

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 255 – September 12th – 2 Corinthians 12:11-21

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 11

Γέγονα ἄφρων· ὑμεῖς με ἠναγκάσατε· ἐγὼ γὰρ ὄφειλον ὑφ' ὑμῶν συνίστασθαι. οὐδὲν γὰρ ὑστέρησα τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων, εἰ καὶ οὐδὲν εἰμι·

Paul now turns from boasting to defence.

γένονα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s γινομαι ἄφρων, ον gen ονος fool, foolish

Note the emphatic use of personal pronouns.

ἀναγκάζω force, compel, urge
ὀφείλω owe, ought, must
συνίστασθαι Verb, pres pass infin συνιστημι and συνιστανῶ (re)commend, give approval to

The Corinthians ought to have been the ones to oppose the false teachers and refute their accusations against Paul. Paul is hurt by their reception of his opponents. He regarded the Corinthians as the seal of his apostleship (1 Cor 9:2; 2 Cor 3:2,3).

οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing;
οὐδεν not at all

ὑστερεῶ fall short of, be inferior to
ὑπερλίαν (adv. used as adj.) outstanding, special, extra-special

Martin thinks that the 'super apostles,' or, as he translates it, 'highest ranking apostles' is a reference to the Jerusalem apostles – Peter, James and John (cf. Gal 2:9). Paul's scorn is not for the apostles but for the way in which his opponents make use of their names.

εἰ καὶ οὐδεν εἰμι 'even though I am nothing' may be an ironic reference to what his opponents said of him. Paul is glad to admit that "he is nothing that Christ may be seen to be everything." Martin

Verse 12

τὰ μὲν σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου κατειργάσθη ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ, σημεῖοις τε καὶ τέρασιν καὶ δυνάμεσιν.

σημειον, ου n sign, miracle

Martin argues that, in contrast with σημειοις later in this verse, σημεια here means 'marks' rather than signs. "We understand Paul to say here that he, not his adversaries, has the true signs, or marks, of apostleship... Hence the first part of v 12 is speaking of the genuine proof of Paul's apostleship.

"First and foremost in Paul's mind as a mark of a true apostle is that the result of his preaching is changed lives... Only God can do that (1 Cor 3:5-9). Paul 'founded' the church at Corinth; he came as an ambassador of reconciliation (5:18-21). The Corinthians were the seal of Paul's apostleship (1 Cor 9:2; 2 Cor 3:1-3). Paul's message had introduced the Corinthians to Christ, and this, in turn, led to changed lives. Could the false apostles say that their message had been as effective? In addition, another mark of Paul was his Christlike life... He had endured suffering on behalf of Christ (13:4)... In summary of our present phrase, we see that Paul's ministry and life basically encompass the 'signs of a true apostle.' His preaching was instrumental in the formation of the Corinthian church; his life was one of purity and honesty...

"The phrase 'the signs (marks) of an apostle' was probably borrowed by Paul as a slogan... Possibly this phrase was taken from the lips of his opponents, but more likely these words originated with the Corinthians themselves."

Martin

κατειργάσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s
κατεργάζομαι do, accomplish

Martin says the sense is 'worked/displayed by God'

ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance

The patient character of Paul's ministry among them.

In view of the comments above, Martin introduces the following phrase '[along with] signs ...'

τε enclitic particle and, and so; τε και and also

τερας, ατος n wonder, object of wonder

Compare Romans 15:17-19. Paul can perform miracles as well as the next apostle (cf. Acts 13:11; 14:10; 15:12; 16:18; 19:11-12; 23:3-6,8) yet his claim to apostleship does not rest on these.

Verse 13

τί γάρ ἐστιν ὃ ἡσώθητε ὑπὲρ τὰς λοιπὰς ἐκκλησίας, εἰ μὴ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν; χαρίσασθέ μοι τὴν ἀδικίαν ταύτην.

ἡσώθητε Verb, aor pass dep indic, 2 pl ἡτταομαι be treated worse than

With ὑπὲρ = 'be inferior to' – 'how were you inferior to ...'

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other ἐκκλησία, ας f congregation, church

αὐτός ἐγώ the emphatic 'I myself' probably implies a contrast with his opponents.

καταναρκαῶ be a (financial) burden to χαρίσασθέ Verb, aor midd dep imperat, 2 pl χαρίζομαι grant, forgive ἀδικία, ας f wrongdoing, evil, sin

Probably ironic, though Paul may be expressing appreciation that he has offended the Corinthians.

Verse 14

Ἴδου τρίτον τοῦτο ἐτοίμως ἔχω ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ οὐ καταναρκήσω· οὐ γὰρ ζητῶ τὰ ὑμῶν ἀλλὰ ὑμᾶς, οὐ γὰρ ὀφείλει τὰ τέκνα τοῖς γονεῦσιν θησαυρίζειν, ἀλλὰ οἱ γονεῖς τοῖς τέκνοις.

τρίτον οἱ το τ. adv. the third time, for the third time

ἐτοίμως readily; ἔ. ἔχω be ready or prepared

The positioning of ἐτοίμως leads to ambiguity. The sense could be 'For the third time I am preparing to visit you,' but most commentators prefer 'I am now ready to visit you a third time.'

ἐλθεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐρχομαι

Paul is about to visit them for the third time (cf. 13:1). The first time was when the church was first founded under Paul's ministry, the second the 'painful' visit referred to by implication in 2:1.

καταναρκαῶ be a (financial) burden to ζητεῶ seek, look for

He seeks their hearts not their money, and even their hearts not primarily for himself but for Christ, cf. 11:2.

ὀφείλω ought, must

τεκνον, ου n child

γονευσ, εως m parent

θησαυρίζω store up, save, put aside

Cf. 1 Cor 4:15 for Paul as spiritual father to the Corinthians and 6:11-13 for a similar appeal for them to open their hearts to him.

Verse 15

ἐγὼ δὲ ἥδιστα δαπανήσω καὶ ἐκδαπανηθήσομαι ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν. εἰ περισσοτέρως ὑμᾶς ἀγαπῶν, ἦσον ἀγαπῶμαι;

ἥδιστα (superl of ἡδεως) most gladly δαπαναῶ spend

ἐκδαπαναομαι spend oneself fully

δαπαναῶ may refer to spending resources (money Paul had earned or had been sent from other churches) while ἐκδαπανηθήσομαι refers to Paul's own energies being spent on the Corinthians – even being willing to sacrifice his life for them. "The point is that ... Paul will not withhold any resource he has, including himself." Martin

ψυχη, ης f 'soul', living being, person

Most MSS add και after εἰ. This would seem to increase the emphasis. It is omitted by p⁴⁶ κ* A B etc.

περισσοτέρως adv. (from περισσοτερος) all the more, to a greater degree ἀγαπαῶ love, show love for

ἀγαπων is read by p⁴⁶ κ² B D ... while ἀγαπῶ by κ* A 33... Metzger comments, "It is difficult to decide between ἀγαπων and ἀγαπῶ, each of which can be explained on palaeographical grounds as arising from either adding or dropping ν before η."

ἦσων, ον gen ονος less

Most understand the sentence as interrogative (so NIV; RSV; RV; NEB; Barrett; contra Phillips; AV).

"V 15b introduces a fear implicitly contained in v15a. If Paul proceeds to expend both his resources and his energy to the point of exhaustion, then what happens if this new campaign is not well received by the Corinthians? What happens if Paul is loved less in spite of his effort? The answer is that Paul would most likely have been devastated, though he is willing to come to Corinth a third time to find out." Martin

Verse 16

ἔστω δέ, ἐγὼ οὐ κατεβάρησα ὑμᾶς· ἀλλὰ
ὑπάρχων πανουργος δόλω ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον.

ἔστω Verb, pres act imperat, 3s εἰμι; ἔστω

δε let it be (admitted)

καταβαρεω be a burden to

ὑπαρχω be (equivalent to εἰμι)

πανουργος, ον crafty, cunning

δολος, ου m deceit, treachery

ἔλαβον cf. 11:20. A metaphor for hunting and fishing.

Paul is responding to the charge that he and his companions have cheated the Corinthians – while outwardly refusing to receive support from them they have arranged the collection to line their own pockets.

Verse 17

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

ἀπέσταλκα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s

ἀποστελλω send, send out

The Greek is a little awkward, perhaps reflecting Paul's emotion as he dictates.

πλεονεκτεω take advantage of, cheat

Paul "is asking the Corinthians to examine the record and step forward with a specific complaint instead of hiding behind generalisations, none of which is easily proved or disproved... In the next verse we see that Paul narrows down the choice for the Corinthians by identifying the emissaries that he has sent to them." Martin

Verse 18

παρεκάλεσα Τίτον καὶ συναπέστειλα τὸν
ἀδελφόν· μήτι ἐπλεονέκτησεν ὑμᾶς Τίτος; οὐ
τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι περιεπατήσαμεν; οὐ τοῖς
αὐτοῖς ἵχνεσιν;

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge

I urged Titus [to visit you] and ...' cf. 8:6a, Titus had been the one to start the collection in Corinth.

συναποστελλω send along with
μητι used in questions to indicate the expectation of a negative answer

Note the change from questions introduced with μη/μητι (expecting a negative answer) to a question introduced with οὐ, expecting an affirmative.

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

ἵχνος, ους n footstep, step, example

Martin translates 'Did we not walk in the same spirit and follow the same course?' Tasker thinks the reference here is to the Holy Spirit.

Verse 18 marks the end of the polemic. 12:19 to the end of the letter focusses on Paul's planned visit to Corinth.

Verse 19

Πάλαι δοκεῖτε ὅτι ὑμῖν ἀπολογούμεθα;
κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν. τὰ δὲ
πάντα, ἀγαπητοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς,

In verses 19-21 Paul urges the Corinthians to repent before he comes.

παλαι adv formerly, all this time

παλαι ('Have you been thinking all along') is strongly supported by p⁴⁶ ⸈* A B F G^{tr} ... The TR follows the easier reading παλιν.

δοκεω think, suppose

ἀπολογεομαι defend oneself

κατεναντι before, in the sight of

Cf. 2:17

ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved

οικοδομη, ης f upbuilding, encouragement

Cf. 13:10. The purpose of Paul's ministry.

Verse 20

φοβοῦμαι γὰρ μή πως ἐλθὼν οὐχ οἴους θέλω
εὔρω ὑμᾶς, κἀγὼ εὔρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἷον οὐ θέλετε,
μή πως ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθεΐαι,
καταλαλιαί, ψιθυρισμοί, φυσιώσεις,
ἀκαταστασίαι·

φοβεομαι fear, be afraid (of)

μη πως lest

οἶος, α, ον relative pronoun such as, of what kind

θελω wish, will

"Paul is quite concerned that he will have to take decisive action against those of Corinth who persist in their sin. He will not shrink from such an unhappy task if it will help his children." Martin

εὔρω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s εὔρισκω

κἀγω a compound word = και ἐγω

εὔρεθῶ Verb, aor pass subj, 1 s εὔρισκω

Cf. 1 Cor 4:21.

"What Paul fears he now specifically lists." Martin

ἔρις, ιδος f strife, rivalry

Some MSS read the plural ἐρεις

ζηλος, ου m, and ους n zeal, jealousy

Some MSS read the plural ζηλοι
For these two sins cf. 1 Cor 3:3 also Rom 13:13.

θυμος, ου m anger, rage, fury

ἐριθεια, ας f selfishness, selfish ambition

Cf. Rom 2:8.

καταλαλια, ας f slander, insult

