implies. Not only how they saw him at a human being but also what they had

⁵⁹⁸“λογίζομαι τινί τι is a commercial expression meaning ‘set something down to someone’s account,’¹¹⁰ ‘to credit something to someone.’ But in the present instance there is no dative or accusative with λογίσθαι. We could treat εἰς ἐμέ as equivalent to ἐμοί (cf. Turner 253) and ὑπὲρ κτλ. as the direct object of λογίσθαι. This would produce a sense such as ‘lest anyone should credit me with a reputation that exceeds what he sees me to be or anything that he hears from me.’¹¹¹ But if we surrender the possible commercial sense of λογίζομαι and give this verb the intransitive of meaning of ‘make an evaluation,’ ‘form a judgment,’ render εἰς ἐμέ by ‘with respect to me,’¹¹² and perhaps supply τό before ὑπὲρ κτλ., a rendering such as Barclay’s would result: ‘I forbear to boast in case anyone forms a judgment about me beyond what he sees in me and hears from me.’¹¹³ Either way, ὑπὲρ means ‘beyond’ or ‘in excess of,’ and points to a crediting or an evaluation that outstrips what is warranted by the evidence.¹¹⁴” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 849–850.]

heard directly from him were to be the two criteria for evaluating him. No rumor or second hand information was to be considered in this evaluation. Probably implied in these expressions is the actions of the opponents both inflating their sense of importance and trying to deflate the importance of Paul to the Corinthians.

The additional expression καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων (v. 7a) poses some punctuation issues which will determine the sense of meaning that it contains.⁵⁹⁹ Most printed Greek texts place a period after ἀποκαλύψεων indicating that the phrase καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων belongs with what precedes it. Note the NRSV translation following this pattern. A few commentators, however, put the period after ἐμοῦ in v. 6b with καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων beginning a new sentence. This latter approach definitely is a minority view point, but is appealing because it simplifies the grammar understanding. Yet, this is no basis for adopting it.

As the above diagram illustrates, καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων simply adds another modifier to φείδομαι δέ, *but I refrain*.⁶⁰⁰ The apostle refrained from

⁵⁹⁹“7 NO C: TR M RSV TEV Seg^{mg} FC NIV Lu TOB REB // Different text: AD VP? // P: Seg NJB” [Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

⁶⁰⁰“The modern interpreter may wonder, after reading the Greek text of 12:7, if Paul set this text down the way he had intended.⁸⁴⁸ We have already examined the textual questions surrounding the verse and have opted to view the above phrase as completing the sentence in v 6 (see Note h on 12:7). V 6 had closed with Paul saying that he refrained from boasting about what was unseen. He wished the people to evaluate him on what was tangible, by something they could see, i.e., his trials. But we may wonder if Paul was convinced that after telling them of his vision, his Corinthian readers would heed his concern (12:2–4; and we must remember that some may have known of Paul’s other visions, especially the one in Corinth [Acts 18:9–10]). There could possibly have been some who, with good intentions, would consider Paul to be an exceptional person because of his ecstatic experience. After all, Paul had his followers at Corinth (1 Cor 1:12: ‘I follow Paul’). Moreover, he had won a majority back to him, as recorded in 7:8–16. In spite of new and recurring problems, there were some who would take this new piece of information and place Paul high in their estimation. Paul’s choice of ὑπερβολῇ, ‘extraordinary,’ here a dativus causae, ‘dative of cause,’ is somewhat ambiguous. The composite noun can mean either ‘excess’ (ὑπέρ- of quantity) or ‘extraordinary’ (ὑπέρ- of quality). Paul’s use of the word in 2 Corinthians (1:8; 4:17; cf. also 4:7; Rom 7:13; Gal 1:13; 1 Cor 12:31) might tip the scales in favor of the qualitative aspect,⁸⁴⁹ but perhaps we should not draw too sharp a distinction here.⁸⁵⁰ The fact that ἀποκαλύψεις, ‘revelations,’ is plural has led Plummer to raise again the idea that 12:2–4 speaks of two separate revelations.⁸⁵¹ But we have already judged this position to be doubtful.⁸⁵² Moreover, as has been stated before, the Corinthians were probably aware that Paul had some visions (but not nearly enough to satisfy the opponents). He had been accused of being out of his mind (5:13). But the significance of the



boasting (about his visions) in spite of their extraordinary character. He anxious to convey the sense that his experiences were subpar and thus he refrains, due to not having anything worth sharing. This assumes the qualitative side of the noun ὑπερβολή. If the other quantitative meaning is intended for ὑπερβολή, then Paul's concern was a criticism that he didn't have enough visions to match those of the outsiders at Corinth. This statement would then counter such a criticism. Clearly the plural τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων refers to multiple revelations from God.

One of the lessons from this particular section of Paul's words to the Corinthians points to the futility of getting into a 'numbers game' with your opponents, especially in religious life. "My church is better than your because it is bigger!" Or, "It's better because it baptizes more people than yours!" These kinds of futile games are loose - loose situations. Turn the table on such criticisms with "we in our church really suffer a lot of hardships," and see whether your opponents will follow suit. In a materialistic culture such as ours today, respond with "We really suffer a lot of persecution and hardships in order for God to work more clearly in our world." The likely reaction of puzzlement to such claims most likely reflects an identical puzzlement to Paul's boasting about his weakness to the Corinthians.

b) Boasting in weakness, 12:7b-10.

διὸ ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί, ἄγγελος σατανᾶ, ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι. 8 ὑπὲρ τούτου τρίς τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα ἵνα ἀποστῆ ἀπ' ἐμοῦ. 9 καὶ εἶρηκέν μοι· ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου, ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται. Ἥδιστα οὖν μᾶλλον καυχῆσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ. 10 διὸ εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὕβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις, ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ· ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατός εἰμι.

Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. 8 Three times I ap- vision in 12:2-4 is its dimension in terms of 'revelation.' In short, it probably fell as a bombshell on some, though ignored or scoffed at by others. There was no way on Paul's part that he would become too proud or conceited over this incident (he will presently explain to the Corinthians why this is so). But there was always the possibility that some at Corinth would treat his mystical experience in a way that Paul himself would disown." [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 604-605.]

12.7b διὸ
ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι,
287 ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί,
ἄγγελος σατανᾶ,
ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ,
ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι.

12.8 ὑπὲρ τούτου
τρίς
288 τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα
ἵνα ἀποστῆ
ἀπ' ἐμοῦ.

12.9 καὶ
289 εἶρηκέν μοι·
ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου,
γὰρ
ἡ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται.

οὖν
Ἥδιστα
μᾶλλον
290 καυχῆσομαι
ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου,
ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ... ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ.
ἐπ' ἐμὲ

12.10 διὸ
291 εὐδοκῶ
ἐν ἀσθενείαις,
ἐν ὕβρεσιν,
ἐν ἀνάγκαις,
ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις,
ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ·
γὰρ
ὅταν ἀσθενῶ,
τότε
292 δυνατός εἰμι.

pealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, 9 but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Next, coming out of this assertion in v. 5 about boasting in weaknesses, with the amplification in vv. 6-7a, is the explicit declaration beginning in v. 7b that is introduced by διὸ,⁶⁰¹ here functioning as a coordinate in-

⁶⁰¹“διὸ is omitted by many witnesses (*P*⁴⁶ *D* *Ψ* 1881 *M* lat sa Irenaeus^{lat}) but should be retained as the probable original reading (preferred by WH, NA²⁷, and UBS^{1, 2, 3} with a {D} rating [= very high degree of doubt], and by UBS⁴ with a {C} rating [= uncertain]) on the basis of (i) strong external attestation (8 A B F G 0243 33 81 1175 1739 pc syr^h bo); (ii) its being the more difficult reading (assuming that v. 7a begins a new sentence—see the commentary there); (iii) the frequency of διὸ in Paul (27 of 53 NT uses, of

ferential conjunction with the sense of 'implied in that is this.' Note that it is repeated again in v. 10, and there is used in succession with the other inferential coordinate conjunction οὖν in v. 9b so that it reaches a climatic point in the discussion of vv. 7b-10.

The topic sentence in v. 7 (# 287) sets up the description of something implicit in the preceding section of vv. 1-7a. The core statement, ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί, was given to me a thorn in the flesh, makes the primary point. The two adverbial purpose ἵνα clauses qualify the core statement with why expressions. The appositional ἄγγελος σατανᾶ, a messenger of Satan, defines from a spiritual view the physical reference σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί, thorn in the flesh. The further explanation in vv. 8-10 expand the idea presented in v. 7b.

The unanswered question down through the centuries centers on what was Paul's thorn in the flesh. In truth we are no closer to a certain answer nearly two thousand later than folks were fifty years after the writing of these words. Educated guesses are the closest that is possible to come to answering this question, although some of the guesses down through history don't have much 'education' behind them.⁶⁰² Nothing

which nine are in 2 Corinthians, including this instance)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 829.]

⁶⁰²"The first interpretation was offered by Tertullian (Modesty 13.17), who took the thorn to mean that Paul had a pain in the ear or head (also see Jerome and Pelagius).

"John Chrysostom (Hom. 2 Cor. 26) understood σατανᾶς, 'Satan,' in the general sense of adversary, and he concluded that Paul's thorn was his opponents (specifically, Alexander the coppersmith). Recently this argument has been revived.⁸⁷² The support of this position is well worth noting, and there are four basic points that endorse the position that the thorn refers to Paul's opponents.

"First, the phrase ἄγγελος σατανᾶ, 'messenger of Satan' (note σατανᾶ is a Doric genitive of σατανᾶς, which is of irregular declension), could refer to a person, for this is the normal use of ἄγγελος, 'messenger' (it is not likely that as yet 'angel' was a technical term). It appears that Paul does not use ἄγγελος, 'messenger,' except to refer to a person.

"Second, one must not forget that chaps. 10–13 describe Paul's fight against his adversaries. We see in 12:12 that Paul is in conflict with those who would question his apostleship. Moreover, in 11:13–15 Paul understands his conflict with his opponents as a conflict between God and Satan.⁸⁷³ Paul sees himself as a representative of God and the false apostles as representing Satan. In this conflict Paul views Satan as a (false) messenger of light (11:14). It follows that the use of messenger is in reference to a person, not an illness. If this is so, then the use of σκόλοψ, 'thorn,' in 12:7 should not be understood as referring to some physical malady.

"A third point is seen in the clause ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, 'in order to batter me.' The verb κολαφίζω, 'batter' (see the uses in Mark 14:65; Matt 26:67; cf. 1 Cor 4:11), speaks of one who is beaten or battered about, especially by blows to the head.⁸⁷⁴ This has led some to conclude that the choice of σκόλοψ, 'thorn,' refers specifically to a person, thus pointing to Paul's opponents.

is stated about his physical appearance inside the NT, although church tradition has numerous portrayals of his physical appearance.⁶⁰³ But these are highly leg-

"A fourth item is that in the LXX we find thorn associated with opponents of Israel. The Canaanites, who are permitted to remain in Israel, are 'thorns' (Num 33:55). In Ezek 23:24 the foes of Israel are described as 'thorns.' These four points show that a case can be made for considering Paul's thorn as the adversaries that dog him at Corinth (see also patristic support in Augustine, Theodoret, and Theophylact).

"However, there is much support for the view of the thorn as referring to something other than the opponents of Paul. The medieval thinkers (from Gregory the Great to Aquinas) understood the Vulgate rendering⁸⁷⁵ of *stimulus carnis*, 'goad of the flesh,' to imply sexual temptation.

"The Reformers (such as Calvin and Luther) viewed Paul's thorn in the flesh as spiritual temptation. Few modern commentators adopt this view.⁸⁷⁶

"Rather, the majority opt for some form of physical ailment.⁸⁷⁷ One common ailment suggested was a severe form of ophthalmia. This is inferred from the colorful language of Galatians. In Gal 4:13 Paul speaks of a weakness of the flesh (σάρξ) and proceeds to acknowledge the willingness of the Galatians to pluck out their eyes and give them to him (4:15). Also, Paul is seen as closing the Galatian epistle by noting that the handwriting is his own, for this writing is in large letters (6:11). Also, appeal is made to the (hypothetical) case of Acts 23:5, where Paul fails to recognize the high priest. This defective eyesight may stem from, as the theory goes, the scales that fell from Paul's eyes after his conversion experience (Acts 9:9, 18). This theory, though interesting, has received little support in recent times.⁸⁷⁸

"Another ailment suggested is epilepsy,⁸⁷⁹ possibly as a result of the experience Paul had at his conversion. That is, the fact that Paul fell down on the road to Damascus has been seen as evidence that Paul was epileptic; but this is doubtful.⁸⁸⁰

"One of the more attractive hypotheses is that of Ramsay.⁸⁸¹ Paul, it is said, suffered from a form of recurring malarial fever. It has been suggested that he contracted this disease in Pamphylia.⁸⁸² For Ramsay, this theory covers all the symptoms Paul seems to exhibit. Accordingly, Paul was incapacitated by the attacks of this fever. If the fever seared the head, one can appreciate how Paul felt battered about."

[Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 607–609.]

⁶⁰³"The New Testament offers little if any information about the physical appearance of Paul, but several descriptions can be found in apocryphal texts. In the *Acts of Paul*^[191] he is described as 'A man of small stature, with a bald head and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with eyebrows meeting and nose somewhat hooked' and in the Latin version of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* it is added that he had a red, florid face.^[192] In *The History of the Contending of Saint Paul* his countenance is actually described as 'ruddy with the ruddiness of the skin of the pomegranate'^[193] and *The Acts of Saint Peter* confirms that Paul had a bald and shining head, with red hair.^[194] As summarised by Barnes,^[195] Chrysostom records that Paul's stature was low, his body crooked and his head bald. Lucian, in his *Philopatris*, describes Paul as '*corpore erat parvo* (he was small), *contracto* (contracted), *incurvo* (crooked), *tricubitali* (of three cubits, or four feet six)', while Nicephorus



διὸ
 ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι,
 287 ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί,
 ἄγγελος σατανᾶ,
 ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ,
 ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι.

endary and thus of little value for determining his actual appearance.

First, consider the context carefully in trying to narrow down the possibilities. Clearly the σκόλοψ was connected to Paul's physical existence as τῆ σαρκί, in flesh, indicates. The noun σκόλοψ was "not a very common word¹ but its possibilities of use are clearly defined. Lit. it means 'what is pointed,' and it is related to σκάλλω 'hack.'²"⁶⁰⁴ The possibilities of ancient reference include a pointed stake, which could be used on occasion as an instrument of execution; and also a splinter or thorn, e.g., one stuck in the finger or foot. The ancient idea of σκόλοψ as a stake was mostly linked to execution of criminals. But σκόλοψ as a splinter or thorn focused on the causing of pain and discomfort. Interestingly the 3 uses of σκόλοψ in the LXX uniformly use it for thorn in translation of three separate Hebrew words: שֵׁשׁ (śēk) in Num. 33:55; סִי רָהַ (sî-rā(h)) in Hos. 2:6; and סִילֹן (sil-lōn) in Ezek. 28:24. The idea of thorn as a source of pain seems more appropriate to 2 Cor. 12:7. Thus as a figurative reference the point of emphasis would fall on something causing ongoing pain physically to the apostle.

Clearly from the reference in v. 9b, it belonged to Paul's ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, in my weaknesses. These, however, are distinct from other difficulties mentioned in v. 10: διὸ εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὕβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις, ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ.

Was this some kind of debilitating disease? Not likely, since the physical abuse described in 11:23-27 would not have been survivable by one whose body was weakened down with some kind of severe disabling disease. But some kind of problem such as an eye disease would be in the realm of possibility, such as alluded to in Gal. 4:15, ποῦ οὖν ὁ μακαρισμὸς ὑμῶν; μαρτυρῶ γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰ δυνατόν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς claims that Paul was a little man, crooked, and almost bent like a bow, with a pale countenance, long and wrinkled, and a bald head. Pseudo-Chrysostom echoes Lucian's height of Paul, referring to him as 'the man of three cubits'.^[196] Paul himself admits to having been 'abnormally born',^[197] perhaps suggesting some kind of deformity such as being crooked or hunch-backed, that tormented him.^[198] ["Paul the Apostle: 11. Physical Appearance," *Wikipedia.org*: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_the_Apostle#Physical_appearance

⁶⁰⁴Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 7:409.

ὑμῶν ἐξορῶντες ἐδώκατέ μοι, What has become of the goodwill you felt? For I testify that, had it been possible, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. This assumes, of course, that Paul is speaking literally here, rather than figuratively.⁶⁰⁵ The later statement in Gal. 6:11, "Ἴδετε πηλίκους ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῆ ἐμῇ χειρί, See what large letters I make when I am writing in my own hand!, properly corresponds to the understanding of somekind of problem with Paul's eyes. Sir William Ramsay in *St. Paul the Traveler*, pp. 94-97, was a proponent of malaria based problems.⁶⁰⁶ Yet, elements of

⁶⁰⁵"The statement 'you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me,' while often popularly taken to suggest ophthalmia on Paul's part (see Comment on v 13), is probably an idiom that speaks of going to the extreme to provide for another's needs. The eyes in antiquity were considered the most precious of the body's parts (cf. 'the apple of his eye' in Deut 32:10; Ps 17:8; Zech 2:8), and so 'to tear out one's eyes for someone' is a graphic and significant idiom for going to the extreme for another's welfare. Certainly it is more telling than our modern idiom of 'giving the shirt off one's back'!" [Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, vol. 41, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 193.]

⁶⁰⁶"2. THE 'THORN IN THE FLESH'. The character of the Pamphylian country, not merely in its modern half-cultivated condition, but at all times, must have been enervating and calculated to bring out any latent weakness of constitution. Now it is a probable and generally accepted view that the 'physical weakness,' which was the occasion why Paul preached to the Galatians, was the same malady which tormented him at frequent intervals. I have suggested that this malady was a species of chronic malaria fever; and, in view of criticisms, it is necessary to dwell on this point; for I have incurred the blame of exaggerating an ephemeral attack. The question is put whether such an illness 'could reasonably have called forth their contempt and loathing.'

"A physical weakness, which recurs regularly in some situation that one is regularly required by duty to face, produces strong and peculiar effect on our human nature. An attentive student of mankind has caught this trait and described it clearly in one of the characters whom his genius has created. I quote from Charles Reade's description of a clergyman engaged in warfare against the barbarity of prison discipline, upon whom every scene of cruelty which he had often to witness produced a distressing physical effect, sickness and trembling. 'His high-tuned nature gave way. He locked the door that no one might see his weakness; and, then, succumbing to nature, he fell first into a sickness and then into a trembling, and more than once hysterical tears gushed from his eyes in the temporary prostration of his spirit and his powers. Such are the great. Men know their feats, but not their struggles.' The feeling of shame at this weakness is several times described in the course of the narrative (It is Never too Late to Mend); and, when at last nature, on the verge of a more serious physical prostration, ceased to relieve itself in this painful way, 'he thanked Heaven for curing him of that contemptible infirmity, so he called it'. Yet that weakness did not prevent the sufferer from facing his duty, but only came on as a consequence; and it could be hidden within the privacy of his chamber. Let the reader conceive the distress and shame of the sufferer, if the weakness had prostrated him before his duty was finished, and laid him helpless before them all when he required his whole strength. Surely he would have 'besought the Lord that it might depart from' him, and regarded it as 'a messen-

ger of Satan sent to buffet him' (2 Cor. 12:7–8).

"Now, in some constitutions malaria fever tends to recur in very distressing and prostrating paroxysms, whenever one's energies are taxed for a great effort. Such an attack is for the time absolutely incapacitating: the sufferer can only lie and feel himself a shaking and helpless weakling, when he ought to be at work. He feels a contempt and loathing for self, and believes that others feel equal contempt and loathing.

"Charles Reade's hero could at least retire to his room, and lock the door, and conceal his weakness from others; but, in the publicity of Oriental life, Paul could have no privacy. In every paroxysm, and they might recur daily, he would lie exposed to the pity or the contempt of strangers. If he were first seen in a Galatian village, or house, lying in the mud on the shady side of a wall for two hours shaking like an aspen leaf, the gratitude that he expresses to the Galatians, because they 'did not despise nor reject his infirmity,' was natural and deserved.

"Fresh light is thrown on this subject by an observation of Mr. Hogarth, my companion in many journeys. In publishing a series of inscriptions recording examples of punishment inflicted by the God on those who had approached the sanctuary in impurity, he suggests that malarial fever was often the penalty sent by the God. The paroxysms, recurring suddenly with overpowering strength, and then passing off, seemed to be due to the direct visitation of God. This gives a striking effect to Paul's words in Gal. 4:14, 'you did not despise nor reject my physical infirmity, but received me as an angel of God': though the Galatians might have turned him away from their door as a person accursed and afflicted by God, they received him as God's messenger. The obvious implication of this passage has led many to the view that Paul's malady was epilepsy, which was also attributed to the direct visitation of God.

"A strong corroboration is found in the phrase: 'a stake in the flesh,' which Paul uses about his malady (2 Cor. 12:7). That is the peculiar headache which accompanies the paroxysms: within my experience several persons, innocent of Pauline theorising, have described it as 'like a red-hot bar thrust through the forehead'. As soon as fever connected itself with Paul in my mind, the 'stake in the flesh' impressed me as a strikingly illustrative metaphor; and the oldest tradition on the subject, quoted by Tertullian and others, explains the 'stake in the flesh' as headache.

"The malady was a 'messenger of Satan'. Satan seems to represent in Pauline language any overpowering obstacle to his work, an obstacle which it was impossible to struggle against: so Satan prevented him from returning to Thessalonica, in the form of an ingenious obstacle, which made his return impossible for the time (P. 230). The words 'messenger sent to buffet me,' imply that it came frequently and unexpectedly, striking him down with the power of the Enemy.

"The idea that the malady was an affection of the eyes, resulting from blinding at his conversion, seems inadequate in itself, unsuitable to his own words, and contradicted by the evidence as to the power of his eyes (P. 38).

"Paul describes the malady as sent to prevent him from 'being exalted overmuch by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations' which had been granted to him; and he clearly implies that it came later than the great revelation, when 'he was caught up even to the third heaven' about 43 A.D. (P. 60). The malady certainly did not begin long before this journey; and the attack in Pamphylia may perhaps have been the first."

[William Mitchell Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1907), 94–97.]

12.7b δὶδὸ
ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι,
287 ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί,
 ἄγγελος σατανᾶ,
ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ,
 ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι.

uncertainty remain with such a perspective.⁶⁰⁷

The appositional ἄγγελος σατανᾶ, messenger of Satan, which redefines σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί, thorn in the flesh, poses some interpretive issues of its own. Clearly Satan is associated with physical illness many times in the biblical text.⁶⁰⁸ Thus the thorn becomes the messenger.

⁶⁰⁷The proposed identifications, legion in number, may be classified under three main headings.⁶⁰ Some representative proponents will be listed under each category.

A. *Spiritual or psychological anxiety*

(1) pangs of conscience about his earlier misdeeds in Jerusalem as a persecutor, which gave him a sense of unworthiness (Schlatter⁶⁶⁷)

(2) anguish over Israel's stubborn disbelief (Menoud, "Thorn" 24–26)

B. *Opposition to Paul*

(1) Opponents in general (Andriessen 462–68; Barré, "Qumran" 225–27; Woods 50–51; Murphy-O'Connor 119; Paul 321–22; Barnett 570 ("the rise of the Judaizing, anti-Paul movement"))

(2) A single opponent (Mullins 301–2; Forbes 21; NAB2 513, note on 12:7b)

(3) Opposition at Corinth

• the opposition and insults of the "false apostles" (11:14) (Bieder 332; Binder 10–11)

• the accusation of Paul's detractors at Corinth that he was an ἄγγελος Σατανᾶ, having been a persecutor of the church (Thierry 309)

• the rejection of the legitimacy of Paul's apostolate by a minority in the "sick" Corinthian church (McCant 149–50; "Thorn" 550–72)

C. *Physical malady*

(1) Unspecified as to its nature (BAGD 441b, 743b, 756c; K. L. Schmidt, TDNT 3.820; Dodd 68; Bruce, Paraphrase 155; History 245; Bultmann 116, 224; Black 146; Fee, Presence 352–53; Thomas 45–47)

(2) Specified

• Fever: (a) malarial (Ramsay 94–97; Allo 311, 320–21; Prumm 1.664–65) (b) Malta (Alexander 547–48)

• Defective vision (Nisbet 126; Leary 520–22)

• Migraine headaches (Uhle-Wettler 161; Heckel, "Dorn" 76; Thrall 818).

"The present writer believes that some kind of physical ailment most easily accommodates the seven characteristics of the σκόλοψ outlined above."

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 858–859.

⁶⁰⁸It is worth noting that Satan is associated with physical illness in the biblical tradition. We see this in Job 2:5, where Satan is allowed (by God's permission) to inflict sickness. Also in Luke 13:16 Satan is credited as the one responsible for the woman be-



This is the most natural function of the use of appositional constructions in ancient Greek. Assuming it is some kind of physical problem, the thorn becomes the physical tool used by Satan⁶⁰⁹ for tempting and harassing the apostle.

The three purpose clauses define intent; two are identical in wording: ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, *so that I might not be bloated up*; and then ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, *so that it might beat me up*. All three are interconnected to one another conceptually. The first two speak of God's intent with the thorn, while the third one speaks of Satan's intent with the thorn. The divine intent ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι surround the entire statement as the first and last expressions. Graphically they portray the different desires between God and Satan around the same thorn.

Satan's intent ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, *so that it might beat me up*, speaks to hurting and destroying a person. But one must not overlook an important connection visually affirmed in the above diagram. The clause ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ modifies the aorist passive verb ἐδόθη. The

ing bent over for eighteen years. There is nothing to suggest that a 'literal' messenger (ἄγγελος) was the agent for these respective illnesses. In addition, the term 'angel of Satan' was not necessarily a common phrase.⁸⁸⁸ Contrary to those who see ἄγγελος, 'messenger,' as signifying a 'person' (specifically, adversaries), Paul may have simply been attributing his ailment to satanic origin,⁸⁸⁹ but always with the conviction that God was in control.⁸⁹⁰ Probably the most telling argument against the position that Paul was referring to human opponents as the thorn in the flesh (and by now it should be apparent that the possibilities offered concerning the thorn roughly fall into two categories, namely, human opponents and physical ailment) is found in 12:8. This verse relates that Paul prayed that God would remove the thorn. Would the apostle pray to be spared persecution? This is doubtful, since persecution was the fuel on which Paul seemed to thrive. The more he was persecuted the more he seemed determined to press the claims of his apostolate. Moreover, if this thorn was given to Paul near the time of his revelation of 12:2–4, then it is doubtful that Paul was speaking of the opponents in 11:13–15,⁸⁹¹ for he had yet to confront them. Yet we must honestly recognize⁸⁹² that a chronically ill Paul does not fit well with the picture of Paul found in the NT. Rather, Paul is one who must be seen as in robust health and with a strong constitution. On the other side, at Corinth where his apostolic role was under fire, any physical weakness would have seemed a liability; then Paul could not deny that the estimate of his person in 10:10, 11:21, and 12:10 is valid, however much it was exploited by his traducers." [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 609–610.]

^{609a}In place of the form Σατανᾶ, read by P⁴⁶ κ* A* B D* F G 0243 1739 pc, some witnesses read the indeclinable form Σατάν (κ² A^c D1 Ψ 33 1881 M syr^b). Σατάν transliterates the Hebrew *šāṭān* while Σατανᾶς represents the Aramaic *sāṭānā*." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 829.]

meaning?⁶¹⁰ The thorn was given by God to Paul, while Satan merely sought to use it for destructive intent. His desire was to turn it into his ἄγγελος, *messenger*, so that through the thorn Satan could get to Paul in order 'to beat him up,' ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, with the thorn. Assuming the thorn to be some kind of illness that impacted Paul's eyes, how Satan could seek to 'beat Paul up' with limited vision is very easy to understand.

The attacking of Paul, κολαφίζῃ, is described in present tense active voice terms, i.e., as ongoing striking of Paul over the duration of his ministry. It was not a one time event, only connected to his special vision just described in vv. 2-5. The gaining of the thorn from every signal in the context here came early on in the apostle's ministry, and just possibly even prior to the Damascus road experience with Christ. But it is highly doubtful that it had anything to do with the scales that came off Paul's eyes through the touch of Ananias in Damascus (cf. Acts 9:8-9, 17-19). Such a connection would mean the end of the thorn through the miraculous touch of Ananias just three days after the blinding encounter with Christ. Clearly this won't fit Paul's depiction in Second Corinthians.

The divine intent, ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, stated twice at the beginning and the end of the sentence, dramatically highlights God's intention for giving Paul this thorn. The present tense passive voice used signals ongoing intention to blunt continuously the temptation toward developing a huge ego by Paul. The verb ὑπεραίρω denotes here having "*an undue sense of one's self-importance*,"⁶¹¹ with its roots in ὑπερ + αἰρω, *I rise up*. The passive, with a figurative meaning linked to one's sense of

^{610a}Paul confesses that he is not the agent responsible for this thorn. He reports that the thorn ἐδόθη μοι, 'was given to me.' It is doubtful that Satan is the giver, even if σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί, 'thorn in the flesh,' is the grammatical subject of ἐδόθη, 'was given.'⁸⁵⁶ If Paul had intended to convey such information, he most likely would have chosen a word other than δίδωμι, 'give.' This word was usually employed to denote that God's favor had been bestowed (cf. Gal 3:21; Eph 3:8; 5:19; 1 Tim 4:14). Plummer⁸⁵⁷ suggests that if Satan was the agent, ἐπιτίθημι, 'lay upon' (Luke 10:30; 23:26; Acts 16:23), or βάλλω, 'cast' (Rev 2:24), or ἐπιβάλλω, 'put on' (1 Cor 7:35), would have been more appropriate. As mentioned earlier, we have an example of the *passivum divinum*, 'divine passive.' This 'divine passive,' speaking of God as the hidden agent behind events and experiences in human lives, fits well into Paul's thinking. He sees both the revelation and the thorn as from God.⁸⁵⁸ Hence Zmijewski is correct when he writes that though 'thorn' can be assumed to be the grammatical subject of 'was given,' in reality 'the evidence points to God being the essential acting subject.'⁸⁵⁹" [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 606.]

⁶¹¹William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1031.

self-importance like here, gets very close to the English idiom, to be bloated up.

The point in the repeat of the clause is that the thorn was given in order to keep Paul from being bloated up in pride and arrogance. To remind him that extraordinary actions connected to his life had absolutely nothing to do with Paul and his actions. They came exclusively from God. Paul was to be the vehicle that God desired to use to show Himself to the world. The thorn came so that Paul's human pride and arrogance would never blossom and get in God's way of showing Himself through Paul to the world. And, as would be expected, Satan comes into the picture as the committed spoiler who sought to turn this thorn into defeating God and Paul both by making the thorn his messenger.

That Paul did not want the thorn is indicated in v. 8 through his praying: ὑπὲρ τούτου τρίς τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα ἵνα ἀποστῆ ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, **Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me.** On three separation occasions (τρίς) Paul sought the Lord's assistance (τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα) regarding the thorn (ὑπὲρ τούτου) with the desire that God might remove it (ἵνα ἀποστῆ ἀπ' ἐμοῦ). Most likely the depiction in v. 7 represents a perspective that evolved in Paul's thinking over time, rather than something he recognized immediately. His early response was simply to seek relief from the negative consequences of his 'thorn.' Thus petitions made in prayer to the Lord were lifted up by Paul on three separate occasions.⁶¹² Another possible

⁶¹²At all events, what he is here concerned with is to describe his reaction in such a way as to lead up to the dominical word in v. 9a, by which, since that time, his whole attitude to his apostolic existence has been shaped. This calls for some detail in respect of his prayer. It was threefold: τρίς ... παρεκάλεσα. For Chrysostom, the τρίς is simply the equivalent of πολλάκις, 'often',³⁷² and for Barrett, similarly, it is not strictly numerical, but indicates 'earnest and repeated prayer'.³⁷³ If so, however, why did Paul not use πολλάκις itself,³⁷⁴ perhaps with some such adverb as σπουδαίως? Furthermore, his general cultural background, both Jewish and Greek,³⁷⁵ would support the ordinary numerical meaning of τρίς. In Judaism the number three is associated with prayer in various ways. Windisch draws attention to the three-member Aaronic blessing (Num 6:24–26), to Elijah's threefold breathing upon the widow's son with the prayer that he might be restored to life (3 Kgdms 17:21), and to the Jewish custom of praying three times a day.³⁷⁶ The threefold prayer was known in Greek religion similarly, as Windisch, again, observes. He cites a clause from Euripides: μηδὲν μάταιον εἰς τρίς εὔξασθαι θεῶν.³⁷⁷ Furnish³⁷⁸ and Betz³⁷⁹ note that threefold prayers are to be found also in hellenistic healing stories. (The number three has no significance, however, for the records of healings at Epidauros, according to Delling.³⁸⁰) The underlying idea in both cultural spheres may be that a prayer can be efficacious only if it has been uttered three times.³⁸¹ Within the Christian tradition the most obvious example of the threefold petition is the prayer of Jesus in the Gethsemane narrative (Mt 26:39–44 and parallels).³⁸² This is recounted as a thrice-spoken prayer uttered on one specific occasion. Was the same true of Paul's prayer?³⁸³ A few commentators prefer to think of three separate occasions,³⁸⁴ perhaps the first

meaning of τρίς is a threefold petition made in a single prayer. I suspect the former is the more likely intent of the number three.⁶¹³ In either meaning the symbolical significance would be that of completeness. That is, Paul prayed until the divine answer came that say no to his request. Then he stopped praying for deliverance from the thorn.

Interestingly, the use of τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα, **I sought the Lord's help**, as a part of prayer language in Paul's day had Greek tones rather than Jewish tones.⁶¹⁴

few times he experienced the onslaught of the 'thorn'.³⁸⁵ Others are indeterminate. But the connotations which Heckel sees attached to τρίς strongly suggest that the apostle's prayer was a repeated petition made at one particular time. The number three allows an action to be seen as complete, since it includes beginning, middle and end, and it serves to effect decision: success or failure. Thus, with the complexive aorist παρεκάλεσα, the τρίς sums up the threefold prayer as a 'rounded-off' event.³⁸⁶ [Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 818–819.

⁶¹³But what is the significance of the adverb τρίς ('three times') that stands, in an emphatic position,¹⁷⁵ before the phrase τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα? If Paul had wished to indicate simply that his request to the Lord was made 'often',¹⁷⁶ one wonders why πολλάκις (8:22; 11:23, 26–27) was not used (Plummer 353). If τρίς was intended to emphasize the intensity of Paul's desire,¹⁷⁷ would not that emphasis have been expressed by a word such as πολλά (Mark 5:10, 23) or σπουδαίως (Luke 7:5) with παρεκάλεσα?¹⁷⁸ Again, it seems improbable that the threefold request was prompted by Paul's awareness of Christ's threefold petition in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:44; Mark 14:41),¹⁷⁹ or that τρίς signifies the completed nature of the entreaty¹⁸⁰ or means 'three times in succession on one occasion' as though only a prayer offered three times was effective.¹⁸¹ There is no compelling reason to resist the natural sense of τρίς, 'Three different times' (NLT). If so, this adverb could point either to repeated requests soon after the first onset of the σκόλοψ (Bruce 249) or to three separate occasions when a particularly severe attack of the σκόλοψ prompted an especially fervent request for its removal.¹⁸² On the basis of this latter view we may cautiously proceed to use other data in 2 Corinthians (1:8–11; 2:12–13; 12:2) and Acts (13:13–14) to try to identify these three occasions—an effort tentatively made in section B.5. of an Excursus after 1:11 on "Paul's Affliction in Asia (2 Corinthians 1:8–11): Paul's Personal Background to 2 Corinthians."

"We may see τρίς ... παρεκάλεσα, then, as precisely parallel to τρίς ἐραβδίσην (11:25). In both cases three separate events are in mind and a constative aorist views these events in their similarity or identity as constituting a unified whole. It is not the tense of the verbs but the accompanying adverb that indicates the repetition of the action; the constative aorist can also depict single or protracted action. Similarly, in the case of τρίς ... παρεκάλεσα it is not the tense but the context (vv. 9–10) that shows that additional requests of the same kind are not contemplated (cf. Turner 72)."

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 860–861.]

⁶¹⁴In secular Greek παρακαλέω is a common word for invoking a deity for aid.¹⁶⁷ In the Gospels it is regularly used to describe



With its common use, however, for requests for aid from the earthly Jesus in the four gospels, it takes on another interesting tone. In a way that would clearly resonate with his Corinthian readers with both Greek and Jewish backgrounds, Paul frames his petitions to the Lord for deliverance from the thorn.⁶¹⁵

The divine response to this petition for deliverance is given in v. 9a: καὶ εἶρηκέν μοι ἄρκει σοι ἡ χάρις μου, ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται, **but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.”**

12.9 καὶ
289 εἶρηκέν μοι ἄρκει σοι ἡ χάρις μου, γὰρ ἡ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται.

Not the answer a modern prosperity gospel preacher would have given for certain. Nor is it the answer a pleasure driven western society would want to hear. Nor was it anywhere close to the answer that Paul's critics at Corinth would have wanted to give to Paul. But, instead, it is the answer of God whose wisdom far exceeds that of all mankind put together. And it is the answer that one as committed to Christ as the apostle

requests made to Jesus for his help, whether in healing (e.g., Matt. 8:5; Mark 8:22) or in granting a favor (e.g., Mark 5:17–18).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 859.]

⁶¹⁵“It is scarcely open to question that the person addressed in Paul’s plea for relief from the battering of the ἄγγελος Σατανᾶ was the Lord Jesus. (1) ὁ κύριος from v. 8 is the implicit subject of εἶρηκεν in v. 9, so that μοι in the expression ἡ χάρις μου must also refer to ‘the Lord.’ But the closely related δύναμις in v. 9a (note γὰρ and the possessive article ἡ¹⁷⁰) is defined in v. 9b as ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ. (2) The articular κύριος normally refers to Christ in Paul.¹⁷¹ (3) In 13:7 prayer addressed to God the Father is expressed by εὐχόμεθα ... πρὸς τὸν θεόν. Now it is clear that in the early church prayers both of thanksgiving and of petition were normally directed to God the Father (e.g., Phil. 1:3; 4:6). Eph. 2:18 expresses the norm: Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, enjoy access to the Father, through Christ, in one Spirit (πρὸς-διὰ-ἐν). But on occasion an individual believer (Acts 7:59–60; 9:10–17; 22:16, 19; 2 Cor. 12:8) or a group of believers (Acts 1:24; 9:21; 1 Cor. 1:2; 16:22; Rev. 22:20) seems to have invoked the Lord Jesus directly.¹⁷² Such a practice occasions no surprise, given the early Christian belief in the deity of Christ.¹⁷³ Paul addressed his earnest request to the risen Lord, not merely because Christ is the chief antagonist of Satan and his agents (cf. 1 Cor. 15:24; Eph. 6:10, 12; Col. 2:15) such as the ἄγγελος Σατανᾶ,¹⁷⁴ or because, as the early Jesus, he was the healer of illness, but perhaps also because the extraordinary revelations that occasioned the giving of the σκόλοψ (v. 7) emanated from the Lord Jesus (v. 1).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 860.]

Paul can find joy and encouragement in hearing.

Note a literary strategy given here that is important but easy to miss.⁶¹⁶ Paul’s request is framed in indirect discourse thus de-emphasizing it. But God’s response is framed in direct discourse, thus dramatically highlighting it as by far the most important part of this dialogue between Paul and the risen Christ.

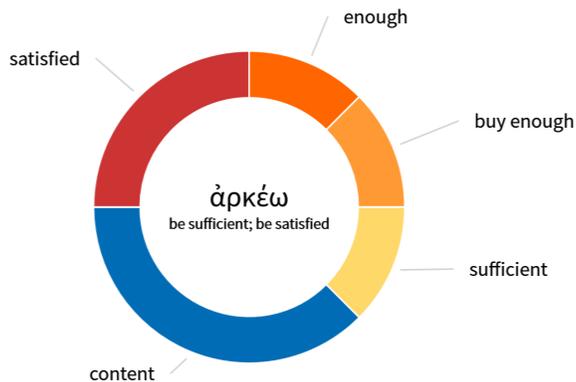
How Christ spoke to Paul is not given; just the simple verbal statement καὶ εἶρηκέν μοι, **and He said to me.** The καὶ connects this divine speaking to the preceding request made by the apostle as a response. The response was made μοι, **to me**, indicating a personal, direct communication by Christ to the apostle Paul. It was private, not public. It was simple, not sensational. The perfect tense active voice εἶρηκέν from λέγω denotes a speaking with consequence. That is, when God said no it was a permanent no, not a temporary one.

The content of what was spoken to Paul is twofold: a promise based on ongoing reality and a claim that also is ongoing. Note the two verbs, ἄρκει, **is sufficient**, at the beginning of the compound sentence, and τελεῖται, **is being made complete**, coming at the very end of the sentence. They both are present tense thus denoting ongoing sufficiency and completing of work.

Promise: ἄρκει σοι ἡ χάρις μου, **sufficient for you is My grace.** The pre-position of the verb ἄρκει at the beginning of the sentence elevates emphasis upon the verbal concept. Used 8 times inside the NT (cf. graphic below) it contains a wide range of meanings built

⁶¹⁶“Whereas Paul’s request was reported in indirect speech (v. 8), Christ’s response is given in direct speech. Also, καὶ εἶρηκεν (perfect) stands in stark contrast to τρις τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα (aorist): ‘Three times I made an urgent appeal to the Lord.... But his answer has been....’ The petition had been made three times, but now, with an explicit answer received, the act of petitioning the Lord lay totally in the past and would not be repeated. On the other hand, the Lord’s reply, although given only once (after the third petition), was permanently valid,¹⁸⁴ a point also made by the two timeless or durative presents, ἄρκει and τελεῖται, that form part of that reply. For Paul, his urgent requests were a memory of the past, but Christ’s reassuring answer was a reality of the present. Another contrast between v. 9 and what has preceded relates to the ἄρρητα ῥήματα of v. 4. Whereas the things Paul heard in paradise were both impossible and impermissible to express in human language, Christ’s reply to Paul’s plea was both possible and permissible to describe. How Christ communicated his response is not stated. It may have been in a vision (cf. Acts 18:9), or when Paul had fallen into a trance during prayer (cf. Acts 22:17–18, 21), or through the testimony of the Spirit (cf. Acts 20:23), or simply during meditation on the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, events which epitomize the three central concepts in Christ’s message to Paul (v. 9a)—grace, weakness, and power.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 861–862.]





around the core idea of adequacy. It is part of a word group -- ἀρκέω, ἀρκετός, αὐτάρκεια, αὐτάρκης⁶¹⁷ -- that speaks of satisfaction or contentment.⁶¹⁸ Although di-

⁶¹⁷Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:464.

⁶¹⁸ ἀρκέω, ἀρκετός.*

"In the first instance this is an external¹ expression of 'satisfaction' or 'contentment'. In philosophical and religious reflection, however, it has within itself the tendency to become a radical demand or admonition. This can take place in various ways.

"1. The demand is that man should be content with the goods allotted to him by fate or by God; that he should exercise ἀρκεῖσθαι τοῖς παροῦσι; that he should ask no more than he is given. Such statements may be either Christian or non-Christian maxims. The difference lies in the general view which gives rise to them. Thus we may have merely the prudent suppression of passion and desire, as when Josephus, to avoid bloodshed, warns the rebels: ἀρκουμένους τοῖς ἑαυτῶν ἐφοδίοις, Vit., 244. Or we may have the freedom from want of the philosopher to whom external goods are incidental. A favourite expression is as follows: ἀρκεῖσθαι τοῖς παροῦσι (e.g., Teles, P. 11, 5; 38, 10; 41, 12, Hense; M. Ant., VI, 30, 9: ὡς ὀλίγοις ἀρκούμενος, οἶον οἰκήσει, στρωμνῆ, ἐσθῆτι, τροφῆ, ὑπηρεσία. Stob. Ecl., III, 273, 2: (Eraminondas) ὁ τοῦτοις ἀρκούμενος.

"For the NT this freedom from want is grounded in God; His provision is sufficient. Hb. 13:5: ἀρκούμενοι τοῖς παροῦσιν (→ supra), 'for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee'; 1 Tm. 6:8; cf. also Mt. 6:34: ἀρκετὸν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἡ κακία αὐτῆς (on the basis of v. 32: οἶδεν γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ...). The thought of content is underlined by reference to imminent retribution, as in the preaching of the Baptist in Lk. 3:14.

"Between the philosopher and the eschatological believer of the NT stands the teacher of the Torah who from Sabbath to Sabbath is satisfied with a carob-bean, b. Ta'an, 24b.: R. Jehuda in the name of Rab: 'Every day a voice (לִּישָׁרָא)² rings out and says: the whole world is nourished for the sake of my son Chanina, and my son Chanina is satisfied (לֵישָׁרָא)³ with a carob-bean from the evening before the Sabbath to the next evening before the Sabbath.'

"2. The admonition to be content can easily change into a warning against becoming secure and complacent in the illusion of sufficiency. Epict. Diss., I, 6, 14: ἐκείνοις μὲν ἀρκεῖ τὸ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν ... ἡμῖν δ' ... οὐκέτι ταῦτ' ἀπαρκεῖ. Biblical statements are numerous but for the most part they do not use the stem ἀρκ-. Cf. Hos. 12:8 f.; 13:6; Sir. 5:1 (→ αὐτάρκης); Lk. 6:25; 12:19; Rev. 3:17 (→ ἐμπλετισμένος, πλούσιος etc.).

"3. The religious connection is brought out when contentment is linked with a supreme philosophical or religious good. For here the statement concerning what suffices expresses particularly

rectly linked to Paul's particular situation, the axiomatic framing of the saying from God extends clearly its reach to a universal principle. Divine grace, ἡ χάρις μου, Christ promises, is adequate to bring you contentment. Thus coping with bouts brought on by the σκόλοψ, thorn, would become possible through the abundant supply of divine grace. Thus God's grace would block the voice of Satan seeking to use the σκόλοψ as his ἄγγελος, messenger. That didn't not in any way mean diminishing of the pain and discomfort caused by the σκόλοψ. Rather, the dynamism of God's grace closes off any opportunity for Satan to use the σκόλοψ as a channel of temptation to Paul, as well as to other believers. Paul, to be sure, continued to struggle with bouts of discomfort produced by his σκόλοψ. But God assured him of divine assistance during those moments that would enable the apostle to endure and bring witness to God's presence in his life and ministry.

The foundation underneath this promise is ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται, for My power is being brought to completion in your weakness. A chiasmic structure seems to be incorporated into the sequencing of these two statement:

A	ἀρκεῖ,	is sufficient
B	σοι,	for you
C	ἡ χάρις μου,	My grace
C'	ἡ δύναμις,	My power
B'	ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ,	in weakness
A'	τελεῖται,	is being completed

In such structures the middle pair form the core point of emphasis.⁶¹⁹ Here God's grace and power are central.

clearly the profoundest character of the underlying view of life. For the philosopher supreme content is to fashion his life in accordance with his φύσις or δαίμων. M. Ant., II, 13, 1: ὅτι ἀρκεῖ πρὸς μόνῳ τῷ ἔνδον ἑαυτοῦ δαίμονι εἶναι καὶ τοῦτον γνησίως θεραπεύειν. VIII, 1, 3: ἀρκεσθητι δέ, εἰ κὰν τὸ λοιπὸν τοῦ βίου ..., ὡς ἡ φύσις σου θέλει, βίωσι, IX, 26: ἀρκεῖσθαι τῷ σῶ ἡγεμονικῶ. To the degree that the force working in the philosopher is regarded as a gift of deity, the ἀρκεῖ μοι is related to it and the statement of content becomes a concentrated expression of religious union with God and the spirituality implanted in man by Him. Epict. Diss., I, 1, 12 f. (Zeus speaking to the philosopher): ἐδόκαμ' ἐν σοὶ μέρος τι ἡμέτερον, τὴν δύναμιν ταύτην τὴν ὀρμητικὴν τε καὶ ἀφορμητικὴν ... ἀρκεῖ οὖν αὐτοῖς, IV, 10, 14 ff.: ἄς ἔλαβον ἀφορμὰς παρά σου ... ἐφ' ὅσον ἐχρησάμην τοῖσσοις, ἀρκεῖ μοι ... σὰ γὰρ ἦν πάντα, σύ μοι αὐτὰ δέδωκας. οὐκ ἀρκεῖ οὕτως ἔχοντα ἐξελεθῆν. Iamb. Vit. Pyth., 1: ἐξαρκεῖ ἡμῖν ἡ τῶν θεῶν βούλησις."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:464–465.]

⁶¹⁹"This structure makes it improbable that the second statement (C' B' A') is merely aphoristic, expressing a universally valid principle that is applicable to believer and unbeliever alike. Similarly, this chiasmic or concentric structure makes it probable that the second statement relates principally to Christ's δύναμις and Paul's ἀσθένεια. Now it is true that at first sight the second affirmation seems to be an aphorism, given its brevity, the anar-

And grace equals power, in this defining of grace as power.⁶²⁰ The sphere of operation of this divine grace/power is referenced by B / B' as σοι which equals ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ. In this divine contradiction of things, one can discern best divine grace at work in human weaknesses, such as Paul's thorn. The operating activity of the divine grace / power is then referenced by A / A' as ἀρκεῖ, is sufficient, which means τελεῖται, is being brought to completion. The connecting link between the two strophes is γὰρ which defines the second strophe as validating the first line. For example, the sufficiency of God's grace is possible because of the dynamic power of God infused into it.

Verse 10a, with the inferential conjunction διὸ introducing it, defines Paul's response to what Christ had communicated to him about his σκόλοψ: διὸ εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὑβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις, ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ· ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ, τότε

θροῦς ἀσθενείᾳ, and present tense of τελεῖται.¹⁸⁶ But we should not overlook (1) the (possessive) article with δύναμις¹⁸⁷ which matches ἡ χάρις (μου), (2) the subsequent ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ (v. 9b), and (3) Paul's restatement of ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ by the phrase ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου (v. 9b). As Paul heard and now recounts this second affirmation of Christ, his primary thought would have been of Christ's power reaching its zenith in his own weakness." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 862–863.]

⁶²⁰In the present context it seems impossible to posit a precise distinction between δύναμις and χάρις; here they are essentially synonymous.¹⁸⁸ Both denote divine gifts of enablement, the power for Paul to fulfill his apostolic calling of service and suffering (4:7; 6:7; 13:4; 1 Cor. 15:10). What is more, both are renewable endowments, not once-for-all acquisitions; the constancy of the supply of χάρις and δύναμις is implied by the presents ἀρκεῖ and τελεῖται. The basic meaning of τελέω is 'bring something to its τέλος,' whether that 'end' be a termination or a goal. There is a colorful array of possible renderings or paraphrases for the passive τελεῖται:¹⁸⁹ 'finds its consummation' (BAGD 811a), 'attains its perfection' (TCNT), 'is most fully seen' (REB), 'is at full stretch' (NJB), 'is made fully present' (Furnish 513), 'realizes its full potential' (Carrez 226), 'is truly efficacious' (G. Dellling, TDNT 8.59), 'has unhindered scope' (Meyer 684), 'reaches its zenith.' If this second dominical statement in v. 9a is not a general maxim (see above), ἀσθένεια here will not refer to generic human weakness. First and foremost it will refer to the weakness Paul felt during and after an assault of his σκόλοψ, then more generally to his weakness as 'a slave of Christ Jesus' (Rom. 1:1) who, in obedience to his apostolic calling, suffered as a slave would, being 'hard-pressed at every turn' (4:8), an object of dishonor and scorn (6:8; 1 Cor. 4:9–10), economically poor (6:10; 1 Cor. 4:11), and constantly exposed to death (6:9; 11:23; 1 Cor. 15:30–31).¹⁹⁰ But we should probably find a still broader reference in ἀσθένεια, a reference to attitudinal weakness, the acknowledgment of one's creatureliness and of one's impotence to render effective service to God without his empowering." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 863.]

δυνατός εἰμι, Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong. It makes explicit what is considered implicit in the preceding statement(s).

12.10 διὸ
291 εὐδοκῶ
ἐν ἀσθενείαις,
ἐν ὑβρεσιν,
ἐν ἀνάγκαις,
ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις,
ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ·

Thus with Christ's assurance of the sufficiency of divine grace for his thorn problem, coupled also with the claim that God's power is better completed in Paul's weaknesses, the apostle then indicates complete contentment with his thorn along with other hardships.

The verb εὐδοκῶ, from εὐδοκέω, and the derivative noun εὐδοκία, has an etymological origin from δέχεσθαι, to welcome. The adverb εὐ, attached as a prefix, denotes good or well. The translation challenge is correctly putting together this concept embedded in εὐδοκέω. It is not quite the sense of receiving someone or something well. The mental emphasis of δοκέω, I think, consider, comes into the picture somewhat. The idea moves toward forming a positive view point with the content creating this stance usually defined by the preposition ἐν. Thus the idea I take pleasure in... commonly expresses the sense of the verb.

Therefore Paul indicates, through a listing of negatives, what he takes pleasure in. They are introduced by the preposition ἐν with the last pair linked together by καὶ. Via Christ's response to Paul (v. 9), these negatives are turned into positives through the working of God's dynamitic grace. These are as follows:

ἐν ἀσθενείαις, in weaknesses. The noun ἀσθένεια stresses physical and mental weakness, usually related to some kind of illness or sickness. Note: the English word 'disease' should be avoided since Paul's world did not think in terms implied by this modern western medical word. Literally the word denotes lack of strength, and such may be produced by some type of physical malady.

Some commentators see ἐν ἀσθενείαις as an inclusive header label with those that follow designating specific kinds of weaknesses. But absolutely no grammar signal of this is provided. It is better to treat it as a separate category in a listing of four items, with the final listing paired via καὶ.

ἐν ὑβρεσιν, in insults.⁶²¹ As a member of the word ⁶²¹ὑβρις is etym. obscure. The second syllable is originally connected with βριαρός 'weighty,' βριθῶ 'heavily laden.'¹ Popular etym., as already in Hom., derives it from ὑπὲρ along the lines of 'beyond measure.'² This is linguistically impossible but important



group -- + ὕβρις, + ὑβρίζω, + ἐνυβρίζω, + ὑβριστής⁶²² -- the central idea is 'an invasion of another's sphere of existence.'⁶²³ The action can be verbal in the form of insults, expressions of contempt, scorn etc. Or it may refer to violent actions such as rape, hitting etc. The attitude of arrogance behind such is embedded in the concept. The noun ὕβρις in the locative case plural ὕβρεσιν, is only used here in Paul's writings, but Luke uses it twice for Paul's warning to the ship captain about the looming danger in leaving the harbor in the winter time (Acts. 27:10, 21). Both the verbal and physical meanings are found for the verb ὑβρίζω in the 6 NT uses outside of Paul's writings.

The general trend of commentators is to take ὕβρεσιν here in 2 Corinthians as verbal based on the assumption that it refers to insults hurled at Paul by both his opponents in the church and also by the outsiders at Corinth. But Paul's experiences alluded to here in v. 10 go way beyond what he had experienced just at Corinth. It is better to include both verbal and physical mistreatment included by ὕβρεσιν. Unfortunately no English word exists that closely captures the sense of ὕβρις.

ἐν ἀνάγκαις, in hardships. The noun ἀνάγκη denotes necessity as a part of the word group ἀναγκάζω, ἀναγκαῖος, ἀνάγκη.⁶²⁴ This curious pattern of meanings, historically.³ With both noun and verb the range of meaning is very large. The noun means originally an act which invades the sphere of another to his hurt, a 'trespass,' a 'transgression' of the true norm in violation of divine and human right. Arrogance of disposition is often implied, Hom. Od., 14, 262; 17, 431; cf. also Il., 1, 203. Thus ὕβρις stands contrasted with εὐνομία, δίκη (→ II, 178, 18 ff.) and σωφροσύνη (→ VII, 1097, 5 ff.) and calls for nemesis.⁴ The ref. is to a wicked act, also insult, scorn, contempt, often accompanied by violence, rape, and mistreatment of all kinds. More rarely and later the noun also means something endured, e.g., Plut. Pericl., 12 (I, 158)." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:295.]

⁶²²Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:295.

⁶²³"Since hubris is so broad and can denote disposition, attitude and conduct, sinful turning from or provocation of God, secularism,⁴⁹ as well as vainglorious arrogance, encroachments and tyranny against one's fellows, it is very hard to fix the limits of signification whether over against synon. or related Gk. words or with ref. to the equivalent Hbr. roots. In fact many Hbr. roots stand close in sense to hubris or are in context an expression of it." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:301.]

⁶²⁴"The question bound up with the root ἀναγκ-¹ is pursued by Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* when he explains what is meant by τὸ ἀναγκαῖον. It is ... οὐ ἄνευ οὐκ ἐνδέχεται ζῆν ... and therefore 'all that which is part of the *conditio sine qua non* of being and life'; it is ἐναντίον ... τῆ κατὰ τὴν προαίρεσιν κινήσει καὶ κατὰ τὸν λογισμόν, and therefore all that which is apart from the true fashioning of life and which constricts and opposes it.² Both

denoting either what is essential to life, or that which constricts and opposes what is essential, here flows here toward the latter meaning which contains the negative perspective. Thus here ἐν ἀνάγκαις will match the similar context of usage in 6:4 to denote the experiences in life that 'squeeze the dickens out of us.' Its usage in the listing as validations of being servants of Christ in 6:4b-5 is instructive: ἐν ὑπομονῇ πολλῇ, ἐν θλιψεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν στενοχωρίαῖς, ἐν πληγαῖς, ἐν φυλακαῖς, ἐν ἀκαταστασίαις, ἐν κόποις, ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις, ἐν νηστείαις, through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger. The generalized nature of ἀνάγκαις suggests a variety of life experiences that put great pressure on individuals.

ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαῖς, in persecutions and calamities. This final listing is a pair of evidently closely related kinds of experiences, as signaled by joining them together with καὶ. The noun διωγμός is much more focused on religious based persecution of individuals that includes physical violence against them. The word group includes διώκω, ἐκδιώκω, διωγμός, and διώκτης. The literal meaning of pursue or chase mostly shifts to the idea of chasing someone with intent to do physical harm to them. The noun διωγμός is only used here in 2 Corinthians in the plural form.

Closely related to διωγμός is στενοχωρία which is only used here and in 6:4. Against the etymological background comes the idea of 'squeezeings' for στενοχωρία.⁶²⁵ Thus chasing to do harm by squeezing these meanings are rooted in a third and general meaning: τὸ μὴ ἐνδεχόμενον ἄλλως ἔχειν ἀναγκαῖον φαμεν οὕτως ἔχειν, *Metaph.*, IV, 5, P. 1015a, 20 ff.

"Thus the different meanings of the terms are given, ἀνάγκη is compulsion or necessity and therefore the means of compulsion or oppression; ἀναγκαῖος is that which compels or makes necessary; ἀναγκάζω is to cause or compel someone in all the varying degrees from friendly pressure to forceful compulsion."³

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:344–345.]

⁶²⁵"Attic στενός, Ionic στενός (στενρός) mean 'narrow,' 'thin,' 'paltry,' 'poor,' 'wretched.' We find τὸ στεῖνος 'narrow place' in Hom. Il., 8, 476; 12, 66, "press" in battle 15, 426, 'narrow pass' 23, 419 etc. From Thuc. we find the noun στενοχωρία 'narrow place,' and later the verb στενοχωρέω 'to be squeezed, pressed,' more commonly 'to confine,' 'to compress.' In the lit. sense the word is often used in topographical descriptions, Thuc., VII, 51, 2; 70, 6; Plat. Tim., 25a; Aesch. Pers., 413. In a transf. sense it is found from the Hell. period, medically in Hippocr. Praecepta, 8 (Littré, IX, 262) and in astrological¹ texts, and as a value concept it can denote the paltriness of a question or narrow-mindedness of exposition.² Finally it is used for the 'straits' or 'stresses' of inner or outer problems and difficulties. The exact meaning cannot always be given. Thus in Ps.-Plat. Ep., III, 319c it is not clear whether the ref. is to an external threat to the author on his departure or whether he feared the inner stress of a relation disrupted by his utterance.³



the victim hard brings the two ideas together in a cohesive manner. This easily produces the idea of squeezing the life out of someone in persecution.

Note that these words list categories of abuses that Paul experienced. Note the plural form used uniformly through the listing which stresses multiple individualized instances of each type of abuse. Elsewhere in 2 Corinthians he provides more specific instances of these kinds of abuses. One should especially check the listings in 11:23-27. For *ἀσθένεια* see 11:30; 12:5, 9 (2x); 13:4 (Christ) for the six instances in this letter. His *σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί*, *thorn in the flesh*, is the primary one mentioned. For *ὑβρις*, it is only used here in Paul's writings in an inclusive way without specific instances being given elsewhere in the letter. Yet many of the items included in 11:23-27 could be included under this label. For *ἀνάγκη*, it is a 2 Corinthians term with three uses in 6:4; 9:7, and here in 12:10. Again the term is inclusive of many different kinds of life difficulties. For *διωγμός*, this is the only use inside 2 Corinthians. For *στενοχωρία*, its exclusive use is here and in the similar listing in 6:4. The squeezings referred to are human produced by opponents intending physical harm. This easily captures the gist of many of the items listed in 11:23-27.

What one should conclude here is that Paul through this short listing alludes to the previous more inclusive lists of difficulties he experienced as Christ's servant, especially that found in 11:23-27. The items in chapter 12 characterize those experiences in different ways, but collectively stress the intensity of difficulty faced by Paul. But here in the discovery of Christ's promised grace for such, the apostle learned how to feel joy and contentment in the midst of these abuses.

The prepositional phrase *ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ*, *for Christ's sake*, best goes back to the verb *εὐδοκῶ*, creating the sense of taking pleasure in the many abuses due to

Sometimes we find *θλίψις*, *θλίβω* with *στενοχωρία*, *στενοχωρέω*. Antonyms are *πλατύς*, *εὐρύς* *εὐρυχωρία*, *ἄνεσις* etc., Aesch. Pers., 875; Hdt., II, 8, 3; VIII, 60, 2; Plat. Leg., V, 737a; Plut. Quaest. Conv. V, 6 (II, 679e-f).

"Materially important here are esp. the statements of Hell. philosophy, namely. Stoicism, e.g., Ceb. Tab.,⁴ a work of morality from the 1st cent. A.D. wrongly ascribed to a Pythagorean of the 4th cent. B.C. Ceb. Tab., 15, 1-3 speaks of a narrow door, a little trodden way and a difficult ascent to true culture, *ἀνάβασις στενή πάνυ ... πρὸς τὴν ἀληθινὴν παιδείαν*.⁵ The idea that Chr. preaching is a means and way to such *paideia* finds a basis in the Gk. OT⁶ and was adopted quite early in Chr. theology.⁷ The obstacles, which are not always clearly perceived, are set forth in a fundamental statement in Epict. which is wholly in the spirit of the autarky of the sage: It is we ourselves who create inner and outer problems for ourselves by nurturing wrong ideas about fortune and misfortune and by building our lives on this false foundation.⁸"

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 7:604.]

Christ being in his life. An alternative possibility is to see *ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ* modifying each of the nouns in the prepositional phrase, thus yielding the idea of each of the abuses being endured for the sake of Christ. Ultimately the meanings for the two options is very close to one another.

The justifying statement in v. 10b, introduced by *γάρ*, is *ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατός εἰμι*, *for whenever I may be weak, then strong I am*.⁶²⁶ Paul's ability to take pleasure in abuse rests upon his discovery of the spiritual principle that his moments of weakness allow Christ's strength to come to full expression in his life, thus making him strong.

10.2.3.3.2.6 Boasting from compassion, 12:11-13

11 *Γέγονα ἄφρων, ὑμεῖς με ἠναγκάσατε. ἐγὼ γὰρ*

⁶²⁶"ὅταν (γὰρ²²⁵) ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατός εἰμι has aptly been called Paul's 'personal motto' (Spittler 266). This paradoxical principle, which lay at the center of Paul's life and ministry, is an explicitly and intensely personal application of v. 9b, 'power reaches perfection in weakness.' There the explicit contrast was between *δύναμις* and *ἀσθένεια*, although there was an implicit contrast between Christ's power and Paul's weakness (see on v. 9). Here, however, the explicit antithesis is between two concurrent states of Paul himself, with no explicit reference to Christ, although such a reference is clearly implicit. When Paul acknowledged his weakness and expressed his dependence on Christ, he became simultaneously 'powerful' with Christ's resurrection power.²²⁶

"Behind *ἀσθενῶ* we should probably see an allusion to the physical debility brought about by assaults of Paul's *σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί*, but also to the external afflictions encountered during his service for Christ, circumstances such as 'insults, calamities, persecutions and difficulties' (cf. v. 10a) that prompted a sense of helplessness and drove him to turn to Christ in prayer. The Paul who was *ταπεινός* (10:1) and *ἀσθενής* (10:10) was the true Paul; lowliness and weakness were the hallmarks of his ministry. Yet it was precisely this *ἀσθένεια*, whether physical, psychological, or spiritual, that caused him to rely wholly on Christ and so occasioned his strength. Behind *δυνατός εἰμι* we should see an allusion, not to Paul's own ability to cope with adversity by harnessing all his personal resources, but to his experience of Christ's power, sometimes in delivering him from adversity, sometimes in granting him strength to endure hardship, but always in equipping him for effective service. There is grammatical justification for translating *ὅταν* with the present subjunctive²²⁷ by 'whenever'²²⁸ rather than by 'when,' but the rendering 'whenever I am weak, then I am strong' (NRSV)²²⁹ could suggest that there were only isolated occasions when Paul felt 'weak' and so was 'strong' through Christ. Isaacs's paraphrase illustrates the point: 'for my moments of weakness are the moments of my greatest power.' If, however, 'weakness' was Paul's conscious attitude of humble dependence on Christ in all circumstances but especially in adverse situations, then correspondingly the experience of having Christ's power resting on him would be a constant reality. 'When I am weak, then I am strong' (RSV)²³⁰ leaves open this interpretation."

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 867-868.]



the sense of “I have been playing the fool.” This is clearly signaled by the content of the γὰρ statements. Also remember the above [discussion on ἄφρων](#) in 11:16 where the idea of ἄφρων has more a technical meaning than a merely popular sense of fool. As a rhetorical device in Paul’s world, making an argument from the perspective of a ἄφρων meant adopting the assumptions etc. of one’s opponent and then proceeding to destroy his arguments with counter arguments within the framework of the opponent’s viewpoint. The label ἄφρων suggested that one’s view of his opponents was that they and their arguments were pure foolishness without any credibility. Therefore their viewpoint could easily be turned against them.

Why would Paul resort to this kind of argumentation? ὑμεῖς με ἠναγκάσατε, [you forced me into it](#) -- this is his answer. That is, you Corinthians -- his readers -- compelled him to adopt the viewpoint of his opponents in order to expose the foolishness of what they were claiming about Paul. Such patterns of argumentation are not Paul’s normal or preferred way of presenting and defending the Gospel message. Thus any criticism of Paul for using this device of the ‘fool’s speech’ falls on the shoulders of the Corinthians themselves, since they insisted on Paul defending himself and his Gospel ministry using secular arguments, like his opponents were.

How did the Corinthians ‘compel’ Paul? Did representatives tell him verbally that this was the only way to rebut these opponents? Not likely! Primarily, as statement #295 suggests, the Corinthians, who should have defended Paul against the criticisms of these opponents, did absolutely nothing to defend Paul. No one in the church stood up for Paul against these criticisms.

(1) ἐγὼ γὰρ ὄφειλον ὑφ’ ὑμῶν συνίστασθαι, [for I ought to have been commended by you.](#) You whom I led to Christ and nurtured in the faith should have been my defenders asserts the apostle. Several times in this letter -- 3:1; 4:2; 5:12; 6:4; 10:12, 18 -- Paul ‘commended’ himself and his associates to the Corinthians in their failure to affirm him and his ministry to them. Several times he asserts their duty to affirm him when criticisms are leveled against him. This assertion here in 12:11 is the bluntest and most direct of all. But they failed to do so, and this forced him to have to defend himself. And one of the best ways to do this was through the ‘fool’s speech’ device commonly employed in the Greco-Roman cultural world of the first century.

The defense of his Gospel ministry through the ‘fool’s speech’ device in 11:1-12:10 is now summarized in the second and third sets of γὰρ statements in vv. 11b-13a. Plus it seems to imply three specific groups of criticisms being leveled against Paul by the outsider [opponents at Corinth](#).⁶²⁹

⁶²⁹“Behind these verses there probably lie three charges against

(2) οὐδὲν γὰρ ὑστέρησα τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων εἰ καὶ οὐδὲν εἰμι. τὰ μὲν σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου κατειργάσθη ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ, σημεῖοις τε καὶ τέρασι καὶ δυνάμεσιν, [for I am not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing. The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, signs and wonders and mighty works.](#)

The pressure to adopt the ‘fool’s speech’ mode comes off the foundation of Paul not being inferior in any way to and of these ‘so-called super apostles.’ If the Corinthians won’t defend him, then he will defend himself.⁶³⁰ Here the focus goes to Paul’s situation, whereas in the third justifying set it will shift to the situation of the Corinthians.

The concessive structured sentence has a protasis εἰ καὶ οὐδὲν εἰμι, [even if I am nothing](#), that comes at the end of the statement. The main clause apodosis, [Paul made by his adversaries at Corinth, whether the intruders or some native Corinthians:](#)

(1) that he was inferior to the twelve, ‘the superlative apostles’ (v. 11), and in fact was ‘nothing’ or ‘a nobody’ (οὐδὲν) (v. 11);

(2) that he had not exhibited ‘the characteristics of a true apostle’ (v. 12);

(3) that, as a result of his ministry, the Corinthians were ‘worse off’ than other Christian churches (v. 13).”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 870.]

⁶³⁰“It was his correspondents who should have⁴⁸³ commended him and spoken in his defence over against the hostile criticism of the rival apostles. It was to him that they owed their existence as Christians, and this in itself was sufficient proof of his apostolic status as Paul himself saw it (1 Cor 9:2; 2 Cor 3:2–3).⁴⁸⁴ Why, then, had they failed to give him the support he obviously feels was owing to him? Barrett suggests that it was because they were ashamed of him on two counts: first, because they had got him as their apostle on the cheap (since he did not accept maintenance from them), and secondly, because of his lack of eloquence. In both respects he came off badly by comparison with the rival missionaries.⁴⁸⁵ In addition, both Barrett and Martin claim that the Corinthians’ basic fault lay in their apathy.⁴⁸⁶ But perhaps we should consider whether there might be something to be said in defence of the Corinthians. For in Paul’s first canonical letter to them, had he not appeared, at one point, somewhat to play down the importance of his own role in the creation of their Christian community? Yes, he had planted the seed, and Apollos had later watered it, but it was God who caused the growth. Neither the planter nor the one who waters the seed is of any consequence (1 Cor 3:6–7). Certainly his continuous efforts to retain pastoral control of the church might suggest that he did not quite mean exactly what he had said, but he had said it. Why, then, should the Corinthians feel under any special obligation to produce a testimonial for him, when these other, apparently more professional, ecclesiastical gardeners arrived in the city?” [Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 833–834.]



οὐδὲν ὑστέρησα τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων, *I lack nothing in comparison to these superlative apostles*. One should not the prominent emphasis on the demonstrative pronoun οὐδέν, *nothing*, in both the apodosis and the protasis. It comes as a strong play on denial of inferiority to these outsiders in spite of the reality that no good thing rests in Paul, or in them and everyone else for that matter. The apostle in no way is deficient to these outsiders in spiritual credentials and divine validation, yet this does not rest upon him being an accomplished servant of God. It totally comes from divine grace operating in his life. The concessive structure here puts his denial of inferiority in contrast to and having overcome the barrier of himself being nothing.⁶³¹ The placing of this pronoun in both the apodosis and protasis with slightly different meanings highlights his point, and probably with a sarcastic tone.

The main clause verb ὑστέρησα from ὑστερέω denotes *inferiority, lacking something, missing out on something*. The aorist active form here conveys the sense with the negative pronoun οὐδέν of *not having missed out on anything*. The statement here is virtually identical to the one in 11:5, *Λογίζομαι γὰρ μηδὲν ὑστερηκένα*

⁶³¹A concessive sentence differs from a conditional sentence at one particularly key point. Both use the protasis (dependent) and the apodosis (independent) clause structure. With the conditional sentence the core idea is that the apodosis depends upon the protasis happening. Otherwise, the apodosis does not occur, or is not correct.

But with the concessive sentence, the occurring of the apodosis happens in spite of the existence of the protasis. The protasis sets up a barrier that the apodosis must overcome, not a required situation necessary for the occurrence of the apodosis, as with the conditional sentence.

As one might well expect, different ways of setting up the connections between the apodosis and protasis existed in ancient Greek. The conditional sentence has four distinct patterns with each carrying different nuances of connection between the apodosis and protasis. The concessive sentence has three distinct patterns of construction, each with distinctive definitions of meaning between the apodosis and protasis.

Concessive protasis constructions:

Conj.	εἰ καὶ	(Logical concession)
	ἐὰν καὶ	(Doubtful concession)
	καὶ ἐάν; καὶ εἰ	(Emphatic concession)

As can be detected from the above chart (from Lorin Cranford, *Understanding Biblical Koine Greek, Appendix 6*, page A6-2), The Logical concession type assumes that the barrier to be overcome actually exists. The Doubtful concession type assumes uncertainty over the actual existence of the barrier. The Emphatic concession assumes that the protasis barrier is very unlikely to exist. See Lesson 10, pp. L10_2-5, of the grammar for more details.

The particular category of concessive sentence is functionally determined by the position of καὶ in relationship to the subordinate conjunctions εἰ and ἐάν. The εἰ καὶ pattern in 2 Cor. 12:11 signals that Paul assumes his 'nothingness,' but it has been overcome so that he then lacks nothing that these super apostles claim to have. One can detect a tone of sarcasm with the effect of him saying that even in 'nothingness' he lacks nothing that they claim to have.

τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων, *for I have calculated that I have missed out on nothing in comparison to these superlative apostles*. One should note, however, that in 11:5 the perfect active infinitive ὑστερηκένα is used, while here the aorist indicative finite verb ὑστέρησα is used. Although not certain this may very well signal some difference of perspective with the aorist verb referencing past comparisons to the outsiders. But more likely the difference is more along the lines of "I am lacking nothing" (Perfect Intensive) to "I have missed out on nothing" (Aorist Culminative). The phrase τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων is the genitive of reference use with the sense of *"in regard to these superlative apostles."* A deliberate play off of the verb ὑστέρησα is made with the adjective ὑπερλίαν. That is, Paul lacks nothing that is claimed by these 'apostles' who have abundantly more than ordinary apostles. Sarcasm is dripping off the words here.

This lack of deficiency by Paul comes in spite of his being 'nothing': εἰ καὶ οὐδέν εἰμι. Note that he declares "am nothing," and not "have nothing." Contextually it is a clear allusion to these outsiders with their claims to superiority. Their superiority claim grows out of their own inflated sense of individual accomplishment and status. But Paul's sense of adequacy grows out of realizing his total dependence upon God's sufficient grace more than meeting his weaknesses which represent no human accomplishments to boast about.⁶³² He -- and he alone in comparison to these outsiders -- recognized the total dependence on God's grace along side the depraved rottenness of human accomplishments.⁶³³ The

⁶³²Another remotely possible interpretive direction is that εἰ καὶ οὐδέν εἰμι represents a taunt thrown at Paul by these outsiders. Paul is nothing, they claimed, in comparison to us who are superior. The problem here is that this interpretation seems too modern and shows Paul sinking down to the low level of his Corinthians critics.

If Paul had been dismissed by some at Corinth as being οὐδέν, "nothing," "a non-entity," "a nobody" (cf. 6:9), the expression εἰ καὶ οὐδέν εἰμι¹³ could be an ironical reference to that taunt.¹⁴ "If, as some of you say (cf. 10:10, φησίν, ... ὁ λόγος ἐξουθεν ημένος), I amount to nothing, then those whom you regard so highly and who are my equals, must also be nobodies, not worthy of consideration!" Given the fact that other derogatory terms such as ἔκτρωμα (1 Cor. 15:8) or ταπεινός (10:1) seem to have been used of Paul at Corinth, and that he could use such a term for his own purposes (see 1 Cor. 15:8-9), this understanding of οὐδέν is perfectly legitimate

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 872-873.]

⁶³³"On the other hand, in saying 'even though I am nothing,' Paul may be intensely serious. In spite of being not one whit inferior to the Twelve with respect to faith and service, he was, in his own estimation, 'nothing,' the least important of the apostles and not worthy to bear the title 'apostle' because he once persecuted



view came after his Damascus road encounter with the risen Christ.

What is needed by an apostle? Verse 12 signals basic validation indicators of genuine apostleship for the Twelve in the first century: τὰ μὲν σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου κατειργάσθη ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ, σημεῖοις τε καὶ τέρασιν καὶ δυνάμεσιν, *The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, signs and wonders and mighty works.* Paul names three indicators of true apostleship here: σημεῖοις τε καὶ τέρασιν καὶ δυνάμεσιν, *signs and wonders and mighty works.* Is this intended as an exhaustive list? Not by any stretch of the imagination. Acts 1:21-22 proposes a different list of qualifications.⁶³⁴

More basically, who is an apostle? What was Paul alluding to in the use of τοῦ ἀποστόλου, *of an apostle*? The word ἀπόστολος enjoyed extensive use in the secular Greek literature of Paul's world.⁶³⁵ The core idea of one

God's church (1 Cor. 15:9).¹⁵ Whatever he was in relation to the Twelve and whatever had been accomplished at Corinth were due solely to God's grace that was with him (1 Cor. 15:10; cf. 2 Cor. 3:5; 4:7). Perhaps we need not choose between the 'ironical'/'serious' alternatives. Even if Paul's primary intent was irony, he would gladly have acknowledged the truth that apart from God's prospering of his service he amounted to nothing (1 Cor. 3:6-7).¹⁶ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 873.]

⁶³⁴Acts 1:21-22. 21 δεῖ οὖν τῶν συνελθόντων ἡμῖν ἀνδρῶν ἐν παντὶ χρόνῳ ᾧ εἰσηλθεν καὶ ἐξηλθεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς, 22 ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τοῦ βαπτίσματος Ἰωάννου ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἧς ἀνελήμφθη ἀφ' ἡμῶν, μάρτυρα τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ σὺν ἡμῖν γενέσθαι ἐνα τούτων.

21 So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection."

⁶³⁵In older Gk. (Lysias, Demosth.) and later (e.g. Posidon.: 87 Fgm. 53 P. 257, 21 Jac. [Strabo 3, 5, 5]) ὁ ἄ. is a naval expedition, prob. also its commander (Anecd. Gr. 217, 26). τὸ ἀπόστολον with (Pla., Ep. 7, 346a) or without (Vi. Hom. 19) πλοῖον means a ship ready for departure. In its single occurrence in Jos. (Ant. 17, 300; it is not found elsewhere in Jewish-Gk. lit.) it prob. means 'sending out'; in pap mostly 'bill of lading' (s. Preisigke, Fachwörter 1915), less freq. 'certificate of clearance (at a port)' (BGU V §64 [II A.D.] = Gnomon des Idios Logos). It can also be 'letter of authorization (relating to shipping)': Mitt-Wilck. I/2, 443, 10 (15 A.D.); PHerm 6, 11f (cp. Dig. 49, 6, 1 litteras dimissorias sive apostolos). In contrast, in isolated cases it refers to persons who are dispatched for a specific purpose, and the context determines the status or function expressed in such Eng. terms as 'ambassador, delegate, messenger' (Hdt. 1, 21; 5, 38; Synesius, Providence 2, 3 P. 122a ἀπόστολοι of ordinary messengers; Sb 7241, 48; BGU 1741, 6 [64 B.C.]; 3 Km 14:6A; Is 18:2 Sym.). Cp. KLake, The Word A.: Beginn. I 5, '33, 46-52. It is this isolated usage that is preferred in the NT w. nuances peculiar to its lit. But the extensive use of ἀποστέλλω in documents relating to pers. of merit engaged in administrative service prob. encouraged NT use of the noun, thus in

being commissioned for some specific task provided the needed background for the adoption of ἀπόστολος to designate the Twelve Apostles whom Jesus commissioned to carry on His work after he ascended back into heaven.⁶³⁶ To be clear, a variety of meanings does exist inside the NT usage.⁶³⁷ The declaration in Eph.

effect disavowing assoc. w. the type of itinerant philosophers that evoked the kind of pejorative term applied by Paul's audience **Ac 17:18.** [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 122.]

⁶³⁶Luke 6:12-13. 12 Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις ἐξελεῖν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι, καὶ ἦν διανυκτερεύων ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ. 13 Καὶ ὅτε ἐγένετο ἡμέρα, προσεφώνησεν τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐκλεξάμενος ἀπ' αὐτῶν δώδεκα, οὓς καὶ ἀποστόλους ὠνόμασεν.

12 Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. 13 And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles:

⁶³⁷1. of messengers without extraordinary status *delegate, envoy, messenger* (opp. ὁ πέμψας) **J 13:16.** Of Epaphroditus, messenger of the Philippians **Phil 2:25.—2 Cor 8:23.**

2. of messengers with extraordinary status, esp. of God's *messenger, envoy* (cp. Epict. 3, 22, 23 of Cynic wise men: ἄγγελος ἀπὸ τ. Διὸς ἀπέσταλται).

a. of prophets **Lk 11:49; Rv 18:20; cp. 2:2; Eph 3:5.**

b. of Christ (w. ἀρχιερεὺς) **Hb 3:1** (cp. ApcEsdr 2:1 P. 25, 29 T.; Just., A I, 12, 9; the extra-Christian firman Sb 7240, 4f οὐκ ἔστιν θεὸς εἰ μὴ ὁ θεὸς μόνος. Μααμετ ἀπόστολος θεοῦ). GWetter, 'D. Sohn Gottes' 1916, 26ff.

c. but predominately in the NT (of the apologists, only Just.) of a group of highly honored believers w. a special function as God's *envoys*. Also Judaism had a figure known as apostle (πῆλψ; Schürer III 124f w. sources and lit.; Billerb. III 1926, 2-4; JTruron, Theology 51, '48, 166-70; 341-43; GDix, ibid. 249-56; 385f; JBühner, art. ἄ. in EDNT I 142-46). In Christian circles, at first ἄ. denoted one who proclaimed the gospel, and was not strictly limited: Paul freq. calls himself an ἄ.: **Ro 1:1; 11:13; 1 Cor 1:1; 9:1f; 15:9; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Ti 1:1; 2:7; 2 Ti 1:1; Tit 1:1.—1 Cl 47:1.** Of Barnabas **Ac 14:14; 15:2.** Of Andronicus and Junia (less prob. Junias, s. Ἰουνία) **Ro 16:7.** Of James, the Lord's brother **Gal 1:19.** Of Peter **1 Pt 1:1; 2 Pt 1:1.** Then esp. of the 12 apostles οἱ δώδεκα ἄ. (cp. ParJer 9:20; AscIs 3:21; 4:3) **Mt 10:2; Mk 3:14; Lk 22:14** (v.l. οἱ δώδεκα); **cp. 6:13; 9:10; 17:5; Ac 1:26** (P-HMenoud, RHPR 37 '57, 71-80); **Rv 21:14; PtK 3 P. 15, 18.** Peter and the apostles **Ac 2:37; 5:29.** Paul and apostles **Pol 9:1** (cp. AcPITh Aa I, 235 app. of Thecla). Gener. the apostles **Mk 6:30; Lk 24:10; 1 Cor 4:9; 9:5; 15:7; 2 Cor 11:13; 1 Th 2:7; Ac 1:2; 2:42f; 4:33, 35, 37; 5:2, 12, 18, 34 v.l., 40; 6:6; 8:1, 14, 18; 9:27; 11:1; 14:4; 2 Pt 3:2; Jd 17; IEph 11:2; IMg 7:1; 13:2; ITr 2:2; 3:1; 7:1; IPhld 5:1; ISm 8:1; D ins; 11:3, 6.** As a governing board, w. the elders **Ac 15:2, 4, 6, 22f; 16:4.** As possessors of the most important spiritual gift **1 Cor 12:28f.** Proclaimers of the gospel **1 Cl 42:1f; B 5:9; Hs 9, 17, 1.** Prophesying strife **1 Cl 44:1.** Working miracles **2 Cor 12:12.** W. overseers, teachers and attendants **Hv 3, 5, 1; Hs 9, 15, 4; w. teachers Hs 9, 25, 2; w. teachers, preaching to those who had fallen asleep Hs 9, 16, 5; w. var. Christian officials IMg 6:1; w. prophets Eph 2:20; D 11:3; Pol 6:3.** Christ and the apostles as



2:20 sets forth the conceptual role of the apostles, along side that of the OT prophets, as the foundation for the Christian communities.⁶³⁸ It is their preaching of the Gospel that establishes genuine Christian communities. Those then trained in this apostolic Gospel help spread this message. Ultimately, our NT becomes the deposit of that apostolic Gospel with each of the 27 documents having either a direct or indirect link back to either the Twelve or Paul as the authentic founders of Christianity. They possess unique, exclusive commissioning from God through Christ to preserve and promote His message and teachings. This definition of 'apostle' is the one Paul has in mind here in 12:12, and the foundation of the church IMg 13:1; ITr 12; 2; cp. **Eph 2:20**. οἱ ἄ. and ἡ ἐκκλησία w. the three patriarchs and the prophets IPHld 9:1. The Holy Scriptures named w. the ap. 2 Cl 14:2 (sim. ApcSed 14:10 P. 136, 17 Ja.). Paul ironically refers to his opponents (or the original apostles; s. s.v. ὑπερλίαν) as οἱ ὑπερλίαν ἄ. the super-apostles **2 Cor 11:5; 12:11**. The orig. apostles he calls οἱ πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἄ. **Gal 1:17**; AcPlCor 2:4.—Harnack, *Mission4 I* 1923, 332ff (Eng. tr. I 319–31). WSeufert, *D. Urspr. u. d. Bed. d. Apostolates* 1887; EHaupt, *Z. Verständnis d. Apostolates im NT* 1896; EMonnier, *La notion de l'Apostolat des origines à Irénée* 1903; PBatiffol, *RB n.s.* 3, 1906, 520–32; Wlh., *Einleitung2*, 1911, 138–47; EBurton, *AJT* 16, 1912, 561–88, *Gal comm.* 1921, 363–84; RSchütz, *Apostel u. Jünger* 1921; EMeyer I 265ff; III 255ff. HVogelstein, *Development of the Apostolate in Judaism, etc.*: HUCA 2, 1925, 99–123; JWagenmann, *D. Stellg. d. Ap. Pls neben den Zwölf* 1926; WMundle, *D. Apostelbild der AG*: ZNW 27, 1928, 36–54; KRengstorff, *TW I* 406–46 (s. critique by HConzelmann, *The Theol. of St. Luke* '60, 216, n. 1), *Apost. u. Predigtamt* '34; J-LLeuba, *Rech. exégét. rel. à l'apostolat dans le NT*, diss. Neuchâtel '36; PSaintyves, *Deux mythes évangéliques, Les 12 apôtres et les 72 disciples* '38; GSass, *Apostelamt u. Kirche ... paulin. Apostelbegr.* '39; EKäsemann, *ZNW* 40, '41, 33–71; RLiechtenhan, *D. urchr. Mission* '46; ESchweizer, *D. Leben d. Herrn in d. Gemeinde u. ihren Diensten* '46; AFridrichsen, *The Apostle and His Message* '47; HvCampenhansen, *D. urchristl. Apostelbegr.*: StTh 1, '47, 96–130; HMosbech, *ibid.* 2, '48, 166–200; ELohse, *Ursprung u. Prägung des christl. Apostolates*: TZ 9, '53, 259–75; GKlein, *Die 12 Apostel*, '60; FHahn, *Mission in the NT*, tr. FClarke, '65; WSchmithals, *The Office of the Apostle*, tr. JSteely, '69; KKertelge, *Das Apostelamt des Paulus*, BZ 14, '70, 161–81. S. also ἐκκλησία end, esp. Holl and Kattenbusch; also HBetz, *Hermeneia: Gal* '79, 74f (w. additional lit.); FAGnew, *On the Origin of the Term ἀπόστολος*: CBQ 38, '76, 49–53 (survey of debate); KHaacker, *NovT* 30, '88, 9–38 (Acts). Ins evidence (s. e.g. SIG index) relating to the verb ἀποστέλλω is almost gener. ignored in debate about the meaning of the noun.—DELG s.v. στέλλω A. EDNT. M-M. TW. Spicq."

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 122.]

⁶³⁸**Eph. 2:19-20**. 19 Ἴσρα ὄν οὐκ ἐστὶ ξένοι καὶ πάροιχοι ἀλλ' ἐστὶ συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ, 20 ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν, ὄντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ,

9 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, 20 built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.

the opponents are seeking to corrupt this meaning by claiming it for themselves and denying it to Paul (cf. 11:5; 12:11).

Paul's response in v. 12 is that, through his ministry to the Corinthians, τὰ μὲν σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου κατεργάσθη ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ, *the signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience*,⁶³⁹ The verb κατεργάζομαι, here in the Aorist passive voice with τὰ σημεῖα as the subject, designates the doing or achieving of these 'signs' earlier in Corinth. The role of the particle of emphasis μὲν, without the customary counter point δὲ (not this...but that), causes μὲν to take on either a concessive or restrictive role, which takes on the sense of 'at least.' This then conveys the sense of at least these were done in your presence but you have paid no attention. Other signals of authenticity were given to you regarding my ministry (cf. chaps 11 & 12), but you have ignored these very basic signals. The prepositional phrase ἐν ὑμῖν, *among you*, limits the verb action to Corinth.

The next prepositional phrase ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ, *with complete patience*, affirms the manner in which these τὰ σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου, *signs of apostleship*, were done among the Corinthians. The sense of ὑπομονή comes from the etymological meaning of 'standing underneath.' The English word 'endurance' is popular among Bible translators into English, with *Ausdauer*, *Standhaftigkeit*, *Standfestigkeit*, being more popular in German.⁶⁴⁰ The Greek philosopher Plato described the idea quite interestingly, with the sense of the inner self remaining calm in the face of pressure along with the individual staying steadfast in commitments, actions etc.⁶⁴¹ It was in this manner that God worked the mira-

⁶³⁹τὰ μὲν σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου κατεργάσθη ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ, σημεῖοις τε καὶ τέρασιν καὶ δυνάμεσιν. 'At least, the signs of an apostle were produced in your midst with the utmost endurance, through signs and marvels and through powerful deeds.' Here Paul reminds his converts of certain distinguishing features of his work at Corinth that showed he was a genuine apostle who was in no way inferior to the Twelve and therefore was worthy of their full endorsement (cf. v. 11). He appeals to what his converts had themselves seen and heard during his founding visit (σημεῖα ... κατεργάσθη ἐν ὑμῖν). He wanted their opinion of him and their assessment of his apostleship to correspond to reality as they had experienced it and not outstrip the evidence of their physical and spiritual senses (12:6)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 873.]

⁶⁴⁰Rudolf Kassühlke and Barclay M. Newman, *Kleines Wörterbuch Zum Neuen Testament: Griechisch-Deutsch* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997), 198.

⁶⁴¹Plato and Aristotle analyzed *hypomonē* and established the conception of it that would hold for the entire Greek tradition. Plato asked, 'In what does courage (andreia) consist?' and answered



cles through the consistent commitment of Paul as he ministered to the Corinthians.⁶⁴²

The three items set forth define the signs of an apostle:

τὰ μὲν σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου
σημείους τε
καὶ τέρασιν
καὶ δυνάμεσιν

The appeal of Harris' proposal is the use of the dative / instrumental case for these three items which match the dative / instrumental of manner for ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ, just in front of these three items. The shift of these three items to the dative / instrumental / locative case options rather than the normal genitive of apposition or the matching nominative case. Yet the slight shift in meaning from τὰ μὲν σημεῖα to σημείους in the listing argues against Harris' view. The first σημεῖα has the more general sense of 'signals' of apostleship, especially indicated by the presence and action of God in the ministry of an apostle. But the second use in σημείους, which is bound together in σημείους τε καὶ τέρασιν καὶ δυνάμεσιν through the postpositive conjunction τε identifying the first of the three elements defining supernatural actions that are visibly observed by people. Such actions are described here -- and elsewhere inside the NT as well -- from three angles. First they are σημεῖα, as John so commonly defines. As signs the supernatural actions point beyond themselves to the power of God overcoming mostly illness and sicknesses common in first century Jewish Palestine. As τέρατα, these supernatural actions evoke wonder and awe by those observing them. People immediately recognize that they are witnessing something far beyond human abilities and powers. And finally as δυνάμεις, these supernatural actions represent clearly a demonstration of divine power rather than human power. Luke's favorite expression is σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα, [signs and wonders](#), and

that it is 'a certain endurance of soul (*karteria tēs psychēs*) ... one of the noblest things.... It is endurance (*karteria*) accompanied by wisdom that is noble' (Lach. 192 b–d). Regarding this, Socrates observes, 'In war, a man endures (*karterounta andra*) and is ready to fight because he calculates reasonably that others will help him, that the enemy is less numerous ... that he has a positional advantage. Would you say that this man, whose endurance of soul relies so much on reason and preparation, is more courageous than the man on the other side who sustains his attack and endures (*hypomenein te kai karterein*)?' — to which Laches replies that the latter is braver.¹ To be courageous, then, is to be manly, to face difficulties without expecting help or putting one's confidence in others; one endures alone, as Aristotle notes.² He makes *hypomonē* a virtue, because it is a noble thing to keep to the mean in difficult circumstances: 'one endures (*hypomenōn*) despite the fear that one feels ... for the beauty of the deed.'³' [Ceslas Spicq and James D. Ernest, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 414–415.]

⁶⁴²It is doubtful, as Harris proposes (NIGTC, P. 874), that ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ should be taken as another σημεῖον of an apostle.

originates out of several Greek writers. The focus here is on the impact upon humans by the supernatural actions. Matthew and Mark prefer δυνάμεις for describing the miracles of Jesus. Note that typically the plural δυνάμεις references what we label as miracles, while the singular δύναμις more broadly designates power of a general nature.

From the contextual background, especially that in First Corinthians, it seems as though the Corinthian church had a segment of members who put high value on charismatic evidence of ministry through miracles being done in their midst. Evidently the Corinthian outsiders had played up this unhealthy trend by these members and then twisted it to raise questions about Paul's credentials, in a ministry obviously focused on changing people's lives far more than doing sensational miracles. Here Paul reminds the Corinthians that God's supernatural working through his ministry was indeed present, and had been consistently from the beginning of ministry at Corinth.⁶⁴³ I suspect that Paul seeks to remind that Corinthians of God's divine power at work in his ministry at Corinth in ways that may have required spiritual wisdom and insight to observe. Lives changed by the Gospel, the thriving and blossoming Christian community in spite of both synagogue and governmental opposition et als. -- these represent divine miracles just as certainly as exorcisms, healing miracles etc.

One important background assumption behind this statement in v. 12 comes from what Paul wrote in Corinth a few months after the writing of Second Corinthians in the mid fiftys (Rom. 15:17-19):

17 ἔχω οὖν τὴν καύχησιν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν· 18 οὐ γὰρ τολμήσω τι λαλεῖν ὧν οὐ κατειργάσατο Χριστὸς δι' ἐμοῦ εἰς ὑπακοὴν ἐθνῶν, λόγῳ καὶ ἔργῳ, 19 ἐν δυνάμει σημείων καὶ τεράτων, ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος θεοῦ· ὥστε με ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ κύκλῳ μέχρι τοῦ Ἰλλυρικοῦ πεπληρωκέναί τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

[17 In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to boast of my work for God. 18 For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through](#)

⁶⁴³"Since Luke does not mention any miracles performed in Corinth during Paul's initial visit of about eighteen months (Acts 18:1–18), we can only guess at their nature (cf. 1 Cor. 2:4). Perhaps they included healings,³⁹ exorcisms, and divinely orchestrated circumstances accompanying conversions.⁴⁰ Miracles were a concomitant of Paul's preaching in Galatia (Gal. 3:5; cf. Acts 14:3, 8–10), Macedonia (1 Thess. 1:5; cf. Acts 16:16–18), Corinth (1 Cor. 2:4; 2 Cor. 12:12), and Asia (Acts 19:11–12) and are highlighted more in Luke's record in Acts than by Paul himself in his letters. Clearly miracles occurred regularly during the founding of Paul's churches." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 875.]



me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, 19 by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ.

^{12.13} γάρ
298 τί ἐστὶν ὃ ἡσώθητε
 ὑπὲρ τὰς λοιπὰς ἐκκλησίας,
 εἰ μὴ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν;
299 χαρίσασθέ μοι τὴν ἀδικίαν ταύτην.

The validating signs of apostleship accomplished through Paul's life in ministry do not point to any personal accomplishment of the apostle himself. Rather these signs, as the term σημεῖον basically references, point to a spiritual reality existing beyond Paul, that of God's presence and power, using Paul as a channel for expression in ministry to the needs of others. The clear way Paul presents this validation should lead the Corinthians to acknowledge God's presence in Paul versus the self-boasting of personal status by the outsiders at Corinth.

(3) τί γάρ ἐστιν ὃ ἡσώθητε ὑπὲρ τὰς λοιπὰς ἐκκλησίας, εἰ μὴ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν; How have you been worse off than the other churches, except that I myself did not burden you?

This then leads to the question posed in v. 13a with its answer in v. 13b (#s 298 - 299). This pair serves as a further justifying expression (γάρ) of the previous statements beginning with v. 11a. This set of statements pushes the issue more personal and more narrowly focused on the Corinthians rather than on Paul.

Most likely in the background here stands outsider criticism of Paul as inferior to them and not able to present to the Corinthians a full gospel message.⁶⁴⁴ Perhaps also from the preceding assertion in v. 12, this criticism claimed superior charismatic 'gifts' to those of Paul as validation of their charge against him. He ut-

⁶⁴⁴In this verse, as also in the previous two verses, Paul seems to be addressing a complaint made against him (see the introduction to this section). Here the grievance appears to have been that in comparison with 'the other churches' the Corinthians had been disadvantaged by some action or actions of Paul. If, as Thrall maintains (841), Paul is now giving a further reason why the Corinthians should have commended him (cf. vv. 11-12), he is giving that reason in a very negative cast. Rather, he is questioning how they can feel slighted when they had witnessed miracles and other evidence of his apostolic status⁵⁰ and when he had patiently toiled for their benefit (cf. 12:19b) amid opposition (v. 12). Literally, 'What is there, then (γάρ),⁵¹ with respect to which (ὃ, accusative of respect⁵²) you came off worse in comparison with (ὑπὲρ)⁵³ the other churches ...?'⁵⁴ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 877-878.]

terly shreds any such objection to his ministry in his response.

The question is framed brilliantly. The main clause τί γάρ ἐστὶν ὃ ἡσώθητε ὑπὲρ τὰς λοιπὰς ἐκκλησίας, for in what way does there exist that which has made you worse

off rather than the rest of the churches? In other words, show me where I have snubbed you in comparison to how I ministered to the other churches. The inclusive expression τὰς λοιπὰς ἐκκλησίας, the rest of the churches, probably references the

other churches established by Paul and his associates in missionary actions up to this point in the mid-fifties, which is essentially all the churches founded by Paul according to Acts. But it could include churches beyond the Pauline evangelizing ministry, particularly like those he would visit later on his trip from Corinth to Jerusalem, e.g., Tyre, Caesarea in Acts 21:1-16. The verb ἐσώσομαι⁶⁴⁵ plus the preposition ὑπὲρ carries the idea of being placed in an inferior status to (ὑπὲρ) someone else. Has then Paul treated the Corinthians as somehow inferior to the other churches?

The one exception which is stated very sarcastically is εἰ μὴ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν; *except that I didn't shake you down?*⁶⁴⁶ Paul's satire here is very obvious, but mostly ignored by English translators. The English expression *I did not burden you* falsely carries the implication of Paul demanding financial support from the churches, except for Corinth. The Greek καταναρκάω does not carry such an idea, in spite of the Latin Vulgate using *gravare*, meaning to *weigh down* to translate καταναρκάω. The verb comes as a compound of κατα + ναρκάω, with the core verb having the sense of *grow stiff / numb*. The prefix κατα here has the intensifying impact on the core verb idea, this to cause someone to *fully become stiff or numb*. A sarcastic cut at his opponents in Corinth is clearly in view with this statement: *What is your inferiority to the rest of the churches, unless I failed to dumb you down to the level of the outsiders? These critics assert this is what I'm doing to all the other churches.* If you reflect carefully on the logic here, Paul brilliantly leaves a small crack open. In Paul's 'mistreatment' of the Corinthians they got the full Gospel message while according to his critics the other churches didn't. Interestingly, the church fathers Chrysostom and Theodoret understand Paul's words

⁶⁴⁵The spelling ἡσώθητε is from the Ionic dialect for the regular koine spelling ἡσώομαι. This reflects some Ephesian influence on Paul's writing, since Ephesus was a center for Ionic Greek usage. It would have particularly caught the attention of the Corinthian listeners to the reading of this letter. And probably this was Paul's reason for using this alternative spelling.

along the lines of the above proposed interpretation.

Then in biting sarcasm he answers his own rhetorical question with *χαρίσασθέ μοι τὴν ἀδικίαν ταύτην, forgive me of this abuse!* That is, *don't hold it against me that I gave you the full Gospel message!* They should be rejoicing, not criticizing!

And with this, the so-called 'fool's speech' comes to a close, thus simplifying the exegetical task enormously. In 11:1-12:13, Paul has put on different clothes in order to answer his critics at Corinth, both those inside the church as well as the outsider false teachers who came to Corinth. In adopting the perspective of ἀφροσύνης by an ἄφρων, Paul slips into a mind-set outside early Christianity and very popular in first century Greek culture. In so doing he adopts the argumentative framework of his Corinthian critics who made Jewish based claims against Paul to a dominantly Greek thinking congregation. Although a brilliant tactic for Paul to his initial audience in mid first century Corinth, it poses an interpretive nightmare to modern twenty-first century readers completely unfamiliar with what a ἀφροσύνης perspective by an ἄφρων in first century Greece was.

The above interpretation of 11:1-12:13 represents a very serious effort to probe the background Greek literature etc. sufficiently to grasp such an argumentative strategy in first century Corinth. And then to trace carefully how Paul both used and modified this framework to turn the tables on his critics, and to make a persuasive case to his Greek minded Corinthian readers. Once insight here begins to emerge, then amazement accompanies it at how ingenious Paul was in approaching the issue as he did. Although Paul's core mind-set was Jewish, he was deeply knowledgeable of both the Greek and Latin mindsets and could draw upon them for ministry witness. If any lesson can be learned here, it is the essential point of Prof. Karl Barth's analogy of a sermon. The sermon should represent building a clearly understood bridge between the Bible and the newspaper. To do this effectively, the preacher must thoroughly understand both the Bible and the newspaper. Paul models this image well with his 'fool's speech,' and thereby challenges us moderns to follow his example.

But a certain caution is present as well. Paul's example reminds us of the essential nature of thorough training and experience in using rhetorical models to make our case for the Gospel. From every indication out of the contemporary discussions in Greek and Latin philosophical circles in Paul's world, he knew well the technique of the fool's speech in both oral and written versions. The modern preacher or teacher should not try to follow Paul's example in highly exotic strategies of argumentation unless he or she knows such strategies well and is quite comfortable in using them. Hope-

fully the exegesis of these two chapters has sufficiently highlighted the complexity of this ancient strategy for making one's case on some topic. In our world the case for the Gospel must be laid out within the limitations of the skills of the presenter and under the guidance of God's Spirit.

Additionally, Paul's example urges caution out of the often expressed uncomfortableness of Paul in defending his ministry in this manner. This is expressed at the very outset in 11:1, *Ὁφελον ἀνείχεσθέ μου μικρόν τι ἀφροσύνης, Please endure from me a little foolishness.* It resurfaces again in 11:16, *Πάλιν λέγω, μή τις με δόξη ἄφρονα εἶναι, Again I say, Let no one think me a fool.* Once again in 12:1, *Καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, οὐ συμφέρον μὲν, to boast is necessary, but it produces no advantage.* Finally at the end in 12:11, *Γέγονα ἄφρων, ὑμεῖς με ἠναγκάσατε, I have become a fool, you forced me into it!* The pressures from the Corinthians to make his case with thinking they were familiar with was the pressure behind Paul's approach. What Paul teaches us methodologically here is to occasionally step outside our comfort zone, but not to become comfortable in doing it.

An additional caution is to maintain our integrity and values while using exotic methods of presenting our views. The very nature of the fool's speech was to brag on oneself and accomplishments while not appearing arrogant about it. The easiest and most common tactic for this was comparisons with one's opponents. But Paul's values and beliefs asserted that such comparisons were not really possible. Although his opponents had built themselves up as super apostles, the apostle knew that only God's working at Corinth through his ministry had produced the solid Gospel foundation that existed. Thus his challenge was to compare the self-made false apostles to the working of God through his ministry. A much more complicated challenge. So he had to present himself as a genuinely called apostle, but also as an empty vessel for God to use. Both overt assertion and profound humility had to be presented.

All this became necessary because at stake was not the reputation of two groups of Christian ministers in a 'who is best' competition. Rather the integrity of the true Gospel was at stake. Their self-help version represented spiritual disaster for the Corinthians. The church had been launched on a Gospel stressing humility and self surrender to God. It must continue on that same foundation if it were to flourish and reach greater numbers of people for Christ.

Paul's approach in these two chapters represents a brilliant approach. He communicated with his readership effectively within the framework of their way of thinking. But at the same time he maintained both his integrity and that of the Gospel. That is our challenge

today.

10.2.3.4 Apostolic Visits, 12:14-13:10

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

The internal subunits of text material in 12:14-13:10 is in broadly defined strokes as follows in the subsequent outline. The topic sentence at the beginning of verse 14 defines the theme for the entire unit of 12:14-13:10, *Ἰδοὺ τρίτον τοῦτο ἐτοίμως ἔχω ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ οὐ καταναρκήσω, Here I am, ready to come to you this third time. And I will not be a burden.* The second main clause, *καὶ οὐ καταναρκήσω, establishes the focus for the first subunit of vv. 14-18. In the second unit of vv. 19-21, the focus is established in v. 19c, τὰ δὲ πάντα, ἀγαπητοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς, and all things, beloved, are for building you up.* The third unit of 13:1-4 centers on a warning, *ἐὰν ἔλθω εἰς τὸ πάλιν οὐ φείσομαι, if I come to you again, I will not be lenient (v. 2c).* The final unit of vv. 5-10 is built off the topic sentence admonition in v. 5a, *Ἐαυτοὺς πειράζετε εἰ ἐστὲ ἐν τῇ πίστει, ἐαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε, test yourselves as to whether you are proven valid in the faith.* Thus this final unit follows a logical progression from

informing to admonishing the Corinthians to be ready for his upcoming visit, which will be their examination day. He makes it very clear what he is after: not what they have but them in serious commitment to Christ. And he will not be compromising this expectation just to be popular with them. All of this stands as a sharp contrast to the outsider false teachers who arrived in the city to begin buttering up the Corinthians in order to gain inroads into swaying the church to follow their alternative teachings.

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

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

	12.14	Ἰδοὺ τρίτον τοῦτο
300		ἐτοίμως ἔχω ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ
301		οὐ καταναρκήσω· γὰρ
302		οὐ ζητῶ τὰ ὑμῶν ἀλλ'
303		(ζητῶ) ὑμᾶς· γὰρ
304		οὐ ὀφείλει τὰ τέκνα τοῖς γονεῦσιν θησαυρίζειν ἀλλ'
305		(ὀφειλῶσιν) οἱ γονεῖς τοῖς τέκνοις (θησαυρίζειν).
306	12.15	δὲ ἐγὼ ἡδιστα δαπανήσω καὶ
307		ἐκδαπανηθήσομαι ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν. εἰ περισσοτέρως ὑμᾶς ἀγαπῶν, ἦσσον ἀγαπῶμαι;
309	12.16	δὲ Ἔστω (ὅτι) ἐγὼ οὐ κατεβάρησα ὑμᾶς· ἀλλ'
310		ὑπάρχων πανοῦργος δόλω ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον.

πνεύματι περιεπατήσαμεν; οὐ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἴχνεσιν;

14 Here I am, ready to come to you this third time. And I will not be a burden, because I do not want what is yours but you; for children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children. 15 I will most gladly spend and be spent for you. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? 16 Let it be assumed that I did not burden you. Nevertheless (you say) since I was crafty, I took you in by deceit. 17 Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you? 18 I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves with the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?

Very clearly the apostle announces his intention of visiting the Corinthians a third time. To be clear, the assertion τρίτον τοῦτο ἐτοίμως ἔχω ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, [this third time prepared I am to come to you](#), clearly signals a third visit to Corinth, and not the third time he has gotten ready to make another visit.⁶⁴⁷ When were [the other two visits](#)? Luke in his Acts narrative only records two visits of Paul to Corinth: one on the second missionary journey (18:1-18), and the visit alluded to here by Paul as the third visit (20:2-3). Between these two visits came an additional one, which is alluded to by Paul as a 'painful visit' in [2 Cor. 2:1](#) (cf. 12:14; 13:1-2). This second visit of Paul to Corinth was made from Ephesus during his lengthy stay in the city on the third missionary journey, and is not described by Luke.

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

⁶⁴⁷Since τρίτον τοῦτο⁵ precedes ἐτοίμως ἔχω,⁶ it might seem that Paul is simply indicating a willingness, for a third time, to visit Corinth. But in fact he has coalesced two distinct thoughts into one: he is coming on a third visit, and he is now ready to come. That the reference is to a third coming, not a third willingness or readiness, is clear from 13:1 (τρίτον τοῦτο ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς) and from the next statement ('I will not be a burden')." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 882.]

inthians 'shine' as enthusiastic participants in this large relief offering being taken up among all the churches established in the provinces of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia, which included Corinth. The Corinthians had been early enthusiastic supporters of the idea of this offering, but their enthusiasm had waned in part at least to critics of Paul both from inside the Corinthian church and then lately by outsiders who came into the church highly critical of Paul.

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

His first point is clear: καὶ οὐ καταναρκήσω, [and I will not be a burden](#).⁶⁴⁸ In 11:9, Paul reminded the Corinthians that in his previous visit with them he had not been a burden to the church, καὶ παρὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑστερηθεὶς οὐ κατενάρκησα οὐθενός, [And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone](#).⁶⁴⁹ In 11:12,

⁶⁴⁸"We should not overlook the intensely personal and highly emotive nature of these five verses, which makes them comparable to 6:11-13. First singular verbs occur thirteen times, ὑμᾶς eight times, and the emphatic ἐγὼ twice. We find no fewer than five rhetorical questions that betray Paul's pained bewilderment, one introduced by an interrogative εἰ (v. 15), two by μή(τι) (vv. 17-18) expecting the answer 'No!' and two by οὐ (v. 18) that assume a 'Yes!' response. Also, Paul actually reproduces the potent charge that he was by nature an unscrupulous trickster (ὕπαρχον πανοῦργος) who had victimized the Corinthians with his cunning (δόλω ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον) (v. 16)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 880.]

⁶⁴⁹"He is reaffirming that he will not deviate from his established policy regarding Corinth of being financially independent, of refusing to enter a client-patron relationship, of waiving his apostolic right to support. After his unambiguous statements on the matter in 11:9-10, 12, it may seem strange that he now returns to the same topic, but this is evidence of the sensitivity and centrality of the issue in Paul's relations with the church and is an indication of the influence of his opponents' strategy of seeking to discredit him in the eyes of the Corinthians by pointing to his waiver of an apostolic right as proof of his counterfeit apostleship. However, in reaffirming his position of independence he gives two additional justifications for his stance that we must now consider." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on*



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

Paul's summary repeating of this earlier discussion here with καὶ οὐ καταναρκήσω in 12:14 provides opportunity to develop the theme in a different direction as vv. 14b-18 illustrate. His refusal to accept support from them is an expression of his love for them. This is developed in several ways through a set of justifying statements introduced by γὰρ. First, he is not interested in their possessions, but in them as people: οὐ γὰρ ζητῶ τὰ ὑμῶν ἀλλ' ὑμᾶς, **for I don't seek your things but you.**⁶⁵⁰ He doesn't mean that he wants to enslave them as devotees to himself. His later letter to the Philippians throws light on Paul's meaning here (4:17): οὐχ ὅτι ἐπιζητῶ τὸ δόμα, ἀλλ' ἐπιζητῶ τὸν καρπὸν τὸν πλεονάζοντα εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν. **Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that accumulates to your account.** When Epaphroditus brought the generous love offering to Paul during his Roman imprisonment, the apostle was more interested

the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 882.]

⁶⁵⁰"When he visits, he will adhere to his policy of refusing maintenance. He wants the Corinthians themselves, not their financial assistance.⁶⁵⁴ This sounds as though he believed he was under criticism on the grounds that (like the sophists, or some of them) he was only after their money.⁶⁵⁵ There may be some hint of this in v. 16. Perhaps the original sense of injury on account of his refusal of a proffered benefaction⁶⁵⁶ had turned into suspicion that the rejection of Corinthian funding could not be wholly genuine. He must be getting money from them in some other, devious, way, i.e., by soliciting donations ostensibly for the collection but in actuality for himself. Repudiating any such intention, Paul insists that the Corinthians themselves are his concern. Several commentators claim that his ultimate objective in all this is to restore the relationship between the Corinthians and Christ.⁶⁵⁷ The implication of such exegesis would seem to be that any criticism of Paul as their apostle is at the same time a form of alienation from Christ himself. But he does not precisely say this, and such a total identification of himself with Christ would surely suggest some degree of egocentricity on his part.⁶⁵⁸ It may simply be that the Corinthians' suspicions of him are inimical to their acceptance of the pastoral guidance which they so clearly need (vv. 20–21) from him, and which he would wish to provide in an affectionate manner." [[Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 843–844.]

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

Second, he will not be a burden on them because as spiritual parent he should be caring for them, not the reverse: οὐ γὰρ ὀφείλει τὰ τέκνα τοῖς γονεῦσιν θησαυρίζειν ἀλλ' οἱ γονεῖς τοῖς τέκνοις, **for children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children.** The use of the parenting image serves a special purpose for Paul.⁶⁵¹ He alone -- and not the outsiders -- enjoys a unique relationship to the Corinthians.⁶⁵² The image is different but the point is virtually the same in Gal. 4:16-19 where point compares himself to a pregnant mother trying to give spiritual birth to the Galatians, while the Judaizing

⁶⁵¹"But would Paul have regarded his statement that 'children are not responsible to save up for their parents' as universally applicable and without exceptions? Certainly not! He must have viewed this as a general principle (note the gnomic present ὀφείλει and the plurals τέκνα and γονεῦσιν) with obvious exceptions and not as a rigid law that was everywhere applicable, for the following reasons.¹⁷ (1) He himself received financial support from some of his spiritual children (11:8–9; Phil. 4:15–16). (2) In 1 Cor. 9:14 he appeals to a dominical provision (see Luke 10:7) that allows for the support of Christian evangelists, presumably (among others) by those who have responded to the preaching of the gospel. (3) He knows of another 'natural law'—that of appropriate returns for labor expended (1 Cor. 9:3–9, 13)—that must stand alongside the 'natural law' of 12:14b.18 (4) In 1 Tim. 5:8 he requires believers to provide for the needs (προνοεῖ) of their own families, which would include, in certain circumstances (cf. Mark 7:9–13), the care of parents by children. So we conclude that, as is sometimes the case with Paul's οὐ(κ) ... ἀλλά contrasts,¹⁹ the antithesis in v. 14b is not absolute but relative: 'it is not normally (or principally) that children must provide for their parents, but parents for their children.'²⁰ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 884–885.]

⁶⁵²"What the apostle presupposes in using this parent-child imagery is his role of spiritual fatherhood and his role as the Corinthians' one and only father in Christ. They are his 'dearly loved children' (τέκνα μου ἀγαπητά, 1 Cor. 4:14).¹³ 'For though you have countless tutors in Christ, you do not have multiple fathers. For I myself became your father in Christ Jesus, through preaching the gospel to you' (1 Cor. 4:15). His spiritual paternity (cf. 6:13; 11:2) gave him a distinctive right, which could not be claimed by his rivals, to care for his children's spiritual welfare, a right he was eager to exercise (ζητῶ).¹⁴" [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 883.]

heretics are lovers seeking to tempt the Galatians to abandon home in order to move in with the heretics.

In v. 15, both a continuation of the parenting image continues but with a shift of emphasis to what the apostle was prepared to sacrifice for his children the Corinthians: ἐγὼ δὲ ἥδιστα δαπανήσω καὶ ἐκδαπανηθήσομαι ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν. εἰ περισσοτέρως ὑμᾶς ἀγαπῶν, ἥσσον ἀγαπῶμαι; *I will most gladly spend and be spent for you. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?* The emphasis here is as father caring for his children.⁶⁵³ He was the preacher under whose Gospel proclamation the Corinthians had come to Christ.⁶⁵⁴ The adverb ἥδιστα, most gladly, is used 3 times in 2 Corinthians out of its 5 NT uses. It underscores a generous and joyful posture by the apostle as father toward his children the Corinthians. How? δαπανήσω καὶ ἐκδαπανηθήσομαι ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν, *I will spend and be spent out completely for your lives.* Although the literal sense of δαπανᾶω is to spend money, Paul uses the verbs δαπανᾶω and ἐκδαπανᾶω figuratively to mean exhausting his time,

⁶⁵³ In chs. 11 and 12, then, Paul justifies his inflexible policy of financial independence of the Corinthians on several grounds.¹⁵

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

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

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

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

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

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 884.]

⁶⁵⁴ The double reference to parenthood (οἱ γονεῖς) in v. 14b makes it clear that when Paul speaks of his expenditure and his love and uses the emphatic ἐγὼ in v. 15, he is thinking of his role as a spiritual father. His sense of fatherhood in relation to his converts originated in his role as the evangelist through whose preaching they had come to believe (cf. 1 Cor. 3:5; 4:15).²¹ If δέ is adversative ('but'), he is contrasting his glad and lavish generosity in giving to his children with what might be expected of normal fathers; he outstrips ordinary expectations. 'I promise to do even more than natural fathers' (Theodoret).²² This is certainly possible, but it is better to see v. 15a as an explanation (δέ = "for") or as a consequence (δέ = "so") of the axiom expressed in v. 14b. θησαυρίζειν in v. 14 does not refer to hoarding resources but to saving them up for use, so that v. 15a affords an illustration (ἐγὼ, 'for my part,' 'as for me' [NEB])²³ of the exuberant (ἥδιστα, 'very gladly'²⁴) and liberal use of a father's resources." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 885.]

energies etc. to help the Corinthians reach spiritual maturity.⁶⁵⁵

As sometimes happens when a father loves his children greatly, they love him less: εἰ περισσοτέρως ὑμᾶς ἀγαπῶν, ἥσσον ἀγαπῶμαι; *If I love you more, am I to be loved less?* The first class conditional sentence assumes Paul's greater love for the Corinthians in the protasis: εἰ περισσοτέρως ὑμᾶς ἀγαπῶν. Clearly this was the case for Paul.⁶⁵⁶ Does Paul's greater love, περισσοτέρως, have to mean lesser love, ἥσσον, by the Corinthians. This rhetorical question pushes the Corinthians to reflect on how they are treating the apostle. In reality, greater love should begot greater love in response. But like spoiled, ungrateful children some of the Corinthians were return Paul's love with criticism and questioning of his motives.

But as vv. 16-18 assert, there was nothing in Paul's past experiences in Corinth to give the Corinthians a

⁶⁵⁵ In a literal sense δαπανᾶω refers to the spending of money or concrete resources. In Acts 21:24, for example, it is used of the paying of expenses, the defraying of the cost of sacrifices. Figuratively, as here, it denotes the exertion of great effort (Louw and Nida §42.27). καὶ ἐκδαπανηθήσομαι intensifies the idea of expenditure, with ἐκ- used in a 'perfective' sense, 'spend out, spend wholly.'²⁵ 'I will expend myself and be utterly expended for your sake.' Both his energies and even his life²⁶ will be used up for the spiritual welfare of his converts. Although it is possible that the simplex verb refers to money and concrete resources, and the compound verb to personal resources ('all I have and all I am,' Goodspeed),²⁷ it is more likely that both verbs describe the willing sacrifice of personal resources such as physical and spiritual vigor. We could take ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν to mean little more than ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν,²⁸ but the use of ψυχή indicates that the benefit (implied by ὑπὲρ) to be felt by the Corinthians lay in the spiritual realm rather than in the physical or financial. Neither energy nor life itself would be spared by Paul as he worked for their salvation. He is not instituting a new policy that would take effect when he arrived on his third visit. Rather, he is reaffirming, with regard to that visit, what had always been true of his service to the Corinthians." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 885–886.]

⁶⁵⁶ In 11:2 Paul presents himself as the protective father of the bride, the whole Corinthian congregation being his daughter 'in the Lord.' Here in 12:15a he presents himself as the devoted, self-giving father of his spiritual children at Corinth, bent on contributing energetically to their highest spiritual good. This shows that for Paul fatherhood involves a nurturing role, and not merely an educating and admonishing role (1 Cor. 4:14–15; 1 Thess. 2:11–12), a disciplinary role (1 Cor. 4:15, 21; cf. 2 Cor. 13:10), or a modeling role (1 Cor. 4:15–16). His aim was to bring each of his converts to maturity in faith and in the knowledge of God's will (Col. 1:9, 23, 28), and to achieve this goal he toiled and strove with the energy that Christ powerfully generated within him (Col. 1:29)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 886.]

12.16 δέ
309 Ἔστω
 (ὅτι) ἐγὼ οὐ κατεβάρησα ὑμᾶς·
 ἀλλ'
 ὑπάρχων πανοῦργος
 δόλω
310 ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον.

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

12.18 παρεκάλεσα Τίτον
 καὶ
313 συναπέστειλα τὸν ἀδελφόν·
314 μήτι ἐπλεονέκτησεν ὑμᾶς Τίτος;
315 οὐ τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι περιεπατήσαμεν;
316 οὐ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἴχνεσιν;

basis for criticizing him: 16 Ἔστω δέ, ἐγὼ οὐ κατεβάρησα ὑμᾶς· ἀλλ' ὑπάρχων πανοῦργος δόλω ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον. 17 μή τινα ὧν ἀπέσταλκα πρὸς ὑμᾶς, δι' αὐτοῦ ἐπλεονέκτησα ὑμᾶς; 18 παρεκάλεσα Τίτον καὶ συναπέστειλα τὸν ἀδελφόν· μήτι ἐπλεονέκτησεν ὑμᾶς Τίτος; οὐ τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι περιεπατήσαμεν; οὐ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἴχνεσιν; 16 Let it be assumed that I did not burden you. Nevertheless (you say) since I was crafty, I took you in by deceit. 17 Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you? 18 I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves with the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?

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

That his words propose a hypothetical scenario is signaled by the very unusual expression Ἔστω δέ, **let it be assumed that I....**⁶⁵⁷ It is unclear precisely what this id-

⁶⁵⁷The focus now moves from Paul's future conduct (vv. 14–15a) to his past conduct (vv. 16–18). ἔστω (literally, 'let it be') may be prospective, introducing a point that all parties would agree on, viz. that Paul had never imposed on the congregation financially. 'Let it be assumed that I did not burden you' (NRSV).³⁹ But Robertson is probably right in observing that the unexpressed subject of ἔστω is the preceding sentence (v. 15b) (392). On this view ἔστω is

iomatic expression alludes to. It probably reaches back to Paul's claim to not have been a burden on them in his previous visit as implied in vv. 14-15 and especially v. 13. αὐτὸς ἐγὼ οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν, **I did not myself burden you.** The Corinthians can at least agree with him on that point, in spite of being suspicious about the motives behind the relief offering.⁶⁵⁸

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

The strong contrastive conjunction ἀλλ', but, sets in stark contrast what Paul thinks the Corinthians can agree with him on in v. 16a to the charges being circulated against him in v. 16b: ἀλλ' ὑπάρχων πανοῦργος δόλω ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον, **but being crafty, by deceit I took you.**⁶⁵⁹

retrospective, 'Be that as it may' (Weymouth, NIV).⁴⁰ 'Whatever is the answer to that question [v. 15b], the incontestable fact remains: I myself (ἐγὼ) was not an imposition on you.' What was contested was the significance of that fact: did it express love (as Paul believed) or lack of love (as the Corinthians seemed to think) (cf. v. 15b)? καταβαρέω means 'put pressure or weight (βάρος) on,' thus 'burden (someone, τινά),' so that οὐ κατεβάρησα ὑμᾶς is indistinguishable in meaning from οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν (v. 13; cf. 11:9a, b).'' [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 888.]

⁶⁵⁸Now Paul clearly alludes to the complaint that appears to lie (somewhat inconsistently) beneath his previous words in v. 14.⁵⁹⁸ In some way or other he has taken financial advantage of the Corinthians, and in a cunning fashion. He assumes their agreement⁵⁹⁹ that he himself⁶⁰⁰ has not directly burdened⁶⁰¹ them, i.e., by openly requiring monetary assistance. But since he is crafty by nature,⁶⁰² he will have managed to get funds from them by some other means. Perhaps he is quoting what his opponents are actually saying about him, claiming such conduct to be a past fact.⁶⁰³ Alternatively, he may simply be aware that suspicions of his financial probity were at least latent, if not already emerging, and may aim to forestall specific criticisms by answering them in advance. This, though, is less probable (see below).⁶⁰⁴ [Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 849–850.]

⁶⁵⁹Standing over against (cf. ἀλλά) that incontrovertible fact was the view that Paul in his craftiness had ensnared the Corinthians by a trick. ὑπάρχων πανοῦργος means 'since I am crafty by nature,' where the causal participle⁴¹ refers to an inherent characteristic (ὑπάρχων = ὧν φύσει).⁴² The adjective πανοῦργος is formed on the analogy of κακοῦργος (= κακόν + ἔργον, 'carrying out an evil deed') and means, etymologically, 'capable of all work' (πᾶν + ἔργον),⁴³ 'ready to do anything,'⁴⁴ or, in a pejorative sense, 'up to every conceivable trick.' The dual sense of this word is represented in the LXX: positively, it means 'prudent,' 'wise,'⁴⁵ and negatively,



The adjective πανούργος, -ov, only found here in the NT, normally had a negative meaning with the sense of ready to anything to scam someone. It was frequently used against the sophist philosophers for their scamming of naive people.⁶⁶⁰ The sense contextually

'crafty' (Job 5:12). In the NT, however, the word group πανουργία⁴⁶ and πανούργος (found only here)⁴⁷ always bears a negative sense. δόλω is an instrumental dative, 'by cunning,' 'through a trick.' As in 11:20, λαμβάνω introduces a metaphor drawn from fishing or hunting, where 'take' means 'catch' or 'snare,' although in reference to persons who are 'duped' or deceived the sense will be 'take in.'

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

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 888–889.]

⁶⁶⁰What, then, is implied by the criticism, actual or anticipated, that Paul is πανούργος?⁶⁰⁵ The word was used in a bad sense quite generally,⁶⁰⁶ and could be employed against opponents of any kind.⁶⁰⁷ But it occurs more particularly, according to Betz, in polemic against the sophists⁶⁰⁸ and against religious superstition. These two targets went together, since there was a tendency to identify religious charlatans with those regarded as fake philosophers. The dividing line was fluid. Furthermore, the charge of avarice was brought against both groups.⁶⁰⁹ When Paul uses the term πανούργος in a context where he is defending his financial integrity, it is surely very likely, Betz suggests, that there is some connection with the polemics of the philosophical and religious milieu in which the apostle worked.⁶¹⁰ This may be so, but it is not very easy to see exactly what this connection would be. If we suppose Paul himself to be engaging in some way in anti-sophistic polemic,⁶¹¹ he would apply the word to the rival missionaries, not to himself. Conversely, if it is a term used by his critics, to denigrate him, what would be the connection with the polemic against sophists? Paul is not a sophist (and the Corinthians seem to have favoured sophists). It would be better to suppose that it was simply religious charlatanism that he believed himself (in danger of being) charged with. But again, how plausible is this? Far from engineering really impressive displays of fake miracles, he seems to have produced little that was very memorable in the way of apostolic signs (12:12). He would scarcely have made much money, if any, as a γόης—a sorcerer,⁶¹² or a (religious) cheat⁶¹³ (pretending to powers he did not possess). All in all, pace Betz, it seems more probable that the term πανούργος is used here in a quite general pejorative sense: '(craftily) clever'." [Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 850–851.]

12.17 μή τινα ὧν ἀπέσταλκα πρὸς ὑμᾶς,
δι' αὐτοῦ
311 ἐπλεονέκτησα ὑμᾶς;
312 12.18 παρεκάλεσα Τίτον
καὶ
313 συναπέστειλα τὸν ἀδελφόν·
314 μήτι ἐπλεονέκτησεν ὑμᾶς Τίτος;
315 οὐ τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι περιεπατήσαμεν;
316 οὐ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἰχνεσιν;

here becomes 'since being a religious charlatan, I took you in by deceit.' This was the essence of the charge against Paul floating around the Christian community at Corinth, with some of the members believing it. 'He didn't scam us while he was here, but look at this relief offering he now wants from us. His first visits just but-tered us up for the really big scam now.'

Verses 17-18 serve to amplify the denial of the charge through the ministry of his associates. He uses four rhetorical questions to put the 'monkey' on the back of the Corinthians.⁶⁶¹

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

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

The highly classical stylizing of this sentence gives greater stress to Paul's point. The block diagram high-

⁶⁶¹Something unique to ancient Greek surfaces in these four rhetorical questions, which by form are yes/no answer type questions. The different negatives used with the verbs carries different meanings. The a detailed background study of this see my LEARNING BIBLICAL KOINE GREEK, [lesson 07](#), pp. 1.7-2f.

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

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



lights this unusual pattern clearly.

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

The core clause *ἐπλεονέκτησα ὑμᾶς*; *Did I take advantage of you?* is the primary answer of Paul to the Corinthian charge in v. 16b, *ἀλλ' ὑπάρχων πανοῦργος δόλω ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον*, *but being crafty I scamed you by deceit*. With personal objects in the accusative case, i.e., *ὑμᾶς*, you, here, the verb *πλεονεκτέω* carries the idea of “to take advantage of, exploit, outwit, defraud, cheat.”⁶⁶² Paul vigorously defends both his integrity and that of his associates.⁶⁶³ Such charges were often leveled against the sophists and Paul employs familiar language to the Corinthians in forcefully rebutting the charge.⁶⁶⁴ The

⁶⁶²William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 824.

⁶⁶³V. 16b has stated in broad outline the charge that had been leveled against Paul. His rebuttal in v. 17, also couched in general terms, is in effect an invitation to the Corinthians to adduce any evidence of exploitation through any of his deputies. As also in v. 18, *πλεονεκτέω* refers to Paul's alleged exploitation of the Corinthians by taking advantage of their willingness to contribute to the collection, all the time siphoning off funds for himself through financial intermediaries. There can be little doubt that the charge Paul is answering was particularly painful to him. It related to his collection for Jerusalem that symbolized the climax of his Aegean ministry and was the 'crown jewel' (Sampley 6) of his work. But even more distressing was the fact that the accusation involved his carefully chosen and trusted associates who had been dispatched by him to work on his behalf in Corinth; the principal was naturally jealous of his agents' reputations as well as his own." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 889–890.]

⁶⁶⁴The verb *πλεονεκτέω* was used as a pejorative term to describe the conduct of sophists and charlatans.⁶²⁸ Paul's own rejection of financial assistance is evidence that he does not himself belong to this category, and neither do his assistants, who follow his own practice." [Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark Interna-

312 ^{12.18} παρεκάλεσα Τίτον
καὶ
313 συναπέστειλα τὸν ἀδελφόν·
314 μήτι ἐπλεονέκτησεν ὑμᾶς Τίτος;

apostle challenges the Corinthian readers to remember a single instance in which they were cheated by his associates. He assumes that they can't and thus are forced to agree with him that both his and his associates' ministries were carried out with highest integrity.

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

In similar eloquent style in v. 18a, Paul singles out Titus in particular as one of those associates: *παρεκάλεσα Τίτον καὶ συναπέστειλα τὸν ἀδελφόν· μήτι ἐπλεονέκτησεν ὑμᾶς Τίτος; I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he?* The prominent emphasis falls on Titus with the opening declaration *παρεκάλεσα Τίτον, I urged Titus (to go)*.⁶⁶⁵ Paul's framing of this indicates that he did not boss his associates around like slaves. Rather he had to convince Titus of the importance of making this trip from Ephesus to Corinth. It was Titus' report upon meeting up with Paul in Macedonia that prompted the writing of this entire letter, as mentioned in 7:13-15.⁶⁶⁶

Titus is mentioned 13 times in the NT with 9 of them in 2 Corinthians in chapters 2, 7, 8 and 12. He was

tional, 2004), 853.]

⁶⁶⁵Windisch, p. 403, notes that *παρεκάλεσα Τίτον* has to be supplemented by some such phrase as *ἵνα ἔρχηται πρὸς ὑμᾶς*. The meaning of *παρακαλέω* here is more likely 'request' (see BAGD s.v. 3., with this reference), 'ask' (so Barrett, p. 318), than 'urge' (BAGD s.v. 2.; both Furnish, p. 557, and Martin, p. 425, favour 'urge'). Titus and his colleague are instanced as a specific example of those whom, in v. 17, Paul has sent to the city. And note the implication of *συναπέστειλα* here." [

Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), P. 853, fn. 631.]

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

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



one of Paul's most trusted associates and seemed to get the really hard assignments of dealing with the Corinthians and later on with the churches on Crete. We know very little about him. He surfaces first in Gal. 2:1, 3 as traveling with Paul from Tarsus to Jerusalem for the big meeting with the Twelve. At the very end of Paul's life, he mentions Titus as going to Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10).⁶⁶⁷ Whether this was his home or a ministry assignment is not certain, although probably the latter.⁶⁶⁸ An unnamed Christian brother is also sent along to accompany Titus: καὶ συναπέστειλα τὸν ἀδελφόν, **and sent the brother with him.**⁶⁶⁹ Most likely this is the same unnamed brother mentioned in 8:16-24 as accompanying Titus to Corinth.⁶⁷⁰ Note that two unnamed Christian

⁶⁶⁷A region along the modern Yugoslav coast of the Adriatic Sea which in apostolic times was the SW part of Illyricum. This ill-defined mountainous district was a nemesis to Rome. By the time of Paul's epistle to Timothy (ca. A.D. 67) the name denoted at least the region between the Macedonian frontier to the S³¹⁵ and the river Titius (Kerka) and oftentimes the entire province of Illyricum (2 Tim 4:10). The broader definition was³¹⁶ definitely used during the Flavian era. Main Dalmatian cities included Salona, Scodra, and Delminium—the capital." [Jerry A. Pattengale, "Dalmatia (Place)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4.]

⁶⁶⁸Titus had gone to Dalmatia. Perhaps he wintered in Nicopolis on his return from Crete and then headed north (see discussion on v 9). Dalmatia was the southwestern part of Illyricum on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea (modern-day Yugoslavia, currently Croatia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina; cf. Pliny Hist. 3.26). Paul had gone as far as Illyricum in his journeys (Rom 15:19), so Titus may have been following up on Paul's missionary endeavors as he may have done in Crete." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 590.]

⁶⁶⁹συναποστέλλω means 'send off (ἀπό) in someone's company (σύν),' thus 'send with.' It implies that 'the brother' played a role subordinate to Titus, which would explain why Titus and not 'the brother' is referred to in the following three rhetorical questions.⁵⁸ The article with ἀδελφόν could be possessive ('his brother';⁵⁹ or 'our brother') but is more probably anaphoric ('the well-known brother' or 'the brother whom you know'); cf. 1:1." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 891.]

⁶⁷⁰**2 Cor. 8:16-24.** 16 Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ τῷ δόντι τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ Τίτου, 17 ὅτι τὴν μὲν παράκλησιν ἐδέξατο, σπουδαιότερος δὲ ὑπάρχων αὐθαίρετος ἐξῆλθεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς. 18 συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ μετ' αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀδελφόν οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, 19 οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ χειροτονηθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν συνέκδημος ἡμῶν σὺν τῇ χάριτι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένη ὑφ' ἡμῶν πρὸς τὴν αὐτοῦ τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν καὶ προθυμίαν ἡμῶν, 20 στελλόμενοι τοῦτο, μή τις ἡμᾶς μωμῆσθαι ἐν τῇ ἀδρότητι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένη ὑφ' ἡμῶν· 21 προνοοῦμεν γὰρ καλὰ οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων. 22 συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ αὐτοῖς τὸν ἀδελφόν ἡμῶν ὃν ἐδοκίμασαμεν ἐν πολλοῖς πολλὰκις σπουδαῖον ὄντα, νυνὶ δὲ πολὺ σπουδαιότερον πεποιθήσει πολλῆ τῇ εἰς ὑμᾶς. 23 εἴτε ὑπὲρ Τίτου, κοινωνὸς ἐμὸς καὶ εἰς ὑμᾶς συνεργός·

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

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

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

οὐ τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι περιεπατήσαμεν;

οὐ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἴχνεσιν (περιεπατήσαμεν);

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

The synonymous parallelism of the two rhetorical questions is obvious, and leads to the necessity of an

εἴτε ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν, ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, δόξα Χριστοῦ. 24 τὴν οὖν ἔνδειξιν τῆς ἀγάπης ὑμῶν καὶ ἡμῶν καυχῆσεως ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν εἰς αὐτοὺς ἐνδεικνύμενοι εἰς πρόσωπον τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν.

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

inner dependent understanding of both of them. Thus the verb περιεπατήσαμεν, *did we not walk*, and the noun ἵχνεσιν, *did we not march together in the same steps*, refer to the behavior of Paul and his associates while at Corinth. The common figurative use of περιπατέω as a reference to behavior in ancient Greek contributes the moral emphasis of their conduct in Corinth.⁶⁷¹ The second noun ἵχνεσιν alludes literally also to walking but refers to one's footprints, here with the sense of marching in military formation with precise timing. This second statement (# 316) stresses the uniform conduct of Paul and his associates.

The two modifiers τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι, *in the same spirit*, and τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἵχνεσιν, *in the same steps*, define each other. Both inner posture and outward action becomes the clear point being made by Paul. Their actions were not phony and deceitful, because they flowed from the inner posture of sincere desire to help the Corinthians. A few commentators wrongly seek to make the argument for πνεύματι here to refer to the Holy Spirit.⁶⁷² This is based on

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

⁶⁷²Fee argues vigorously (357–59) that τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι should be rendered 'in the same Spirit,' an interpretation (we observe) that is reflected in several EVV.⁶² Noting the comparable phrase πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε in Gal. 5:16, he suggests that 'walking in/by the Spirit' is the basic form of Paul's ethical imperative (358), so that without the second question (οὐ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἵχνεσιν;) one would naturally understand πνεύματι as referring to the Holy Spirit. In fact, he argues, this second question is not an explanation of τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι but simply a development of the metaphor of 'walking.' He also points to the expression ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι in 1 Cor. 12:9 in a context that speaks of diversity of gifts yet the oneness of the giver (1 Cor. 12:11) (359). Although Gal. 5:16 and 1 Cor. 12:9 lend support to this view, the parallelism between τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι and τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἵχνεσιν⁶³ suggests that πνεύματι is being used anthropologically in reference to a 'disposition of mind' (Zerwick, Analysis 414) or attitude.⁶⁴ In all three NT uses of ἵχνος ('footprint') (Rom. 4:12; 2 Cor. 12:18; 1 Pet. 2:21) the word is figurative in meaning. 'Did we not walk (supplying περιεπατήσαμεν) in the same footsteps?' or 'Were our footsteps not the same?' refers to the identity of course or track followed by Titus and Paul that was the corollary of their identity of outlook. Between the two there was perfect harmony in both inward attitude and outward action. If the Corinthians knew Titus to be innocent of financial chicanery, so too Paul was innocent." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on*

Gal. 5:16, 18, 25, where Paul begins with πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε, *walk in the Spirit*, asserts πνεύματι ἄγεσθε, *being led by the Spirit* and concludes with πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν, *let us march also in conformity to the Spirit*. But the context in 12:18 clearly argues against this viewpoint. To the Corinthians the emphasis is upon inner and outward. That is, the outward actions genuinely reflected the purity of inner motivation. And this was uniformly the case between Paul and his associates, and in particular with Titus. So if they concluded that Titus and those with him were genuine, they should draw the same conclusion about Paul, contrary to the accusations of the critics at Corinth.

the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 892.]

12.19

317

Πάλαι

δοκεῖτε

ὅτι ὑμῖν ἀπολογούμεθα.

318

κατέναντι θεοῦ
ἐν Χριστῷ

λαλοῦμεν·

12.20

320

γὰρ

φοβοῦμαι

ἐλθῶν

μή πως...οὐχ οἴους θέλω εὐρω ὑμᾶς

κάγω εὐρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἶον οὐ θέλετε·

321

(φοβοῦμαι)

μή πως ἔρις,
ζῆλος,
θυμοί,
ἐριθειῖαι,
καταλαλιαί,
ψιθυρισμοί,
φυσιώσεις,
ἀκαταστασίαι·

12.21

322

μή
πάλιν
ἐλθόντος μου

ταπεινώσῃ με ὁ θεός μου

323

πρὸς ὑμᾶς
καὶ

πενθήσω πολλοὺς

τῶν προημαρτηκότων

καὶ

μὴ μετανοησάντων

ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ

καὶ

πορνείᾳ

καὶ

ἀσελγείᾳ ἢ ἐπραξαν·



10.2.3.4.2 Fears about the Corinthians, 12:19-21

19 Πάλαι δοκεῖτε ὅτι ὑμῖν ἀπολογούμεθα. κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν· τὰ δὲ πάντα, ἀγαπητοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς. 20 φοβοῦμαι γὰρ μή πως ἐλθὼν οὐχ οἴους θέλω εὐρω ὑμᾶς κἀγὼ εὐρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἷον οὐ θέλετε· μή πως ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθεΐαι, καταλαλιαί, ψιθυρισμοί, φυσιώσεις, ἀκαταστασίαι· 21 μὴ πάλιν ἐλθόντος μου ταπεινώσῃ με ὁ θεός μου πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ πενθήσω πολλοὺς τῶν προημαρτηκότων καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ ἀσελγείᾳ ἧ ἔπραξαν.

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

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

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

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

These two sentences amplify Paul's motivation for ministry to the Corinthians. The first one indirectly levels a charge against his critics, while the second

sentence underscores his motivation to glorify God in a ministry that builds up the Corinthians spiritually.

The adverb πάλαι denotes "past time in contrast to the present."⁶⁷³ Text critical wise, it is to be preferred over the alternative πάλιν, again.⁶⁷⁴ The point is to signal with the present tense verb it modifies "up till now."⁶⁷⁵ This triggers a special function of the present tense for the verb that gathers the past and the present into a single expression; it is labeled in most English language Greek grammars the Durative Present, and can only be rendered in English by the perfect tense, e.g., δοκεῖτε as "have you been supposing...?"

The point of this rhetorical is to probe the thinking of his readers about how long they have been suspecting unworthy motives by Paul for the relief offering. Evidently the possibility of such questioning began either with his second visit, i.e., the so-called painful visit in early 55 AD (cf. 2 Cor. 2:1, 12-14; 13:1-2), when emphasis was first given to raising funds to help the believers in Jerusalem and Judea. Now about a year later after Titus' visit to Corinth, he reported to Paul what was being said. Perhaps this questioning of Paul was

⁶⁷³William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 751.

⁶⁷⁴πάλαι ('for a long time,' 'all this time') is to be preferred over πάλιν (read by κ² D Ψ 0278 M g vg^{ms} syr bo) because (i) it has superior attestation, with proto-Alexandrian (κ* B 1739), later Alexandrian (A 0243 33 81 1175 1881), and Western (F G) textual representatives; and (ii) it is the more difficult reading, since πάλιν ('again') is a very common adverb (28 uses in Paul) and may be explained as an assimilation to its use in 3:1 and 5:12 in a similar context, while πάλαι is found only here in Paul and does not bear its usual sense of 'long ago.' Probably under the influence of 12:18, P46 reads οὐ πάλαι, which makes v. 19a a question that expects an affirmative answer." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 893.]

⁶⁷⁵"When πάλαι ('long ago,' 'formerly') is used with the present tense (δοκεῖτε), it has the meaning 'up to now,' 'for a long time now,' or 'all this time.' The durative δοκεῖτε is 'the present of past action still in progress' (Robertson 879), so that past and present time are united in one phrase (πάλαι δοκεῖτε) (Moulton 119).⁴ English expresses this by the perfect tense ('Have you been thinking all this time ...?'), whereas some other languages reproduce the Greek idiom and use the present.⁵ Similarly, ἀπολογούμεθα may also be a durative present ('we have been defending ourselves,' RSV, NRSV) and possibly λαλοῦμεν as well ('we have been speaking,' RSV, NJB), but it is not necessary to translate these two verbs this way. With the verb ἀπολογέομαι ('defend oneself'), used only here and in Rom. 2:15 in Paul, the dative (ὑμῖν) denotes the person before whom the defense is given (cf. Acts 19:33).⁶ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 894-895.]

intensified by the arrival of the outsiders from Judea who questioned Paul's credentials as an apostle before Titus arrived on his trip to Corinth. But this suspicion was festering as time passed, and Paul felt the need to address it. Indeed the entire letter of Second Corinthians is the apostle's response.

What was it that the Corinthians were supposing? The direct object ὅτι clause defines it: ὅτι ὑμῖν ἀπολογούμεθα, *that I am defending myself to you?* In the limited perspective of the Corinthians, they expected Paul to defend himself against these criticisms in a manner similar to the self-promotion of the outsiders. This Paul contends is false. He is not interested in promoting himself, as these false teachers were doing. This we saw laid out in detail in chapter ten. Self-promotion is not a part of the message of a true preacher of the Gospel. Even though an ἀπολογία, *a defense speech*, in Paul's world meant an effort to put oneself in a favorable light to his audience, usually in response to accusations of being unfavorable,⁶⁷⁶ he had a different twist to its meaning. He was not defending himself either then or especially now in this letter. Yet, even a causal reading of this letter, especially chapters 10-13, suggests a vigorous self-defense by Paul.⁶⁷⁷ The un-

⁶⁷⁶For more details see the Louw-Nida Greek Lexicon, topics 33:435-33.438, *Defend, Excuse*:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁶⁷⁷"Skilled pastor that he was, Paul was always anticipating his converts' reactions to what he was saying. He knew the Corinthians' predilection for criticism well enough to know that as they heard this long letter being read aloud, some would be thinking that he had been conducting a prolonged self-defense that was motivated by personal resentment at the charges that had been directed against him and by a desire for personal vindication. So he poses a probing question (v. 19a).² Without any introductory interrogative

κατέναντι θεοῦ
ἐν Χριστῷ
318 λαλοῦμεν

δὲ
319 (εἰσὶ) τὰ πάντα,
ἀγαπητοί,
ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς.

usual use of ἀπολογέομαι just here and in Rom. 2:15 in Paul, follows a reflexive middle voice usage for this otherwise deponent verb. Perhaps this was done in order to catch the attention of the listeners at Corinth as this rather long letter was read in the various house church group meetings.

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

In essence, Paul envisions his oral and written words of defense as being given *before God* (κατέναντι θεοῦ) while *by means of the presence of Christ* (ἐν Χριστῷ).⁶⁷⁸ Even though speaking to the Corinthians (ὑμῖν), the setting is the tribunal of God. The adverbial preposition κατέναντι is unusual in the NT and stresses the sense of God being fully aware of everything spoken, as 2:17 makes even clearer. It is the full opposite of how Paul characterized his opponents in 11:3-4. Thus he would not dare to speak with hidden motive to the Corinthians.

particle such as οὐ or μή(τι) (cf. vv. 17–18), the question is open and is not in itself accusatory. If the sentence is read as a statement,³ there is a sharper, accusatory tone that is less compatible with the warmth and sensitive indirectness of Paul's approach here (note ἀγαπητοί and see below on v. 20). [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 894.]

⁶⁷⁸"The phrase κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν also occurs in 2:17. In both places the prepositional phrases probably bear the same sense: 'in the sight of God' presupposes God's 'all-knowingness' and refers to his role as the witness and assessor of everything Paul said and did (cf. Rom. 14:10);⁷ 'in Christ' may be shorthand for 'in the name of Christ,' referring to Paul's role as a person commissioned and empowered by Christ and representing him.⁸ But in 2:17 λαλοῦμεν primarily denotes Paul's proclamation of the good news, and perhaps also, by synecdoche, his whole apostolic life. Here in 12:19 λαλοῦμεν has a more specific sense, describing his self-defense throughout the present letter. It is therefore improbable that the first person plural is an instance of the apostolic 'we,' with Paul here associating Silvanus and Timothy (cf. 1:19) with himself, an apostle, in the apostolic task of proclaiming the gospel.⁹ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 895.]

The true motive behind Paul's speaking to the Corinthians out in #319: τὰ δὲ πάντα, ἀγαπητοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς, **Everything we do, beloved, is for the sake of building you up.**⁶⁷⁹ The τὰ πάντα, **all things**, includes all of his ministry to the Corinthians from the very beginning. Thus everything done and said has but one motivation: ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς, **for the sake of your edification.** Some nine of the eighteen NT instances of οἰκοδομή surface in First and Second Corinthians. And this doesn't take into consideration the more common verb (128x NT) built off this same root stem: οἰκοδομέω. The literal meaning is that of constructing **a building.** Off of this foundational meaning the NT

⁶⁷⁹Another powerful contrast is that between ἀπολογούμεθα and ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς. At first hearing it might have appeared that Paul's 'apology' was motivated by an egotistic and selfish desire for vindication and the protection of his reputation, but in reality (δέ) this 'apology' and all that he said and did (τὰ πάντα) was aimed at building up the Corinthians. In its attributive position, ὑμῶν is emphatic:¹¹ 'Your edification, not my self-justification, is my primary aim.' As Kitzberger expresses it, the antithesis and emphasis in v. 19 is 'Not I, but you!' (129) (cf. 1 Cor. 10:33). Yet, in the circumstances that were prevalent in Corinth, that main aim of upbuilding was achieved in part by self-defense (cf. 12:11); when circumstances required it, self-defense was part of Paul's strategy, as 1 Cor. 9:3 makes clear. οἰκοδομή here refers to more than benefit (as JB) or help (as GNB). It denotes progress in the Christian life (Zerwick, 320 Analysis 414), in particular the strengthening of individual and corporate faith (cf. 1 Cor. 14:12, 26; 16:13; 1 Thess. 3:2). ὑπὲρ will here have a telic sense, 'with a view to' (Weymouth) or 'for the purpose of' (Barrett 326)12 or simply 'for,' so that ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς is not materially different from εἰς οἰκοδομήν ... ὑμῶν (10:8; cf. 13:10). As in 7:1, the direct address ἀγαπητοί reassures his converts of his tender affection for them (cf. τέκνα in 6:13; 12:14), even if his love is not adequately reciprocated by them (cf. 6:12-13; 12:15). 'Dear friends' is an adequate translation¹³ although the archaic 'beloved'¹⁴ has the advantage of possibly including an allusion to God's love for them as well as a reference to Paul's. As suggested above, τὰ πάντα has primary reference to what Paul had written up to that point, but it also includes all his words and actions in relation to the Corinthians.¹⁵ Since the sentence in which τὰ πάντα occurs is verbless, this expression should be taken as the subject, with ἐστίν supplied,¹⁶ although it is not impossible that it is the object, with either λαλοῦμεν (from v. 19b)17 or ποιοῦμεν¹⁸ supplied." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 895-896.]

mostly uses both the noun and the verb figuratively to reference building up individuals spiritually into God's temple. Three of the four uses of οἰκοδομή in 2 Cor. reference Paul's commitment to building up the Corinthians: 10:8; 12:19; 13:10. The fourth in 5:1 defines that building against the backdrop of the heavenly temple as our eternal home. Thus Paul's ministry is designed to prepare the Corinthians for living eternally in the full presence of God from conversion on. As we are developed into the habitation of God on earth by His Spirit, we prepare ourselves for the culmination of that construction process when we enter Heaven.

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

His fear of having to dismantle first, vv. 20-21. 20 φοβοῦμαι γὰρ μή πως ἐλθὼν οὐχ οἴους θέλω εὐρω ὑμᾶς κάγω εὐρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἶον οὐ θέλετε· μή πως ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθεΐαι, καταλαλιαί, ψιθυρισμοί, φυσιώσεις, ἀκαταστασίαι· 21 μή πάλιν ἐλθόντος μου ταπεινώσω με ὁ θεός μου πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ πενήθσω πολλοὺς τῶν προημαρτηκότων καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ

<p>12.20 γὰρ φοβοῦμαι</p> <p>321 (φοβοῦμαι)</p> <p>322 12.21 (φοβοῦμαι)</p>	<p>ἐλθὼν</p> <p>μή πως...οὐχ οἴους θέλω εὐρω ὑμᾶς κάγω εὐρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἶον οὐ θέλετε·</p> <p>μή πως ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθεΐαι, καταλαλιαί, ψιθυρισμοί, φυσιώσεις, ἀκαταστασίαι·</p> <p>πάλιν ἐλθόντος μου</p> <p>μή...ταπεινώσω με ὁ θεός μου πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ</p> <p>-- πενήθσω πολλοὺς τῶν προημαρτηκότων καὶ</p> <p>--- μὴ μετανοησάντων ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ ἀσελγείᾳ ἢ ἔπραξαν·</p>
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καὶ πορνεία καὶ ἀσελγεία ἢ ἔπραξαν. 20 For I fear that when I come, I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish; I fear that there may perhaps be quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. 21 I fear that when I come again, my God may humble me before you, and that I may have to mourn over many who previously sinned and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and licentiousness that they have practiced.

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

Here at least, the situation called for warnings that are expressed by the Greek idiom φοβοῦμαι μή πως... I fear lest...⁶⁸⁰ Paul casts some doubt on whether or not he will find things moving the proper way in Corinth upon his arrival. Thus by this he was giving his readers advanced notice to get their act together prior to his arrival. Plus, it provided Titus and his two companions with resources to encourage the Corinthians to straighten up in advance of his arrival. Paul was not seeking to build loyalty to himself, but rather to push the Corinthians to being at peak commitment to Christ by the time of his coming visit. This is genuine οἰκοδομή.

What were those warnings? As the above diagram illustrates, three sets of fears are expressed by Paul to the Corinthians. These are governed grammatically by the beginning φοβοῦμαι followed first by μή πως... twice, and then by μή... the third time. The second and third instances are elliptical as signaled by the parentheses around φοβοῦμαι in the diagram. The repeating of the adverbial temporal particle ἐλθὼν, *when I come*, with the genitive absolute ἐλθόντος μου, *when I come*, sets off the third set as somewhat distinct from the first two.⁶⁸¹ Also

⁶⁸⁰[φοβέω] *Foll. by μή and the aor. subj. to denote that which one fears* (Thu. 1, 36, 1; Aesop, Fab. 317 H.=356a P.; Alex. Aphr. 31, II/2 P. 203, 20 τὸν Ἀπόλλω φοβεῖσθαι μή τι παρελθῆ τούτων ἄπρακτον=Apollo is concerned [almost as much as 'sees to it'] that nothing of this remains undone; Jos., Ant. 10, 8, Vi. 252) **Ac 23:10; 27:17**; ITr 5:1; Hs 9, 20, 2. *Foll. by μήποτε* (Phlegon: 257 Fgm. 36, 2, 4 Jac. P. 1172, 30 φοβοῦμαι περὶ ὑμῶν, μήποτε; JosAs 7:3; ApcMos 16 al.); Hm 12, 5, 3. φοβηθῶμεν μήποτε δοκῆ τις Hb 4:1; μήπου (v.l. μήπως; ParJer 5:5) **Ac 27:29; 2 Cor 11:3; 12:20**. A notable feature is the prolepsis of the obj. (cp. Soph., Oed. R. 767; Thu. 4, 8, 7) φοβοῦμαι ὑμᾶς μήπως εἰκῆ κεκοπίακα εἰς ὑμᾶς I am afraid my work with you may be wasted **Gal 4:11** (B-D-F §476, 3; Rob. 423).—*W. inf. foll. be afraid to do or shrink from doing someth.* (B-D-F §392, 1b.—X., An. 1, 3, 17 al.; Gen 19:30; 26:7; ApcMos 10:18) **Mt 1:20; 2:22; Mk 9:32; Lk 9:45; 2 Cl 5:1**. [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1061.]

⁶⁸¹The two fears expressed in v. 20 are introduced by μή πως,

the difference in meaning between μή πως and μή, used here with the aorist subjunctive verbs in a quasi-subordinate conjunctive role, is the difference in degree of certainty.⁶⁸² The first two sets with μή πως expresses more uncertainty and should be translated along the lines of 'lest...may perhaps...'. The third set with just μή reflects greater certainty and should be translated with just 'lest...may'. A final grammatical clarification needs to be explained regarding the first apprehension:⁶⁸³

'(I fear) that ... perhaps.' This third fear (v. 21), with φοβοῦμαι to be supplied, is introduced by μή alone,⁵¹ perhaps suggesting that Paul regarded the possibility of a humiliation at Corinth, leading to grief over unrepentant sinners, as even more real than the other two fears. If this further fear materialized, it would be after his arrival (ἐλθόντος μου, "when I come," a temporal use of the genitive absolute). Word order might suggest that πάλιν belongs to this phrase; thus "when I come again," "on my return."⁵² But there are several compelling reasons for construing πάλιν with ταπεινώσει,⁵³ or with the whole statement ἐλθόντος ... ὑμᾶς.⁵⁴ (1) By its position πάλιν is emphatic. Since v. 20 has already mentioned a "coming" (ἐλθὼν), the point emphasized is more likely to be the possibility of yet another humiliation. If πάλιν is taken with ἐλθόντος, it is superfluous, not emphatic.⁵⁵ (2) 2:1 speaks of the possibility of another painful visit (τὸ μὴ πάλιν ἐν λύπῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν). (3) Without an added πάλιν, ἔρχομαι can mean "come back," "return" (e.g., 1:15, 23; 2:3; 1 Cor. 4:18–19; 16:11) (4) As a genitive absolute ἐλθόντος μου is grammatically subordinate and therefore unlikely to be qualified by an emphatic πάλιν.⁵⁶

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

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 900–901.]

⁶⁸²Although some EVV do not represent the enclitic particle πώς in translation,²¹ perhaps assuming that it merely strengthens the sense of uncertainty implicit in φοβέομαι μή with the subjunctive,²² it is important to see it as a qualification of Paul's fears and to render it by a word or phrase such as 'somehow,' 'perhaps,' or 'in some way or other.' While he entertained genuine fears that were based on information he had recently received and on his own knowledge of Corinthian proclivities, he still hoped that his fears would not materialize and that his friends at Corinth would set their house in order before his arrival.²³ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 897.]

⁶⁸³It is illegitimate to relate these negatives to εὐρω and εὐρεθῶ,²⁴ and it is unnecessary to relate the first negative to εὐρω.²⁵ If we take the word order as it stands (which produces a perfectly appropriate sense in the context), then (a) both uses of εὐρίσκω are positive, (b) οὐχ negates οἶους θέλω ('not the kind of people I wish [you to be]'),²⁶ and (c) οὐ negates θέλετε²⁷ ('the kind of person you do not wish [me to be]').²⁸ οἶους = τοιούτους οἶους and οἶον = τοιοῦτον οἶον, 'the kind of people/person such as...' V. 20a sums up the remainder of the letter: vv. 20b–21 explicate οὐχ οἶους



οὐχ οἴους θέλω εὐρω ὑμᾶς
κάγω εὔρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἶον οὐ θέλετε

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

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

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

μή πως ἔρις, ζήλος, θυμοί, ἐριθεΐαι, καταλαλαί, ψιθυρισμοί, φυσιώσεις, ἀκαταστασίαι (v. 20b). What

θέλω, and 13:1–10 develops οἶον οὐ θέλετε. What Paul wished for the Corinthians was the opposite of vv. 20b–21, namely their up-building (v. 19). What they would not wish would be for Paul to arrive ‘rod in hand’ (ἐν ῥάβδῳ, 1 Cor. 4:21) with a view to καθαίρεις (cf. 10:8; 13:10).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 897–898.]

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

The first two traits, ἔρις and ζήλος, **quarreling and jealousy**, lay out the problem in basic terms in the singular spelling.⁶⁸⁴ These are foundational traits possibly in the church that Paul feared he might find upon coming there. The subsequent six traits are stated in the plural form. The shift over to the plural from the singular spotlights individual expressions of the different vices.⁶⁸⁵ The first pair of plural traits is θυμοί and ἐριθεΐαι, **anger, selfishness**, focus upon the individuals in the church.⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸⁴ἔρις, 'discord,' 'strife,' or 'quarreling,' is found only in Paul's letters (9 instances) and is the opposite of εἰρήνη, 'peace,' 'undisturbedness' (cf. Gal. 5:20, 22; 1 Tim. 2:2). One aspect of this 'contentiousness' will have been disputes over the rival claims of Paul and his opponents. In 7:7, 11; 9:2 ζήλος has a positive sense, 'eagerness' or 'zeal,' but here its negative meaning is applicable, 'jealousy' or 'envy,' so that it is synonymous with φθόνος. Given the rife factionalism at Corinth and the association of ζήλος with ἔρις here and in Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 3:3; Gal. 5:20, ζήλος could bear the sense, 'party strife' (Wand), 'rivalry,' or 'party-attachment' (BAGD 337d). Common to the good and bad senses of ζήλος is the idea of strong emotion, which may be expressed positively in 'emulation' (a Classical Greek meaning) or 'enthusiasm,' or negatively in 'envy' or 'resentment.'” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 899.]

⁶⁸⁵The next six terms are plural, pointing to individual instances of the vice in question; thus 'acts of ...' or 'expressions of.'⁶⁹⁰ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 899.]

⁶⁸⁶Accordingly, θυμοί are 'outbursts of anger' (BAGD 365c) or 'angry outbursts' (Bruce, Paraphrase 157). If we render it 'explosive tempers' (Furnish 557), the reference is to tempers that do explode rather than might explode. 'As compared with ὀργή, θυμός denotes an outburst of passion, ὀργή a more settled indignation; in accordance with which distinction θυμός tends to be used of the reprehensible anger of men, ὀργή of the righteous wrath of God' (Burton, Galatians 307). Apart from two uses in Aristotle where it refers to 'intrigue aimed at obtaining an official post by suspect means,'¹⁴⁰ the word ἐριθεΐα is unknown in the Greek language before NT times, but it occurs seven times in the NT,⁴¹ twice in lists of vices (12:20; Gal. 5:20). In spite of the superficial similarity, it is etymologically unrelated to ἔρις; in any case, the meaning 'strife' is unlikely since synonyms would be out of place in a brief list of sins. The term is derived from ἐριθος, 'a hired worker,' and ἐριθεύομαι,



The next pair, καταλαλιά and ψιθυρισμοί, *slander and gossip*, center on speech about one another.⁶⁸⁷ The final two are not so inner connected as the preceding pairs. φυσιώσεις literally means 'puffed up' and in the plural form as here connotes the idea of expressions of arrogance.⁶⁸⁸ The last trait, ἀκαταστασία, references disturbances of public order with the sense here of 'causing disorder.'⁶⁸⁹

One should resist trying to set up a set of pairs for these eight traits.⁶⁹⁰ By using the singular for the first two traits, Paul clearly sets them forth as foundational. But the shift over to plural forms for the next six traits

'work for daily hire' or 'hire party agents,' so that ἐπιθειά came to denote a 'party spirit' (Weymouth, Cassirer), 'the factious spirit' (Barclay) or 'factiousness' (Thrall 857), and thus 'intrigues' (JB),⁴² 'personal rivalries' (NEB, REB)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 899.]

⁶⁸⁷"The next pair of words refers to verbal sins; Lambrecht renders the pair 'words of slander and gossip' (211). καταλαλία is 'evil-speaking' or 'slander,' with the plural referring to instances of slander, thus 'slandering.' ψιθυρισμός, 'whisper,' is 'an onomatopoeic word for the sibilant murmur of a snake charmer (Eccl. 10:11).'⁴³ The verb ψιθυρίζω means 'speak in a low voice,' 'mutter,' 'mumble,' and the cognate noun ψιθυριστής (Rom. 1:29) refers to a person who conducts 'secret attacks on a person's character as compared with κατάλαλος [Rom. 1:30], an open detractor' (MM 698b). ψιθυρισμός, then, is 'the clandestine speech of the detractor,'⁴⁴ 'whispered gossip' (Thrall 857), with the plural pointing to instances of gossip, 'gossiping.'" [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 899–900.]

⁶⁸⁸"Literally, φυσιώσις means 'a puffing up' and so in medical usage referred to 'inflation' or 'swelling' (cf. our English word 'puffiness'). To have an inflated view of one's importance was to be filled with φυσιώσις, 'conceit,' 'pride' (= inflation of mind), so that φυσιώσεις could be rendered 'cases of arrogance' (Furnish 557).⁴⁵" [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 900.]

⁶⁸⁹"Finally, ἀκαταστασία are 'disturbances' of the public order, manifestations of 'disorder,' or general unruliness.⁴⁶" [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 900.]

⁶⁹⁰"Some have suggested that these eight vices form a series of four pairs.⁴⁷ But although ἔρις and ζήλος may be closely associated (as in Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 3:3; Gal. 5:20), quarreling as the result of jealousy, and καταλαλιά could be linked to ψιθυρισμοί, both being sins of the tongue, a comparable link cannot be easily found for the second and fourth pairs." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 900.]

πάλιν
ἐλθόντος μου
μὴ...ταπεινώση με ὁ θεός μου
πρὸς ὑμᾶς

signals expressions of these two basic traits in differing concrete actions. This is as close to a grouping of these eight qualities as one can legitimately come to.

Most of these qualities are referenced in Paul's earlier letter in 1 Cor. 1:10-17. Thus they were present much before the arrival of the outsiders to Corinth. But the likelihood is that their presence at Corinth served to intensify this divisiveness in the community.⁶⁹¹ Again, one must remember that Paul's wish is not to find these qualities still in the church at his arrival on the third visit, even though he is fearful that they still exist in the church.

μὴ πάλιν ἐλθόντος μου ταπεινώση με ὁ θεός μου πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ πενήσω πολλοὺς τῶν προημαρτηκότων καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ ἀσελείᾳ ἧ ἔπραξαν (v. 21). This third fear goes a different direction from the first two. The use of just μὴ signals a greater expectation of finding the traits mentioned here among the Corinthians. But he frames this carefully in terms of the difficulty such a discovery will cause him personally.

The adverb πάλιν, again (8x in 2 Cor.), is positioned at the beginning of the clause in an emphatic location, although it modifies the core verb ταπεινώση, as is illustrated in the diagram, rather than the participle ἐλθόντος. This then alludes to another humiliation of Paul before the Corinthians rather than to another trip to Corinth.⁶⁹² Exactly what this humiliation would poten-

⁶⁹¹"Since 1 Corinthians shows that most if not all of the sins in this vice-catalogue were present in the congregation eighteen or so months previously,⁴⁸ there is no reason to assume that their presence at the time 2 Corinthians was written should be attributed to the adverse influence of Paul's rivals. However, the persistence and intensity of these congregational sins were doubtless the result of their influence.⁴⁹ There may have been rivalry not only between those Corinthians who championed Paul's adversaries and those who supported Paul himself,⁵⁰ but perhaps also within the anti-Pauline group as some sided with one of the Judaizing intruders and some with another." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 900.]

⁶⁹²"Word order might suggest that πάλιν belongs to this phrase; thus 'when I come again,' 'on my return.'⁵² But there are several compelling reasons for construing πάλιν with ταπεινώση,⁵³ or with the whole statement ἐλθόντος ... ὑμᾶς.⁵⁴ (1) By its position πάλιν is emphatic. Since v. 20 has already mentioned a 'coming' (ἐλθόν), the point emphasized is more likely to be the possibility of yet another humiliation. If πάλιν is taken with ἐλθόντος, it is superfluous, not emphatic.⁵⁵ (2) 2:1 speaks of the possibility of another painful visit (τὸ μὴ πάλιν ἐν λύπῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν). (3) Without an added πάλιν, ἔρχομαι can mean 'come back,' 'return' (e.g., 1:15, 23; 2:3; 1 Cor. 4:18–19; 16:11) (4) As a genitive absolute ἐλθόντος μου is



tially be is not stated directly, but the context sets up a framework that point a particular direction.⁶⁹³ It would happen in Paul's connection to the Corinthians (πρὸς ὑμᾶς), rather than in confrontation with the outsider false teachers. It would center on the failure of the Corinthians to repent of their sinning (v. 21b; cf. v. 20b, οὐχ οἴους θέλω εὐρω ὑμᾶς). It would lead to deep mourning for Paul that somehow he didn't do enough to prevent this lapse into sinful patterns by the Corinthians. This would force him to deal bluntly with the unrepentant members in the church (cf. v. 20c, κἀγὼ εὐρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἶον οὐ θέλετε). The *again*, πάλιν, most like references the so-called 'painful visit' mentioned in 2:1; 12:14; 13:1,2, as the first instance. Additionally, there may be the involvement of the offending individual mentioned in 2:6-8; 7:12. The subsequent text in 13:1-2 points in this direction of the confrontation with members living in sin that happened on the second visit, the so-called 'painful visit.'

The core statement ταπεινώση με ὁ θεός μου, *my God may humble me*, perhaps takes on greater profundity with this coming visit, since the delegation of representatives from the different churches participating in the relief offering will accompany Paul to Corinth.⁶⁹⁴ To loose face in the presence of those

grammatically subordinate and therefore unlikely to be qualified by an emphatic πάλιν.⁶⁹¹ [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), 901.]

⁶⁹³First, the fear of fresh humiliation.⁵⁷ What constituted this potential humiliation is not stated, but there are three hints in the context. God would be its cause or at least would permit it to occur (ταπεινώση με ὁ θεός μου);⁵⁸ it would directly involve the Corinthians (whether πρὸς ὑμᾶς means 'in your presence'⁵⁹ or 'in my relations with you'⁶⁰) rather than the rival missionaries; it would entail Paul's discovery that the Corinthians were not in a spiritual state such as he would wish them to be (οὐχ οἴους θέλω εὐρω ὑμᾶς, v. 20), that they were beset by social and sexual sins such as those listed in v. 20b and v. 21b. Paul could attribute this 'humbling' to God because God could turn Paul's painful discovery of those sins among his own converts⁶¹ into spiritual benefit if Paul himself was thereby brought low before God and if his subsequent action of 'not sparing' them punishment (13:2) brought about their repentance and thus their οἰκοδομή (v. 19; cf. 10:8; 13:10). The previous 'humbling' alluded to by πάλιν may have been either the result of the offense against Paul committed by ὁ ἀδικήσας (2:6-8; 7:12) in the Corinthian congregation, or, more generally, the Corinthian failure to side with Paul decisively during the 'painful visit.'⁶² [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), 901-902.]

⁶⁹⁴I am using the term 'humiliation' in the (legitimate) sense of 'being made humble,' not of having one's dignity or self-respect injured. Most EVV and commentators render ταπεινώση by 'humiliate,' but the unambiguous 'humble' is preferred by RV, TCNT, Montgomery, RSV, NIV, NRSV, and Martin 451; Barnett 596.]

to whom Paul had so bragged about the enthusiasm of the Corinthians would indeed be significant. Paul's ideal scenario was to make the trip with these representatives to Corinth and find a congregation both committed to Christ and fully prepared to participate in this offering. Everything could then proceed smoothly since they would leave Corinth headed for Jerusalem with the offering. His fear, however, was that not only would the church still be caught up in divisiveness, but that also many of the members at Corinth would still be living pagan lives while professing Christ. This would necessitate a blunt confrontation with these individuals and thus raise credibility about the integrity of the church in its commitment to Christ.

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

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

The core verb πενθήσω should be taken as aorist subjunctive in matching its parallel ταπεινώση, even though the future active indicative is the same spelling. Thus the translation *I may have to mourn*, as opposed to *I will mourn*. To grieve over someone is expressed by Paul one other time in 1 Cor. 5:2, where the member was living in sinful relationship to his mother. It was a part of Paul's anxious concern for the churches, cf. 11:28. This verb often depicts the mourning that took place at ancient funerals. It's doubtful that Paul went through some kind of mourning ritual pointed at those living in sinfulness. But his graphic language here points to failure of professing believers to be sensitive to sinful conduct. As their spiritual leader he would show grief and sorrow in a public manner about them.⁶⁹⁵

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), P. 901, fn 57.]

⁶⁹⁵Second, the fear of having to mourn. After the implied φοβοῦμαι before μὴ, πενθήσω is more probably aorist subjunctive



Those whom Paul might have to grieve over are described as πολλούς τῶν προημαρτηκῶτων καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ ἀσελγείᾳ ἣ ἔπραξαν, *over many who previously sinned and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and licentiousness that they have practiced*. The reference is complex but seems to move along the following lines.⁶⁹⁶ The two participles προημαρτηκῶτων, *sinned earlier*, and μὴ μετανοησάντων, *have not repented*, are both governed by the single article τῶν (cf. above diagram). The means one group of people who have sinned but not repented. The substantival use of these two infinitives in the genitive case is best understood as appositional. This results in the translation *many, those who have sinned and not repented*. The adjective πολλούς designates a significant number of the church members at Corinth. Whether it implies a majority or a minority segment of the church can't be determined, although the latter is more likely. The combining of the perfect tense

(‘I fear ... that I may grieve’) than future indicative (‘and I shall grieve’⁶²). In the former case, a second fear is specified. On either view the grieving may be the result of the humbling. After discovering that his converts were still entwined in obvious sin, Paul would naturally react by ‘mourning’ over them,⁶³ as if they were spiritually dead, that is, unresponsive to God.⁶⁴ Such mourning was one aspect of his ‘anxious concern’ (μέριμνα) for all the churches (11:28). Paul’s only other use of πενθέω is in 1 Cor. 5:2 where, as here, the grief is over the believer who continues in sin without repentance, not over the excommunication that would result.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 902.]

⁶⁹⁶“Those Paul would grieve over are described as πολλούς τῶν προημαρτηκῶτων καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων κτλ. With regard to this difficult expression, we may make four observations.

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

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

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

"(4) προ- in the participle προημαρτηκῶτων refers to some earlier period up to the time of writing, perhaps the period after their conversion (during Paul’s first visit),⁶⁸ but certainly including the period during and after his ‘painful visit.’”

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

προημαρτηκῶτων with the aorist tense μετανοησάντων creates a picture of repeated consequential action but without applying the necessary solution. That is, they were deeply involved in sinful action with severe consequences but had expressed no willingness to turn away from it. The prefix προ- on προημαρτηκῶτων suggests an earlier pattern of this activity at least going back to his second visit and the subsequent ‘severe letter’ right up to the time of the writing of Second Corinthians. This is more likely than the alternative view that this segment of the church had never truly repented and thus were Christians in name only.

Whom Paul is referencing here most likely are his critics inside the Corinthian community of believers (cf. 11:1-11). If so, this would explain their negativism against Paul. He demanded that they clean up their moral living but they had no interest in adopting standards of holy living as taught by the apostle. They had clashed with Paul during his “painful” visit and then rejected his “severe” letter that came shortly afterward.

What did they clash over? The answer comes in ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ ἀσελγείᾳ ἣ ἔπραξαν, *in regard to their uncleanness, sexual immorality, and licentiousness which they practiced*. Again from the above diagram not that the one article τῇ governs all three nouns ἀκαθαρσία καὶ πορνεία καὶ ἀσελγεία. Thus one sin is defined three different ways.⁶⁹⁷ These Corinthians were deeply involved in the very depraved sexual culture of the city of Corinth and didn’t want to turn loose of it, even as professing Christians. Such is not overly surprising given the reputation of the city for its immorality.

In First Corinthians five and six the apostle had to

⁶⁹⁷“ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ κτλ. belongs with μετανοησάντων (‘repent of,’ BAGD 512a), not with the more remote πενήθῃω (‘mourn ... because of’). Now it is true that elsewhere in the NT, when μετανοέω is followed by a preposition, that preposition is ἀπό or ἐκ.⁶⁹ But this is the only use of μετανοέω in the epistles, and in the LXX μετανοέω ἐπὶ is not uncommon.⁷⁰ The sins of which ‘many’ Corinthians refused to repent were three, all sexual sins, which would account for the single article that binds them together in a conceptual unity. All three are mentioned in Gal. 5:19 (in a different order), as the first three of the ‘deeds of the flesh.’ ἀκαθαρσία is ‘impurity,’ especially of a sexual nature (e.g., Rom. 1:24; Eph. 4:19). πορνεία, ‘immorality,’ ‘sexual vice,’ refers to illicit sexual activity of any sort, especially prostitution and fornication. The third term, ἀσελγεία, describes sexual conduct that lacks any moral restraint, unbridled and shameless sexual activity comparable to that of animals, ‘licentiousness,’ ‘gross sensuality,’ ‘debauchery.’ Between them, the three terms depict impure, immoral, and dissolute sexual behavior⁷¹ and testify to the rampant depravity in the city of Corinth and the clinging pagan background of some of the Corinthian converts (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9–11).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 903–904.]



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

Paul addresses then two distinct problems in the church by expressing fear that he will still find them existing in the church by the time of his impending visit with the delegation of representatives of the other churches. One the first hand in v. 20 there was the fear of lingering divisiveness, probably egged on by the arrival of the outsider false teachers. Then in v. 21 there was the problem of sexual immorality by some of the church members that had not be resolved by repentance. If these two fears materialized at his arrival, then what should have been a happy occasion of celebration of God's blessings in the relief offering would turn into a tense scene of Paul having to take blunt and forceful action against these at Corinth who were out of line. The warning of this possibility is given in detail in the following unit of 13:1-10.

10.2.3.4.3 Anticipated disciplinary actions, 13:1-4

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

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

The linkage of 13:1-4 to 12:19-21 is clear from the content of both units of text.⁶⁹⁸ The warning in vv. 1-4

⁶⁹⁸"We have seen that what Paul hoped not to find at Corinth on his third visit is described in 12:20b–21, namely factionalism and immorality. What he surmised the Corinthians would not want him to be on that visit is stated in 13:1–4, namely someone who administers punishment. That is, 12:20b–21 explains the expression φοβοῦμαι ... μή πως ... οὐχ οἴους θέλω εὔρω ὑμᾶς (12:20a), while 13:1–4 explains φοβοῦμαι ... μή πως ... κἀγὼ εὐρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἷον οὐ θέλετε (12:20a). His purpose in expressing those fears about his forthcoming visit was to encourage a change of behavior prior to his arrival. But he sensed that the mere expression of his personal

builds off Paul's explanation in 12:19-21 of why he is defending himself the way he does. Then 13:5-10 follows very naturally off of 13:1-4 as an admonition to remedy the problems prior to Paul's arrival. As such it stands as a culmination of the longer discussion in 12:14 - 13:10.

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

In the beginning declarations of this subunit in vv. 1-4, Paul sets up the discussion with the announcement Τρίτον τοῦτο ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς, this third time I am coming to you. This, although in shorter form in effect repeats 12:14, Ἰδοὺ τρίτον τοῦτο ἐτοιμῶς ἔχω ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, behold this third time I am prepared to come to you. The two previous visits are described first in Acts 18:1-18, i.e., the founding of the church, and the second in 2 Cor. 2:1, i.e., the 'painful visit.' The apostle from the early 50s to the mid-50s had given considerable attention to the Christian church at Corinth.⁶⁹⁹ The hugely corrupt atmosphere of the city made establishing a strong and stable congregation there much more challenging.

The tone of that impending visit is next established from a reference to Deut. 19:15, ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων καὶ τριῶν σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα, "Any charge

forebodings would not be sufficient to shake the Corinthians from their lethargy about their sins. So he repeats a warning that he had given as he departed from Corinth after his second visit: "On my return I will not spare you" (v. 2). This punitive action would give the Corinthians the proof they were demanding that he was Christ's spokesman and agent (v. 3a). He then develops a comparison between the two states of Christ (weakness-power) and his own dual approach in dealing with the Corinthians (vv. 3b–4)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 904–905.]

⁶⁹⁹"Paul's first visit was the time when he introduced the Corinthians to the good news; his second, when he found the Corinthians at odds with the aims and purposes of the gospel. Now he contemplates a third visit, which he hopes will be pleasant. Just as chaps. 8–9 were designed to help the Corinthians prepare for the final stages of their pledged collection, so chaps. 10–13 are designed to prepare the congregation for this third visit." [Frederick W. Danker, *II Corinthians*, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1989), 208.]

13.1 *Τρίτον τοῦτο*
323 ἔρχομαι
 πρὸς ὑμᾶς ·
 ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων καὶ τριῶν
324 σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα.

13.2
325 προείρηκα
 καὶ
326 προλέγω, _____
 ὡς παρῶ|ν τὸ δεύτερον
 |καὶ
 ἀπῶν|νῶν,
τοῖς προημαρτηκόσιν
καὶ
τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν,

13.3
ὅτι...οὐ φείσομαι,
 ἐπεὶ δοκιμὴν ζητεῖτε
 τοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ λαλοῦντος Χριστοῦ,
 /-----|
 | εἰς ὑμᾶς
 ὅς...οὐκ ἀσθενεῖ
 | ἀλλὰ
 -- δυνατεῖ
 ἐν ὑμῖν.

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

must be sustained by the evidence of two or three witnesses.⁷⁰⁰ The surface level meaning signals that every action taken during this visit will be appropriate according to divine revelation. The subsurface level meaning is a warning to the critics and outsider false teachers with Jewish heritage that they had better be ready to sustain their criticisms ‘biblically’ or else face disciplinary actions against them.⁷⁰¹ Whether Paul additionally saw

⁷⁰⁰Paul chooses to cite Deut. 19:15 at this point (13:1),12 probably because Deuteronomy goes on (v. 16) to speak of malicious witnesses, in this case surely the false apostoloi, and (v. 19) to conclude that if malicious witnesses are shown to have testified falsely, then 'You shall do to the false witness what the false witness meant to do to the accused. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.' Those who knew the Hebrew Scriptures would likely catch a hint here of upcoming legal action against the offenders in Corinth.¹³ [Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 469.]

⁷⁰¹"Very abruptly, without any connecting particle and without any introductory formula (cf. 10:17) *suchuch* as καθὼς γέγραπται (cf. 8:15; 9:9), Paul introduces a citation of Deut. 19:15. His thought has moved swiftly from his arrival in Corinth (ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς) to the urgent church business he may have to conduct there. Deut.

some symbolism in the three witnesses linked to his three visits is but speculation with no real evidence.⁷⁰² 19:15–21 deals with the law regarding witnesses, which aimed to protect the person accused of a crime against inadequate witness (v. 15) and against malicious witness (vv. 16–21; cf. Exod. 20:16). The requirement (v. 15) of multiple witnesses—three, or at least two⁵—to establish the case against the accused was a distinctive of OT legal procedure and of rabbinic jurisprudence (see van Vliet *passim*);⁶ neither Roman nor Greek law in the first century rejected the validity of the testimony of a single witness (van Vliet 11–25)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 906.]

⁷⁰²"Are the 'three witnesses' Paul's three visits? Is Paul saying that by his third visit he will establish his case? The context favors this view.¹⁴ Paul is probably suggesting that he will hold court when he arrives.¹⁵ He is turning the tables on his audience and preparing to put them on trial, just as he has been judged by them and has had to defend himself in this letter. Roman judicial proceedings included a preliminary hearing in which the facts of the case were determined and agreed on as the basis for the trial.¹⁶ Paul may then be threatening to take forensic, but in-house, action against various Corinthians, perhaps the ones supporting the false apostoloi, unless they get their house in order.¹⁷ The point is that



Paul reference follows closely the Greek text of the LXX for Deut. 19:15.⁷⁰³ It is unclear whether Paul's use of this OT principle was a threat to convene a formal court proceeding within the church to force disciplinary action against his critics. Or, whether he merely is indicating that he will come prepared to validate his ministry according to OT principle.⁷⁰⁴ At any rate, he anticipates when Paul comes he will not spare them, because he has warned them previously about their former sins and is warning them now in this letter as well (v. 2). [Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 469.]

⁷⁰³Paul's citation is essentially the same as the LXX of Deut. 19:15, the only differences being that the LXX repeats ἐπὶ στόματος between καὶ and τριῶν and repeats μαρτύρων after τριῶν.⁷ Several matters in the citation require clarification. ἐπὶ here means 'on the basis of' or simply 'on,' while στόμα ('mouth'), by metonymy, refers to what the mouth utters, 'testimony' (cf. Luke 19:22), so that ἐπὶ στόματος means 'on the basis of the testimony' = 'on the evidence' (BAGD 286c) or 'on the testimony'.¹⁸ The καὶ that joins δύο (μαρτύρων) and τριῶν is equivalent to ἢ ('or'),⁹ with 'two or three' meaning 'two or more' (no upper limit!) or 'three, or at least two' (JB). σταθήσεται, 'shall be established/decided/substantiated/settled,' is an instance of the use of the future indicative in OT legal language to render a 'categorical injunction' (BDF §362) and so is equivalent to an imperative. Generally ῥῆμα denotes a spoken word, but here it represents the Hebrew term *dābār* and refers to a subject spoken about (πράγμα), thus 'matter,' 'issue,'¹⁰ or in a specifically legal sense, 'case,' 'charge.' As a phrase σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα may therefore be rendered in a variety of ways, such as:

- Every matter must be established (NIV)
- Every case is to be decided (Moffatt)
- Any accusation must be upheld (GNB)
- Every issue ... shall be settled (Cassirer)"

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 906–907.]

⁷⁰⁴"But who or what are the 'two or three witnesses'? Three main answers have been given to this question.

"(1) The witnesses cannot be identified, for Paul is speaking in general terms of the legal stringency that would apply during his formal inquiry into the charges made against him¹¹ or into the offenses (cf. 12:20–21) that required discipline.¹² Charges not substantiated by at least two witnesses would be ruled out of court.

"Now it is true that Matt. 18:16 and 1 Tim. 5:19 refer to this OT stipulation in the context of church discipline, which would suggest that such an application of the OT principle was recognized and approved within the early church. Nevertheless, in the present case we may question whether a judicial investigation would be necessary to identify offenses that were already common knowledge among the Corinthians and whether Paul would initiate quasi-legal proceedings in which the Corinthians would bring or support charges against one another (cf. Plummer 372). The only form in which this view could be countenanced would be to suppose that in responding to accusations against himself Paul envisaged bringing forward multiple witnesses—such as Timothy and Titus¹³—who would be able to vouch for his personal integrity in any 'issues' under consideration. But any form of this view has the not inconsiderable disadvantage of ignoring any association between τρίτον and τριῶν or between δύο (v. 1) and δεύτερον (v.

ipated some tense exchanges to occur with his visit to Corinth.

In vv. 2-4, he gets down to the business at hand of issuing a strong warning to the wayward members of the church. The emphatic nature of this warning is heightened with the introductory reminder: προείρηκα καὶ προλέγω, ὡς παρὼν τὸ δεύτερον καὶ ἀπὼν νῦν, I told you earlier and tell you in advance, while being present the second time and now being absent. He pointedly reminds the Corinthians that on his 'painful second visit' he had given them this warning about coming back and not showing leniency to the offenders. Now prior to his third visit he issues a repeating of the same warning. This is the best way of understanding the Greek expression.⁷⁰⁵

2), links which would seem to be the natural starting point for identifying the 'witnesses.'

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

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

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

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

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 907–908.]

⁷⁰⁵"Those who have continued in their former sins and all the rest I have already warned, and now, when absent, I am forewarning you just as when I was present on my second visit, that on my return I will not spare you.' In this complicated verse the differing tenses of the verb προλέγω (perfect and present) support a linking of προείρηκα with ὡς παρὼν τὸ δεύτερον and of προλέγω with ἀπὼν νῦν, but there is no reason, in spite of the three apparently parallel instances of καὶ, to relate τοῖς προημαρτηκόσιν only to προείρηκα, and τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν only to προλέγω.¹⁸ That is to say, the warning introduced by ὅτι was spoken twice (προείρηκα and προλέγω), on each occasion to two groups, τοῖς προημαρτηκόσιν and τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 909.]



Who is the apostle addressing with this warning? Of course, by putting it in the letter he is implicitly addressing the entire Christian community at Corinth. But he specifically names two groups that he issues this warning to: τοῖς προημαρτηκόσιν καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν, **those who sinned previously and all the others**. The first group, τοῖς προημαρτηκόσιν καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων, **to those who sinned previously**, alludes back to τῶν προημαρτηκότων καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων, **those who sinned previously and have not repented** in 12:21. Clearly he means the church members still engaging in sexual immorality as is made clear.

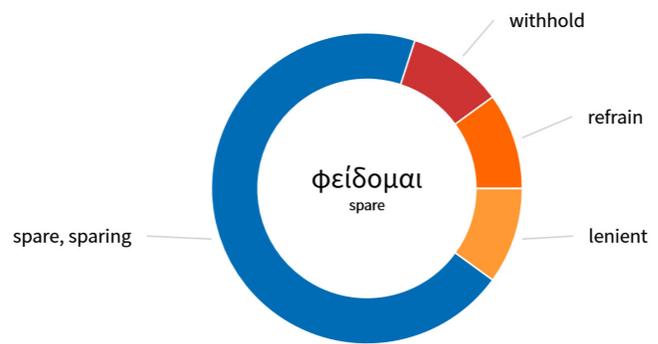
The second group, καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν, **and to all the rest**, is less clear. Does he mean All the rest of the church members? Or, all those in the first group? Or, does it mean All those who have lapsed into sin after the first warning? Opinion among commentators is divided over this choice.⁷⁰⁶ The honest truth is that the ambiguity of the statement precludes any certain decision. Any conclusion on this is sheer guess work. Clearly all of the church members at Corinth heard the letter read in at least one of the house church gatherings across the city. For some then it would not apply, except to bolster their avoidance of sinful activity.

One important note: the perfect tense use of προλέγω in προεἶρηκα combined with the present tense προλέγω, is set up in colloration with ὡς παρὼν τὸ δεύτερον καὶ ἀπὼν νῦν, **while being present the second time and now being absent**, so that παρὼν τὸ δεύτερον modifies προεἶρηκα, while ἀπὼν νῦν modifies προλέγω. The prefix προ- indicates something happening in advance of something else. Thus προεἶρηκα with ὡς

⁷⁰⁶As for the two sets of people addressed in Paul's warning, there is general agreement that τοῖς προημαρτηκόσιν refers to the same unrepentant sinners who are mentioned in 12:21 (πολλοὺς τῶν προημαρτηκότων καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων κτλ.).²² As in 12:21, so in 13:2, the perfect tense of the participle indicates that their sinning persists to the time of writing; thus, 'those who have continued in their former sins,' people we have called 'proto-gnostic libertines' (see on 12:21). There is, however, no unanimity about the identity of τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν, 'all the others/rest.' They have been seen as all those who had lapsed into sin since Paul's last (= second) visit and needed his warning (Plummer 366, 373); as 'anyone else' at Corinth who may have been sinning by sexual immorality or by strife but was unknown to Paul (Martin 451, 455, 471); as those adversely affected by the false apostles and guilty of the sins listed in 12:20b (Barrett 333; "Opponents" 248); or as all the other members of the congregation, 'the rest of you as well' (Moffatt), those not guilty of the particular sins committed by οἱ προημαρτηκότες (see 12:21b)²³ but who nevertheless needed a warning for the sake of deterrence.²⁴ On this last view, which is to be preferred, the two groups mentioned in 13:2 embrace the whole church, just as 12:20–21 does.²⁵ It is no difficulty that Paul did not write πᾶσιν ὑμῶν or ὑμῖν πᾶσιν after τοῖς λοιποῖς." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 909–910.]

παρὼν τὸ δεύτερον denotes the time of the second visit (cf. 2:1. But προλέγω with ἀπὼν νῦν references the time of the writing of this letter. Both times are in advance of the impending visit of the apostle (v. 1). So by the time of Paul's arrival in the city, these folks in the church will have been forewarned twice to get their act together.

The warning itself is couched in strong terms with the so-called recitative ὅτι usage: ἐὰν ἔλθω εἰς τὸ πάλιν οὐ φείσομαι, **when I come I will not spare anyone**. The likelihood is that he repeats here his exact words from the second visit warning.⁷⁰⁷ The uncertainty implicit in the third class protasis ἐὰν ἔλθω εἰς τὸ πάλιν, **when I come again**, first implied uncertainty about the timing of the next visit, while now it connotes uncertainty about the tone of the visit. Thus ἐὰν is more appropriate than ὅτε would have been.



The precise meaning of οὐ φείσομαι is important. Its core meaning is to abstain from doing something.⁷⁰⁸ In its very common military setting it denoted refrain from killing an enemy soldier, and thus also took on **the meaning of showing mercy**.⁷⁰⁹ Clearly the verb with

⁷⁰⁷The content of the warning is introduced by a 'declarative' ὅτι and indirect speech (Robertson 1035), although Paul may be reproducing the actual words (recitative ὅτι) he used on his departure after the 'painful visit'.¹²⁸ When he departed at that time, ἐὰν may have expressed his uncertainty, not about the likelihood of a return, but about its timing: 'whenever I return.' But now, having announced his imminent return (12:14; 13:1), ἐὰν must mean 'when.'¹²⁹ The forthcoming visit is certain, although its character remains uncertain, given Paul's deep fears (12:20–21). Perhaps we can reproduce this latent ambiguity of ἐὰν by rendering ἐὰν ἔλθω εἰς τὸ πάλιν with 'on my return' (NIV) or 'the next time I come' (GNB). This assumes (rightly) that εἰς τὸ πάλιν = πάλιν³⁰ and that this phrase belongs with ἔλθω, not with οὐ φείσομαι.³¹ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 910.]

⁷⁰⁸William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1051.

⁷⁰⁹Originally φείδομαι ('spare,' 'refrain') referred to refraining from killing (= sparing) a defeated enemy and thus could also mean 'be merciful towards,'¹³² meanings also found in the LXX.³³ Here in 13:2 it is used absolutely, and some EVV reflect this: 'I shall have

the negative suggests severe punishment upon the offending individuals in the church. What was that? Here one has to be very careful since the definition of severe is hugely cultural. Paul's options were somewhat limited. No ecclesiastical courts existed inside the Christian community, as did in Judaism. He certainly could not have used the Roman court system as would Christianity from the fifth century on. Authority was essentially moral authority flowing out of the individual's own personal righteous living. Plus, the sense of divine authorization for the leader to take action played a role. But the apostle vowed to make use of his leadership influence to punish these offenders should they not repent.⁷¹⁰ It's also important to understand this warning against the more detailed expression of it in v. 10, Διὰ τοῦτο ταῦτα ἀπὼν γράφω, ἵνα παρῶν μὴ ἀποτόμως χρήσωμαι κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἣν ὁ κύριος ἔδωκέν μοι εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν, *So I write these things while I am away from you, so that when I come, I may not have to be severe in using the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.* The adverb ἀποτόμως is key for this statement. It stresses sharp verbal rebuke.⁷¹¹ The contextual idea is of driving

no mercy' (JB, NJB), 'I shall not spare' (Thrall 871), 'I will show no leniency' (NEB, REB, Cassirer). But it is perfectly legitimate to supply an object, such as οὐδενός ('anyone,' BAGD 854d), αὐτῶν ('them'), or ὑμῶν ('you').³⁴ If the two groups mentioned in v. 2a incorporate the whole church, 'I will not spare you' is the preferable translation." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 911.]

⁷¹⁰"The punishment Paul was threatening to inflict was obviously severe (cf. 13:10), which would seem to rule out public censure, or, as Barrett proposes (334), the declaration that those who were denying the gospel by their behavior had alienated themselves from God and fallen back into Satan's realm.³⁵ So the options would appear to be (1) removal from the church (cf. 1 Cor. 5:13), provided Paul had the support of the majority (cf. 2:6; 10:6) for such drastic action; or (2) handing the offenders over to Satan 'for the destruction of the flesh' (1 Cor. 5:5; cf. 1 Tim. 1:20), a penalty which probably refers to the suffering of an illness that may lead to death (cf. 1 Cor. 11:30) unless there was repentance. Certainly Paul longed that the wrongdoers would repent, but in the absence of repentance no mercy would be shown. It would be a case of καθαίρεσις (10:8; 13:10) or ἀποτόμως χρᾶσθαι (13:10) or ἐν ῥάβδῳ ἔλθειν (1 Cor. 4:21)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 911.]

⁷¹¹ἀποτόμως adv. fr. ἀπότομος (Isocr. et al.; Polyb. 18, 11, 2; Plut., Mor. 131c; Cic., Att. 10, 11, 5; Wsd 5:22) *severely, rigorously* ἔλεγε αὐτοὺς ἄ. correct them rigorously **Tit 1:13.** ἵνα μὴ ἄ. χρήσωμαι = ἀποτομία χρ. that I may not have to deal sharply **2 Cor 13:10.**—DELG s.v. τέμνω. M-M. [William Arndt, Frederick

13.3 ἂν ἔλθω εἰς τὸ πάλιν
ὅτι...οὐ φείσομαι,
 ἐπεὶ δοκιμὴν ζητεῖτε
 τοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ λαλοῦντος Χριστοῦ,
 /-----|
 | εἰς ὑμᾶς
 ὃς...οὐκ ἀσθενεῖ
 | ἀλλὰ
 -- δυνατεῖ
 ἐν ὑμῖν.

out the corrupting influences both from the individual's life and from the community at Corinth. To have to do take such harsh action was not Paul's objective, but he was fully willing to do this if circumstances warranted it.⁷¹² It could include public rebuke of individuals and/or having them removed from participation in the life of the church.⁷¹³

The causal clause in v. 3 probably was not a part of the original warning delivered verbally while in Corinth. Instead, it is now added on in order to explain the nature and basis of Paul's authority.⁷¹⁴ The causal expression W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 124.]

⁷¹²"The adverb ἀποτόμως ('sharply,'⁶¹ 'severely,' 'rigorously'; cf. Tit. 1:13) points to 'unsparing severity' (Barrett 340), 'thoroughgoing sternness' (Meyer 709), or 'inflexibly sharp judgment' (H. Koester, TDNT 8.108), so that ἀποτόμως χρήσωμαι may be translated 'deal ... severely' (Cassirer) or 'act drastically' (Young and Ford 276). It was summary punishment of this sort that Paul longed to avoid. He had no desire to exercise his divinely given ἐξουσία in drastic, punitive action, but if circumstances demanded such action he would not shrink from it (οὐ φείσομαι, 13:2). The choice lay with his converts and depended on their responsiveness to his injunctions.⁶²" [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 929.]

⁷¹³In modern western culture, although a public rebuke is embarrassing to most individuals, it does not begin to carry the sense of negativism that it has in a communal or collective culture such as in Paul's world as well as in the rural Africa and Asia of today's world.

⁷¹⁴"In Paul's eyes a disposition of meekness (cf. 10:1) and a display of strength (cf. 13:2, 10) were not incompatible. If, as the adage puts it, 'meekness is not weakness but harnessed strength,' the use of power when occasion warrants it is no contradiction of meekness. Paul would have known that Moses, described as the meekest man on the earth,⁶³ was nevertheless capable of great anger and a display of his God-given authority (Num. 16:15-33). And Danker notes that ;from a Jewish perspective, the conjunction [of meekness and vehemence] is in harmony with God's own display of wrath and power while engaged in the salvation of Israel.⁶⁴

"If in fact Paul found it necessary to act harshly against the Corinthians, he knew that such action would still be in keeping with his apostolic authority and its primary aim of οἰκοδομή. This assumes that κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν κτλ. qualifies ἀποτόμως χρήσωμαι.⁶⁵ Here the apostle is repeating almost verbatim what he said in



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

The core issue of criticism against Paul is identified as δοκιμὴν ζητεῖτε τοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ λαλοῦντος Χριστοῦ, *validation you seek of Christ speaking in/by me*. That is, were Paul's teaching and preaching of the Gospel coming from Christ or not?⁷¹⁵ The critics inside the Corinthian church were questioning the authenticity of Paul as a spokesman for Christ. They had demanded δοκιμὴν of his claim to speak for Christ. What was that? Most likely his critics expected some miracle or ecstatic experience done by Paul in order to prove that he was a genuine apostle of Christ. But he went a different direction that was both unexpected and non culturally conditioned.⁷¹⁶ His willingness to be very stern with them

10:8.⁶⁶ Our discussion of these two passages at 10:8 arrived at the following conclusions: the ἐξουσία is apostolic authority given to Paul personally at the time of his conversion; ὁ κύριος is the Lord Jesus; οἰκοδομὴ refers to the act or process of building, involving individuals as well as churches; and—a conclusion particularly relevant in the present context—καθαίρεισι sometimes necessarily precedes οἰκοδομὴ, so that 'destruction' and 'upbuilding' are not mutually exclusive categories. But Kitzberger is correct to infer from εἰς οἰκοδομὴν that οἰκοδομὴ describes 'the content and goal of apostolic activity' (137).

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

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 929–930.]

⁷¹⁵"One reason Paul planned to exercise uncompromising discipline (οὐ φείσομαι, v. 2) on his next visit was the prolonged refusal of certain members of the congregation (οἱ προημαρτηκότες, 12:21; 13:2) to repent of their immorality. But he believed this disciplinary action would achieve a further purpose — it would satisfy the demand of some or all of the Corinthians for specific, visible proof that he was indeed Christ's spokesman, one of Christ's genuine apostles. Those who had issued this demand (cf. ζητεῖτε) for convincing evidence (δοκιμή) would not have expected their challenge to be met by painful punitive measures. Their expectation, perhaps, was for additional miraculous signs (cf. 12:12) or specialized ecstatic experiences (cf. 12:6) or aggressive authoritarianism (cf. 11:20) or polished rhetoric (cf. 10:10). Once more we see the radical difference between the criteria for determining genuine apostleship that the Corinthians were using and those espoused by Paul." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 911.]

⁷¹⁶"The causal ἐπεὶ looks back to οὐ φείσομαι, not to the remote προλέγω, and introduces a supplementary reason Paul would

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

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

The apostle linked himself to Christ through the weakness / strength image. The Corinthians viewed Christ as a symbol of power and strength, but overlooked the 'weakness' side of Christ. In the modifying relative clause, ὃς εἰς ὑμᾶς οὐκ ἄσθενεῖ ἀλλὰ δυνατεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν, *who to you is not weak but is powerful among you, reminds them of Christ's strength through weakness.*⁷¹⁷

not be merciful toward any impenitent Corinthians. The δοκιμή is the οὐ φείσομαι. But proof of what? '(Of the fact) that Christ speaks through me.' This rendering assumes that (1) τοῦ ... Χριστοῦ is an objective genitive, indicating what was to be proved;³⁶ (2) τοῦ ... λαλοῦντος Χριστοῦ is equivalent to ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς λαλεῖ;³⁷ and (3) ἐν is instrumental³⁸ rather than local in meaning ('through' rather than 'in'). The question at issue was not whether Paul enjoyed personal communion with Christ or received messages directly from Christ ('that Christ speaks in me'), but whether he was, as he claimed to be (5:20), an ambassador who reliably represented the intent of Christ in his words and deeds,³⁹ whether the message he had delivered to the Corinthians by word and deed accurately reflected the mind of Christ. It was the validity of his apostleship that was being questioned." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 911–912.]

⁷¹⁷Interestingly, he does this in a chiasmic format that made it easier to memorize and remember:

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

With this widely used Jewish literary device in the ancient



In verse four, a pair of justifying statements (γάρ) both defend and amplify the central point made in the relative clause especially: καὶ γὰρ ἐσταυρώθη ἐξ ἀσθενείας, ἀλλὰ ζῆ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ. καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἀσθενοῦμεν ἐν αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ ζήσομεν σὺν αὐτῷ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς, *For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God.* ⁷¹⁸

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

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

Note the parallelism between these two declarations. It

world, the central point, in this usage, becomes B / B'. Not weak but strong. But with the second person pronoun for 'you' in A / A', the point becomes centered on the Corinthians perspective. The difference between εἰς ὑμᾶς and ἐν ὑμῖν is minimal while the common plural forms stress the entirety of the believing community at Corinth. Note Harris' depiction:

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

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 912–913.]

⁷¹⁸In these three sentences the common feature is the weakness-power motif: οὐκ ἀσθενεῖ-δυνατεῖ (v. 3b), ἐξ ἀσθενείας-ἐν δυνάμεως θεοῦ (v. 4a), ἀσθενοῦμεν-ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ (v. 4b). V. 4 develops this motif of v. 3b by adding to it the death-life antithesis (ἐσταυρώθη-ζῆ, v. 4a) and the union with Christ theme (ἐν αὐτῷ-σὺν αὐτῷ, v. 4b)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 913.]

is a contrast between ἀσθενείας, *weakness* / ἀσθενοῦμεν, *we are weak* and live, with ζῆ, *he lives* / ζήσομεν, *we will live*. Christ's crucifixion, ἐσταυρώθη, *He was crucified* signals weakness, ἐξ ἀσθενείας, *out of weakness*. But his resurrection in which He now lives, ζῆ, *He lives*, signals God's power, ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ. Christ as a meek person discovered God's power through being resurrected after being crucified. The Corinthians identified them-

selves with perceived divine power but without realizing how this power was put into effect in Christ. Remember his earlier accusation against them in 11:20-21:

20 ἀνέχεσθε γὰρ εἴ τις ὑμᾶς καταδουλοῖ, εἴ τις κατεσθίει, εἴ τις λαμβάνει, εἴ τις ἐπαίρεται, εἴ τις εἰς πρόσωπον ὑμᾶς δέρει. 21 κατὰ ἀτιμίαν λέγω, ὡς ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἠσθενήκαμεν. 20 *For you put up with it when someone makes slaves of*

you, or preys upon you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or gives you a slap in the face. 21 To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that!

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

10.2.3.4.4 Straighten yourselves up! 13:5-10

5 Ἐαυτοὺς πειράζετε εἰ ἐστὲ ἐν τῇ πίστει, ἑαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε· ἢ οὐκ ἐπιγινώσκετε ἑαυτοὺς ὅτι Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν; εἰ μὴτι ἀδόκιμοὶ ἐστέ. 6 ἐλπίζω³³³ δὲ ὅτι γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐσμὲν ἀδόκιμοι. 7 εὐχόμεθα δὲ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν μὴ ποιῆσαι ὑμᾶς κακὸν μηδέν, οὐχ ἵνα ἡμεῖς δόκιμοι φανῶμεν, ἀλλ' ἵνα ὑμεῖς τὸ καλὸν ποιῆτε, ἡμεῖς δὲ ὡς ἀδόκιμοι ὤμεν. 8 οὐ γὰρ δυνάμεθα τι κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀληθείας. 9 χαίρομεν γὰρ ὅταν ἡμεῖς ἀσθενῶμεν, ὑμεῖς δὲ δυνατοὶ ᾗτε τοῦτο καὶ εὐχόμεθα, τὴν ὑμῶν κατάρτισιν. 10 Διὰ τοῦτο ταῦτα ἀπὼν γράφω, ἵνα παρὼν μὴ ἀποτόμως χρήσωμαι κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἣν ὁ κύριος ἔδωκέν μοι εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεισιν.

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

331 ^{13.5} Ἐαυτοὺς πειράζετε
εἰ ἐστὲ
ἐν τῇ πίστει,
332 ἑαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε

I come, I may not have to be severe in using the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.

Thus what is the best course of action for the Corinthians in anticipation of Paul's visit? Verses 5-10 outline the contours of that response. The first two admonitions (#s 331-332) sum up the bottom line responsibility: Ἐαυτοὺς πειράζετε εἰ ἐστὲ ἐν τῇ πίστει, ἑαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε, *Be examining yourselves as to whether you are in faith; be testing yourselves!*

The emphatic preposition of the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτοὺς, *yourselves*, highlights the point dramatically that the Corinthians needed to be checking themselves rather than Paul. This pronoun most likely implies the entire church needing to test itself, and not just the unrepentants (cf. 12:21; 13:2). The two verbs πειράζετε and δοκιμάζετε are very close in meaning, with πειράζω having the sense of testing to determine the nature of something or someone, while δοκιμάζω has the sense of testing to establish the genuineness of something or someone.⁷¹⁹ The present tense imperative mood of

⁷¹⁹Clearly πειράζω here bears a neutral sense, 'put to the test,' not its pejorative sense of 'entice to evil,' 'tempt' (as in 1 Cor. 7:5; Gal. 6:1). πειράζω and δοκιμάζω could be treated as synonymous (Wolff 263) or as 'virtually' so (Furnish 571), but perhaps there

both verbs underscores an ongoing process rather a single point of time examination.

ἢ
οὐκ ἐπιγινώσκετε ἑαυτοὺς
ὅτι Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν;
εἰ μὴτι ἀδόκιμοὶ ἐστέ.

The impersonal direct object role of εἰ ἐστὲ ἐν τῇ πίστει, positioned between the two verbs, applies to both verbal commands, as illustrated in the following diagram. What is it that the Corinthians need to determine? They need to determine whether they are living the life of faith commitment to Christ.⁷²⁰ The sense of

is a slight difference of emphasis, with πειράζω signifying 'determine the nature of something by submitting it to testing' (cf. Louw and Nida §27.46), and δοκιμάζω, 'test the genuineness of something with a view to approving it.' [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 919.]

⁷²⁰After πειράζετε, the interrogative particle εἰ could introduce a direct question⁸: 'Examine yourselves: are you living the life of faith?' (NEB, REB). Bultmann believes the parallelism with ἑαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε supports construing the εἰ clause separately (377). But most EVV rightly regard εἰ ('whether,' 'if') as introducing an indirect question⁹ and supply a verb such as 'to find out'¹⁰ or simply 'to see' (NIV) with εἰ. The precise significance of the combination εἶναι ἐν is uncertain. It may mean 'adhere/conform to' or 'continue/live in,'¹¹ or this construction could be a periphrasis for an adjective, so that ἐστὲ ἐν τῇ πίστει = ἐστὲ πιστοί, 'you are believing/true believers.'¹² ἡ πίστις may refer to the core of apostolic teaching as epitomized in the gospel (Gal. 1:23), the gospel that had been delivered to the Corinthians in its purity (1 Cor. 15:1–5) and was under attack in Corinth (11:4). On this view Paul is requesting self-examination regarding their adherence to an unadulterated form of the gospel.¹³ 'Put yourselves to the proof, to see whether you are holding to the Faith' (TCNT). Alternatively, ἡ πίστις may here denote personal trust in Christ as a *modus vivendi*: 'whether you are living in faith' (GNB), 'are you living the life of faith?' (NEB, REB), 'whether you are controlled by faith' (Danker 210). But in a context that emphasizes the need for proper Christian action (12:20–21; 13:7, ἵνα ὑμεῖς τὸ καλὸν ποιῆτε) the most satisfactory option is to take ἡ πίστις in a broad sense as referring to Christian conduct that accords with Christian doctrine. That is, 'being in the faith' means continuing true to the faith in conduct as well as in belief.¹⁴ An emphasis on conduct is suggested by the following unqualified ἑαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε when it is read in the light of Gal. 6:4, τὸ ... ἔργον ἑαυτοῦ δοκιμαζέτω ἕκαστος. For the Corinthian believers the main 'work' that would demonstrate their true πίστις was obedience (cf. ὑπακοὴ πίστειος, 'the obedience that springs from faith,' Rom. 1:5; 16:26), obedience to Paul and to the gospel he proclaimed (2:9; 10:6). So then, εἰ ἐστὲ ἐν τῇ πίστει in 13:5 should not be equated with τῇ ... πίστει ἐστήκατε in 1:24 where there is a contrast between the Corinthians' firm standing in their own πίστις (= personal trust) and any domineering control of their faith that Paul might be thought to exercise.¹⁵ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary

331 ^{13.5} **Ἐαυτοὺς πειράζετε**
εἰ ἐστὲ
έν τῇ πίστει,

332 **ἑαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε**·

ἢ

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

^{13.6} δὲ

334 **ἐλπίζω**
ὅτι γνώσεσθε
ὅτι ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐσμὲν ἀδόκιμοι.

^{13.7} δὲ

335 **εὐχόμεθα . . . μὴ ποιῆσαι ὑμᾶς κακὸν μηδέν,**
πρὸς τὸν θεὸν
οὐχ ἵνα ἡμεῖς δόκιμοι φανῶμεν,
ἀλλ’
ἵνα ὑμεῖς τὸ καλὸν ποιῆτε,
δὲ
ἡμεῖς ὡς ἀδόκιμοι ᾧμεν.

^{13.8} γὰρ

336 **οὐ δυνάμεθά τι**
κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας
ἀλλ’

337 **(δυνάμεθά τι)**
ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀληθείας.

^{13.9} γὰρ

338 **χαίρομεν**
ὅταν ἡμεῖς ἀσθενῶμεν,
δὲ
ὑμεῖς δυνατοὶ ᾗτε·

339 **τοῦτο καὶ εὐχόμεθα,**
τὴν ὑμῶν κατάρτισιν.

^{13.10} Διὰ τοῦτο ταῦτα
ἀπῶν

340 **γράφω,**
παρῶν
ἵνα...μὴ ἀποτόμως χρήσωμαι
κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν
ἣν ὁ κύριος ἔδωκέν μοι
εἰς οἰκοδομὴν
καὶ
οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν.

ἐστὲ ἐν τῇ πίστει with the verb πειράζετε is to determine if one’s conduct matches his profession of faith commitment to Christ. With δοκιμάζετε the genuineness of this faith commitment is determined by their obedience. And this revolves around the apostolic Gospel message that Paul had brought to them.

The rhetorical question that follows in v. 5c (# 333

(Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 919–920.]

in the diagram) begins an amplification of the implications contained in these admonitions at the beginning. This runs through verse nine. Then verse ten contains a general summarizing declaration the gathers up the entire discussion of 10:1-13:9 into a short summation.

The rhetorical question poses the most crucial aspect: ἢ οὐκ ἐπιγινώσκετε ἑαυτοὺς ὅτι Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν; **Or you do fully recognize for yourselves that Jesus**



Christ is in you, don't you? An affirmative answer is expected by Paul in his expression of confidence.⁷²¹ This is signaled by addition the negative adverb οὐκ before the verb. The verb ἐπιγινώσκετε with the prefix ἐπι- stresses thorough understanding, rather than superficial or even usual understanding. The double accusative -- personal and impersonal objects -- ἑαυτοὺς ὅτι, stresses the conclusion of a careful self examination looking for validation of the principle stated in the ὅτι clause. This principle is simply Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, *Jesus Christ is in you*. The elliptical expression heightens the emphasis along the lines of *Jesus Christ -- in you*. The prepositional phrase ἐν ὑμῖν carries an intended double meaning. In you, i.e., in each of you. And in you, i.e., in your community of believers.

This question has an elliptical addendum attached to it: εἰ μήτι ἀδόκιμοί ἐστε, *unless you are disqualified*.⁷²²

⁷²¹As in 11:7 the particle ἤ introduces a rhetorical question, here a question that Paul expects will be answered affirmatively,¹⁶ as is shown by the presence of οὐ(κ) (BDF §427[2]). After his two-fold invitation to the Corinthians to scrutinize their conduct and attitudes (v. 5a), Paul now appeals with confidence to their theological self-awareness. ἐπιγινώσκετε need mean no more than 'you realize/recognize' (γινώσκετε), but in a rhetorical question that expects the answer 'Yes, indeed!' the intensifying prefix ἐπι- may well prompt the sense 'you know for sure.' ἑαυτοὺς is probably an accusative of respect, 'about yourselves' (TCNT, NASB), 'about your state' (Plummer 366), although it could be construed as a direct object with the ὅτι clause providing further definition.¹⁷ What Paul assumed that his Corinthian converts knew for certain was the fact that (ὅτι) Jesus Christ was indwelling each of them (cf. Rom. 8:9–10) and was also active corporately in their congregation (ἐν ὑμῖν; cf. 13:3). Through his Spirit the risen Christ was both 'within' and 'among' (ἐν) the Corinthians.¹⁸ But it was not only this bare fact that they needed to be reminded of, but in particular what that fact implied for their present Christian living,¹⁹ namely their need to continue true to the faith (v. 5a) as it was embodied in Paul and his gospel, by turning from their divisive and immoral ways and altering their attitude to their spiritual father." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 920–921.]

⁷²²The motif of self-defence will recur in v. 6. First, however, Paul follows his exhortations with a question and an apparent qualification. The point of the question is not altogether easy to determine. Do they not know, he asks, that Jesus Christ¹⁵² is 'within' them?¹⁵³ There are various ways of understanding this.

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

The heightened emphasis of μήτι over the simple μή is almost untranslatable into English. When coupled with εἰ, unless becomes **UNLESS**. The adjective ἀδόκιμοί, from ἀδόκιμος, -ov with the alpha privative prefix, denotes those tested who have miserably failed the test and have thus become disqualified. What Paul does with this additional qualification is signal to the Corinthian readers that he expects some to not pass the self examination test. And this includes some individuals and some of the house church groups in the believing community at Corinth. Whom he is targeting are some of his critics inside the church. He would ideally desire that everyone be validated as authentically Christian, but given what he knows about that is going on in the community at Corinth he is honest enough to realize that not everyone or every group will pass an honest self-examination test.⁷²³

5 refers.

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

"(iii) According to Bultmann, the point is this. The Corinthians assume that Christ is 'in them' (cf. Windisch), but have failed to understand what this means. They have failed to realise that the indwelling Christ is the Lord, who critically assesses them and makes demands upon them.¹⁵⁷ Further, there is an implicit allusion to Paul's authentication. If the Corinthians are recalled to the realisation of the indwelling Christ as Lord, they will recognise that Christ demands what Paul is demanding, and should therefore conclude that he is Christ's spokesman.¹⁵⁸ Whether this further nuance of meaning is present is debatable, as we have noted under (i) above. But the basic point is valid. Paul expresses himself elliptically, but he seems to be saying something like this. His readers must remember that the presence of the indwelling Christ¹⁵⁹ requires that they should conform to the standards of behaviour that Christian faith demands, and therefore that they should themselves critically test the quality of their Christian life. This will be at the same time a test of the reality of their new Christian existence in the fullest sense.¹⁶⁰"

[Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 890–891.]

⁷²³Harris' view (NIGTC, 920-921) that εἰ μήτι ἀδόκιμοί ἐστε is ironical and thus a greater affirmation of Paul's confidence is unconvincing. The most natural understanding of the Greek text is the one given above. "I. H. Marshall, however, rendering εἰ μήτι by 'except if,' maintains that Paul here momentarily admits the possibility that some Corinthian believers may prove failures in the test (Power 111–12, 119 n. 73)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI;



13.6 δὲ
334 ἐλπίζω
 ὅτι γνώσεσθε
 ὅτι ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐσμὲν ἀδόκιμοι.

13.7 δὲ
335 εὐχόμεθα . . . μὴ ποιῆσαι ὑμᾶς κακὸν μηδέν,
 πρὸς τὸν θεὸν
 οὐχ ἵνα ἡμεῖς δόκιμοι φανῶμεν,
 ἀλλ'
 ἵνα ὑμεῖς τὸ καλὸν ποιῆτε,
 δὲ
 ἡμεῖς ὡς ἀδόκιμοι ὦμεν.

13.8 γὰρ
336 οὐ δυνάμεθά τι
 κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας
 ἀλλ'
337 (δυνάμεθά τι)
 ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀληθείας.

13.9 γὰρ
338 χαίρομεν
 ὅταν ἡμεῖς ἀσθενῶμεν,
 δὲ
 ὑμεῖς δυνατοὶ ᾗτε·
339 τοῦτο καὶ εὐχόμεθα,
 τὴν ὑμῶν κατάρτισιν.

not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed.

Paul's deep desire in the ὅτι clause is couched as a prayer wish reflecting that it is a desire voiced to God (πρὸς τὸν θεὸν) and not just to the Corinthians: εὐχόμεθα, **we are praying**. This refocuses the thrust upward and not just horizontally as did ἐλπίζω ὅτι, **I expect that**. The contrast is heightened further with the direct object of each verb shifting from the ὅτι-clause to the infinitive phrase μὴ ποιῆσαι as direct object. The concern expressed to God regarding the Corinthians is μὴ ποιῆσαι ὑμᾶς κακὸν μηδέν, **that you would do absolutely nothing wrong**.⁷²⁵ The double negative use here of μὴ and μηδέν, particularly as inclusio boundary markers for the phrase, heightens the negation considerably. Even though he suspects that some in the church may not be authentic Christians, he prayer to God is that the entire community may not misstep in their service to God. Every experienced pastor understands this kind of concern for his / her congrega-

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

First in v. 6 comes: ἐλπίζω δὲ ὅτι γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐσμὲν ἀδόκιμοι, **but I expect that you understand that we are not 'test failers.'** When it comes to the Corinthians, Paul asserts his expectation (ἐλπίζω) that they will clearly understand that he and his associates are authentic believers, in contrast to some in their community.⁷²⁴ The future tense verb γνώσεσθε projects this discovery to the time of his anticipated visit. The double negative οὐκ...ἀδόκιμοι, **not...unauthorized**, is a litotes equalling δόκιμοι, **approved**, with heightened emphasis to contrast this with the Corinthians: *some of them are unapproved by God but not anyone associated with Paul*.

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

The prayer wish: εὐχόμεθα δὲ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν μὴ ποιῆσαι ὑμᾶς κακὸν μηδέν, οὐχ ἵνα ἡμεῖς δόκιμοι φανῶμεν, ἀλλ' ἵνα ὑμεῖς τὸ καλὸν ποιῆτε, ἡμεῖς δὲ ὡς ἀδόκιμοι ὦμεν, **But we pray to God that you may not do anything wrong—**

Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), fn. 24, P. 921.]

⁷²⁴One must note that although ἐλπίζω implies substantial confidence -- far more than its English counterpart 'I hope' normally does -- it is not full confidence. Otherise, he would have used οἶδα, **I know**, instead.

tion.

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

Paul's first prayer concern, however (ἀλλ'), was ἵνα ὑμεῖς τὸ καλὸν ποιῆτε, ἡμεῖς δὲ ὡς ἀδόκιμοι ὦμεν, **that you may do what is good and we may be as though unqualified**. Was Paul then saying that his hope was for the criticism of his opponents to be proven true? Not at all!

⁷²⁵The Greek infinitival phrase has a much wider range of uses than is true of the English infinitival phrase. When the Greek is doing something grammatically beyond what its English counterpart can do, the translator has to reach out to a English grammar construction that has a similar function capability. Here the best English grammar option is the subordinate clause with the conjunction 'that' with a finite verb. Of course, the intended distinction of the Greek infinitival phrase is lost in the process.



Very skillfully the apostle makes two critical points here with this second ἵνα clause. Most importantly his prayer to God for the Corinthians was that they might do the right thing by him especially. "God open their eyes to see who we really are, and then judge us accordingly." The second point was simply phrased "Let them see us as unqualified weak ones."

What does this imply? The first justifying statement in verse eight makes it clear: οὐ γὰρ δυνάμεθά τι κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀληθείας, *for we cannot do anything against the truth, but only in behalf of the truth.*⁷²⁶ Don't forget the significance of the motifs of weakness and strength vv. 1-4. They define Paul's meaning here in vv. 8-9. As 'weak,' Paul and his associates functioned in complete surrender to Christ, in contrast to his opponents at Corinth. This meant total commitment to truth, which biblically means what corresponds to God and His character (cf. Jhn 14:6). Nothing they would say or do would contradict God.

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

This warning to be harsh with them in his visit is

⁷²⁶A play on words exists in the Greek that is lost in translation. Paul's rejoiced in the Corinthians being δυνατοὶ (v. 9) but he and his associates had no strength (οὐ δυνάμεθά τι κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας, *we have no strength to do anything against the truth*) to waver from the truth (v. 8), since their weakness left them without it. But ironically it was their weakness that strengthened them to work in behalf of the truth (ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀληθείας).

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

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

Ordinarily in ancient Greek the antecedent of pronouns looked backwards to a previous reference. The neuter singular τοῦτο, this, from Διὰ τοῦτο, is used when the antecedent is a multi-word block of expression, like a phrase. On occasion, however, this prepositional phrase Διὰ τοῦτο, *for this reason*, can look forward to an antecedent clause at the end of the sentence, especially when it is a ἵνα clause.⁷²⁷ This is what we have

⁷²⁷διὰ τοῦτο ('this is why') may look back to ὑμεῖς ... δυνατοὶ and τὴν ὑμῶν κατάρτισιν in v. 9. In this case Paul is writing in order to bring about the spiritual health and restoration of his correspondents. But in the other two places in Paul where διὰ τοῦτο is followed by a ἵνα clause (Phlm. 15; 1 Tim. 1:16), this phrase is prospective, 'for this reason, (namely) that,' so this understanding is preferable here.⁵⁷ That is, his aim in writing⁵⁸ is to avoid having to exercise stern discipline." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005),

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

The second form of the demonstrative pronoun is ταῦτα, in the neuter accusative plural from the same root as τοῦτο: οὗτος, αὕτη, τοῦτο. The neuter plural ταῦτα, *these things*, reaches backward for its antecedent most likely the entire discussion of 10:1-13:10. And quite possibly it means the entire letter of Second Corinthians, although commentators differ on what is included.⁷²⁸

ἵνα... μὴ ἀποτόμως χρήσωμαι
 παρῶν
 κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν
 ἣν ὁ κύριος ἔδωκέν μοι
 εἰς οἰκοδομὴν
 καὶ
 οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν.

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

Most of the sentence in v. 10 is devoted to the ἵνα clause expression of his intention for writing to the Corinthians: ἵνα παρῶν μὴ ἀποτόμως χρήσωμαι κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἣν ὁ κύριος ἔδωκέν μοι εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν, *so that when I come, I may not have to be severe in using the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.*

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

Note the play on ἀπών, *while not present*, and παρῶν, *upon arrival*. Both are compound forms built off the εἰμί root, *to be*. The first is ἄπειμι with the meaning of *not present*, while the second is πάρεμι meaning *I am present*. They establish that the letter was written prior to 928.]

⁷²⁸But if διὰ τοῦτο is prospective, ταῦτα may refer to a more restricted section within chs. 10–13 such as 12:19–13:4 or 10:1–11 (so Bultmann 249), although a wider reference to the whole canonical letter is possible (so also Barnett 614), provided his desire to avoid another painful visit is seen as part of his overall purpose to pave the way for a mutually pleasant and profitable visit.⁶⁰⁰ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 929.]

Paul's arrival on his third visit (13:1) to the church in Corinth. But how much prior to this trip is not specified, and must be estimated from examination of the larger scenario of his relations with Corinth from the available evidence.⁷²⁹

The core idea is that Paul will not be forced to act severely upon his arrival (παρῶν) at Corinth: μὴ ἀποτόμως χρήσωμαι. The sense of χρήσωμαι here in the aorist subjunctive mood spelling has the sense of proceeding or functioning in its use here.⁷³⁰ Slightly different meanings are found in its use in 1:17 and 3:12. It is the negative adverb ἀποτόμως that defines clearly the action that Paul hopes to avoid. The adverb only shows up here and in Titus 1:13 with Paul's admonition to Titus to rebuke the Cretins sharply. Paul most likely picked it up from the

LXX usage.⁷³¹ The etymological background of cutting

⁷²⁹For a helpful detailed assessment see Murray J. Harris, "C. Chronology of the Relations of Paul, Timothy, and Titus with the Corinthian church," *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary, (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), pp. 102-105. Twenty-three points of contact are listed, with the writing of this letter beginning in the summer of 56 AD and finishes it in the fall of 56 AD. He then arrives in Corinth at the beginning of winter in 56 AD for his three month stay in the city through the winter months of 56/57 AD.

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

⁷³¹Only ἀπότομος and ἀποτόμως occur in the LXX, and even these only in Wis. They are used for the unbending 'severity' of God in His judgment of the wicked and the mighty: ὅτι κρίσις ἀπότομος ἐν τοῖς ὑπερέχουσιν γίνεται, Wis. 6:5. The means of divine judgment are also called ἀπότομος, e.g., His wrath in 5:20, His word which mercilessly executes judgment in 12:9, cf. 18:15,11 the water of the sea in 5:22. The context of these expressions makes it plain that God is represented here as a sovereign monarch who judges justly but does not have to give account to any for His acts, cf. 12:12–14. If on the one side He is a father admonishing the righteous, on the other side his penal judgment is like that of a Greek tyrant (→ lines 25 ff.): τούτους μὲν γὰρ ὡς πατὴρ νοουθετῶν ἐδοκίμασας, ἐκείνους δὲ ὡς ἀπότομος βασιλεὺς καταδικάζων ἐξήτασας, 11:10. It is thus evident that in this one LXX book which uses ἀπότομος the word describes the 'unrelenting severity' of the divine judgment in the same way as it is used in Gk. lit. for the inexorability of the law, the pitilessness of ananke, or the unyielding hardness of the tyrant (→ 107, 15 ff.), a quality which in neither

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

The prepositional phrase modifier κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν poses the most interesting part of Paul's expression. Clearly this plays off of what Paul said earlier in 10:8, ἔάν τε γὰρ περισσώτερόν τι καυχῆσωμαι περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν ἧς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθάρσεις ὑμῶν, οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι, Now, even if I boast a little too much of *our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for tearing you down*, I will not be ashamed of it. The Lord had called Paul into ministry to nourish and help new believers grow into maturity spiritually. This point Paul wanted to get across to the Corinthians clearly and emphatically.⁷³² His calling was

area is befitting in man." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:107–108.]

⁷³²In 12:19 Paul states 'Everything (τὰ ... πάντα), dear friends, is for your upbuilding (ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς).' The 'everything' includes all that Paul said and did in his relationship with the Corinthians, but the primary reference is to all he was writing in the present letter. ὑπὲρ here means 'with a view to achieving,' so we may deduce that the apostle's general purpose in writing was to promote his converts' οἰκοδομή (cf. 10:8; 13:10), that is, to strengthen and stabilize their individual and corporate faith and to promote their advance and maturation in the Christian life. This deduction is supported by Paul's statement in 13:9 that he was praying for their 'restoration' (κατάρτισις), their return to proper relations with God, with himself, and with one another, which all are aspects of their progress in appropriate Christian living (οἰκοδομή). Such a prayer presumably corresponds to his aim in writing. Similarly, his prayer-report in 13:7 must reflect his purpose: he was asking God that they would reject all wrongdoing (κακόν) and espouse right conduct (τὸ καλόν).

"If the letter was written in stages during Paul's ministry in Macedonia (see above, A.3.e.[3]), it is not surprising that the three main divisions of the canonical letter (chs. 1–7, 8–9, and 10–13) should have different although complementary specific purposes. In chs. 1–7 Paul seeks to express his great relief and delight at the Corinthians' positive response to his 'severe letter,' which had been delivered and reinforced by Titus (2:6, 9, 12–14; 7:5–16). In chs. 8–9 he aims to exhort the Corinthians to complete their promised collection for the saints at Jerusalem before his arrival on the next visit (8:6–7, 10–11; 9:3–5). Finally, in the last four chapters (10–13) his intent is (a) to help them recognize the proper criteria for distinguishing among rival apostles (10:1–5, 7, 12–18; 11:7–15, 22–30; 12:6, 9–10, 12, 14–15; 13:3–4, 10) and thus become convinced of the genuineness of his own apostleship (10:7–8, 14–15; 11:2, 5–6; 12:11–12; 13:6–7, 10) and (b) to encourage them to engage in self-examination with a view to mending their ways (12:2–21; 13:2, 5, 7, 9, 11). In a nutshell he is saying first 'I rejoice over you and have complete confidence in you' (cf. 7:4, 16), then 'I urge you to finish what you have commendably begun' (cf. 8:10–11), and lastly 'I am about to come, so get ready' (cf. 12:14; 13:1, 11). Each major section of the letter prepares for the next. Once Paul had reestablished a favorable relationship with his converts (reflected in chs. 1–7), he could confidently appeal to them to

complete the collection project before his arrival (chs. 8–9). Then, having mentioned his coming (in 9:4), he could announce its imminence and indicate how they should prepare for it (chs. 10–13).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"In this matter of purpose and how it was achieved, there is a remarkable similarity between 2 Corinthians and Romans, a letter written about four or five months later (early A.D. 57). Paul sent both letters to prepare Christians for a forthcoming visit (2 Cor. 9:4; 10:2; 12:14, 20–21; 13:1–2, 10; Rom. 1:10–13, 15; 15:22–24, 28–29, 32). In each case the principal ingredient in that preparation is an *apologia*—in 2 Corinthians, an *apologia* for his apostolic conduct and ministry (chs. 1–7) and his apostolic authority (chs. 10–13); in Romans, an *apologia* for his gospel (1:16b–15:13). Such a defense served to remove possible obstacles to an enjoyable visit



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

Is there any way of knowing whether Paul succeeded in his objective for writing this letter? Nothing directly is so stated inside the New Testament. But Luke's account in Acts 20:2-3 along with the positive tone of Romans written from Corinth on this three month long visit would suggest that it was successful.⁷³³ Unfortunately, the positive spirit which prevailed in this visit did not last. Clement of Rome writes some forty years later to the church at Corinth in 96 AD and indicates that many of the same problems which Paul addressed

(see A.3.e.[3] above for 2 Corinthians; Rom. 15:24b, 32).¹²²" [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 51–53.]

⁷³³ Was 2 Corinthians successful where 1 Corinthians had been only partially so? Apparently it was, because Paul made the promised visit (Acts 20:2–3) and during this three-month stay in 'Greece' (primarily Corinth, in the winter of 56–57) he wrote or completed his letter to the Romans. This letter seems to betray some apprehension for the future (15:30–31) but none for the present, and Paul would hardly have contemplated implementing his long-standing desire to visit Rome (Rom. 1:10–11, 13, 15; 15:22–24, 28–29, 32; cf. Acts 19:21) and to prosecute pioneer evangelism in the west (Rom. 15:20–21, 23–24, 28) if the congregation in the city from which he was writing was not only harboring his opponents but was also so opposed to him (2 Cor. 11:4, 20) that they were actually being seduced from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ (cf. 11:3). Also, the use of ηὐδόκησαν in Rom. 15:26–27 with reference to the spirit which prevailed among the Corinthians (and their neighbors [= Ἀχαΐα; cf. 2 Cor. 1:1; 9:2; 10:11] together with the Macedonians) in making their contribution to the collection would scarcely have been appropriate unless the church in Corinth were in harmony with the promoter of that collection. Moreover, the very preservation of 2 Corinthians is evidence that Paul's contest with his adversaries turned out successfully (cf. Windisch 432). But it is sadly true that when Clement of Rome wrote to the church at Corinth in 96 he had to rebuke the same internal strife (1 Clement 46:5–7; 47:3–4) and rebellion against authority (44:3, 6; 54:1–2; 57:2) that had plagued the church forty years earlier." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 53–54.]

were present in the church at the end of the century: cf. 1 Clement 46:5-7; 47:3-4 (internal strife); 1 Clem. 44:3, 6; 54:1-2; 57:2 (rebellion against authority). A new generation of members brought back some old problems.

*****Conclusions*****

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

10.2.4 Conclusio, 13:11-13

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

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

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

13 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Of all the sections of ancient letter that could contain a huge variation of content, the **closing comments** of the letter writing is the most diverse.⁷³⁴ Paul's letters

⁷³⁴For a treatment of the history of interpretation of the letter Conclusio through 1991, see my lecture to PhD seminar students "Epistolary Research: Bibliographical Overview" at cranfordville.com.

Conclusio

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

347 13.12 Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους
 ἐν ἀγίῳ φιλήματι.

348 Ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἅγιοι πάντες.

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

exhibit the huge diversity typical in the ancient world. Second Corinthians happens to be one of the shorter expressions of this segment for Paul's letters. The letter Conclusio was not a conclusion to a document in the modern sense of the term. The only point where the two terms intersect one another is that they both come at the end of a document. Otherwise, they have entirely different roles to play.

The letter Conclusio was generally important for most letter writers because it provided opportunity to close out a letter on positive terms with the targeted readers of the letter. Given the enormous importance of *φιλία* in Paul's world, maintaining positive friendship with one's readers was critical for maintaining one's status in society. Your value in Paul's world had noth-

(1) those which focus on the surrounding history of letter writing in the ancient world and on secondarily treat the New Testament phenomena; (2) those which reverse this focus usually with major attention on Paul; (3) also those which are in fact source books of non canonical documents without much treatment of methodology or research into this field.

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

ing to do with innate worth, as it does in post-enlightenment western culture. Rather, it was solely determined by one's network of connections with people considered to be at you στάσις or above in society. Personal letter writing, outside of family communication, was an important part of maintaining and enhancing that status. Thus both the beginning Praescriptio, as well as the Proem, and the closing Conclusio served as critical bridges for enhancing that friendship connection. The body of the letter could, and often did, contain rebuke and criticism of the readers. But the positive tone of the beginning and ending segments of the letter helped make that possibly negative middle section acceptable to the designated readers. This because *φιλία*, **friendship**, was crucial to maintain. In a society as direct and as vigorously blunt as was Paul's world, people understood critical comments, but wanted to know that the one making them had ultimately their best interest in mind. The two segments of the letter fulfilled that role of affirming genuine interest in the readers.

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

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

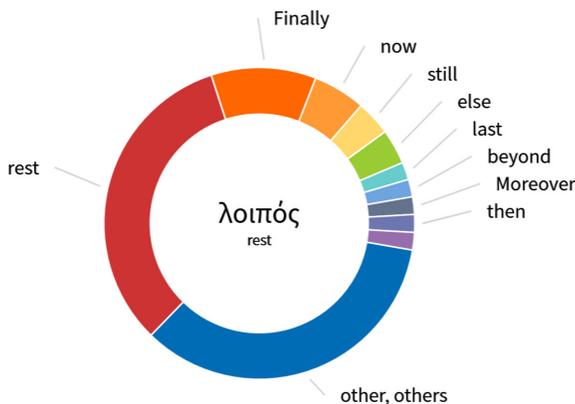
Consequently a few items are most always found

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

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

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

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



The beginning adverb, λοιπόν, *Finally*, has many possible meanings.⁷³⁵ The adjective form λοιπός, -ή, -όν also has an adverbial function in the neuter accusative singular spelling λοιπόν. Basically it specifies what remains or is left whether it is time, measurement etc. Of the 55 NT uses some 26 of them are found in the

⁷³⁵With the phrase λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί (cf. Phil. 4:8) Paul introduces his concluding exhortations (v. 11a), greetings (v. 12), and benedictions (vv. 11b, 13). The adverbial expression (τὸ) λοιπόν is an accusative of respect, 'with respect to what remains,' 'as far as the rest is concerned,' and has a variety of meanings.¹ Here it points to concluding comments and means 'finally.'¹² [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 931–932.]

writings of Paul. Here it is best understood as signaling the transition into the letter Conclusio.⁷³⁶

The vocative case ἀδελφοί, brothers, represents the third instance of this in Second Corinthians: cf. 1:8 and 8:1 also. It is a pastoral reference affirming friendship toward the Corinthians. It functions very similar to ἀγαπητοί, beloved.⁷³⁷ Additionally, these vocative case forms also serve quite often as transition markers from one topic to another, which ἀδελφοί is doing here.

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

χαίρετε. Literally, the meaning is *be rejoicing*. But coming here in the Conclusio the context may well signal this as a parting word closer to the English farewell,

⁷³⁶That this is the point of transition to the letter-ending is signified by the initial λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί, an expression which 'typically serves in Paul's letters to introduce a closing hortatory section'.²⁵² Some of these sections are of a general nature. The present passage, however, as in Rom 16:17–20, has direct reference to what has been said in the letter-body.²⁵³ The initial τὸ λοιπόν means 'finally',²⁵⁴ and simply serves to mark the transition." [Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 905.]

⁷³⁷This is the third use of the vocative ἀδελφοί in 2 Corinthians (see 1:8; 8:1; 12:19). Paul uses the term here in addressing the whole Corinthian congregation in order to remind them of the unity that believers have in Christ (note also μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν in v. 13) and of the parity of status between all the sons and daughters (cf. 6:18) within God's family. They are family, and Paul, an apostle, is also their ἀδελφός. Although he occasionally uses ἀδελφός of one's neighbor (1 Thess. 4:6) or of his own kindred by race (Rom. 9:3), the term usually refers to fellow Christians (e.g., 8:23; 11:9; Rom. 8:29), and its conjunction with ἀγαπητοί,³ or an expression such as ἠγαπημένοι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ,⁴ gives it overtones of family love or God's paternal love." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 932.]

as many Bible translators assume.⁷³⁸ But culturally we are dealing with a situation where χαίρειν can serve both as a greeting or parting admonition to be happy. In Paul's world such was natural, but not in most modern western cultures. Thus to press a distinction between a parting word and its literal meaning is to set up a false dichotomy. As a parting word it has more meaning than the more common ἔρρωσθε as found in Acts 15:29. It also gives some distinctive to Paul just as his standard greeting does in the [Adscriptio](#) portion of all of his letters, which incidentally played off χαίρειν as well.

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

καταρτίζεσθε. The literal sense of καταρτίζω is to [put things in order](#). It is close to the English idiom, [straighten up](#). [Here the idea of repenting comes clearly to the](#)

⁷³⁸With regard to the translation of χαίρετε, it is interesting to observe that most EVV render this imperative by 'farewell'⁵ or 'good-bye'⁶ while most commentators prefer the rendering 'rejoice.'⁷ Now it is incontestable that χαῖρε (singular) and χαίρετε (plural) are a form of greeting used at a time of leave taking as well as of meeting.⁸ But this is probably an instance where the commentaries are to be preferred over the translations. Several considerations support the rendering 'rejoice.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 932–933.]

surface but more in the sense of not just a single action but rather as an ongoing process. The uncertainty here is via the use of the middle voice spelling -εσθε, which in the present tense is identical to the passive voice. This impacts the meaning from [put your lives in order](#) (middle) to [be put in order by paying attention to what I tell you](#) (passive).⁷³⁹ Either idea is possible. And either becomes an obligation for the Corinthians to make any needed changes in their lives once they conduct the self examination advocated in vv. 5-10.

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

τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε. The verb φρονέω has an interesting background which helps in the understanding of this Greek idiom.⁷⁴⁰ The idea centers on using one's

⁷³⁹At 13:9 (where the noun κατάρτισις occurs) we saw that the basic sense of καταρτίζω is 'put in order,' 'restore.'¹¹ Accordingly, if καταρτίζεσθε is middle (with a reflexive sense) it will mean 'set yourselves in order,' 'aim for restoration' (Martin 490, 498–99), 'mend your ways,'¹² or 'put things in order' (NRSV). On the other hand, if this form is passive, the sense will be 'be restored [by God],' where the passive is permissive (Windisch 426; Furnish 585), 'let yourselves be restored,' 'cooperate in your restoration' (Thrall 904).¹³ Either way, the action of the Corinthians is being called for. Paul's prayer for their restoration (v. 9) would be answered in part by their work in setting right what was amiss." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 933.]

⁷⁴⁰φρήν, usually plur. φρένες 'diaphragm,'¹ was early regarded as the seat of intellectual and spiritual activity. The diaphragm determines the nature and strength of the breath and hence also the human spirit and its emotions. In Hom. φρένες² means 'inner part,' 'mind,' 'consciousness,' 'understanding' etc. and like the other terms for inner organs it is the agent of spiritual and intellectual experiences. φρένες and deviates soon lost altogether (or almost so) their physical sense. In Hom.³ the group is nearly always used for purely intellectual activity: θυμός ref. to emotion or impulse with no rational components, and ἦτορ or καρδία to the disposition. Expressions like κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν, Il., 1, 193; 11, 411; Od., 1, 294; 4, 117 etc. are for Hom. typical means of denoting clearly intellectual and emotional involvement.⁴

"The meaning 'mind' etc. occurs in many compounds such as ἄφρων,⁵ 'without understanding,' or εὐθρών 'with a good or cheerful mind,' 'in a friendly or well-disposed way,' cf. the abstract



mind to think properly. And thus the idiom τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε carries an emphasis upon unity and like-mindedness.⁷⁴¹ One should note in English an important distinction between 'unity' and 'uniformity.' The former is what is being stressed by Paul. As this expression is used by Paul in Phil. 2:1-11, the mind of Christ is the defining standard for the thinking of all in the community of believers: Τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, *Let this mind be in you which also was in Christ Jesus* (v. 5). As the community achieves the thinking of Christ on issues etc., it will achieve the unity it needs.

εἰρηνεύετε. This admonition naturally flows out of the previous emphasis upon unity with the sense of being at peace with one another.⁷⁴² This is not merely encouragement to stop fussing with one another, but εἰρήνη, the noun form, stresses the positive aspect of cultivating everything that promotes peace and harmony. The opposite of εἰρήνη, *peace*, is ἀρρεσις, *division*, which is the impact of the false teachers on the community.

ἀφροσύνη, εὐφροσύνη and the verbs ἀφρονέω 'to be irrational,' εὐφρονέω 'to be well-disposed.' We also find the simple φρονέω,⁶ which is already common in Hom. esp. in the part. and which usually means 'to think' and can also describe the inner attitude. One also finds the sense 'to plan' in Hom., but the real development of this is later. In class. times we find the adj. φρόνιμος 'understanding,' and the two verbal nouns φρόνημα 'thought,' also 'disposition,' and φρόνησις 'thinking,' 'reason,' 'cleverness' etc. φρένες retains for the most part the less precise sense of 'inner attitude.' In large measure later development is influenced by Hom."

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

⁷⁴¹"The fundamental demand of Pauline exhortation is a uniform direction, a common mind, and unity of thought and will. In Phil. 2:2 the apostle issues an urgent admonition that we are to seek the same goal with a like mind, establishing the given unity and maintaining a Christian disposition in all things, cf. R. 12:16. According to Phil. 2:5⁷⁵ the confession of Christ is itself the standard for the mind of believers whose fellowship is constituted by Christ. In Phil. 4:2 the same admonition occurs in relation to an individual case and with emphasis on fellowship with Christ. In Gl. 5:1076 Paul expresses confidence that with a like mind the community will reject any other message. In 2 C. 13:11 the exhortation to unity of mind is given a place in the conclusion of the epistle. In R. 15:5 there is a prayerful desire to the same effect with common praise of God as the goal." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 0:233.]

⁷⁴²"But living in agreement with one another would pave the way for the fulfillment of the next imperative. εἰρηνεύετε, 'cultivate peace,' is an injunction to pursue peace as though it were a quarry (τὰ τῆς εἰρήνης διώκωμεν, Rom. 14:19),¹⁸ not only in relations within the church (Mark 9:50; 1 Thess. 5:13) but also in dealings with nonbelievers (Rom. 12:18)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 933–934.]

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

καὶ ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν. The promise of God's presence in obedience to the preceding admonitions is both familiar and unique in Paul's writings. Much more common is ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν, *the God of peace will be with you*, as in Phil. 4:9⁷⁴³ (cf. Rom 15:33; 16:20; 1 Cor 14:33; Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 5:23; 2 Thess 3:16; cf. also Heb 13:20). The phrase ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης, *the God of love*, is not found anywhere else in the NT, nor the OT even in the LXX. Here we encounter the creativity of Paul and his writing secretary in closing out the letter.

The tone of this phrase ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν suggests a formal, liturgical blessing pronounced upon those following the admonitions.⁷⁴⁴

⁷⁴³"The whole of v 11 parallels Paul's structure of Phil 4:8–9a (cf. 2 Cor 13:11a) and 4:9b (13:11b). Phil 4:8–9a is a command to think on things that are pure and good, as well as a command to practice what Paul does and says and teaches. In 4:9b (linked to Phil 4:8–9a by a καὶ, 'and') is the promise that the God of peace will be with the Philippians.

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

[Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 692–693.]

⁷⁴⁴"The second question, however, is more complex. What kind of sentence is v. 11b? Furnish uses the term 'blessing',²⁹⁸ and



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

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

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

"Is the relationship conditional? Windisch claims that v. 11b is an assurance that God will be with the Corinthians, provided that they pay attention to the exhortations of v. 11a. These imperatives function, logically, as the protasis of a conditional concept which has v. 11b as its apodosis. The notion is 'Pelagian'.³¹⁰ There is, of course, no explicit syntactical evidence for this interpretation. But it is probably rejected more because of its theological implications than on account of syntactical deficiency. Is God's presence (not a matter of grace but) something that has to be earned or deserved by

Indeed, ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης clearly has this quality elsewhere in Paul's usage. This literary structure then argues for the descriptive genitive understanding of τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εἰρήνης, of love and peace. That is, God who Himself is the essence of love and peace. But as the promise segment of the command / promise structure established here by καὶ further asserts a subjective genitive role for τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εἰρήνης. That is, God who supplies love and peace. Most commentators present these as mutually exclusive alternative understandings, but nothing prevents one from seeing them as mutually complementary terms.⁷⁴⁵ The location of the phrase both in the Conclusio and as the promise side of the Hebraistic thought construct argues strongly for the complementary perspective.

Clearly the promise presence of God, ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν, is collective oriented. That is, God will be present amendment of conduct and attitudes? Another reading of the verse, supported by Barrett and Furnish, is that v. 11b gives the grounding for v. 11a. The fact that God is the supplier of love and peace will make it possible for the Corinthians to put Paul's exhortations into practice.³¹¹ But this would surely require something like ὁ γὰρ θεός ... Or perhaps Paul is simply juxtaposing separate syntactical items, i.e., a string of imperatives followed by the assertion of a promise, without intending to suggest any organic relationship between them.³¹² This is the simplest solution. It is obviously possible to promise, by implication, God's presence to help and support the Corinthians as they endeavour to respond to Paul's exhortations without making the support conditionally dependent upon the endeavour.³¹³

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

[Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 909–911.]

⁷⁴⁵"The imperatives are followed by and (καί) and the future indicative, the God of love and peace shall be with you. If this is a substitute for a conditional sentence ('If you pull yourselves together ... then the God of love and peace ...') it may rest upon a Semitic construction, but need not do so, since there are Greek parallels (Beyer, p. 253). But it is not certain that this form of conditional construction (plainly to be seen at 6:17) is used here. In his final words Paul, it may be, simply puts separate propositions together. Do this; do that; God will be with you. Curiously, the term the God of love does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. The God of peace occurs at Rom. 15:33; 16:20; (1 Cor. 14:33); Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23; (2 Thess. 3:16); Heb. 13:20. It was evidently a regular Pauline concluding formula. The meaning appears to be not only that God is himself characterized by love and peace, but that he supplies love (cf. Rom. 5:5) and peace (cf. Rom. 5:1; 14:17), thus making possible the fulfilment of the precepts Paul has just uttered." [C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Black's New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 1973), 342–343.]



in your assembled gatherings.⁷⁴⁶ The divine presence becomes the promised blessing that supplies love and peace which enables the fivefold paths of obedience to God. Were the Corinthians to follow these paths their problems and failures would be resolved and turned into spiritual health.

347 ^{13.12} Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους
ἐν ἀγίῳ φιλήματι.

348 Ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἅγιοι πάντες.

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

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

The twofold perspective on greetings often found in this section in Paul's letter surfaces here in Second Corinthians: $|===>$ and $<===|$.⁷⁴⁷

⁷⁴⁶"When εἶναι μετὰ ('be with') is used of God's or Christ's presence with humans, it signifies the divine favor and aid as supporting some human endeavor²⁶ or intervening in some human situation.²⁷ The particular form that this divine help would take in the present case was the granting of love and peace." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 934–935.]

⁷⁴⁷Note the following:

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

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

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

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

21 Ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Τιμόθεος ὁ συνεργός μου καὶ Λούκιος καὶ Ἰάσων καὶ Σωσίπατρος οἱ συγγενεῖς μου. 22 ἀσπάζομαι ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ Τέρτιος

$|===>$, Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν ἀγίῳ φιλήματι. *Greet one another with a holy kiss.* The aorist imperative is standard for this.⁷⁴⁸ This denotes a specific action during the community house church gatherings.⁷⁴⁹ The

ὁ γράφας τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἐν κυρίῳ. 23 ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Γάϊος ὁ ξένος μου καὶ ὅλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας. ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Ἐραστός ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως καὶ Κούαρτος ὁ ἀδελφός.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁷⁴⁸"It is always ἀσπάσασθε; also 3 Jn 15 ἄσπασαι according to S (ἀσπάζου also occasionally in the papyri)." [Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner, and Robert Walter Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 173.]

⁷⁴⁹ἀσπάζομαι fut. ptc. ἀσπασομένους 3 Macc. 1:8; 1 aor. ἠσπασάμην (s. next entry; Hom.+) 'greet'.

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

a. *through word or gesture or both:* of those entering a house



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

The greeting action of a kiss on the cheek, ἐν ἀγίῳ φιλήματι, is mentioned in 1 Thess., 1 Cor., 2 Cor., and

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

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

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

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 144.]

Rom. Such was typical in the Greco-Roman world of Paul, just as it remains so today in Europe. The origin of kissing in the ancient world is interesting.⁷⁵⁰ It stands

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

a. Usage.

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

b. The Kiss in Antiquity outside the Bible.⁴⁶

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

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

In many cases the element of respect is present as well as love. This is predominant in a practice which comes from the East and which was orig. meant to honour the one kissed but then came to be regarded as an honour for the one who kisses, namely, the privilege of kissing the king, which was granted to those closest to him, not merely his relatives, but also the 'friends of the king' (→ 147, 14 ff.). This custom was adopted by Alexander the Gt., and on those elevated to be his 'relatives,' Arrian. Alexandri Anabasis,⁵⁷ VII, 11, 1, 6 f.,⁵⁸ as well as his Macedonian 'friends,' it was conferred as a right, although only together with obeisance (→ VI, 758, 15 ff.), cf. Plut. Alex., 54 (I, 696a). Then by way of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic empires it was introduced to Rome by Augustus, cf. Suet. Caes., III, 10, 2; Sen. De ira, II, 24, 1, abolished again as a daily custom by Tiberius, Suet. Caes., III, 34, 2, and then re-adopted.⁵⁹ The Younger Pliny in Panegyricus, 23, 1 lauds Trajan for granting the senate the right of kissing at the beginning and end of sessions. The kiss conferred by the emperor was regarded as a high honour, cf. Amm. Marc., 22, 9, 13 and also 29, 5, 16. but that demanded by the emperor was often a burdensome duty, cf. Thdr̄t., V, 16, 3. Many hoped to share the imperial power of healing through the kiss, cf. Script. Hist. Aug., 1, 25, 1 (→ 123, 6 f. with n. 94).⁶⁰ Like the emperors, Roman patrons allowed themselves to be kissed by their clients, cf. Mart., 8, 44, 5; 12, 26, 4; 59, 2–10.

Attestation of the erotic kiss is relatively late;⁶¹ it occurs in the Graeco-Roman world along with the kiss of love for the op-



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

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

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

(e) The effects of kisses (→ 119, n. 45)⁹¹ and their value were estimated very differently. With uninhibited pleasure in them we find serious warnings,⁹² esp. against the homoerotic kiss, Xenoph. Mem., I, 3, 8–13,⁹³ but also against excess, Mart., 12, 59; Cl. Al. Paed., III, 81, 3. We even find prohibition on the ground that kisses can be the vehicle of demonic infection or cultic defilement, Hdt., II, 41, 3 → 127, 10 ff. with n. 137.

(f) Cultic kisses play a gt. part in antiquity and they

in the background of the early Christian practices mentioned here. The first century Jewish negative attitude toward kissing, which is somewhat different than in the OT, must not be overlooked since Jewish Christians made up an important segment of these Christian communities in Diaspora Judaism.⁷⁵¹ For the Christian use

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

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

⁷⁵¹II. The Kiss in the Old Testament and Judaism.

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

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

3. As outside the Bible the kiss on the lips in the service of Eros becomes the true kiss, so it is in the OT world. This may be seen clearly in Prv. 24:26: “As a kiss on the lips, so is a good answer.” Again it is mostly presupposed even when not expressly mentioned, cf. Gn. r., 70, 12 on 29:11. But when the ref. is to the kiss of honour → 121, 3 ff., in the OT too the hands are kissed, e.g., Sir. 29:5,¹²⁸ the knees,¹²⁹ and esp. the feet. In the first instance,



of a kiss in greeting, these Jewish Christians at Corinth would have had to overcome their Jewish heritage. The role of the kiss generally in the NT is more limited than in the surrounding non-Jewish culture.⁷⁵² The

however, the kissing of the feet, like the humiliating kissing of the earth,¹³⁰ is ascribed in the OT to the nations, cf. Ps. 2:12,¹³¹ but forbidden to the Israelites, since it cannot be separated from proskynesis,¹³² cf. Mordecai in relation to Haman in *Ἐσθ.* 4:17δ. In the course of further development, however, kissing the feet comes to be practised by the Jews too as mark of grateful respect, b. Ket., 63a; b. Sanh., 27b; j. Pea, 1, 1 (15d, 28).¹³³ The Rabb. also mention many substitute kisses (→ 121, 7 ff.; 123, 13 ff.) apart from kissing the earth.¹³⁴

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

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

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

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

⁷⁵²II. The Kiss in the New Testament.

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

1. Manner and Occasion of Kissing.

Among the types of kisses mentioned we do not find the

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

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

2. The Kiss of Judas.

The kiss of Judas is a problem on its own.²³⁹ It formed a difficult problem for early Christianity from the very outset, as is shown by the variations in the Synoptic accounts and its omission from the Fourth Gospel. In Mk. 14:44 f. the kiss has plainly a pragmatic meaning; it is the agreed sign of recognition leading on at once to the arrest.²⁴⁰ Mt. 26:50 puts before it the enigmatic saying of Jesus: ἑταῖρε, ἐφ' ὃ πάρει, probably: "Friend, for this then thou hast come!" or: "Friend, why thou hast come (I know)"—a kind of aposiopesis.²⁴¹ In Lk. 22:47 f. it is an open question whether the



practice of kissing remained fairly common in post-apostolic Christianity for some time to come beginning in the second century.⁷⁵³ One must distinguish among the

kiss is actually given. What the Synoptic Judas aims to do is done by Jesus Himself in Jn. 18:5 f. with His ἐγὼ εἶμι.²⁴² The betrayal of the Master by a kiss²⁴³ of one of the Twelve, cf. Mk. 14:10 and par., 20, 43 and par.; Jn. 6:71 became an increasing offence that was hard to overcome. The difficulty was resolved by the proof from prophecy, cf. Jn. 13:18; 17:12, intimated already in Mk. 14:18, and by the prediction of the betrayal by Jesus Himself, cf. Jn. 6:70 f.; 13:18 f., 21, 26 f.

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

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

⁷⁵³D. The Kiss in the Post-New Testament Period.

I. The Early Church.

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

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

a. In the post-NT age the eucharistic kiss is rather oddly not mentioned in the post-apost. fathers but we find it in Just.: ἀλλήλους φιλήματι ἀσπάζόμεθα παυσάμενοι τῶν εὐχῶν, Apol., 65, 2. Because the place of the kiss in worship at the time came after the common prayer and before the eucharist,²⁵² Tert. De oratione, 18 (MPL, 1 [1879], 1280 f.) calls it a *signaculum* (“sealing”) orationis. Tert. is a strong champion of the *osculum pacis* even in times of private fasting apart from the pre-Easter fast, when all Christians should desist from the kiss of peace.²⁵³ Its gt. significance for the community is that it underscores the need for reconciliation before receiving the holy Supper → 139, 26 ff.²⁵⁴ That the kiss of peace τὸ ... πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἠνώσθαι ... δηλοῖ and leads on to τὴν πρὸς τὸν ἀδελφὸν ... σύμπνοιαν is also stressed by Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite De ecclesiast, hier. (Paraphrasis Pachymerae), 3, 3,

8 (MPG, 3 [1857], 464b), where between the creed and the presentation of the (still covered) elements.²⁵⁵ on the one side, and the reading of the diptycha, the lists of dead and living members of the community remembered at the mass. and the washing of the priests’ hands on the other,²⁵⁶ ὁ θεϊότατος ἀσπασμός ἱερουργεῖται, 3, 3, 8 (p. 437a). Similarly Cyr. Cat. Myst. 5, 3 calls the φίλημα a σημεῖον τοῦ ἀνακραθῆναι τὰς ψυχὰς and Chrys. Hom. de proditōne Judae, 2, 6 (MPG, 49 [1862], 391) calls it a φρικωδέστατος ἀσπασμός, a greeting woven around him who sees the mysterium tremendum, binding together senses and souls, and thus making all into one σῶμα.²⁵⁷

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

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

b. The liturgical kiss occurs in many other parts of the liturgy apart from the eucharist. It comes twice in baptism.²⁶⁶ There is first the kissing of the candidates by the bishop Hipp. Church Order, 46, 7 (Hennecke2, 580); Const. Ecclesiae Aegypt., 16, 20, whereby he pronounces their reconciliation with God and their acceptance into the community.²⁶⁷ This is compared to the kiss of greeting after a long absence abroad, Chrys. Hom. de utilitate lectionis scripturarum, 6 (MPG, 51 [1862], 98) and Hom. in 2 C., 30, 1 on 13:12 → n. 226.²⁶⁸ Then there is the kiss the baptised give their new brothers and sisters, Hipp. Church Order, 46, 8 (Hennecke2, 580) in order to impart to them a share in the newly granted grace and power of peace.²⁶⁹



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

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

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

f. There are various substitute kisses in the early Church → 121, 7 ff. Here it seems in many details to inherit pagan practices → 123, 8 ff., as in the kissing of doorposts and thresholds in churches,²⁷⁸ e.g., *Paulinus of Nola Carmen*, 18, 249 (CSEL, 30 [1894], 108); *Chrys. Hom. in 2 C.*, 30, 2 on 13:12 (MPG, 61 [1862], 606 f.) and also of altars,²⁷⁹ e.g., *Ambr. Ep.*, I, 20, 26 (MPL, 16 [1880], 1044b): *milites, irruentes in altaria, oculis significare pacis insigne*; *Prud. Peristeph.*, 9, 99 f. (CCh, 126 [1966], 329). Kissing the altar has a central place in the liturgy since the altar points to Christ. Hence the kiss of peace given just after derives its force from Christ and takes on sacramental significance.²⁸⁰ Something of the same idea may be seen in the eastern practice (still in force) of kissing icons and *achiropoiita*,²⁸¹ since the power of the heavenly original attaches to icons, which through the centuries have been faithful copies even in matters of detail. We find many other liturgical kisses in eastern liturgies, e.g., *Chrys. Liturg.*, 355, 12. 37; 356, 1; 362, 1; 382, 26 f.; 385, 14 f.: the Gospel book, discos, cup, signs of the cross on the orarion (stola) etc.²⁸² These were adopted in the West²⁸³ along with the medieval osculatorium, the

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

Thus the *ἀγίω φιλήματι* here designates a religious kiss that took place in the gathered assembly of the Christian community.⁷⁵⁴ Behind it lay an expression of

kissing tablet of precious metal, ivory, wood or marble which the priest hands communicants to kiss—a prime example of the substitute kiss.²⁸⁴ Originally common to all these liturgical kisses is their desire to give a share in the sacred force of that which is kissed.

II. Gnosticism.

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

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

⁷⁵⁴As well as expressing love and unity,³³ the 'holy kiss' signified reconciliation (cf. *Gen.* 33:4; 45:15; *Luke* 15:20) and forgiveness, and so naturally came to be associated in the post-NT period with the celebration of the Lord's Supper,³⁴ perhaps under the influence of Jesus' word in *Matt.* 5:23–24.³⁵ In addition, the 'holy kiss' exhibited Christian liberty, the transcending of divisions based on gender, race, and status, for the kiss was exchanged by male and female, Jew and Greek, slave and free (cf. *Gal.* 3:28). The initiative in giving the kiss could, apparently, rest with the female or the male believer.³⁶ Paul 'was certainly the first popular ethical teacher known to instruct members of a mixed social group to greet each other with a kiss.'³⁷ Paul's injunction was particularly relevant in Corinth where quarreling needed to be replaced by reconciliation, factionalism by unity, and arrogance by love (cf. 12:20). As to the origin of the practice in Christian circles, perhaps it was the concept of the church as a brotherhood of believers or as the family of God that led to the transference of the kiss given among physical relatives to a kiss exchanged between spiritual relatives in the Christian community." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International



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

<===| Ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἅγιοι πάντες, *All the saints send you greetings*. Often the apostle includes greetings sent by people present where the letter originates from. Sometimes the names of specific individuals sending the greetings are included. At other times a group of individuals will be indicated, such as here. But usually the designation is not as inclusive as this one.⁷⁵⁵ The one exception is Phil. 4:22 ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι, μάλιστα δὲ οἱ ἐκ τῆς Καίσαρος οἰκίας, the first part of which is virtually identical to the one here. This re-enforces the concept of the local community of believers being the intended reference in οἱ ἅγιοι πάντες, *all the saints*. As the letter was read to the various house church groups this greeting would be acknowledged by the recipient groups.

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

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

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

In the Jewish synagogue the meeting both began and closed with formal prayers, normally taken from the psalms. But over time they evolved into their own formulation.⁷⁵⁶ So did the early Christian assemblies.

Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 936.]

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

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

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

⁷⁵⁶BENEDICTIONS (Heb. sing. בְּרַכָּה, berakhah; pl. בְּרָכּוֹת, berakhot), formulas of blessing or thanksgiving, in public and private services. The Hebrew noun berakhah is derived from the verb

But the prayers were tailored to Christian focus rather than Jewish. And they differ considered from the standard Greek closing, ἐρρῶσθαι ὑμᾶς εὐχομαι, "I pray you may fare well."⁷⁵⁷

An analysis of these concluding prayers in Paul's letters reveals a similar pattern for all of them.⁷⁵⁸ Most brk בְּרַךְ ('to fall on one's knees'). The Talmud ascribes the institution and formulation of the benedictions to 'the Men of the Great Synagogue' (Ber. 33a), to the sages of old (Sif. Deut. 33:2; Mid. Ps. 17:4), or to the '120 elders' at the head of the community in the time of 'Ezra (Meg. 17b; TJ, Ber. 2:4, 4d). These references, however, cannot be considered historically authentic, although they are indicative of the fact that benedictions were known to have been instituted in very ancient times. In the Bible, mention is made of a number of individual benedictions (Gen. 24:27; Ex. 18:10; Ruth 4:14; I Sam. 25:32; II Sam. 18:28; I Kings 1:48; 5:21; 8:15, 56; I Chron. 16:36; II Chron. 2:11; 6:4; Ps. 28:6; 31:22). After the victory of the Maccabees over Nicanor, the people exclaimed, 'Blessed be He who has kept His holy place undefiled' (II Macc. 15:34). According to the Book of Enoch (36:4), each time Enoch beheld some of the wonders of nature, he 'blessed the Lord of Glory, Who had made great and glorious wonders to show the greatness of His work to the angels and to spirits and to men, that they might praise His work and all His creation.

The Origin of the Berakhot

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

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

⁷⁵⁷Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 937.

⁷⁵⁸Note the following Pauline use of the Benedictio:

Gal. 6:18. Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί· ἀμήν. *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.*

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

2 Cor. 13:13. Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. *The grace*

invoke the grace of the Lord upon the readers. The benedictio of Second Corinthians is unique in that it contains a trinitarian based blessing.⁷⁵⁹

Lord = grace, ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

God = love, ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ

Holy Spirit = fellowship, ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος

The details are important to understand here.

Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The benedictio begins with a typical Pauline expression in the benedictio emphasizing the grace that comes through Christ.⁷⁶⁰ Note the formal

of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁷⁵⁹Paul closes with a benediction in the form of a wish.⁴⁴

Compared with his other closing benedictions, this verse contains two distinctives: (1) He refers not only to *χάρις* but also to *ἀγάπη* and *κοινωνία*; (2) he refers not only to the Lord Jesus Christ but also to God and the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 937.]

⁷⁶⁰The genitive in the first element of the triad is clearly subjective. Salvation and all its associated blessings (*χάρις*) were brought (8:9) and are being brought (12:9) by Christ. But although in Pauline benedictions Christ is the sole source of *χάρις*, in Pauline salutations (including 1:2) God the Father and Christ are generally mentioned as the joint source of *χάρις*.⁴⁶ This illustrates the point that the *χάρις*, *ἀγάπη*, and *κοινωνία* that are attached to the three persons mentioned in this verse should not be thought of as exclusive characteristics. Other examples of this fact would include the phrases ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ (1 Cor. 1:4), ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ (5:14; Rom. 8:35), ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πνεύματος (Rom. 15:30), and *κοινωνία* ... Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1 Cor. 1:9). But why, in this embryonic trinitarian formulation, do we find the unexpected order, Christ-God-Spirit? Three reasons may be suggested for the 'priority' of Christ in this triadic structure. (1) Paul began the benediction with his customary reference to 'the grace of (our) Lord Jesus (Christ)' and then expanded it. (2) Christ's grace is the means by which God's love reaches the believer. As Paul expresses it in Rom. 8:39, nothing can separate believers 'from the love of God that is revealed in [the grace of] Christ Jesus our Lord' (ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν). The third element of the triad also is dependent on the first. It was through the grace of Christ exhibited in the cross that God demonstrated his love (Rom. 5:8) and that believers came to participate in the Spirit's life and so form the community of the new Age. (3) The verse does not describe

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

καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ, and the love of God. Although it could mean 'love for God' (= Greek objective genitive), the parallelism of the context demands 'love that God expresses' (= Greek subjective genitive).⁷⁶¹ One must remember that ἡ ἀγάπη is not much linked to the English word 'love.' The Greek ἡ ἀγάπη specifies an active expression of self-sacrificing action for the benefit of others, while the English word 'love' mostly defines an attitude or warm feeling toward someone or something. ἡ ἀγάπη is centered in a person's will, not in feelings or emotions. With ἡ ἀγάπη, we deliberately choose to take sacrificial beneficial actions. This is precisely what God has done for sinful humanity. And this is seen most clearly in the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, as John 3:16 so eloquently portrays. Here Paul

relationships within the Trinity but the chronological order (so to speak) of the believer's experience of God: we come to Christ and so encounter God and then receive his Spirit.

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

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 937–938.]

⁷⁶¹Although ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ could mean 'love for God' (objective genitive),⁴⁸ parallelism with the preceding phrase and the appropriateness of expressing a divine blessing in a benediction favor taking τοῦ θεοῦ as a subjective genitive. Paul is expressing his wish and prayer that the love God has already poured out (Rom. 5:5) and demonstrated (Rom. 5:8) may continue to fortify his readers. He realized that only by fresh infusions of divine love would they be able to heed his appeals (παρακαλεῖσθε, v. 11a). This wish, therefore, functions in the same way as the assurance of the presence of ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης does in v. 11b in relation to the injunctions of v. 11a; the one enables the other.⁴⁹ As elsewhere in Paul (and the NT) (ὁ) θεός signifies the Father.⁵⁰ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 938–939.]



invokes this divine love upon his readers of this letter and the hearers of it being read at Corinth.

καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. The difficulty of this phrase centers on determining whether τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος is either objective or subjective genitive case function.⁷⁶² This

⁷⁶²"The most difficult exegetical problem in this verse arises from the phrase ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος. If the genitive is subjective, the sense will be 'the fellowship with one another that is engendered by the Spirit' or 'the participation granted by the Spirit in himself' or 'the sense of community created by the Spirit.' Arguments adduced in support of such an interpretation are as follows.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"4. This view, too, suits the context. Common participation in the one Spirit would promote harmony and dispel factionalism (cf. 12:20; 13:11), just as adherence to the one name of the Lord Jesus Christ prompted unity and banished dissensions (1 Cor. 1:10).

"Some argue that both the subjective and objective senses are implied or intended.⁵⁸ In his EDNT article on the κοιν- root, which draws on his earlier monograph (KOINONIA), J. Hainz argues for a unified structure in Pauline usage of the word group: 'fellowship/partnership (with someone) through (common) participation (in

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

μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν, with all of you. This exact phrase is also found in the benedictio of 2 Thess. 3:18 and Titus 3:15.⁷⁶³ Thus toward the beginning of his writing ministry, at the middle of that ministry, and then toward the end of his writing ministry we find the same inclusive expression. In this prayer structure this elliptical expression should be supplied with the optative verb form εἴη, rather than either the indicative ἐστίν or the imperative ἔστω.⁷⁶⁴ Thus the prayer wish invokes di-

something)' (EDNT 2.304).⁵⁹ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ (ἁγίου) πνεύματος he renders by 'the partnership [through common participation] of the (Holy) Spirit' (EDNT 2.305). But it is not clear that the notions of fraternal fellowship created by the Spirit and common participation in the Spirit could be simultaneously present in our phrase. Schweizer seems to be on safer ground when he opts for the subjective sense—the 'Spirit's giving of a share (in Himself)'⁶⁰—but adds 'which may well include brotherly fellowship too. Materially this amounts to the same thing as the exposition in terms of an obj[ective] gen[itive]' (TDNT 6.434).⁶¹

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

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 939–941.]

⁷⁶³"The presence of πάντων in the phrase μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν (cf. 2 Thess. 3:18; Tit. 3:15) is significant. No sections of the Corinthian church—not even the rebellious elements—were excluded from Paul's benediction.⁶³ Does it also suggest that he expected a positive response to his letter, as earlier to his 'severe letter' (cf. 7:14)? With this final phrase we should understand the optative εἴη⁶⁴ rather than the indicative ἐστίν or the imperative ἔστω.⁶⁵" [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 941.]

⁷⁶⁴"The singular εἴη would agree with the nearest subject or with the three subjects regarded as a whole. The forms εἴησαν and εἴεν are not found in the NT." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second*



vine blessings upon the entire community at Corinth including his critics there. One should remember the overwhelming nature of the divine Presence upon a community. God's power in such a manifestation would burn out of the community all rebellious elements and purify the remaining segments.

The letter thus ends on a positive note that has a built in warning to any rebellious, sinful members. As Harris (NIGTC) observes, "It is a singular paradox that a letter so full of indignation, remonstrance, and gyrating emotions should conclude with the most elevated trinitarian affirmation in the NT⁶⁶ couched in the form of a benediction addressed to all the members of a factious church."⁷⁶⁵ But properly understood the benedictio is not nearly as surprising as Harris seems to think. Paul's ἀγάπη for the community at Corinth does not mean sentimentality over them whatsoever. Instead, it is a disciplined, determined commitment to push and cajole them toward new and deeper obedience to God through Christ. By the end of the reading of this letter in the house church groups in the city, those assembled in worship should begin to recognize this ἀγάπη from the apostle.

Did the letter help solve the problems at Corinth?⁷⁶⁶ Although no direct information is available to give a definitive answer, the depiction of Paul's third visit to Corinth in Acts 20:1-3 is essentially positive, even though Luke does mention a three month stay εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα, in Greece, rather than just at Corinth. The noun Ἑλλάς designated the region of Greece which basically corresponded to the Roman province of Achaia, of which Corinth was the capital city in the mid first century. Additionally, during this time the letter to the Romans was composed, thus indicating enough freedom and time to put together with Τέρτιος, Tertius, his writing secretary, the most eloquent expression of Paul's belief system found inside the NT.⁷⁶⁷ Of course, by 96 AD the situation at Corinth has deteriorated back to many of the same problems that Paul was coping with

Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), p. 941, fn. 64.]

⁷⁶⁵Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 941.

⁷⁶⁶Carson asks, 'Did these chapters turn the situation in Corinth around?' (p. 191). He admits that this cannot be known for certain, but several factors point to at least some improvement: Paul found time to write Romans during his third visit; Paul's plans to travel to Spain; and he took a collection for believers in Jerusalem (p. 192)." [Larry J. Waters, "Review of A Model of Christian Maturity: An Exposition of 2 Corinthians 10–13 by D. A. Carson," ed. Matthew S. DeMoss, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 165 (2008): 117.]

⁷⁶⁷**Rom. 16:22.** ἀσπάζομαι ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ Τέρτιος ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἐν κυρίῳ. I Tertius, the writer of this letter, greet you in the Lord.

in the mid-50s. We have a more detailed picture in the first letter of the Roman church leader Clement to the church at Corinth in [First Clement](#).

*****CONCLUSIONS*****

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

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

This is perhaps the most challenging part of Christian ministry. It is a modern difficulty largely due to the twisted perception of 'love' in western society. Due to the corrupting influence of Hollywood, love is largely defined as a 'warm, fuzzy feeling' toward another person. But biblical ἡ ἀγάπη never centered on emotions in the ancient world. This was ἡ ἔρος, which was devalued extensively in Paul's world, and thus never used in the New Testament. Biblical ἡ ἀγάπη, however, was volitional by definition and specified a deliberate choice to sacrificially reach out to others in help and assistance. It moved from will to action and without touching emotions. That means that within Christian perspective ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης, the God of love, would take actions that benefited His people, and even rotten sinners. Often this meant disciplinary actions. Remember Heb. 12:6, which is taken from Proverbs 3:12.⁷⁶⁸ From the outset Judaism understood the nature of God's love.⁷⁶⁹ Paul's non-Jewish Christian audience also had a pretty good idea about the volitional nature of ἡ ἀγάπη, which was used far less often than φιλέω. The focusing on sac-

⁷⁶⁸**Heb. 12:6.** ὃν γὰρ ἀγαπᾷ κύριος παιδεύει, μαστιγοῖ δὲ πάντα υἱὸν ὃν παραδέχεται. for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises every child whom he accepts.

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

⁷⁶⁹This word, which is widely used in the LXX, is in the overwhelming majority of cases a rendering of רָחַם and derivatives, being used only seldom for חָחַר (5 times), for חָפַץ (twice), for רָצַח (once) or for other roots which sometimes stand in partial connexion (e.g., חָסַח hi, פָּתַח pi, שָׁעַע pilp), sometimes in no connexion at all (e.g., בּוֹא 2 Βασ. 7:18, 1 Ch. 17:16, where a theological interpretation is given, חָטַח and עָשָׂה) with the thought expressed by the translation. The noun ἀγάπη occurs some 20 times along with ἀγάπησις (some 10 times), and the two are often interchanged in MSS. Both are renderings of אָהַבָה except in Hab. 3:4, where ἀγάπησις is a theological or erroneous equivalent for קָוַר "cover." A Hebrew equivalent is lacking in Wis. 3:9; 6:18; Sir. 48:11." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), vol. 1, p. 21, fn. 1.]

rificing for others ran counter to a largely egocentric culture. Yet among the NT writers ἀγάπη is the dominating term describing both God and Christian duty toward others.

Paul's stance toward the Corinthians beautifully illustrates how God's love should work in our lives as His people. The apostle was deeply committed to the Corinthians in spite of their unruly behavior, and negativism toward him. Out of this commitment, which he had consistently demonstrated in personal sacrifice for their benefit, came an uncompromising demand for them to straighten up and get right with God. Out of this same love came his scorching condemnation of his critics and the false teachers in the community. Over and over he affirmed his love for them, but never once did he compromise his convictions just to curry their favor. This affirmation of love was not just verbal. Mostly it centered in reminders of how he had sacrificed himself for their sake in order to lead them to Christ. Such scarifies was from the very beginning to the time of the writing of this letter. His opponents feigned a love for the church but it was false since it sought to enslave the church to its teachings and a loyalty to human leaders rather than to God. This reflected for Paul, the old Pharisee Paul rather than the now Christian Paul in his own life. This signaled a lack of divine love in the lives of his enemies at Corinth, just as it had in his own life before Christ took control of him on the road to Damascus. To be Christian means that God's love has taken over one's life in transforming power.⁷⁷⁰

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

Our problem mostly has to do with lack of ἀγάπη. And especially the lack of ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ. This was also the problem of the Corinthians, and they had sunk themselves into the sewer of divisiveness and pagan misbehavior. The false teachers, also lacking ἡ ἀγάπη

⁷⁷⁰Compare to 1 John 3:14, ἡμεῖς οἶδαμεν ὅτι μεταβεβήκαμεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν, ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τοὺς ἀδελφούς· ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν μένει ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ. We know that we have passed out of death into life because we are loving our brothers; the one not loving remains in death.

τοῦ θεοῦ, sought to affirm them in this moral sewer by currying their favor without demanding repentance. The apostle Paul wasn't about to sink down to such a level in his efforts to help the church find its way to genuine faith commitment to God. And neither must authentic Christian leaders in today's believing communities. He risked his entire relationship with the Corinthians in order to help them. That remains true today! A corrupted, watered down relationship provides no authentic spiritual help to wayward believers. Easy to accomplish? Not at all! Necessary for genuine help? Absolutely!

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

What the apostle faced with the Corinthians was a multi pronged attack from two sets of opponents in the church. Although the identity of these groups is difficult to pin down with absolute certainty, it appears that he had his critics inside the church who were Corinthians and then later on outsiders from Judaea arrived in the city and began aligning themselves with the insider critics and others in opposition to Paul.⁷⁷¹ Chapter ten especially centers on the insider critics while chapters eleven through thirteen center primarily on the outsiders. The insider group reflects the lingering impact of divisiveness described in fair detail in First Corinthians, especially chapter one. The contrast between Greek and Jewish versions of σοφία in chapter two clearly points this direction. These individuals in the church were still plagued by their non-Christian set of values that had not been jettisoned at conversion. At any point in this debate with Paul, both groups never numbered a significant part of the Christian community and most of the members looked with favor toward

⁷⁷¹Modern scholarship is hopelessly divided on this issue and many different proposals will surface in the commentaries. Note Harrington's assessment particularly of the outsider group:

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

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



Paul and his leadership.⁷⁷²

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

Paul somewhat returns to the group of insider critics in chapter thirteen especially in vv. 1-4, although his rather blunt warning and call for repentance is more inclusive of the entire community rather than targeting just one small segment inside the community. Verse two comes very close to targeting a subgroup inside the community and may imply that these insider critics were in opposition to him due to his condemnation of their immoral lifestyle while claiming to be Christian. What is made clear is that this targeted segment here had a longtime history in the church prior to his second "painful visit" to Corinth. Most likely it reaches back to the beginning of the church in the early 50s and comprised many of those he labeled *ὡς σαρκίνοις*, as fleshly (1 Cor. 3:1) and to whom the letter prior to First Corinthians was primarily targeting (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9). They had become arrogant in their sinning as a warped

⁷⁷²"The opponents were probably not very numerous. It is, we think, not completely impossible that there were connections between them and the Jerusalem authorities (see our discussion of 10:12-18), nor, as most scholars hold, is it absolutely certain that they are wholly different from Paul's opponents in Galatia, those who compelled the Gentile Christians to live like Jews (Gal 2:14; see our discussion of 2 Cor 10:4-6; cf. Gal 1:7-9). Yet since Paul himself does not pay much attention to the religious origin and historical provenance of his opponents, identifying them may remain impossible. One could even ask whether this is really necessary in order to understand Paul's main concern. Many Christians of Corinth must have taken sides with the intruders and detached themselves from Paul, at least during a certain period of time. Second Corinthians shows us a Paul who, above all, wants to win them back." [Daniel J. Harrington, *Second Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 8, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 7.]

badge of super spirituality (1 Cor. 4:18-21), illustrated by the extreme example in 5:1-8. The strong / weak criticism in Second Corinthians had begun among these insider critics prior to the writing of First Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor. 4:18-21).

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

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

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

The precise approach taken in responding by Paul differed in large part to who was criticizing him. **To the insiders at Corinth** he responded by answering their criticism of him not being a quality leader by cultural standards. This was as 10:1-6 signals by addressing

the weak / strong criticism with pointing them to Christ's leadership pattern that he was following. His goal was to help them understand the legitimacy of both these stances in an edifying ministry to the church at Corinth. He desired to recover these critics by bringing them to repentance to Christ. That could be best achieved through making the Christ centered nature of his ministry to the church clear. Ultimately Paul concludes in 10:18, οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἑαυτὸν συνιστάνων, ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος, ἀλλ' ὃν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν. *For it is not those who commend themselves that are approved, but those whom the Lord commends.*

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

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

Then brilliantly he turns the secular καύχησις of these outsiders (11:20-21) on its head with a personal recounting of how he diminishes himself in favor of exalting Christ who is the source of his calling and ministry (11:30; 12:9-10). This while his outsider opponents only compared themselves horizontally to others, and to Paul while drawing the conclusion of their own superiority. To be clear, he was in no way inferior to them and possessed equal credentials to what they claimed (11:22; 12:6-7). His weaknesses reflected in all his sufferings thus became a badge of a Christ driven humbling of himself before the powerful Christ now exalted in heaven. These 'weaknesses' follow the model of Christ's sufferings that led to the Heavenly Father's exaltation of Christ in the resurrection and ascension. For Paul, his sufferings as signs of weakness confirm the divine calling upon his life for service and ministry. The Spirit based conversion of the Corinthians through Paul's preaching of the Gospel is exhibit A of this truth

(12:12-13). Clearly Paul is not gifted in rhetoric, but does possess this profound knowledge of how God works (11:5). But the Corinthians need to cast aside the weak / strong assessment because his upcoming visit will be unrelenting punishment against both those still living in sin and the outsider opposition against him (12:20-21). Through his 'weakness' the strong power of God will explode against those rebelling against Christ at Corinth.

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

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

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

3. How to utilize various literary skills in crafting together a strategy for responding to attack. One of the highly impressive aspects of chapters ten through thirteen especially in this letter is Paul's brilliant use of argumentation skills available to him in the cultural worlds of his day. Such usage is clear throughout the entire letter, but especially prominent in this last section of the letter. His brilliance lies in knowing these tools and even more in knowing how to appropriately utilize them in making his case. Of course, his superior background training in both Hellenism and Judaism prior to becoming a Christian played a huge role in possessing such skills. But 'field experience' in standing up against

both Judaism's and paganism's hostility after Christian conversion helped refine and polish these skills.

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

What can be taken away from this angle? At minimum, when we communicate the Gospel to a modern audience not only must we possess a profound understanding of the sacred text, but also we must deeply know our world and the people in it that we speak to. In Karl Barth's classic illustration of the role of the sermon and its preacher in building connecting bridges between the Bible and the newspaper, one cannot over stress the importance of knowing both quite well before construction work begins. Paul knew well how to make a case just like a Jewish Pharisee would. But he also knew how to make a case for the same idea just like a Greek philosopher would. And he knew how to blend these two approaches when writing to a mixed audience. Just as for Paul, the kind of educational training we achieve will play a critically important role in developing these skills. A solid liberal arts university background is critically important here. When combined with seriously biblically grounded theological education, we stand a much better chance of having skills to effectively communicate the Gospel to a modern audience.⁷⁷³

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

⁷⁷³What grieves me to no end in retirement is having to watch the diminishing of this perspective on proper education of religious leaders in the Americas. Few pastors in almost every Protestant denominational pulpit possess today the background training that I describe, and the percentage is shrinking rather than growing. Superficiality and heresy are exploding all across Protestant Christianity as a direct consequence. To my dismay, I found a similar trend in Europe during my last extended time in Germany 2008-2010.

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

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

The apostle was able to walk a difficult chalk line of utilizing human based tools of communication but without compromising the integrity of his commitment to Christ -- something enormously difficult to accomplish. Thus his contention of being authentically validated by God to proclaim the Gospel of Christ took on powerful persuasive human tones while remaining completely spiritually authentic.

Such remains the continuing challenge of the today's genuinely called messenger of God. Always in the church will be critical voices judging us purely by human standards that lead to denial of divine calling. We will repeatedly be challenged by outsider false teachers who claim Christianity as their exclusive pos-

session but in reality reflect nothing but pagan corruption of the true Gospel. Our calling from God is to rebut and challenge these opponents vigorously and persistently. But always for the sake of the Gospel and in order to build up the true people of God. No personality cult of loyal followers must be allowed to surface toward us. All eyes must constantly remain focused on Christ alone and never on us as spiritual leaders. That means following closely Paul's example of responding to criticism while maintaining his integrity in an uncompromising manner in which God is honored and can bless.

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

Paul shows us that risking yourself in the eyes of your opponents as being weak is key to God honoring reaction. Paul's motto must be yours: ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατός εἰμι, *for whenever I am weak then I am strong* (12:10b). Your ministry needs a history of personal sacrifice and faithfulness to God's calling. In God's grace you must adopt Paul's stance: Ἡδιστα οὖν μᾶλλον καυχῆσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *therefore all the more will I take pride in my weaknesses, so that Christ's power upon me may be all the more clear* (12:9b). Not easy to do until you learn to be content in your sufferings: διὸ εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὕβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις, ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, *Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ* (12:10a). Then and only then can your response be guided by the objective εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν ὑμῶν, *for building you up and not for tearing you down* (10:8b). Additionally you recognize, even if your opponents don't, that οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἑαυτὸν συνιστάνων, ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος, ἀλλ' ὃν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν, *it is not those who commend themselves that are approved, but those whom the Lord commends* (10:18).

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