

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 251 – September 8th – 2 Corinthians 10:1-18

Works frequently referenced in these notes on 2 Corinthians

Carson, Donald A	<i>From Triumphalism to Maturity: A new exposition of 2 Corinthians 10-13</i> , Leicester, IVP, 1986
Kruse, Colin	<i>2 Corinthians</i> (Tyndale Commentary), London, IVP, 1987
Martin, Ralph P	<i>2 Corinthians</i> (Word Biblical Commentary), Waco Texas, Word Books, 1986
Tasker, RVG	<i>2 Corinthians</i> (Tyndale Commentary), London, Tyndale Press, 1958

2 Corinthians 10

The marked change in tone has led many to view chapters 10-13 as a separate letter: perhaps the 'severe' letter written after 1 Corinthians but before 2 Corinthians 1-9, or a letter written on an occasion subsequent to the preceding chapters. Martin comments, "If we refuse to see chaps. 10-13 as part of the 'tearful letter' (2:4-7:8), then the remaining option is to postulate a new and worsening development in Paul's relations with the Corinthians, which required another letter of a different tone and temper, consonant with a more serious attack on his apostolic work at Corinth. We may trace this development to the arrival and influence of the anti-Pauline teachers of 11:4-18."

Verse 1

Αὐτός δὲ ἐγὼ Παῦλος παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς διὰ τῆς πραΰτητος καὶ ἐπιεικείας τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς κατὰ πρόσωπον μὲν ταπεινὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀπὼν δὲ θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς·

Baur suggested that the phrase Αὐτός δὲ ἐγὼ Παῦλος occurring here and subsequently in these chapters indicates that Paul dispensed with his amanuensis and wrote these final chapters himself. Martin suggests rather that they underline the personal nature of these chapters – expressing personal feeling, force and authority.

παρακαλεῶ exhort, encourage, urge

Not thunderous condemnation but an appeal.

πραυτης, ητος f gentleness, humility
 ἐπιεικεια, ας f kindness, forbearance

ἐπιεικης 'gentle' is not found in the Gospels; but it is a Christian trait in Phil 4:5, το ἐπιεικες, 'graciousness' is a suggested rendering ..., with the idea that Christians will have a willingness to forego retaliation when threatened, a thought of some relevance here; 1 Tim 3:3; Titus 3:2 and especially 1 Pet 2:18). The Lord's attitude (as in Col 3:13) may well have prompted this appeal." Martin

προσωπον, ου n appearance, presence
 ταπεινος, η, ου humble, lowly

"His service shared in the features set by the criterion of the humbled and crucified Christ (as in 4:7-10; 6:4-10). In context, however, ... ταπεινος carries a pejorative sense, implying that Paul was regarded by his enemies as pusillanimous... He cites their estimate, while retaining in a double entendre his own self-estimate based on the model of the incarnate Lord." Martin

ἀπὼν Verb, pres ptc, m nom s ἀπειμι be
 away, be absent

θαρρεω be full of courage, act boldly

"Paul's opponents are to be heard in this innuendo, charging that when he is away from Corinth he is insisting on his rights and lording it over the congregation (εἰς ὑμᾶς: something like 'over you' would express the idea of Paul's superior attitude, his 'impudence')." Martin

Verse 2

δέομαι δὲ τὸ μὴ παρὼν θαρρῆσαι τῇ πεποιθήσει ἢ λογιζομαι τολμῆσαι ἐπὶ τινας τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς ὡς κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας.

δέομαι ask, beg, pray

Conciliatory in tone. A request of the Corinthians, not a prayer.

"The sentence is convoluted and hard to unravel, but the meaning is tolerably plain." Martin

παρῶν Verb, pres ptc, m nom s παρειμι be
 present

πεποιθησις, εως f confidence

λογιζομαι reckon, count

τολμαω dare, be brave

τινας Pronoun, m & f acc pl τις

'certain people'. The reference would appear to be to "the emissaries (shortly to be revealed: see 11:4) who have presumed to interfere with Paul's apostolic mission." Martin

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body,
human nature
περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

"To walk according to the flesh, as far as Paul's opponents were concerned, probably meant not acting authoritatively (11:20,21), not experiencing visions and revelations (12:1), performing no mighty works (12:11-12) and not being one through whom Christ spoke (13:3). Instead it meant, they would probably have said, carrying on a purely human enterprise using guile and deceit (12:16-18)." Kruse

Verse 3

ἐν σαρκί γὰρ περιπατοῦντες οὐ κατὰ σάρκα
στρατευόμεθα –

στρατευομαι serve as a soldier, wage war,
do battle

Verse 4

τὰ γὰρ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ
ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ πρὸς καθαίρεσιν
ὀχυρωμάτων – λογισμοὺς καθαιροῦντες

ὄπλον, ου n weapon, tool
στρατεια, ας f warfare, fight
σαρκικος, η, ον belonging to this world
δυνατος, η, ον strong, powerful, able

δυνατῶ τῷ θεῷ 'have divine power' Martin
phrases it, 'but as God empowers [us]...'

καθαίρεσις, εως f destruction, tearing
down

ὀχυρωμα, τος n stronghold, fortress

Allusion to Prov 21:22.

λογισμος, ου m thought, reasoning, false
argument

His opponents' reasoning.

καθαίρειω take down, pull down, overthrow

'We demolish arguments' The first of a series
of participles, cf. αἰχμαλωτίζοντες v.5, ἐτοίμῳ
ἔχοντες v.6.

Verse 5

καὶ πᾶν ὕψωμα ἐπαίρομενον κατὰ τῆς
γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ αἰχμαλωτίζοντες πᾶν
νόημα εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

ὕψωμα, τος n height, stronghold, proud
obstacle

'All lofty notions'

ἐπαίρομενον Verb, pres midd/pass ptc, m acc
& n nom/acc s ἐπαίρω raise, lift up;
midd lift up in opposition

γνωσις, εως f knowledge, understanding
αἰχμαλωτίζω make captive, take prisoner
νοημα, τος n mind, thought, design, plot
ὑπακοη, ης f obedience

"In practical terms such obedience to Christ involves a submission to Paul's kerygma which is in danger of losing its credibility at Corinth (11:4) as a result of the rival mission there." Martin

Paul's presentation of the gospel used reasoning to argue against opponents and to destroy their opposition to the truth. Yet it was no mere argument which broke down such barriers, it was the power of God (v.4). We need to appreciate both the usefulness and the limitations of reasoned argument in the work of the gospel.

Verse 6

καὶ ἐν ἐτοιμῷ ἔχοντες ἐκδικῆσαι πᾶσαν
παρακοήν, ὅταν πληρωθῇ ὑμῶν ἡ ὑπακοή.

ἐτοιμος, η, ον ready, prepared; ἐν ἐ. ἔχω
be ready (a term used of military
preparedness)

ἐκδικεω help (someone) get justice,
avenge, punish

παρακοη, ης f disobedience

ὅταν when

πληρωθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s πληρωω
fill, make full, accomplish

ὑπακοη, ης f obedience

One of Paul's favourite terms for human response to Christ and his word. Kraus thinks that the full obedience Paul was awaiting was the Corinthians' rejection of the false teachers and recognition of Paul's authority. Martin says, "In other words, Paul distinguishes the alien intruders at Corinth whose satanic work (11:13-15) he wants to overthrow and neutralise from the body of Pauline believers for whom he entertains optimistic hope of their recovery from the snare of deviation and seduction (11:1-4)."

Verse 7

Τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον βλέπετε. εἴ τις πέποιθεν
ἐαυτῷ Χριστοῦ εἶναι, τοῦτο λογιζέσθω πάλιν
ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ ὅτι καθὼς αὐτὸς Χριστοῦ οὕτως
καὶ ἡμεῖς.

προσωπον, ου n face, appearance

βλεπετε could be either indicative or
imperative. If indicative it is an accusation, as
NIV, "You are looking only on the surface of
things". The RSV treats it as an imperative,
"Look at what is before your eyes." Martin
favours the latter as do Hering and Hughes.

πέποιθεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s πειθω
persuade; perf have confidence, be
confident

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

λογίζομαι reckon, count

παλιν again, once more

The sense is, 'let him think again'. The ἐφ' ἑαυτου emphasises an act of conscious consideration.

οὕτως thus, in this way

Χριστου could mean simply, 'belonging to Christ', 'a Christian', but probably has the sense here of 'a servant of Christ' – one commissioned by Christ. "The centre of debate is Paul's right to ministry, set against that of his rivals who have appeared on the Corinthian scene. They claim to be true apostles, and act accordingly. Paul, following his literary convention of irony and *apologia*, takes their claims at face value but then challenges them to offer proof. Hence the call βλέπετε [τα κατα προσωπον]. Moreover, he enters a counterclaim, that he too is Christ's representative with rightful authority, ἐξουσια (v 8), so when they deny that to him they are virtually casting doubt on his Christian standing. 'Pressed to the limit, the question raised here is whether Paul is or is not a Christian' (Barrett)." Martin

Verse 8

ἐάν τε γὰρ περισσώτερόν τι καυχῆσώμαι περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν, ἣς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν ὑμῶν, οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι,

ἐαν if, even if, though

τε enclitic particle and, and so

περισσοτερος, α, ον adj & adv. more, much more

Martin suggests that 'the cryptic περισσοτερον seems to require an insertion to make the comparison.' He suggests 'Even if I can boast [about being [Christ's] and, more than that, about my [our] authority ...'

καυχασομαι boast, boast about

ἐξουσια, ας f authority, right

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s διδωμι

οικοδομη, ης f upbuilding, encouragement

καθαίρεσις, εως f destruction, tearing down

Tearing down is reserved for those who would themselves tear down what Paul has been building up.

αἰσχυνθήσομαι Verb, fut pass dep indic, 1 s

αἰσχυνομαι be ashamed

Martin translates 'I will not be discredited by it' and says, "At risk is not only Paul's apostolic credibility, but his entire Gentile mission in the Aegean region, with its headquarters at Corinth. If this church is lost to him, his entire work is in jeopardy – as is his prospect for a future mission in the west (Rome, Spain), to say nothing of his task to get the collection to Jerusalem."

Verse 9

ἵνα μὴ δόξω ὡς ἂν ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν·

δόξω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s δοκεω have reputation, seem

ἵνα μὴ δόξω 'that I might not seem'. The sense is difficult. It may be linked with what precedes – Paul is saying that the ministry and authority he has been given is not to frighten them with his letters. Or it may be introducing a new thought, '[Do not think] that I am trying to frighten you with my letters...'

ἂν particle indicating contingency

ἐκφοβεω frighten, terrify

ἐπιστολη, ης f letter

Verse 10

ὅτι Αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μέν, φησὶν, βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραὶ, ἡ δὲ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενῆς καὶ ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος.

The accusation of Paul's opponents

ἐπιστολαὶ Noun, nom pl ἐπιστολη, ης f letter

φησὶν Verb, pres act indic, 3 s φημι say

βαρυσ, εια, υ weighty, serious, fierce

ἰσχυρος, α, ον strong, mighty, powerful

The reference is probably particularly to the 'severe letter' which Paul sent. Martin records that T Holtz "argues that it is only after the Council of AD 49/50 and the Incident at Antioch (Gal 2:11-16) that Paul developed the use of letters as a way of communicating with his churches. For it was as Paul was kept away from his converts and knew them to be vulnerable to various counter-missionary activity that he relied on letters as his *alter ego*... His enemies, however, put a negative construction on this policy, insinuating that Paul chose the safety of distance rather than a personal encounter ... with them in the setting of Paul's congregations."

παρουσια, ας f coming, arrival, presence

σωμα, τος n body

ἀσθενῆς, ες sick, weak

"The words *his bodily presence is weak* may reflect his opponents' reaction to a physical ailment which was never healed (cf. 12:7-9; Gal 4:15), or his unimpressive physical make up ... or most likely to what they regarded as a lack of commanding presence because Paul did not provide *displays* of authority and spiritual *charismata*." Kraus. The two ideas might be combined in the insinuation that Paul was unable to heal himself, cf. 12:1-10.

ἐξουθενημένος Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom s
ἐξουθενεω despise, treat with contempt

'contemptible.' May refer to their dislike of Paul's unadorned style of speaking (cf. 1 Cor 2:1-2). "It declares that, in their ears, Paul's rhetorical ability was non-existent and his public presentation of the message moved them to contempt and scorn... In the contest of 'evidence,' he made a poor showing on the twin counts where they scored – at least in their own esteem. And on both counts he had no valid claim to 'authority' (ἐξουσία)." Martin

Verse 11

τοῦτο λογίζεσθω ὁ τοιοῦτος, ὅτι οἳ οἶοί ἐσμεν τῷ λόγῳ δι' ἐπιστολῶν ἀπόντες, τοιοῦτοι καὶ παρόντες τῷ ἔργῳ.

λογίζομαι reckon, count, calculate, credit, suppose

τοιοῦτος, αὐτῆ, οὗτον correlative pronoun and adjective such, of such kind

ὅσος, ἡ, ὄν correlative pronoun, as much as, how much, how far

ἐπιστολή, ἡς f letter

ἄπειμι be away, be absent, go

παρεῖμι be present

The sense is probably future, '... thus also we will be in our actions when we come.'
"Presumably this is a remonstrance as he plans to deal with refractory church members ... but more particularly he is confronting the alien teachers who have seduced them (11:2,3)." Martin

Verses 12-18

"The point in question is the challenge which was apparently raised against Paul that he had no jurisdiction at Corinth, which may have been claimed – whether with consent or not – as Peter's bailiwick... See v 15 and Romans 15:19,20 for this idea of 'another's territory.' So the conclusion is drawn by his rivals that Paul's mission to Corinth was illegitimate from the start, and his converts were therefore being placed under duress with the insinuation that they are followers of a pseudo-apostle and a charlatan." Martin. Paul insists that he has been commissioned by God to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. To this end he came to Corinth and for the same reason has sought to establish Corinth as a base (v.12) for which he proposes to launch out into further regions with the Gospel (v.16, cf. Rom 1:1-15; 15:23,24,28). The argument of these verses is full of "chopped up pieces of sentences, violently thrown together." Lietzmann "We may put this type of composition down to Paul's emotional involvement in the situation he is describing, and the way (it seems) his dictation runs ahead of his mind." Martin

Verse 12

Οὐ γὰρ τολμῶμεν ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι ἑαυτοὺς τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοῦς συνιστανόντων· ἀλλὰ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἑαυτοὺς μετροῦντες καὶ συγκρίνοντες ἑαυτοὺς ἑαυτοῖς οὐ συνιάσιν.

τολμᾶω dare, be brave

Paul adopts a mock humility – refusing to class himself with these elevated people! "Paul answers those who saw 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, ἰδιωτῆς τῷ λόγῳ)." Martin

ἐγκρίναι Verb, aor act infin ἐγκρίνω class or classify with

συγκρίναι Verb, aor act infin συγκρίνω compare

συνιστανόντων Verb, pres act ptc, gen pl συνιστήμι and συνιστανῶ commend, give approval to

"The precise point of the debate centres on συνιστάναι ἑαυτόν, 'self-commendation,' which is a practice which Paul will not indulge in (a denial already registered in 5:12). Again, we must add, this is his stance until he is driven from it by the exigencies of his 'apology' in subsequent chapters (cf. 11:21ff.). Then, he will be compelled to boast, though paradoxically the object of his self-approbation will be his weakness (ἀσθενεῖα)." Martin

μετρεῶ measure, deal out

συγκρίνοντες Verb, pres act ptc, m nom pl
 συγκρινῶ
 συνιημι understand, comprehend

The text at the end of v.12 and beginning of v.13 is uncertain. A shorter Western text, read by D* G it^{d.g.61} Ambrosiaster and others, omits οὐ συνιασιν. ἡμεῖς δε, 'are without understanding. We however.' The shortened version reads: 'But we, measuring ourselves by ourselves and comparing ourselves with ourselves [i.e. changing the participles to refer to first person] will not boast beyond our proper limits.' The allusion in the longer text to Paul's opponents now drops out and the reference to measuring by one's own standards in v.12 takes on a good connotation. Kasemann favours the shorter reading as do Strachen and Hering. Metzger, however, is of the view that the shorter text is "doubtless the result of an accident in transcription."

Verse 13

ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχησόμεθα, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος οὗ ἐμέρισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρον, ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν –
 ἄμετρος, ον immeasurable, unmeasured;
 εἰς τὰ ἄ. beyond limits
 καυχασομαι boast, boast about
 μετρον, ον n measure, degree
 κανων, ονος m limits, rule, principle

The primary meaning of κανων is a 'rule' or 'standard of measurement', but it was also used to denote services to be rendered within a specific geographical area. This seems to be the sense used here (so Barrett). It appears that Paul's opponents argued that he had no right to preach *in Corinth* — that this was not his proper area of ministry. Paul's response is that God appointed him to this ministry.

μεριζω divide, assign, apportion
 ἐφικέσθαι Verb, aor midd dep infin
 ἐφικνεομαι reach, come as far as
 ἄχρι (and ἄχρις) until, as far as

"Paul was the first to preach the Gospel in Corinth, and his commission emanated directly from God (1 Cor 9:1-3, 15-18; 15:8-11)."
 Martin

Verse 14

οὐ γὰρ ὡς μὴ ἐφικνούμενοι εἰς ὑμᾶς ὑπερεκτείνωμεν ἑαυτούς, ἄχρι γὰρ καὶ ὑμῶν ἐφθάσαμεν ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ –

'As though we did not reach you.'

ὑπερεκτεινω go beyond one's limits or authority
 ἐφθάσαμεν Verb, aor act indic, 1 pl φθανω
 come to, come first, precede

The sense seems to have been that Paul not only came to Corinth with the gospel but that he was first to come. (Compare his argument in Romans 15:15-20.)

εὐαγγέλιον, ον n good news, gospel

"Corinth rightly belongs to his jurisdiction in which the rival preachers are properly to be seen as interlopers and usurpers of apostolic prerogative.

"To this we may add one extra thought: it was evidently of vital concern for Paul to defend Corinth as his 'home church' if he wished to have it as a base from which, in due course, to launch out on his westerly mission to Rome and beyond. More was at risk than just the disaffection of a local congregation; his present and future work 'in the gospel' were in jeopardy by a situation which could develop into a renewed slide away from Paul and his mission on the part of the Corinthian believers." Martin

Verse 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,

ἄμετρος, ον see v.13

ἄλλοτριος, α, ον belonging to another
 κοπος, ον m work, labour, trouble

Cf. Rom 15:20.

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope, ground of hope
 αὐξανω grow, spread, increase
 πιστις, εως f faith, trust, belief

Paul is expressing his hope, his optimism.

μεγαλυνθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin μεγαλυνω
 enlarge, magnify
 κανων, ονος m see v.13
 περισσεια, ας abundance

The latter part of verse 15 is difficult to translate. Paul seems to be expressing the hope that his sphere of service among the Corinthians will be enlarged as their faith grows. It may be that Paul is also expressing the hope that their faith will spread, i.e. the gospel will be propagated from them to other areas, and that this will enlarge his area of ministry among them.

Verse 16

εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν εὐαγγελίσασθαι, οὐκ ἐν ἄλλοτρίῳ κανόνι εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα καυχῆσασθαι.

ὑπερεκεινα prep with gen beyond; τα ὑμῶν lands beyond you

εὐαγγελισασθαι Verb, aor midd dep infin
εὐαγγελίζω act. and midd proclaim the
good news

Cf. Rom 15:23-39.

ἔτοιμος, η, ον ready, prepared; τα ἔ. work
already done

καυχῆσασθαι Verb, aor midd dep infin
καυχομαι boast, boast about

Verse 17

Ὁ δὲ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω·

Cf. Jer 9:22,23; 1 Cor 1:13.

Verse 18

οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἑαυτὸν συνιστάνων, ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν
δοκιμος, ἀλλὰ ὃν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν.

συνιστάνων Verb, pres act ptc, m nom s
συνιστημι and συνιστανω see v.12.

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that, that
one, those

δοκιμος, ον approved, genuine

συνίστησιν Verb, pres act indic, 3 s
συνιστημι