
2 CORINTHIANS VERSE-BY-VERSE | DR. RANDY WHITE

SESSION 19 | 2 CORINTHIANS 10:1-10

2 CORINTHIANS 10:1-18 | PAUL'S ADDRESS TO HIS ENEMIES IN CORINTH

- Verse 1 -
 - Paul's tone changes dramatically beginning with chapter 10, so much so that critics have speculated that this portion of the letter was not written at the same time as the previous 9 chapters. Such speculation is unwarranted, especially when it is noted that those addressed in chapters 10-13 are not Paul's friends, but his enemies within the church at Corinth (the Judaizers- see 2 Cor. 11:3-4).
 - In this verse, Paul pulls away from the group (Paul, Sylvanus, and Timothy) that has been predominant in the writing, and says the words come from **I Paul myself**. While not totally unique in 2 Corinthians (see 2 Cor. 2:1), Paul is careful through the book to let the reader know when he is speaking on his own behalf.
 - Here Paul speaks **by the meekness and gentleness of Christ** and *through this* is **bold toward you**. This helps us define Christlike meekness and gentleness.
- Verse 2 -
 - In verse 1 Paul began to **beseech you**, but did not define who **you** was. Here the audience is defined as those **which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh**.
 - There were those in the Corinthian church that rejected Paul's apostleship, and this is the group he wanted to speak to. Paul's desire was to address this group before he was face-to-face in Corinth again.
 - Note that Paul transitions from the **I** to the **we** in verse 2, but **we** is not inclusive of the Corinthians.
- Verse 3 -
 - There is a distinction between a **walk in the flesh** and a **war after the flesh**.
 - That is, though there is a physical element to Paul's ministry, they do not battle using fleshly methods.
- Verse 4 -
 - Elaborating on verse 3, Paul uses *spiritual* rather than **carnal weapons** (carnal is not "sinful" but "physical"). Rather, Paul uses weapons that are **mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds**.
 - These strong holds are elaborated upon in verse 5.
- Verse 5 -
 - Paul speaks of the **strong holds** (v. 5) that are being pulled down. These include:
 - **imagination** - the word λογισμός [logismos] carries the idea of *human reasonings* as opposed to *divine revelation*.
 - **every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God** - once again, carrying the idea of opposition to divine revelation.
 - **every thought which has not been brought into captivity...to the obedience of Christ**.
 - Note that these are things which *physical weapons* cannot conquer, so Paul uses God's weapons.
- Verse 6 -
 - the **readiness to revenge all disobedience** was a further aspect of the **pulling down of strong holds** (v. 4) activity in which Paul was involved. He was holding back, however, and *not currently punishing all disobedience*, waiting for the time when **your obedience is fulfilled**.

- Importantly, note that in verses 3-6a the subject is **we** (2 times) and **our** (1 times), whereas in 6b Paul shifts to **your**.
 - If we use words seriously, we cannot include ourselves in both the first person and the second person.
 - It would be most reasonable to include ourselves in the **your obedience** phrase of Paul rather than in the previous **we** statements.
 - Paul is explaining his apostolic work of spiritual warfare that he performed on our behalf, with our obedience in mind. It is not our job to fulfill Paul's apostolic duties.
- Verse 7 -
 - While the language is somewhat difficult, the statement is rather clear: If someone (based on all **outward appearance**) is trusting to himself that he is Christ's then that person should consider this: that as he *is* Christ's even so *are we* Christ's.
 - The issue is either hypothetical or (in my opinion) speaking of a particular but unnamed man in the congregation at Corinth. The hypothetical or unidentified man says, "I look like a Christian based on outward appearances, but someone else (namely, Paul) with the same outward appearances is *not* a Christian." Paul is pointing out the hypocrisy and illogical rationale of this kind of thinking.
 - See notes on verse 10 for a defense of the idea that this is an unnamed but real individual.
- Verses 8 - 9 -
 - Paul says that he may **boast somewhat more of our authority**, he does it without shame because **the Lord** (that is, Jesus Christ) gave that authority **for edification, and not for your destruction**.
 - The reason Paul takes no shame in when he may **boast somewhat more** in the **authority...for edification** (v. 8) is so that it would **not seem as if I would terrify you by letters**. That is, the purpose of Paul's letters is *not* to invoke terror, but edification.
- Verse 10 -
 - The reason Paul takes no shame in when he may **boast somewhat more** in the **authority...for edification** (v. 8) is so that it would **not seem as if I would terrify you by letters**. That is, the purpose of Paul's letters is *not* to invoke terror, but edification.
 - Was Paul's **bodily presence...weak**? We do not know. We only know that his accusers said it was. It is possible that Paul had some sort of physical ailment when he was with the Corinthians the first time and that someone had exaggerated this temporary weakness into a permanent description.
 - Was Paul's **speech contemptible**? The Greek word emphasizes "small measure," and has the same root as in verses 13 and 15, **without...measure**. The English word means "to be despised." Since we have no recording of Paul's speeches, we cannot make a conclusion. However, what we have here is *an enemy's accusation* of Paul's speech.
 - See 1 Corinthians 2:3-4 for what is likely the source of this enemy's twisting of the truth concerning Paul's physical presence and speech.
 - The King James (and most others) have translated the verb *to say* as a third person plural, **they say**. However, the Greek is the third person *singular* "he says" or "one says." For this reason, it is my opinion that the scenario of verse 7 is not a hypothetical, but a particular man in the congregation. Paul is not (graciously) using the man's name, but the man exists (and everyone in Corinth knew his name).