

**Notes on the Greek New Testament**  
**Day 253 – September 10<sup>th</sup> – 2 Corinthians 11:16-33**

**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

**Verse 16**

Πάλιν λέγω, μή τίς με δόξη ἄφρονα εἶναι – εἰ δὲ μή γε, κἂν ὡς ἄφρονα δέξασθέ με, ἵνα κἀγὼ μικρόν τι καυχῆσωμαι·

παλιν again, once more

Refers back to the request in verse 1 (see note ad loc.). Martin suggests 11:16 picks up Paul's main argument from which he was diverted in vv.1-15.

δόξη Verb, aor act subj, 3 s, δοκεω think, imagine, suppose  
ἄφρονα Adjective, m acc s ἄφρων, ον gen ονος fool, foolish, senseless, ignorant

"The key term is ἄφρων, 'fool': not a dim-witted person or clown, a jester (as in 'play the fool'), but in the technical sense of the person in Hellenistic-Roman society who had lost the correct measure (μετρον) of himself and the world around him." Martin

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι  
γε enclitic particle adding emphasis to the word with which it is associated

εἰ δὲ μή γε 'but even if you do'

καὶ (καὶ ἐάν) even if, and if, even  
δέξασθέ Verb, aor midd dep imperat, 2 pl  
δέχομαι receive, accept, bear with  
κἀγὼ a compound word = καὶ ἐγὼ  
μικρόν Adjective, m acc & n nom/acc s  
μικρος or Adverb a little  
καυχῶμαι boast, boast about

"His taking the fool's part is the way he centres attention on 'boasting,' the main item in his rejoinder." Martin

**Verse 17**

ὁ λαλῶ οὐ κατὰ κύριον λαλῶ, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐν ἀφροσύνη, ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ὑποστάσει τῆς καυχήσεως.

λαλεω speak, talk

"The Corinthians were seeking 'evidence' of Christ's speaking (λαλουντος Χριστου) through Paul. He implies that it is not in his enforced καυχασθαι that Christ's message is made known – only as a boasting in his weakness (11:30)." Martin

ἀφροσύνη, ης f folly, foolishness  
ὑποστάσει Noun, dat s ὑποστασις, εως f confidence, assurance

Martin follows Hering in suggesting the meaning is 'ground' – 'on the ground of making my personal boast'

καυχῆσις, εως f boasting

ὑποστάσει τῆς καυχήσεως 'self-confident boasting' (NIV), 'boastful confidence' (RSV)

**Verse 18**

ἐπεὶ πολλοὶ καυχῶνται κατὰ σάρκα, κἀγὼ καυχῆσομαι.

ἐπει since, because, for

πολλοὶ suggests an opposition in some strength, cf. 2:17.

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature

Boasting in human things – human achievement, status, power, prestige, one's own religious experience etc. Here, perhaps, the reference is to his opponents boasting of what they had done in service to God, cf. 10:16.

**Verse 19**

ἡδέως γὰρ ἀνέχεσθε τῶν ἀφρόνων φρόνιμοι ὄντες·

ἡδέως gladly

ἀνεχομαι endure, be patient with

ἀφρόνων Adjective, gen pl ἄφρων see v.16  
φρονιμος, ον wise, sensible

"The expression *being wise yourselves* is probably a cutting allusion to the Corinthian's own tendency to pride themselves in their own wisdom (cf. 1 Cor 3:18-20; 4:10; 6:5; 8:1-7; 13:2)." Kruse. "Paul uses φρονιμοι in a derogatory manner, much the same as in 1 Cor 4:10." Martin

### Verse 20

ἀνέχεσθε γὰρ εἴ τις ὑμᾶς καταδουλοῖ, εἴ τις κατεσθίει, εἴ τις λαμβάνει, εἴ τις ἐπαίρεται, εἴ τις εἰς πρόσωπον ὑμᾶς δέρει.

καταδουλω *make a slave of, take advantage of*  
κατεσθιω and κατεσθω *devour, prey upon*

I.e. exploiting them for personal gain, cf. Mk 12:40 // Lk 20:47.

λαμβάνω here in the sense of *trap, take advantage of*

Martin, 'lays hands on you.'

ἐπαίρω here meaning *put on airs, act haughtily*

"The notion of irresponsible, lordly control seems implied, and exposes the nature of the opposition in direct contrast to Paul's pastoral solicitude in 1:24 [οὐ] κυριευομεν ὑμων της πιστεως, 'we are not ruling over your faith.'" Martin

προσωπον, ου n *face, appearance, presence*

δερω *beat, strike, hit*

Probably a "vivid word picture for an insult that was like a blow." Martin

### Verse 21

κατὰ ἀτιμίαν λέγω, ὡς ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἠσθενήκαμεν· ἐν ᾧ δ' ἂν τις τολμᾷ, ἐν ἀφροσύνη λέγω, τολμῶ καγώ.

Martin says that this is Paul's final thrust: 'What a pity we are not like that – you seem to prefer bullies.'

ἀτιμία, ας f *disgrace, dishonour*  
ἀσθενεω *be ill, be weak*

The first part of this verse concludes the previous. Referring to what he has said in verse 20, Paul uses sarcasm stating, 'To my shame, I say, we were too weak for that.'

"Whether Paul's writing of ὡς ὅτι introduces an explanation, 'I must confess to my shame ... I have been weak,' or a comparison, 'I have been too weak to imitate the opponents,' in both instances it is a mark of irony. Paul seems consciously to be reflecting on what they have rumoured about him: he is weak. And he takes this assessment at face value as a 'concession' ..., and acts out the fool's role. Herein is the key to the entire 'Foolish Discourse' of 11:1-12:10, as a 'self-caricature,' a grotesque parody of Paul as a servant of Christ." Martin

ἄν particle indicating contingency

On the identity of those Paul is referring to Martin says, "We maintain that the four designated titles in the next vv make more sense if they refer to a Jewish mission which not only made large claims for itself but acted upon those claims in coming to Corinth to challenge Paul's authority."

τολμᾷ Verb, pres act indic, 3 s *τολμῶ dare, be brave, be bold*

Martin suggests that, "τολμαν is the opponents' slogan word, used contemptuously of Paul (10:1,2), and here he turns it back to them, but in an *ad hominem* way. Granted they are bold in the claims they make as Christ's professed servants, Paul will set down his list of credentials – an act of boldness in both senses mentioned earlier. In that way he will try to show how *their boldness* is presumptuous."

ἀφροσύνη, ης see v.17

καγω see v.16

### Verse 22

Ἑβραῖοι εἰσιν; καγώ. Ἰσραηλιταὶ εἰσιν; καγώ. σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ εἰσιν; καγώ.

Ἑβραῖος, ου m *Hebrew person*

A speaker of the Hebrew language.

καγω from *καὶ ἐγώ* and I, but I, I also  
σπερμα, τος n *seed, offspring*

Difficult to see what distinctions (if any) intended between these various terms. Martin suggests, "'Hebrews' (Ἑβραῖοι) represents the outer 'shape' of their profession: 'Israelites' (Ἰσραηλιταὶ) is the inner character of that national identity; while σπερμα Ἀβραάμ, 'seed of Abraham,' is the honorific title they lay claim to since it embodies the name of the father of all of the faithful. διακονοὶ Χριστοῦ places the capstone on their right to office as representing an important function they felt commissioned to exercise on the basis of the earlier designations."

Concerning the phrase 'seed of Abraham' Martin cites Gal 3:16 and adds, "If 'Abraham' was a name being used in the propaganda of the Jewish Christian mission, and 'seed of Abraham' was their term which Paul takes up, it is likely that, on the basis of evidence in Philo, what made Abraham important was his role as the first believer and also as a 'man of the Spirit'... The missionaries claimed equally to be πνευματικοί and to be preachers with both a self-understanding and a mission-consciousness ... based on the 'model' ... of Abraham. Zmijewski ... prefers to see the issue centred in the divine promises which the patriarch inherited (Rom 4:16, 18; 9:6-9; Gal 3:29...). Paul is claiming this title, 'seed of Abraham,' for himself as a badge of honour to mark out his Christian self-identity over against his rivals."

### Verse 23

διάκονοι Χριστοῦ εἰσιν; παραφρονῶν λαλῶ,  
ὕπερ ἐγώ· ἐν κόποις περισσοτέρως, ἐν  
φυλακαῖς περισσοτέρως, ἐν πληγαῖς  
ὑπερβαλλόντως, ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις·

διακονος, ου m & f servant, minister  
παραφρονεω be out of one's mind  
λαλεω speak, talk  
ὕπερ ἐγώ I am even more

Probably meaning 'I have better claim to be such.' This is then followed by a list of credentials.

κοπος, ου m work, labour trouble  
περισσοτερος adv. (from περισσοτερος) all  
the more, to a greater degree  
φυλακη, ης f prison, imprisonment  
πληγη, ης f beating, wound  
ὑπερβαλλοντως much more, more severely  
θανατος, ου m death

The plural must refer to 'many occasions which threaten death' or 'in constant exposure to death.'

πολλακις often, repeatedly, frequently

### Verse 24

ὕπὸ Ἰουδαίων πεντάκις τεσσεράκοντα παρὰ  
μίαν ἔλαβον,

Ἰουδαίος, α, ου a Jew, Jewish, Judean  
πεντακις Five times

"The five occasions on which Paul claims to have been beaten perhaps belong to an early period of his mission service, in the so-called 'silent years.'" Martin

τεσσερακοντα forty  
παρὰ μιαν except one (i.e. 39 lashes)

"Deuteronomy 25:1-3 specifies punishment by beating must not exceed forty strokes, and as a hedge around the law the Jews of Paul's day limited the number to forty less one, lest by error of counting the prescribed number be exceeded and the law be broken." Kruse

### Verse 25

τρὶς ἐραβδίσθην, ἅπαξ ἐλιθάσθην, τρὶς  
ἐναυάγησα, νυχθήμερον ἐν τῷ βυθῷ πεποίηκα·

τρὶς three times  
ἐραβδίσθην Verb, aor pass indic, 1 s ῥαβδιζω  
whip, beat with a stick

Cf. Acts 16:22.

ἅπαξ once, one time  
ἐλιθάσθην Verb, aor pass indic, 1 s λιθαζω  
stone

Cf. Acts 14:19

ναυαγεω be shipwrecked

These incidents are unknown to us.

νυχθημερον, ου n a night and a day  
βυθος, ου m open sea

Reminiscent of OT imagery, Pss 68:3; 67:23, LXX.

πεποίηκα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s ποιεω

### Verse 26

ὁδοιπορίας πολλάκις, κινδύνοις ποταμῶν,  
κινδύνοις ληστῶν, κινδύνοις ἐκ γένους,  
κινδύνοις ἐξ ἔθνων, κινδύνοις ἐν πόλει,  
κινδύνοις ἐν ἔρημῳ, κινδύνοις ἐν θαλάσῃ,  
κινδύνοις ἐν ψευδαδέλφοις,

ὁδοιπορια, ας f journey  
πολλακις often, repeatedly, frequently  
κινδυνος, ου m danger, peril

Martin suggests the translation 'During my frequent journeys I have been exposed to dangers from ...'

ποταμος, ου m river, stream  
ληστης, ου m robber, insurrectionist  
γενος, ους n family, people, nation  
ἔθνος, ους n nation, people; τα ἔ. Gentiles  
πολις, εως f city, town  
ἔρημια, ας f deserted place, uninhabited region

I.e. in inhabited and uninhabited regions.

θαλασσα, ης f sea  
ψευδαδελφος, ου m false brother, one  
who pretends to be a believer

Cf. Gal 2:4; 2 Cor 11:13. Even at the end of his journey and among the fellowship of the church, the dangers remain. "In our view, the term ψευδαδελφοί is placed at the end of the list deliberately to bring the list to a powerful (if lamentable) conclusion, and to drive home to the Corinthian readers that their hospitality to such people (11:4, 19) is a source of great grief to him now. These men are no less than his rivals; and worse, they are Satan's agents (vv 13-15)." Martin

### Verse 27

κόπω καὶ μόχθω, ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις πολλάκις, ἐν λιμῶ καὶ δίψει, ἐν νηστείαις πολλάκις, ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι·

κοπος, ου m work, labour trouble  
μοχθος, ου m labour, hardship  
ἀγρυπνια, ας f sleeplessness

Either through travel, work or cares, or maybe (though less probably) voluntary vigils of prayer.

λιμος, ου m & f famine, hunger  
διψος, ους n thirst  
νηστεια, ας f going without food, hunger

Probably lack rather than voluntary spiritual discipline.

ψυχος, ους n cold  
γυμνοτης, ητος f nakedness, without sufficient clothing, poverty

### Verse 28

χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτὸς ἢ ἐπίστασις μοι ἢ καθ' ἡμέραν, ἢ μέριμνα πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν.

χωρις apart from, besides  
παρεκτος adv used as adj external, unmentioned

Does he mean 'and beside many other things I have not mentioned...' (Denney, Plummer) or 'on top of these external matters...' (Barrett).

ἐπιστασις, εως f pressure, burden  
μεριμνα, ης f care, concern, anxiety  
ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church

### Verse 29

τίς ἀσθενεῖ, καὶ οὐκ ἀσθενῶ; τίς σκανδαλίζεται καὶ οὐκ ἐγὼ πυροῦμαι;

ἀσθενεω be ill, be weak  
σκανδαλιζω cause (someone) to sin, cause (someone) to give up the faith  
πυροομαι burn, be in distress

"When Paul sees a Christian weak in faith he feels their vulnerability, and when he sees them made to fall he burns with indignation against the behaviour of those who caused it." Kruse

### Verse 30

Εἰ καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, τὰ τῆς ἀσθενείας μου καυχῆσομαι.

καυχαομαι boast, boast about  
δει impersonal verb it is necessary, must  
ἀσθενεια, ας f weakness, illness

### Verse 31

ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ οἶδεν, ὃ ὄν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι.

εὐλογητος, η, ον blessed, praised  
αἰῶνας Noun, acc pl αἰων, αἰωνος m age, eternity  
ψευδομαι lie, speak untruth, deceive

### Verse 32

ἐν Δαμασκῶ ὁ ἐθνάρχης Ἀρέτα τοῦ βασιλέως ἐφρουρεῖ τὴν πόλιν Δαμασκηνῶν πιάσαι με,

ἐθναρχης, ου m governor, official  
Ἀρετας, α m Aretas  
βασιλευς, εως m king  
φρουρεω guard, hold prisoner  
πιάσαι Verb, aor act infin πιαζω seize, arrest

πιάσαι με most MSS read πιασαι με θελων. Metzger writes, "Although support for the reading πιάσαι με is not extensive, its quality is impressive. If θελων were original, its omission would be difficult to account for; on the other hand, its insertion at various positions can be explained as the work of copyists in the interest of stylistic amelioration."

### Verse 33

καὶ διὰ θυρίδος ἐν σαργάνῃ ἐχαλάσθην διὰ τοῦ τείχους καὶ ἐξέφυγον τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ.

θυρις, ιδος f window  
σαργανη, ης f (rope) basket  
ἐχαλάσθην Verb, aor pass indic, 1 s χαλαω lower, let down  
τειχος, ους n wall  
ἐξέφυγον Verb, aor act indic, 1 s & 3 pl ἐκφευγω escape, flee  
χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

Paul's 'boasting' is not in his own work but in what God did in delivering him. It may have been that Paul's opponents cited this incident as a sign of Paul's cowardice. Paul himself may have viewed it as involving humiliation, but it also displayed God's saving power made evident in Paul's weakness.