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Greek 312: Exegesis OA
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It Is Not My War
Second Corinthians 10:1-13

Briefly, this passage is Paul's response to his opponents. He addresses their accusations with warlike metaphors and irony. The genre of the passage as well as the entire book is that of a letter or epistle. Paul uses traditional opening and salutations. There is nothing out of the ordinary. Chapter 10 is the first of three chapters, the others are eleven and twelve, where Paul deftly defends his leadership and apostolic calling.

TRANSLATION

As I studied the passage certain words stood and I was curious about how they related to one another and how Paul used them to express his intent. I did not perceive the challenge of translation as difficult, but rather what was the best way to convey what Paul was saying through his word choice. If there was a difficulty it was walking the very thin line between proper exegesis. More directly, my difficulty was in how to translate the passage without it appearing as if I copied or used an accepted translation and being "original" enough but not working outside of the boundaries of proper exegesis. This project is a result of that effort. By way of instruction, in the Translation section all underlined words are from my translation of a word or phrase.

It was important for me in translating to show the relationship between the various words. Moreover, although some commentaries use Paul's tongue-in-cheek remarks about not using human measurements of comparison in verse 12 as an introduction to speak about boasting in

the remainder of the chapter, I elected to end the translation at verse 13 because of the metaphor of measurement that is in my concluding verse 13 (Guthrie 487). In verse 12, Paul uses the μετροῦντες (measure) and συγκρίνοντες (comparison). When these terms are juxtapose with ἄμετρα (immeasurable) μέτρον (measure) κανόνας (jurisdiction)μέτρου(measure)ἐφικέσθαι (reach) and ἄχρι (far). They all reference measurements and limits. However, the limits in verse 12 are from a human perspective and the far reaching limits of jurisdiction that Paul has was given by God.

Although, perhaps, fitting into the realm of scholastic exegesis, this process like all of my projects started with prayer. This is not a passage that I would normally would have selected. I have many favorite passages. However, this was the passage that reached out to me. I read it several times in my NIV Bible and was drawn to Paul's imagery and use of words in the English translation. I continued reading it over and over again in the NIV and various other English translations. In addition to Paul's imagery, I was also struck for the first time at what appeared to be Paul's ironic or sarcastic tone. This increased my interest to see how the passage read in Greek. In Greek, the irony and sarcasm was even more apparent.

I read the passage over and over again in Greek without consciously focusing on the specific words or forms. After a while I noticed the repetition of certain words and word forms. Laid out the passage verse in a Word document and proceeded to take note of the words I knew and understood. This phase was in response to homework assignments. I have two Kindle books of Greek words. Although they both provided an adequate translation of the words, it wasn't until I purchased Danker's Lexicon that I had a better sense of translation. I found this book extremely helpful and my go to book. I also used it along with the weekly vocabulary provided by Professor Keiderling when completing the weekly translation assignments.

The phrases or words that struck me the most (find different wording) were the war imagery and what I continued to perceive as Paul's irony. However, before consulting any commentaries and only using Danker as my primary Lexicon, I looked for words that seem to have a connection either in similarities or antithesis. I colored coded these words in the passage. TELL THE WORDS. Based solely on the Lexicon, which would also explain the variety of ways a word was used and in most cases specific scriptures. It was not until I had a better sense of the word and saw the pattern of my translations that I researched articles that discussed Paul's irony and the metaphor of war.

Paul's purpose in this passage is two-fold. He must one defend not only his calling and authority as an apostle, he must also defend his personal character. As Paul states in the text, he is being criticized for being bolder in writing than in person. Although there is not a widely recognized consensus some scholars have suggested that Apollos who came to Corinth after learning more about the Gospel from Aquila and Priscilla was an influence on the church at Corinth. The premise presented is that Apollos was influenced by Philo, a Jewish philosopher. Moreover, it was these followers of Apollos, having been influenced by Apollos style of oratory who criticized Paul's speech (Kistemaker 28-29). Although there is very little scriptural evidence of a conflict between Paul and Apollos, the suggestion is plausible. However, Apollos may not be the instigator, but humanity being humanity may have independently expressed their own preference. Paul does make a reference to this idea in 1 Corinthians 1Corinthians 3:4: For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not merely human? (NRSV). Paul is placed in a position to navigate through these two divisive criticisms without alienating the congregation at Corinth or the other churches receiving this circulated

letter. Paul traverses two accusations through specifically related words and the literary style of irony.

Relationship of Words

Paul's navigation begins in the first verse. Paul emphatically urges (παρακαλῶ - usually translated as exhort, or pleads) using a very strong phrasing that he tempers with humility and gracious restraint (ἐπιεικείας - usually translated as gentle or meekness) and then closes firmly but not harshly with boldly confident (θαρρῶ - usually translated as bold). Already Paul's apparent balancing of words is evident.

After establishing a tone of gentle, but firm confidence, Paul now addresses the accusation at hand. In making his point, Paul now becomes less emotional and begins to use words of logic and reasoning. This both gives clarity to his intent not leaving any room for characterization or misunderstanding. As shared earlier, it is not that I am so proficient in Greek, that is clearly evident, but my challenge was not always in the difficulty (though the passage is difficult. My goal was to stay as true to the language and what I saw as Paul's intent. As an example, one of the word forms that I noticed through the passage was λογίζομαι (to reckon to count) and λογισμός (reasoning and thought). In verse two, λογίζομαι, as Paul begins his argument, I translated it as consider. However in verse four, λογισμοὺς I stayed with the fundamental meaning of reasoning (although other translators have sometimes translated as argument). In verse seven λογιζέσθω the imperative λογίζομαι which is sometimes translated reckoning or reflect, I chose to continue the idea of considering as I also did in verse 11. The rationale; although Paul is building a line of logic, where reckoning or counting is an appropriate rendering, Paul is also requesting the readers, both opponents and supporters not

to reckon or count, but to think through. It is an appeal to weigh each side more than to reckon or do an accounting of his reasonings.

Imagery of War

However, what is most striking in the passage is Paul's use of war metaphors. Subliminally, the very use of these metaphors authority, power and strength. Moreover, in battle a commander's position does not change nor is it mitigated by the perspective of those under a commander's charge. The war motif begins at the end of verse three. It is important to note that Paul has shifted from the emphatic, "I Paul" in verse one to the third person plural at the end of verse two. In this instance, Paul is not referring to anyone that may be serving with him, "but is using the third person plural from here to the end of the translation as an indicator that he is placing himself in the group of those who have authority. This becomes more evident when read in relationship to verse seven where the structure of the sentence implies that those in opposition to Paul consider themselves a group. However, the weakness of their arguments lies in the understanding that they are comparing their authority to themselves, which Paul is taking them to task for doing so.

Beginning in at the end of verse three Paul declares στρατευομαι, that is not how we fight (also translated - wage war) and continues into verse four with instruments, what is necessary to engage in warfare is not based upon any human endeavor, but are powerful because they come through God (τῷ θεῷ - dative). Paul now begins to subtly lead up to reasons for confidence. It is, τῷ θεῷ, not Paul. Continuing with the war imagery, these godly instruments are demolishing fortresses and reasonings (καθαίρεσιν ὀχυρωμάτων, λογισμοὺς καθαροῦντες). In verse five it was fascinating to see how Paul illustrates the consequences of war. Those things that are

presumptuous enough come against the divine knowledge of God (τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ) are made captive and brought into submission to Christ (καὶ αἰχμαλωτίζοντες πᾶν νόημα εἰς τὴν ὑπακοήν τοῦ Χριστοῦ)! Moreover, a contrast is shown between the λογισμοὺς of the carnal and the divine knowledge of God (τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ). This contrast of consequence is also illustrated in verse 6: And in preparation having to punish each disobedience whenever your submission may be replete (καὶ ἐν ἐτοίμῳ ἔχοντες ἐκδικῆσαι πᾶσαν παρακοήν, ὅταν πληρωθῆ ὑμῶν ἡ ὑπακοή).

IRONY

In Paul's response to his opponents, he wraps his metaphor of war in irony. This is especially evident in Paul's use of boasting. He makes it clear, especially in verse eight. Paul states, "if I should boast" and then proceeds to boast. In verse 12, he does a something similar, he states that he dares not compare himself or endorse himself and then proceeds in the remainder of the chapter to do that very things.

OPINIONS OF OTHERS

In an article by Manuel A. Bagalawis entitled, Ministry as Warfare: An Exegesis of 2 Corinthians 10:2b-6 discusses Paul's use of warfare imagery. Although the author's focus is on the phrase κατὰ σάρκα used in verses 2b and 3. Bagalawis views the use of κατὰ σάρκα not as equating Paul's "human behavior" with inconsistent behavior between when he is in their presence and when he writes as some scholars do. Bagalawis does not see it this way, does not see it as duplicitous but more like Paul is speaking in strong terms in the event that the Corinthians have been influenced by his distractors (Bagalawis 8). As it relates to boldness,

Paul's appeal is that he does not want to use the same level of boldness with the Corinthians in general that he must strongly use against those who falsely oppose him and his authority.

The author views the phrase *κατὰ σάρκα* to refer not to what others see as accusation about Paul's inconsistent behavior (in person vs letters), but an all inclusive view of Paul. The accusation is that Paul is not spiritual or spiritually led, but is just another limited human being. The author contends that Paul's Corinthian opponents believe that they are more spiritual than Paul! (Bagalawis 9). Additionally, the use of warfare as a metaphor was common in ancients, but Paul's use is not to show how strong he is physically or spiritually (11). Paul uses the warfare metaphors in relation to and coming from God (who is the One who called him into ministry). Also, related words such as *καθαροῦντες* and *ὄχυρωμάτων* to the same idea of strength and power coming from God (Bagalawis 14).

Although the author's perspective of the war metaphors is attributed to how Paul relates his authority as coming from God, it also lines up with my view of Paul's use of this terminology not only because his authority and power comes from God, but also as God's representative he does have the authority. Although, it is only one reference, the idea that war metaphors were common for this time, further illustrates for me that those opposing Corinthians will fully understand that Paul is coming from and talking to them from a position of authority and strength (both spiritually and authoritatively in the natural).

Similarly, Paul Barnett in the article entitled, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, also uses the phrase . Barnett also points out and I agree, Paul repeats the language of war intentionally (Barnett 466). Moreover, Barnett characterizes Paul's rhetoric as "siege metaphor"

(Barnett 467). In his argument, he compares and contacts the imagery of “ pulling down strongholds” and fortresses (Barnett 467). This perspective, in my opinion, adds to the distinct yet subtle intent of Paul’s message. Wars do not always have to be a sudden clash of power, but as with any siege the stronger combatant (in this instance Paul), can also just stand his ground and pull down disobedience without overt violence. In keeping with the metaphor of siege, Barnett also directs our attention to the victorious Paul who (with the divine knowledge of God) takes “every thought” captive bringing it into obedience (Barnett 469). Although, I have not addressed it specifically yet, I see the subtle irony of Paul in his use of these metaphors. He is demonstrating his apostolic power and authority without directly pointing to himself.

Loubser, Johannes A. "A NEW LOOK at PARADOX AND IRONY in 2 CORINTHIANS 10-13."

The author, Loubser examines the use of irony in chapters 10-13 of 2 Corinthians. For his purpose, he not just identifying irony in the classic sense of saying the opposite of the writer’s intent, but apparently in the broader sense (as is relates to Paul) to “communicative event.” It is not so much of what Paul says, but how it is said and when it is employed. Although, perhaps sometimes unintentional from the author’s perspective Paul’s irony on some occasions is unintentional. Author also describes Paul’s irony in these three chapters as paradoxical (he is saying what he means, but there is more to it). Author contrasts the irony of Paul’s strong language (ex. I, Paul, myself) as an example of his authority and strength. Later on, in the passage, how Paul uses irony in his comparison what others perceive as his weakness and their strengths. (Note: language in this instance is also dual purpose because he also uses war metaphors, which also have an intentional point. However, even in the intentional use of war metaphors based upon my author’s definition can be viewed as paradoxical irony.) This

article is helpful because it confirmed my view/sense of Paul's irony that as I stated previously I had not noticed until recently.

Keener, Craig S. *1-2 Corinthians*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Keener has the typical scholar view of this passage. Unlike source # 2, does see or use the term irony, but sees Paul's response as a response to opponents' criticism. However, Keener also points out that Paul is also trying to show that his gentleness in his letters is intentional because he does not want to come down harshly to them in person using his apostolic authority. Moreover, Keener shows that Paul's contrasting adjectives of power and weakness is to show that he is against the accusations or ideas that his opponents are spreading and not the people. (Almost like the idea of hating the sin, but loving the sinner). Also discusses Paul's use of war metaphor to show that his power (and hence judgement comes from God). So, it is not Paul who they are fighting, but God. However, even in this regard, Paul like God is not looking to tear them down but to build them up. Although, Keener tends to see specific verses as ironic (as in 10:2), much like in Resource #2, I continue to see irony as a major component in the discourse as well as Paul's use of comparative language to make his point about his authority. Paul skillfully uses language to get his point across to his distractors without deflating those Corinthians who are in obedience.

2 Corinthians 10: 1-13

Now indeed, I Paul who emphatically urge you through the humility and gracious restraint of Christ, when among you face to face, yet am boldly confident when I am not.

Now I implore you that when I am face to face with you that I do not have to consider being audacious towards those who consider us to be conducting our life according to human nature.

Though we walk/conduct our life by our human nature, that is not how we fight [spiritual things].

For the instruments of our fight are not natural but are powerful through God demolishing fortresses, demolishing reasonings

And each presumptuous thing that is in opposition against the divine knowledge of God and making captive each thought into submission to Christ,

And in preparation having to punish each disobedience whenever your submission may be replete.

You are looking at appearances. If anyone is confident in himself that he belongs to Christ, let him reconsider this in himself just as he is in Christ, so are we

Indeed, even if I should boast exceedingly/exceeding boast concerning the authority which the Lord has given us to build you up and not to tear you down, I will not be put to shame./ I will not ashamed.

I do not want to seem to terrify you because of my letters.

Indeed, for the letters, they say, “are impressive and impactful, but his physical presence is weak and his speech not worth hearing”.

Such a one should consider that we are through the speech of our letters when we are absent, we will be in our actions when we are present.

For we dare not categorize or compare ourselves with those endorsing themselves, however, these by measuring and comparing themselves to themselves, fail to comprehend.

However, we will not boast without measure, but according to the measure of the jurisdiction that God has assigned to us, a measure even to come as far as to you

ΠΡΟΣ ΚΟΡΙΝΘΙΟΥΣ Β

101 Αὐτὸς δὲ ἐγὼ Παῦλος παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς διὰ τῆς πραύτητος καὶ ἐπεικειίας 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 καθάρσεις ὀχυρωμάτων, λογισμοὺς καθαιροῦντες

5 καὶ πᾶν ὑψωμα ἐπαιρόμενον κατὰ τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ αἰχμαλωτίζοντες πᾶν νόημα εἰς τὴν ὑπακοήν τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

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

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

8 ἐάν [τε] γὰρ περισσώτερόν τι καυχῆσώμαι περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν ἧς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθάρσεις ὑμῶν, οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι.

9 ἵνα μὴ δόξω ὡς ἂν ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν·

10 ὅτι αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν, φησὶν, βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί, ἡ δὲ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενής καὶ ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος.

Works Cited and Some Books Read

The works cited are in bold. The other books on the list were read or skimmed during the course of preparation, but not cited (nor was any information paraphrased.

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