

Notes on the Greek New Testament Week 92 – 2 Corinthians 12:1-13:13

Day 456: 2 Corinthians 12:1-6

Verse 1

Καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ· οὐ συμφέρον μὲν,
ἐλεύσομαι δὲ εἰς ὄπτασις καὶ
ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου.

Compare 11:30. The abruptness of the text has given rise to a number of variants which seek to improve the flow. Martin translates *καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ* as 'I must go on boasting'

συμφερον, ου n **good, advantage, benefit**

The AV places a full stop after *μὲν*. But it is better to see the clause *οὐ συμφέρον μὲν* as a parenthesis between 'I must go on boasting' and 'I will go on to visions ...' Note the use of *μὲν ... δε*. Paul views his boasting as forced foolishness, a necessary evil.

ἐλεύσομαι Verb, fut midd dep indic, 1 s
ἐρχομαι

ὄπτασια, ας f vision

ἀποκαλυψεις, εως f revelation

Cf. Acts 18:9,10; 22:17-21; 23:11; 27:23,24.

Verse 2

οἶδα ἄνθρωπον ἐν Χριστῷ πρὸ ἐτῶν
δεκατεσσάρων – εἴτε ἐν σωματι οὐκ οἶδα,
εἴτε ἐκτὸς τοῦ σωματος οὐκ οἶδα, ὁ θεὸς
οἶδεν – ἀρπαγέντα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἕως
 τρίτου οὐρανοῦ.

His use of the third person "may ... 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." Martin

ἐν Χριστῷ here not referring to 'the person' being a Christian but to the nature of the power that laid hold of him.

πρὸ ἐτῶν δεκατεσσάρων 14 years ago

"Whatever the date of Paul's experience, it was well before the founding of the Corinthian church. What remains a mystery is to what event specifically Paul is referring. With the date of AD 44 in mind, it appears we can rule out every other visionary experience of Paul recorded in the NT... Bruce only allows that we simply have a reference to an obscure period between the time when Paul was sent to Tarsus (Acts 9:30) and the meeting with Barnabas at Antioch." Martin

εἴτε if, whether

σωμα, τος n body

ἐκτὸς outside, outside of

ἀρπαγέντα Verb, aor pass ptc, m acc s

ἀρπαζω take away, carry off

τοιοτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun
and adjective such, of such kind

ἕως until, as far as

τρίτος, η, ον third

The reference to 'third' heaven is probably not intended to reflect a particular cosmology.

There were systems which variously included 3, 5 or 7 heavens, the first being preferred by the Jews and last by the Greeks. Paul probably uses the phrase metaphorically meaning the heights of heaven. Some suggest that the OT makes a distinction between the atmospheric heaven, a stella heaven (or firmament) and the limitless or spiritual heaven, where God is located (Lincoln, Hughes).

Verse 3

καὶ οἶδα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον – εἴτε ἐν
σωματι εἴτε χωρὶς τοῦ σωματος οὐκ οἶδα,
ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν –

A number of MSS read *ἐκτὸς* in place of *χωρὶς* in conformity with v.2.

Verse 4

ὅτι ἠρπάγη εἰς τὸν παράδεισον καὶ
ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν
ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι.

ἠρπάγη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ἀρπαζω
see v.2

παραδεισος, ου m paradise

Some argue that Paul is speaking of different experiences and different spiritual locations but Hodge, Windisch, Tasker, Barrett and Hughes argue that paradise is here a synonym for the third heaven. It appears then that Paul is speaking of the one event (so also Lincoln and Martin).

ἄρρητος, ον too sacred to be put into
words

ῥήμα, ατος n word, thing, matter

ἐξεστιν impersonal verb it is permitted, it
is lawful, it is proper, it is possible

λαλεω speak, talk

A "counter-blast to gnosticising secrets putatively revealed to the opponents." Martin.

It was given for Paul alone, to strengthen and encourage him in the ministry to which he had been called.

Verse 5

ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιοῦτου καυχῆσομαι, ὑπὲρ δὲ ἔμαντοῦ οὐ καυχῆσομαι εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις.

ἔμαντου, ης reflexive pronoun **myself**
ἀσθενεια, ας f see 11:30

Cf. 6:4-10; 11:23-28, 30.

Verse 6

ἐὰν γὰρ θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι, οὐκ ἔσομαι ἄφρων, ἀλήθειαν γὰρ ἐρῶ· φείδομαι δέ, μὴ τις εἰς ἐμὲ λογίσηται ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με ἢ ἀκούει [τι] ἐξ ἐμοῦ

ἐαν if, even if, though

θελήσω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s θελω wish

'even if I should choose to boast.'

καυχῆσασθαι Verb, aor midd dep infin
καυχασομαι

ἔσομαι Verb, fut indic, 1 s εἶμι

ἄφρων, ον gen ονος fool, foolish

"Paul could choose to boast of himself, for he would have solid grounds on which to do so. Unlike his opponents, who probably boasted of visions they did not have..., Paul has just related a vision which he has experienced." Martin

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality; ἐν ἀ. truly
ἐρῶ Verb, fut act indic, 1 s λεγω
φειδομαι spare, refrain from

'bur I will refrain [from boasting]...'

ἐμὲ Pronoun, acc s ἐγω

λογίσηται Verb, aor midd dep subj, 3 s

λογιζομαι reckon, credit, suppose

'so that no one will think more of me than...'

βλεπω see, look, be able to see

"Both the verbs *sees* and *hears* are in the present tense, emphasising that it is upon present performance that Paul wants to be judged." Kruse

Day 457: 2 Corinthians 12:7-13**Verse 7**

καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων. διό, ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί, ἄγγελος Σατανᾶ, ἵνα με κολαρίζῃ, ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι.

If the opening words are construed with v.6 (see below), the sense must be something like 'even with respect to the extraordinary revelations'

ὑπερβολη, ης f surpassing, beyond
measure

ἀποκαλυψις, εως f revelation

διο is omitted by many MSS resulting in the first 5 words of this verse becoming an integral part of what follows. διο is included by x A B G etc, resulting in the first part of the verse concluding the thought of v.6. Metzger believes that some copyists mistakenly began a new sentence with 12:7a and this led to some witnesses omitting διο.

διο therefore, for this reason

ὑπεραιρωμαι be puffed up with pride

Only here and 2 Thess 2:4.

ἐδόθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s διδομι

i.e. by God.

σκολοψ, οπος m thorn, splinter

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body

κολαριζω beat, strike, harass

There is not enough evidence for us to identify this *thorn in the flesh*. Most modern commentators think it a physical ailment; some, in the light of Gal 4:15, suggest an eye problem. Ramsay suggested recurring malarial fever, others a speech impediment. A few commentators have argued that Paul is speaking of his opponents whom he terms 'messengers of Satan' and considers 'a pain in the side.'

Several witnesses omit the second occurrence of ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι as unnecessary and superfluous.

Verse 8

ὑπὲρ τούτου τρις τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα ἵνα ἀποστῇ ἀπ' ἐμοῦ·

τρις three times

"The number three is a reminder of Jesus' temptations in the Garden of Gethsemane and the three times he petitioned the Father to remove the cup from him." Martin

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge

ἀποστῇ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἀφισταμαι
go away, keep away

Verse 9

καὶ εἶρηκέν μοι, Ἄρκει σοι ἡ χάρις μου· ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται. ἥδιστα οὖν μᾶλλον καυχῆσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, ἵνα ἐπισκηνωσῆ ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

εἶρηκέν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s λεγω

Suggests a decision that is final.

ἄρκεω be enough, be sufficient

"Paul is convinced that neither the thorn nor trials of any sort will cause him to cease in his service of God. The following clause restates the same theme." Martin

The 'power' spoken of is the power of Christ.

ἀσθενεια, ας f weakness, illness

τελεω complete, finish, fulfill

τελειουται is found in $\kappa^2 D^2 E K L P$. The stronger witness supports the text τελεῖται ($\kappa^* A B D^* F G$).

"Barrett is certainly correct, if slightly anachronistic, when he writes, 'Divine power is scarcely perceptible in the impressive activities of the ecclesiastical potentates with whom Paul has to contend.'" Martin

ἥδιστα (superl of ἡδεως) most gladly
μαλλον adv more; rather, instead

i.e. rather than in revelations.

καυχασομαι boast, boast about

ἐπισκηνωω rest upon, live in

Cf. Jn 1:14

ἐμὲ Pronoun, acc s ἐγω

"What we can see is that Paul has experienced a higher degree of communion with God because of suffering in general and the thorn in particular. We probably will never know the invaluable aid the experience of 12:1-10 played in strengthening Paul over the arduous years of his ministry." Martin

Verse 10

διὸ εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὕβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις, ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ· ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατός εἰμι.

διο see v.7

εὐδοκεω be pleased, take pleasure in

ὑβρις, εως f insult, mistreatment

ἀναγκη, ης f necessity, distress

διωγμος, ου m persecution

και is supported by p⁴⁶ $\kappa^* B 104$... Other MSS read ἐν which appears to have arisen from copyists seeking to continue the series with the same preposition.

στενοχωρια, ας f distress, difficulty, trouble

"Such an idea repels the mistaken concept of suffering that has sometimes pervaded church history. Those who have experienced or encouraged self-afflicted wounds, endured martyrdom simply as a means of seeking to become righteous, and practiced asceticism solely as a means of securing God's favour are guilty of emphasising merit, not faith... Human suffering in and of itself does not display divine power. Such bravado only produces rewards for the morbid fanatic or the foolish... Or, as Hughes proposes, 'a joyless theology of insecurity' is the outcome of such endeavours. Rather, Paul exhibits a joyful walk with God undergirded by a firm security in God's grace. So deep-seated is Paul's delight that what he has endured does not compare to what is his in Christ." Martin

ὅταν when, whenever, as often as

ἀσθενεω be ill, be weak

τοτε then, at that time

δυνατος, η, ον possible, strong, powerful, able

"Whenever God's servants humble themselves and acknowledge their weakness, then the power of Christ can flow through them." Martin

"Paul's weaknesses – whether exhibited in his sufferings for the Gospel or centred in the thorn in the flesh – have been his criteria for true apostleship. He has entered into the fray, not in order to boast of his own achievement, but to boast of his weaknesses. By doing so he has offered the Corinthians an alternative to the opponents that harrass him. The alternative is strength-based-on-weakness, a theme no doubt foreign to the opponents of Paul, but one that expressed the heart of the Gospel of a crucified Lord." Martin

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.

ἀναγκαζω force, compel, urge

ὄφειλω owe, ought, must

συνίστασθαι Verb, pres pass infin

συνιστημι and συνιστανω

(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
ὑστερεω fall short of, be inferior to
ὑπερλιαν (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 και 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,
σημείους 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 ἠσσωθητε ὑπὲρ τὰς λοιπὰς
ἐκκλησίας, εἰ μὴ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ οὐ
κατενάγκησα ὑμῶν; χαρίσασθέ μοι τὴν
ἀδικίαν ταύτην.

ἠσσωθητε Verb, aor pass dep indic, 2 pl
ἠτταομαι be treated worse than

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

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

αὐτος ἐγὼ the emphatic 'I myself' probably implies a contrast with his opponents.

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

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

Day 458: 2 Corinthians 12:14-21**Verse 14**

Ἴδου τρίτον τοῦτο ἐτοιμῶς 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

ἐτοιμῶς readily; ἐ. ἔχω be ready or prepared

The positioning of ἐτοιμῶς 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.

καταναρκῶ be a (financial) burden to
ζητῶ 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

τέκνον, οὐ n child

γονεὺς, εὼς 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

ἔγω δὲ ἥδιστα δαπανήσω καὶ ἐκδαπανηθήσομαι ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν. εἰ περισσότερως ὑμᾶς ἀγαπῶ[v], ἦσον ἀγαπῶμαι;

ἥδιστα (superl of ἡδεως) most gladly

δαπανῶ spend

ἐκδαπαναομαι spend oneself fully

δαπανῶ 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

ψυχή, ἡς f 'soul', living being, person

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

περισσότερως adv. (from περισσότερος) all the more, to a greater degree

ἀγαπῶ love, show love for

ἀγαπῶν is read by p⁴⁶ κ² B D ... while ἀγαπῶ by κ* A 33... Metzger comments, "It is difficult to decide between ἀγαπῶν and ἀγαπῶ, each of which can be explained on palaeographical grounds as arising from either adding or dropping ν before η. The more difficult reading is the participial form, which demands that the reader supply mentally the finite verb εἶμι (nowhere else does Paul make this kind of demand on the reader). In order to represent the preponderance of external evidence, a majority of the Committee preferred ἀγαπῶν, but in view of internal considerations it was thought advisable to enclose ν within square brackets."

ἦσσων, οὐ gen οὐτος 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 πανουργός δόλω ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον.

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

δε let it be (admitted)

καταβαρῶ be a burden to

ὑπαρχῶ be (equivalent to εἶμι)

πανουργός, οὐ crafty, cunning

δόλος, οὐ 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 ὦν ἀπέσταλκα πρὸς ὑμᾶς, δι' αὐτοῦ ἐπλεονέκτησα ὑμᾶς;

ἀπέσταλκα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s

ἀποστελλῶ 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 ἴχνεσιν;

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
ἴχνος, οὐς 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 s* A B F G^{sr}... 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

οἰκοδομη, ης f upbuilding,
encouragement

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

Verse 20

φοβοῦμαι γὰρ μή πως ἔλθων οὐχ οἴους θέλω εὔρω ὑμᾶς, κἀγὼ εὔρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἶον οὐ θέλετε, μή πως ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθείαι, καταλαλιάι, ψιθυρισμοί, φρυσίωσεις, 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
κἀγὼ a compound word = καὶ ἐγὼ
εὔρεθῶ Verb, aor pass subj, 1 s εὔρισκω

Cf. 1 Cor 4:21.

"What Paul fears he now specifically lists." Martin

ἐρις, ἰδος f strife, rivalry

Some MSS read the plural ἐρεις

ζῆλος, ου m, and οὐς n zeal, jealousy

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

θυμος, ου m anger, rage, fury
ἐριθεία, ας f selfishness, selfish ambition

Cf. Rom 2:8.

καταλαλία, ας f slander, insult

Cf. Jas 4:11.

ψιθυρισμος, ου m harmful gossip, tale-bearing

φρυσίωσις, εως f conceit, arrogance, pride

ἀκαταστασία, ας f disorder, mob rule

This list includes issues which Paul had sought to address in 1 Corinthians. Verse 20 lists sins of a church rent by division. The following verse describes a church troubled by sexual immorality. These two weaknesses were evidently typical of Corinth.

Verse 3

ἐπεὶ δοκιμὴν ζητεῖτε τοῦ ἐν ἑμοὶ
λαλοῦντος Χριστοῦ· ὃς εἰς ὑμᾶς οὐκ
ἀσθενεῖ ἀλλὰ δυνατεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν.

ἐπει since, because, for
δοκιμη, ης f proof, evidence
ζητεω seek, look for

The Corinthians, or at least Paul's opponents in Corinth, treated powerful speaking and signs and wonders as the marks of Christ's presence. "The only test of the validity of any ministry is whether it conveys the word of Christ to his people." Barrett

ἀσθενεω be sick, be ill, be weak

The latter part of this verse can be understood in one of two ways. It could be Paul's sarcastic repetition of their claim to have powerful evidence of Christ's presence with themselves, unlike the feeble Paul. Or it could be Paul's serious reminder that Christ had indeed been powerfully at work in them. So they should recognise the power of Christ which Paul can and will now exercise towards them (cf. the following verse). Martin suggests "If the Corinthians examine themselves and find that indeed Christ is in them (which of course Paul knows is true and is confident that the Corinthians themselves will come to discover), then this should be sufficient proof that Paul is a true apostle, for he brought the Gospel first to Corinth."

Verse 4

καὶ γὰρ ἐσταυρωθῆ ἐξ ἀσθενείας, ἀλλὰ ζῆ
ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ. καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς
ἀσθενοῦμεν ἐν αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ ζήσομεν σὺν
αὐτῷ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς.

"Several MSS (κ² A D¹ Ψ lat syr Ambst) have και γαρ ει which leaves us with 'for if he was crucified...' The text (without ει) is supported by p⁴⁶ κ* B D* F G 0243 33 81 1739. Barrett ... appears correct when he observes that the variant reading 'lacks the vigour' of the [shorter] text found in Nestle-Aland." Martin

σταυρω crucify
ἀσθενεια, ας f weakness, illness

Christ's weakness, as exhibited in his crucifixion, is not through lack of power. "When Christ chose the cross, he did so because he was acting in God's power. Yet he assumed ἀσθενεια as a role. In taking God's will to be his own, Christ acted in power, despite the fact that the world would think otherwise (cf. Mark 15:30-32). His death on a cross was his own choice and not to be understood as submission to alien powers, such as satanic-demonic forces, as in gnostic theology." Martin

ζῆ Verb, pres act indic, 3s ζω live, be alive

ἀσθενεω be weak

Under the influence of the following συν αὐτῷ, several witnesses replace ἐν αὐτῷ with συν αὐτῷ.

"Christ came in weakness yet God vindicated him with resurrection life... Likewise, Paul came in 'weakness' and thus he too will be vindicated like his Lord... God regarded Christ's work as fully acceptable; Paul wishes that the Corinthians would see his work *mutatis mutandis* in the same light." Martin
The future ζήσομεν may imply that the Corinthians will fully recognise these things only in the age to come.

Day 460: 2 Corinthians 13:5-13**Verse 5**

ἑαυτοὺς πειράζετε εἰ ἐστὲ ἐν τῇ πίστει,
ἑαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε· ἢ οὐκ ἐπιγινώσκετε
ἑαυτοὺς ὅτι Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν; εἰ
μήτι ἀδόκιμοί ἐστε.

"There are different ways to interpret the punctuation of this verse. One way is to end this verse with a question mark (KJV/AV; RSV; NIV; NEB). Another way is to create a series of questions. Also the whole verse can be understood as a statement (Phillips)." Martin

πειραζω test, put to the test

Paul urges them to examine themselves rather than subjecting *him* to scrutiny.

πίστει Noun, dat s πιστις, εως f faith, the Christian faith

Cf. 1 Cor 16:13. 'In the faith' is essentially synonymous with 'In Christ.'

δοκιμαζω test, examine, prove

ἢ or

ἐπιγινωσκω perceive, understand

"The Corinthians appear to have been quite confident that Christ was in them, so the purpose of Paul's question is to reawaken them to the moral implications of that great fact."
Kruse

εἰ μητι unless
ἀδοκιμος, ον failing to meet the test,
disqualified, worthless, corrupted

Paul is also optimistic of the Corinthians' standing, but he seeks to startle them into wakefulness.

Verse 6

ἐλπίζω δὲ ὅτι γνωσεσθε ὅτι ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐσμὲν ἀδόκιμοι.

The call for them to examine themselves may waken them to a more sober judgment concerning Paul.

ἐλπίζω hope, hope for, hope in, expect
γνωσεσθε Verb, fut midd dep indic, 2 pl
γινωσκω

In recognising the genuine nature of Paul's ministry they must realise the need to obey his instructions and reject his opponents.

Verse 7

εὐχόμεθα δὲ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν μὴ ποιῆσαι ὑμᾶς κακὸν μηδέν, οὐχ ἵνα ἡμεῖς δόκιμοι φανώμεν, ἀλλ' ἵνα ὑμεῖς τὸ καλὸν ποιῆτε, ἡμεῖς δὲ ὡς ἀδόκιμοι ὤμεν.

εὐχομαι pray, wish, long

εὐχόμεθα (p⁴⁶ A B D* F G K P 33 81 1175 lat) εὐχομαι (² Ψ 0243 vg^{mss} syr^p sa^{ms} Ambst).

κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm

"ὑμας, 'you' is the accusative and, grammatically speaking, can be taken as either the subject (so RSV) or the object of the aorist infinitive ποιῆσαι (from ποιεῖν). The latter, however, seems unlikely. If the Corinthians are the object, then the subject is understood to be either God ... or Paul himself (so NEB [1961 ed.] '[we pray] that we may not have to hurt you'). Either choice leaves us with an awkward thought, for what follows suggests that Paul wishes nothing but the best for the Corinthians." Martin

μηδεν adverb not at all, in no way
δοκιμος, ον approved, genuine, valued
φανώμεν Verb, aor pass subj, 1 pl φαινω
pass. appear, be seen, be revealed

Paul's concern is for them, not for the damage to his own reputation because of them, cf. 12:19. Barrett remarks that Paul is prepared to take the sins of others upon himself and "to be counted a transgressor for their justification."

καλος, η, ον good, right, beautiful
ὤμεν Verb, pres subj, 1 pl εἶμι

'even if we appear to have failed.'

Verse 8

οὐ γὰρ δυνάμεθά τι κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας, ἀλλὰ ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀληθείας.

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

Bultmann suggests that 'truth' means Paul's teaching over against a different gospel. And Martin says, "In essence, Paul has laid a foundation for his coming visit. Whatever he finds at Corinth and in whatever way he is led to act, it will be done for God's glory. Whether he rejoices at their repentance or attacks the church at large..., Paul will (and always intends to) promote the will of God in action. Thus, he is committed to serve 'the truth,' i.e., the Gospel entrusted to him, even in the dialectic of weakness-in-strength and acceptance-in-rejection, as well as death-in-life (see 4:12). To his mind, he will not violate this dictum during his third visit."

Verse 9

χαίρομεν γὰρ ὅταν ἡμεῖς ἀσθενῶμεν, ὑμεῖς δὲ δυνατοὶ ᾗτε· τοῦτο καὶ εὐχόμεθα, τὴν ὑμῶν κατάρτισιν.

χαιρω rejoice, be glad

ὅταν when

ἀσθενεω be ill, be weak

δυνατος, η, ον strong, powerful, able

Cf. 12:10, also 10:4; 11:19.

εὐχομαι see v.7

καταρτισις, εως f being made complete

The word means putting in a proper condition, restoration. "What Paul has in view is the restoration and repair of what has been broken. There were several relationships that had been fractured. For one, the relationship between Paul and the church was in need of repair. Something had happened after the time Titus left Corinth with a good report (7:2-16) that caused the church to become estranged from him. (Here the intrusion of a rival mission in 11:4, 13-15 probably explains the breakdown of good relations.) In chaps 10-13 we find Paul attempting to mend a broken relationship. For another, the relationship between the Corinthians and God was likewise in need of attention." Morris.

Verse 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.

Paul reviews his purpose outlined in chapters 10-13.

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

παρὼν Verb, pres ptc, m nom s παρεimi **be present**

ἀποτομως **sharply, severely**

χρήσωμαι Verb, aor midd dep subj, 1 pl

χραομαι **use, make use of**

'so that when I am present I may not have to act harshly.'

ἐξουσία, ας f **authority, right, power**

Cf. 12:19-13:4.

ἔδωκέν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s διδωμι

οἰκοδομη, ης f **upbuilding,**

encouragement

καθαίρεισις, εως f **destruction, tearing down**

Cf. 10:8 also 10:4.

Martin writes, "These words of 13:10 reiterate his topic introduced in 10:1,2. He will not be 'bold' unless forced to be so by the Corinthians. In these four chapters he has presented his case and provided the evidence that is more than sufficient to convict ... any wrongdoers. Yet his arguments have preceded his person in the form of a letter in the hope that those led astray by alien forces (11:1-3) will rectify the situation. Although we are left in the dark as to the outcome of this visit, we may hope that Harris is right in conjecturing that most likely the visit was not unpleasant... There are several hints (though no direct evidence) that possibly Paul's third visit turned out to be somewhat positive. For one thing, if Paul visited Corinth during the time he was in Greece (a three month period mentioned in Acts 20:2,3) and if he wrote the Epistle to the Romans from Corinth ... then Rom 15:30, 31 may shed some light on our concern. In these vv, we see that Paul is apprehensive, but it is for the future, not necessarily the present... There appears to be no pastoral concern (11:28) for the situation in Corinth at the time of writing to the Romans. If the Corinthian church was still the same as described in chaps 10-13, then we could rightly expect Paul to ask for prayer for that situation..."

"Again we appeal to Romans (following Harris) when we note that Paul was laying plans for further evangelism (15:24, 28). Would he be so eager to press westward (i.e., towards Spain) if the Corinthian church was still in disarray? Moreover, it appears that the collection (2 Cor 8,9) was completed among the Corinthians (Rom 15:26, 27). It is doubtful this would have transpired if the church had rejected Paul after reading chaps. 10-13. Yet there are no Corinthian delegates in the journey with the collection intended for Jerusalem according to Acts 20:4, 5... "Perhaps we are being too optimistic to suggest that Paul and the church at Corinth lived in renewed harmony. But at least we can say that there are some hints that all was not lost in the writing of chaps. 10-13. Possibly the situation improved at Corinth... But we must note that if the situation at Corinth was pleasant for Paul, nevertheless the church eventually reverted to its old ways (see *I Clement*, dated AD 96) and Paul's influence went generally into decline."

Verse 11

Λοιπὸν, ἀδελφοί, χαίρετε, καταρτίζεσθε,
παρακαλεῖσθε, τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε,
εἰρηνεύετε, καὶ ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ
εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν.

Paul's closing appeal is an appeal for unity.

(το) λοιπον adv. finally, henceforth, from now on

ἀδελφοι "suggests that Paul does not yet consider the situation at Corinth irreversible." Martin

χαίρω rejoice, be glad; imperat used as a greeting – here perhaps, farewell

Martin thinks that the sense is 'rejoice.' "This is consistent with Paul's use of χαίρειν in 13:9, where he speaks of 'rejoicing' at his being weak while the Corinthians are strong. Such an idea comports well with 13:11. Paul's hope is that the Corinthians will rejoice in spite of the bad report that has come to him and in spite of the threats he has made to the Corinthians (13:2)... They can rejoice in that God loves them and Paul as apostle loves them (even if they questioned this: so 12:15)... The Corinthians may rejoice in that they can remedy the situation if they choose to do so."

καταρτιζω restore, make complete; midd strive for perfection

If the passive voice is intended it is an implied prayer, 'be restored.' Martin thinks that the verb is middle, "To take the verb in the passive voice conveys the idea that Paul is lessening the burden on the Corinthians to act. This seems unlikely in view of his desire that the Corinthians should act before he arrives."

παρακαλεω **exhort, encourage, urge**

Middle or passive? Passive would mean 'take our appeal to heart' NEB. Middle, 'encourage one another.' Martin favours the middle voice.

φρονεω **think, have in mind**

Evidently imperative here. Cf. Rom 12:16; 15:15; Phil 2:2; 4:2.

εἰρηνευω **live or be at peace**

Christians must constantly strive for church harmony, cf. Eph 4:3.

ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 2 s εἶμι

Cf. Phil 4:7-9; Rom 15:33; 16:20; 1 Thess 5:23 also 1 Cor 14:33.

"In essence, Paul is telling the Corinthians that divine blessing awaits their right and responsive action." Martin
Paul's prayer is that these characteristics of God may be evident characteristics of the Corinthians.

Verse 12

ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν ἀγίῳ φιλήματι.
ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἅγιοι πάντες.

ἀσπαζομαι **greet**

ἀλλήλων, οἰς, οὖς **one another**

φιλημα, τος η **kiss**

Cf. 1 Cor 16:20; Rom 16:16; 1 Thess 5:26 also 1 Peter 5:14. A sign of mutual forgiveness, reconciliation and acceptance as family.

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας

Cf. Rom 16:6. The Corinthians are part of a larger body.

Verse 13

Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

Cf. Rom 16:20b; 1 Cor 16:23; Gal 6:18; Phil 4:16; 1 Thess 5:28; 2 Thess 3:18; Philem 25; see also Col 4:18b; 1 Tim 6:21b; 2 Tim 4:22b; Titus 3:15b.

On the grace of Christ, see 8:9. On the love of God see 5:18-21.

κοινωνια, ας f **fellowship, sharing in, participation**

Probably both a sharing in the Holy Spirit and, by the Holy Spirit, having a share in Christ and having fellowship with one another.

"No other Pauline letter concludes with a benediction so theologically imposing as the one [here]." Funtz
Tasker writes, "In this wonderful closing verse, among the most frequently quoted words in the Pauline Epistles, the apostle adds his customary final prayer that his readers may live in the atmosphere of that saving *grace*, whose *fons et origo* is the redemptive death of the *Lord Jesus Christ*. But he does more than this. Here, and nowhere else in his extant letters, he prays further that they may experience *the love of God*, of which Christ's sacrifice on Calvary was the outstanding revelation, and also that fellowship which the Holy Spirit creates among all who have stood beneath the cross and accepted Christ as their personal Saviour. As the first of the three genitives in this verse must be subjective, it is probable that the other two should be construed in the same way. It is not the Christian's love for God, nor his communion with the Holy Spirit that is here the dominant thought, but rather the love displayed by God and the fellowship achieved by the Holy Spirit."

The TR follows most minuscules in adding ἄμην.