#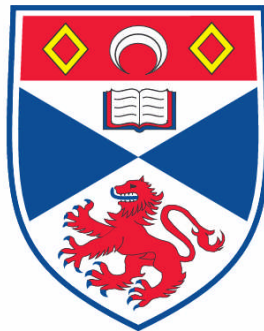 FROM SELF-PRAISE TO SELF-BOASTING : PAUL'S UNMASKING OF THE CONFLICTING RHETORICO-LINGUISTIC PHENOMENA IN 1 CORINTHIANS

**Kate C. Donahoe**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
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University of St. Andrews**

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FROM SELF-PRAISE TO SELF-BOASTING:

PAUL'S UNMASKING OF THE CONFLICTING

RHETORICO-LINGUISTIC PHENOMENA IN 1 CORINTHIANS


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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY


BY

KATE C. DONAHOE

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# ABSTRACT

The thesis, entitled "From Self-Praise to Self-Boasting: Paul's Unmasking of the Conflicting Rhetorico-Linguistic Phenomena in 1 Corinthians," examines the rhetorical conventions of "boasting" and self-praise among those vying for social status and honor within the Greco-Roman world. While the terminological options for "boasting" and self-praise frequently overlap, a survey of these conventions demonstrates that the ancients possessed a categorical distinction between "boasting" and self-praise, which oftentimes conflicted with Paul's distinction. Clear examples of this conflict appear in 1 Cor 1:10-4:21; 5:1-13; 9:1-27; 13:1-13; and 15:30-32, where Paul addresses the Corinthians' overestimation of wisdom and eloquence, redirects the Corinthians' attention away from loyalties to specific leaders to loyalty to Christ, redefines the standards by which the Corinthians should view themselves and their leaders, counters the Corinthians' tendency to engage in anthropocentric "boasting," and affirms his own apostolic ministry. It is the Corinthian community's inability to grasp the application of theocentric "boasting" which leads Paul to address certain aspects and values of secular Corinth that have penetrated the Corinthian community. Thus, operating from an eschatological perspective, Paul critiques both the Corinthians' attitudes and the Greco-Roman cultural values upon which their attitudes are based. Through irony, self-presentation, imitation, differentiating between theocentric and anthropocentric "boasting," and distinguishing between personality and gospel rhetoric, Paul challenges the secular notions of social status, power, wisdom, leadership, and patronage and exhorts the Corinthians to focus their attention on their relationship with the Lord rather than on improving their social status or on increasing their honor.

# DECLARATIONS

(i) I, Kate C. Donahoe, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 103,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.


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# CONTENTS

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| AB | Anchor Bible |
| *ABQ* | *American Baptist Quarterly* |
| *ABR* | *Australian Biblical Review* |
| ACCS | Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture |
| ACNT | Augsburg Commentaries on the New Testament |
| *AJA* | *American Journal of Archaeology* |
| *AJP* | *American Journal of Philology* |
| *AJT* | *American Journal of Theology* |
| AnBib | Analecta biblica |
| ANTC | Abingdon New Testament Commentaries |
| *ARA* | *Annual Review of Anthropology* |
| *Arch* | *Archaeology* |
| *AsTJ* | *Asbury Theological Journal* |
| *ATJ* | *Ashland Theological Journal* |
| *AThR* | *Anglican Theological Review* |
| *AUSS* | *Andrews University Seminary Studies* |
| *BA* | *Biblical Archaeologist* |
| *BAR* | *Biblical Archaeology Review* |
| *BAGD* | *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Walter Bauer. Translated and adapted by William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker. 2d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979. |
| *BBR* | *Bulletin for Biblical Research* |
| *BBS* | *Bulletin of Biblical Studies* |
| BECNT | Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament |
| BETL | Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium |
| BHT | Beiträge zur historischen Theologie |
| *BI* | *Biblical Illustrator* |
| *Bib* | *Biblica* |
| *BibInt* | *Biblical Interpretation* |
| *BJRL* | *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library Manchester* |
| BNTC | Black's New Testament Commentaries |
| *BR* | *Biblical Research* |
| *BRev* | *Bible Review* |
| *BSac* | *Bibliotheca Sacra* |
| *BTB* | *Bible Theology Bulletin* |
| CBC | Cambridge Bible Commentary |
| *CBQ* | *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* |
| CIG | Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum |
| CIJ | Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum |
| *CJ* | *Classical Journal* |
| *CJT* | *Canadian Journal of Theology* |
| ComC | The Communicator's Commentary Series |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Comm* | *Communio* |
| ConBNT | Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series |
| ConBOT | Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series |
| *Cont* | *Continuum* |
| *CP* | *Classical Philology* |
| *CQ* | *Classical Quarterly* |
| *CTJ* | *Calvin Theological Journal* |
| *CTM* | *Concordia Theological Monthly* |
| *CTQ* | *Concordia Theological Review* |
| *CurBS* | *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* |
| *CurTM* | *Currents in Theology and Mission* |
| *CW* | *Classical World* |
| *Di* | *Dialog* |
| DSB | Daily Study Bible |
| *EBib* | *Etudes bibliques* |
| *Enc* | *Encounter* |
| *EnchBib* | *Enchiridion biblicum* |
| ESCJ | Etudes sur le christianisme et le judaïsme |
| *EstBib* | *Estudios bíblicos* |
| *ETL* | *Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses* |
| *EvJ* | *Evangelical Journal* |
| *EvQ* | *Evangelical Quarterly* |
| *EvT* | *Evangelische Theologie* |
| *ExAud* | *Ex auditu* |
| *ExpTim* | *Expository Times* |
| GBS | Guides to Biblical Scholarship |
| *GRBS* | *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* |
| *Greg* | *Gregorianum* |
| *HBT* | *Horizons in Biblical Theology* |
| *Hesperia* | *Hesperia: Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* |
| *HeyJ* | *Heythrop Journal* |
| HNTC | Harper's New Testament Commentaries |
| *Hor* | *Horizons* |
| *HSCP* | *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* |
| HSM | Harvard Semitic Monographs |
| HSS | Harvard Semitic Studies |
| *HTR* | *Harvard Theological Review* |
| HTS | Harvard Theological Studies |
| HUT | Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie |
| IBC | Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching |
| *IBS* | *Irish Biblical Studies* |
| ICC | International Critical Commentary |
| *IJT* | *Indian Journal of Theology* |
| *Int* | *Interpretation* |

| | |
|---|---|
| ITC | International Theological Commentary |
| *ITQ* | *Irish Theological Quarterly* |
| IVPNTC | InterVarsity Press New Testament Commentary |
| *JAAR* | *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* |
| *JAC* | *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* |
| *JBL* | *Journal of Biblical Literature* |
| *JETS* | *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* |
| *JMA* | *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* |
| *JRA* | *Journal of Roman Archaeology* |
| JRASup | Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series |
| *JGRChJ* | *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* |
| *JRH* | *Journal of Religious History* |
| *JRS* | *Journal of Roman Studies* |
| *JSNT* | *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* |
| JSNTSup | Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series |
| *JSOT* | *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* |
| JSOTSup | Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series |
| *JTS* | *Journal of Theological Studies* |
| LCBI | Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation |
| LCL | Loeb Classical Library |
| LTPM | Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs |
| *LQ* | *Lutheran Quarterly* |
| *LTQ* | *Lexington Theological Quarterly* |
| MNTC | Moffatt New Testament Commentary |
| NAC | New American Commentary |
| NCBC | New Century Bible Commentary |
| *Neot* | *Neotestamentica* |
| NIBCNT | New International Bible Commentary on the New Testament |
| NIBCOT | New International Bible Commentary on the Old Testament |
| NICNT | New International Commentary on the New Testament |
| NICOT | New International Commentary on the Old Testament |
| *NIDNTT* | *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology.* Edited by Colin Brown. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975-1985. |
| *NIDOTTE* | *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis.* Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997. |
| NIGTC | New International Greek Testament Commentary |
| NIVAC | The New International Version Application Commentary |
| *NovT* | *Novum Testamentum* |
| NovTSup | Novum Testamentum Supplements |
| NTG | New Testament Guides |
| NTL | New Testament Library |
| *NTS* | *New Testament Studies* |
| *Numen* | *Numen: International Review for the History of Religions* |
| OTG | Old Testament Guides |
| OTL | Old Testament Library |
| OTM | Old Testament Message |
| *Per* | *Perspectives* |
| PNTC | Pelican New Testament Commentaries |
| *PRSt* | *Perspectives in Religious Studies* |

| | |
|---|---|
| *RelStTh* | *Religious Studies and Theology* |
| *RelSRev* | *Religious Studies Review* |
| *ResQ* | *Restoration Quarterly* |
| *RevExp* | *Review and Expositor* |
| *RivB* | *Rivista biblica italiana* |
| *RTR* | *Reformed Theological Review* |
| SBA | Studies in Biblical Archaeology |
| SBL | Society of Biblical Literature |
| SBLDS | Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series |
| SBLMS | Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series |
| SBLRBS | Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study |
| *SBLSP* | *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* |
| SBLSymS | Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series |
| SBLTT | Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations |
| SBT | Studies in Biblical Theology |
| SCHNT | Studia ad corpus hellenisticum Novi Testamenti |
| *SE* | *Studia evangelica* |
| *SEÅ* | *Svensk exegetisk årsbok* |
| *SIG* | *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*. Edited by W. Dittenberger. 4 vols. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915-1924. |
| *SJRS* | *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* |
| *SJT* | *Scottish Journal of Theology* |
| SNT | Studien zum Neuen Testament |
| SNTSU | Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt |
| SNTSMS | Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series |
| SP | Sacra pagina |
| *Spec* | *Speculum* |
| *SR* | *Studies in Religion* |
| *SSEJC* | *Studies in Early Judaism and Christianity* |
| *ST* | *Studia theologica* |
| *SwJT* | *Southwestern Journal of Theology* |
| *TAPA* | *Transactions of the American Philological Association* |
| TBC | Torch Bible Commentaries |
| *TBT* | *The Bible Today* |
| *TDNT* | *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976. |
| *TDOT* | *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 15 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974-2006. |
| *Them* | *Themelios* |
| *Theol* | *Theologica* |
| THKNT | Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament |

| | |
|---|---|
| *ThTo* | *Theology Today* |
| *TJ* | *Trinity Journal* |
| *TJT* | *Toronto Journal of Theology* |
| *TLNT* | *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*. Ceslas Spicq. Translated and edited by James D. Ernest. 3 vols. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994. |
| *TLOT* | *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Edited by Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann. Translated by Mark E. Biddle. 3 vols. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997. |
| TNTC | Tyndale New Testament Commentaries |
| TOTC | Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries |
| *TS* | *Theological Studies* |
| *TTJ* | *Trinity Theological Journal* |
| *TynBul* | *Tyndale Bulletin* |
| *TZ* | *Theologische Zeitschrift* |
| VCSup | Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae |
| WBC | Word Biblical Commentary |
| *WTJ* | *Westminster Theological Journal* |
| WUNT | Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament |
| *WW* | *Word and World* |
| YCS | Yale Classical Studies |
| *ZAW* | *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* |
| *ZNW* | *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* |
| *ZTK* | *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* |

The Method of Citation

Abbreviations of primary sources follow established usage. For classical literature, see Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (rev. Henry S. Jones and Roderick McKenzie; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); and Patrick H. Alexander et. al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999).

# INTRODUCTION

During Paul's third missionary journey, he received disheartening news regarding the community in Corinth and composed a letter to the Corinthians (52 or 53 CE) that addressed the issue of associating with immoral individuals (1 Cor 5:9). This letter proved to be ineffective, as the problems in the church magnified. While in Ephesus (52-55 CE), Paul learned of new information from a delegation of Chloe's household (1:11), who informed him about the rise of a rupture in the social fabric of the community brought about by allegiances to different Christian leaders, issues Paul deals with in 1:10-4:21. About the same time, or while writing his response to Chloe's people, Paul received a letter from some other Corinthian Christians, carried probably by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (16:17). This letter requested advice for at least four matters, which he responds to in 1 Corinthians (so his περὶ δὲ formulations): sexual conduct (i.e., 7:1, 25), food sacrificed to idols (8:1-11:1), spiritual gifts and heavenly speech (12:1-14:40), and the collection (16:1-4). Whether the issues in 5:1-6:20 and 15:1-58 derive from questions from Chloe's people or the other delegation is not clear.[1] Despite some members' preference for Apollos over Paul, other members within the Corinthian community nevertheless seek Paul's perspective and guidance on matters pertaining to the welfare of the community.

As Paul addresses various issues raised by the Corinthian community, the theme of "boasting" emerges as one of the prominent motifs of 1:10-4:21 and 9:1-27 (cf. 5:1-13; 13:1-13; 15:30-32). In his response to the behaviors of some members, Paul asserts his understanding of the nature of proper "boasting"—"boasting" in the Lord (1:31; cf. 3:21; 4:6). Paul's discussion of "boasting" in 1 Corinthians raises an important question that, unfortunately, has been overlooked by scholars. Regarding the issue of leadership and Paul's *modus operandi* in 1 Corinthians, how does Paul's

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[1] For statistical breakdown of space Paul devotes to compromise issues, see Bruce W. Winter, "The 'Underlays' of Conflict and Compromise in 1 Corinthians," in *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict. Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall* (ed. Trevor J. Burke and J. Keith Elliott; NovTSup 109; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 139-55.

distinction between legitimate and illegitimate "boasting," relate to the Greco-Roman conventions of self-praise and "boasting and to his view of rhetoric?

The study of Christianity at Corinthian has undergone much development since the landmark essay on the divisions in the community by F. C. Baur, who identified the factions to be representative of a conflict between Petrine (Jewish) and Pauline (Gentile) Christianity.[2] During the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule* movement of the late nineteenth and mid twentieth centuries, scholars such as Godet, Schmithals, and Wilckens noted parallels with Gnosticism.[3] In more recent scholarship, however, scholars are turning to other sources and methods for examining the Greco-Roman and religious contexts of the problems within the Corinthian community. For example, Horsley, Lamp, and Davis ascribe the Corinthians' enthusiasm for wisdom and knowledge to Jewish sapiential traditions.[4] Others explain the Corinthian situation from the perspective of Paul's own teaching and theology. Thiselton, for instance, blames the problems on the Corinthians having an over-realized eschatology.[5] Still others examine Paul's dealings with the Corinthians in light of Greco-Roman rhetorical conventions and cultural practices in which they demonstrate how the conventions and practices associated with sophism and rhetoric (Winter, Litfin, Pogoloff), patronage (Chow), social networks (Clarke), enmity (Marshall), and so on influence the perspectives and ethical conduct of

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[2] Ferdinand Christian Baur, "Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde der Gegensatz des petrinischen und paulinischen Christentums in der ältesten Kirche," *Tübinger Zeitschrift* 4 (1831): 61-206. For a survey of research, see David G. Horrell and Edward Adams, "The Scholarly Quest for Paul's Church at Corinth: A Critical Survey," in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church* (ed. Edward Adams and David G. Horrell; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 1-43. See ch. 4.3 for analysis of Baur and the Corinthian slogans.

[3] Frederic L. Godet, *A Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Clarks 27, vol. 1.; trans. A. Cusin; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1898), passim; Walter Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians* (trans. John Steely; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971); Ulrich Wilckens, *Weisheit und Torheit* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1959).

[4] Richard A. Horsley, "Pneumatikos vs. Psychikos: Distinctions of Spiritual Status among the Corinthians," *HTR* 69 (1976): 269-88; idem, "*Gnosis* in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 8.1-6," *NTS* 27 (1981): 32-51; idem, "'How Can Some of You Say That There is No Resurrection of the Dead?' Spiritual Elitism in Corinth," *NovT* 20 (1978): 203-31; idem, "Consciousness and Freedom among the Corinthians: 1 Corinthians 8-10," *CBQ* 40/4 (1978): 574-89; idem, "Wisdom of Words and Words of Wisdom in Corinth," *CBQ* 39 (1977): 224-39; Jeffrey S. Lamp, *First Corinthians 1-4 in Light of Jewish Wisdom Traditions: Christ, Wisdom and Spirituality* (Studies in Bible and Early Christianity 42; Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000); James A. Davis, *Wisdom and Spirit: An Investigation of 1 Cor. 1:18-3:20 Against the Background of Jewish Sapiential Traditions in the Greco-Roman Period* (Lanham, MD: University Press, 1984).

[5] Anthony C. Thiselton, "Realized Eschatology at Corinth," *NTS* 24 (1978): 510-26; idem, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), passim.

members of the Corinthian community.[6] Building upon this last group of scholars, we shall evaluate Paul's "boasting" passages in 1 Corinthians in light of the Corinthians' immersion in the values of the secular culture.

Paul's correspondence with the Corinthian community reveals that its members did not automatically abandon the societal norms, values, and behaviors upon their conversion. The problem of "boasting" in the Corinthian community stems from the influence of worldly values of competition, self-aggrandizement, and social prominence among its members. Savage rightly notes that the Corinthian community continues to be conditioned by societal norms: "They are showing the same obsession with self-exalting behavior as their pagan counterparts, the same drive to excel their neighbor, the same regard for arrogance and contempt for humility and ultimately the same compulsion to boast."[7] The transference of the secular cultural values into the believing community has devastating effects on the life of the community.

The mere frequency of the καυχ- stem in 1 and 2 Corinthians testifies that Paul corresponds with a community preoccupied with self-praise and "boasting."[8] As 1 Cor 1:10-4:21; 5:1-13; 9:1-27; and 13:1-13 divulges, the Corinthian community continues to adore the things that result in worldly honor—wisdom, power, nobility, patronage, and being disciples of specific teachers—rather than in that which results in eschatological honor. Paul therefore employs the καυχ- stem to target the destructive importation of secular conventions into the believing community. While observing the rhetorical conventions of his time, Paul's cruciform worldview results in an unveiling of two new contrastive concepts to the

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[6] E.g. Bruce W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among the Sophists: Alexandrian and Corinthian Responses to a Julio-Claudian Movement* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); idem, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); A. Duane Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric* (SNTSMS 79; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Stephen M. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians* (SBLDS 134; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* (JSNTSup 75; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992); Andrew D. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1-6* (AGAJU 18; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993); Peter Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians* (WUNT 23; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1987).
[7] Timothy B. Savage, *Power through Weakness: Paul's Understanding of the Christian Ministry in 2 Corinthians* (SNTSMS 86; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 64.
[8] 1 Cor 1:29, 31; 3:21; 4:7; 5:6; 9:15-16; 13:13; 15:31; 2 Cor 1:12, 14; 5:12; 7:4, 14; 8:24; 9:2-3; 10:8, 13, 15-17; 11:10, 12, 16-18, 21, 30; 12:1, 5, 6, 9. For references to "boasting" outside the Corinthian correspondence, see Rom 2:17, 23; 3:27; 4:2; 5:2, 3, 11; 11:18; 15:17; Gal 6:4, 13, 14; Eph 2:9; Phil 1:26; 2:16; 3:3; 1 Thess 2:19; 2 Thess 1:4; Heb 3:6; Jas 1:9; 3:14; 4:16.

Corinthian community: anthropocentric/ theocentric "boasting" and personality/ gospel rhetoric. By focusing on these two motifs, our study shall clarify the somewhat muddled discussion of the Greco-Roman conventions of self-praise and "boasting," thereby presenting a fresh reading of Paul's "boasting" passages in 1 Corinthians.

## §1 The Corinthian Context Defined

### §1.1 The Colonization of Corinth

Commanding a strategic location both militarily and commercially, Corinth exploited its position so that it became a wealthy and prominent city.[9] Located at the base of Acrocorinth on the south side of the isthmus connecting the Peloponnesian peninsula with the rest of Greece, Corinth separates the Saronic and Corinthian Gulfs, between the ports of Lechaeum to its north and Cenchreae to its east. The geographical location of Corinth thus made it an important site of mercantile activity. Corinth commanded the trade route between northern and southern Greece and controlled the major sea route between Asia and Italy. Because the voyage around the Peloponnesus was long and often perilous, a paved road known as the *diolkos* was built across the isthmus in the sixth century BCE, which enabled ships to transport their cargo between eastern and western Greece without having to negotiate the waters around Cape Malea at the tip of the Peloponnesian peninsula. The ship's contents could be unloaded on one side of the isthmus, dragged overland, and reloaded on the other side, while light vessels could actually be dragged across the peninsula.

Corinth served as the chief city of the Achaean League from the eighth through the second centuries BCE, until its destruction in 146 BCE by Roman forces under the leadership of consul Lucius Mummius, who led a large military force from Italy to the Isthmus of Corinth.[10] When the Achaean league declared war on Sparta, Rome's ally, Rome crushed the armies of the Achaean league and Mummius took the city of Corinth by force and burned it. Mummius slaughtered the Corinthian men

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[9] Strabo, *Geogr.* 8.6.20, 23; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 8.5; Apuleius, *Metam.* 10.18, 35; Plutarch, *Mor.* 831A; *Tim.* 14.2; Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 34.6, 48.

[10] Pausanias, *Descr.* 2.1.2. David W. J. Gill, "Corinth: A Roman Colony in Achaea," *BZ* 37 (1993): 259-64.

and sold the women and children into slavery.[11] However, while archeological evidence suggests that there was a partial and selective physical destruction of Corinth,[12] the destruction of Corinth by Mummius nonetheless marked a significant break in the history of the city and the preservation of its monuments. For instance, the ruins of the archaic temple on the lower hill of the agora are the only visible traces of the pre-Roman Corinth. The other ruins in that area belong to the Roman imperial and Christian eras.

Although people continued to inhabit Corinth and some buildings remained intact, Corinth had no formal political life until 44 BCE, at which time Julius Caesar refounded Corinth as a Roman colony, giving Corinth the name *Colonia Laus Iulia Corinthiensis* (Colony of Corinth in honor of Julius).[13] The city layout, building structures, and temples were constructed according to Roman style and design.[14] Romans colonized Corinth, including veterans, freedmen and freedwomen, urban plebeians, Romanized Greeks, and Jews.[15] The large amount of freedpersons and

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[11] Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 32.27; Livy, *Perioch.* 52; Pausanias, *Descr.* 7.15.1-16.8; Strabo, *Geogr.* 8.6.23; Cicero, *Imp. Pomp.* 11; *Agr.* 2.87; *Fam.* 4.5.4 Velleius Paterculus 1.13.1; Zonaras 9.31; Polybius 39.2.

[12] David G. Romano, "Post-146 B.C. Land Use in Corinth, and Planning of the Roman Colony of 44 B.C.," in *The Corinthia in the Roman Period* (ed. Timothy E. Gregory; JRASup 8; Ann Arbor, Mich.: Cushing-Malloy, 1994), 13, maintains that there was continuous occupation in Corinth between 146 BCE and 44 BCE. Romano defines occupation to there being agricultural activity but not political activity. For discussion of habitation in Corinth during the period immediately preceding Mummius' invasion until the arrival of Caesar, see Elizabeth R. Gebhard and Matthew W. Dickie, "The View from the Isthmus, ca. 200 to 44 B.C.," in *Corinth, The Centenary 1896-1996* (ed. Charles K. Williams II and Nancy Bookidis; vol. 20 of *Corinth: Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*; n.p.: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2003), 261-78. See also Cicero, *Agr.* 1.2.5; 2.19.51; 2.87; *Tusc. Disp.* 3.22.53.

[13] One of the primary distinctions between first century CE Corinth and its neighboring cities is that Corinth had been refounded as a Roman colony. This fact necessitates caution when making parallels between Roman Corinth and either the earlier Greek city of Corinth or contemporary Greek cities. Roman colonies themselves differed depending on when they were founded and for what purpose they were founded. The refounding of Corinth served several purposes. First, it removed potentially troublesome occupants from residing in Rome. Second, it aided in Caesar's strategy to expand the Roman Empire into the East. Control of the Isthmus also reduced the dangers of ships being damaged by pirates and other physical dangers in the sea.

[14] The Corinth Computer Project, led by a research team from The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, studies the nature of city planning during the Roman period to create an accurate computer generated map of Corinth's overall dimensions and roadway system. For an introduction to the Project, see Romano, "Post-146 B.C.," 9-30.

[15] Pausanias, *Descr.* 2.1.2; Strabo, *Geogr.* 8.6.23; 17.3.15; Plutarch, *Caes.* 57.5; Philo, *Legat.* 281; Livy, *Perioch.* 52; Allen Brown West, *Latin Inscriptions: 1896-1926* (vol. 8.2 of *Corinth: Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931), Nos. 77, 107, 121; Donald Engels, *Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 66-91. Charles K. Williams, II, "Roman Corinth as a Commercial Center," in *The Corinthia in the Roman Period* (ed. Timothy E. Gregory; JRASup 8; Ann Arbor, Mich.: Cushing-Malloy, 1994), 33, comments on the Roman refounding of Corinth: "It should be emphasized that Corinth was not refounded for the purpose of settling ex-soldiers: rather, Corinth was populated mainly by ex-slaves. This type of resettlement

concern for economic trade deeply impacted the manner in which Corinth developed. For the occupants, Corinth was seen as a city that lent itself to social mobility.[16] The city rose to prominence, and in 27 BCE, Corinth became the seat of the regional proconsul and capital of the senatorial province of Achaia. Upon its refounding, Corinth no longer existed as a Greek city but became a truly Roman city with Roman values and ideology.[17]

§1.2 Civic and Individual Prominence

With accumulation of honor and avoidance of disgrace being of paramount concern, the people of Corinth frequently expressed their honor and civic pride through benefactions, possessions, abilities, and positions of leadership.[18] In

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programme obviously suited the policies of the aristocratic families in the Roman Senate who . . . could not themselves operate the business of the new East-West trade route that Colonia Laus Julia Corinthiensis would service. The freedmen-agents were an important part of the population sent to Corinth, serving the wealthy families who foresaw the colony as a potentially strong commercial center. These freedmen were sent out to ensure Roman control of the markets at this point on the east-west trade route and to secure positions for interested Roman families in this new distribution center in the eastern Peloponnesos."

[16] See Savage, *Power through Weakness*, 19-53.

[17] Winter, *After Paul Left*, 22, remarks on Roman values and culture: "whether rich or poor, bond or free, the cultural milieu which impacted life in the city of Corinth was *Romanitas*. This does not mean that there were no ethnic minorities, but it does mean that the dominant and transforming cultural influence was Roman." Similarly, David W. J. Gill, "In Search of the Social Élite in the Corinthian Church," *TynBul* 44/2 (1993): 331, avers that since Roman Corinth was relatively new, it was "very fashionable to adopt Roman styles in all aspects of civic life."

[18] Cicero, *Off*. 2.17; Dio Chrysostom, *Or*. 46.3; Plutarch, *Mor*. 831A. Honor is the public recognition of one's social standing that comes in two ways: ascribed honor (inherited from one's family descent, gender, or order of birth) and acquired honor (derives from one's virtuous deeds and benefactions, civic roles and offices, military prowess, success at athletic games, verbal challenge-riposte competitions, or other such activities). Acquired honor may be gained or lost as one seeks to receive public recognition. Halvor Moxnes, "Honor and Shame," in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (ed. Richard Rohrbaugh; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 20, rightly observes the role of others in obtaining honor: "While honor may sometimes be an inner quality, the value of a person in his or her own eyes, it depends ultimately on recognition from significant others in society. It is a public matter. When someone's claim to honor is recognized by the group, honor is confirmed, and the result is a new social status." Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (3d ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 52, summarizes the meaning of honor as "a person's rightful place in society, a person's social standing. This honor position is marked off by boundaries consisting of authority, gender status, and location on the social ladder. From a functionalist point of view, honor is the value of a person in his or her own eyes plus the value of that person in the eyes of his or her social group. Honor is a claim to worth along with the social acknowledgment of worth. The purpose of honor is to serve as a sort of social rating that entitles a person to interact in specific ways with his or her equals, superiors, and subordinates, according to the prescribed cultural cues of the society." For honor in Corinthians, see Robert Jewett, "Paul, Shame, and Honor," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 551-74; David A. deSilva, "Let the One Who Claims Honor Establish that Claim in the Lord: Honor Discourse in the Corinthian Correspondence," *BTB* 28 (1998): 61-74; idem, "Investigating Honor Discourse: Guidelines from Classical

Corinth, as in many civic centers throughout the Greco-Roman world, individuals erected inscriptions praising their own accomplishments, contributions to building projects, and social status.[19] The importance of wealth and social prestige among Corinth's occupants is evinced through its numerous building projects, benefactions, and festivals, in which its citizens expended great wealth in order to increase their social prominence.[20] Playing into Corinth's administrative structure's dependence upon private monetary donations, ambitious individuals eager to accumulate honor often would incur serious debt attempting to maintain appearances of benevolence since these acts were publicly known through inscriptions. Hence, "to have one's name inscribed above the door of some important, new, public building, or to erect a statue to oneself with a fulsome inscription was a powerful status symbol."[21]

With the Isthmian and Caesarean games attracting a large influx of visitors and heightening the allure of Corinth, these games also greatly increased the revenue of Corinth and contributed to the erection of structures and statues.[22] Held biennially at the sanctuary of Poseidon on the isthmus of Corinth, the Isthmian games were second in fame to the Olympic games. Both the Isthmian and quadrennial Caesarean games were under the management of the *agonothetes*, who probably were the wealthiest citizens of Corinth since they were expected to personally contribute large funds for the festival's operating costs.[23] Generally, this post was considered the highest honor in the *cursus honorum*.

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Rhetoricians," *SBL Seminar Papers*, 1997 (*SBLSP* 36; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 491-525; Arthur J. Dewey, "A Matter of Honor: A Social-Historical Analysis of 2 Corinthians 10," *HTR* 78 (1985): 209-17.

[19] E.g. Pausanias, *Descr.* 2.2.8; 2.7.2-5; 2.10.1, 3, 5, 7, credits specific individuals with constructing statues or other structures and mentions the tombs of certain individuals.

[20] Of the Greek cities, Corinth was one of the most appealing and awe inspiring cities with its plethora of temples, statues, buildings, monuments, theatres, and baths. Thus, the beauty, prominence, and stature of Corinth no doubt incited pride in its residents. See Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 9.8, 21; Horace, *Ep.* 17.36; Lucian, *Hermot.* 27, 29, 45.

[21] Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 31.

[22] Strabo, *Geogr.* 8.6.20; 10.5.4. Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 45-52; Richard M. Rothaus, *Corinth: The First City of Greece: An Urban History of Late Antique Cult and Religion* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 139; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 84-92; Elizabeth R. Gebhard, "The Isthmian Games and the Sanctuary of Poseidon in the Early Empire," in *The Corinthia in the Roman Period* (ed. Timothy E. Gregory; JRASup 8; Ann Arbor, Mich.: Cushing-Malloy, 1994), 78-94.

[23] John H. Kent, *The Inscriptions, 1926-1950* (vol. 8.3 of *Corinth: Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*; Princeton: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1966), 30, notes: "The office of *agonothetes* seems to have been considered the highest honor within the power of the colony to bestow, exceeding even the prestige of the *duovir quinquennalis*." Cf. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 17-18; Robert S. Dutch, "The Educated Elite in First Corinthians: A Social-Scientific Study of Education and Community Conflict in a Graeco-Roman Context" (Ph.D. diss., University of Bristol, 1998), 226-30.

The American School of Classical Studies at Athens has published archeological reports of epigraphic material that demonstrate how pervasive the quest for increasing honor and social status was in Corinth.[24] The School has uncovered over 1,500 inscriptions dating from the Roman Imperial Period (44 BCE-267 CE) during the excavations of the Theatre, Potters' Quarter, Odeion, Asklepieion, and the Roman Agora between 1926 and 1950 that speak of honor either by the benefactor himself or by another individual on his behalf. These inscriptions often are accompanied with a statue and appear in prominent public locations in the city. Some people are honored for being civic officials,[25] victors of the games,[26] good orators,[27] upright in character,[28] and for contributing to building projects.[29] Other inscriptions honor emperors and members of their families.[30]

In the attempt to prove one's social worth and honor, self-praise and "boasting" became somewhat of an art form. To be honored established social status, whereas to be shamed was to have one's claim to honor rejected by society. Individuals competed for honor, and for many self-praise and "boasting" became honorable activities because of the potential to receive public recognition of their accomplishments. Thus, "putting oneself on show was not a ritual observed for the elite. It was a passion played out at every level, though on lesser scales. In Corinth, perhaps more than anywhere else, social ascent was the goal, boasting and self-display the means, personal power and glory the reward."[31]

§2 The Socio-Economic Location of the Corinthian Community

In recent scholarship, scholars have been interested in applying models, theories, and approaches of the social sciences to the study of Scripture and consequently are acknowledging that the social and economic location of early

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[24] Benjamin D. Meritt, *Greek Inscriptions, 1896-1927* (vol. 8.1 of *Corinth: Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931); West, *Latin Inscriptions*; Kent, *The Inscriptions*.

[25] West, *Latin Inscriptions*, Nos. 67-68, 71, 81-83, 86-90, 95; Kent, *The Inscriptions*, Nos. 119-29, 149-56.

[26] Merritt, *Greek Inscriptions*, Nos. 14, 19; Kent, *The Inscriptions*, No. 272.

[27] Kent, *The Inscriptions*, Nos. 226, 264, 268-69, 307.

[28] Kent, *The Inscriptions*, Nos. 264-65, 268.

[29] West, *Latin Inscriptions*, Nos. 16, 56-57, 66, 68, 71, 121-23, 130, 132; Kent, *The Inscriptions*, Nos. 52-54, 57, 62-64, 67-69, 74, 77, 81, 99, 100, 102, 107, 124-25, 130, 134-37, 146, 152-56, 158-63, 173, 175-77, 199, 224, 231-32, 237, 248.

[30] Kent, *The Inscriptions*, Nos. 50-55, 69-118.

[31] Savage, *Power through Weakness*, 41.

believers might be higher than originally proposed by Deissmann.[32] A key work that sparked future interest in applying this method to 1 Corinthians and represents a turning point in the study of the social identity of the Corinthian community, though it has come under heavy fire, is Edwin Judge's *The Social Patterns of Christian Groups in the First Century*, where he asserts that the Corinthian community constituted a mixed and socially diverse group.[33] Since Judge's publication, scholars have debated the identity of the Corinthians, without resolving this issue. The study can be divided into two camps: (1) those who hold that the socio-economic level of the Corinthian community varied from quite poor to relatively well-off and (2) those who believe the community comprised only those from the lower social strata.

Continuing the work by Judge, Gerd Theissen has conducted one of the most notable and disputed studies on social stratification in the Corinthian community in his *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*.[34] Drawing upon historical evidence and social-scientific theories in order to determine the social composition of the Corinthian community and to explain the source of some of its divisions, Theissen challenges the prevailing view that the earliest believers originated from among the poor. Setting the basis for the "New Consensus" view, Theissen instead maintains that the Corinthian believers came from a variety of social strata (which he terms "internal stratification"), with the majority from the lower classes standing in contrast to an influential minority from the upper classes:

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[32] A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1927), 144, argues that early urban believers were predominately from the lower social class. For a summary of the research into the social status of the Corinthian community, see Steven J. Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus," *JSNT* 26/3 (2004): 323-61; David G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* (SNTW; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), 91-101; Horrell and Adams, "The Scholarly Quest," 1-47; John H. Elliott, *Social-Scientific Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 138-74; Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "Methodological Considerations in the Debate Over the Social Class Status of Early Christians," *JAAR* 52/3 (1984): 519-46. Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 51-73, notes that the Corinthian community was marked by social stratification and status inconsistency: "Although the evidence is not abundant, we may venture the generalization that the most active and prominent members of Paul's circle (including Paul himself) are people of high status inconsistency . . . They are upwardly mobile; their achieved status is higher than their attributed status" (p. 73). The "typical" believer, Meeks argues, was a free artisan or small trader who may have had some wealth. Cf. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 265-71.

[33] Edwin A. Judge, *The Social Patterns of Christian Groups in the First Century* (London: Tyndale House, 1960), esp. 30-38, 60.

[34] Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (ed. and trans. J. H. Schütz; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), esp. 69-119.

Early Christianity was located in the *plebs urbana*, but attracted also a small minority of people at the periphery of the local upper class. These were above all people with dissonance of status, caused by lower birth, by gender or the fact that they were aliens (*peregrini*) or well-to-do people outside the privileged circle of the decurions. Within these limitations early Christianity comprised all social levels and groups, which we discover on and below the level of the local power elite. In particular cases Christianity also penetrated the elite.[35]

Similarly, Witherington speculates that more than ten percent of the Corinthian community was reasonably well off and status conscious.[36] Upon examining the variety of living spaces in Corinth, Jongkind likewise argues for the existence of another class alongside the elite and non-elite.[37] Since the Corinthian community included members of relative wealth, strategies that exclude such believers from membership "need to be reversed in order to allow a more balanced picture to emerge."[38]

Although the "New Consensus," with its varied nuances, is supported by many scholars, it has undergone serious scrutiny, most notably by Justin Meggitt and Steven Friesen. Meggitt criticizes the trend among the "New Consensus" proponents which places select individuals in the Corinthian community among the elite of secular Corinthian society. Meggitt also disagrees with those, like Theissen, who maintain that the affluent lived alongside the poor and that conflicts within the Pauline communities arose over social tensions.[39] After dividing Roman society into

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[35] Gerd Theissen, "The Social Structure of Pauline Communities," *JSNT* 84 (2001): 73. Later, Theissen discusses membership in religious clubs and concludes that freedmen dominate membership (63.60%), followed by slaves (18.68%), free people (17.25%), and decurions (0.47%) (p. 76-77).

[36] Ben Witherington, III, *Conflict and Community: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 116.

[37] Dirk Jongkind, "Corinth in the First Century AD: The Search for Another Class," *TynBul* 52/1 (2001): 139-48, summarizes: "A consideration of living spaces in ancient Corinth suggests that it is not possible to characterize its society as one made up merely of a very small number of élite alongside vast numbers of non-élite who were extremely poor. The variety of housing suggests the existence of another class" (p. 139). Cf. Wilhelm Wuellner, "The Sociological Implications of 1 Corinthians 1:26-28 Reconsidered," in *SE* VI (ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1973), 666-72.

[38] David W. J. Gill, "Acts and the Urban Élites," in *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting* (ed. David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf; vol. 2 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*; ed. Bruce W. Winter; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 117-18.

[39] Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), esp. 53-153. Idem, "Sources: Use, Abuse, Neglect. The Importance of Ancient Popular Culture," in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church* (ed. Edward Adams and David G. Horrell; Louisville:

two groups—the elite (1% of the population) and the non-elite (99% of the population), thereby removing the possibility of another class—Meggitt examines the economic experiences, reality, and responses of the Pauline communities. Contradicting the "New Consensus," Meggitt locates Paul and his followers among the destitute, meaning that they both lived slightly above subsistence level.[40] Meggitt criticizes Rohrbaugh's estimation that the elite constituted 5-10% of the population and finds fault with Theissen and others who maintain that wealthy individuals were included among the community's membership. However, Meggitt's simplistic dichotomy of the two classes raises questions concerning his methodology and use of primary sources. By lumping together merchants, artisans, soldiers, and plebeians among the non-elite (i.e. those who live at subsistence level) with the aristocracy representing the opposite side of the spectrum in order to demonstrate the commonality among the groups, Meggitt omits discussion of the various social strata represented in Corinth's population and instead presents the non-elite as a socially homogeneous group. In general, Meggitt glosses over as socially insignificant any differences regarding social status indicators that have been highlighted by other scholars such as rhetorical education, slave ownership, home ownership, hosting a church group, and practicing benefactions. For example, Meggitt rightly argues that slave ownership does not automatically equate elite status, but he fails to distinguish between the economic hardships faced by the absolute poor and those who owned slaves and wrongly asserts that all cases of slave ownership tell us nothing of significance about the status of the slave owners.[41] Based on Paul's response to the conflicts within the Corinthian community, a better interpretive approach would be to allow for a more nuanced analysis of social status, not less as Meggitt proposes, that acknowledges status variations among the lower class.

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Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 241-53, calls for an understanding the popular culture of the first-century Corinth and acknowledgement of the voice of the non-elite. For dialogue between Meggitt and proponents of the "New Consensus," see Justin J. Meggitt, "Response to Martin and Theissen," *JSNT* 84 (2001): 85-94; Dale B. Martin, "Review Essay: Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*," *JSNT* 84 (2001): 51-64; Theissen, "The Social Structure," 65-84; idem, "Social Conflicts in the Corinthian Community: Further Remarks on J. J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*," *JSNT* 25/3 (2003): 371-91. See also Peter Oakes, "Constructing Poverty Scales for Graeco-Roman Society: A Response to Steven Friesen's 'Poverty in Pauline Studies,'" *JSNT* 26/3 (2004): 367-71; John M. G. Barclay, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: A Response to Steven Friesen," *JSNT* 26/3 (2004): 363-66; Friesen, "Poverty," 323-61.
[40] Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty*, 75-97, 179; cf. Friesen, "Poverty," 348-58.
[41] Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty*, 129-32.

Unlike Meggitt, Friesen recognizes social status differences among the lower class through his exploration of the economic resources affiliated with poverty. While building upon the work by Meggitt, Friesen expands Meggitt's binary model of the elite and non-elite to include varying degrees of poverty in his seven-category poverty scale ranging from "below subsistence level" to "imperial elites." Using this scale to examine explicit references of economic resources in the undisputed Pauline letters, Friesen concludes that evidence suggesting that the believing community includes wealthy individuals is lacking and that most of the believers live near or below the subsistence level. Friesen's assessment of poverty shows one major methodological weakness. By operating on generalities, Friesen fails to consider the unique constitution of the residents of Corinth and opportunities for earning an income due to Corinth's position of prominence (see §1 above) that distinguishes Corinth from elsewhere in the Roman empire. Moreover, pre-industrial Florence hardly can be the basis from which to explore the social constituency of Roman Corinth.[42] Furthermore, to Friesen's own admission, the percentages of population comprising each of the categories are purely speculative, especially regarding Corinth's population.[43] For instance, we do not know how many people lived at the "moderate surplus" (PS4) or "stable near subsistence" (PS5). Even if we did know the exact percentages of each of the levels in secular society, these numbers do not necessarily correlate with the constituency of the Corinthian community. Therefore, it is not "statistically unlikely" that Gaius, Chloe, Prisca, Aquila, Erastus, and Phoebe all had surplus resources.[44]

In light of the lack of consensus among scholars, it is prudent to begin with the textual evidence provided by Luke and Paul to determine whether any information pertaining to the socio-economic location of the Corinthian community can be garnered, despite Meggitt's claim that we cannot "determine with any precision the nature of social diversity within the Pauline communities and what part it can legitimately be said to play in their conflicts."[45] If the majority of the Corinthians are at or below the subsistence level (PS6 and PS7), as Friesen suggests, then questions arise as to which level to place the Corinthians named or described by

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[42] Friesen, "Poverty," 343-45.
[43] Friesen, "Poverty," 347.
[44] Friesen, "Poverty," 357.
[45] Meggitt, "Response to Martin," 94.

Paul.[46] Even slight differentiation in poverty levels can accommodate for the social stratification issues as noted by Theissen, and even by Friesen who locates a few members among the PS4.[47]

While much remains debatable concerning the composition of the believing community in Corinth, scriptural evidence allows us to describe the social consistency of the community membership with some particulars. Concerning the religious and ethnic background of the community, the Corinthian correspondence itself divulges that the community consists of both Jews (cf. 1 Cor 7:18)[48] and Gentiles, with Gentiles being the predominant members. Not only is the community religiously and ethnically diverse, but the social status among its members also varies.

The naming of specific individuals and their households elsewhere in the NT and evidence in 1 Corinthians itself suggests that individuals of noteworthy social status are included among the Corinthian community's membership, as noted by proponents of the "New Consensus." The inclusion of οὐ πολλοὶ ("not many") among the descriptive terms σοφοὶ (wise), δυνατοί (powerful), and εὐγενεῖς (of noble birth) in 1:26 denotes that some members do fit the characteristics associated with high social status.[49] Names of persons of some economic means and standing in the believing community and city of Corinth, at least from Paul's perspective, include Crispus (Acts 18:8; 1 Cor 1:14), Sosthenes (Acts 18:17; 1 Cor 1:1), Erastus (Acts 19:22; Rom 16:23; 2 Tim 4:20), Stephanas (1 Cor 1:16; 16:15, 17), Gaius (Acts 19:29; 20:4; Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 1:14), Titius Justus (Acts 18:7), Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:2-3; 1 Cor 16:19), and Phoebe (Rom 16:1). For example, Paul's mention that the entire Corinthian community meets in Gaius' house (Rom 16:23) may imply that Gaius has a large home (possibly larger than anyone else's home in the community), which in itself is indicative of being wealthy. Agreeing that the size

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[46] Friesen, "Poverty," 348-59.

[47] Theissen, *The Social Setting*, 69-119; Friesen, "Poverty," 352-57.

[48] Philo, *Legat.* 281, speaks of the presence of Jews in Corinth during the time of Paul's visit. Although Luke mentions a synagogue in Corinth (Acts 18:4), archeologists have yet to discover evidence confirming a Jewish presence in first-century Corinth. The inscription reading [ΣΥΝΑ]ΓΩΓΗ ΕΒΡ[ΑΙΩΝ] ("Synagogue of the Hebrews") and the capital with three *menorot* and other Jewish symbols date from the fifth century CE. For the synagogue inscription, see Meritt, *Greek Inscriptions*, Nos. 78-79; for the column, see R. L. Scranton, *Medieval Architecture in the Central Area of Corinth* (Vol. 16 of *Corinth: Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 116n.130.

[49] Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 45; and Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 192-95, propose that the terms in 1:26 refer to the ruling class from which sophists and rhetors came.

of Gaius' house points to wealth, Friesen locates him on the PS4 scale.[50] The mention of Stephanas' household implies that he too is a member of some means.[51]

While Paul's reference to Erastus being the city treasurer (ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως, Rom 16:23) may suggest that he is a prominent member of the Corinthian community, the nature of the title and identity of Erastus is highly controversial among scholars. Archeologists have uncovered a pavement inscription possibly naming the same Erastus, reading: "Erastus laid the pavement at his own expense in return for his aedileship."[52] "New Consensus" scholars assert that the Erastus Paul speaks of is the same Erastus whose name features on the pavement inscription, whereas Meggitt and others question the validity of evidence for identifying Paul's Erastus with the inscription Erastus. Because being chosen as an aedile points to the individual being a full Roman citizen of notable wealth, Theissen and others contend that Paul's Erastus is of high social status, belonging to the οὐ πολλοὶ δυνατοί.[53] Furthermore, they argue that it would be highly improbable that there would have been two prominent citizens named Erastus residing in Corinth at the same time. On the contrary, Meggitt avers that Erastus is a common cognomen and that the socio-economic situation of Paul's Erastus is low and "indistinguishable from that of his fellow believers."[54] Friesen follows Cadbury's assertion that the title οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως refers to slaves and locates Erastus on the PS4 or PS5 scale.[55] Although disputed, the likelihood that Paul's Erastus is the same Erastus named in the inscription as one holding the honored position of aedile nevertheless is high since it would seem unlikely that Paul would mention the secular status of a member of the community for no apparent reason.

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[50] Friesen, "Poverty," 356.

[51] Theissen, *The Social Setting*, 87, comments: "Reference to someone's house is hardly a sure criterion for that person's high social status, but it is a probable one, particularly if other criteria point in the same direction." Cf. Gill, "In Search," 336; Winter, *After Paul Left*, 196-99. Contra, Friesen, "Poverty," 352, who declares that Theissen makes too much of the evidence and therefore locates Stephanas at PS5 or PS6.

[52] Kent, *The Inscriptions*, 99-100, No. 232.

[53] So, Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 41-57, 89-107; idem, "Another Corinthian Erastus Inscription," *TynBul* 42/1 (1991): 146-51; Wuellner, "The Sociological Implications," 666-72; Theissen, *The Social Setting*, 75-83; idem, "The Social Structure," 78-80; Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 58-59; David W. J. Gill, "Erastus the Aedile," *TynBul* 40/2 (1989): 293-300.

[54] Justin J. Meggitt, "The Social Status of Erastus (Rom 16:23)," *NovT* 38/3 (1996): 223. See also Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty*, 135-41.

[55] Friesen, "Poverty," 354-55; Henry J. Cadbury, "Erastus of Corinth," *JBL* 50 (1931): 42-58.

At the same time, Paul's letter exposes the reality that most members of the Corinthian community belonged to the lower echelons of society (1:26-28).[56] While some members are wise, powerful, and wealthy by worldly standards, we should concede that the majority of membership consists of those with a relatively low socio-economic status who have not received the proper tutelage to be considered wise and do not exercise political or social influence. Furthermore, the problems surrounding the consumption of idol meat (8:1-11:1) and Paul's mention that some members are slaves (7:21-23) point to there being poor members with low social status.[57]

Although financial means is a key determinant of social status, it is not the only factor to take into consideration when speaking about the Corinthians' social status.[58] Other variables of social status include, but are not limited to, family lineage, ethnic origins, citizenship, education, public offices or honors, occupation, military or athletic accomplishments, benefactions, patron-client relationships, gender, age, and marital status.[59] Because social status is multidimensional, our interpretation of the situation in Corinth is not contingent upon there being believers of the elite class. It is from the premise that social status includes multiple variables that we interpret the Corinthians' factions and anthropocentric "boasting."

While the evidence needed to make a detailed sketch of the social constituency of the Corinthian community is lacking, the available information in Paul's letters reveals a diverse community ethnically, religiously, and socio-economically. As we shall discover in the following chapters, Paul directs his discourse in 1:10-4:21 and 9:1-27 to two primary groups within the Corinthian community: those of relatively high social status (at least in comparison to other Corinthian believers) who operate in terms of status acquisition rather than servanthood and those who exploit their newfound status in the faith.

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[56] Theissen, *The Social Setting*, 145-74.

[57] Theissen, *The Social Setting*, 121-74; idem, "Social Conflicts," 371-91; Brad Ronnell Braxton, *The Tyranny of Resolution: 1 Corinthians 7:17-24* (SBLDS 181; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 177-234.

[58] Barclay, "Poverty in Pauline Studies," 366, declares: "the relationship between economics, society and religion is a complex matter, and I am not convinced that, in the case of the Pauline churches, wealth was the most important determinant of status." Cf. Friesen, "Poverty," 338.

[59] Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 53-55.

§3 Survey of Previous Research on the Topic of "Boasting"

While the issue of "boasting" appears frequently in the Corinthian correspondence, the subject receives limited treatment by scholars, and oftentimes this treatment is superficial and biased, particularly in relation to 1 Corinthians. Most studies focus on the "boasting" passages in 2 Corinthians as if "boasting" does not feature prominently in sections of 1 Corinthians.[60] If we view the Corinthian correspondence as an ongoing pastoral conversation between Paul and the Corinthian community, then it is advisable to begin analyzing Paul's "boasting" passages at the earliest possible stage of his conversation rather than jumping into a later segment of his conversation. Thus, this study aims to give "boasting" in 1 Corinthians its proper place in the scholarly discussion of "boasting" and self-praise in the Corinthian correspondence.

While lexical studies of the καυχ- stem may not cover 1 Cor 1:10-4:21; 5:1-13; 9:1-27; 13:1-13; and 15:30-32 in sufficient detail, they nevertheless offer a helpful starting point for understanding how "boasting" has been interpreted by modern scholars and for grasping the extent to which dependence on Bultmann may have perpetuated an inadequately nuanced interpretation of "boasting" in Paul's letters.[61] By arguing that καυχᾶσθαι is "proved by the comic dramatists to be an everyday word in Attic,"[62] Bultmann sets the precedent for bypassing detailed analysis of "boasting" in the extant Greco-Roman texts. Scholars believe they can

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[60] E.g. David E. Aune, "Boasting," in *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 81-84; Christopher B. Forbes, "Comparison, Self-Praise, and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric," *NTS* 32 (1986): 1-30; Glenn Holland, "Speaking Like a Fool: Irony in 2 Corinthians 10-13," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (eds. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht; JSNTSup 90; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 250-64; Stephen H. Travis, "Paul's Boasting in 2 Corinthians 10-12," in *SE* VI (ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1973), 527-32; Duane F. Watson, "Paul's Boasting in 2 Corinthians 10-13 as Defense of His Honor: A Socio-Rhetorical Analysis," in *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the Lund 2000 Conference* (eds. Anders Eriksson et al.; Emory Studies in Early Christianity 8; Harrisburg, Pa.; Trinity Press International, 2002), 260-75.
[61] Rudolf Bultmann, "καυχάομαι, καύχημα, καύχησιϛ, ἐγκαυχάομαι, κατακαυχάομαι," *TDNT* 3:645-54; C. Spicq, "καυχάομαι, καύχημα, καύχησιϛ," *TLNT* 2:295-302; C. K. Barrett, "Boasting in the Pauline Epistles," in *L'Apôtre Paul: Personnalité, style et conception du ministère* (ed. A. Vanhoye; BETL 73; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986), 363-68; Ulrich Heckel, "Jer 9,22f. als Schlüssel für 2 Kor 10-13," in *Schriftauselgung im antiken Judentum und im Urchristentum* (ed. Martin Hengel and Hermut Lör; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1994), 206-25; idem, *Kraft im Schwachheit: Untersuchungen zu 2 Kor 10-13* (WUNT 2.56; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1993), 145-59; Jorge S. Bosch, *"Gloriarse" según san Pablo: Sentido e teología de καυχάομαι* (AnBib 40; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970).
[62] Bultmann, *TDNT* 3:645.

adequately grasp the perception of "boasting" and self-praise in the Greco-Roman world in a few paragraphs or less.[63] Bultmann himself devotes two short paragraphs to the Greek usage of the καυχ- stem and makes it appear that the word group is more widely attested in the extant Greco-Roman literature than it is in actuality.[64] Notwithstanding, Bultmann's lexical work has positively contributed to the study of the καυχ- stem with his observance that in biblical usage, καυχάομαι can function positively with an element of thanksgiving to refer to "boasting" in the Lord or negatively to refer to "boasting" in one's own self apart from the Lord.[65] However, one limitation of these lexical studies is that they can omit discussion of other terms that denote self-praise and "boasting." As we shall discover in Chapter One, the terminological options within the semantic field of self-praise and "boasting" are much broader than the καυχ- stem employed by writers of the Septuagint and Paul.[66] Thus, a study centered on the occurrences of the καυχ- stem not only would inevitably omit many references to "boasting" and self-praise in Greco-Roman literature but more importantly would provide an incomplete picture of these conventions in the wider Greco-Roman context.

Other investigations of "boasting" focus on evaluating "boasting" in Paul's letters from a theological perspective.[67] For instance, the studies by O'Day,

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[63] For example, Spicq, *TLNT* 2:295-302, surveys the Greco-Roman usage of , καυχάομαι in one paragraph; and Barrett, "Boasting," 363-68, includes a single reference to Pindar (*Ol.* 9.37-39) as the background for how the καυχ- stem was understood in the Greco-Roman world.

[64] Bultmann, *TDNT* 3:645-46.

[65] Bultmann, *TDNT* 3:645-54. For Bultmann's influence, see Duane F. Watson, "Paul and Boasting," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 77; I. Howard Marshall, "Should Christians Boast?" *BSac* 159 (2002): 263; David M. Stanley, *Boasting in the Lord: The Phenomenon of Prayer in Saint Paul* (New York: Paulist Press, 1973).

[66] E.g. ἀλαζονεία, ἀλαζών, αὐχέω, ἐπαινέω, κομπέω, μεγαλαυχέω, μεγαληγορέω, περιαυτολογέω, περπερεύομαι, φιλοτιμέομαι.

[67] Gail R. O'Day, "Jeremiah 9:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 1:26-31: A Study in Intertextuality," *JBL* 109/2 (1990): 259-67; J. Schreiner, "Jeremiah 9.22-23 als Hintergrund des paulinischen 'Sich-Rühmens,'" in *Neues Testament und Kirche* (ed. Joachim Gnilka; Freiburg: Herder, 1974), 530-42; Kasper Ho-yee Wong, *Boasting and Foolishness: A Study of 2 Cor. 10, 12-18 and 11, 1a* (Jian Dao Dissertation Series 5; Hong Kong: Alliance Bible Seminary, 1998); Scott J. Hafemann, "'Self-Commendation' and Apostolic Legitimacy in 2 Corinthians: A Pauline Dialectic?" *NTS* 36 (1990): 66-88; Jan Lambrecht, "Dangerous Boasting: Paul's Self-Commendation in 2 Corinthians 10-13," in *The Corinthian Correspondence* (ed. R. Bieringer; BETL 125; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 325-46; Marshall, "Should Christians Boast," 259-76; Simon J. Gathercole, "After the New Perspective: Works, Justification and Boasting in Early Judaism and Romans 1-5," *TynBul* 52/2 (2001): 303-6; idem, *Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1-5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); H. H. Drake Williams, *The Wisdom of the Wise: The Presence and Function of Scripture within 1 Cor. 1:18-3:23* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001); Hans Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought* (ed. John Riches; trans. James C. G. Greig; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984), 101-24;

Williams, Hays, and Hafemann note the role Jer 9:22-23 (LXX) plays in forming Paul's understanding of what constitutes appropriate "boasting" in 1 Cor 1:26-31. Developing the hermeneutical method of intertextuality, O'Day argues that the Jeremiah text has a much larger function than merely serving as the framework of Paul's argument.[68] Similar to Jer 9:22-23 (LXX), the triad in 1 Corinthians critiques false sources of security and emphasizes the consequences of defining oneself according to the triad wise/mighty/rich. Paul's text thus represents a christocentric shift in that he focuses on God's saving acts in Christ. Williams and Hays likewise observe the eschatological aspect of "boasting" in the Lord. Williams asserts that when the context of Jer 9:22-23 (LXX) and the text's appearances within early Jewish literature are considered within 1 Cor 1:26-31, they draw attention to God's eschatological plan and to the misguided "boast" in the human standards of wisdom, power, and riches.[69] Also interpreting 1 Cor 1:26-31 in the context of eschatological judgment, Hays contends that Paul draws upon Jer 9:22-23 (LXX) in order to reshape the identity of the Corinthian community and to warn the Corinthians of God's impending judgment.[70] Using 1 Cor 1:31 as a starting point of his interpretation of Jer 9:22-23 (LXX) in 2 Cor 10:17, Hafemann correctly concludes that to "boast" in the Lord does not mean to cease from "boasting" entirely but rather means to "boast" only in what God has accomplished in the individual's life. To "boast" in the Lord is "the human counterpart of being commended by the Lord and hence 'approved' by him."[71] The predominant weakness of the theological approach, however, is its reluctance to interact with the socio-historical and rhetorical contexts that drive Paul's "boasting" passages.

Although some scholars have brought into scholarly discussion Greco-Roman texts that shed light on Paul's apologetic method and use of "boasting" terminology, they predominately turn to 2 Cor 10:1-13:13 for interpreting "boasting"

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Frank Pack, "Boasting in the Lord," *ResQ* 19/2 (1976): 65-71; Thomas Fahy, "St. Paul's 'Boasting' and 'Weakness,'" *ITQ* 31 (1964): 214-27.

[68] O'Day, "Jeremiah 9:22-23," 259-67; cf. Williams, *The Wisdom*, 103-32; Richard B. Hays, "The Conversion of the Imagination: Scripture and Eschatology in 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 45 (1999): 391-412.

[69] Williams, *The Wisdom*, 103-32.

[70] Hays, "The Conversion," 391-412.

[71] Scott J. Hafemann, *2 Corinthians* (NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 406, 412; idem, "'Self-Commendation,'" 66-88; idem, "Paul's Use of the Old Testament in 2 Corinthians," *Int* 52/3 (1998): 246-57.

in 1 Corinthians and do not differentiate between self-praise and "boasting."[72] For instance, Betz unpersuasively links Paul's apostolic defense in 2 Cor 10:1-13:13 with Socrates' self-presentation in Plato's *Apology* and argues that Paul's critique of his opponents is a parody of sophistic "boasting" designed to expose the absurdity of his opponents' self-presentation.[73] Betz's focus on parallels of Paul's self-presentation with the Socratic tradition misses the broader Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition of self-defense. Overcoming Betz' shortcomings, Judge and Forbes also argue that Greco-Roman conventions of self-praise and "boasting" inform the situation in 2 Cor 10:1-13:13. Judge contends that Paul's "boasting" represents a parody of the standard principles of self-praise in the Greco-Roman world since Paul engages in a careful *reductio ad absurdum* of rhetorical methods.[74] Similarly, Forbes maintains that Paul's emphasis on his weakness is a parody of the "boastful" self-presentation by his opponents.[75] Although Forbes rightly observes that the terms περιαυτολογία and ἀλαζονεία are closely related, his analysis could have benefited from a survey of the καυχ- stem in Greco-Roman rhetoric before embarking on his interpretation of "boasting" in 2 Corinthians.[76] Had he done so, Forbes would have noted the connection between περιαυτολογία, ἀλαζονεία, and the καυχ- stem. Briefly surveying the conventions of self-praise and the figure of the ἀλαζών provides not "a convincing background," as Forbes suggests, but rather an incomplete picture from which to interpret Paul's "boasting" passages.[77] The overall weaknesses of the studies by Betz, Judge, Forbes, and others is that they focus on the Greco-Roman conventions of self-praise and "boasting" as being synonymous and place minimal emphasis on "boasting" in both Jewish literature and 1 Corinthians. Moreover, by not differentiating between self-praise and "boasting,"

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[72] E.g. Watson, "Paul and Boasting," 77-100; Forbes, "Comparison," 1-30; George B. Davis, "True and False Boasting in 2 Cor 10-13" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1999); Savage, *Power through Weakness*; Karl A. Plank, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987); John T. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence* (SBLDS 99; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988); Edwin A. Judge, "Paul's Boasting in Relation to Contemporary Professional Practice," *AusBR* 16 (1968): 37-50; Michael Wojciechowski, "Paul and Plutarch on Boasting," *JGRChJ* 3 (2006): 99-109.

[73] Hans Dieter Betz, *Paul's Apology: 2 Corinthians 10-13 and the Socratic Tradition* (Protocol of the Second Colloquy; Berkeley: Center for Hermeneutical Studies, 1975).

[74] Judge, "Paul's Boasting," 37-50. See also his articles "St. Paul and Classical Society," *JAC* 15 (1972): 19-36; "St. Paul and Socrates," *Interchange: Papers on Biblical and Current Questions* 13 (1973): 106-16; "The Conflict of Educational Aims in New Testament Thought," *Journal of Christian Education* 9 (1966): 32-45.

[75] Forbes, "Comparison," 1-30.

[76] Forbes, "Comparison," 8-13.

[77] Forbes, "Comparison," 22.

scholars disregard the various nuances and perceptions of these rhetorical conventions within Greco-Roman society. This disregard points to the need for expanding the terminological scope of their studies. It is when we broaden our examination of the semantic field of self-praise and "boasting" that we begin to grasp the uniqueness and controversial aspect of Paul's theology of "boasting" to a first-century audience.

Interestingly, Callan examines Paul's use of "boasting" from a psychological perspective and argues that Paul displays inconsistencies in his "boasting."[78] Observing Paul's competitive and self-reliant nature, Callan holds that Paul continues to rely on himself and compete with others, despite not wanting to do so, and justifies his behavior by attributing it to God working in him.[79] Callan mistakenly declares that Paul thinks little of those he competes with by not taking into consideration Paul's comments regarding his relationship with Apollos. If Paul has reason to think less of someone, it would be Apollos since his presence in Corinth has negatively affected Paul's standing with the Corinthians. Paul does not present Apollos in a negative light but rather speaks of him with cordial terms and views him as a comrade in ministry. More importantly, Callan has misunderstood Paul's motivation in "boasting" and the Greco-Roman allowances for acceptable self-praise through his critique of Paul as being arrogant, self-reliant, competitive, and inconsistent. Callan does not take into consideration the Corinthian context and its focus on honor and social status and consequently blames Paul for the problem of "boasting" among the Corinthian community. Since he neglects examining the ancient context of self-praise and "boasting," Callan misses the categorical distinction between "boasting" and self-praise not only in Paul's letters but also in the Greco-Roman context.

In the recent years, the Corinthian correspondence has been analyzed from the social historical perspective, which has broadened our understanding of the

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[78] Terrance Callan, "Competition and Boasting: Toward a Psychological Portrait of Paul," *ST* 40/2 (1986): 137-56; and its revision in *Psychological Perspectives on the Life of Paul: An Application of the Methodology of Gerd Theissen* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 16-50.

[79] Callan, "Competition," 144, comments: "Boasting is intimately related to the self-reliant, competitive character which we have discovered in Paul; one who is motivated by a desire to surpass one's peers might very readily boast of success in doing so . . . Paul is critical of any boasting about himself, yet continues to boast. In part this is unconscious; but insofar as it is conscious, Paul justifies it by identifying with Jesus." Cf. C. H. Dodd, "The Mind of Paul: I," in *New Testament Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953), 67-82; idem, "The Mind of Paul: A Psychological Approach," *BJRL* 17 (1933): 91-105, who also interprets Paul's "boasting" as demonstrative of his pride.

situation in the Corinthian community and Paul's employment of the καυχ- stem.[80] Some of the key monographs that evaluate the Corinthian correspondence in light of possible conceptual parallels in Greco-Roman literature and society include: Litfin's *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation*, Winter's *Philo and Paul among the Sophists*, and Clarke's *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth*.[81] Though "boasting" and self-praise are discussed in varying degrees within these studies, they nonetheless provide useful contextual frameworks from which to interpret Paul's "boasting" passages.

While some have located the Corinthians' preoccupation with wisdom and knowledge with Hellenistic Judaism,[82] others argue that the Greco-Roman rhetoric best accounts for the background of wisdom and knowledge.[83] Litfin, for example, addresses how Paul conceives of his *modus operandi* and how this view relates to the basic presuppositions of Paul's thought. Litfin traces the historical and intellectual development of Greco-Roman rhetoric from its origins to first century CE in order to demonstrate that this tradition underlies the Corinthian community's expression of wisdom. Concentrating on the rhetorical problems as reflected in 1 Cor 1:10-4:21, Litfin contends that Paul directs his criticism toward a presentation of the gospel that is dependent upon adornments of rhetorical acumen rather than the sovereign work of the Spirit.[84] Litfin concludes that 1:10-4:21 reflects contrasting theories of discourse arising from differing theological assumptions.[85] Some Corinthians highly esteem Greco-Roman rhetoric and thus criticize Paul for a lack of rhetorical eloquence in his preaching. By focusing on 1:17-2:5 as the key text for interpreting Paul's theology of preaching, Litfin omits from serious discussion such texts as 9:18-23 that also speak of Paul's *modus operandi*. Furthermore, Litfin rightly argues that 1:17-2:5 is Paul's *apologia* against criticisms that his preaching

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[80] E.g. Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*; Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (HUT 28; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991); Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (LCBI; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991); Brian J. Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I': Personal Example as Literary Strategy* (JSNTSup 177; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); Chow, *Patronage and Power*.
[81] Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*; Winter, *Philo and Paul*; Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*.
[82] Lamp, *First Corinthians*; Horsley, "Pneumatikos vs. Psychikos," 269-88; idem, "Wisdom of Words," 224-39; Davis, *Wisdom and Spirit*.
[83] Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*; Michael A. Bullmore, *St. Paul's Theology of Rhetorical Style: An Examination of 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 in the Light of First Century Greco-Roman Rhetorical Culture* (San Francisco: International Scholars Press, 1995); Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*.
[84] Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*, 10, 52-58.
[85] Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*, 250-51.

fails to measure up against Greco-Roman eloquence, but he does not deal extensively with the influence of the sophistic movement on the Corinthian community's perceptions of Paul's preaching.

Winter argues that Paul critiques sophistic self-presentation in 1 Cor 1:10-4:21 and contends that Paul's own theological convictions prevent him from behaving and conducting his ministry like the sophists of his day. The main purpose of his study is twofold: (1) to address the sophists' impact on the Jews of Alexandria and the Christians in Corinth; and (2) to examine in which sense Philo and Paul are "among the sophists." Winter successfully situates both Philo and Paul within the framework of first-century sophism as individuals who detach themselves from the opportunistic activities of the sophists. Winter contends that Paul "deliberately adopts an anti-sophistic stance and thus defends his church-planting activities in Corinth against a backdrop of sophistic conventions, perceptions and categories."[86] The main weakness in Winter's work is his being too eager to attribute Paul's actions and argumentation to sophistic influence rather than attributing them to other factors. For example, Winter relates Paul's decision to engage in hard labor while in Corinth to his taking an "anti-sophistic stance" so that he might not be identified with the sophists who accepted payment for their services.[87] While this identification may be one factor, Winter avoids discussing the patron-client relationship and its possible impact on Paul's ministry in Corinth. In another instance, Winter suggests that 1 Cor 1:26-31 refers to the social status and practice of "boasting" among the sophists exclusively rather than to a much broader cross-section of Corinth.[88] While it is true that sophists generally were wealthy, claimed to possess wisdom, and were politically influential, that does not necessarily mean that Paul has them entirely in mind. Wisdom, power, and wealth were not limited to the sophists, nor were the sophists the only ones guilty of "glorying" in these things instead of "glorying" in the Lord. Winter's failure to relate the sophistic movement to the overarching dynamics of honor/shame that drove most sectors of ancient society proves to be a serious oversight.

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[86] Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 141.
[87] Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 169.
[88] Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 187-95.

Examining the nature of leadership in 1 Cor 1-6, Clarke demonstrates how Paul modifies the Corinthian community's understanding of church leadership.[89] Clarke assesses the situation in Corinth from the perspective that leadership is expensive and elitist (occupied by the wise, well-born, and powerful) and is a position that affords one with honor, increased status, and praise. With a fraction of the community belonging to the Corinthian elite, Clarke contends that the community adopts some of the secular practices and perceptions of leadership. Paul therefore exhorts the Corinthians to view Christian leadership differently than that of secular leadership and accuses them of being "thoroughly secular."[90] One aspect of secular leadership adopted by the Corinthian community is its inclination towards "boasting" in leaders. "Boasting," according to Clarke, is one aspect of self-advancement in secular society, where individuals "boast" about wealth, reputation, wisdom, and take pride in others. Besides limiting his scope of leadership, status, and patronage to 1 Cor 1-6 and ignoring the rest of the epistle (specifically 8:1-11:1), another weakness in Clarke's study is his failure to differentiate between self-praise and "boasting." Clarke, like many other scholars, puts them both into the same negative "boasting" category.

While all of the aforementioned studies illuminate Paul's treatment of "boasting," these studies expose the need for additional investigation of Paul's usage of "boasting" and self-praise particularly in 1 Cor 1:10-4:21 and 9:1-27 since these passages are not at the forefront of their investigations. Hence, this present work seeks to address the lacuna in modern scholarship and add to our understanding of these rhetorical conventions by focusing on the categorical distinction between self-praise and "boasting" in Greco-Roman literature and in Paul's response to the Corinthian community in 1 Corinthians.

§4 Personality Rhetoric Versus Gospel Rhetoric Defined

Throughout Paul's discussion of wisdom, rhetoric, and leadership in 1 Cor 1:10-4:21 and 9:1-27, we note a conflicting discrepancy between what members of the Corinthian community hold as standards of good rhetoric with Paul's proclaimed

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[89] Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*; idem, "Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth," *TynBul* 43/2 (1992): 395-98.
[90] Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 107, cf. 41-107.

*modus operandi* and definition of wisdom. In dealing with the factions around himself and Apollos and the Corinthians' adoration of wisdom, Paul distinguishes between proper and improper rhetoric. For purposes of presentational simplicity, it will be convenient to devise labels to designate these two forms of rhetoric handily throughout the remainder of this thesis. Although no term is wholly satisfactory, the convenient labels used here to designate rhetoric that Paul lauds will be "gospel rhetoric," while the label used to designate rhetoric that Paul castigates will be "personality rhetoric." Rhetoric is understood simply as persuasion, without any positive or negative connotations.[91] In nonjudgmental terms, rhetoric "seeks to instigate a change of attitudes and motivations, it strives to persuade, to teach and to engage the hearer/reader by eliciting reactions, emotions, convictions, and identifications."[92] Rhetoric is the use of language to influence one's audience for or against a certain course of action. Paul does not have an aversion towards rhetoric itself since it can be a means for teaching virtue and wisdom. In that case, neutral forms of rhetoric (a category that Paul does not discuss) can be transformed into gospel rhetoric when used to advance gospel, as Paul understands it. It is only when rhetoric is used for purposes of advancing one's self or one's group in ways that run contrary to the gospel (again, as Paul understands it), that rhetoric impedes one's spiritual growth and creates airs of superiority and factions; in that case, neutral forms of rhetoric have degenerated into what might be termed "personality rhetoric."

Personality rhetoric focuses on securing public followings, fame, prestige, and social status; whereas gospel rhetoric focuses on commitment in proclaiming the gospel message, obedience in serving the Lord and the believing community, and demonstrating God's redemptive power at work. Personality rhetoric is characterized by conceit and arrogance, while gospel rhetoric is characterized by humility and servitude. For Paul, gospel rhetoric is an antidote to the Corinthians' "boastful" self-praise and divisiveness. Paul's differentiation between personality

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[91] For further discussion of rhetoric, see the works by George A. Kennedy: *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); *A New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984); *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963); *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World: 300 B.C. – A.D. 300* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972). See also R. Dean Anderson, Jr., *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul* (CBET 18; Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1996).

[92] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 33/3 (1987): 387.

rhetoric and gospel rhetoric therefore functions as a reevaluation of aspects of Greco-Roman culture upon which rhetoric is founded.

The point of distinction between the two types of rhetoric is firmly rooted in Paul's theology. Paul's declaration, πάντα δὲ ποῖω διὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ἵνα συγκοινωνὸς αὐτοῦ (9:23), encapsulates the mission of gospel rhetoric. Whereas rhetoricians, particularly the sophists, adapt their message to the audience and context, for Paul there can be no variation in the fundamental components of the gospel message. For Paul, the proclamation of the gospel is not dependent upon any rhetorical techniques of eloquence but upon the demonstration of the Spirit and power (2:4-5). Being a proponent of gospel rhetoric means that Paul acknowledges that the skill of the preacher has nothing to do with who among an audience will respond favorably to the gospel message. As we shall discover, although Paul strives to write and speak in what the Corinthians would consider good Greek without employing sophistic excess, Paul's stylistic techniques and delivery do not always result in winning favor among the entire Corinthian community and subject him to criticism and negative comparison with Apollos.

§5 The Approach of This Study

Little research has been devoted to examining the rhetorical conventions of self-praise and "boasting" in 1 Corinthians. The understanding of these conventions has been formed largely on the basis of few Greco-Roman texts, and these texts are then declared as representative of the wider Greco-Roman understanding of these conventions. These selected texts are then compared against Paul's "boasting" passages. A more detailed examination of the rhetorical conventions of self-praise and "boasting" is needed. The following study is presented in the hope that it will contribute toward a greater understanding of the ancient rhetorical conventions of self-praise and "boasting" and broaden the perspective from which Paul's "boasting" passages are viewed.[93] It will attempt to avoid the methodological weaknesses

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[93] The focus on the Greco-Roman background does not imply that scholars should examine the Corinthian correspondence from either a Jewish or Greco-Roman background. To argue for an either or approach is to sell short the profundity of Paul's thought. Both backgrounds influence Paul's understanding of "boasting" and self-praise. This study does not focus on the Jewish background of "boasting" because others have adequately examined this aspect, so it is unnecessary to rehearse their findings. For "boasting" in early Jewish literature, see Davis, "True and False Boasting," 57-107; Williams, *The Wisdom*, passim.

present in some of the investigations on this subject by integrating lexical, theological, and Greco-Roman background studies to illuminate the dialogue between Paul and members of the Corinthian community regarding what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable "boasting" in 1 Cor 1:10-4:21 and 9:1-27 (with 5:1-13; 13:1-13; and 15:31 offering supportive evidence).

This study seeks to discuss 1 Corinthians in sufficient detail to uncover Paul's understanding of "boasting" in the aforementioned passages. Because this study does not aim to undertake a verse-by-verse exegesis of these five texts, only relevant sections and verses will be addressed. More emphasis will be placed on an exegesis of 4:1-21 and 9:1-27 since these two chapters deal with self-praise, "boasting," sophistic rhetoric, and leadership as they pertain to Paul in a more extended fashion than they do elsewhere in the epistle. Chapters 4:1-21 and 9:1-27 serve as examples of Paul's differentiation between appropriate and inappropriate "boasting" and self-praise, and they focus on Paul's call for imitation.

Because the occasion and intensity of Paul's discourse in 2 Corinthians drastically differs from that of 1 Corinthians, we will avoid drawing upon the apologetic "boasting" passage in 2 Cor 10:1-13:13.[94] Unlike the situation in 2 Corinthians, the problems in 1 Corinthians are internal. Paul does not provide explicit evidence in 1 Corinthians that he faces external opponents at the time of composing 1 Corinthians. Nevertheless, some scholars turn to 2 Corinthians for support of their reconstruction of the situation in 1 Corinthians.[95] However, this method tends to ignore that the material in 2 Corinthians represents a new and declining stage in Paul's relationship with the Corinthians.

This study is divided into two sections, with Part One focusing on the Greco-Roman background and Part Two focusing on Paul's response to the Corinthian situation. Chapter One will investigate the rhetorical conventions of self-praise and "boasting" in the extant Greco-Roman literature and will discuss the principles, limitations, and prohibitions behind the practice of self-praise. Since Greco-Roman

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[94] For the setting of 2 Corinthians, see Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 327-52; C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC 8; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1973), 1-50; Ralph P. Martin, "The Setting of 2 Corinthians," *TynBul* 37 (1986): 3-19; Scott E. McClelland, "'Super-Apostles, Servants of Christ, Servants of Satan': A Response," *JSNT* 14 (1982): 82-87.

[95] Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, passim; idem, "Invective: Paul and His Enemies in Corinth," in *Perspectives on Language & Text: Essays & Poems in Honor of F. Andersen's 60th Birthday* (ed. Edgar W. Conrad and Edward G. Newing; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 359-73, is one such scholar who reads the theme of enmity in 1 Corinthians through the lens of 2 Corinthians.

writers occasionally target sophists as one group of individuals who engage in illegitimate self-praise, Chapter Two will focus on the emergence and rhetorical ideology of the Second Sophistic movement. These first chapters form the basis from which to view Paul's discourse on "boasting" and self-praise in 1 Corinthians, with most attention focused on 1:10-4:21 and 9:1-27 (chs. 3-6).

Part Two addresses Paul's response to the Corinthian community regarding the emergence of factions and preoccupation with status, wisdom, and power among some of its members. Chapter Three focuses on Paul's call for the community to transform its understanding of their conversion, wisdom, and Paul's *modus operandi*. After having established the framework of "boasting" in the Lord, Chapter Four examines Paul's presentation of himself and Apollos as examples of leaders who cooperate in God's mission field for the purposes of censuring the "boastful" divisiveness and allegiances (both outgrowths of sophistic influence) among some of the Corinthians. Chapters Five and Six center on Paul's paradigmatic presentation of himself that combats the Corinthians' anthropocentric "boasting" on a more personal and direct level (4:1-21; 9:1-27; 13:1-13; 15:30-32). Chapter Five explores Paul's call to imitate him as one who follows Christ's example of servitude and as one who views social status and leadership from a theological perspective (4:1-21). Finally, Chapter Six examines Paul as a model of one who relinquishes his inherent cruciform rights and freedoms for the benefit of others (9:1-27; cf. 13:1-13; 15:30-32). Paul's surrender of his apostolic right to receive support not only addresses the issue of consuming food sacrificed to idols but also criticizes the establishment of the patron/client relationship in the Corinthian community as a means of increasing one's social status.

In our exegesis of the καυχ- stem in 1 Corinthians, we will attempt to answer several questions: How are the rhetorical conventions of self-praise and "boasting" understood in the Greco-Roman world? What is Paul's distinction between appropriate and inappropriate "boasting," and how do members of the Corinthian community understand this differentiation? For Paul, what does it mean to "boast of the Lord" in relation to the issue of leadership, to his *modus operandi*, and to his self-presentation?

The central premise of this thesis is that Paul derives the principle of "boasting" in the Lord from Jer 9:22-23 (LXX), thereby deviating from the acceptable norms of self-praise in the Greco-Roman literature, and presents his

definitions of theocentric "boasting" and gospel rhetoric in order to rebuke those Corinthians who engage in anthropocentric "boasting" in hopes of securing secular social status and honor. Through his employment of the καυχ- stem, Paul introduces the Corinthians to a new understanding of the Greco-Roman rhetorical terms designating self-praise and "boasting"—an understanding that had long resided within the scriptures of Israel— thereby casting what the Corinthians deem as acceptable self-praise into a negative eschatological light. Believing self-praise is an acceptable and useful means to acquire and maintain social status and honor within the believing community, the Corinthians view their self-praise with such terms as περιαυτολογία and ἐπαινέω accompanied with the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτοῦ. Paul, however, challenges the basis for the Corinthians' self-praise and by shifting their self-praise into a pejorative "boasting" category through the introduction of the καυχ- stem, which for the Corinthians is reminiscent of the ἀλαζ- stem. It is Paul's shift in terminology which offers a new hermeneutical grid from which to explore his critique of the secular notions of social status, wisdom, power, patronage, and leadership in 1 Corinthians.

PART ONE

ANTHROPOCENTRIC "BOASTING":

THE GRECO-ROMAN BACKGROUND

# CHAPTER ONE

## GRECO-ROMAN RHETORICAL CONVENTIONS OF "BOASTING" AND SELF-PRAISE

Conventions for "boasting" and self-praise existed as early as Plato, Aristotle, Homer, and Aesop. Rhetoricians, sophists, and philosophers regularly engaged in self-praise, which oftentimes was in the form of comparison (σύγκρισις) with other rhetoricians, sophists, or philosophers. By comparing themselves with others, they practiced a form of self-advertisement, of which those relating to self-praise and "boasting" are of particular interest here.[1] "Boasting" and self-praise, however, were not limited to rhetoricians, sophists, and philosophers. Instead, they were practiced widely among the broad spectrum of those vying for honor within the Greco-Roman world.[2]

References to self-praise and "boasting" frequently appear within the matrix of honor and shame that permeated the Greco-Roman world, where the pursuit of honor was a competitive endeavor that aimed to elevate and maintain one's social standing. John Elliott helpfully defines honor as involving the "socially approved and expected attitudes and behavior in areas where power, sexual status, and religion intersect. Honor is the public claim to worth and status (both ascribed and achieved) along with the social acknowledgment of such worth, status, and reputation."[3] The

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[1] Jan Lambrecht, "Dangerous Boasting: Paul's Self-Commendation in 2 Corinthians 10-13," in *The Corinthian Correspondence* (ed. R. Bieringer; BETL 125; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 325-26, rightly differentiates between the terms "self-commendation" and "boasting": "In common speech self-commendation need not necessarily be understood as boasting. In commending oneself, a person often intends his or her self-praise as a justification or legitimation. Boasting for the most part misses that nuance: in boasting one publicly speaks of status and achievements with justifiable or unjustifiable pride." See also Christopher B. Forbes, "Comparison, Self-Praise, and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric," *NTS* 32 (1986): 2-13.

[2] While advanced rhetorical education on the techniques of persuasive argument was limited to those of higher social status, familiarization with rhetorical conventions was not limited to the social elite. See Ben Witherington, III, *Conflict and Community: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 40n.121; A. Duane Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric* (SNTSMS 79; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 124-26; Robert S. Dutch, "The Educated Elite in First Corinthians: A Social-Scientific Study of Education and Community Conflict in a Graeco-Roman Context" (Ph.D. diss., University of Bristol, 1998), passim.

[3] John H. Elliott, *Social-Scientific Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 130. For a summary of honor, see Halvor Moxnes, "Honor and Shame," in

claim to honor required a "truthful" estimation of oneself—or at least an account of oneself that would be accepted as "truthful" among those within one's social network. This would include accounts of one's physical presence or strength, speaking ability, wealth, political power, wisdom, success at athletic competitions, or other accomplishments. Acquired honor could be gained or lost as one sought to receive public recognition. If the individual had proper grounds for making a public claim, honor was granted and the individual increased his social status. If not, the individual offended his audience, his claim to honor was rejected, and he lost social status. Thus, criticism of self-praise and "boasting" often is associated with a desire to earn unmerited recognition. The balancing act between "boasting" and self-praise on the one hand and the scales of honor and shame on the other hand could at times be precarious, as will be shown below.

The terminological options within the semantic field of self-praise and "boasting" are extensive,[4] being much broader than the καυχ- stem used by the apostle Paul in the Corinthian correspondence—itself a semantic indicator that appears relatively infrequently in the extant Greco-Roman texts outside of the LXX and NT. Because space limitations preclude thorough treatment of the variety of terms denoting "boasting" and self-praise, only the terms with the καυχ- stem (καυχάομαι, καύχημα, καύχησις, ἐγκαυχάομαι, ἐκκαυχάομαι, and κατακαυχάομαι)

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*The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (ed. Richard Rohrbaugh; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 19-40; idem, "Honor and Shame," *BTB* 23 (1993): 167-76; Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (3d ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 27-57; Robert Jewett, "Paul, Shame, and Honor," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 551-74; David A. deSilva, "Let the One Who Claims Honor Establish that Claim in the Lord: Honor Discourse in the Corinthian Correspondence," *BTB* 28 (1998): 61-74; idem, "Investigating Honor Discourse: Guidelines from Classical Rhetoricians," *SBL Seminar Papers*, 1997 (*SBLSP* 36; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 491-525; Mark T. Finney, "Conflict in Corinth: The Appropriateness of Honour-Shame as the Primary Social Context," (Ph.D. diss., University of St Andrews, 2004); George B. Davis, "True and False Boasting in 2 Cor 10-13" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1999), 13-31.

[4] Some of the terminology for self-praise and "boasting" includes the following word groups in Greek: ἀλαζονεία ("boastfulness, arrogance, imposture"), ἀλαζών ("a boaster, braggart, charlatan"), ἀπειλή ("boastful promises, boasts"), αὐχέω ("to boast, declare confidently, take pride in something"), εὔχομαι ("to vaunt, boast vainly, pray for something, vow"), καυχάομαι ("to boast, glory, take pride in something"), κομπέω ("to boast of, brag"), μεγαλαυχέω ("to boast greatly, brag"), περπερεύομαι ("to boast, brag"), φιλοτιμέομαι ("to glory, pride oneself upon something, aspire honor"); and in Latin: *alazon* ("a braggart, boaster"), *exsulto* ("to vaunt, boast, exult"), *gloria* ("glory, praise, honor, fame, pride, boasting"), *grandiloquus* ("speaking loftily, a boaster"), *jactantia* ("boasting, ostentatious display, bragging"), *magnidicus* ("boastful, bragging"), *magnificus* ("boastful, eminent, haughty, bragging"), *magniloquentia* ("pompous language, boasting"), and *ostentatio* ("boastful, a vain display"). For discussion of some of these terms, see Davis, "True and False Boasting," 12-56; Forbes, "Comparison," 1-30.

and terms of related semantic range (the ἀλαζ- stem and αὐχέω) will be considered here (§3 and §4) since they have direct bearing on the "boasting" passages in 1 Corinthians. Before discussing the above terms, we will begin by examining the convention of self-praise in the Greco-Roman world. This entails considering Plutarch's treatise "On Praising Oneself Inoffensively" (§1) and the rhetorical handbooks that deal with self-praise (§2). As will be seen in the following discussion, the terminology for self-praise and "boasting" frequently overlaps. Some Greco-Roman writers, such as Plutarch, employ each of the above terminological categories. To only discuss the καυχ- stem would therefore provide a limited picture of various nuances of self-praise and "boasting" in the Greco-Roman world.

The purpose of the survey of the Greco-Roman conventions of "boasting" and self-praise is twofold: (1) it will demonstrate that the semantic field pertaining to "boasting" and (more particularly) to self-praise in the extant Greco-Roman literature have both positive and negative connotations, and (2) it will set the groundwork for comparison of Paul's view of "boasting" with the views and conventions of rhetoricians of the Greco-Roman world. While the terminological options for self-praise and "boasting" frequently overlap, this survey will demonstrate that the ancients possessed a categorical distinction between self-praise and "boasting." The Greco-Roman writers understood the risky nature of self-praise and permitted its use under certain prescribed situations. However, when an individual exceeded the suitable limits tolerated by his audience or when the purpose of his engaging in self-praise was self-advancement, then his self-praise moved beyond the category of self-praise to the category of "boasting." It is this differentiation that will inform us of the situation in Corinth and more specifically of Paul's discourse with the Corinthian community.

§1 Self-praise in Plutarch's Treatise "On Praising Oneself Inoffensively"

The foremost work on the topic of self-glorification from the first century CE that also highlights the ancient categorical distinction between self-praise and "boasting" is Plutarch's "On Praising Oneself Inoffensively" (Περὶ τοῦ ἑαυτὸν ἐπαινεῖν ἀνεπιφθόνως). In this essay, Plutarch outlines for the virtuous statesman Herculanus the legitimate circumstances for engaging in self-praise. This outline includes discussion of the rhetorical devices that make such self-praise palatable to

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the statesman's audience and advice for avoiding self-praise when it is inopportune.[5] Plutarch presupposes that the statesman is truthful and is not praising himself in order to receive additional praise from others; instead, for Plutarch the statesman is to risk the offensive nature of self-praise in order to establish his own character with his audience. While addressing the circumstances that justify self-praise, Plutarch differentiates between seasonable self-praise (that which is palatable to one's audience) and unseasonable self-praise (that which oversteps the suitable limits of self-praise and arouses envy among one's audience).

In the introduction to his treatise, Plutarch acknowledges that though the consensus of the Greco-Roman culture viewed vaunting one's own importance or power as repugnant, some individuals who publicly denounced such conduct engaged in self-praise anyway.[6] After remarking on this hypocrisy among orators, Plutarch states that praise from others is "the most pleasant of recitals," whereas self-praise is "for others the most distressing."[7] He briefly articulates the rationale why self-praise has such an offensive nature to one's audience and provides three principal reasons why self-praise should be avoided:

> For first we regard self-praisers (τοὺς ἑαυτοὺς ἐπαινοῦντας) as shameless
> (ἀναισχύντους), since they should be embarrassed even by praise from
> others; second as unfair, as they arrogate to themselves what it is for others
> to bestow; and in the third place if we listen in silence we appear disgruntled

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[5] In his discussion of the ethical problems of self-praise, Hans Dieter Betz, "*De ipsius* (*Moralia* 539A-547F)" in *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature* (ed. Hans Dieter Betz; SCHNT 4; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), 373, asserts that self-praise presents the religious problem of self-deification. Though Plutarch does not focus on the religious issue of self-deification per se, Betz nevertheless proposes self-deification as the background of Plutarch's entire argument: Plutarch "can assume that this background, even if it is largely unexplained, is shared and agreed upon by every reader as part of Greco-Roman popular religion. Therefore, Plutarch can restrict himself to simply denouncing self-deification at several points of the argument" (p. 373). Although Plutarch refers to rulers who took human titles (Philadelphus, Philomentor, Euergetes, and Theophiles) instead of being proclaimed a god or son of a god and suggests that the self-praiser attribute part of his success to a deity, it appears that Betz overstates the issue of self-deification in Plutarch's argument. Perhaps it would be better to view the impact (negative or positive) self-praise has on interpersonal relationships as the backdrop of Plutarch's essay. See Plutarch, *Mor.*542E, 543E; see also Plutarch's quotation of Pericles, who refused to deify himself (Plutarch, *Mor.* 543D; Homer, *Od.* 16.187).

[6] Plutarch cites Euripides and Pindar as examples of those who are guilty of this practice (Plutarch, *Mor.* 539B-C; cf. Euripides [Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.* 675f., Eur. No. 978]; Pindar, *Olympian Odes* 9.41). The only instance in which Plutarch uses the term καυχᾶσθαι is when he quotes Pindar, who states: "Untimely vaunting plays the tune for madness" (καὶ τὸ καυχᾶσθαι παρὰ καιρὸν μανίαις ὑποκρέκειν; *Mor.* 539C).

[7] αὐτῷ μὲν γὰρ ὁ παρ᾽ ἄλλων ἔπαινος ἥδιστον ἀκουσμάτων ἐστίν . . . ἑτέροις δὲ ὁ περὶ αὑτοῦ λυπηρότατον (Plutarch, *Mor.* 539D).

and envious, while if we shy at this we are forced to join in the eulogies and confirm them against our better judgement, thus submitting to a thing more in keeping with unmanly flattery than with the showing of esteem—the praise of a man to his face (πρᾶγμα κολακείᾳ μᾶλλον ἀνελευθέρῳ προσῆκον ἢ τιμῇ τὸ ἐπαινεῖν παρόντας ὑπομένοντες). (Plutarch, *Mor.* 539D-E)

Self-praise is therefore offensive because the individual engaging in self-praise (1) lacks propriety, (2) usurps the right of others to commend whom they choose, and (3) damages his relationships with others either by creating feelings of envy or by forcing them to confirm the praises.

Before focusing on the reasons for which the statesman should risk public dishonor by praising himself, Plutarch considers the frivolous and offensive nature (τὸ κενὸν καὶ δυσχεραινόμενον) of self-praise. He likens the employment of self-praise for gratifying one's own ambition and fondness of fame to that of humanity feeding upon itself during times of extreme famine:

> Now the praise (ἔπαινος) is frivolous which men are felt to bestow upon themselves merely to receive it; and it is held in the greatest contempt (καταφρονεῖται μάλιστα), as it appears to aim at gratifying ambition and an unseasonable appetite for fame (φιλοτιμίας ἕνεκα γίνεσθαι καὶ δόξης ἀκαίρου φαινόμενος). For just as those who can find no other food are compelled to feed unnaturally on their own persons, and this is the extremity of famine, so when those who hunger for praise (ἐπαίνων) cannot find others to praise them (ἐπαινούντων), they give the appearance of seeking sustenance and succour for their vainglorious appetite from themselves, a graceless spectacle (ἀσχημονοῦσιν). (Plutarch, *Mor.* 540A)

Plutarch regards this "hunger for praise" when praise is lacking from others to be a "graceless spectacle." However, self-praise moves beyond being frivolous and contemptible to being envious and spiteful when its intention is to diminish another's glory or honor that rightfully belongs to that individual.[8] Plutarch advises

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[8] ὅταν δὲ μηδ᾿ ἁπλῶς καὶ καθ᾿ αὑτοὺς ἐπαινεῖσθαι ζητῶσιν, ἀλλ᾿ ἁμιλλώμενοι πρὸς ἀλλοτρίους ἐπαίνους ἔργα καὶ πράξεις ἀντιπαραβάλλωσιν αὐτῶν ὡς ἀμαυρώσοντες ἑτέρους, πρὸς τῷ κενῷ βάσκανον πρᾶγμα καὶ κακόηθες ποιοῦσι (Plutarch, *Mor.* 540B).

that when such undeserved claims are made, one should refute them by showing that they are groundless:

> Self-praise that is thrust by envy and jealousy among praises of others should be most diligently avoided (τὴν δ᾽ ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις ἐπαίνοις εἰς μέσον ὑπὸ φθόνου καὶ ζηλοτυπίας ἐξωθουμένην περιαυτολογίαν εὖ μάλα δεῖ φυλάττεσθαι); indeed we should not even endure such praise from others, but should give place to those on whom honour is conferred when they deserve it. If we hold them undeserving and of little worth, let us not strip them of their praise by presenting our own, but plainly refute their claim and show their reputation to be groundless. Here then is something we clearly must avoid. (Plutarch, *Mor.* 540B-C)

When individuals proclaim undeserved praise, Plutarch advises against undermining those claims by introducing one's own self-praise. Plutarch does not take issue against listening to one praise oneself as long as that individual is worthy of such honor. Instead, it is only when the individual has made a false claim to honor that the self-praise must be refuted.

In spite of the odious nature of self-praise, Plutarch acknowledges that self-glorification (περιαυτολογία) is acceptable under certain circumstances:

> Yet in spite of all this there are times when the statesman might venture on self-glorification (περιαυτολογίας), as it is called, not for any personal glory (δόξαν) or pleasure (χάριν), but when the occasion and the matter in hand demand that the truth be told about himself, as it might about another—especially when by permitting himself to mention his good accomplishments and character he is enabled to achieve some similar good. (Plutarch, *Mor.* 539E)

Plutarch suggests eight ways in which self-praise will not prove offensive. The first inoffensive use of self-praise cited by Plutarch is using self-praise to defend one's name from being tarnished. Defending one's character with self-praise should not be resented because others will not equate it with "boastfulness." Plutarch comments: "For not only is there nothing puffed up, vainglorious, or proud in taking a high tone

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about oneself at such a moment, but it displays as well a lofty spirit and greatness of character, which by refusing to be humbled humbles and overpowers envy."[9] Not only does the use of self-praise under these circumstances not spark feelings of resentment, but it can also inspire one's audience: "For men no longer think fit even to pass judgement on such as these, but exult and rejoice and catch the inspiration of the swelling speech, when it is well-founded and true."[10]

The second use of bearable self-praise listed by Plutarch occurs when the speaker has experienced misfortune and uses self-praise to move from a humbled state to that of an attitude of triumph and pride.

> The unfortunate . . . can boast and extol themselves with better grace than the fortunate (δυστυχοῦσι μᾶλλον ἁρμόζει μεγαλαυχία καὶ κόμπος ἢ εὐτυχοῦσιν). For the fortunate are felt to lay hands on glory, as it were, and take their pleasure of it in glorification of their pride, but the others, far removed from ambition by their plight, are looked upon as breasting ill-fortune, shoring up their courage, and eschewing all appeal to pity and all whining and self-abasement in adversity. And so, just as we regard those who strut on a walk and hold up their chin as fatuous and vain, . . . so the man cast down by fortune, when he stands upright in fighting posture . . . using self-glorification (μεγαλαυχία) to pass from a humbled and piteous state to an attitude of triumph and pride, strikes us not as offensive or bold, but as great and indomitable. (Plutarch, *Mor.* 541A-B)

The unfortunate, Plutarch maintains, have more latitude in self-glorification than the fortunate. When the unfortunate "boast," their "boasting" attests to their ambition and courage in their plight to achieve better circumstances and fortune.

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[9] οὐ γὰρ μόνον ἀλαζονείαν καὶ κενότητα καὶ φιλοτιμίαν ἐκπέφευγε τὸ λέγειν τι τηνικαῦτα περὶ αὑτοῦ σεμνόν, ἀλλὰκαὶ φρόνημα καὶ μέγεθος ἀρετῆς διαδείκνυσι τῷ μὴ ταπεινοῦσθαι ταπεινούσης καὶ χειρουμένης τὸν φθόνον (Plutarch, *Mor.* 540D).

[10] Plutarch, *Mor.* 540D. Plutarch cites several instances where self-praise incited inspiration rather than judgment (540C-541A). Referring to Cicero and Scipio as examples, Plutarch comments: "The Romans again were annoyed with Cicero for frequently vaunting his success with Catiline; but when Scipio said that it ill befitted them to sit in judgement over Scipio, to whom they owed the power to sit in judgement for all mankind, they put garlands on their heads, escorted him to the Capitol, and joined him in the sacrifice. For Cicero boasted not from necessity but for glory (ὁ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἀναγκαίως ἀλλ᾽ ὑπὲρ δόξης ἐχρῆτο τοῖς ἐπαίνοις); whereas the peril of the other did away with envy" (Plutarch, *Mor.* 540F-541A).

The third appropriate use of self-praise is when the speaker has experienced an injustice and vaunts as a means of self-defense. The plea for justice permits one to "boast" and engage in self-praise: "Further, it is no less, nay even more, permissible for a statesman when wronged to make some boast (λέγειν τι περὶ αὑτοῦ) to those who deal hardly with him. . . . For the freedom of speech that is involved in a plea for justice gives scope for self-praise (μεγαληγορίαν)."[11] Plutarch provides examples of prominent men who have previously benefited those individuals chastising them. Under normal circumstances, one is to display modesty; however, when justice is demanded because one has been denied appropriate honor or one's character has been attacked, Plutarch permits one to vaunt (μεγαλαυχίαν).[12]

In the fourth permissible use of self-praise, the speaker admits to an accusation but argues that the opposite of what he has been charged with would have been shameful (αἰσχρὸν) and base (φαῦλον).[13] In Plutarch's discussion of contrast, he turns to Demosthenes' oration *On the Crown* as an example of appropriate self-praise since Demosthenes refutes each charge with "the most felicitous contrasts" and then introduces self-praise (ἐπαίνους).[14] Acknowledging that self-praise generally is resented by one's audience, Demosthenes blends the praises of his audience with his own, thereby removing the offensiveness (ἀνεπίφθονον) and self-love (ἀφίλαυτον) in his speech. Through this masterful blend, his listeners, "taken off guard, accept with pleasure the praise of the speaker, which insinuates itself along with the praise of themselves; and their delight in the rehearsal of their own successes is followed at once with admiration and approval of him who made them possible."[15] The basis for Demosthenes' speech is that he has not received the honor and public recognition he justly deserves. On this basis, Demosthenes' oration

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[11] Plutarch, *Mor.* 541C-D.

[12] After citing examples from Homer's *Iliad* of Achilles who, out of anger, vaunts his triumphs (*Mor.* 541D; Homer, *Il.* 9.328; 16.70-71), Plutarch remarks: "But a man reproached for his very triumphs is entirely pardonable and escapes all censure if he extols (ἐγκωμιάζων) what he has done. For this, it is felt, is not recrimination (ὀνειδίζειν) but self-defence (ἀπολογεῖσθαι). It was this, for example, that allowed Demosthenes to speak with full freedom and made palatable the self-praise (ἐπαίνων) with which he fills nearly the whole oration *On the Crown*, as he glories in the very charges brought against him: his conduct as ambassador and statesman in the war" (Plutarch, *Mor.* 541E-F).

[13] Plutarch, *Mor.* 541F.

[14] Plutarch, *Mor.* 542A; Demosthenes, *Cor.* 101; 240. Plutarch's use of Demosthenes' oration is not surprising since Demosthenes' skill as a rhetorician was regarded highly by other rhetoricians (e.g. Cicero, *Brut.* 9.35; Quintilian, *Inst.* 10.1.76). For discussion of Demosthenes' oration *De Corona*, see Davis, "True and False Boasting," 48-52.

[15] Plutarch, *Mor.* 542B.

reveals the close relationship between acceptable self-praise and public recognition of one's achievements.

Plutarch supports the fifth use of self-praise in which the speaker praises others whose acts are the same as his own and in effect praises himself indirectly. Instead of feeling hostility (σφόδρα) and resentment (ἄχθονται) toward the speaker, the audience frequently responds positively to the speaker who praises another:

> Since towards one who praises himself (ἑαυτὸν ἐπαινοῦντι) the generality of men feel a great hostility and resentment, but do not feel so strongly against one who praises another, but often even listen with pleasure and voice their agreement, some, when the occasion allows, are in the habit of praising others whose aims and acts are the same as their own and whose general character is similar. In this way they conciliate the hearer and draw his attention to themselves; for although they are speaking of another, he at once recognizes in the speaker a merit that from its similarity deserves the same praises. For as one who vilifies another in terms that apply to himself does not deceive the audience, which sees that he vilifies himself rather than the other, so when one good man commends another he reminds hearers conscious of his merit of himself, so that they at once exclaim: "And are not you one of these?" (Plutarch, *Mor.* 542C-D)

The sixth proper occasion of self-praise occurs when orators are forced to speak of their own praise (ἐπαινεῖν αὐτοὺς) but make it more bearable to their audience by attributing their own achievements partly to chance and partly to the gods.[16] By attributing their fortune partly to fortune and partly to the gods, orators "disburden themselves, as it were, of honour."[17] Plutarch includes several examples of individuals who eradicated feelings of envy by attributing their commendable deeds to fortune and the gods rather than to their own abilities. One such example comes from Python of Aenos, who killed Cotys. When Python arrived in Athens, various speakers were surpassing one another in extolling him to the assembly.

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[16] Plutarch, *Mor.* 542E-F.

[17] φορτίου τῆς δόξης τὸ μὲν εἰς τὴν τύχην τὸ δὲ εἰς τὸν θεὸν ἀποτίθεσθαι (Plutarch, *Mor.* 542E). Plutarch adds: "For men would rather be bested by luck than by merit, feeling that in the first event another has had an advantage, in the second, that the failure lies in themselves and is their own doing" (Plutarch, *Mor.* 542E-F).

Noticing that individuals were becoming "jealous and disaffected he came forward and said: 'This, men or Athens, was the doing of some god; I did but lend my arm.'"[18]

The seventh device Plutarch recommends for palatable self-praise is amending the praise offered by another. When praised as eloquent (λόγιον), rich (πλούσιον), or powerful (δυνατὸν) by another, the speaker can request that individual to consider whether he is of "worthy character (χρηστός), commits no injuries (ἀβλαβὴς), and leads a useful life (ὠφέλιμος)."[19] By asking the above, the speaker does not introduce his own praise (τὸν ἔπαινον) but transfers it:

> He leaves the impression not of delighting in encomiasts (οὐδὲ χαίρειν δοκεῖ τοῖς ἐγκωμιάζουσιν αὐτὸν) but of being displeased with them for praise that is unbecoming and bestowed for the wrong reasons, using his better points to draw attention from the worse, not from a desire for praise (οὐκ ἐπαινεῖσθαι βουλόμενος), but to show how to praise (ἐπαινεῖν) aright. (Plutarch, *Mor.* 543B)

The speaker is therefore able to transfer the praise from his eloquence, skill, or success to praise of his life, character, or humanity.

The audience generally does not become envious of the speaker who transfers praise to these areas.[20] However, those who do not utilize this device often are met with resentment:

> While men resent the writers and speakers who assume the epithet "wise" (τοὺς τῆς σοφίας ἐπιγραφομένους ὄνομα) they are delighted with those who say that they love wisdom or are advancing in merit, or put forward some other such moderate and inoffensive claim. Whereas the rhetorical sophists (ῥητορικοὶ σοφισταὶ) who at their displays of eloquence accept from the

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[18] Plutarch, *Mor.* 542F. Plutarch also cites Achilles as an example of this type of self-praise (Plutarch, *Mor.* 542E; cf. Homer, *Il.* 22.379).

[19] πρὸς δὲ τοὺς μετρίους οὐκ ἄτοπόν ἐστι χρῆσθαι καὶ ταῖς ἐπανορθώσεσι τῶν ἐπαίνων, εἴ τις ὡς λόγιον ἢ πλούσιον ἢ δυνατὸν ἐπαινοίη, κελεύοντα μὴ ταῦτα περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγειν ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εἰ χρηστὸς καὶ ἀβλαβὴς καὶ ὠφέλιμος (Plutarch, *Mor.* 543A-B).

[20] Plutarch remarks: "For to him who declines the greater honours envy is not displeased to grant the more moderate, and does not cheat of true praise (τὸ ἀληθὲς ἐγκώμιον) those who reject what is false and vain" (Plutarch, *Mor.* 543D).

audience the cries of "how divine" and "spoken like a god" lose even such commendation as "fairly said" and "spoken as becomes a man." (Plutarch, *Mor.* 543E-F)

Because select writers, orators, and rhetorical sophists refuse to transfer praise and boldly proclaim their "wisdom" rather than accept modest titles, Plutarch considers them reprehensible.

The eighth device for eliminating envy from self-praise recommended by Plutarch is for the speaker to temper his own praise by including "certain minor shortcomings (ἐλλείψεις), failures (ἀποτεύξεις), or faults (ἁμαρτίας), thus obviating any effect of displeasure or disapproval."[21] When the speaker accompanies self-praise with mention of his own mistakes or weaknesses or confessions of poverty (πενίας), indigence (ἀπορίας), or low birth (δυσγενείας), the audience looks more favorably upon his self-praise. According to Plutarch, when shortcomings or "faults not altogether degrading or ignoble are set down beside the praise (ἐπαίνοις) they do away with envy."[22]

After discussing the eight ways in which self-praise will not prove offensive, Plutarch states that it is not enough simply to avoid offending one's audience or to avoid arousing envy but that there should be an advantage, goal, or purpose that moves an orator to engage in self-praise.[23] Plutarch therefore proposes three possible purposes or advantages for praising oneself. One such advantage of self-praise is to inspire and exhort one's audience with emulation and ambition:

> For exhortation that includes action as well as argument and presents the speaker's own example and challenge is endued with life: it arouses and spurs the hearer, and not only awakens his ardour and fixes his purpose, but also affords him hope that the end can be attained and is not impossible. (Plutarch, *Mor.* 544E)

The second occasion for self-praise is to humble the listener: "But there are also times when in order to overawe and restrain the hearer and to humble and subdue the

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[21] Plutarch, *Mor.* 543F.
[22] Plutarch, *Mor.* 544B.
[23] Plutarch, *Mor.* 544D.

headstrong and rash, it is not amiss to make some boast and extol oneself"
(κομπάσαι τι περὶ αὑτοῦ καὶ μεγαληγορῆσαι).[24] The third purpose Plutarch suggests
for utilizing self-praise is to allay the fears of one's friends and compatriots:
"Among friends and countrymen we can not only calm and chasten the overbold, but
also restore and rouse the spirits of the terrified and timorous by a seasonable
recourse to self-praise (μεγαλαυχία)."[25]

Following the discussion of the aim of self-praise, Plutarch proceeds to
consider the four situations in which an individual can be tempted to indulge in
"unseasonable self-praise" (τὸ ἐπαινεῖν ἀκαίρως ἑαυτόν). According to Plutarch,
"boasting" (περιαυτολογία) "has in self-love a powerful base of operations" such
that those who have a "modest interest in glory" succumb to praising themselves.[26]
Plutarch therefore recommends that individuals either avoid altogether the situations
and themes that encourage them to engage in self-praise or tread upon these
situations and themes with the utmost care.

In the first situation, the speaker reacts out of jealousy at the praise of
others.[27] Plutarch compares the urge to praise oneself to that of scratching an itch:

> First, when others are praised (τοῖς ἀλλοτρίοις ἐπαίνοις), our rivalry erupts,
> . . . into praise of self; it is seized with a certain barely controllable yearning
> and urge for glory (δόξαν) that stings and tickles like an itch, especially when
> the other is praised (ἐπαινῆται) for something in which he is our equal (τοῖς
> ἴσοις) or inferior (τοῖς ἐλάττοσιν). (Plutarch, *Mor.* 546C)

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[24] Plutarch, *Mor.* 544F.

[25] Plutarch, *Mor.* 545B. Plutarch cites examples of individuals who "boasted" in times of need
(Plutarch, *Mor.* 545B-C; cf. Xenophon, *Cyr.* 7.1.17; Aristides, *Or.* 49.105; Plutarch, *Mor.* 183D;
278D; Homer, *Od.* 12.209-212). Plutarch refers to the incident where Odysseus praised himself when
his men were dismayed at the sight and sound of the raging waters of Charybdis and remarks: "This
is not the self-praise of a demagogue (δημαγωγοῦντος) or would-be sophist (σοφιστιῶντος) or of
one who courts plaudits and cheers, but of a man who offers his virtue (ἀρετὴν) and understanding
(ἐπιστήμην) to his friends as security against despair. For at critical moments a successful outcome
may depend largely on the regard and confidence that are placed in some man who possesses the
experience (ἐμπειρίαν) and talents (δύναμιν) of a leader" (Plutarch, *Mor.* 545C-D).

[26] μέγα γὰρ ἡ περιαυτολογία τὴν φιλαυτίαν ὁρμητήριον ἔχουσα καὶ τοῖς πάνυ δοκοῦσι μετρίως ἔχειν
πρὸς δόξαν ἐμφαίνεται πολλάκις ἐπιτιθεμένη. καθάπερ γὰρ τῶν ὑγιεινῶν ἕν ἐστι παραγγελμάτων τὸ
τὰ νοσώδη χωρία φυλάττεσθαι παντάπασιν ἢ προσέχειν μᾶλλον αὑτῷ γινόμενον ἐν αὐτοῖς, οὕτως
ἔχει τινὰς ἡ περιαυτολογία καιροὺς καὶ λόγους ὀλισθηροὺς καὶ περιφέροντας εἰς αὐτὴν ἐκ πάσης
προφάσεως (Plutarch, *Mor.* 546B-C).

[27] Plutarch, *Mor.* 546C-D.

The praise (ἔπαινος) of others who are either equals or inferiors thus "inflames with jealousy those who are intemperate in seeking glory."[28]

Courtiers and the military fall victim to the second occasion of self-glorification (περιαυτολογία) in which the individual is so delighted with himself while recalling his own exploits that he engages in "vainglorious boasting" (μεγαλαυχίαν):

> Second, in telling of exploits that have been lucky and have turned out according to plan, many are so pleased with themselves that before they know it they have drifted into vainglorious boasting. For once they come to talk of some victory or political success or act or word of theirs that found favour with leading men, they get out of hand and go too far. (Plutarch, *Mor.* 546D)

The temptation to glorify oneself, however, is not limited to courtiers and the military but also includes those who have returned from a governor's banquet or from handling affairs of the state. When they recount the praise they received from "illustrious and royal personages" (ἀνδρῶν ἐπιφανῶν καὶ βασιλικῶν), they "fancy that they are not praising themselves (αὑτοὺς ἐπαινεῖν) but recounting praise received from others (ἑτέρων ἐπαίνους)."[29] Plutarch then adds a word of caution: "We must not therefore look warily to ourselves when we recount praise received from others and see that we do not allow any taint or suggestion of self-love (φιλαυτίας) and self-praise (περιαυτολογίας) to appear."[30]

The third opportunity for "unseasonable self-praise" involves praising oneself while censuring others.[31] Those who "suffer from a morbid craving for glory" (δόξαν νοσοῦσιν), particularly elderly men, fall victim to this sort of self-praise, for "once they have been drawn into admonishing others and rating unworthy habits and unwise acts, they magnify themselves (μεγαλύνοντες αὑτοὺς) as men

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[28] ὁ τῶν πλησίον ἔπαινος ἐκκαίει τῇ ζηλοτυπίᾳ τοὺς πρὸς δόξαν ἀκρατῶς ἔχοντας (Plutarch, *Mor.* 546D).

[29] Plutarch, *Mor.* 546E. Plutarch continues: "Some even suppose that the self-praise is quite unobserved by their audience when they report the greetings, salutations, and attentions of kings and generals, feeling that what they recite is not their own praise but proofs of the courtesy and affability of others" (Plutarch, *Mor.* 546E).

[30] Plutarch, *Mor.* 546F.

[31] Plutarch, *Mor.* 546F-547A.

who in the like circumstances have been prodigies of wisdom."[32] While Plutarch gives these distinguished men some latitude since their self-praise can purposefully arouse emulation and ambition in those being rebuked, he advises others to "carefully avoid and be wary of this deviation:"[33]

> For to point out the faults of our neighbours in any case gives pain, can hardly be borne, and requires great tact; but when a man intermingles praise of himself with censure of another, and uses another's disgrace to secure glory for himself (ἀδοξίας ἑτέρου δόξαν αὑτῷ), he is altogether odious and vulgar, as one who would win applause from the humiliation of another. (Plutarch, *Mor.* 547A)

In the fourth situation, Plutarch advises individuals "with a too ardent weakness for fame" to abstain from self-praise when praised by others.[34] Plutarch recommends modesty in these situations:

> For you should blush when praised (ἐρυθριᾶν ἐπαινούμενον), not be unblushing; you should restrain those who mention some great merit of yours, not find fault with them for doing you scant justice, as most do, going on themselves to recall and gorge themselves on other actions and feats of prowess until by thus commending themselves they undo the commendation of others (ἑτέρων ἔπαινον διαφθείρωσιν). (Plutarch, *Mor.* 547B)

Some individuals purposely entice through flattering speech, tributes, or questions for more detail those who are prone to seek fame and recognition to engage in self-praise.[35] Plutarch warns these individuals not to permit flattery to elicit an appetite to indulge in self-praise.

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[32] Plutarch, *Mor.* 546F.

[33] Plutarch, *Mor.* 547A.

[34] ὅσοι δὲ πρὸς δόξαν ἐμπαθέστερον ἐρρυήκασι, τούτοις ἄν τις οὐχ ἥκιστα παραινέσειεν ἀπέχεσθαι τοῦ σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐπαινεῖν, ὅταν ὑπ᾽ ἄλλων ἐπαινῶνται (Plutarch, *Mor.* 547B).

[35] "Now some tickle these men as it were by flattery and puff them up (ἔνιοι μὲν οὖν κολακεύοντες αὐτοὺς ὥσπερ γαργαλίζουσι καὶ φυσῶσιν); others maliciously throw out a little tribute as a kind of bait to elicit self-praise (περιαυτολογίαν); still others press for details and interrogate them for the fun of it" (Plutarch, *Mor.* 547C).

Plutarch reiterates his concerns regarding self-praise to the statesman and concludes his treatise with a final cautionary note:

> In all these circumstances we cannot be too cautious, not allowing ourselves to be drawn out by the praise (τοῖς ἐπαίνοις) nor to be led on by the questions. The surest precaution and safeguard is to attend closely to the self-praise of others (ἑτέροις ἑαυτοὺς ἐπαινοῦσι) and to remember the distaste (πρᾶγμα) and vexation (λυπηρὸν) that was felt by all: no other kind of talk (λόγος) is so odious (ἐπαχθὴς) or offensive (βαρύς). For although we can point to no further harm than the mere hearing of the self-praise (αὐτοὺς ἐπαινούντων), yet as though instinctively irked by the performance and uncomfortable we are eager to escape and breathe freely again. Why even a flatterer (κόλακι), a hanger-on (παρασίτῳ), a man in need (δεομένῳ), finds it hard in his necessity to stomach and endure a rich man (πλούσιός) or satrap or king bestowing praises on himself (ἑαυτὸν ἐγκωμιάζων), and calls it the most exorbitant reckoning he ever paid. . . . These are the feelings and languages to which we are prompted not only by soldiers and the newly rich (νεοπλούτους) with their flaunting and ostentatious talk (εὐπάρυφα καὶ σοβαρὰ διηγήματα περαίνοντας), but also by sophists, philosophers, and commanders who are full of their own importance and hold forth on the theme; and if we remember that praise of oneself always involves dispraise (ψόγος) from others, that this vainglory (κενοδοξίας) has an inglorious end (τέλος ἀδοξία), the audience being left, as Demosthenes says [*On the Crown* 128], with a feeling of vexation, not with any belief in the truth of the self-portrait, we shall avoid talking about ourselves unless we have in prospect some great advantage to our hearers or to ourselves. (Plutarch, *Mor.* 547D-F)

Although Plutarch acknowledges situations that are appropriate for self-praise, he is nevertheless intimately acquainted with the offensive nature of self-praise and the ethical problems self-praise creates. Plutarch therefore advises the statesman to avoid self-praise unless he must risk offending his audience in order to achieve some higher end.

The terminological options for self-praise, self-glorification, "boasting," vaunting, and bragging vary in Plutarch's treatise "On Praising Oneself Inoffensively." The primary terms Plutarch employs to denote self-praise include the term ἐπαινέω by itself or with either the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτον or the third person pronoun αὐτος and the term περιαυτολογέω. When referring to "boasting," self-glorification, or bragging, Plutarch frequently uses the following terms: μεγαλαυχέω, μεγαληγορέω, αλαζονεία, and ἀλαζών. Only one time does Plutarch include the term καυχάομαι in his treatise, and this appears in a quotation from Pindar. Because Plutarch does not limit his discussion of self-praise and "boasting" to this treatise and because he employs a variety of terms in his discussion of these themes, it is necessary to explore the convention of self-praise and "boasting" within Plutarch's other writings and within other Greco-Roman texts.

Within Plutarch's treatise, one notices a clear demarcation between legitimate and illegitimate self-praise, or, using his terminology, between seasonable and unseasonable self-praise. What determines which category one's self-praise falls into is a culmination of the following: the audience's reception of the self-praise, the character of the individual praising himself, and the situation out of which the self-praise arises. Self-praise is legitimate for honorable individuals when the situation demands its use. However, self-praise moves into the category of "boasting" when individuals of an unworthy character employ its use with impure motives, i.e. seeking personal advancement or glory.

Arguably, the Corinthian community engage in these dynamics of self-praise, hoping that their audience favorably approves. It is clear, however, that Paul does not approve of the Corinthians' self-praise and that he uses none of the words for self-praise identified by Plutarch when referring to their self-praise. Instead, Paul employs the καυχ- stem. The καυχ- stem, while overlapping somewhat with the semantic field of self-praise, deviates from the field in one (or two) significant aspects, as will be shown in section §4. Before discussing the καυχ- stem, however, we must first examine the convention of self-praise in the Latin rhetorical handbooks (§2) and related "boasting" terms (§3) in order to illuminate the reception of self-praise and "boasting" within the wider Greco-Roman context and in order to determine whether Plutarch's categorical distinction between self-praise and "boasting" is commonplace.

§2 Self-praise in Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and Quintilian

The discussion of self-praise is not limited solely to Plutarch or other ancient Greek writers, but extends into ancient Latin writers as well. Hence, eliminating a few rhetorical handbooks that deal with self-praise as a rhetorical device (Cicero, *De inventione* 1.16.22; *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 1.5.8; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 11.1.15-28) from consideration would be a serious omission. These aforementioned rhetorical handbooks provide a general overview of how orators structured their arguments, and, more particularly, how orators inserted self-praise into their arguments. In both the *Rhetorica* and *De inventione*, self-praise, as a rhetorical device, is utilized within the context of the *exordium* of a forensic speech in order to achieve the goodwill (*benevolentia*) of the orator's audience.

Cicero's *De inventione* (first century BCE) best exemplifies the rhetorical guidelines for winning the goodwill of an orator's audience. Through the careful use of self-praise, Cicero suggests four ways to earn the audience's goodwill: by including references to (1) the orator himself (*ab nostra*), (2) the orator's opponents (*ab adversariorum*), (3) the members of the jury (*ab iudicum persona*), and (4) the case itself (*a causa*):

> We shall win good-will from our own person if we refer to our own acts and services without arrogance (*arrogantia*); if we weaken the effect of charges that have been preferred, or of some suspicion of less honourable dealing which has been cast upon us; if we dilate on the misfortunes which have befallen us or the difficulties which still beset us; if we use prayers and entreaties with a humble and submissive spirit. . . . Good-will may come from the circumstances themselves if we praise and exalt our own case, and depreciate our opponent's with contemptuous allusions. (Cicero, *Inv.* 1.16.22)

*Rhetorica ad Herennium* (first century BCE) speaks of self-praise in similar fashion to Cicero's *De inventione*:

> From the discussion of our own person we shall secure goodwill by praising our services without arrogance and revealing also our past conduct toward

the republic, or toward our parents, friends, or the audience, . . . provided that all such references are pertinent to the matter in question; likewise by setting forth our disabilities, need, loneliness, and misfortune, and pleading for our hearers' aid, and at the same time showing that we have been unwilling to place our hope in anything else. . . . From the discussion of the facts themselves we shall render the hearer well-disposed by extolling our own cause with praise and by contemptuously disparaging that of our adversaries. (*Rhet. Her.* 1.5.8)

When comparing these two texts, one notices that these authors present similar material, and only in the first two points is the material presented with slightly different nuances.

1. Where Cicero states that the orator earns the audience's goodwill by referring to his own acts and services without arrogance (*si de nostris factis et officiis sine arrogantia dicemus*), *Rhetorica* illuminates what might be considered such acts and services—the orator's previous conduct toward the republic, parents, friends, or audience. Both texts acknowledge the effectiveness of self-deprecation in securing the goodwill of one's audience.

2. While Cicero advises the orator to refer to his past and present difficulties (*quae incommoda acciderint aut quae instent difficultates, proferemus*), *Rhetorica* advises the orator to speak of his disabilities (*nostra incommoda*), need (*inopiam*), loneliness (*solitudinem*), and misfortune (*calamitatem*).

3. Both passages speak of securing one's own goodwill by bringing one's opponent into hatred (*odium*), unpopularity (*invidiam*), or contempt (*contemptionem*). This is done by referring to certain acts (e.g. those that are cruel [*crudeliter*], haughty [*superbe*], or malicious [*malitiose*]), behaviors (e.g. idleness [*inertiam*], sloth [*ignavia*], or indolent pursuits [*desidiosum studium*]), and advantages (e.g. wealth [*divitiae*], power [*potentia*], or high birth [*nobilitatem*]).

4. Both texts advise the orator to praise the jury for previous judgments that were performed either with courage (*fortiter*),

wisdom (*sapienter*), and mercy (*mansuete gestae proferentur*; *De inventione*); or with courage (*fortiter*), wisdom (*sapienter*), humanity (*mansuete*), and nobility (*magnifice*; *Rhetorica*).[36]

Quintilian, the first century CE orator, describes self-praise in his *Institutio oratoria* (11.1.15-28), in which he concludes the section on *elocutio* by dealing with the concept of *decorum*. Quintilian observes that "boasting" is wrong, whether this entails the individual "boasting" about himself or his eloquence, for "boasting" "not only bores the hearers but generally also disgusts them."[37] He particularly despises inverted vanity and self-derision:

> Perhaps however it is actually more tolerable to boast (*gloriari*) openly, accepting the sheer naïveté of this failing, than to do so with that inverted vanity with which a rich man claims to be poor, an aristocrat obscure, a man of power weak, and a skilled orator incompetent and inarticulate. The most pretentious kind of boasting is to make fun even <of oneself> (*Ambitiosissimum gloriandi genus est <se> etiam deridere*). Let us therefore leave it to others to praise (*laudemur*) us. (Quintilian, *Inst.* 11.1.21-22)

Although Quintilian finds "boasting" to be odious, he finds it more tolerable than self-derision because of its straightforwardness. Regarding Quintilian's understanding of irony and self-praise, Forbes correctly observes: "It would appear that irony was seen as appropriate in contexts of invective and forensic oratory, and as a technique was worthy of high praise, but was seen as invidious when used as a form of self-praise."[38] Thus according to Quintilian, self-deprecation, when not employed cautiously, could be viewed as an inverted and abhorrent form of "boasting."

Despite recommending that orators leave the praising of their own achievements to others, Quintilian acknowledges that orators may show confidence in their own eloquence on occasion.[39] For instance, while reflecting on the example of Cicero, Quintilian permits orators to "boast" under three circumstances: (1) when

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[36] *Rhet. Her.* 1.5.8; Cicero, *Inv.* 1.16.22.
[37] Quintilian, *Inst.* 11.1.15: *In primis igitur omnis sui vitiosa iactatio est, eloquentiae tamen in oratore praecipue, adfertque audientibus non fastidium modo sed plerumque etiam odium.*
[38] Forbes, "Comparison," 12.
[39] Quintilian, *Inst.* 11.1.25.

defending others who have offered personal assistance, (2) when responding in self-defense against those who make accusations out of envy,[40] and (3) when opposing enemies and detractors who attempt to discredit the orator's actions.[41]

Even though Cicero, Quintilian, and the author of *Rhetorica* write of self-praise in predominately neutral terms, the categorical distinction between self-praise and "boasting" is nevertheless evident, particularly in Quintilian's handbook. If the speaker follows their guidelines, then his self-praise would not be deemed offensive because he would have earned the goodwill of his audience. Similar to Plutarch, these three rhetoricians emphasize the character of the individual who praises himself and the circumstances that lead him to praise himself. They contend that self-praise must always be free of arrogance and maintain that self-praise is acceptable in cases of self-defense. They differ from Plutarch, however, by focusing more on earning the audience's goodwill through the use of self-praise and, with the exception of Quintilian, by commenting less on the negative reception of self-praise.

§3 Related "Boasting" Terms

Because of the few occurrences of the καυχ- stem words in the extant Greco-Roman literature, attention must now be drawn to words of similar semantic range in order to lay further foundations for analyzing Paul's understanding of "boasting" against the backdrop of Greco-Roman attitudes in general. This section will help to establish the broader semantic field in which the καυχ- stem normally functioned in the Greco-Roman world, providing a stronger springboard from which to analyze the καυχ- stem within Paul's correspondence to the Corinthian community and further demonstrate the categorical differentiation between self-praise and "boasting."

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[40] Quintilian, *Inst.* 11.1.17-19: "Cicero . . . was more inclined to boast of his political achievements than of his oratory. Yet he often had some justification for this also, because he was either defending persons who had assisted him in putting down the Catilinarian conspiracy, or responding to envy . . . so that the frequent mention of the actions of his consulship can be thought of less as boasting than as self-defence (*ut illorum quae egerat in consulatu frequens commemoratio possit videri non gloriae magis quam defensioni data*)."

[41] Quintilian, *Inst.* 11.1.23: "It is when opposing his enemies and detractors that he commonly makes greater claims for himself, because he had to defend his policies when they were brought up against him (*Plerumque contra inimicos atque obtrectatores plus vindicat sibi: erant enim illa tuenda cum obicerentur*)."

Like self-praise, the καυχ- stem and "synonyms" can carry negative connotations. The figure of the "boastful" individual (ἀλαζονεία and ἀλαζών) appears with greater frequency than the καυχ- stem terms in Greco-Roman literature.[42] In fact, a search in the *Thesaurus linguae graecae* reveals over 3,000 occurrences of the ἀλαζ- stem. Even when we eliminate those references that postdate the second century CE, we still find a significant number of occurrences. Already in Plutarch's treatise "On Praising Oneself Inoffensively," we have encountered instances of the ἀλαζ- stem, where he employs the stem in passages that refer to "boasting," self-glorification, or bragging. In order to validate further Plutarch's negative usage of the term in that treatise, we must examine additional instances of the ἀλαζ- stem in Plutarch's other writings and in the literature of the wider Greco-Roman context.

The writings of Plutarch contain numerous occurrences of the ἀλαζ- stem for denoting "boasting," bragging, vain pretension, imposture, ostentation, arrogance, and empty vaunts.[43] As previously discussed, in "On Praising Oneself Inoffensively," Plutarch differentiates between the praise of oneself that goes unresented in cases of defending one's honorable character and the praise of oneself that is "puffed up, vainglorious, or proud" (ἀλαζονείαν καὶ κενότητα καὶ φιλοτιμίαν).[44] In the latter category, the praise of oneself moves beyond the category of acceptable self-praise to that of arrogant bragging and "boasting."[45] Plutarch continues this categorical distinction between legitimate self-praise and "boasting" in his biographies. For instance, Alcibades, while departing the camp after having been insulted by Tydeus, retorts:

> had he [Alcibades] not been so grievously insulted by the generals, within a
> few days he would have forced the Lacedaemonians to engage them whether
> they wished to do so or not, or else lose their ships. Some thought that what
> he said was arrogant boasting (ἀλαζονεύεσθαι); but others that it was likely,

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[42] ἀλαζών even crosses over into Latin. Plautus names the subject of one of his plays that deals with a bragging Captain *Alazon*, which he adds is *Gloriousus* in Latin (T. Maccius Plautus, *Miles Gloriosus* 2.1.8).

[43] E.g. Plutarch, *Mor.* 540C; 544A; *Virt. prof.* 81B; *Rect. rat. aud.* 47E; *Art.* 20.2; *Cupid. divit.* 523E; *Alc.* 37.2; *Lys.* 6.2; *Ag. Cleom.* 10.4; *Ages.* 37.2; *Pel.* 34.2; *Per.* 12.2; *Def. orac.* 411B, 419A; *E Delph.* 385E; *Is. Os.* 360C.

[44] Plutarch, *Mor.* 540C-D.

[45] Plutarch, *Mor.* 544A.

since he had merely to bring up his numerous Thracian javelineers and horsemen to assault by land and confound the enemy's camp. (Plutarch, *Alc.* 37.2)[46]

Some within the crowd held that Alcibades' comment was no more than arrogant "boasting" since he proclaimed that he possessed the power to do something when he, in fact, did not; while others within the crowd determined that Alcibades' comment was an example of self-praise because he did have the resources to do what he threatened.

In his other writings, Plutarch considers ἀλαζονεία a moral failure—the antithesis of making progress in virtue.[47] Included among Plutarch's list of vices are what he considers indicative of immodesty and an unwholesome mode of living: self-opinion (οἰήματος), pretension (ἀλαζονείας), love affairs (ἐρώτων), and nonsense (φλυαρίας).[48] Plutarch includes the pretentious, public display of one's wealth as that which opposes virtue. In one text, he maintains that the individual who publicly pretends to possess great wealth is even poorer because of his pretension and consequently falls deeper into vice.[49] In other texts, Plutarch speaks of displaying one's wealth in terms of pretension and vainglory and attributes ἀλαζονεία to the quest for amassing wealth:

Let kings and royal stewards and those who would be foremost in their cities and hold office engage in money-getting. These are driven to it, their ambition and pretension and vainglory compel them (ἐκείνοις ἀνάγκη διὰ τὴν φιλοτιμίαν καὶ τὴν ἀλαζονείαν καὶ τὴν κενὴν δόξαν), engaged as they are in giving banquets, bestowing favours, paying court, sending presents, supporting armies, buying gladiators. (Plutarch *Cupid. divit.* 525D)[50]

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[46] For other examples, see Plutarch, *Lys.* 6.2; *Nic.* 11.5.
[47] E.g. Plutarch, *Rect. rat. aud.* 43B; *Virt. prof.* 82D; *Virt. vit.* 100F.
[48] Plutarch, *Rect. rat. aud.* 43B; cf. *Cor.* 24.1.
[49] ἀμέλει τῶν πενομένων οἱ προσποιούμενοι πλουτεῖν ἔτι μᾶλλον πένονται διὰ τὴν ἀλαζονείαν (Plutarch, *Virt. prof.* 82D).
[50] See also Plutarch, *Cupid. divit.* 523E; *Pel.* 34.2.

In general, Plutarch criticizes those who attempt to elevate themselves inappropriately and exceed the limits of propriety. One such example of this criticism is directed to Themistocles, whose ambition results in public scorn:

> [Themistocles] tried to rival Cimon in his banquets and booths and other brilliant appointments, so that he displeased the Hellenes. For Cimon was young and of a great house, and they thought they must allow him in such extravagances; but Themistocles had not yet become famous, and was thought to be seeking to elevate himself unduly without adequate means, and so was charged with ostentation (ἀλλὰ δοκῶν ἐξ οὐχ ὑπαρχόντων καὶ παρ' ἀξίαν ἐπαίρεσθαι, προσωφλίσκανεν ἀλαζονείαν). (Plutarch, *Them.* 5.3)[51]

In order to stay within the acceptable limits of propriety, Plutarch suggests that one avoid extremes, that is avoid "boastfulness" or being utterly humbled. Plutarch quotes a line from Pindar stating: "The wise have lauded with exceeding praise the words 'Avoid extremes.'"[52] Plutarch adds that if one abides by the precept of avoiding extremes, then he will be able to adapt to all circumstances in life, thereby never going "beyond the limit of propriety, either in being elated to boastfulness (ἀλαζονείαν) or in being humbled and cast down to wailings and lamentations."[53]

Within the wider Greco-Roman context, the terms ἀλαζονεία, ἀλαζονίας, ἀλαζονικός, ἀλαζονεύομαι, and ἀλαζών all refer to individuals characterized as "boastful," arrogant, pretentious, ostentatious, braggarts, and impostors.[54] Forbes defines ἀλαζονεία as "the pretence to qualities which one does not possess" and relates this term to ὕβρις and ὑπεροψία within the broader discussion of self-glorification (περιαυτολογία).[55] Forbes' definition, however, should be expanded to include the entire ἀλαζ- stem, particularly since the noun ἀλαζών carries a similar

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[51] For ἀλαζονεία and ἀλαζών resulting in public scorn or, in extreme cases, death, see Plutarch, *Caes.* 67.5; *Nic.* 11.5; Xenophon, *Cyr.* 1.6.22; *Mem.* 1.7.2.
[52] Plutarch, *Cons. Apoll.* 116D.
[53] Plutarch, *Cons. Apoll.* 116E.
[54] For arrogance, brazenness, pretence, ostentation, or bragging, see Aristophanes, *Eq.* 290, 903; Isocrates, *Panath.* 12.20; *Areop.* 53; Aeschines, *Ctes.* 101, 237; Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.2.5; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 66.20; Herodotus, *Hist.* 6.12; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 2.23.5; 2.34.3. For trickery, see Aeschines, *Tim.* 178; *Fals. leg.* 71. For imposture, see Plato, *Gorg.* 525A; *Resp.* 490A; *Hipp. min.* 371D; Aeschines, *Ctes.* 218, 238, 256; Xenophon, *Ages.* 9.1; *Mem.* 1.1.4-5; 1.7.1, 5; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 2.68.2; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 4.18, 33; 70.8, 10; Plutarch, *Def. orac.* 411B; *E Delph.* 385E; Lucian, *Pisc.* 21, 29.
[55] Forbes, "Comparison," 13.

nuance as ἀλαζονεία and refers to individuals who are charlatans, quacks, braggarts, "boasters," impostors, and pretentious.[56]

When the ἀλαζ- stem refers to "boasting," the ancient writers frequently highlight the idleness of the "boasting." The connotation of the ἀλαζ- stem is that the claims of the individuals who "boast" are false and untruthful and are intended to deceive the listener.[57] "Boastful" speech signifies overconfidence and bragging—the opposite of honesty and modesty.[58] In the NT and LXX, ἀλαζών appears amongst a catalogue of sins denoting an "arrogant boaster."[59] This meaning parallels some of the Greco-Roman texts. For example, Aristotle lists "boastfulness" among the emotions he classifies as excessive or defective. Other such emotions include shamelessness, envy, liberality, self-depreciation, flattery, luxuriousness, vanity, greatness of spirit, and extravagance.[60] Similarly, when ἀλαζονεία appears in Dio Chrysostom's depictions of particular ostentatious individuals, he includes other unfavorable descriptive terms such as vainglory, luxury, conceit, jealousy, foolishness, and "all such difficult and savage emotions."[61] Not only does Chrysostom rate ἀλαζονεία among such unfavorable descriptive terms, but he also attributes the arrogance behind ἀλαζονεία to the demise of certain individuals. For instance, Chrysostom attributes "boastfulness," or conceit, to the death of Icarus, who fatally attempted to fly over the Aegean Sea, and to the death of Asius, who disobeyed the order to leave his horse outside the trench and consequently plunged into the sea.[62]

The view that ἀλαζονεία is opposed to virtue likewise finds its way in the writings of Xenophon and Plato, who both include the term in their record of dialogues with Socrates. Xenophon provides some examples of Socrates' method of encouraging virtue among his companions by discouraging imposture: "By similar

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[56] For references to ἀλαζών designating cheats, false pretenders, phony speakers, or impostors, see Aristophanes, *Ran.* 908; *Nub.* 440, 1490; *Pax* 1046, 1120-21; *Ach.* 110, 135, 370; *Av.* 984, 1017; *Eq.* 269; Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.7.2; Menander, *Georg.* 27; Theophrastus, *Char.* 23.1; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 11.20; 33.53. For braggarts, see Plato, *Resp.* 560C; Menander, *Perik.* 268. Ἀλαζώνων also refers to the name of a tribe (Herodotus, *Hist.* 4.52; 4.17).
[57] For example, Demosthenes, *Andr.* 47: μὴ τῇ τούτου προσέχοντες ἀλαζονείᾳ τὸν νοῦν, ἀλλὰ τὸ πρᾶγμα οἷον γέγονεν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ σκοποῦντες. See also Isocrates, *Archid.* 9-10, 98; *Panath.* 74; Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 1233b39-1234a1-2; Aeschines, *Ctes.* 99.
[58] Isocrates, *Antid.* 75-76, 195; Herodotus, *Hist.* 6.12; Plato, *Resp.* 560C; Menander, *Frag.* 746; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 43.1-2; 45.2; 55.7-8; 64.22.
[59] 2 Tim 3:2; Rom 1:30-31; Jas 4:16; 1 John 2:16; Job 28:8; Prov 21:24; Hab 2:5.
[60] Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 1221a.
[61] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 1.79; 4.121, 126; 11.39; 70.7.
[62] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 4.121; 55.18.

reasoning he would show how unprofitable is a reputation for wealth or courage or strength when it is undeserved. . . . For my part I thought that such talks did discourage imposture (ἀλαζονεύεσθαι) among his companions."[63] Similarly, in Plato's texts dealing with the unhealthy or bad soul, ἀλαζονεία refers to pride and imposture. Speaking of the bad soul as a horse, Socrates asserts that the bad horse is "the friend of insolence and pride (ὕβρεως καὶ ἀλαζονείας ἑταῖρος), is shaggy-eared and deaf, hardly obedient to whip and spurs." The good soul, in contrast, "is a friend of honour joined with temperance and modesty, and a follower of true glory; he needs no whip, but is guided only by the word of command and by reason."[64] In another text, Plato writes that falsehood and imposture (ψεύδους καὶ ἀλαζονείας) characterize the unhealthy soul.[65] While recounting dialogues with Socrates, Xenophon and Plato refer to ἀλαζονεία as that which is characteristic of imposture and the unhealthy soul.

Dio Chrysostom's oration entitled "Nestor," demonstrates that in the Greco-Roman world ἀλαζονεία was not a preferred descriptive of people who desired to be held in high regard. In the oration, Dio Chrysostom examines whether Homer depicts Nestor as a braggart (ἀλαζονείαν) or whether Homer justifies Nestor's self-praise in the *Iliad*.[66] Chrysostom considers Nestor's self-praise acceptable for two reasons: (1) because Nestor's motivation for praising himself was to benefit Agamemnon and Achilles with sound advice that would stop a quarrel between them; and (2) because it secured Agamemnon and Achilles' attention by humbling them of their folly and madness.

Chrysostom draws attention to the tendency of individuals to defer only to men of repute as a justifiable basis for self-praise, and in this case, Nestor's use of self-praise. Nestor refers to the honor that important men paid to him in order to convince Agamemnon and Achilles that his advice was worthy of their attention:

Certainly foolish persons universally scorn men of no reputation (τῶν ἀδόξων ἀνθρώπων) and pay no heed to them, even though they may

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[63] Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.7.4-5.
[64] Plato, *Phaedr.* 253D-E. Cf. *Phileb.* 65C-D.
[65] Plato, *Gorg.* 525A.
[66] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 57.3: "Come then, let us examine also the other aspects of the case, to see if Nestor has spoken rightly or as a braggart" (Φέρε δὴ καὶ τἄλλα σκεψώμεθα, πότερον ὀρθῶς εἴρηκεν ἢ δι᾽ ἀλαζονείαν). Cf. Homer, *Il.* 1.260-68, 273-74. For other discussions of Homer, see Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 35.6; Plato, *Hipp. min.* 369E, 371A.

chance to be giving most excellent advice; but, on the other hand, when they see men being honoured by the multitude or by persons of greatest power, they do not disdain to be guided by them. This is one count, therefore, on which Nestor commends himself (ἑνὸς μὲν οὖν τοῦ χάριν ὁ Νέστωρ συνίστησιν αὐτόν), namely, that in the days gone by he has been able to persuade many men of influence (δυνατοὺς), and that Agamemnon and Achilles will refuse to obey, if they do refuse, because of their own folly (ἀφροσύνην) and lack of perception (ἀναισθησίαν), and not because Nestor is incompetent to give advice about things of highest importance. (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 57.3)

Chrysostom maintains that Nestor would not have hesitated to disparage himself if he believed that by disparaging himself he could ensure Agamemnon and Achilles' obedience. Nestor must therefore have deemed the use of self-praise necessary for gaining an audience with them. According to Chrysostom, if Nestor had refused to engage in self-praise despite his determining that self-praise was necessary because of its foreseeable benefits, then this refusal would have been a mark of folly:

> Accordingly, just as Nestor would not have hesitated to disparage himself, if by disparaging and saying that no one ever deigned to consult him about anything he were more likely to move Agamemnon and Achilles to obey his words, so, if he thought his self-praise (ἔπαινον) would move them to this, it was reasonable for him to resort to praise (ἐπῄνει). Or is it not the mark of a foolish person to be ashamed to praise himself (αὐτὸν ἐπαινεῖν) when by praise he is likely to confer the greatest benefits; just as it is also, . . . to do the opposite . . . Therefore, just as when a physician who wants a patient to submit to surgery or cautery or to the drinking of some unpleasant drug, knowing the patient to be cowardly and foolish, mentions others who have been saved by him because they willingly submitted to his treatment, no one says the man who makes these statements is bragging (ἀλαζονεύεσθαι), so it seems to me that Nestor could not justly be accused of bragging (ἀλαζονείας) either. (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 57.4-6)

Thus, comparing Nestor's self-praise to that of a doctor who mentions previous patients he has cured so that he might encourage his present patient to consent to his prescribed treatment, Chrysostom avers that Nestor should not have been ashamed to praise himself nor should his self-praise be seen as bragging.

Chrysostom provides further proof to dispute the notion that Nestor was bragging when he outlines the root cause of the dispute between Agamemnon and Achilles, i.e. arrogance (μεγαλαυχίας). Agamemnon's arrogance rested in his being the sole ruler of all the Greeks, while Achilles' arrogance was an outgrowth of his preeminent fighting abilities.[67] Their insolence prevented them from living at peace with one another and necessitated the intervention of Nestor. Nestor desired to reduce their pride and humble them, which could only be realized if he demonstrated to them that his advice demanded their attention. Consequently, Nestor was forced to mention the fact that men of more importance than that of Agamemnon and Achilles deemed it necessary to pay deference to him. Mentioning men of fame and power enabled Nestor to humble Agamemnon and Achilles.[68] Because Nestor's intent was not to be admired, Chrysostom declares that Nestor should not be reckoned a braggart (ἀλαζὼν).[69]

The ἀλαζ- stem appears in several texts within Aesop's *Fables* in which the morals center on having an individual's braggart claims exposed as lies and deception.[70] For instance, in *Fable* 33, Aesop writes of a "boastful" athlete who arrived at his home city after having traveled to foreign lands in order to illustrate the futility of bragging if one cannot prove the veracity of one's claim. Upon the athlete's return, he bragged (ἀλαζονευόμενος) of his heroic deeds and vaunted that he jumped a distance unmatched by any living individual. One of the bystanders in the crowd retorted that if that were true, then he should be able to demonstrate his leaping abilities to the crowd rather than call on witnesses of the original jump. The theme of bystanders confronting the "boastful" individuals deceit continues in *Fable* 289. Aesop writes of a frog who falsely claimed that he could heal all diseases because he was a learned physician and was well acquainted with the use of medicinal plants. A fox overheard the frog's "boastful" claims (ἀλαζονεία) and

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[67] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 57.6.
[68] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 57.6-7.
[69] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 57.10.
[70] See Aesop, *Fab*. 33, 214, 273, 289.

inquired why the frog, if he were so skilled as a physician, could not heal himself of his own sickness.

The terms ἀλαζών and ἀλαζονεία both refer to individuals intending to deceive others in varying degrees and motives.[71] For example, Xenophon narrates a comical story of obedience in which some soldiers recount over a meal the incident where new comrades misinterpret the command of their lieutenant. One of the captains listening to the story questions the veracity of the story and claims that the intention of the story is to deceive (ἀλαζονεύονται), to which Cyrus responds:

> Don't call these men humbugs (ἀλαζόνας). For to me, the name "humbug" (ἀλαζών) seems to apply to those who pretend that they are richer than they are or braver than they are, and to those who promise to do what they cannot do, and that, too, when it is evident that they do this only for the sake of getting something or making some gain. But those who invent stories to amuse their companions and not for their own gain nor at the expense of their hearers nor to the injury of any one, why should these men not be called "witty" and "entertaining" rather than "humbugs" (ἀλαζόνες)? (Xenophon, *Cyr.* 2.2.12)[72]

Cyrus makes a categorical distinction between embellishing stories for entertainment's sake and pretending to be something for selfish gain, in which he reprehends only the latter.

The ancient writers do not look favorably upon those who pretend to possess great wealth[73] and upon those who exaggerate their own merits for personal gain, which is exemplified in the writings of Aristotle. Aristotle contrasts truthfulness (ἀληθευόντων) with "boastfulness" (ἀλαζονείας), self-depreciation (εἰρωνείας), and falsehood (ψευδομένων) in his ethical discussions of virtues and vices entitled *Nichomachean Ethics*. He describes the ἀλαζών individual as a type of "boaster" who exaggerates the truth and is opposite of the truthful and sincere man.[74]

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[71] E.g. Plato, *Hipp. min.* 369E, 371A.

[72] Cf. Xenophon, *Cyr.* 2.2.2-12.

[73] Plutarch remarks that the poor who act wealthy are "even poorer because of their pretension" (ἀμέλει τῶν πενομένων οἱ προσποιούμενοι πλουτεῖν ἔτι μᾶλλον πένονται διὰ τὴν ἀλαζονείαν; *Virt. prof.* 82D). See also Xenophon, *Hell.* 7.1.38.

[74] Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 2.7.12: "In respect of truth, then, the middle character may be called truthful, and the observance of the mean Truthfulness; pretence in the form of exaggeration is Boastfulness,

"Boastfulness," he argues, is worse than self-depreciation.[75] The character of the sincere individual deserves to be praised, whereas that of the insincere, especially that of the "boaster" is to be censured:

> As generally understood then, the boaster is a man who pretends to creditable qualities that he does not possess, or possesses in a lesser degree than he makes out (δοκεῖ δὴ ὁ μὲν ἀλαζὼν προσποιητικὸς τῶν ἐνδόξων εἶναι καὶ μὴ ὑπαρχόντων καὶ μειζόνων ἢ ὑπάρχει), while conversely the self-depreciator disclaims or disparages good qualities that he does possess. Midway between them is the straightforward sort of man who is sincere both in behaviour and in speech, and admits the truth about his own qualifications without either exaggeration (μείζω) or understatement (ἐλάττω). Both Sincerity and Insincerity may be practiced with or without an ulterior motive; but when a man is acting without ulterior motive, his words, actions, and conduct always reflect his true character. Falsehood (ψεῦδος) is in itself base (φαῦλον) and reprehensible (ψεκτόν), and truth (ἀληθὲς) noble (καλὸν) and praiseworthy (ἐπαινετόν); and similarly the sincere man who stands between the two extremes is praised (ἐπαινετός), and the insincere of both kinds are blamed, more especially the boaster (ἀλαζών). (Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 4.7.2-6)

Aristotle maintains there are two extremes relating to how one publicly presents himself: (1) exaggerating one's good qualities or claiming to possess good qualities when they are absent, which he terms "the boaster;" or (2) understating one's good qualities, which he terms "the self-depreciator."

Continuing his discussion of the "boaster" being prone to exaggeration, Aristotle highlights the motives of those who "boast":

> When . . . a man exaggerates his own merits to gain some object, if that object is glory or honour the boaster (ὁ ἀλαζών) is not very seriously blamed, but if he boasts to get money or things that fetch money, this is more unseemly (ἀσχημονέστερος). Boastfulness is not a matter of potential

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and its possessor a boaster (ἡ δὲ προσποίησις ἡ μὲν ἐπὶ τὸ μεῖζον ἀλαζονεία καὶ ὁ ἔχων αὐτὴν ἀλαζών); in the form of understatement, Self-depreciation, and its possessor the self-depreciator." See also Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1384a7; *Eth. eud.* 1233b39-1234a1-2.

[75] ἀντικεῖσθαι δ᾽ ὁ ἀλαζὼν φαίνεται τῷ ἀληθευτικῷ· χείρων γάρ (Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 4.7.17).

capacity but of deliberate purpose; a man is a boaster if he has a fixed disposition to boast—a boastful character (οὐκ ἐν τῇ δυνάμει δ᾽ ἐστὶν ὁ ἀλαζών, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν τῇ προαιρέσει· κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν γὰρ καὶ τῷ τοιόσδε εἶναι ἀλαζών ἐστιν). . . . Those then who boast for the sake of reputation pretend to possess such qualities as are praised and admired (οἱ μὲν οὖν δόξης χάριν ἀλαζονευόμενοι τὰ τοιαῦτα προσποιοῦνται ἐφ᾽ οἷς ἔπαινος ἢ εὐδαιμονισμός); those who do so for profit pretend to accomplishments that are useful to their fellows and also can be counterfeited without detection; for instance, proficiency in prophecy, philosophy, or medicine. It is because these arts satisfy the two conditions specified that they are the commonest fields of quackery and imposture. (Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 4.7.11-13)

Aristotle differentiates between motives for "boasting"—the motive of increasing one's glory or honor and the motive of increasing one's wealth. While these two motives are both deplorable, Aristotle asserts that "boasting" for monetary purposes is the worse of the two. He thus conjectures that the "boaster" is attracted to the fields of prophecy, philosophy, and medicine because those fields result in personal profit.

The ἀλαζ- stem appears in several texts to describe the activities and behaviors of sophists, philosophers, and flatterers. Plutarch employs the term ἀλαζονεία to describe the pretentiousness of flatterers and the imposture of sophists and philosophers.[76] Already in "On Praising Oneself Inoffensively," we have encountered texts dealing with self-praise in relation to sophists and philosophers. For instance, Plutarch denounces those sophists who accept titles of acclamation from their audience rather than transfer the praise or accept modest titles.[77] Within the same treatise, Plutarch remarks that philosophers and sophists are full of their own importance, which can leave their audience vexed from having to listen to their praise.[78]

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[76] For example, Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 52E, describes Alcibiades as a great flatterer and demagogue who changes his activities according to city: "At Athens he indulged in frivolous jesting, . . . in Lacedaemon he kept his hair cropped close, . . . in Thrace he was a fighter and a hard drinker: but when he came to Tissaphernes, he took to a soft living, and luxury, and pretentiousness (ἀλαζονεία)." For imposture in relation to a flaw in a philosopher's argument, see Plutarch, *Def. orac.* 411B.
[77] Plutarch, *Mor.* 543E-F.
[78] Plutarch, *Mor.* 547D-F.

The treatment of sophists and philosophers expands in Plutarch's other writings to highlight their imposture. For example, drawing upon the analogy of a farmer who gazes at the heads of grain, Plutarch likens the heads of grain that stand erect (the "empty cheats," ἀλαζόνας) to that of young men first studying philosophy. Like the heads of grain, they too are "empty cheats" at the beginning of their studies, but once they grow in knowledge, their false assurance and superficiality will disappear.[79] Plutarch's main grievance against some philosophers and sophists is that they pretend to possess certain knowledge or abilities when they are lacking or inflate the degree to which they possess them.[80] Because their assessment is not truthful and accurate, Plutarch claims they are pretentious "boasters."

Other ancient Greco-Roman writers criticize sophists and philosophers on similar grounds as Plutarch. Both Aristotle and Aristophanes describe false philosophers as charlatans.[81] Likewise, Dio Chrysostom refers to sophists as impostors and charlatans:

> And furthermore, if he comes upon a man who knows the road, so to speak, this man easily directs him, and on getting the information he at once goes his way. If, however, he falls in with some ignorant and charlatan (ἀλαζόνι) sophist, the fellow will wear him out by leading him hither and thither, dragging him now to the east and now to the west and now to the south, not knowing anything himself but merely guessing, after having been led far afield himself long before by impostors (ἀλαζόνων) like himself. (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 4.33)

The "ignorant and charlatan sophist" cannot even acknowledge when he lacks expertise on a simple thing such as directions. Instead, Chrysostom writes that this sophist will lead the unsuspecting to and fro, all the while claiming to know the directions. In another text, when asked how Socrates resembles Homer, Dio

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[79] Plutarch, *Virt. prof.* 81B.
[80] Cf. Plutarch, *E Delph.* 385D-F.
[81] Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 1217a1-4; Aristophanes, *Nub.* 102. Plato (*Charm.* 173C) refers to false prophets as charlatans (ἀλαζόνας).

Chrysostom replies by stating that neither one resembled the "boastfulness" and brazenness of the ignorant sophists.[82]

Similarly, Isocrates criticizes the sophists for pretending to possess wisdom, for not teaching virtue, for their greed, and for vaunting (ἀλαζονεύεσθαι) "their powers with utter disregard of the truth."[83] In one text, Isocrates expands his criticism to include those who teach political discourse because they, like the sophists, disregard the truth, believe that attracting a large following of students proves their mastery in the art of declamation, and promise to make their pupils clever orators regardless of their students' natural abilities. These teachers, he adds:

> undertake to transmit the science of discourse as simply as they would teach
> the letters of the alphabet, not having taken trouble to examine into the
> nature of each kind of knowledge, but thinking that because of the
> extravagance of their promises they themselves will command admiration
> and the teaching of discourse will be held in higher esteem—oblivious of the
> fact that the arts are made great, not by those who are without scruple in
> boasting (ἀλαζονεύεσθαι) about them, but by those who are able to discover
> all of the resources which each art affords. (Isocrates, *Soph*. 9-10)

Isocrates denounces those who teach political discourse as well as the sophists because of their "boastful" and extravagant promises and their utter disregard for the truth.

In several texts Lucian speaks of false philosophers as pretenders and compares them with the genuine philosophers:

> These self-styled philosophers do just that, and I for my part abused their
> sort, and shall never stop criticizing and ridiculing them. . . . But those
> pretenders (ἀλαζόνας) and miscreants deserve in my opinion to be hated. . . .
> Because they have long beards and claim to be philosophers and look sour,
> ought they to be compared with you? I could have put up with it if they were
> at least convincing in their roles, but as things are, it would be easier for a

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[82] οὐδέτερος γὰρ αὐτοῖν ἀλαζὼν ἦν οὐδὲ ἀναιδής, ὥσπερ οἱ ἀμαθέστατοι τῶν σοφιστῶν (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 55.7).

[83] Isocrates, *Soph.* 1, 19-20; *Panath.* 19-21.

buzzard to imitate a nightingale than for them to imitate philosophers."
(Lucian, *Pisc*. 37)

And now I, Philosophy, and Virtue here and Truth will decide who are the genuine philosophers. Then all who are found to be living by our rules shall be pronounced superior and will be happy ever after, but as for the cheats and all those who have nothing in common with us, we shall put the wretches to a wretched end, so that they may not claim any part in things that are over their heads, false pretenders (ἀλαζόνες) that they are! (Lucian, *Pisc*. 44)

[The philosophers] begin their discussions peaceably, but as the conference proceeds they raise their voices to a high falsetto, so that, what with their excessive straining and their endeavour to talk at the same time, their faces get red, their necks get swollen, and their veins stand out like those of flute-players when they try to blow into a closed flute. In fact, they spoil their arguments, confuse the original subject of inquiry, and then, after abusing one another, most of them, they go away wiping the sweat off their foreheads with their bent fingers; and the man that is most loud-mouthed and impudent and leaves last when they break up is considered to have the best of it. However, the common people admire them, especially those who have nothing more pressing to do, and stand there enchanted by their impudence and their shouting. For my part, I considered them impostors (ἀλαζόνες) in consequence of all this, and was annoyed at the resemblance in beard."
(Lucian, *Bis acc*. 11)

In the above texts, Lucian does not find fault with the true philosophers (e.g. Plato and Aristotle) but only with those who pretend to be true philosophers.[84] Although the false philosophers try to imitate the genuine philosophers' physical appearance, their style of argumentation, lifestyle, and limited knowledge exposes their

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[84] See also Lucian, *Gall*. 4; *Icar*. 4-6; *Philops*. 5, where Lucian finds fault with the sophist Pythagoras, whom he refers to as an impostor (τὸν ἀλαζόνα), with a group of philosophers who each brag (ἀλαζονείαν) that they know how the universe came into being, and with a philosopher who told exaggerated stories (ἀλαζονείαν).

quackery. It is for reasons such as these that Lucian and others condemn certain philosophers and sophists.

The second term of similar semantic range to the καυχ- stem to which attention must now cursorily be drawn is αὐχέω. Although when αὐχέω appears in James (3:5) it denotes "'boasting' or making a wild claim," normally within the extant Greco-Roman literature αὐχέω refers to "having confidence, uttering a 'boast,' or making a bold assertion."[85] The nouns αὔχη, αὔχημα, and αὔχησις likewise refer to "'boastful' confidence and the object of one's pride."[86] The confidence referred to by the nouns may be in one's own abilities or in a nation's power and privileged position. In the texts where αὐχέω appears, confidence can signify the trust one has placed in a deity, beauty, statue, or other nonentity.[87] The αὐχ- stem may denote "boasting" of a trivial matter, in which the "boasting" does not have any immediate negative consequences, such as in the case of the Eleans "boasting" that they could arrange the Olympic games better than others could.[88] In other more serious incidents, "boasting" may incite anger and retribution. One example of this type of "boasting" appears in Apollodorus' discussion of the family of Inachus, where αὐχέω refers to Cassiepea's "boasting" that aroused Poseidon' anger: "For Cassiepea, the wife of Cephas, vied with the Nereids in beauty and boasted (ηὔχησεν) to be better than them all; hence the Nereids were angry, and Poseidon, sharing their wrath, sent a flood and a monster to invade the land."[89]

From the texts examined in this section, we can deduce that the ἀλαζ- stem and αὐχ- stem both view "boasting" in negative terms and never in overtly positive terms. While the αὐχ- stem may have an almost neutral nuance in that "boasting" of a trivial matter may not have any immediate negative consequences, the ἀλαζ- stem never occurs in neutral terms. The connotation of the ἀλαζ- stem is that the claims of the individual who "boasts" are false, untruthful, exaggerated, and deceptive. Frequently the ἀλαζ- stem appears amongst a catalogue of vices and is employed to

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[85] For αὐχέω denoting "boasting" or making a bold assertion, see Euripides, *Heracl.* 353, 931; *Andr.* 463; *Bacch.* 310; *Hipp.* 952; *Tro.* 770; *Med.* 582; Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.160.1; 7.103.2; Aeschylus, *Eum.* 561; Babrius, *Mythiambi Aesopici* 1.85. αὐχέω may also mean simply to make a loud voice in battle (Euripides, *Heracl.* 830-33).
[86] Pindar, *Nem.* 11.29-32; *Pyth.* 1.92; Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 2.62.4; 6.16.5; 7.66.3; 7.75.6-7; Euripides, *Phoen.* 1137; Plutarch, *Ages.* 31.1-6; Pausanias, *Descr.* 4.8.7; Sophocles, *Oed. col.* 710-713.
[87] Euripides, *Hel.* 1366; *Heracl.* 333; *Alc.* 95; *Andr.* 311; *Iph. aul.* 412; Sophocles, *El.* 65; Aeschylus, *Prom.* 340; *Pers.* 741.
[88] Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.160.1.
[89] Apollodorus, *The Library* 2.4.3. See also Pausanias, *Descr.* 4.33.7.

describe the imposture, pride, and "boastfulness" of select individuals, such as sophists and philosophers. Whenever someone is incorrectly called a braggart or humbug, someone else must defend that individual's character and pronounce that he is not a braggart or humbug. Using Plutarch's terminology, both the ἀλαζ- stem and αὐχ- stem are examples of unseasonable self-praise, and therefore fall into the category of "boasting."

§4 The καυχ- stem

While Paul prefers to use the καυχ- stem in his "boasting" passages, a cursory examination of *TLG* reveals few occurrences of the καυχ- stem within Greco-Roman literature before the second century CE.[90] Of the 4,624 instances of the καυχ- stem listed by *TLG*,[91] approximately 240 of these instances date before the second century CE (approximately 5.19%), and of those instances, 152 appear in the LXX, Pseudepigrapha, and NT (3.29% of the total instances, 63.33% of the 240 instances),[92] and seven in Clement of Alexandria. After the NT period, the καυχ- stem predominately appears in theological texts where the authors either explicate or refer to the LXX and NT passages containing the καυχ- stem. For example, the καυχ- stem is used 16 times by Ignatius, 242 by Origen, 679 by John Chrysostom, 130 by Theodoret, and 222 times in the *Analecta Hymnica Graeca*. Of the 4,624 occurrences of the καυχ- stem, approximately 81 appear in non-theological texts predating the second century CE (approximately 1.75%), and of those texts, 31 are fragments with significant portions of the text missing and minimal context to determine a precise meaning.[93] We are thus left with approximately 50 texts to

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[90] Even the *Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri* lists only six instances of the καυχ- stem, with the earliest text dating from the late third century or early fourth century CE (*P.Oxy*. 1160 [3x, one instance being in the textual apparatus]; *P.Mich*. 749; *SB* 9229, 9548). In the *P.Oxy*. 1160 text, a son named Trophimus, who is stationed in Alexandria, writes to his father Origenes: "To my revered father Origenes, many greetings from Trophimus. . . . You wrote to me in your letter that my boastfulness (καυχώμενος) earns me the name of 'Gift of Zeus' because I sent you money; but I do not boast (καυχομαι) about what I sent you by Philoxenus. If you have sold the various things which I sent you, write to me in order that I may send you more. I have been idle here for two months, otherwise I would have sent you all some more. I am keeping for the trial the money that I have collected; for I am waiting for the memoranda."
[91] A textual search for καυχ in *TLG* reveals 4,639 instances, but once we remove καὐχένα (six texts), καὐχμώδη (one text), and duplicates (eight texts) from the results, we are left with 4,624 instances.
[92] The καυχ- stem occurs 82 times in the LXX, 6 in the Pseudepigrapha, and 64 in the NT.
[93] E.g. Sappho, *Poetarum Lesbiorum fragmenta* 15b; Eupolis, *Comicorum Atticorum fragmenta* 134; Lycurgus, *Fragmenta* B.8.79-80.

examine, with the earliest writers to have repeated use of the καυχ- stem being Aesop (sixth c. BCE, 17 times), Diodorus Siculus (first c. BCE, 9 times), and Aristonicus (first c. BCE-first c. CE, 14 times).

Within the extant Greco-Roman texts, καυχάομαι occasionally appears in the positive sense to glory in the accomplishments of deserving individuals.[94] For example, καυχάομαι appears in a positive sense in Pindar's *Nemean Odes*, in which he writes that the heroes Adrastos and Phoebus should be honored for their victories at the chariot races and for increasing the fame of the city. The way to honor these individuals for their noble accomplishments, Pindar proclaims, is through composing verses of acclaim: "Men have a saying: do not hide a noble accomplishment on the ground in silence. Rather, a divine song with verses of acclaim is called for."[95] Although Pindar refers to legitimate "boasting," he does not appear to advocate self-praise and instead leaves the "boasting" to others. It is when the "boasting" of one's accomplishments is left to others, that καυχάομαι appears in the positive sense.

In most texts, however, καυχάομαι appears in a pejorative sense to indicate an individual overstepping the suitable limits of self-praise tolerated by his audience.[96] Some texts employ καυχάομαι to denote varying degrees of bragging, where the individual accused of exaggerating the truth may be regarded a braggart.[97] More often, καυχάομαι appears in the negative sense of "boasting" undeservedly of one's achievements, militarily or otherwise.[98] For example, Diodorus Siculus reports that the Gauls "boast" of their barbaric feats in battle in which they cut off the heads

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[94] Within the extant Greco-Roman texts, καυχάομαι refers to "priding oneself in something" or to "boasting about something or on behalf of another," occasionally with overtones of bragging (e.g. Theocritus, *Id.* 5.76-77; Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 5.29.3-5; 15.6.1-5; 20.36.3; 20.63.4; Dionysius Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 8.30.1; Strabo, *Geogr.* 13.1.27; Josephus, *A.J.* 8.372; see also Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* 5.19; 10.7). In Herodas, *Mimiambi* 1.33, "boast" is used in the neutral sense of heaven κεκαύχηται of bearing stars.

[95] ἔστι δέ τις λόγος ἀνθρώπων, τετελεσμένον ἐσλόν μὴ χαμαὶ σιγᾶ καλύψαι· θεσπεσία δ᾽ ἐπέων καύχας ἀοιδὰ πρόσφορος (Pindar, *Nem.* 9.6-12).

[96] In other texts, such as in Aesop's *Fables*, one "boasts" in order to mock others. See also Aristotle, *Pol.* 5.1311b, where Derdas attacks Amyntas the Little because Amyntas "mocked (καυχήσασθαι) at his youth."

[97] E.g. Theocritus, *Id.* 5.77, where Lacon accuses Comatas, in a friendly sense, of overstating the truth.

[98] For instance, Lycophron, *Alexandra* 626, writes of an individual "boasting" illegitimately of moving pillars. Additionally, Strabo, *Geogr.* 13.1.27, recounts Fimbria's arrogance in "boasting" that he captured Ilium in eleven days when it took Agamemnon ten years to do the same. See also Josephus, *A.J.* 8.372, for the inappropriateness of "boasting" of one's military strength before becoming victorious in battle.

of their enemies and fasten them upon their houses to display their booty.[99] Diodorus also includes "boasting" of one's nobility as a sign of social superiority and brazenly "boasting" of excelling at one's craft among the pejorative uses of καυχάομαι.[100]

In the pejorative occurrences, those who "boast" inappropriately are chastised, for as one text asserts, "'boasting' inappropriately sounds a note of madness."[101] This castigation may result in simply annoying one's audience or in being publicly censured thereby losing one's honor. "Boasting" of one's exploits could result in banishment, as in the case of Marcius, who "boasted" of capturing the entire city of Corioli among other victories at battle.[102] In another text, Herodotus' account of Pythius demonstrates the loss of one's honor and the devastating outcome that may result from an unreasonable request. Herodotus writes of King Xerxes' judgment upon his slave Pythius for requesting that one of his sons stay home from battle so that the son may take care of him. Xerxes became incensed at Pythius' request and condemned to death the eldest and most beloved of Pythius' sons so that Pythius would never "boast" that he excelled Xerxes in service.[103] In other instances, "boasting" does not have such severe consequences. For instance, Diodorus Siculus' references to Dionysius "boasting" of his poems fall into the category of annoyance.[104] According to Diodorus, the inferior quality of Dionysius' poems did not merit "boasting." Dionysius falsely believed his poems were of superior quality and enjoyed the flattering words he received after reciting his poetry. Even when Philoxenus criticized one of his poems by calling it "pitiful," Dionysius interpreted his critique to mean the poem was deeply moving and was a sign of Dionysius' superior skill as a poet.

Aesop's *Fables* advise discretion when "boasting" and call for an accurate and honest assessment of one's own privileges, particularly wealth, when comparing oneself to another.[105] In *Fable* 304, a fir tree "boasts" (καυχωμένη) to a bramble bush about its purpose in supplying roofs for houses and asks how the bramble bush, nothing more than a thorn, can compare itself to such a magnificent tree as a fir tree.

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[99] Diodorus Siculus, *Hist*. 5.29.5.
[100] Diodorus Siculus, *Hist*. 20.36.3; 20.63.4.
[101] τὸ καυχᾶσθαι παρὰ καιρὸν μανίαισιν ὑποκρέκει (Pindar, *Ol*. 9.38).
[102] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom*. 8.30.1.
[103] Herodotus, *Hist.* 7.39.2.
[104] Diodorus Siculus, *Hist*. 15.6.1-5.
[105] Aesop, *Fab*. 284, 304, 413. See also Babrius, *Mythiambi Aesopici* 1.96. References to Aesop's *Fables* follow Perry's numeration system.

The bramble bush retorts that axes cut down fir trees, and therefore it is better to be a bramble bush than a fir tree. The fable illustrates that wealth and fame expose one to certain hazards that the seemingly unimportant are not subjected to. Through an allegory about an olive and fig tree, *Fable* 413 further demonstrates the folly of "boasting" of one's wealth or fortune because of the possibility of experiencing misfortune. In the fable, the olive tree ridicules the fig tree for losing its leaves in the winter. While the olive tree was "boasting" (καυχωμένης) that it keeps its green leaves year-round, a lightning bolt struck the olive tree and burned it to cinders, but the fig tree remained unharmed. Thus, the *Fables* allegorize the fatuity of "boasting" of one's privileges because disaster can ensue at any moment.

Four additional texts in Diodorus' *Library of History* are worthy of attention since on each occasion Diodorus equates καυχάομαι with folly and ultimately with death. In the first text, Diodorus speaks of a woman named Eriboea who vaunted that she did not need assistance fighting Hercules because of her combat skills: "She had boasted (καυχωμένη) that because of the manly bravery which she displayed in contests of war she had no need of anyone to help her, but she found her claim was false when she encountered her better."[106] This connection between "boasting" and overconfidence also finds its way in Theocritus' *Idylls*, where a boy named Daphnis and an unnamed girl tell each other not to be "so confident" (μὴ καυχῶ).[107]

In the second text, Diodorus recounts the demise of Dioxippus, who defeated Coragus in combat: "Dioxippus released his fallen opponent, and left the field the winner of a resounding victory and bedecked with ribands by his compatriots, as having brought a common glory to all Greeks. Fortune, however, did not allow him to boast (καυχήσασθαι) of his victory for long."[108] Diodorus continues narrating Dioxippus' loss of honor. Because the king and others grew increasingly annoyed with Dioxippus, they played a trick on him by secretly placing a golden cup under his pillow and accused him of thievery. This trick resulted in publicly shaming Dioxippus to such an extent that he committed suicide.[109] The public once deemed Dioxippus worthy of honor, but because of their irritation and envy of him, they

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[106] Diodorus Siculus, *Hist*. 4.16.2.
[107] Theocritus, *Id*. 27.3, 8.
[108] ὡς κοινὴν πᾶσι τοῖς Ἕλλησι παρεσχημένος εὐδοξίαν. οὐ μὴν ἡ τύχη γε εἴασεν ἐπὶ πολὺν χρόνον καυχήσασθαι τὸν ἄνδρα τῇ νίκῃ (Diodorus Siculus, *Hist*. 17.101.2).
[109] Diodorus Siculus, *Hist*. 17.101.3-5.

conspired to retract the honor they once bestowed upon him by publicly shaming him.

Diodorus refers to the role envy may have in one's being shamed as a result of one's "boasting" in the third text. Diodorus recounts the judgment and shame Niobe experienced because of her "boastful" comparison with Leto. Niobe gave birth to seven daughters and seven sons. She then gloried in the number of her children: "and since she gave herself haughty airs over the number of her children, she frequently declared in a boastful way that she was more blest in her children than was Leto."[110] Leto, out of envy, had Apollo slay her sons and had Artemis slay her daughters. In the same day that Niobe was blessed because of her fruitfulness, she was judged and shamed by becoming childless.

The fourth text uses Dionysius' defeat and misfortune as an example for those who "boast" unwisely of their successes:

> In this year, Timoleon frightened the tyrant Dionysius into surrendering the citadel, resigning his office and retiring under a safe-conduct to the Peloponnese, but retaining his private possessions. Thus, through cowardice and meanness, he lost that celebrated tyranny which had been, as people said, bound with fetters of steel, and spent the remaining years of his life in poverty at Corinth, furnishing in his life and misfortune an example to all who vaunt themselves unwisely on their successes (τὸν δ᾽ ἴδιον βίον καὶ τὴν μεταβολὴν ἔσχε παράδειγμα τοῖς καυχωμένοις ἀφρόνως ἐπὶ ταῖς εὐτυχίαις). He who had possessed four hundred triremes arrived shortly after in Corinth in a small tub of a freighter, conspicuously displaying the enormity of the change in his fortunes. (Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 16.70.1-3)

Dionysius, who once possessed great wealth and military power, illustrates the folly of "boasting." According to Diodorus, Dionysius' "boasting" was unwise because he lacked the character to retain his honor.

The noun καύχημα refers to "a 'boast,' vaunt, or a subject of 'boasting,'" while καύχησις refers to the "act of 'boasting' or taking pride in someone or something." These two terms occur infrequently outside of theological texts. For

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[110] ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ πλήθει τῶν τέκνων μέγα φρυαττομένη πλεονάκις ἐκαυχᾶτο καὶ τῆς Λητοῦς ἑαυτὴν εὐτεκνοτέραν ἀπεφαίνετο (Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 4.74.3).

instance, of the approximate 30 occurrences of καύχησις listed by *TLG*, 10 are from the LXX, 11 from Paul, and one each from James and Philo;[111] and of the approximate 46 occurrences of καύχημα, 24 are from the LXX, 11 from Paul, two from Clement, and one each from the Pseudepigrapha, Philo, and the author of Hebrews.[112] Because of the fragmentary nature of many of the occurrences, only four Greco-Roman texts have specific relevance for the discussion of these two terms. Pindar uses καύχημα to signify "boasting" of one's honors in athletic victories and honors in battle, in which he includes a reference to Zeus: "But nevertheless, drench your boast in silence; Zeus dispenses a variety of things, Zeus the lord of all."[113] Pindar criticizes those who "boast" that their honors were a result of their own accomplishments rather than "boast" that their honors were the result of a deity's benevolence.[114] The second text appears in Plutarch's description of Aemilius, whose trenchant speech, Plutarch comments, curbed a group of young men's "vainglorious insolence" and pride.[115] Unlike the two previous texts, Philo employs καύχημα in a positive sense to refer to taking legitimate pride in the holy laws: "Now other kings carry rods in their hands as sceptres but my sceptre is the book of the Sequel to the law, my pride (καύχημα) and my glory, which nothing can rival, an ensign of sovereignty which non can impeach, formed in the image of its archetype the kingship of God" (*Spec.* 4.164). In another text, Philo speaks indirectly of the negative aspect of "boasting" by stating that God shows favor upon those "who afflict and belittle themselves and are not puffed up by vaunting and self-pride."[116] Both of Philo's texts relate the καυχ- stem to God, which as we shall see in our discussion of "boasting" in 1 Corinthians has similarities with Paul's distinction between anthropocentric and theocentric "boasting."

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[111] καύχησις appears in fragments by Ibycus (*Supplementum lyricis Graecis* frag. S220, S221), Epicurus (*Epistularum fragmenta* 101), Nausiphanes (*Testimonia* frag. 9), Ariston (*Fragmenta* 13.6), and Aristonicus (*De signis Iliadis* 14.366). Cf. Zenodorus, *Lexica Graeca Minora*, p. 254.

[112] καύχημα also appears in fragments by Apion (*Fragmenta de glossis Homericis* 74.239) and Aristonicus (*De signis Iliadis* 2.161; 8.541). Cf. Aesop, *Fables* 195aliter, bis.

[113] Pindar, *Isthm.* 5.51-53: ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως καύχημα κατάβρεχε σιγᾷ· Ζεὺς τά τε καὶ τὰ νέμει, Ζεὺς ὁ πάντων κύριος. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, the connection of καύχημα with a deity has affinities with the NT use of καύχημα. For Paul, the Lord should be the object of one's praise (καύχημα), whereas for some Greco-Roman writers, an individual's fortune is the result of a deity's benevolence rather than as a result of his own accomplishments.

[114] Included among Plutarch's eight ways in which self-praise is not offensive is to attribute one's achievements partly to chance and partly to the gods (Plutarch, *Mor.* 542E-F).

[115] τοιαῦτά φασι πολλὰ διαλεχθέντα τὸν Αἰμίλιον ἀποπέμψαι τοὺς νέους, εὖ μάλα τὸ καύχημα καὶ τὴν ὕβριν ὥσπερ χαλινῷ τῷ λόγῳ κόπτοντι κεκολασμένους (Plutarch, *Aem.* 27.6).

[116] Philo, *Congr.* 107: ἵλεως οὖν καὶ ἄνευ ἱκετείας ἵλεως εὐθὺς γίνεται τοῖς ἑαυτοὺς κακοῦσι καὶ συστέλλουσι καὶ μὴ καυχήσει καὶ οἰήσει φυσωμένοις.

Of the approximate 300 occurrences of ἐγκαυχάομαι cited by *TLG*, only a handful of those occurrences predate the second century CE.[117] The occurrences after this date appear predominately in theological texts from such authors as Origen, Eusebius, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, and the *Analecta Hymnica Graeca*. In Aesop's *Fables*, ἐγκαυχάομαι denotes being proud of something and inappropriately "boasting" of it. The morals of the *Fables* suggest that "boasting" has overtones of conceit and can lead to one's own downfall. Success and fortune, according to the *Fables*, do not entitle one to "boast" or become conceited. The fable of the two fighting roosters demonstrates this principle.[118] The defeated rooster hid in a corner, while the victorious rooster flew to the top of a wall, flapped his wings, and delighted in his victory. An eagle then pounced on the winner and carried him off. The pride of the rooster that developed from a momentary success led to its destruction.

The *Fables* also illustrate the folly of praising oneself unless that which one praises is useful or beneficial, such as in the fable about the stag that greatly admired the shape and size of his horns.[119] While drinking water at a spring, the stag enjoyed looking at the reflection of his horns but decried the slenderness of his legs. His legs enabled him to run quickly for long distances and saved him from immediately being hunted; his horns, however, made him become entangled with branches and enabled the hunter to capture him. The stag reflected on his predicament and concluded that the thing he "boasted" about (ἐνεκαυχώμην) would destroy him, whereas the thing he despised could have saved his life.

Two terms within the καυχ- stem (ἐκκαυχάομαι and κατακαυχάομαι) have few occurrences before the second century CE according to a *TLG* search and consequently deserve only cursory attention here. The least used word within the καυχ- stem is ἐκκαυχάομαι, the strengthened form of καυχάομαι, which appears only once in our designated time frame. Euripides employs ἐκκαυχάομαι for proclaiming loudly an action that resulted in another's demise. Euripides recounts the story in which Dionysus' mother, Semele, falsely blamed her pregnancy on Zeus.[120] Because

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[117] ἐγκαυχάομαι appears four times in Aesop's *Fables* (*Fables* 74, 281, 407, 413), once in the Pseudepigrapha (*T. Jud.* 14:8), once in the NT (2 Thess 1:4), once in *1 Clement* (21:5), and four times in the LXX (Pss 51:3; 73:4; 96:7; 105:47).

[118] Aesop, *Fab.* 281; cf. 413; Babrius, *Mythiambi Aesopici* 1.5.

[119] Aesop, *Fab.* 74.

[120] Euripides, *Bacch.* 26-31.

Semele ascribed her sexual indecency to Zeus, Semele's sisters "boasted" (ἐξεκαυχῶνθ᾽) that Zeus killed her for falsely claiming he was her lover. The other term within the καυχ- stem that appears infrequently is κατακαυχάομαι. Of the over 145 instances of κατακαυχάομαι, less than ten predate the second century CE, with each instance located in biblical texts.[121] Within these texts, κατακαυχάομαι communicates the meaning of "boasting" against another with a triumphal spirit or the notion of simply being proud.[122]

A survey of the καυχ- stem has revealed few occurrences of this stem in the extant Greco-Roman literature. A large concentration of the occurrences appear in the LXX, NT, and other theological writings predating and following the second century CE, though the emphasis in this discussion has focused on the instances of the καυχ- stem predating the second century CE. Though the database for occurrences of the καυχ- stem is limited, the database is nevertheless consistent.

The καυχ- stem is poorly attested in pre-Christian texts; instead, the ἀλαζ- stem has a greater frequency in the extant Greco-Roman literature. Like self-praise, the καυχ- stem *can* carry positive connotations. The difference, however, is that the positive connotations emerge when the καυχ- stem is used of someone else. According to the ἀλαζ- stem, αὐχ- stem, and καυχ- stem, "self-boasting" was always negative. Where the καυχ- stem has both positive and negative nuances, the ἀλαζ- stem has predominately negative nuances. Where individuals are falsely ascribed ἀλαζων or ἀλαζονεία, others are forced to defend their honor/character and pronounce that they, in fact, are not ἀλαζων or ἀλαζονεία. Upon examination of the ἀλαζ- stem, αὐχ- stem, and καυχ- stem, we may conclude that the ἀλαζ- stem and αὐχ- stem are synonyms of the negative connotation of the καυχ- stem and self-praise, as illustrated in the table below:

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[121] κατακαυχάομαι appears in the LXX (Jer 27:11, 38; Zech 10:12), and in the NT (Rom 11:18 [2x]; Jas 2:13; 3:14).

[122] The verb κατακαυχάομαι is to "boast" by degrading someone else, thereby expressing a feeling of one's comparative superiority over another (Rudolf Bultmann, "καυχάομαι, καύχημα, καύχησις, ἐγκαυχάομαι, κατακαυχάομαι," *TDNT* 3:653).

| Term | Connotation | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Positive | Negative |
| The καυχ- stem | √ (of others) | √ |
| Self-Praise (according to Plutarch, Cicero, Quintilian, and *Rhetorica ad Herennium*) | √ (of self) | √ |
| The ἀλαζ- stem | | √ |
| The αὐχ- stem | | √ |

From this overview of the καυχ- stem, it is surprising that NT scholars (1) have not commented on the limited number of instances of the καυχ- stem,[123] (2) assume that "boasting" and self-praise are synonymous within the extant Greco-Roman literature,[124] and (3) maintain that the καυχ- stem always has a pejorative sense.[125] While the pejorative connotation might be true for the preponderance of occurrences of the καυχ- stem, the fact that it is not universally the case would suggest that NT scholars have tended to assume a semantic field that is more uniform than the evidence allows—an assumption owing more to the Pauline agenda, perhaps, than to an informed cognizance of the relevant data.

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[123] Scholars typically limit their examination of "boasting" to its treatment by Dio Chrysostom, Quintilian, and Plutarch, as if these three individuals were the only ones who wrote on the subject, thereby bypassing other relevant sources such as Aesop's *Fables*. So, Benjamin Fiore, "The Hortatory Function of Paul's Boasting," *Proceedings of the Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies* 5 (1985): 39-46; Bultmann, *TDNT* 3:645-46; Davis, "True and False Boasting," 12-56.

[124] E.g. David E. Aune, "Boasting," in *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 81-84; Duane F. Watson, "Paul and Boasting," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 77-100.

[125] For instance, Michael Wojciechowski, "Paul and Plutarch on Boasting," *JGRChJ* 3 (2006): 99-109, purports that the verb's meaning was "too negative for it to be used more often," without offering additional evidence to support his assertion. Cf. I. Howard Marshall, "Should Christians Boast?" *BSac* 159 (2002): 263. C. Spicq, "καυχάομαι, καύχημα, καύχησις," *TLNT* 2:295n.4, correctly observes that neutral or favorable meanings are rare, but he is in a minority.

§5 Summary

In the evidence considered above, the following five points emerge as being of particular relevance with regard to the semantic field of "boasting" and self-praise.

1. In the extant Greco-Roman literature, "boasting" and self-praise focused on self-advancement as one made claims to honor. Most Greco-Roman texts speak of "boasting" and self-praise in terms of honor and shame.

2. Positively, Plutarch and others recognized circumstances in which self-praise and "boasting" were legitimate, and in some cases advisable. Done within the audience's acceptable limits, "boasting" and self-praise resulted in honor.

3. Negatively, "boasting" of oneself or one's achievements could easily become offensive to one's audience. In cases where the individual exceeded the suitable limits tolerated by his audience, shame ensued. These were cases of inappropriate "boasting" and self-praise, which involved the rejection of the individual's claim to honor. The individual could be shamed publicly, either verbally or more severely by formal punishment. Occasionally, the individual could even face death.

4. Consequently, the audience's reception of one's "boasting" and self-praise (regardless of subject matter) determined whether one's "boasting" and self-praise was acceptable or unacceptable. "Boasting" in the Greco-Roman literature necessarily has a subjective element. What one audience deemed acceptable may be unacceptable to another audience.

5. "Boasting" and self-praise were to be set up as two different rhetorico-linguistic phenomena, albeit related.

With this data in view, we now turn to an assessment of sophistic rhetoric and the rhetorical dynamics involved in Paul's use of the καυχ- stem in his relationship with the Corinthian community.

# CHAPTER TWO

# THE SOPHISTIC MOVEMENT

Having observed in the preceding chapter that various Greco-Roman writers such as Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom, Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, and Lucian criticized sophists for their "boasting" and pretension, we shall now undertake a survey of the sophistic movement. Oratory was of paramount concern for those participating in civic life and was a status symbol, particularly for the sophists.[1] Sophistic rhetoric not only deeply impacted the culture, government, and society of the Greco-Roman world but also influenced how Paul and other ministers were received. Until Bruce Winter's 1988 dissertation and subsequent publication of *Philo and Paul among the Sophists*, both classical and biblical scholarship either ignored or made passing reference to the evidence in Philo and Paul concerning sophistic influence in first-century Alexandria and Corinth.[2] Including Philo and Paul as reputable witnesses regarding the sophistic movement on par with such witnesses as Dio Chrysostom and Epictetus, Winter proves that the sophistic movement not only flourished in Alexandria and Corinth but also flourished during the mid-first century CE, thereby coinciding with the development of early Christianity.

While Winter demonstrates how important the first century CE is for understanding the Second Sophistic movement of the second-century, his work has two weaknesses in this regard. First, Winter neglects to address the origins of the sophistic movement and comment on whether there is continuity or discontinuity between the sophistic movement of the fifth century BCE and that of the first century CE. He merely remarks that the sophistic movement originated during the fifth century BCE, with no further elaboration. Although Winter's aim is limited to discussing Philo and Paul's interactions with the sophistic movement, nevertheless it

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[1] E.g. Plutarch, *Mor.* 801E; 802E; Dio, *Or.* 18.1-2; 24.3. Oratory "was the grounds for considerable public display, and therefore provided the opportunity to gain both reputation and public honour" (Andrew D. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1-6* [AGAJU 18; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993], 38).

[2] Bruce W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among the Sophists: Alexandrian and Corinthian Responses to a Julio-Claudian Movement* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); cf. Winter, "Is Paul among the Sophists?" *RTR* 53 (1994): 28-38.

would have been helpful to include a brief discussion of the origins and philosophy of the sophistic movement from its beginnings so that the reader might be better equipped to define the term σοφιστής, make parallels with the criticisms and ideologies of the two sophistic movements, and ultimately interact with Winter's assessment of the sophistic movement in the first-century.

Another weakness lies in Winter's occasionally selective use of sources. For instance, Winter criticizes Munck for relying too heavily upon Philostratus, the third-century sophist, because Philostratus "stood on the other side of the peak of the Second Sophistic even though he made reference to sophists in the second half of the first century."[3] Nonetheless, Winter relies on Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists* for an account of Herodes Atticus, for supportive evidence regarding personal adornment among sophists and their disciples, and for description of the sophists' entries into cities. If there are limited witnesses pertaining to the sophistic movement, then it would seem advisable to utilize all such available texts, including Philostratus', albeit with some caution, especially since Winter turns to Philostratus' text on some occasions. For example, the conflicts between disciples of differing sophists and the loyalty disciples had for their instructor that are recounted by Philostratus are useful in understanding the factions that formed within the Corinthian community and the Corinthians' assessment of Paul.

In order to overcome some of Winter's weaknesses and explore whether Paul follows sophistic rhetorical ideology and methodology and investigate how sophism pervades the life of the Corinthian community, we will first briefly survey the sophistic movement from its origins in the fifth century BCE (§1) to its resurgence in the first two centuries CE (§2). After surveying the key works and sophists forming the foundation of the Second Sophistic, we shall examine sophism in relation to education (§3), public declamations, rivalry (§4), and the special privileges and honors bestowed on the sophists (§5). From Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists* and other primary texts, we can corroborate the existence and influence of the sophistic movement in such cities as Athens, Alexandria, Corinth, Ephesus, Pergamum, and Smyrna; demonstrate that the sophistic movement, with its shortcomings and merits,

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[3] Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 10; Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (trans. Frank Clarke; London: SCM Press, 1959), 135-67. Munck provides examples from Philostratus in his discussion of the display of confidence among sophists and the triad in 1 Cor 1:26 in lengthy footnotes (158n.2, 162n.2). Against Winter, Munck's use of Philostratus' text is appropriate for the confines of his essay.

influenced the academic, social, cultural, and political milieus of the Greco-Roman world; and provide the necessary background from which to analyze the formation of factions in the Corinthian community.

## §1 Sophism in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries BCE

The second half of the fifth and early part of the fourth centuries BCE marked a transition in classical Greece during which time sophism developed into a type of philosophical movement and those called sophists enjoyed a life of luxury, privilege, prestige, and power. The term "sophist" (σοφιστής) originally was an honorable term designating those skilled in the art of rhetoric or a particular craft or those possessing political or theoretical wisdom, and was applied to poets such as Homer, musicians, seers, the Seven Wise Men, and philosophers without any derogatory connotations.[4] However, Protagoras and others started using the term "sophist" to denote members of a particular oratorical profession who claimed that they were experts on how to succeed in civic life and charged expensive fees to impart their oratorical skills to the young rich men who possessed hopes of securing a political career. By educating wealthy young men in the art of argumentation and persuasion, sophists provided the first formal education beyond the basic subjects. They traveled throughout the Mediterranean, while focusing in Athens, selling their oratorical wisdom in return for a fee. Largely, sophists were the first to raise questions in moral, social, and political philosophy and taught whatever subject was in popular demand. Whereas their predecessors, the Presocratic philosophers, attempted to give a systematic account of the nature of the universe using the human rational mind, the sophists concentrated on language (λόγος) rather than on the nature and origin of the world. Sophists turned their attention from theoretical natural science to how humanity can better itself through the acquisition of certain practical skills, i.e. the art of persuasion. Some sophists, such as Protagoras, published essays on a vast array of subjects with a slight philosophical bent. Other sophists were little more than teachers of argumentative techniques and linguistic theory. The most eminent

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[4] E.g. Aristides, *Orations* 46 (DK 79.1); Plato, *Crat.* 403E; Homer, *Il.* 15.412; Pindar, *Pyth.* 5.115; Sophocles, *Oed. tyr.* 484; Aeschines, *Suppl.* 770; *Sept.* 382. For the meaning of the word "sophist," see G. B. Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 24; W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Sophists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 27-34.

of the early sophists include Protagoras of Abdera, Gorgias of Leontini, and
Prodicus of Ceos.

Protagoras of Abdera (ca. 486/485-411/408 BCE) is generally regarded as the
earliest known sophist.[5] Born in Abdera in Northern Greece, he acquired great fame
throughout Greece but particularly in Athens, where he was part of Pericles'
intellectual circle.[6] Protagoras was the first to charge his pupils a fee of 100 minas,
distinguish the tenses of verbs and genders of words, note four modes of speech
(entreaty, question, answer, and command), and proclaim that there are two
contradictory arguments for everything.[7] Going against the predominant notion of
that time that good citizenship was inherited by the will of the gods according to
family line, Protagoras held that civic virtue could be taught.[8] Since advancement in
politics was dependent on one's oratorical abilities and the ability to speak
persuasively, Protagoras and other sophists maintained that through the acquisition
of sound rhetorical skills (i.e., the art of persuasion), their pupils could advance in
politics.[9] The sophists claimed that they filled this need for rhetorical training and,
because of their tutelage, could mold their pupils into more effective citizens and
improve their pupils' status in Athenian society.

Known as a sophist, rhetorician, philosopher, teacher, and orator of
epideictic speeches, Gorgias of Leontini (ca. 480-375 BCE) was the first orator to
develop and teach a distinctive style of speaking—extempore oratory.[10] According
to Philostratus, his declamations attracted huge crowds due in part to his ability to

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[5] For dating Protagoras' lifespan, see Mario Untersteiner, *The Sophists* (trans. Kathleen Freeman; New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), 6n.7.

[6] Plutarch, *Per.* 36; Ps.-Plutarch, *Cons. to Apoll.* 118E-F; Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 494. Protagoras' fame ended after he eliminated the possibility of having a cognitive knowledge of the gods, whereupon the Athenians burned his books and forced him to flea the city. See Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 14.3.7 (DK 80B4); Plutarch, *Nic.* 32; Plato, *Meno* 91E; Sextus, *Against the Schoolmasters* 9.55.56 (DK 80A12); Untersteiner, *The Sophists*, 27.

[7] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 494; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.51-53; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1402a23 (DK 80A21); 1407b6-8; Plato, *Theaet.* 161C-E.

[8] See Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement*, 131-38, for Protagoras' argument that virtue can be taught.

[9] Protagoras' statement, "Man is the measure of all things, of the existence of the things that are and the non-existence of the things that are not" (Plato, *Theaet.* 152A), symbolizes the sophistic movement with its preoccupation with rhetorical skill and civic advancement and its emphasis on the orator being the determinant of truth. Cf. Plato, *Theaet.* 151E-152C; 160A-B; 166C-167D; *Crat.* 385E; Aristotle, *Metaph.* 1062b13-19; DK 80B1; Sextus Empiricus, *Math.* 7.60. All translations are from the Loeb Classical Library unless otherwise indicated. For fuller discussion of relativism in Protagoras' writings, see Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement*, 83-110; Guthrie, *The Sophists*, 170-75.

[10] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 482; Plato, *Gorg.* 449a2-b3; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1404a24-6; cf. Sextus Empiricus, *Math.* 7.6; Quintilian, *Inst.* 3.1.8; DK 31A19.

speak extemporaneously on any subject proposed by his audience.[11] Gorgias borrowed various features from Greek tragedy and poetry and incorporated them into his speeches. Gorgias heavily used metaphor and paradox and was most known for using certain figures of speech (σχήματα) to such excess that his name became synonymous with exaggerated mannerisms and poetical diction. These figures of speech included antithesis, isocolon, parison, homoeoteleuton, rhetorical questions, triplets, and the increase of syllables in phrases towards a climax.

According to Gorgias, rhetoric is the agent of persuasion in that it has the power to persuade jurors in the courts, the members of the council, and those attending the Assembly.[12] Likening the effect of the spoken word on the mind to that of a drug on the body, he remarked that the spoken word has the power to bewitch, entrance, persuade, deceive, entertain, allay fears, eliminate sadness, and intensify pity.[13] The power of speech could make insignificant things seem significant or vice versa, and could amplify or deflate a subject through praise or criticism.[14] Although rhetoric may be used for good or ill purposes, Gorgias maintained that rhetoric in itself is neither good nor bad but rather is neutral.

Our knowledge of Prodicus of Ceos (born ca. 470/460 BCE), like many of the sophists, is quite limited since only one paraphrase of his works survives (*The Hours*).[15] After arriving in Athens as an ambassador, he opened a school of rhetoric and amassed great wealth and fame from giving lectures to young Athenian men and even hired agents to locate wealthy young pupils to attend his school.[16] Socrates declared that he sent young men to Prodicus whom he did not think could be helped by his own teachings.[17] Philostratus recounted that Prodicus was so well known for his wisdom that Xenophon used to attend his lectures.[18] Prodicus focused on the spoken word (λόγος) in an attempt to establish the precise meaning of words, quite possibly the first attempt at composing a Greek dictionary. He believed that the right use right words and the accurate discrimination of synonyms were very important.[19]

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[11] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 482, 492-93; Pausanias, *Descr.* 6.17.8; DK 82A1; DK 82A7.
[12] Plato, *Gorg.* 452e1-453a3.
[13] Gorgias, *Hel.* 8, 13, 14.
[14] Plato, *Phaedr.* 267a6-b2; Cicero, *Brut.* 12.47.1-5; Isocrates, *Paneg.* 7-8.
[15] Xenophon preserved a portion of this text in *Mem.* 2.1.21-39 (DK 84B2).
[16] Plato, *Hipp. maj.* 282c1-6; Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 496.
[17] Plato, *Theaet.* 151B.
[18] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 496.
[19] Plato, *Crat.* 384a8-c1; *Prot.* 340a6-b2; *Euthyd.* 277E-278A; *Meno* 75E; *Charm.* 163B-D.

Both Plato (ca. 429-347 BCE) and Aristotle (384-322 BCE) believed that one of the characteristics of sophism was bad argumentation and consequently criticized sophists for not being genuine truth seekers and labeled them quibblers and cheats in argumentation.[20] The word sophism therefore came to stand for an argument that had the appearance of being a valid argument but was in fact an invalid argument. Since Plato and Aristotle valued wisdom and considered it a virtue, they maintained that those who pretended to have wisdom and made money claiming to possess wisdom were immoral individuals. The sophist, Plato proclaimed, was "a paid hunter after the young and wealthy," "a kind of merchant in articles of knowledge for the soul," "a retailer of these same articles of knowledge," "a seller of his own productions of knowledge," "an athlete in contest of words," and "a purger of souls."[21] Plato generally disliked the sophists because he felt they were concerned not with wisdom but with how to gain power, wealth, and honor. Because they accepted payment for their instructions, Plato did not regard sophists as true philosophers. Similarly, Aristotle defined a sophist as one who reasoned falsely for the sake of gain.[22] For Aristotle, feigning to possess wisdom for profit demonstrated that one's arguments were invalid and relative to the answerer.[23] Thus, the sophists' pragmatic and entrepreneurial approach to education was not supported by the traditional philosophical views of both Plato and Aristotle.

The existence of the sophistic movement coincided with the state of Athenian democracy. When Athens flourished, the sophists likewise prospered. However, when the political existence of Athenian independence lost importance and momentum after a period of decline following the Peloponnesian war, the demand for their sophistic teaching declined.[24] Sophists were demoted to mere teachers of rhetoric—a role that would not change until the Second Sophistic—and

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[20] E.g. Plato, *Phaed.* 267C-D; *Resp.* 341C; *Crat.* 384B; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1405b34; 1406a4; 1406b4; 1415b12; cf. Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 497. Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.6.13; *On Hunting* 13.8, also criticized sophists.

[21] Plato, *Soph.* 231D-E.

[22] Aristotle, *Soph. elench.* 170a13-19; 171b4-11, 25-30, 34-35.

[23] "But since in the eyes of some people it is more profitable to seem to be wise than to be wise without seeming to be so (for the sophistic art consists in apparent and not real wisdom, and the sophist is the one who makes money from apparent and not real wisdom), it is clear that for these people it is essential to seem to perform the function of a wise man rather than actually to perform it without seeming to do so" (Aristotle, *Soph. elench*. 165a20-25).

[24] Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement*, 175-76.

apparently discontinued publishing their works.[25] Though Plato and Aristotle criticized sophistry, one must remember that sophistry in itself was not necessarily bad argumentation or a signal of moral depravity.[26] One must not overlook the positive contributions the sophists had on the foundation of a democratic society, on the development of argumentation, and on the advancement of education, which will be more evident in the following discussions.

§2 The Second Sophistic

With the revival of Greek eloquence during the first century CE, sophists reemerged and continued in the traditions of the early sophists. The Second Sophistic refers predominantly to the professional orators who flourished from the first century CE until approximately 230 CE and were catalogued by the writer Flavius Philostratus in his *Lives of the Sophists*. Like the sophists of the fifth century BCE, these sophists were professional orators who delivered public declamations not only in their native homelands but also throughout the Greek world in the sophistic centers. They thrived on the acclaim, special distinctions, and financial gain that were achieved through public declamations and sophistic schools. The Second Sophistic orators generally were preoccupied with the classical world of Athens and included such orators as Herodes Atticus, Aelius Aristides, Polemo, Dio Chrysostom, and Favorinus.

Philostratus does not call the resurgence of the sophistic movement the "New Sophistic" but rather refers to it as the "Second Sophistic," thereby emphasizing the movement's development.[27] Philostratus accredits Gorgias with founding the older

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[25] Jacqueline de Romilly, *The Great Sophists in Periclean Athens* (trans. Janet Lloyd; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 236-37.

[26] So, George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 39-40: "But sophistry, like rhetoric itself, is not necessarily depraved, decadent, or in poor taste. It is the natural aspect of rhetoric which emphasizes the role of the speaker and the process of learning to speak or to write primarily by imitation of models. . . . Sophistry is also one place within the rhetorical system where allowance is made for genius and inspiration, . . . If sophists have sometimes liked to shock or indulge conceits, it should be remembered that most sophists have believed that the orator should be a good man, and their most consistent theme has not been how to make the worse seem the better cause, but celebration of enlightened government, the love of the gods, the beauty of classical cities, the values of friendship, the meaning of patriotism, the triumph of reason, and the artistry of speech."

[27] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 481. G. W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 9, affirms that the Second Sophistic is an outgrowth of the sophistic movement of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE: "There is continuity and development throughout, so

type of ancient sophistic in Thessaly and Aeschines with inaugurating the Second Sophistic after being exiled from political life in Athens.[28] In order to understand the *Lives of the Sophists*, one must remember that Philostratus did not actively participant in the oratorical culture he describes since the apex of the sophistic movement occurred before his birth. Despite his limitations and prejudices, Philostratus nonetheless is one of the most important historical witnesses to the Second Sophistic.

For Philostratus, the Second Sophistic was the resurgent age of sophists who were admired by audiences, emperors, and aristocratic pupils. Philostratus divides his account of the sophistic movement into two books: (1) those who pursued philosophy and were in the class of sophists and (2) those who were properly called sophists. This categorical distinction illuminates the value placed upon rhetorical skill during the Second Sophistic. Those philosophers who excelled in oratorical fluency were considered sophists, while those who did not were philosophers. The pure sophists, on the other hand, referred to those who taught rhetorical theory and the art of declamation. Though Philostratus has a personal investment in and bias towards the sophistic movement, this does not lessen his veracity as a historian of the Second Sophistic, for his work emphasizes various sophists' contributions to Greek culture and benefactions to Greek cities and their high rank and acceptability in Roman governmental circles.[29] His writing, Bowie asserts, is "the nearest thing to

much so that the Second Sophistic would not have occurred, had the way not been prepared. The Second (or New) Sophistic is a culmination, not a sudden burst or fad."

[28] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 481, 507. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists*, 8-9, remains undecided as to whether Aeschines is correctly ascribed with initiating the Second Sophistic but nevertheless acknowledges the new contributions Aeschines made to sophistic literature.

[29] Philostratus' bias towards certain sophists is evinced in his selection of sophists included in the *Lives of the Sophists* and in the amount of material presented in the biographies of certain sophists, sometimes irrespective of their overall contributions to the sophistic movement. In the Loeb edition, for instance, Philostratus devotes 597 lines of Greek text to Herodes Atticus, 407 to Polemo, 246 to Scopelian, 163 to Hadrian of Tyre, 83 to Heracleides the Lycian, 61 to Dio of Prusa, 61 to Proclus of Naucratis, 40 to Ptolemy of Naucratis, 28 to Protagoras of Abdera, 13 to Phoenix the Thessalian, and 8 to Varus of Laodicea. Anderson, *Philostratus*, 11-13; and G. M. A. Grube, *The Greek and Roman Critics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 326-27, look unfavorably upon Philostratus' historical account of the Second Sophistic. Anderson highlights Philostratus' omissions and unfairly maintains that Philostratus' survey is "appalling," "sadly out of joint," "absurd," and "a sham," (p. 11-12). If one were to focus on the sophists Philostratus neglected to include in his catalogue, then Anderson's comments would be justified. However, Philostratus did not set out to examine every single sophist in great deal but rather to relate those sophists included in the *Lives* to the prominent sophists (Herodes Atticus, Polemo, Scopelian, and Hadrian of Tyre).

a Greek history of the period that could have fitted into the limitations of ancient genres."[30]

One of the philosophical sophists discussed by Philostratus is Dio Chrysostom (ca. 40-115 CE), who regarded himself as a sophist during the early part of his life but later adopted the title philosopher. Upon his return from exile from Rome and Bithynia (ca. 82-96 CE), Dio no longer followed the sophistic estimation of eloquence over the content of one's oration and instead became a type of moralizing philosopher, whereby his discourses aimed at reminding the Greeks of their past and rebuking them for their faults.[31]

Several of his orations are of noteworthy attention because of his criticism of sophists. For example, *On Tyranny* describes Corinth and Athens, with Diogenes of Sinope serving as his mouthpiece. The sophists, Dio proclaims, "wanted to be looked up to and thought they knew more than other men."[32] With Diogenes of Sinope continuing to serve as Dio's mouthpiece in the eighth discourse, Dio speaks frankly about Domitian and sophistic activity in Corinth during the Isthmian games:

> There was a time, too, when one could hear crowds of wretched sophists (σοφιστῶν κακοδαιμόνων) around Poseidon's temple shouting and reviling one another, and their disciples (μαθητῶν), as they were called, fighting with one another, many writers reading aloud their stupid works, many poets reciting their poems while others applauded them, many jugglers showing their tricks, many fortune tellers interpreting fortunes, lawyers innumerable perverting judgment, and peddlers not a few peddling whatever they happened to have.[33]

Dio reports that the crowd that initially gathered around him did not consist of any Corinthians because they had grown accustomed to hearing him daily.[34] Offering his wisdom to cities where fools abound in order to convict them of their folly and reprove them, Dio chooses to visit Corinth because of the large numbers drawn to

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[30] E. L. Bowie, "Greeks and Their Past in the Second Sophistic," in *Studies in Ancient Society* (ed. M. I. Finley; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 182; repr. from *Past and Present* 46 (1970).
[31] J. W. Cohoon, *Dio Chrysostom* (trans. J. W. Cohoon and H. Lamar Crosby; LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932-1951), ix-x. Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 486-88.
[32] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 6.21.
[33] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 8.9; cf. 11.6, where he refers to sophists as κακοδαίμονας σοφιστάς.
[34] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 8.10.

the city and its need.[35] However, while comparing himself to a physician whose services are welcomed, Dio proclaims, to his disappointment, that no one seeks him for his cures of the soul.[36]

Dio's oration, *The Olympic Discourse*, also provides valuable information on sophistic presence. Speaking before a large gathering of people who traveled to the city to witness the games (97 CE), he expresses surprise that a large audience has gathered to listen to him when they have a multitude of sophists on display.[37] Unlike the sophists, his appearance is neither handsome nor commanding, his age exceeds theirs, he lacks disciples, and he possesses no special knowledge or ability as a prophet, sophist, orator, or flatterer.[38] Not one of the sophists, he adds, is willing to debate with him or even look at him.[39] From a brief survey of some of Dio Chrysostom's discourses, we may conclude that the sophists whom he refers to are virtuoso orators who gather large crowds of listeners. Furthermore, his orations suggest that the pursuit of wealth and fame directs the content of sophists' public declamations rather than that which improves the citizenry of their audience.

Along with Dio Chrysostom, Philostratus includes Favorinus of Arelate (ca. 80-150 CE) under the section of those who pursued philosophy but had the reputation of being a sophist through the "charm and beauty of his eloquence."[40] Born a hermaphrodite, Favorinus was one of the more prominent sophists of the second-century and was remembered for his unusual appearance and oratorical abilities.[41] His public declamations, according to Philostratus, left his audiences enchanted.[42]

Although Favorinus dazzled the Corinthians during his first two visits, his third visit included a defense of his character. Impressing the Corinthians with his eloquence during his first and second visits, the Corinthians honored him by erecting a statue in the most prominent location in the library so that the reminder of

[35] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 12.5.
[36] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 8.7-8; 32.10.
[37] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 12.1-5: "And since you likewise, though having so many delightful spectacles to behold, and so many things to hear—able orators, most charming writers of both verse and prose, and finally, like gorgeous peacocks, sophists in great numbers, men who are lifted aloft as on wings by their fame and disciples" (*Or.* 12.5).
[38] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 12.15.
[39] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 12.13.
[40] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 489.
[41] Polemo, *De Physiognomia* 160-64; Aulus Gellius, *Noct. att.* 1.3.27; 1.10.1; 3.19.1; 8.2.14; 13.25.4; 20.1.20; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 37.25.
[42] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 490-91.

Favorinus' rhetorical genius would inspire the Corinthian youth to persevere in their studies.[43] Despite the supposed friendship he developed with the Corinthians, some individuals elected to throw down his statue for unknown reasons.[44] The destruction of a statue demanded a response because it was in essence a defamation of his character.[45] This act, in a sense, banished him from Corinth without holding a trial and without having any charges against him.[46] His response to the statue being removed, the *Corinthian Discourse* (*Or.* 37), was delivered on his third and final visit to Corinth. In this oration, he asks his audience to imagine that his statue is on trial and adopts the persona of his statue's advocate and sometimes of the statue itself in order to avoid the appearance of crude self-praise.[47] By comparing himself to Arion, he implies that his own voice has magical powers.[48] He combines apology and invective without appearing to do so to the audience. He mocks Corinth subtly by using historical and literary allusions and by adopting the identity of imaginary personae in order to disguise his own self-praise.

Like Philostratus, Philo of Alexandria discusses the sophistic movement in Alexandria during the first century CE.[49] In *De vita contemplativa* 31, Philo contrasts the orators and sophists with the θεραπευταὶ philosophers. He describes the activities of the Therapeutai and their elder but offers little description of the activities of the orators and sophists.[50] The elder, Philo states, "does not make an exhibition (παρεπιδεικνύμενος) of clever rhetoric (δεινότητα λόγων) like the orators

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[43] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 37.1, 8, 9, 25-26.

[44] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 37.20.

[45] The Athenians also destroyed a statue of Favorinus when he fell out of favor with the emperor after being accused of adultery with the wife of a consul (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 490).

[46] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 37.16, 37. Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 132-33.

[47] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 37.22-36. Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 131-32, places four values on this Corinthian oration: (1) it provides evidence for the degree to which an orator could be esteemed and the reasons for the people's praise; (2) Favorinus refers to his serving as a model for the Romans in terms of Greek rhetorical education; (3) he states that he is a model for the Celts and barbarians, who can attain Greek *paideia* (παιδεία; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 37.27; cf. Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 553); and (4) he bears witness to the Corinthians' enthusiasm towards the sophistic movement (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 37.1, 8-9, 33).

[48] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 37.1-4. For a more detailed discussion of Favorinus' argument and historical allusions, see Maud W. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 8-20; Tim Witmarsh, "'Greece is the World': Exile and Identity in the Second Sophistic," in *Being Greek under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire* (ed. Simon Goldhill; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 295-99.

[49] Philo's comments on the sophistic movement have generally been overlooked until Winter's study, where he sets out to demonstrate that Philo never uses the term sophist pejoratively, "although he may castigate the group to which it applies albeit with traditional invective," but rather uses the term to refer to virtuoso orators (Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 62).

[50] Philo, *Contempl.* 31.4, 30-31. For further treatment of *Contempl.* 31, see Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 60-66.

or sophists of today but follows careful examination by careful expression of the exact meaning of thoughts."[51] In other texts, Philo sheds light on the activities of the sophists and offers criticism for some of their practices.[52] Philo comments that he sees a "swarm of sophists" (τῶν σοφιστῶν ὅμιλος) who wear out their listeners with "disquisitions on minutiae, unraveling phrases that are ambiguous and can bear two meanings and distinguishing among circumstances."[53] Characterizing sophists as those who have "an empty conglomeration of incompatible and discordant notions," Philo asks them what benefit their speeches on the subject of virtue have had on their souls.[54] He criticizes sophists for living a lifestyle contrary to the one they teach[55] and proclaims that although they demonstrate great ability in declaiming, they are evil thinkers (βουλεύσασθαι δὲ φαυλότατοι).[56] Noting that sophists lack of wisdom, Philo states that they practice the "arts of speech to use against the truth" and give "the name of wisdom to their rascality."[57] Philo does not consider the sophists' philosophy to be genuine philosophy, namely "the utterance and word of God."[58] In summary, Philo's texts demonstrate that both orators and sophists were identifiable groups in Alexandria and that some found fault with sophistic practices.

§3 Education and Sophism

The term sophist originally described ancient wise men, but by the first century CE, it designated those rhetoricians who were skilled in oratory such that they could secure a public following and attract students to their schools. The growing demand for education beginning in the fifth century BCE resulted in the emergence of a professional class of teachers known as sophists who would impart to young men knowledge that was applicable to the political and legal professions. Since participation in the public life necessitated skill in the art of public speaking,

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[51] Philo, *Contempl.* 31.31.
[52] E.g. Philo, *Agr.* 96, 136; *Opif.* 157; *Her.* 304-5; *Det.* 38.
[53] Philo, *Agr.* 136; cf. *Agr.* 143.
[54] Philo, *Det.* 71, 74; cf. *Post.* 86.
[55] Philo, *Congr.* 67.
[56] Philo, *Migr.* 72.
[57] Philo, *Post.* 101. In *Cher.* 9, Philo proclaims: "Wisdom has no kinship with the sophist's culture. For the latter has for the fruits of all its labor only those persuasions which tend to establish the false opinion, which destroys the soul; but wisdom studies truth and thus obtains that great source of profit to the mind, knowledge of right reason." The contrast between the sophist and the wise individual is seen in the story of Ishmael, where Ishmael, the sophist, is banished by God from the presence of the wise, Sarah and Abraham (Philo, *Cher.* 6-10; *Post.* 130-31).
[58] Philo, *Post.* 102.

sophists preyed on the desires of wealthy parents to have their sons hold positions of power in their cities. The sophistic teachers were scattered throughout Greece and exhibited professional rivalries with other sophists. They traveled to various cities giving lectures, attracting new students, and entering into debates. For these services, they demanded large fees and were the first in Greece to charge a fee for teaching wisdom.[59] The sophists saw themselves as teachers of virtue in the sense that they taught people to perform a certain role for the state. Wherever the sophists publicly declaimed, they generally were well received with a large following of listeners and admirers.

The education the sophists offered went beyond the traditional four subjects of Greek education (παιδεία; language, literature, arithmetic, and athletics) in order to train young men for a career in the public arena. Because a career in politics required skill in public speaking, the art of persuasive speaking became a central component of the young man's training. The sophists were teachers of rhetoric and composition in addition to other subjects they may have taught. For example, Isocrates (436-338 BCE) greatly influenced the development of the curriculum and provided a model for rhetorical education.[60] His school of rhetoric in Athens combined the study of technique with the practice of rhetoric and included instruction in oratory, composition, history, citizenship, culture, and morality.[61] In *Against the Sophists* (391 BCE), Isocrates contrasts his educational system with his contemporaries who merely teach skills in order to explain his rationale for opening his school of rhetoric. He maintains that his pupils' moral growth is more important to society than is their facility in public speaking. He criticizes the sophists for "becoming nothing more than professors of meddlesomeness and greed" because they do not include virtue in their teaching.[62] According to Isocrates, the

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[59] Despite charging expensive fees for their instruction, pupils and other enthusiasts were willing to pay the sophists' fees. For example, Gorgias' pupils and fans paid him 100 minas and undisclosed amounts (Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 12.53.2-5; Xenophon, *Anab.* 2.6.16-17; Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 497), Prodicus charged fifty drachma per lecture (Plato, *Crat.* 384B [DK 84A11]; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1415b12), Proclus of Naucratis charged one hundred drachmae to attend his lectures (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 604), Polemo charged Herodes Atticus 250,000 drachmae for attending his lectures (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 536-38), and Aelius Aristides charged 10,000 drachmae (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 605).
[60] Isocrates considers himself a sophist but dissociates himself from the other sophists in that he does not show off his oratorical skills in public assemblies or private gatherings, does not revile or argue with the other sophists, does not make extravagant professions, and has not amassed great fortune (Isocrates, *Antid.* 147-8, 158).
[61] Burton L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (GBS; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 26.
[62] Isocrates, *Soph.* 20.

development of the pupil's moral character should be a crucial facet of rhetorical education. Though moral character cannot be taught, the study of oratory can aid in its cultivation.[63]

Many sophists believed that any side of an opposing argument could be successfully argued and often encouraged their students to argue the weaker position. Following the principle that there is no set truth, sophists were free to switch positions of any given argument depending on who was paying them. Sophists "boasted" of their ability to make the weaker argument appear to be the stronger argument and to make the worse reason appear to be the better reason. To prove their position superior, sophists attempted to entangle, ensnare, and confuse their opponents while enchanting their audience through figures of speech.

Various anecdotes in Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists* illuminate the level of devotion pupils had for their teachers. Pupils in general were ardent followers of their tutors. Described as disciples (ἀκροατής), pupils (μαθητής), zealots (ζηλωτής), or Hellenes (Ἕλληνας),[64] they were exclusively loyal to their instructors, at times to a fault. They took pleasure in listening to their instructors' declamations and tried to mimic their oratorical style. For example, pupils of Hadrian of Tyre tried to mimic his accent, gait, and style of dress;[65] Onomarchus of Andros followed his instructor Herodes' abundant use of synonyms;[66] Demosthenes modeled himself after Isocrates;[67] Herodes greatly admired Scopelian and declaimed in front of his father in the style of Scopelian;[68] and Lollianus of Ephesus imitated Isaeus in his extempore speeches.[69] Some students, however, did not desire to imitate the style of their teachers. For instance, Ptolemy of Naucratis did not imitate his teacher Herodes but rather mimicked Polemo's ornamental style,[70] and Favorinus' style of delivery was "as different from Dio as any who never were his pupils."[71]

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[63] "And let no one suppose that I claim that just living can be taught; . . . I hold that there does not exist an art of the kind which can implant sobriety and justice in depraved natures. Nevertheless, I do think that the study of political discourse can help more than any other thing to stimulate and form such qualities of character" (Isocrates, *Soph.* 21; cf. *Antid.* 274-75).

[64] E.g. Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 518, 522, 571, 587, 600; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 55.1-5.

[65] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 587.

[66] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 598.

[67] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 503.

[68] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 521.

[69] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 527.

[70] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 595.

[71] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 492.

The impact of sophists on the educational system cannot be overestimated even in spite of the few sophists who were primarily motivated by personal gain. Issues of public policy motivated some sophists such as Protagoras, Isocrates, and Hippias of Elis. Sophists established schools, served as personal tutors, and changed the general curriculum to include the study of rhetoric. They instructed their students in the art of persuasive speech by providing their students model speeches either to imitate or memorize and by providing advanced instruction in rhetorical theory. Because aristocratic parents placed a high value on their son's ability to excel in public speaking, they were willing to pay the sophists' expensive enrollment fees and created a demand for sophistic schools that sometimes exceeded the amount of available schools.

§4 Sophistic Declamations and Sophistic Rivalry

Sophists gave public performances to large and eager audiences in which they declaimed extemporaneously to themes proposed by the audience. During these declamations, the sophists displayed their virtuoso rhetorical skills. Often these public declamations had a competitive edge due to the intense rivalry between fellow sophists. As well as declaiming in public and for their pupils, sophists also composed written treatments of declamation themes. In addition to being an educational tool and a literary genre, declamations were a competitive form of public entertainment.[72] Favorinus records that even the women and children attended his public declamations when he came to Corinth.[73] Thousands attended Dio Chrysostom's epideictic speech in Alexandria, possibly including visiting ambassadors and Roman soldiers.[74]

The sophist's arrival in a city required adherence to certain standards and procedures if he desired to establish a reputable reputation and earn a sizable income. He first had to invite the public to hear him declaim. This introductory speech was delivered seated and included a brief self-commendation (*prolalia*) and a commendation of the citizens and their city (*encomium*). The *prolalia* and *encomium* were followed by an open invitation to the audience to suggest a topic on which he

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[72] It is not evident at what point declamations become more than a part of rhetorical education and became a source of unprecedented public entertainment.

[73] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 37.33.

[74] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 32.40.

would declaim. The sophist could either postpone his declamation for a period up to twenty-four hours or he could stand up and immediately deliver his speech. The audience took into consideration the sophist's physical presence, delivery, style of dress, control of his emotions and voice, facial expressions, and manner of speech. The sophist's success in a given city rested upon his audience's reception. Accordingly, if the audience responded favorably, he was assured fame and wealth in that city; if rejected, he would have to depart and try declaiming in another city.[75]

Both disciples of sophists and audiences paid attention to the physical appearance of those who declaimed. Audiences expected orators to have a commanding and charismatic presence, a handsome appearance, and a well-resonated and pleasant sounding voice. Because physical presence was just as important as the orator's voice, orators used artificial means to make themselves look more attractive, younger, or smoother.[76] Philostratus reports that the sophist Hadrian of Tyre wore expensive clothing, adorned himself with precious gems, and rode to his lectures in a carriage with silver-mounted bridles.[77] His followers revered him to such a degree that they would shed tears upon remembering him and others would attempt to imitate his accent, walk, or the elegance of his attire.[78] Some orators such as Scopelian were reported to have used pitch plasters to remove hair from their legs and arms in order to resemble a godlike figure when they declaimed.[79] The sophist Alexander was also known for his appearance: "For his beard was curly and of moderate length, his eyes large and melting, his nose well shaped, his teeth very white, his fingers long and slender, and well fitted to hold the reins of eloquence."[80] During one of Alexander's introductory speeches, the Athenians were so enamored with his appearance and dress that even before he uttered a single word they approved of his elegance.[81]

Epictetus' (ca. 55-135 CE) "Of Personal Adornment" provides further insight into the value attached to one's physical appearance and career aspirations among the students of sophists. The philosopher Epictetus engages in a conversation with a

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[75] Winter, "Is Paul among the Sophists," 30.
[76] Even before the Second Sophistic, audiences were preoccupied with an orator's physical presence (e.g. Philodemus, *Rhet.* 1.195).
[77] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 587.
[78] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 587.
[79] Scopelian became addicted to using pitch-plasters and professional hair removers. Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 536.
[80] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 570.
[81] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 572.

young student of rhetoric in Corinth. Whereas Epictetus dons the symbols of a philosopher (a gray beard and a rough cloak),[82] the pupil follows the sophistic appearance with a hairstyle that is "somewhat too elaborately dressed" and attire that is "highly embellished."[83] In addition to having an elaborate hairstyle, the young Corinthian wears jewelry and plucks the hairs from his body.[84] After asking a series of questions on what makes a being beautiful, Epictetus informs the student that it is a man's excellence (ἡ ἀρετὴ ἡ ἀνθρώπου) which makes him beautiful.[85] If he desires to be beautiful, the student must labor to be a man who is just, temperate, and self-controlled.[86] If he neglects this pursuit, then he will remain ugly despite his efforts to employ every artifice in hopes of making himself look beautiful.[87] With this statement, Epictetus condemns the sophists for presuming to teach their pupils virtues (ἀρετή) when, in fact, they concentrate more on physical appearance than on the virtues of justice, temperance, and self-discipline. Instead, Epictetus encourages the young man to adorn and beautify his reason and leave his hair "to him who fashioned it as he willed."[88] Epictetus argues that the cardinal virtues make the bodily presence of a man beautiful, not elaborate hairstyles, expensive attire, jewelry, or smooth skin. After asserting that the man who plucks his hair is effeminate, Epictetus turns to the rank and status a young, effeminate Corinthian student of rhetoric should expect to achieve in adulthood.[89] Although he might esteem to be made a citizen of Corinth, a warden of the city, a superintendent of the ephebi, a magistrate, or superintendent of the games, Epictetus declares that he cannot anticipate achieving any of these positions if he continues to pluck his hair. From Epictetus' perspective, a smooth body serves as a liability rather than an asset for any young man who desires to hold any one of these public offices.

One of the more prominent themes of the sophists derives from the history of Athens from the fourth century BCE and earlier. Bowie examines various historical writers in order to illustrate a general tendency of the late first and second centuries to neglect the present in their writings and focus on themes from the classical age of

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[82] Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.1.24.
[83] Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.1.1.
[84] Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.1.14.
[85] Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.1.4-8.
[86] Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.1.8-9, 40, 42.
[87] Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.1.9.
[88] Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.1.26.
[89] Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.1.27-35.

Greece.[90] According to Bowie, the tendency to use historical themes was at its peak from the late first to early third centuries CE. For instance, Dio of Prusa discusses Alexander in two of his orations and eight of his books, *On the Virtues of Alexander*, which are now lost.[91] Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists* also provides valuable insight into the sophistic motifs that frequently appear in the sophists' declamations. Numerous themes mentioned by Philostratus derive from the classical period. For instance, three of Polemo of Laodicea's declamations delivered in the presence of Herodes Atticus had classical themes.[92]

The ancient sophists discussed the philosophical themes of courage, justice, heroes, gods, and the universe at length, whereas the followers of the Second Sophistic dealt with humanity's social-economic standing and other themes for which history would inform the present times. Gorgias and the other original sophists discussed the above themes with the intent of proving their case, while the followers of the Second Sophistic discussed their themes in order to elaborate their rhetorical methods.[93]

Philostratus recites examples of rivalry among the sophists. This rivalry was exhibited in simple witticisms in the form of a one-upmanship, verbal confrontation, or physical contact. The key instances of rivalry include the frictions between Favorinus and Polemo,[94] Timocrates and Scopelian,[95] Hadrian of Tyre and Chrestus of Byzantium,[96] Herodes Atticus and Fronto,[97] Herodes and the Quintilii,[98] and Aspasius of Ravenna and Philostratus of Lemnos.[99] The feud between Favorinus and Polemo may have been the result of city rivalry—Ephesus (in favor of Favorinus)

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[90] Bowie, "Greeks and Their Past," 174-95.
[91] Bowie, "Greeks and Their Past," 171, also includes Plutarch among his examples of sophists who declaim themes relating to the classical period even though it is unlikely that Plutarch was a practicing sophist. Plutarch composed two declamations that focus on Alexander's debt to Fortune and another declamation discusses whether the Athenians were more famous for their intellectual or military achievements.
[92] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 538.
[93] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 481.
[94] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 490-91.
[95] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 536.
[96] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 587.
[97] Bowersock, *Greek Sophists*, 93-99, deals at length with the conflict between Herodes and Fronto and the historicity and dating of this conflict.
[98] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 559-62. After this quarrel and the loss of his freedman Alcimedon's daughters, whom he loved as his own, Herodes chose to live at Oricum in Epirus as though he were exiled.
[99] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 627. The conflict between Aspasius of Ravenna and Philostratus of Lemnos began in Rome but grew more serious in Ionia.

versus Smyrna (in favor of Polemo).[100] On occasion, professional quarrels among the sophists led to the intervention of emperors, such as in the dispute between Herodes Atticus and the Quintilii. Other disputes reflected factional divisions between followers of particular sophists, political rivalries, or rivalries between cities.

Not only did there exist rivalry among the sophists themselves, but there also existed a rivalry among the pupils (μαθητής) of sophists. The disciples demonstrated their zeal for their teacher by playing one teacher off against another. Philostratus' account of the sophist Philagrus of Cilicia provides one example of this type of rivalry.[101] During a walk one evening, Philagrus encountered four of Herodes' pupils of whom he imagined that one of them, Amphicles, was ridiculing him. Philagrus retorted with a barbarism upon which Amphicles criticized him for using words abhorred by the sophists. The following day Philagrus wrote Herodes a letter accusing him of not teaching his pupils decent manners, at which Herodes replied that Philagrus' prooemium was unsuccessful in winning the goodwill of his listeners. Herodes' pupils further humiliated Philagrus when they proposed a theme to declaim knowing that Philagrus had previously declaimed on the same subject in another city and published it. When Philagrus began his declamation, Herodes' pupils began reading it aloud. Because repeating a declamation or using stale arguments was contrary to the accepted rhetorical conventions, the pupils created a scene of laughter and commotion. Consequently, he was forced to retire humiliated from his inaugural lecture and depart Athens. Philostratus relates another instance of this rivalry in his account of the dispute between Hadrian of Tyre and Chrestus of Byzantium.[102] One of Chrestus' disciples barked insults that were not tolerated by Hadrian's disciples. Hadrian's pupils had the man thrashed and after thirty days of heavy drinking, he died. Hadrian was then accused of murder before the proconsul but was later acquitted. Disciples of sophists were also known to listen in on the conversations of rival teachers and pick up lapses in grammatical constructions. They were zealous for their teacher and did all they could to promote him by lauding his accomplishments at the expense of other sophists.[103]

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[100] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 490-91. Because cities rivaled against other cities for preeminence, Bowersock, *Greek Sophists*, 90, comments that sophists were cause for "boasting."
[101] Philostratus, *Vit soph.* 578-79.
[102] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 587.
[103] Winter, "Is Paul among the Sophists," 33.

A cursory reading of Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists* and other extant literature reveals that one of the sophists' favored themes was classical Greek history. The mere eminence of sophists made conflict and rivalries inevitable. While these rivalries usually involved the sophists themselves, at times they also included the sophists' pupils, cities, and emperors.

## §5 The Special Privileges of Sophists

Philostratus' historical account of the sophists and miscellaneous texts and inscriptions by other writers shed light upon the social background of the sophists. Sophists often came from the wealthiest and most influential families in their city's aristocracy. In *Lives of the Sophists*, Philostratus speaks of only three sophists who had a low or middle class origin: Secundus of Athens, Quirinus of Nicomedia, and Apollonius of Naucratis.[104] While Philostratus may have neglected mentioning other sophists' modest upbringings, the preponderance of evidence suggests that sophists originated from the upper classes of their respective cities.[105] Of the sophists recounted by Philostratus, Polemo and Herodes Atticus had the wealthiest backgrounds. The family of Polemo extended back into the late republic and produced several great figures in successive generations—kings in Pontus and Thrace, ambassadors, and at least one poet.[106] Herodes' ancestors likewise were traced back to the late republic and included magistrates, ambassadors, and benefactors.[107]

Sophists played an integral role in the political life of their cities by serving as ambassadors to provincial governors or emperors.[108] Their mastery of public speaking commended them for political roles and may have lent itself to imperial favors. Sophists were called upon to use their persuasive powers during times of

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[104] Some referred to Secundus the Athenian as "Wooden Peg" because he was the son of a carpenter (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 544), and Quirinus' family was "neither distinguished nor altogether obscure" (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 620). For Apollonius, see Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 599. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists*, 21-22; Bowie, "The Importance of the Sophists," 54-55.

[105] Examples of sophists coming from wealthy upbringings include Scopelian (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 515), Aristocles (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 567), Antiochus (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 568), Varus of Perge (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 576), Rufus of Perinthus (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 597), Damianus of Ephesus (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 605), and Heracleides of Lycia (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 612).

[106] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 530.

[107] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 545-47.

[108] See Bowie, "The Importance of the Sophists," 55-56, where he lists the seventeen sophists or rhetors who served as ambassadors in chronological order.

crises or conflicts between rival cities.[109] For example, Gorgias of Leontini was chosen because of his skill in speaking to head up the delegation for which he was to ask the Athenians for assistance against Syracuse.[110] When he went before the Assembly regarding the possibility of entering into an alliance, the Athenians were so impressed by his use of antithesis, isocolon, evenly balanced clauses, and homoeoteleuton that they agreed to form an alliance with Leontini. The sophist Scopelian of Smyrna also went on numerous embassies to the emperor, with the most successful one being on behalf of the vines, where he was dispatched to Rome as ambassador of all Asia instead of merely Smyrna.[111] Polemo served as an envoy on two occasions, with the second being worthy of attention because he was able to secure money for Smyrna after an earthquake had decimated the city.[112] Polemo diverted Hadrian's favor from Ephesus to Smyrna, thereby winning a gift of one million drachmae with which a corn-market, a gymnasium, and a temple were built.[113] Philostratus comments that when Prodicus of Ceos appeared before the Senate in Athens he proved himself "the most capable ambassador possible, though he was hard to hear and had a very deep bass voice."[114]

However, emperors did not always have favorable reactions to sophists, and sophists were not always selected to go on embassies. Even though a command of rhetoric was a prerequisite for serving as an ambassador, the ambassadorial role was not limited to sophists and rhetors because rhetorical skill was not limited solely to sophists and rhetors. Athletes, philosophers, and poets likewise served as envoys for their cities.[115] Philostratus refers to instances where sophists failed in their role as ambassadors. For example, the Emperor Pius did not have a favorable reaction to the

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[109] E.g. Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 526, 529, 531; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 33-34, 38-41.

[110] Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 12.53.2-5.

[111] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 520.

[112] Polemo first served as an envoy when Scopelian became too old to travel (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 521).

[113] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 531.

[114] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 496.

[115] Bowie, "The Importance of the Sophists," 36-37. Bowie compares the number of sophists who went on embassies to the number of known embassies from Greek cities from the periods between the Flavians to the middle of the third century and from Augustus to Nero. During these three hundred years, approximately two hundred embassies occurred. Some of these attestations merely state the names of the ambassadors and the cities where they were honored. Approximately fifty embassies were merely congratulatory and may not have required the best orators available. However, of the approximate sixty embassies of significant importance, seventy-five percent were conducted by men with no sophistic background. The appointment of sophists and rhetors to the office of *ab epistulis* is another matter. Sophists and rhetors dominated this position because it necessitated rhetorical expertise. See Bowie, "The Importance of the Sophists," 39-53, 57-59, for his discussion on the office of *ab epistulis*.

embassy of Alexander of Seleucia. When Alexander directed the emperor to pay more attention to him, the emperor retorted with criticisms regarding Alexander's constantly arranging his hair, cleaning his teeth, polishing his nails, and smelling of myrrh.[116] Though Philiscus the Thessalian did not serve as an ambassador on behalf of his city, his appearance before the Emperor Antonius Caracalla is worthy of note because it did not produce a desirable outcome. Philiscus went before him in order to defend his own immunity from liturgies and instead lost his immunity because the emperor perceived him as a prima donna.[117]

Not only were the sophists paid handsomely for their rhetorical services, but the Roman government also granted them special privileges, such as free travel, membership into the Museum in Alexander,[118] or immunity (ἀτέλεια) from serving in the military, paying taxes, or holding civic positions.[119] Polemo was one such sophist upon whom the emperors bestowed many privileges. From Trajan, Polemo received the privilege of free travel by land and sea. Hadrian granted him the same privilege to his descendants, enrolled him in the circle of the Museum in Alexandria with the Egyptian right of free meals, and gave him a gift of more than 250,000 drachmae.[120] Hadrian also honored Dionysius of Miletus by appointing him prefect and enrolling him in the order of the knights and among those who enjoyed free meals in the Museum.[121] Other honors were nonspecific such as when Emperor Marcus presented Hermogenes with presents after hearing him declaim extempore.[122] Marcus also exalted Hadrian of Tyre with privileges and honors including the right to dine at the expense of the state, a seat of honor at the public games, immunity from taxes, priestly offices, and various monetary gifts.[123]

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[116] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 570-71.

[117] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 622-23. "And when Philiscus appeared in court he gave offence by his gait, he gave offence by the way in which he stood, his attire seemed far from suitable to the occasion, his voice effeminate, his language indolent and directed to any subject rather than to the matter in hand. All this made the Emperor hostile to Philiscus, so that he kept pulling him up throughout the whole speech, both by interjecting his own remarks in the other's allotted time, and by interrupting with abrupt questions. And . . . the Emperor exclaimed: 'His hair shows what sort of man he is, his voice what sort of orator!'" (*Vit. soph.* 623).

[118] For the Museum setting the intellectual tone of Alexandria, see Robert W. Smith, *The Art of Rhetoric in Alexandria: Its Theory and Practice in the Ancient World* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 16-19.

[119] However, Heracleides of Lycia was stripped of his immunity for his defeat to Apollonius (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 601), as was Philiscus (*Vit. soph.* 623).

[120] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 532-33.

[121] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 524.

[122] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 577.

[123] Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 588-89.

Cities depended on the generosity of their wealthy citizens to perform local liturgies or provide voluntary contributions if they were granted immunity. If wealthy citizens shied away from their civic duties, the effects would be devastating for any city relying on their benefactions.[124] Liturgies often required substantial expense, and some individuals were eager to spend more than was required in order to promote themselves and their political careers. For instance, Nicetes caused the construction of an approach to Smyrna,[125] Antiochus of Aegae contributed from his own resources to building projects and food supply, Heracleides of Lycia constructed a fountain at Smyrna in the gymnasium of Asclepius, and Herodes was responsible for various building projects. Damian of Ephesus maintained the Ephesian poor, contributed funds to restore any public building in need of repair, built an elaborate marble portico to link the city with the Artemisium, and constructed a huge dining hall made of Phrygian marble in the sanctuary of Artemis.[126] The sophists' generous contributions to cities like Smyrna, Ephesus, and Corinth suggests that they generally were eager to assume financial burdens for the betterment of the city and their social standing.[127]

## §6 Summary

Although we only briefly surveyed a limited number of the early sophists of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE and the sophists of the Second Sophistic, we nevertheless notice both similarities and dissimilarities among these sophists. Our knowledge of the Second Sophistic is grounded largely upon Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists* (ca. 230 CE), which comprises biographical sketches of fifty-nine sophists from the beginnings of sophism to its resurgence. Both the early and later sophists received acclaim from the crowds, played prominent roles in festivals and public assemblies, declaimed on similar themes, educated the youth with variation on the quality of education, and held positions of political and social eminence. The early sophists were more engaged in philosophical rhetoric while the later sophists

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[124] For the crippling results of immunity and the limits imposed on it, see Bowersock, *Greek Sophists*, 30-34.
[125] Philostratus, *Vit. soph*. 511.
[126] Philostratus, *Vit. soph*. 605.
[127] However, not all sophists were enthusiastic about fulfilling their financial duties. For example, Favorinus objected to being elected to the provincial priesthood in the province of Narbonenis of Gaul (Philostratus, *Vit. soph*. 489-90).

focused on rhetoric as such. While the early sophists earned their income by public declamations and tutoring, the second sophists tended to be excessively motivated by personal and financial gain. They traveled to the wealthy centers of commerce giving public declamations at games, festivals, and other public gatherings so that they might attract affluent pupils and receive remuneration in the form of monetary gifts and special privileges. The second sophists took the art of declamation to higher levels so that at times it was nothing more than a form of public entertainment devoid of substantial content.

The sophists' frequent travels, public declamations, and expensive fees for private tutelage brought much wealth, fame, honor, and privileges to the sophist and his family. Sophists faced numerous opportunities in which their oratorical skills were needed to influence emperors, the council, and citizens during times of famine or conflict. For their services to the government and to the community, they were granted special honors and privileges. On certain occasions, their pride and arrogance became a detriment, but overall the sophistic centers and other cities wanted sophists to reside in their city because of the prestige, construction projects, and economic advancement that the sophists' presence brought to it.

The sophistic movement was primarily a Greek movement that was criticized by philosophers, rhetoricians, and the apostle Paul for its emphasis on persuasion, deceptive practices, and financial gain. Despite having critics, sophism nevertheless impacted Greco-Roman education, the cultural and civic milieus of the Hellenistic world, and, as we will discover in the following chapters, the reception of ministers from the Corinthian community that expected certain stylistic techniques of apostolic preaching.

PART TWO

THEOCENTRIC "BOASTING":

PAUL'S RESPONSE

PART TWO

INTRODUCTION


As we discovered in Part One, the extant Greco-Roman literature not only relates "boasting" to self-advancement as one makes claims to honor but also highlights the foolish nature of "boasting." Though several texts correlate excessive pride with provoking the jealousy and wrath of gods,[1] most Greco-Roman texts speak of "boasting" primarily in terms of honor and shame.[2] Inappropriate "boasting" in the Greco-Roman literature means that the individual's claim to honor is rejected by his audience. The individual could be shamed publicly either verbally or more severely by formal punishment. In the extant Greco-Roman literature what determines whether one's "boasting" is acceptable or unacceptable is the audience's reception of the "boasting," irrespective of the subject matter. In contrast, the essence of "boasting" propounded by Paul, as we shall see, is worship directed toward the Lord and gratitude for his work in and through the lives of his people. In the biblical usage, what determines the acceptability of one's "boasting" strictly is the subject matter and object of one's trust.

In 1 Cor 1:10-4:21 and 9:1-27, Paul must elaborate to the Corinthian community what it means to "boast" in the Lord and how this is carried out in practice. Like the Greco-Roman writers who distinguish between acceptable self-praise and unacceptable "boasting," Paul also distinguishes between these two categories. Unlike the Greco-Roman definitions, Paul defines these categories in terms of praising the Lord. For Paul, "boasting" is a grievous matter that extends well beyond the Greco-Roman notions of social decorum. That which aims to increase one's social status or honor is deemed unacceptable "boasting," whereas that which seeks to bring glory to the Lord is acceptable "boasting." Paul's categorical distinction in 1 Corinthians is most evident in his appraisal of leadership, social status, and the Corinthians' standing before God in 1:10-4:21 and 9:1-27,

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[1] E.g. Pindar, *Isthm*. 1.5.51; 5.51-53; Euripides, *Bacch*. 26-31; Diodorus Siculus, *Hist*. 4.74.3.
[2] E.g. Plutarch, *Mor.* 540B-C; Diodorus Siculus, *Hist*. 4.74.3; Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 4.7.11-13; Herodotus, *Hist.* 7.39.2.

where Paul attempts to set before the Corinthians a proper view of God and humanity. In these chapters, Paul introduces the καυχ- stem, thereby redefining the Greco-Roman conventions of self-praise and "boasting," and presents himself and Apollos as examples in order to rebuke the "boastful" disunity, preoccupation with achieving social status and honor, and arrogance among some of the Corinthians.

§1 The Structure of 1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21

The first four chapters of 1 Corinthians focus on the divided state of the Corinthian community and set the foundation of the exhortation that follows in chapters 5-16. Chapters 1:10-4:21 thus have a paraenetic function in which Paul establishes the importance of unity among the leaders and members within the Corinthian community. The dissension within the community stems from an obsession with wisdom and eloquence, the divisive attitudes of "boasting" and arrogance, and an improper adulation of their favorite leaders. Because the cross has made null any justification for self-sufficient arrogance and "boasting" (1:26-31; 3:21; 4:6-7, 18-19; cf. 5:2; 8:1; 13:4), leaders and members within the community alike are to voluntarily surrender their worldly rights and instead take on a servant mentality.

After the letter opening (1:1-3) and introduction (1:4-9), Paul gets at the heart of the Corinthians' problems. The most pressing problem facing the community is not one involving doctrinal issues but one involving division due to an overemphasis on human leadership. Instead of being a unified body in Christ, the community is split into parties (1:10-12; 3:3-9; 4:1-2). The thrust of 1:10-17 is to introduce 1:10-4:21 and, more specifically, to draw attention to Christ crucified as the center of Paul's proclamation (1:18-31) and to direct attention away from loyalties to leaders and from a fixation with worldly wisdom. The next section (1:18-4:21) lays the groundwork for the rest of Paul's argument. Here Paul reestablishes his apostolic authority by redefining the standards by which the Corinthian believers should view themselves and their leaders. Paul aims to redirect the Corinthians' sense of being a disciple of a specific leader to being a disciple of Christ, which should result in the obliteration of their divisive "boasting" in their leaders. The last unit within the opening chapters (4:14-21) provides a transition between 1:1-4:13 and 5:1-15:57 and launches Paul's discussion of additional issues

dividing the community in the rest of the epistle, which includes their relationship with the larger Corinthian society (5:1-11:1), divisiveness in worship (11:2-14:40), and dissension over the resurrection from the dead (15:1-57). This is then followed by the conclusion and the letter closing (15:58-16:1-24).

First Corinthians 4:1-21 may be divided into three sections (vv. 1-5, 6-13, and 14-21), with each section serving to redirect the Corinthians' loyalty to Christ. Paul confronts their factionalism on a more personal level in order to eradicate forcefully their divisive loyalty and "boasting" in their favorite leader. In 4:1-5, Paul applies the servant model to himself and demonstrates how that model relates to the Corinthians' treatment of him. Though a chapter division separates 3:18-23 and 4:1-5, these two sections nevertheless belong together as a recapitulation of previous themes. For instance, 4:1-5 concerns how the Corinthians are to regard God's servants and reinforces the faultiness of human evaluation (reminiscent of 2:6-16), particularly in regards to the evaluation of God's servants (recalling 3:5-17). Furthermore, both sections begin with a third person singular command: "let no one deceive himself" (3:18) and "let a person evaluate us" (4:1). Emphasizing his role as God's servant, Paul nullifies the Corinthians' judgment of him in 4:1-5 and warns the Corinthians of the future judgment that all humanity must experience.

Verses 6-13 contain Paul's final rebuke of the Corinthian schisms in which he uses himself and Apollos as examples of the general principle the Corinthians are to learn. The Corinthians are to cease favoring one leader over another and being overcome with a sense of self-achievement and prominence. By reminding the Corinthians that everything they have as followers of Christ is a gift of God's grace, Paul subsequently removes all grounds for human "boasting."

In the third section (4:14-21), Paul reasserts his apostolic authority and his right to admonish them of their behavior and theological misunderstandings through the metaphor of father and child. Appealing to his parent-child relationship, Paul calls upon the Corinthians to imitate him. Paul proceeds in 4:17-21 to discuss his future plans to visit Corinth and threatens to confront the problems of disunity and arrogance harshly if required. Together these three sections bring Paul's first major argument to a climax, for in 4:1-21, Paul explains the covert allusions to himself and Apollos in 3:1-23.

While scholars generally hold that 1 Cor 1:10-4:21 forms a coherent unit, they differ in how the text thematically is coherent and as a result have offered

several proposals explaining the thematic interrelationship. Many commentators suggest 1:10-4:21 is an elaboration of a single, central theme such as the crucified Christ as God's wisdom,[3] factionalism,[4] wisdom as understood by rhetors and sophists,[5] the example of Paul,[6] or secular versus Christian leadership.[7] Other commentators, such as Fee, more accurately maintain that 1:10-4:21 is unified by the combination of the themes of party strife, leadership, and wisdom.[8] Castelli rightly views 1:10-4:21 as a single rhetorical unit and notes that between the call for unity in 1:10-17 and Paul's call for imitation in 4:14-21 lie arguments that function as mimetic examples (1:18-2:5; 2:6-3:5; 3:6-4:5).[9] Similarly, Mitchell examines the overall genre, composition, and function of 1 Corinthians and argues that 1 Corinthians is an argument for "ecclesial unity," which is centered on the πρόθεσις in 1:10.[10] Mitchell's rhetorical analysis correctly reveals that 1 Corinthians is "a single letter of unitary composition which contains a deliberative argument persuading the Christian community at Corinth to become reunified."[11] Here it is held that all the key themes discussed in 1:10-4:21—party strife (1:11-13), the crucified Christ as God's wisdom (1:18-2:5), the revelation of God's wisdom through the Spirit (2:6-3:4), the status of leaders (3:5-23), and the example of leaders

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[3] Karl A. Plank, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 30-31; Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther I* (EKK 7; Zürich: Düsseldorf, 1991-1999), 127-28.

[4] Laurence L. Welborn, "A Conciliatory Principle in 1 Cor 4:6," *NovT* 29/4 (1987): 334-35; Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (HUT 28; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 199-200, 207-10. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric*, 111-79, does not limit the subject of factionalism to 1 Cor 1:10-4:21, as some scholars have done. Mitchell observes various terms and *topoi* relating to the issue of political divisiveness and factionalism also to be present in 1 Cor 5:1-16:24.

[5] A. Duane Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric* (SNTSMS 79; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 160-73; Stephen M. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians* (SBLDS 134; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); Bruce W. Winter, *Philo and Paul Among Sophists: Alexandrian and Corinthian Responses to a Julio-Claudian Movement* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 145-46, 179-202.

[6] Benjamin Fiore, "'Covert Allusion' in 1 Corinthians 1-4," *CBQ* 47 (1985): 85-102; Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (LCBI; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 97-111; Rollin A. Ramsaran, *Liberating Words: Paul's Use of Rhetoric Maxims in 1 Cor 1-10* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1996), 31.

[7] Andrew D. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1-6* (AGAJU 18; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993).

[8] Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 47-51; Vincent P. Branick, "Source and Redaction Analysis of 1 Corinthians 1-3," *JBL* 101/2 (1982): 251-69.

[9] Castelli, *Imitating Paul*, 98-105.

[10] Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric*, 1-2, 187-88, 198-200.

[11] Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric*, 1. See Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric*, 184-86, for her outline of the epistolary and rhetorical structure of 1 Corinthians and pages 186-295 for her analysis of the composition of 1 Corinthians as a deliberative letter urging concord.

(4:6-21)—converge to bring the Corinthian community in line with God's perspective by "boasting" appropriately and by being a unified body.

Because we are not attempting a verse-by-verse commentary of 1 Cor 1:10-4:21, we need not discuss the structural relationship of this section to the rest of 1 Corinthians nor the distinguishable literary units within 1:10-4:21 in great detail. Our interpretation of "boasting" in these four chapters assumes: (1) Paul composed, in addition to 1 Corinthians, the "previous letter," the "severe letter," and 2 Corinthians, and (2) 1 Cor 1:10-4:21 forms a clearly defined literary unit within 1 Corinthians.

## §2 First Corinthians 1:10-4:21 as Deliberative Rhetoric

The main function of 1 Cor 1:10-4:21 is not that of an *apologia* in which Paul defends his apostleship but that of a deliberative speech in which Paul demonstrates what is to the Corinthians' benefit.[12] Those who view 1:10-4:21 strictly as an apology miss the overall message of Paul's discourse on "boasting" and leadership. Paul's discourse is not a defense in the technical sense since he does not respond to a list of accusations and insults leveled against him as he does in 2 Cor 3:1-6:18 and 10:1-13:10. Instead, Paul concerns himself with resolving conflict within the community (1:10-12) rather than with defending himself per se. Paul presents himself and Apollos as examples of mutual cooperation and suffering in order to confront the Corinthian community's overestimation of rhetoric, misunderstanding of the role of leaders, and practice of "boasting" inappropriately.

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[12] For those characterizing 1 Cor 1:10-4:21 as an apology, see Nils A. Dahl, "Paul and the Church at Corinth According to 1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21" in *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox* (ed. W. R. Farmer, C. F. D. Moule, and R. R. Niebuhr; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 313-35; Joop F. M. Smit, "'What is Apollos? What is Paul?' In Search for the Coherence of First Corinthians 1:10-4:21," *NovT* 44/3 (2002): 231-51; Fee, *The First Epistle*, 156; Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*, 152-59, 171; Timothy L. Carter, "'Big Men' in Corinth," *JSNT* 66 (1997): 45-71. For those arguing that 1:10-4:21 represents a deliberative speech rather than an apology, see Ben Witherington, III, *Conflict and Community: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 136; Mark D. Given, *Paul's True Rhetoric: Ambiguity, Cunning, and Deception in Greece and Rome* (Emory Studies in Early Christianity 7; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2001), 94; John T. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence* (SBLDS 99; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 128; Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric*, 54-55; Brian J. Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I': Personal Example as Literary Strategy* (JSNTSup 177; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 44-45.

Contrary to Litfin, who characterizes Paul's defense of the form and manner of his preaching as an apology of his *modus operandi*,[13] Paul does not repeatedly explain the manner of his ministry to the Corinthians in the sense of defending his ministry. Although Litfin contends that any interpretation that disregards the apologetic aspect misses a central component of Paul's discourse in these chapters, here we hold that any interpretation that views 1:10-4:21 strictly as an apology misses the aspect of Paul presenting himself and Apollos as examples to correct the Corinthian community's improper "boasting" and divisive allegiance to specific leaders.

Mitchell correctly comments that the presence of judicial terms alone does not automatically prove that a given text is defensive rhetoric.[14] Rather, one must first examine the function of those judicial terms within the overall argument. Mitchell maintains that Paul's language in 4:1-5 highlights the inappropriateness of believers judging one another and showcases Paul as an example of one who possesses the proper understanding of judgment. Noting that the final section of epideictic proof is the comparison (σύγκρισις), Mitchell adds that it was standard practice in an encomium to compare the person under discussion with illustrious examples.[15] Therefore, when Paul compares apostles with the Corinthians in 4:1-13, he does not defend his apostleship but rather presents himself and Apollos as examples for comparison with the Corinthians (cf. 4:6).

Some scholars are guilty of overreading the apologetic element in 1:10-4:21 and possibly of bringing the situation of 2 Corinthians to bear in their interpretation of these chapters. At the core of Paul's discourse is not their anti-Paul attitude, as Fee suggests.[16] Although anti-Paul feelings may have begun to emerge within the community by the time Paul writes 1 Corinthians, they are not in the foreground and have not climaxed as in 2 Corinthians. Neither Paul's apostolic authority nor his ability to gain a receptive audience is in jeopardy. Hence, Paul's language in 1:10-4:21 appears to be assertive rather than defensive, and any covert references to those opposing Paul's apostleship are absent from 1:10-4:21. Despite the Corinthians not rejecting outright Paul's teaching and authority, some of the Corinthians nonetheless appear to favor Apollos over Paul since being a disciple of Apollos brings more

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[13] Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology,* 152-59, 171.
[14] Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric*, 54.
[15] Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric*, 219-21.
[16] Fee, *The First Epistle*, 156.

honor and status due to his supposed superior rhetorical abilities and possible acceptance of their patronage. Paul's references to himself and his apostolicity in 1:10-4:21 therefore are not to be interpreted as his response to specific charges. Instead, Paul's self-presentation serves to strengthen his overall argument and exhortation in 1 Corinthians in which he addresses the issue of disunity among the Corinthians, which stems from their proclaiming allegiance to one leader over another.

§3 The Focus of the Remainder of the Study

In Part Two, we will investigate how the social setting of Corinth with its focus on self-advancement, social status, and honor impacts the perspectives of some of the Corinthian community's membership and how Paul addresses the situation. Before we analyze the "boasting" passage in 1 Cor 4:1-21, we must first place the passage in its wider context within 1:10-4:21. Since Paul's use of "boasting" in 4:6 carries over from its use in 1:26-31 and 3:21, we will briefly examine these texts in Chapters Three and Four and proceed with a detailed analysis of 4:1-21 (Chapter Five). Chapter Three will also include a specific example of the Corinthians' anthropocentric "boasting" (5:1-13). These findings will then be supported with an exegetical treatment of Paul's self-presentation in 9:1-27; 13:1-13; and 15:30-32 as additional correctives to the Corinthians' status-seeking behaviors (Chapter Six).

# CHAPTER THREE

## THE CORINTHIAN IDENTITY, WISDOM, AND
## PAUL'S PRESENTATION OF THE GOSPEL

One of the fundamental problems that emerges in 1 Corinthians from Paul's perspective is that members of the Corinthian community view Paul, other leaders, and themselves from a wrong perspective through their continued embracing of secular standards. Paul's admonition in 1:10-4:21 (cf. 5:1-13) therefore aims to criticize their worldly standards of judgment based on physical attributes and social status and to reorient them to the standards set by the cross. In these chapters, Paul redefines the standards by which the Corinthians should view and conduct themselves. Before Paul undertakes the issue of allegiances to specific personalities as a means of increasing one's social status, Paul must first address the issue of worldly wisdom versus divine wisdom as it is actualized in the Corinthian community's calling and Paul's own *modus operandi*. Once Paul establishes the appropriate grounds for "boasting" and defines his distinction between unacceptable self-praise and acceptable "boasting" in the Lord on a broader level, then he can tackle the issue of self-praise and "boasting" on a more specific level. This chapter thus explores the framework Paul sets to address addresses the Corinthian community's divisions. After exhorting the Corinthian community to consider their calling (§1), Paul outlines his preaching methodology (§2), defines true wisdom (§3), and tackles a specific episode of "boasting" (§4).

### §1 "Boasting" and the Corinthian Identity

26 For consider your calling, brothers and sisters, that not many were wise according to human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world in order that he might shame the wise, and God chose the weak things of the world in order that he might shame the strong, 28 and God chose the insignificant things of the world and the despised things, the things that are not, in order that he might render ineffective the things

that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 But it is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." (1 Cor 1:26-31)[1]

The Greco-Roman tendency to "boast" of one's status in terms of education, societal endeavors, political power, and noble birth has contributed to the Corinthians' rivalry between following Paul or Apollos over against the other. "Boasting" features prominently in the Corinthians' conduct and estimation of themselves and their leaders. Despite the majority of the Corinthians not belonging to the elite social class and not being proficient orators themselves, some members do come from circles of wealth, influence, and sophistication, though not from the most elite circles in Corinthian society. The fact that many of them have found just cause to "boast" in their calling deeply concerns Paul. Not only have they been "boasting" of the wisdom they possess as believers and "boasting" of their teachers from whom they received that wisdom, but they have "boasted" of themselves.

Because an unidentified number of Corinthians define themselves according to human standards, Paul employs a framework hermeneutic of Jer 9:22-23 (LXX), in which he carries into a Corinthian setting the themes, phraseology, and meaning of Jeremiah's exhortation to the Israelites, in order to redefine their standards according to God's wisdom. With an allusion to Jeremiah as an authoritative voice, Paul addresses the issue of "boasting" in symbols of status (wisdom, political influence, and nobility) and defines true wisdom in 1 Cor 1:26-31. The world honors those who are wise, powerful, and wealthy, whereas God exalts those who are foolish, weak, and despised by the world. God chooses the foolish things of the world (1:27-28; cf. 3:18-19) to shame those who are considered wise, and God chooses the things of the world that are thought of as being weak to shame the strong. The paradox of God's sovereign plan is illustrated in his love and grace extending towards those individuals the society deems as foolish, weak, and insignificant.

The fact that God is well pleased (εὐδοκέω) to save those who believe in the foolishness of the gospel (1:21) is the basis upon which Paul builds his argument in 1:26-31. "For consider your calling" (βλέπετε γὰρ τὴν κλῆσιν ὑμῶν) points to the

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[1] All translations, author's own, unless otherwise noted.

socioeconomic circumstances of the Corinthians at the time of their calling.[2] Paul exhorts the Corinthians to evaluate themselves properly before God and consider their past calling so that no one might find in themselves any cause for anthropocentric "boasting" before God. Paul picks up the idea of calling from the introduction, where he addresses the Corinthians as the church (ἐκκλησία) of God, sanctified (ἁγίαζω) in Christ, and called to be saints (ἅγιος) (1:2; cf. 1:9, 24). All four terms in 1:2 point to the Corinthian community being set apart. As the people of God, they no longer are to follow the world's operating system by valuing what the world values.

The dominant theme of 1:26-31 is that the Corinthians' calling is not contingent upon their social standing in the world. Paul objectifies the Corinthians' calling and directs them to reflect on their socioeconomic and sociopolitical circumstances at the time of their calling so that they may reflect on the kind of people God has called out of his divine initiative, irrespective of one's social status. With the repeated use of the phrase οὐ πολλοὶ in 1:26, Paul emphasizes that the predominant socio-economic strata represented in the Corinthian community are relatively low.[3] As demonstrated by God calling those deemed unimportant in social standing and deficient of wisdom, the act of calling is contrary to worldly standards or criteria. The act of calling is based not on a person's socioeconomic status or abilities but on the Lord's sovereign love and initiative. Paul therefore invites the Corinthians to ponder the reality of their conversion and to continue to reflect on it

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[2] Paul understands the act of calling (κλητὸς, κλῆσις and καλέω) primarily in the sense of a divine calling, with an emphasis on God's initiative. κλητὸς refers to a divine calling, where those who are called are called to be something, i.e., saints or an apostle (Rom 1:1, 6, 7; 8:28; 1 Cor 1:1, 2, 24). κλῆσις refers to a divine call (Rom 11:29; Eph 1:18; 4:1, 4; Phil 3:14; 2 Thess 1:11; 2 Tim 1:9) or to a station in life (1 Cor 7:20). καλέω also refers to a divine calling, but its meaning extends beyond the divine. It speaks of the act of God's calling (Rom 4:17; 8:30; 9:12, 24, 25; 1 Cor 1:9; Gal 1:6, 15; 5:8; Eph 4:4; 1 Thess 4:7; 5:24; 2 Thess 2:14; 2 Tim 1:9) and can carry the implication to live a certain lifestyle (1 Cor 7:15, 17; Gal 5:13; Eph 4:1; Col 3:15; 1 Thess 2:12; 1 Tim 6:12). The definition also includes being named something (Rom 9:7, 26; 1 Cor 15:9) or being invited to something (1 Cor 10:27). Lastly, it refers to the religious or socioeconomic situation of the called individual (1 Cor 7:18, 20, 21, 22, 24). This last meaning is especially important in our discussion on κλῆσις in 1 Cor 1:26 since it supports the argument that Paul refers to the social status of the Corinthians at the time of their calling. See Stephen J. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church* (London: T & T Clark, 2003).
[3] Contrary to Wilhelm Wuellner, "Haggadic Homily Genre in 1 Corinthians 1-3," *JBL* 89 (1970): 203; idem., "The Sociological Implications of 1 Corinthians 1:26-28 Reconsidered" in *SE* VI (ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1973), 668-69; Gail R. O'Day, "Jeremiah 9:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 1:26-31: A Study in Intertextuality," *JBL* 109 (1990): 263-65, the ὅτι clause should not be translated as an interrogative with an affirmative answer expected. According to their translation, Paul states that many believers are wise, powerful, and of nobility, which clearly is not the case. For the social consistency of the community, see Introduction §2.

long into the future. Once they begin viewing themselves according to God's perspective rather than according to the world's standards, then they will begin to see more clearly who they are in Christ and become a community marked by unity and humility instead of one preoccupied with social status and marked by divisive allegiances to specific leaders.

The triad σοφοὶ/δυνατοί/εὐγενεῖς in 1:26 is not merely a socioeconomic commentary on the Corinthian community; rather, these terms are "essential elements in a theological critique," for all three terms in the triad reflect the key issue of arrogance that threatens to permanently divide the community.[4] Through his description of the social status of the Corinthian believers, Paul focuses the Corinthians' attention away from their social status to their relationship with Christ, thereby challenging the social-climbing and status-conscious members' estimation of themselves.[5] Paul sees their sociopolitical position as a testimony to the power and wisdom of the Lord.

The repetition of the idea of God choosing (ἐκλέγομαι) underlines God's purpose and dominates the flow of Paul's thought in 1:27-28. Each of the three parallel purpose clauses expresses the implication of who God chooses and why. Through contrast and repetition, Paul reveals God's work in redemption (cf. 1:18-19). The terms foolish (μωρός), weak (ἀσθενής), insignificant (ἀγενής), and despised (ἐξουθενέω) refer to that which God chooses, contrary to the triad in 1:26 (wise, powerful, and noble birth), and functions as a warning against the Corinthians' "boasting" in themselves (πᾶσα σάρξ, 1:29) and evaluating themselves and others according to their secular social status location.

The paradox of the Lord's plan is illustrated in his love and grace extending towards those individuals the society deems as foolish, weak, insignificant, and despised. According to the Greco-Roman society, μωρός is an antonym of wisdom and refers to those who lack education, cultural sophistication, and good sense.[6] God thus chooses those deemed foolish, weak, insignificant, and despised according to the world's standards in order that he might shame (καταισχύνω) the wise (σοφός)

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[4] O'Day, "Jeremiah 9:22-23," 264.
[5] Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 178, correctly notes that these terms point forward to their inversion and redefinition in the later reference to righteousness, holiness, and redemption in Christ (1 Cor 1:30).
[6] Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.2.16; Sophocles, *El.* 890; 1326; *Oed. tyr.* 433; *Aj.* 594; Euripides, *Bacch.* 369; *Hipp.* 966; *Heracl.* 682; *Sib. Or.* 3.226; *P.Tebt.* 750.20.

and strong (ἰσχυρός) and might render ineffective the things that are (τὰ ὄντα καταργήσῃ).[7] The thought is eschatological; the Lord is doing away with what the world considers significant. It began with the death and resurrection of Christ and will find its ultimate fulfillment at the Parousia when he will exalt not only believers of the elite social class but also those believers who are foolish, weak, and despised by the world. God will reduce "the things that are"—the things resulting in social status (wisdom, power, wealth)—and bring them to a position of worthlessness and shame.

Shattering secular notions of social status and self-worth, the Lord chooses to redeem individuals from the lowest socioeconomic status with the view that no one would be able to "boast" (1:29). While the call in itself does not necessarily change the believer's social status (cf. 7:17-24), those believers who are low and despised according to society's standards nevertheless achieve a new status in God's eyes that is quite distinct from their status location outside the believing community. Because the Corinthians have done nothing to earn their special redemptive status, they have no reason to "boast" in the flesh. Thus, no human being, when considering one's position, whether it concerns education, political influence, or social affluence, can "boast" before God. If there is to be any "boasting," it is to be in the undeserved honor and privilege of being called by God, a point Paul buttresses with a quotation of Jer 9:22-23 (LXX).

Excursus: Jeremiah 9:22-23 (LXX)

22 Thus says the Lord: Let not the wise person boast in his wisdom, and let not the mighty person boast in his might, and let not the rich person boast in his riches; 23 but let the one who boasts boast in this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who exercises steadfast love, justice, and righteousness upon the earth; for in these things I delight, declares the Lord. (Jer 9:22-23 LXX)

The allusion to Jer 9:22-23 draws attention to the Lord's eschatological plan and to the misguided "boasting" in the worldly standards of wisdom, power, and wealth. The context of Jer 9:22-23 is reminiscent of 1 Cor 1:26-31, where Paul

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[7] Paul's rhetoric about God's wisdom and redemption is context specific. He does not suggest that God does not choose socially prestigious individuals. Rather, his rhetoric draws attention to the Corinthians' misplaced value on aspects that can increase their social status.

likewise condemns "boasting" in wisdom, power, and nobility.[8] Jeremiah 9:22-23 reflects on the proper grounds for human "boasting," in which Jeremiah condemns pride in intellect, power, and wealth, and instead enjoins them to "boast" that they understand and know the Lord, thereby orienting them to a theocentric posture.

In Jeremiah, the warning against "boasting" in wisdom, strength, and riches occurs in a series of judgment oracles.[9] Because the Israelites are caught up in deceit, iniquity, oppression, and idolatry, God's judgment is imminent (8:3-9:26). By trusting in wisdom, might, and wealth, the Israelites have broken the covenant. Regarding Israel's obsession with wisdom, power, and wealth as idolatrous and foolish, Jeremiah understands that anthropocentric "boasting" is grounds for judgment since it exposes the misplaced object of one's trust and becomes a means of self-glorification rather than a means of glorifying the Lord.[10] The act of glorying in the things of this world symbolizes idolatry and covenant unfaithfulness because the individual forgets the Lord and worships something other than the Lord. Only those who put their trust in the Lord rather than in wisdom, strength, or riches and follow him wholeheartedly will be delivered from the Lord's judgment.

Located between longer passages of warning and judgment, the pericope concisely states what people are to prize. Jeremiah contrasts two alternative worldviews through two triads (σοφία/ἰσχύς/πλοῦτος and ἔλεος/κρίμα/δικαιοσύνη). The godly values of love, justice, and righteousness put the worldly values of wisdom, power, and riches into proper perspective. Rather than "boasting" in that which fosters feelings of self-sufficiency, the only ground for "boasting" is in understanding and knowing the Lord, who practices steadfast love, justice, and

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[8] Allusions to or citations of Jer 9:22-23 also appear in 1 Sam 2:10; Sir 11:1-6; *Pss. Sol.* 17; *Odes Sol.* 3:10; *L.A.B.* 50:2; *Ps.-Phoc.* 1.53; 1 QS 1.5-6, 11-13, 16-17; 8.1-2; 4Q185 2.8-13; 11 QPs 18.9-16; *Midr. Rab. Eccl* 12:9; *Midr. Ps* 112:1; *Midr. Gen* 35:3; 1 Clem 13:1. For further analysis of Jer 9:22-23, see George B. Davis, "True and False Boasting in 2 Cor 10-13" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1999), 73-85; Walter Brueggemann, "The Epistemological Crisis of Israel's Two Histories (Jer 9:22-23)," in *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien* (ed. John G. Gammie; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978), 85-105. For Jer 9:22-23 in 1 Cor 1:26-31, see O'Day, "Jeremiah 9:22-23," 259-67; Richard B. Hays, "The Conversion of the Imagination: Scripture and Eschatology in 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 45 (1999): 391-412; idem, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); H. H. Drake Williams, *The Wisdom of the Wise: The Presence and Function of Scripture within 1 Cor. 1:18-3:23* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), 103-32; Davis, "True and False Boasting," 142-49.

[9] See Brueggemann, "The Epistemological Crisis," 85-105.

[10] Jeremiah considers human wisdom as a misperceived wisdom (Jer 4:22; 8:8, 9; 10:9; 18:18; 50:35; 51:57) and human strength as weakness (Jer 14:9; 16:21; 23:10; 49:35; 51:30). Jeremiah also writes that the accumulation of wealth is deceptive since its acquisition evokes God's impending judgment rather than security (Jer 5:26-28; 17:11).

righteousness (9:23). Wisdom, strength, and riches, are thus subordinate to authentically knowing and understanding the Lord.

According to Jer 9:22-23, boasting in anything apart from that which focuses one's attention on the Lord is an unjustifiable ground for "boasting." In v. 22 the verb הלל/καυχάομαι appears three times for negative admonitions, while in v. 23 הלל/καυχάομαι appears twice for positive exhortations.[11] The use of הלל/καυχάομαι in both a negative and positive sense as the object of "boasting" moves from anthropocentric to the theocentric "boasting" suggests that "boasting" itself is not the issue; rather, the concern is the object in which one "boasts." Jeremiah differentiates between legitimate "boasting," which he limits to "boasting" in the Lord's name,[12] and illegitimate "boasting," which involves "boasting" in one's arrogance.[13] Legitimate "boasting" signifies that the person's confidence is in the Lord, whereas illegitimate "boasting" signifies that the person's confidence is in the things of the world.

Wisdom, might, and riches themselves are not forbidden as long as they are not the object of one's "boasting." When they are the object of one's "boasting," the act of "boasting" becomes a means of self-glorification and signalizes one's inward feelings of pride and self-sufficiency. Only when wisdom, strength, and wealth are properly understood according to God's perspective are they of true value and not inherently sinful. Possession of wisdom, might, or wealth is not the proper basis for "boasting;" rather, the one who "boasts" must "boast" in his understanding and knowledge of the Lord. Jeremiah therefore exhorts the Israelites to stop placing their trust and glory in themselves since true wisdom, power, and wealth are located only in the authentic knowledge of the Lord.

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[11] There are three primary uses for the verb הלל (designated as I, II, and III): הלל I for "to shine, cause to shine" (Job 29:3; 31:26; 41:10; Isa 13:10; cf. Isa 14:12); הלל II for "to praise, boast, exalt," with the Lord predominately as the object (Pss 22:23-24; 34:3; 44:9; 64:11; 135:1, 3; Prov 31:30; Isa 41:16; 45:25; Jer 4:2; 9:22-23; 20:13; 31:7; 49:4); and הלל III for "to be confused, deluded, foolish, mad" (1 Sam 21:14; Eccl 2:2; 7:7; Job 12:17; Jer 25:16; 46:9; 50:38; 51:7; Nah 2:5). In the Hithpael, הלל II denotes "to take pride in oneself, boast, exult," often with overtones of arrogance, bragging, and covenant unfaithfulness (1 Kgs 20:11; Pss 5:6; 10:3; 49:7; 52:3; 73:3; 75:5; 97:7; Prov 20:14; 25:14; 27:1; Jer 49:4), while in a other texts הלל II is used in the context of glorying or rejoicing in the Lord (2 Sam 22:4; 1 Chr 16:25; 2 Chr 7:6; Ezra 3:10-11; Pss 18:4; 44:9; 105:3; 106:5; Isa 41:16; 45:25; Joel 2:26). See L. Allen, "הלל," *NIDOTTE* 1:1035-38; H. Ringgren, "הלל *hll* I and II," *TDOT* 3:404-10; C. Westermann, "הלל *hll* pi. to praise," *TLOT* 1:371-76; C. Pan, "הלל," *NIDOTTE* 1:1038-40; H. Cazelles, "הלל *hll* III," *TDOT* 3:411-13.
[12] Jer 4:2; 9:23; cf. 1 Chr 16:10; Pss 34:3; 64:11; 105:3; 106:5; Isa 41:16; 45:25.
[13] Jer 9:22; 49:4; cf. 1 Kgs 20:11; Pss 49:7; 52:3; Prov 20:14; 25:14; 27:1.

As noted above in the excursus, both Paul and Jeremiah consider "boasting" of things of the flesh to be tantamount to crediting oneself with something. For both Paul and Jeremiah, inappropriate "boasting" does not simply affect one's relationship with others, but it also affects one's relationship with the Lord. From a theological perspective, "boasting" reflects the object of one's trust and confidence. Because members within the Corinthian community have placed a false trust in the world's wisdom, power, and nobility, Jeremiah 9:22-23 (LXX) is the key text for Paul's idea of "boasting" since it redefines "boasting" in terms of the knowledge of God and condemns pride in secular wisdom, power, and wealth.[14] Paul explicitly refers to this passage twice in abbreviated form (1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17) and twice alludes to it (1 Cor 3:21; 4:6) in order to exhort the Corinthians to "boast" in the Lord rather than in the flesh, in the praise of other people, and in one's leader. Anthropocentric "boasting" is to be excluded by the Corinthian community. Hence, the only acceptable form of "boasting" for believers is theocentric "boasting." Possession of wisdom, power, or wealth is not the proper basis for "boasting." Instead, the one who "boasts" must "boast" in his or her understanding and knowledge of Christ.

Shifting from anthropocentric to theocentric "boasting," Paul introduces the true manner by which the Corinthians are to consider their calling in 1:30-31. Although Paul's movement from negative to positive "boasting" follows the pattern of Jeremiah, the insertion of Christ distinguishes Paul's text from Jeremiah's and demonstrates intertextuality at its fullest.[15] By adding a christocentric category, Paul focuses his "boasting" discourse on God's saving acts in Christ and identifies Christ as the sole ground for "boasting." Whereas Jeremiah locates the true source of the community's identity in the understanding and knowledge of God, Paul locates the source of identity in Christ who became wisdom. The adversative δέ and the pronoun ὑμεῖς in 1:30 set the Corinthian believers apart from the unbelieving status-seekers and show how different the believers' soteriological state is from those described in 1:18-25. The Corinthians have been called ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, thus

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[14] Although Paul employs different terms for powerful (Jeremiah uses ἰσχυρός, while Paul uses δυνατοί) and wealthy (Paul uses εὐγενεῖς instead of πλούσιος), the triad presented in 1 Cor 1:26 has a similar meaning and function of the triad in Jer 9:22 in that both triads critique a false sense of security. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 80, surmises that Paul uses the term for noble birth instead of wealthy because people in Corinth may have been wealthy, the *nouveaux riches*, but very few of them were well born.

[15] O'Day, "Jeremiah 9:22-23," 266-67.

signifying the eschatological status of being a new creation (cf. 2 Cor 5:17). The Corinthians are now intimately connected to Christ, both individually and corporately, since to be "in Christ Jesus" is to have a personal relationship with him and to be a part of the body of Christ, i.e. the church.

## §2 Paul's *Modus Operandi* and Rejection of σοφία λόγου

First Corinthians 1:10-4:21 addresses how Paul's theological presuppositions influence his view of preaching and includes Paul's response to the question of rhetoric. Within 1:10-4:21 (cf. 9:1-27), we discover a unique discussion of Paul's method of preaching and rationale behind his preaching method. Repeated references to his ministry with the verbs εὐαγγελίζω, καταγγέλλω, κηρύσσω, and λαλέω indicate that a central component of Paul's apostolic ministry and calling is to publicly proclaim the gospel.[16] Dissimilar to the sophists who are motivated by honor, wealth, and fame, Paul's only motivation is to be faithful to God in his preaching ministry (4:2). Because faithfulness to the gospel message is of utmost importance to Paul, he resists conforming the content of his message to appease his audiences' desires or expectations. And unlike his secular contemporaries who thrive on receiving flattery and acceptance from their audiences, Paul understands that his audiences do not have the final word on his success as a communicator of the gospel—only God is the final judge on that matter (4:3-5).

Paul addresses the Corinthians' improper allegiance to leaders by explaining his *modus operandi* as a preacher (cf. 1:17; 2:1-5) in anti-sophistic terms.[17] What the Corinthians fail to comprehend is that Paul has intentionally chosen his preaching style for theological reasons (cf. 1:18-25) knowing full well that his delivery

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[16] 1 Cor 1:17, 23; 2:7, 13; 9:14, 16, 18; 15:1-2; 2 Cor 2:17; 4:5; 10:16; 11:7; 12:19; 13:3; 15:11; cf. Rom 1:15; 10:8; 15:18, 20; Gal 1:8, 11, 16; 2:2; 4:13; Eph 3:8; 6:20; Col 1:28; 4:3-4; 1 Thess 2:2, 4, 16. A. Duane Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric* (SNTSMS 79; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 195-96, comments that the terms Paul uses to describe his preaching ministry are non-rhetorical and would not have been employed by orators to describe their own *modus operandi*: "No self-respecting orator could have used such verbs to describe his own *modus operandi*. Indeed, even though they deal with the subject of public speaking such verbs play no significant role in the rhetorical literature. This is understandable because these verbs describe a form of speaking which is at its core the antithesis of rhetorical behavior."

[17] The best background for understanding Paul's various comments about his *modus operandi* as a preacher is the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition of the first-century since it is within the Greco-Roman world that there is a close correlation between eloquence, wisdom, and social status. The manner in which one spoke revealed not only the individual's social standing but also his level of education, degree of political influence, and financial standing.

contrasts starkly with the persuasive orators of his day. The unsophisticated message Paul has preached to the Corinthians is not the only message he is capable of delivering. Rather, his message is one that he decided to deliver beforehand. Paul voluntarily became weak and dishonored (2:3; 4:9, 13; 9:20, 22) with a specific pastoral purpose in mind—to win them to Christ. The so-called deficiencies the Corinthians may have observed in Paul's preaching are nonexistent according to God's standards and to Paul's definition of gospel rhetoric.

Thus, Paul's and secular Corinth's understanding of σοφία diametrically oppose one another. The relationship between σοφία, rhetoric (λόγος), and the presence of sophists are intimately intertwined in the Corinthian context.[18] Within the first-century Greco-Roman world, wisdom was a prerequisite of eloquence. Those individuals possessing knowledge of philosophy, science, and culture were considered wise. In addition, since being an effective communicator required wisdom, those who lacked wisdom were not deemed eloquent. To possess eloquence without wisdom was inconsonant since eloquence separated the wise from the ignorant.[19] Those who possessed λόγος and σοφία were admired and honored by their audiences.[20] Although the Corinthians may have questioned Paul's familiarization with ancient rhetorical practices, Paul knows this aspect of ancient rhetoric quite well.

From Paul's statement in 4:3, we may deduct that some kind of criticism has been leveled against Paul in Corinth. This criticism most likely relates to the Corinthians' appraisal of Paul's proficiency in eloquence and wisdom (cf. 1:17; 2:1, 4). Because some Corinthians highly esteem Greco-Roman rhetoric and expect rhetorically powerful speeches, they criticize Paul for his apparent lack of rhetorical eloquence in his preaching without first considering Paul's professed *modus operandi* before finding his public speaking deficient. What these Corinthians fail to comprehend is that Paul has consciously refused to display rhetorical skill characteristic of the sophists in his preaching. Since public speaking entails a central

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[18] See Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*, 21-86.

[19] Cicero, *De Part*. 79; cf. *De Opt*. 4; *De Or*. 1.17, 20, 50-51; 3.19; *Tusc. Dis*. 1.4; *Brut*. 110; Isocrates, *Antid*. 244, 248, 277, 292, 308; Aristides, *To Plato* 391. However, it was possible that one considered wise could not speak eloquently. See Andrew D. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1-6* (AGAJU 18; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993), 38; Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*, 44-45, 74, 97.

[20] Philostratus, *Vit. soph*. 519-21, 524-25, 541; Aristides, *To Plato* 179; Dio Chrysostom, *Or*. 12.11; 18.2-3; 54.1; 66.12; Juvenal, *Sat*. 10.114-132; Epictetus, *Diatr*. 3.9.8-9; Tacitus, *Dial*. 6.2-4; 40.1.

component of his apostolic ministry, to be found inadequate in this area touches a sensitive nerve. In response to questions regarding Paul's level of wisdom and eloquence and to vindicate his *modus operandi* as a preacher, Paul explains the manner of his ministry by differentiating between personality and gospel rhetoric and by subtly displaying his rhetorical proficiency throughout his discourse in 1:10-4:21 (cf. 9:1-27).[21]

Since Paul focuses on the divisions and "boastful" arrogance of some Corinthians in 1:10-4:21 and moves on to other issues, only to return to his *modus operandi* in 9:1-27, and then quickly resumes discussing other issues, we may assume that the majority of the Corinthians have not minimized Paul's role as their authoritative spiritual father upon the arrival of Apollos. If the majority of the community were against him and seriously doubted the legitimacy of his apostleship, then we would expect a more irritated and sarcastic response much like that in 2 Cor 10-13. Instead, Paul directs the brunt of his rebuke towards an undisclosed number of individuals, who most likely represent a minority of the Corinthian community's membership but an influential minority nonetheless. Because of their potential to convince others to join their faction and further

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[21] Although John T. Fitzgerald, "Paul, the Ancient Epistolary Theorists, and 2 Corinthians 10-13: The Purpose and Literary Genre of a Pauline Letter," in *Greeks, Romans and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (ed. David L. Balch et al.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 190-93; Christopher B. Forbes, "Comparison, Self-Praise, and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric," *NTS* 32 (1986): 22-24; and Ronald F. Hock, "Paul and Greco-Roman Education," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), esp. 208-17, argue that Paul's education level was high and that he received training in rhetoric, our interpretation of "boasting" in 1:10-4:21 requires us to assume, at the very minimum, that Paul has received at least a rudimentary rhetorical education and has a limited understanding of Greco-Roman rhetoric. Here we will assume that Paul has encountered Greco-Roman rhetoric and learned some rhetorical conventions simply from his upbringing in Tarsus and from his exposure to professional orators during his frequent travels throughout the Greco-Roman world. Thus, as Edwin A. Judge, "Paul's Boasting in Relation to Contemporary Professional Practice," *AusBR* 16 (1968): 41, declares: "Whatever the circumstances of his upbringing and education, therefore, it is beyond doubt that Paul was, in practice at least, familiar with the rhetorical fashions of the time." Even if he were not formally educated in rhetoric while residing in Tarsus, Paul could not have been completely ignorant of the art of rhetoric. This point is correctly brought out by Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*, 137-40, who notes that Paul's ability to speak Greek and extensive travels meant that he possessed at least a limited understanding of Greco-Roman rhetoric: "by the time he wrote the Corinthian epistles Paul had spent years moving widely in the Hellenistic world. However long he may have remained in Tarsus, Paul later lived not sporadically but for extended periods among the people who made up the Greco-Roman culture. The practices and thinking of the Hellenistic world were forced upon him and he could not have avoided them had he tried. If nothing else, this exposure easily accounts for the general understanding of Greco-Roman rhetoric we observe in Paul's argument throughout 1 Cor. 1-4" (p. 139-40). For additional arguments pertaining to Paul's education, see Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 38-68; E. Earle Ellis, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 24-34; R. Dean Anderson, Jr., *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul* (CBET 18; Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1996), 249-57; Hock, "Paul and Greco-Roman Education," 198-227.

complicate Paul's relations with the community, Paul cannot blow off their criticism and must clarify his *modus operandi* to the Apollos faction as well as to the Corinthians who have not been affected negatively by Apollos' ministry so that all parties may be clear on what proclaiming the gospel and abiding by it entails.

Although Paul acknowledges that being an effective speaker requires a certain level of rhetorical adaptation (cf. 9:19-23), he does not submit to the "tyranny of the audience" in which the audience judges the orator's abilities and determines the orator's fate in their city.[22] Using their insight into the audience to discover how to best shape their persuasive efforts to win a positive verdict from their audience, sophists adapted themselves to the demands of each rhetorical situation. Contrary to the professional orators, Paul strictly limits the degree from which he accommodates his audience. The purpose of adapting his delivery is not to please an audience but to persuade them into following the gospel. The gospel is not a form of entertainment, and to make it into a form of entertainment as some Corinthians desire is an affront not only to Paul's apostolic calling but more importantly to the Lord of whom the gospel speaks. This is why Paul vehemently chastises those Corinthians who judge Christian ministers with the same standards as those professional orators who earn a profit flattering their audiences' whims. For Paul, his audience's response to his preaching is not the final arbiter. This is one of the key distinguishing factors between personality and gospel rhetoric. Paul takes the power out of the Corinthians' hands by adopting gospel rhetoric. In his explanation of gospel rhetoric, Paul declares that he does not seek to satisfy the Corinthians but seeks to satisfy the Lord since it is only the Lord's judgment of him that matters.

The dynamic of rhetorical adaptation to control an audience's affections toward an orator is relevant to Paul's argument in 1:17 since it is precisely this dynamic that Paul disavows. Paul's rejection of σοφία λόγου is not an attack against Greco-Roman rhetoric per se but rather is an attack against the rhetoric the Corinthians admire (referred to here as personality rhetoric). At the heart of rhetoric, in its most neutral terms and terms which Paul endorses, lays the power of language to sway people's minds for their betterment. Because Paul grasps that rhetoric encompasses more than the employment of oratorical tricks to manipulate an

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[22] Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*, 93. Cf. Cicero, *De Or.* 1.116, 120.

audience, Paul does not dismiss rhetoric altogether but rather proposes a new form of rhetoric, gospel rhetoric. Disagreeing with the practices of professional orators, Paul feels it is the sole task of the Spirit, not the preacher, working through the message of the cross to induce belief in the preacher's listeners.

Paul provides a clear statement of his *modus operandi* in 2:1-5, where he proclaims that before arriving in Corinth, he resolved to present Christ crucified without persuasive words of wisdom. Paul does not shy away from presenting the gospel in an ornate style because he is incapable of presenting the gospel with rhetorical sophistication, for he could easily have appeared to be more learned and wise had he wanted to do so. Unlike secular orators who had to display self-confidence to influence their audiences, Paul repudiates this type of self-assurance, as demonstrated in his acknowledgment that he came to the Corinthians in weakness, fear, and trembling (2:3). Paul's declaration does not suggest that he lacks confidence in his ability to effectively carry out his preaching ministry. On the contrary, Paul's declaration affirms the preeminence of the cross and the power of God working through the proclamation of the gospel. Paul consciously and consistently shuns all λόγοι and σοφία associated with personality rhetoric that are deliberately intended to impress others for purposes of receiving public prestige and securing social status and instead focuses on the straightforward message of the cross. Furthermore, by avoiding the employment of persuasive techniques designed to engineer πίστις through σοφία ἀνθρωπών, Paul emphasizes the soteriological centrality of the cross (2:5). Rather than presenting a gospel that is dependent upon adornments of rhetorical acumen, Paul presents a gospel that is dependent upon the sovereign work of the Spirit.

Paul eagerly desires the Corinthians to receive Christ in faith but eschews the techniques characteristic of personality rhetoric fashioned to convert others through the preacher's facility as an orator. In the place of personality rhetoric, Paul espouses gospel rhetoric, with its simple and pretenseless proclamation of the cross. In a sense, Paul views his preaching role similar to the role of a herald. The herald's duty was to announce the message of another without persuasive embellishment. The herald was simply a messenger. Contrary to the professional orators who would change the subject of their declamations from audience to audience, Paul proclaims the same gospel message to every audience. With Christ crucified being his constant message placarded before everyone (1 Cor 1:23; 2:2; cf. Gal 3:1), Paul regards

himself as a preacher, not a professional rhetor.[23] For Paul, the content of the gospel and the proper basis of faith necessitate abandoning the techniques and goals associated with personality rhetoric since personality rhetoric would elevate the preacher's persuasive abilities over the salvific power of God.

Paul's self-portrayal in 2:1-16 corrects the Corinthians' false notions of wisdom and eloquence and highlights the message about Christ. By arguing that the foundation of the gospel does not rest on human persuasiveness but rather on the power of God (2:1-5), Paul dissociates himself from the eloquence and worldly wisdom broadcasted by sophists. This dissociation does not imply that Paul believes rhetoric, in its neutral sense, and the cross are antithetical; instead, gospel rhetoric and personality rhetoric are completely opposed to one another. The oratorical climate of Corinth demands that Paul proves to the Corinthian community that the foundation of the gospel is divine wisdom rather than worldly wisdom or persuasiveness. Paul therefore presents himself as an example of one who is not arrogant because of his rhetorical ability since the effectiveness of his proclamation rests on the power of God, which is actualized in the proclamation of the crucified Christ.

<center>§3 Paul's Response to the Corinthians' Misunderstanding<br>of the Gospel and Wisdom</center>

The comparison of worldly standards of wisdom with that of God's standards in 1:10-4:21 features prominently in Paul's argument, thereby suggesting that worldly perceptions of wisdom and rhetoric are highly valued by the Corinthian community. Paul's discussion of human wisdom and persuasion as being antithetical to godly wisdom (1:17, 19-20, 25; 2:1, 4-6, 13) implies that the Corinthians have elevated the rhetoric of human speech too highly and consequently have

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[23] The verb προγράφω in Gal 3:1 denotes that Paul has made a clear and impassioned public proclamation, not a theatrical performance of the crucifixion. James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (BNTC 9; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993), 152, comments that Christ crucified was "so vividly represented to the Galatians that they could see him on the cross with their own eyes." Cf. Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Waco: Word Books, 1990), 100-101; Ben Witherington, III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 205; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 148.

misunderstood what equates true, divine wisdom.[24] Paul attributes the source of the Corinthians' schisms to their faulty perception of wisdom, Christian leaders, and their own position as believers and to their failure to grasp that there are no grounds for anthropocentric "boasting" since they have received everything from God.[25] By establishing an eschatological framework in 1:10-4:21 in which wisdom and folly are reversed, Paul sets the wisdom of the cross against the wisdom of rhetoric. To the world, the gospel is foolishness, but according to God's standards, the wisdom of the world is folly. True wisdom is only to be understood and defined in terms of Christ's salvific work. Thus, Paul's homiletic aim is to reorient the Corinthians to the message of the cross by drawing attention to Christ crucified as the center of his proclamation and by correcting the Corinthians' skewed understanding of what constitutes wisdom. With this twofold approach, Paul directs their attention away from loyalties to different leaders and away from obsessions with rhetorical wisdom and securing social status.

Wisdom is of prime concern for Paul, which is demonstrated by the sheer preponderance of references to the topic of wisdom—the terms σοφία and σοφός occur 28 times in 1 Corinthians and 26 times in chs. 1-3 alone.[26] In 1:18-25, Paul contrasts the wisdom of the world with the foolishness of God and includes two quotations from Isaiah (Isa 29:14; 33:18) to illustrate that human wisdom will fail. Paul sets the tone in 1:19 by quoting from Isa 29:14, a text that is directed towards those who have placed confidence in their own abilities in order to attain wisdom. In 1:20, Paul draws out the implications of the Isaiah quotation with a series of three elliptical rhetorical questions (cf. Job 12:17; 28:12; Isa 19:12; 33:18; 44:25) in order to substantiate his claim that no human wisdom can avail before God.[27] Human striving after wisdom is inherently contrary to God's standards. The Corinthians must realize that the Lord has turned into folly the worldly wisdom of those who have rejected the gospel message. Paul connects wisdom and salvation in 1:21 with

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[24] For the contrast between the wisdom of God and human wisdom in 1:10-4:21, see Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 101-105, 109-27; Peter Lampe, "Theological Wisdom and the Word about the Cross: The Rhetorical Scheme in 1 Corinthians 1-4," *Int* 44/2 (1990): 117-31; Ernesto Borghi, "Il Tema ΣΟΦΙΑ in 1 Cor 1-4," *RivB* 40 (1992): 421-58.

[25] See Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (trans. Frank Clarke; London: SCM Press, 1959; repr., Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1977), 154-66.

[26] 1 Cor 1:17, 19, [2x], 20 [2x], 21 [2x], 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30; 2:1, 4, 5, 6 [2x], 7, 13; 3:10, 18 [2x], 19 [2x], 20; 6:5; 12:8.

[27] This is consistent with the OT, which likewise predicts the overthrow of this human-centered wisdom (e.g. Ps 33:10; Prov 14:12; 21:30; Jer 8:9; 9:23-24; Ezek 28:4-7).

the previous set of rhetorical questions. He argues that God in his wisdom chose to save humanity by means of the cross and by no other means. Salvation comes to those who believe in the gospel and not through human wisdom. Salvation is not by knowledge but by faith, not by wisdom but by the folly of the gospel message. Focal to Paul's identification of Christ with wisdom in 1:24 is his view that human wisdom cannot arrive at a saving knowledge of the Lord. The true standard of wisdom is Christ crucified, and it is this wisdom that stands in opposition to the worldly standards of wisdom so beloved in Corinth. The divine wisdom that brought about Christ's saving act in the cross is true wisdom, i.e. the wisdom of God (cf. 2:6-9).

In response to wisdom playing a significant role in 1:10-4:21, scholars have disputed what type of wisdom the Corinthians are "boasting" of possessing. Greco-Roman rhetoric and Jewish wisdom are two contextual influences against which 1:10-4:21 must be read.[28] Although Jewish wisdom shapes Paul's understanding of wisdom, it is not the most prominent of the contextual influences against which 1:10-4:21 must be read.[29] Instead, Greco-Roman rhetoric is the most probable

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[28] According to OT understanding, the wise are those who possess knowledge of God as well as common sense. At the heart of OT wisdom instruction is the fear of the Lord, for out of fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov 1:7; 9:10; cf. Ps 111:10). A fundamental aspect of the pursuit of wisdom is its emphasis on a pursuit of the virtuous life, which is demonstrated by the numerous references to the righteous (צַדִּיק) and the wicked (רָשָׁע) in the wisdom literature (e.g. Job 3:17; 9:22, 11:20; 18:15; 27:7; Prov 8:15-16; 10:2-3, 6-7; 20-21; 11:4-8; 12:3, 5-7; 13:5-6; 14:34; 21:3; 24:16; 25:5; 31:9; Eccl 3:16-17; 7:15; 8:13; 9:2). Another aspect of divine wisdom is its identification with the Torah (e.g. Sir 24:23; 38:24-39; Bar 4:1). Even a focal point of Qumran literature is the Torah (CD 3:12-16; 6:2-11; 1 QS 11:5-6; 8:11-12; 1 QpHab 7:4-5; 1 QH 2:11-14; 12:11-12; 14:12-13; 16:6-7). Wisdom theology also is creation theology (e.g. Prov 8:1-36; Wis 7:17-30; 9:1-12; Philo, *Ebr*. 30-31; *Det*. 54; *QG* 4.97). See Peter. F. Ellis, "Salvation through the Wisdom of the Cross (1 Cor 1:20-4:21)," in *Sin, Salvation, and the Spirit: Commemorating the Fiftieth Year of the Liturgical Press* (ed. Daniel Durkin; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1979), 324-33; James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 266-81.

[29] Jeffrey S. Lamp, *First Corinthians 1-4 in Light of Jewish Wisdom Traditions: Christ, Wisdom and Spirituality* (Studies in Bible and Early Christianity 42; Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), examines Paul's presentation of σοφία and concludes that Paul draws upon Jewish wisdom traditions in 1:10-4:21. While adopting a minimalist approach in his analysis of Jewish texts, Lamp asserts that Paul's christocentric focus represents a deviation and continuity with the soteriological emphasis of wisdom in Jewish thought. Despite Lamp's slant, he nonetheless avers that the Greco-Roman background is the best background that accounts for the Corinthian situation (p. 111-15).

Unlike Lamp who views Jewish wisdom tradition as only one of the influences in the development of Paul's thought, James A. Davis, *Wisdom and Spirit: An Investigation of 1 Cor. 1:18-3:20 Against the Background of Jewish Sapiential Traditions in the Greco-Roman Period* (Lanham, MD: University Press, 1984), holds that the Jewish sapiential tradition is the source that most adequately accounts for the Corinthian wisdom critiqued by Paul in 1:18-3:20. Davis asserts that Torah-centric wisdom was the main problem in Corinth and suggests that Paul proposed that the Corinthians should rid themselves of the Torah (p. 71-74). One critique of Davis' thesis is his failure to explain why Paul makes no mention of Law in 1:18-3:20 if a Torah-centric wisdom were in view. Furthermore, if this wisdom were in view, then it would be difficult to explain the Corinthians'

background that accounts for the situation in Corinth and provides the most accurate reading of ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου (1:17).[30] As noted by Litfin, σοφία in the Greco-Roman tradition is "closer to hand and forms a sounder, more complete, and less fanciful key for unlocking the Apostle's meaning" than are the Jewish sapiential traditions.[31]

The mere frequency of wisdom terminology in 1:10-3:20 and their sporadic appearance elsewhere in Paul's letters[32] suggests that Paul picks up a key word of the Corinthians and connects it to their arrogance and divisiveness.[33] As previously noted, σοφία frequently appears in Greco-Roman texts within the context of rhetoric the Greco-Romans believed it was not possible to be eloquent without being wise. Furthermore, the practice of rhetoric was held in the highest esteem in the educated circles in Greco-Roman cities, such as Corinth, where those individuals possessing knowledge of philosophy, science, and culture were considered wise. Because Gentiles (Greeks) comprise the predominant membership of the Corinthian community, it seems unlikely that Paul would refer strictly to Jewish sapiential wisdom traditions to a community divided over issues pertaining to secular knowledge and eloquence of speech. This notion finds support in 1:22, where Paul explicitly relates wisdom to the Greeks and signs to the Jews. Paul employs the term Ἕλλην rather than ἔθνος because the search for wisdom was so significant in Greek

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behavior. It is also problematic to suggest that Paul proposes the Corinthians to rid themselves of the Torah (cf. 7:19; 9:8-9) as Davis suggests. "The wisdom of this age" (2:6) is not to be identified with the Torah, as Davis contends (p. 89-93). Michael D. Goulder, "ΣΟΦΙΑ in 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 37 (1991): 516-34; idem, *Paul and the Competing Mission in Corinth* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2001), 47-74, also incorrectly maintains that σοφία refers to the Torah and subsequently has nothing to do with rhetorical eloquence. Cf. Richard A. Horsley, "Wisdom of Words and Words of Wisdom in Corinth," *CBQ* 39 (1977): 224-39; idem, "Pneumatikos vs. Psychikos: Distinctions of Spiritual Status among the Corinthians," *HTR* 69 (1976): 269-88. In short, positions favoring Jewish wisdom traditions as the only background from which to interpret the Corinthian problems addressed in 1:10-4:21 should be rejected, as Neil Richardson, *Paul's Language about God* (JSNTSup 99; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 107, rightly proclaims: "The evidence does not support them." Cf. A. van Roon, "The Relation between Christ and the Wisdom of God According to Paul," *NovT* 16 (1974): 207-39, who argues against viewing Jewish wisdom Christology in Paul's writing.

[30] "Wisdom of word" refers to the rhetorical skill and eloquence required in public declamations as well as to persuasive reasoning. Because Davis, *Wisdom and Spirit*, passim, does not take this verse into consideration and consequently ignores one of the central problems Paul combats in 1:10-4:21, he mistakenly identifies Hellenistic Judaism as the source of theological error prevalent in the Corinthian community. The problem, as noted by Raymond Pickett, *The Cross in Corinth: The Social Significance of the Death of Jesus* (JSNTSup 143; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 37-84, is not theological but social. Cf. Laurence L. Welborn, "On the Discord in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Ancient Politics," *JBL* 106/1 (1987): 85-111.

[31] Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*, 173.

[32] Rom 1:14, 22; 11:33; 16:19, 27; 1 Cor 6:5; 12:8; 2 Cor 1:12; Col 1:9, 28; 2:3, 23; 3:16; 4:5; 2 Tim 3:15.

[33] Lampe, "Theological Wisdom," 118; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 108-109.

culture.[34] Thus, according to Paul, the pursuit of wisdom in Corinth strictly is a Greek phenomenon, not a Jewish one. While different explanations have been proposed to decipher the meaning of σοφία in 1:10-4:21, our succeeding study shall demonstrate for the above reasons that the most plausible thesis is that Paul objects to the admiration of worldly wisdom characteristic of the sophists and highly valued in Greco-Roman society.[35]

Setting worldly rhetorical wisdom against divine wisdom of the cross in 1:10-4:21, Paul demonstrates that God has overthrown the human standards of wisdom, and in their place, God has established a wisdom grounded in Christ crucified. Paul contrasts worldly wisdom with true wisdom with the statement Christ "became to us wisdom from God" in 1:30. The foolishness of the gospel is true wisdom. God has made Christ to become wisdom, but not the worldly wisdom the Corinthians esteem. The switch to the first person pronoun (ἡμῖν) signifies that what the Lord has done through Christ is applicable to all believers, not just to the Corinthians. Paul's understanding of Christianity therefore can be summed up with the statement: Christ is the wisdom of God. Paul redefines what true wisdom consists of—Christ on the cross—over against the status seeking and arrogant of Corinth.[36] True wisdom is not to be found in rhetoric; it is to be found in God's plan for redemption through Christ's atoning work. Wisdom is shown through God's gracious gifts of righteousness (δικαιοσύνη), sanctification (ἁγιασμός), and redemption (ἀπολύτρωσις). These terms, when taken together, encompass the totality of wisdom and serve as metaphors for salvation. Believers have righteousness, sanctification, and redemption through God in Christ, the embodiment of wisdom. While it is true that these terms all apply to Christ, this is not Paul's focus here. Wisdom is separated from the other terms because it applies to

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[34] Raymond F. Collins, *1 Corinthians* (SP 7; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1999), 106; David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 68-69.

[35] Bruce W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among Sophists: Alexandrian and Corinthian Responses to a Julio-Claudian Movement* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 101; C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC 7; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1968), 67-68; Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*; Stephen M. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians* (SBLDS 134; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

[36] The Greeks believe Paul's preaching is utter folly since he connects God's power to the weakness of the cross. The Jews waited for a Messiah who would come triumphantly. A crucified Messiah was a contradiction in terms, but for Paul, this crucified Messiah is the power of God for salvation and is true wisdom.

Christ while the others apply to believers.[37] Thus, true wisdom is only to be understood and defined in terms of Christ's salvific work.

Paul introduces the true manner by which the Corinthians are to consider themselves in 1:30-31. Because of Christ's saving work, they are now the people of God and subsequently should evaluate themselves according to God's redemptive historical plan. The church is part of God's redemptive plan, which began with the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:1-3) and is fulfilled in the work of Christ. Paul emphasizes the absolute indebtedness of the Corinthian believers to the Lord's sovereign and gracious plan that has been realized in their calling. All that the Corinthians have is due to God's grace and Christ's sacrificial death, so that there is no reason to "boast" in the flesh. With the allusion to Jer 9:22-23 (LXX), Paul confronts those Corinthians who "boast" inappropriately in their own knowledge, power, or wealth. The Corinthians must understand that who they are in Christ is entirely by God's grace. "Boasting" in themselves or in anything other than God and his work is totally inappropriate. Salvation did not come to them because of their wisdom, might, riches, or nobility. Instead, it came to most of them in spite of their lack of such things. Christ therefore becomes the sole ground for "boasting."

Employing the terminology of the cross in 1:18-31 as a counter argument against the wisdom of speech, Paul reverses the values of the Corinthians with respect to rhetorical wisdom by proving the trustworthiness of his message.[38] Although the message of the cross might appear foolish to his Corinthian audience, Paul proclaims the Lord's power and human salvation are conveyed precisely through the means of the cross. Paul's preaching of the cross does not conform to the human wisdom that the Corinthians value. For those who are being saved it is the power of God, while for those who are being judged it is foolishness. Paul aims to show that the gospel message is powerful because it represents God's perspective. He exhorts the Corinthians to consider their calling so that they would be able to grasp the meaning of the message of the cross. Although the gospel message appears

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[37] Commentators disagree on the specific relation between these terms. Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 117, argues for the separation of wisdom and asserts that the verse should be read as it is structured: "But *you are*—from God in Christ, who was made wisdom for us by God—righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (italics his). Similarly, Fee, *The First Epistle*, 85-86; W. Bender, "Bemerkungen Übersetzung von 1 Kor 1:30," *ZNW* 71 (1980): 263-68. Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 191, holds that wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption belong together since they characterize Christ and are imparted by Christ.

[38] Williams, *Wisdom of the Wise*, 688.

weak, powerless, and foolish from a worldly perspective, it is strong, powerful, and wise from God's perspective. The cross is true wisdom, so it is with the cross, not the rhetorical abilities of their leaders or social status, that the Corinthians should be enamored.

§4 "Boasting" Despite Sexual Immorality

The case of sexual immorality in 5:1-13 further demonstrates not only the Corinthians' misapprehension of what constitutes true wisdom and how destructive their lack of wisdom is on the welfare of the community, but it also exposes their propensity to engage in anthropocentric "boasting." The issue is not merely that immorality has occurred within the community, which in itself is catastrophic, but that the community has become conceited in spite of it. Paul's discourse in 5:1-13 draws upon 4:14-21, where he exhorts the Corinthians to imitate his ways and threatens to punish those who are arrogant (φυσιόω) because of his absence. Paul does not target his reprimand to the incestuous man but rather to the entire community for condoning the man's conduct through their silence. From Paul's perspective, members of the community have displayed no remorse and have not dealt with the situation effectively by excommunicating the guilty party.[39]

As reported to Paul, a male member of the community was cohabitating with a woman who either had been or was still married to the man's father. The text does not indicate whether the father was deceased or was still alive but merely states that the father was divorced from the woman.[40] The text also does not indicate whether the man married his stepmother or was living with her outside the confines of marriage but merely suggests that the relationship was ongoing, as indicated by the present infinitive ἔχειν (5:1).[41] Thiselton maintains that marriage is "probable but not

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[39] Against Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 153-54, Paul's concern is not on how his missionary efforts would be perceived by the Jerusalem community. Instead, his primary concern is on the spiritual state of the Corinthian community.

[40] Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 48-49, maintains that the father was not deceased and that the man's incestuous liaison was a serious criminal offense according to Roman law.

[41] The fact that the woman herself is not mentioned intimates that only the man is a member of the believing community. Fee, *The First Epistle*, 201, comments: "Given the full mutuality of men and women in the marital issues addressed in chap. 7, it is nearly impossible that she could have been a member of the community and not in v. 5 have been brought under the same judgment as her lover."

certain."[42] Since material interests played a bigger role in establishing marital relationships during the first century than did sex and affection, Chow speculates that the couple may have married for financial reasons:

> To see in the man's action, whatever his theological views, a way to preserve or to increase family wealth may well provide a better explanation of why the son chose to associate with the stepmother against all odds. For on the one hand, through marriage, he would not have to pay higher taxes. On the other hand, he would immediately be able to have control over his share of the inheritance from his father who probably was dead at that time. Better still, through marrying his stepmother he might have been able to preserve in his house his stepmother's dowry to his father and might even have access to the possession of his wife's family.[43]

Nonetheless, Lev 18:8 condemns this union: "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is the nakedness of your father."

Scholars have attributed the Corinthians' reluctance to rebuke the man to the man being relatively well-off.[44] As noted by Garland, "Most in the church probably deemed it inexpedient or impossible to confront an influential figure on the matter of sexual immorality. Such persons are dangerous to offend, both for an individual and for a church association that has an uncertain legal status and that also may be financially dependent on them."[45] Since Paul provides no concrete details as to the circumstances of the sexual relationship and to the social status of the individual, it seems probable that the man possessed some social standing within the community. Assuming this is the case, it illuminates why the Corinthians resisted confronting his behavior. If this individual were a patron of some members within the community, then their censure of his actions would create enmity with their patron. Their resistance to terminating the patron/client relationship, or at the minimum their reluctance to violate Roman social etiquette, further exemplifies the importance of

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[42] Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 386.

[43] John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* (JSNTSup 75; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 138.

[44] Michael D. Goulder, "Libertines? (1 Cor. 5-6)," *NovT* 41 (1999): 334-48; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 158, 162; Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 75-86; Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 130-41; Winter, *After Paul*, 56-57.

[45] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 163.

social status within the community and how the community honored those of higher social status (cf. 1:26-28).

Paul's remark that this type of sexual immorality is not even found among pagans (5:1) highlights the sharpness of his censure against the entire community. If even pagans, with their lax sexual restrictions, find incest disdainful, then how much more the believing community should find it utterly loathsome.[46] The scandal is not simply a case of sexual immorality but that the general attitude of the community is one of arrogant pride. The stress is laid upon the incestuous nature of the union, which even secular customs forbade. Instead of mourning over the incident, the Corinthians have become arrogant (φυσιόω; 5:2). Paul's contemptuous statement ὑμεῖς πεφυσιωμένοι recalls 4:6, 18-19, where Paul chastises particular members for their arrogance. From Paul's admonitions in 1:10-4:21, we may deduce that the Corinthians' "inflated opinion of themselves sprang from an overweening sense of spiritual power, knowledge, and wisdom," and manifests itself in their anthropocentric "boasting" (cf. 5:6).[47] For Paul, the Corinthians' root problem is their spiritual arrogance coupled with their moral apathy. The enormity of the immorality calls for extreme humility and prompt action. If even a small quantity of leaven can have disastrous effects, then how much more can a sex scandal of this magnitude impact negatively on the life of the community.

Because the Corinthians have failed to act as the sanctified and holy people they are (ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις; 1:2), Paul must take decisive action by παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ Σατανᾷ εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός (5:5). What is the effect of handing the individual over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh? For clarification we turn to 1 Tim 1:20, where an individual is similarly delivered to Satan as some sort of religious penalty for blaspheming. The term's comparable usage in 1 Tim 1:20 suggests that for Paul "this was quasitechnical language for some kind of expulsion from the Christian community, probably from the gatherings of the assembly for worship, including the meals and supper in honor of the Lord."[48] Destruction of the flesh (ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός) does not imply

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[46] Cicero, *Clu*. 5.27; Tacitus, *Ann*. 6.19. For further comment, see Winter, *After Paul*, 44-57.
[47] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 159.
[48] Fee, *The First Epistle*, 208-209. For expulsion in the Jewish Scriptures, see Brian S. Rosner, *Paul, Scripture, and Ethics: A Study of 1 Corinthians 5-7* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 64-68. For exclusion in the OT, see Deut 13:17-17 (LXX); 23:3 (LXX); Ezek 44:6-9; Josh 7:25.

physical death, as some have suggested,[49] but rather expresses Paul's intention to bring about some kind of positive result.[50] Since the ultimate purpose is the man's salvation, it is difficult to argue that the man's premature death could result in a redemptive outcome. Though the man's punishment may or may not include physical suffering, Thiselton astutely suggests that what is to be destroyed is the self-glorying of both the man and the community.[51] The purpose for handing the man over to Satan is expressed in the final purpose clause, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου (5:5). Paul's concern is both for the man and the Corinthian community. He worries about the ramifications of this man's sin if it remains unchecked by the community (5:6-8), but at the same time, Paul displays concern for the man's salvific redemption.

The primary function of expulsion is to restore the holiness of God's temple. The temple/holiness motif recalls 3:16-17, where Paul describes the Corinthian community as God's temple.[52] Rosner rightly concludes regarding the thematic interconnectedness of 3:16-17 and 5:1-13:

> There are good reasons, then, for thinking that 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 provides the theological framework for understanding perhaps the most fundamental reason for the expulsion of the sinner in 5:1-13: the sinner must be "destroyed" because he has defiled the holiness of God's temple, the church. A corollary of this holiness motif, contamination, is also present in 1 Corinthians 5. The sinner must be removed because holiness and unholiness cannot coexist, "a little leaven leavens the whole lump" (5:6).[53]

Thus, the decisive action Paul demands is not Paul's alone, for the community must also play an active role in reprimanding the man's behavior. The reading of 5:5

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[49] So, Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Hermeneia; trans. James W. Leitch; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 97; William F. Orr and James A. Walther, *1 Corinthians* (AB 32; Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 188.

[50] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 169-77; Fee, *The First Epistle*, 208-13; Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 395-400.

[51] Anthony C. Thiselton, "The Meaning of Σάρξ in 1 Corinthians 5:5: A Fresh Approach in the Light of Logical and Semantic Factors," *SJT* 26 (1973): 204-27.

[52] Brian S. Rosner, "Temple and Holiness in 1 Corinthians 5," *TynBul* 42/1 (1991): 137-45, maintains that the demand for holiness and purity reflects Paul's development of Deut 23:2-9. Thus, according to Rosner, this would not be the only instance where Paul intends his audience have "a cumulative reading" of 1 Corinthians (e.g. 1:4-5 introduces chs. 12-14; 2:7-8 introduces ch. 15).

[53] Rosner, "Temple," 145.

should be understood as Paul instructing the community that they have the authority to participate in the expulsion of the immoral man, and Paul expects them to do so in his absence.[54] The intended outcome of the man's expulsion is that he might be publicly shamed of his behavior and subsequently might be saved on the eschatological day of judgment.

Scholars disagree on the precise correlation between the Corinthians' arrogance (φυσιόω) and "boasting" (καύχημα) to the incestuous relationship—are the Corinthians arrogant and "boastful" *in spite of* the sex scandal or *because of* it? Some scholars attribute their "boasting" to theological confusion regarding their newfound spiritual freedom in Christ (cf. 6:12).[55] This, however, seems unlikely.[56] If secular society even condemned incest, then it appears improbable that the Corinthians would find incest praiseworthy. Instead, the point is that Paul finds it incredible that the Corinthians could find reason to "boast" when they have such blatant immorality in their midst. The problem lies not with their glorying in the sexual scandal but with their elevated feelings of self-importance through which they tolerate the indiscretion and with their belief that they possess superior knowledge. They have absolutely no grounds for spiritual airs or self-glorification. Their "boastful" attitude is completely inappropriate given that an incestuous relationship exists in their midst. Mourning over the man's sin is the proper response, not displays of arrogance and "boasting."[57] Consequently, Paul views their "boasting" as improper, anthropocentric "boasting."

Paul's question οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι μικρὰ ζύμη ὅλον τὸ φύραμα ζυμοῖ (5:6b) underscores the magnitude of their spiritual ignorance. Knowledge is the very thing some of the Corinthians pride themselves in having. If they did possess the spiritual knowledge they "boast" of having, then they would know how inappropriate it is for them to "boast" in light of the sex scandal. Hence, their οὐ καλὸν τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν (5:6a).

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[54] For corporate responsibility, see Bath L. Campbell, "Flesh and Spirit in 1 Cor. 5:5: An Exercise in Rhetorical Criticism of the NT," *JETS* 36 (1993): 331-42; Brian S. Rosner, "Οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἐπενθήσατε: Corporate Responsibility in 1 Corinthians 5," *NTS* 38 (1992): 470-73.

[55] Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (EKK 7; Zürich: Düsseldorf, 1991), 1:371-72; Fee, *The First Epistle*, 201-202.

[56] So Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 161, 178; Winter, *After Paul*, 53; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 94, 98; Orr and Walther, *1 Corinthians*, 186.

[57] Cf. 2 Cor 12:21; Ezra 10:6; 1 Esd 9:2.

Because some of the Corinthians are enamored with attributes resulting in elevated social status, Paul's call for the man's removal from the community is even more startling. Paul directs them to stop associating with perhaps one of the more influential patrons of the community. The metaphors of leaven and the Passover (5:6-8) supply Paul's theological justification for the man's expulsion and highlight the absurdity of their anthropocentric "boasting." In the leaven analogy, leaven symbolizes that which is unclean and pollutes one's environment (Exod 12:15-20; 13:6-7; Matt 16:6-12; Gal 5:9). For Paul, the leaven metaphor illustrates that accepting this man's sinful behavior could result in other members seeking how far they could push the envelope, behaviorally speaking. Tolerating such depravity stunts the spiritual growth of the believing community, a community characterized as unleavened bread, a symbol of purity (cf. 6:11). With a shift of metaphors, Paul reminds the Corinthians how they came to be the unleavened bread by associating Christ's atoning death with the Passover lamb (Exod 12:1-28; Ezek 45:18-22). Christ as the Paschal lamb is the basis upon which the Corinthians are to rid themselves of sexual immorality and become a new community in Christ, ναὸς θεοῦ (3:16-17), living as those who have been sanctified by the blood of Christ. Their identity as the unleavened bread should guide their behavior. By expulsing the incestuous man, the community breaks away from their improper focus on social status and moves toward becoming a "new batch of dough."

Relating the incident of sexual immorality to his previous letter, Paul returns his focus to the community's attitude in 5:9-13. Upon initial reading, this paragraph may seem to introduce a new subject, but closer examination reveals that though Paul resolves an issue from a former letter, the issue is intrinsically related to the incestuous affair. Because the Corinthians have either misunderstood or completely disregarded Paul's former directives, Paul must clarify what it means for them to disassociate themselves from sexually immoral persons. They are to judge those within the community and expel the incestuous man from the community. That they still socially associate with the immoral individuals is a component of their anthropocentric "boasting." Paul's concluding command, ἐξάρατε τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν (5:13) is reminiscent of Deut 17:7 (cf. Deut 19:19; 21:21, 24; 24:7) and

recalls 1 Cor 5:2, 5, 7.[58] The Corinthians, in their present state, "do not reflect the purity and truth of the gospel. If they were morally sincere and inflexibly committed to the truth, they could never have condoned this sin by a member, no matter how prominent or powerful that person might be."[59]

## §5 Summary

Paul's first mention of "boasting" in the Corinthian correspondence appears in 1 Cor 1:29 and 31, where he explains that God's salvific plan precludes any grounds for anthropocentric "boasting" before the Lord. The dominant theme of 1:26-31 is that the Corinthians' calling is not contingent upon their social standing in the world. Paul contrasts the eschatological standing of the community with the eschatological judgment of the world's wise, powerful, and socially prestigious. God chooses people irrespective of the world's standards: the world honors those who are wise, powerful, and of noble birth, whereas God exalts those who are foolish, weak, and despised by the world. While seeking to influence their moral and ethical behavior so that they would become a unified body, Paul provokes a reinterpretation of the Corinthian calling and defines his *modus operandi* in order to refute any claims of his being inferior to Apollos.

Paul is consistent with his rhetoric and can speak of the transforming power of the gospel with first hand knowledge. What Paul once thought was important and prided himself in became worthless post-conversion: ἅτινα ἦν μοι κέρδη, ταῦτα ἥγημαι διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ζημίαν (Phil 3:7; cf. Phil 3:4-8). Because Paul's conversion was dramatic, he expects the Corinthians to have a similar dramatic conversion where they too find things resulting in social status and honor utterly worthless. This is why "boasting" is such a critical issue for Paul. Their competitiveness and

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[58] For more on the Deuteronomic background, see Rosner, *Paul, Scripture*, 61-93. Against reading Deuteronomy into Paul's discourse, Christopher M. Tuckett, "Paul, Scripture and Ethics. Some Reflections," *NTS* 46 (2000): 411-16, holds that Paul's instruction to expel the wicked person is not strongly influenced by Deut 22:22, 30 and that the Corinthians would not have picked up on any allusions to Deuteronomy. Tuckett concludes: "The OT legislation of Deuteronomy does *not* seem to be an important factor in Paul's argument. Such legislation *may* have been in the background of Paul's thinking. But it is hard to see that this would have been picked up in any way by Paul's audience on the basis of what Paul actually says in vv. 1-12 at least. V. 13 may simply represent a use of at most biblical terminology or phraseology with no further overtones detectable, at least to the readers. It thus seems very improbable that Paul's language here would have led his readers to any wider context of Deuteronomy. Nor is there any indication that Paul would have wished to lead them in that direction" (p. 416).
[59] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 180.

arrogance reminds Paul of the type of person he was before his conversion. Perhaps Paul resonates with the Corinthians more than with any other community and consequently expects more out of them. Paul's approach is entirely pastoral. He knows what the Corinthians could have spiritually and longs for them to have it. He wants the Corinthians to experience a similar break with their past, and the only way they can begin to be transformed into spiritually mature believers is if they truly know what it means to "boast" in the Lord. "Boasting" in the Lord thus becomes Paul's prescription for dealing with the Corinthians' problems relating to social status and anthropocentric "boasting."

In 1:10-4:21 and 5:1-13, Paul centers his discourse on the Corinthians' inappropriate admiration of leaders and worldly behavior in relation to their pursuit of wisdom, honor, and social status. Paul does not criticize a particular type of wisdom but only the Corinthians' attitude toward worldly rhetorical wisdom, which he characterizes as arrogant and "boastful." Central to Paul's interplay between the themes of dissension and wisdom is his conviction that there can be no factions if the Spirit of God, who reveals divine wisdom, were fully present (cf. 12:1-31). If the wisdom of God really did take root among the Corinthian community, then the community would not be marked by disunity. For Paul, the very existence of factions signals that some Corinthians continue to hold on to human wisdom rather than divine wisdom and continue to have wrong attitudes and behavior in relation to the pursuit of wisdom and social status. As we shall examine in the next chapter, Paul presents himself and Apollos as counterexamples to the Corinthians' tendency to glory in that which increases their social status.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## "BOASTING" IN LEADERS: PAUL AND APOLLOS
## VERSUS THE SOPHISTS

In the preceding chapter, we examined Paul's call to the Corinthian community to change their perspective regarding their identity and their concept of wisdom. Having established the framework of "boasting" in the Lord and his *modus operandi*, Paul next tackles in 1:10-4:21 the problem of the Corinthians viewing Paul and other leaders from a faulty, worldly perspective. Members of the Corinthian community have evaluated Paul and the other leaders' preaching according to cultural standards set by the sophists and other public orators (§2). Subjecting Paul's preaching and ministry to the same standards as secular orators, they have found his public declaration of the gospel to be deficient, especially when compared to Apollos' ministry (§1 and §3). Their comparison of Paul with other leaders in the community has resulted in the community's becoming divisively arrogant and "boastful" (cf. 1:10-12; 4:6).

Although the Corinthian community imagines they are engaging in socially acceptable self-praise, Paul theologically interprets their focus on self-advancement and honor not as acceptable self-praise but as unacceptable "boasting." To emphasize his disapproval with the Corinthian community's arrogant behavior, Paul introduces the καυχ- stem (§5). By redefining the Greco-Roman conventions of self-praise and "boasting" into the believing context, Paul exhorts the Corinthians to focus on their relationship with Christ instead of focusing on improving their social status or on increasing their honor by claiming allegiance to a specific leader who could elevate their social rank within the community. In his quest to influence the Corinthian's affections toward him as their founding spiritual father, Paul directly confronts the issue of divisive allegiances (cf. 1:10-12; 3:3-4; 4:6) and elucidates his ministerial relationship with Apollos through the employment of metaphors (§4).

§1 The Arrival of Apollos in Corinth

Apollos first appears in Ephesus and is introduced by Luke (Acts 18:24) as an Alexandrian Jew who is eloquent (ἀνὴρ λόγιος) and mighty in the Scriptures (δυνατὸς ὢν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς).[1] From Luke's description, some scholars have suggested that Apollos was influenced by Hellenistic Jewish philosophy and allegorical interpretation of Scripture. It must be noted, however, that it is possible for someone to reside somewhere without adopting the dominant philosophical climate of that community. Without conclusive evidence, we must resist reading Philonic doctrines into Apollos' interpretation of Scripture.[2] Luke does not mention Apollos being a native of Alexandria in order to demonstrate his method of interpretation but rather to emphasize his powerful and eloquent speaking abilities. As observed by Litfin, Luke holds Apollos at a distance, suggesting that Apollos was viewed as a phenomenon in the church, a phenomenon centered on his public speaking.[3] Even during Apollos' preaching beginnings when he lacked complete understanding of the gospel, Luke declares that Apollos nevertheless entered the

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[1] Although the historicity of Acts is questioned widely by scholars today, here we take into consideration its parallels with 1 Corinthians, for to reject its historicity outright misses an important text that can illuminate the situation in Corinth. Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), xiv, remarks that the current trend of rejecting the scholarly use of Acts contradicts the practice of ancient historians: "While this is currently a very unfashionable approach among New Testament scholars, it is certainly not among ancient historians; they gladly adopt it where such a parallel exists with a corpus, and information about activities of its author is found elsewhere . . . The approach of ancient historians must question the judgement of those who would dismiss outright as unscholarly any use at all of Acts in work on a letter in the Pauline corpus." For others who use Acts, see Richard A. Bondi, "Become Such as I Am: St. Paul in the Acts of the Apostles," *BTB* 27/4 (1997): 164-76; Stanley K. Stowers, "Social Status, Public Speaking and Private Teaching: The Circumstances of Paul's Preaching Activity," *NovT* 26/1 (1984): 59-82; Donald P. Ker, "Paul and Apollos—Colleagues or Rivals?" *JSNT* 77 (2000): 75-97; Mark D. Given, *Paul's True Rhetoric: Ambiguity, Cunning, and Deception in Greece and Rome* (Emory Studies in Early Christianity 7; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2001); Günther Bornkamm, "Missionary Stance of Paul in 1 Corinthians 9 and in Acts," in *Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays Presented in Honor of Paul Schubert* (ed. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), 194-207; Stephen M. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians* (SBLDS 134; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 180-96. Contra, Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 8-9, who rejects using Acts as a primary source because of its discrepancies with Paul's letters over chronological and theological issues.

[2] This is exactly what Paul W. Barnett, "Paul, Apologist to the Corinthians" in *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict. Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall* (ed. Trevor J. Burke and J. Keith Elliott; NovTSup 109; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 316-17; George A. Barton, "Some Influences of Apollos in the New Testament, I," *JBL* 43 (1924): 207-23; J. H. A. Hart, "Apollos," *JTS* 7 (1906): 16-28; and Richard A. Horsley, "Wisdom of Words and Words of Wisdom in Corinth," *CBQ* 39 (1977): 224-39, do. Even if we were to argue that Apollos preached using Philonic themes and doctrines, this would insufficiently explain the prominence of σοφία λόγου in Corinth.

[3] A. Duane Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric* (SNTSMS 79; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 240.

synagogues speaking boldly and with great fervency (Acts 18:25-26). After receiving instruction in the ways of the Lord from Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus, Apollos traveled to Achaia, where he demonstrated his rhetorical skills and eloquence by proving that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18:28). Apollos then traveled to Corinth, where the Corinthians warmly welcomed him and approved of his public speaking.

Acts remains silent as to whether Apollos depended on Greco-Roman rhetorical conventions in his preaching. Luke describes the content of Apollos' preaching in a similar fashion as to the content of Paul's preaching. According to Luke, Apollos refuted the Jews and demonstrated that Jesus was the Messiah (Acts 18:28). Luke makes no mention of Apollos' *modus operandi* other than he was eloquent and well-versed in Scripture. From Luke's narrative, we may infer that Apollos' preaching style differed from Paul's. Paul's preaching was characterized by simplicity (1 Cor 2:2-4), whereas the style of Apollos probably was highly rhetorical (Acts 18:24, 27-28). While their styles may have differed, the content of their messages did not fundamentally differ. Paul himself speaks of Apollos as continuing the work he began (1 Cor 3:5-9), thus demonstrating a commonality of purpose in ministry. However, this difference in preaching style may have contributed to the emergence of partisanships among some of the Corinthians.

The arrival of Apollos resulted in a negative evaluation of Paul among some of the Corinthians since it confirmed that Paul does not meet the standards of professional orators. The allegiance among the Corinthians centers on how eloquent and wise they judge Paul and Apollos to be, with some Corinthians viewing Paul as inferior to Apollos. This covert negative evaluation of Paul represents only the beginnings of a trend that eventually heightens in 2 Corinthians with the group of false apostles casting doubt on Paul's apostolicity (2 Cor 10-13). The factors contributing to the deterioration of the Corinthian' view of Paul are twofold: (1) Paul does not address the allegiance problem forcibly enough in 1 Corinthians, and (2) the Corinthians are too stubborn and too influenced by their surrounding culture to grasp Paul's differentiation between gospel rhetoric and personality rhetoric. As we shall discover below, the Corinthian community is habitually accustomed to evaluating orators—even if that orator is an apostle—while always looking for someone better or someone new. The Corinthian community experiences difficulty learning from Paul's example to reject the cultural standards of orators, which

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consequently results in their propensity to form allegiances to leaders in 1 Corinthians and to the false apostles in 2 Corinthians.

## §2 Professional Orators and the Corinthian Community

First Corinthians 1:10-4:21 reflects a mixture of sophistry and philosophy of Greco-Roman society that has influenced the Corinthian community.[4] As we discovered earlier in our discussion of sophists, the Corinthians displayed a deep adoration for oratory. The Corinthians were used to a steady stream of orators traveling through their city and consequently grew accustomed to judging the orator's eloquence or lack thereof. The Corinthians fickly rewarded or banished individuals possessing λόγος and σοφία, such as in the case with the sophist Favorinus.[5] During his first two visits to Corinth, members of the city enthusiastically supported Favorinus, dedicated a bronze statue of him, and placed it in an honorable location. The Corinthians, however, later elected to take down the statue for unknown reasons, which, in essence, defamed his character and expelled him from Corinth.

Although audiences in the first-century were by no means professional judges of oratory, they freely rendered their verdicts regardless. Even the average listener in the first century ce appreciated oratorical skills. Both the educated elite and the uneducated commoner were aware to some degree of the skills and techniques involved with public declamations.[6] Both classes of audiences evaluated an orator's speech and compared one orator to another, with some members in the

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[4] For the influence of sophists on the Corinthian community, see Bruce W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among Sophists: Alexandrian and Corinthian Responses to a Julio-Claudian Movement* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 141-202; idem, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 31-43; idem, "Is Paul among the Sophists?" *RTR* 53 (1994): 28-38. Contra, Wilhelm Wuellner, "Haggadic Homily Genre in 1 Corinthians 1-3," *JBL* 89 (1970): 199-204, who attributes the divisions to halakic and haggadic discussions, not to preoccupations with sophistic rhetoric. However, Wuellner makes these claims with only minimal Jewish texts and misconstrues Paul's focus on σοφία.

[5] Favorinus, *Discourses* 37.46; cf. 37.9, 20, 33; Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 489-90; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 37.1-9, 20.

[6] Christopher B. Forbes, "Paul and Rhetorical Criticism," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 140, comments on people's knowledge of rhetoric: "literary composition, at various levels, spoken or written, was a living feature of Greco-Roman culture, and a feature of which anyone of any formal education would have been thoroughly aware. Further, because displays of oratory were an extremely popular form of public entertainment, a high proportion of at least the male urban population would have had a good informal knowledge of rhetoric."

audience preferring one orator while others preferred another orator. Audiences alike expected an orator to have a charismatic and commanding presence, good looks, a strong voice, and expensive clothing.[7] Since the success of a traveling sophist depended on his audience's favorable reception based on these qualities,[8] the sophist consequently adapted himself as well as the content and delivery of his speech in the hopes of winning his audience's acceptance.[9]

This preference for orators parallels the situation in the Corinthian community in that the community has adopted the societal practice of judging orators and preferring one over another. Because the Corinthian community is accustomed to evaluating orators according to the rhetorical standards set by the vast number of professional orators who enter their city, the community indiscriminately scrutinizes all public speaking and subjects Christian leaders to the same standards set by professional orators. They judge Paul, Apollos, and other Christian leaders according to the cultural standards of what makes a speech effective, thereby missing Paul's point that the power of the Gospel does not depend on one's rhetorical prowess (1:17-25; 2:1-5) and that leaders simply are servants of God (3:1-5; 4:1).

Paul argues against the sophistic tradition that has infiltrated the Corinthian church and condemns the practice of judging Christian preachers against the standards set by sophists. The content and style of Paul's preaching contrast sharply with that of the public declamations by the sophists. Unlike the theme and content of the sophists' declamations which fluctuated from audience to audience, Paul's preaching remains constant. The constant theme that constitutes Paul's *modus operandi* is Christ crucified.[10] Because creating πίστις is the sole task of the Spirit working through the message of the cross, Paul eschews the employment of rhetorical techniques characteristic of personality rhetoric that are specifically designed to secure a public following by drawing attention to the orator. Paul is not against rhetoric per se, but only against rhetoric that would induce false faith rather than true salvific faith among his audience. In a culture where individuals blindly

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[7] E.g. Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 536, 570, 587.

[8] See Cicero, *Brut.* 184-188, 192, 283, 290; *De Or.* 1.30-32; 3.101; *Orator* 168; Tacitus, *Dial.* 32.2; 15.3; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 7.25, 39; 8.9; 32.11, 22, 26; 33.5; 34.6; 38.6-7; 40.6; 43.3; 48.3; Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 566-67, 580, 600-601; Plutarch, *Mor.* 131A; Suetonius, *Cal.* 20.

[9] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 4.124-127, 131-132; 12.5, 13; 22.1; 32.10; 33.23; 35.8, 10; 38.2; Seneca the Elder, *Controversiae* 9.Pr.1; Petronius, *Sat.* 3-4.

[10] See ch. 3.2-3 for further comment on Paul's *modus operandi*.

follow sophists, Paul purposefully distances himself from sophistic mannerisms and behaviors. Conducting himself in similar fashion to the sophists would create zealous followers of himself, not the Lord. For Paul, adhering to aspects of personality rhetoric would be to abrogate the role of the Spirit and diminish the cross of its saving power. Since he maintains that it is not the role of the preacher to induce belief in his listeners, Paul therefore espouses gospel rhetoric and boldly proclaims that his role as a steward of Christ is not to persuade an audience but to declare the mystery of God faithfully (2:1; 4:1).

Even the level of Paul's confidence when entering Corinth contrasts with the levels of self-confidence displayed by sophists. Litfin notes that self-confidence was "the *sine qua non* of an effective orator."[11] In order to captivate their audiences' attention and demonstrate their self-confidence, sophists focused heavily upon their own physical appearance and mannerisms in speech. Paul, in contrast, speaks of his arrival and ministry in Corinth in anti-sophistic terms (2:1-5). Paul declares that he began his preaching ministry in Corinth in a state of weakness, fear, and trembling (2:3). Unlike the sophists who based their confidence on their rhetorical abilities, Paul's confidence rests in the power of the cross. Furthermore, Paul does not depend on persuasive techniques, theatrical gestures, physical appearance, or ability to improvise on a theme suggested by his audience in order to preach effectively. By not relying on the things distinctive of personality rhetoric, Paul remains confident that his audience's conversion does not rest upon his own rhetorical prowess but upon the work of the Spirit, which induces faith among those who hear the gospel message.

Another parallel with the situation in the Corinthian community is the loyalty enacted between a disciple and sophist.[12] As we discovered earlier, disciples (μαθηταί) of sophists gave exclusive loyalty to their oratorical teacher and often played one teacher off against another. They did everything in their power to promote their teacher and his accomplishments, sometimes even resorting to

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[11] Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*, 209. Cf. Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (trans. Frank Clarke; London: SCM Press, 1959), 158n.2; Isocrates, *Antid*. 192; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Isocr*. 1.

[12] Our comparison of disciples of sophists (who generally were of wealthy parents who could afford sophists' expensive fees) with the Corinthian community does not imply that every member within the community enjoys a comfortable economic situation. See Introduction §2 for the socio-economic location of the Corinthian community.

physical violence.[13] The Corinthian community's intense allegiance to specific Christian leaders thus may be explained by the precedent of disciples of sophists who demonstrated their zealousness and commitment to a particular sophist, often at the expense of another sophist. In order to promote the professional attributes as an orator, disciples would create strife among disciples of other sophists by broadcasting the other sophist's perceived deficiencies. Some Corinthian believers view their leaders according to the same standards and mores established by sophists and their disciples, behave in manners accustomed to disciples of sophists, and expect Paul and Apollos to behave competitively with one another in similar fashion as the professional sophists. Like the disciples of sophists, members within the Corinthian community align themselves against certain factions within the community by playing Apollos off against Paul (1:12; 3:4, 22; 4:6), thereby creating strife (ἔρις) within the community.[14]

In response, Paul declares the inappropriateness of allegiances and competitive rivalry within the believing community. Because all ministers belong to the church and the criteria of ministers' faithfulness lie with God rather than with people, allegiances are not to be formed around teachers but around God, who ordains their ministry. Using Apollos and himself as examples, Paul stresses their solidarity as fellow workers of Christ (3:5-4:1). Paul is Christ's delegate and is in no way Apollos' rival. Though they have different roles, both Paul and Apollos are unified in their efforts; Paul planted the seed and Apollos watered it. The fact that Paul did not baptize many is a reason for thanksgiving because no one would owe loyalty to him (1:13-17). Instead of evaluating their preachers according to the secular standards used to judge the performance of professional orators and sophists, Paul exhorts the Corinthians to view Christian leaders according to his view of God's standards.

## §3 The Corinthian Slogans

10 Now I exhort you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no divisions among you, but you may be made complete in the same mind and in the same purpose. 11 For it has been reported to

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[13] E.g. Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 8.9; Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 587-88. See ch. 2.4 for further comment.
[14] While the converse may be true that members promote Paul at the expense of Apollos, this does not appear to be Paul's primary concern.

me concerning you, brothers and sisters, by Chloe's household that there are selfish rivalries among you. 12 Now I mean this, that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." (1 Cor 1:10-12)

First Corinthians 1:10-4:21 deals with the serious divisions and quarrels among the Corinthians (1:10-12; 3:3-4), thus suggesting the presence of an antagonistic spirit within the community. Pogoloff rightly pinpoints the problem in 1:10-4:21 primarily to be "divisions based on ambitious, boastful, status-seeking attitudes and behavior which led to rivalries and party spirit."[15] Not only was rhetorical wisdom a significant factor in assessing one's social status in the Greco-Roman world, but also claiming adherence to a wise teacher elevated one's rank in the community.[16] The divisions in the Corinthian community then arose as factions developed around Paul and Apollos in the competitive quest to attain status by attaching themselves to the one thought to be the wisest teacher. Drawing upon his discourse on divine wisdom in opposition to worldly wisdom, Paul seeks to abate their divisiveness by addressing the Corinthians community's preference to specific leaders. In spite of the Corinthians viewing their leaders as teachers of wisdom, Paul minimizes the importance of wisdom by proclaiming their dependence on God and by drawing attention to the future eschatological judgment. Paul's aim in 1:10-4:21 therefore is to criticize those within the Corinthian community who have prized wisdom and eloquence and to demonstrate the futility of becoming members of a specific party.

There can be no doubt that Paul connects the party slogans with the visits by Apollos, Cephas, and perhaps Barnabas since the formation of these factions most likely occurred during Paul's absence. During Paul's first period of absence from Corinth of two and a half years, the Corinthians were visited by Apollos (Acts 18:27; 1 Cor 1-4 passim), Cephas (1 Cor 9:3-7) and possibly Barnabas (1 Cor 9:6). Paul does not explicitly state whether the factions were created intentionally by the

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[15] Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 234.

[16] The importance of rhetoric in first-century Corinth and in the wider Greco-Roman context should not be underestimated, for without rhetorical eloquence, one could not hold a position in civic life (see C. P. Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978], 9; Plutarch, *Mor.* 792D; 801E; 802E). Being proficient in oratory therefore was highly prized within the Greco-Roman world. Andrew D. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1-6* (AGAJU 18; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993), 38, rightly comments on the importance of eloquence: "Oratory was thus used as a powerful status symbol (most especially by the sophists). It was the grounds for considerable public display, and therefore provided the opportunity to gain both reputation and public honour."

individuals named in the slogans or were unintended consequences of their ministries. First Corinthians leaves room for both interpretive possibilities, but it will be argued here that the emergence of factions, and particularly the Apollos faction, was an unintentional consequence of their ministries in Corinth.

The visit by Apollos specifically created some level of tension in Paul's relationship with the Corinthian community. Apollos, however, is not the instigator of the Corinthians' adoration of him, for he did not set out to compete with Paul or undermine Paul's authority. Instead, the blame lies entirely on those Corinthians who, in their adoration of wisdom and eloquence, have elevated Apollos above Paul. The Corinthians compared Paul's preaching with that of Apollos and estimated Paul's preaching to be inferior to Apollos'. As a result, the Corinthians reacted enthusiastically to Apollos' preaching and preferred his preaching over Paul's "unsophisticated" preaching and adherence to gospel rhetoric.

One of the reasons why the Corinthians favor Apollos' preaching style over Paul's is that Paul does not measure up to the popular standard Greco-Roman expectations of eloquence and wisdom. Paul's supposed rhetorical shortcomings became quite apparent upon Apollos' arrival in Corinth. After witnessing the sophists' display of eloquence on a regular basis and then Apollos' display, the Corinthians hoped and expected that Paul and all future leaders similarly would cater their preaching to meet or excel the standards set by the sophists. If Paul and other leaders did so, the Corinthians would benefit with an increase in honor and social status. Paul, however, refuses to adapt his message for the sake of increasing their social status and honor.

In Pogoloff's survey of the value system underlying Greco-Roman rhetoric and its relation to the Corinthian situation, Pogoloff notes that individuals would be attracted to rhetors whose styles reflected the characteristics of their own social standing.[17] According to Pogoloff, Apollos attracted the *nouveaux riches*, while Paul attracted the more cultured, sophisticated members of the community. Pogoloff suggests that Paul viewed Apollos like other Alexandrian rhetors: "energetic, enthusiastic, playing to the tastes of the masses."[18] Pogoloff then deduces from Luke's description of Apollos as ζέων τῷ πνεύματι (Acts 18:25) to mean that he spoke passionately and subsequently "appealed to those Corinthians who were not

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[17] Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 173-235.
[18] Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 187.

the most sophisticated."[19] While his hypothesis is interesting and draws out a unique nuance of the dynamics of the Paul and Apollos factions, it seems improbable that Paul would direct such lengthy criticism against the "weak" members who follow Apollos. By attributing the factions to competition between the cultured and less cultured and casting most blame on the less cultured, Pogoloff does not take into consideration Paul's emphasis on gospel rhetoric over personality rhetoric, misses the impact of sophists on the Corinthians' reception of Paul and Apollos, and misconstrues Paul's target audience—the stronger members who have more influence on the welfare of the community. Paul responds to some of the Corinthians' "boastful" behavior by addressing their status-seeking behavior as the cause of the divisions and by undermining the value base that supports this behavior.

Scholars have suggested several interpretations of the slogans in 1:12. There appears to be either four factions within the Corinthian church—one of Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ—or three factions, with Christ being the umbrella over the three, or two factions—one of Paul and one of Apollos, with Christ and Cephas being included merely for the sake of completeness. Our argument, however, does not depend on identifying the precise identity of the groups represented in the slogans. For our discussion, we shall be content with seeing two groups represented in the slogan: those who follow Paul and those who criticize Paul.

Ferdinand Christian Baur's essay in 1831 on the Christ party in the Corinthian community marked a landmark in the critical study of divisions within the Corinthian community.[20] In this study, Baur suggests that 1 Cor 1:12 is the key verse for unlocking the context and interpretation of the Corinthian correspondence. Despite Paul listing four parties in 1 Cor 1:12, Baur argues that the four parties simply represent a twofold division within the Corinthian community—Paul and Apollos (the Gentile Christian faction) against Peter and Christ (the Jewish Christian faction). Baur holds that Paul simply increases the total number of parties involved

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[19] Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 187-88. Pogoloff adds that Apollos' rhetoric would have "offended the more sophisticated listeners . . . In this Greek city of Corinth which tried to be Roman, the reader can easily imagine that the higher status Corinthians yearned to impress Roman visitors with the propriety of their speech, and were embarrassed by anything that sounded less cultured. They might have heard Apollos' rhetoric as characterized not just by Asianism, but by demagoguery" (p. 188).
[20] Ferdinand Christian Baur, "Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde der Gegensatz des petrinischen und paulinischen Christentums in der ältesten Kirche," *Tübinger Zeitschrift* 4 (1831): 61-206.

in order to "depict the overbearing party-spirit of the Corinthian Church."[21] The slogan "I am of Christ," Baur asserts, represents the position of the Jewish Christians who maintain that Christ, the Messiah, belonged specifically to them. The Judaizers attack Paul for not being a true apostle and consequently not being "of Christ," which, Baur claims, is evident from Paul's own defense in both Corinthian letters (1 Cor 9:1-27 and 2 Cor 10:1-13:13).

Although scholars have taken a critical stance toward Baur's article, they nevertheless use his article as their starting point for discussing the issue of division within the Corinthian community.[22] For example, like Baur who identifies the source of conflict to be the tension between the Jewish believers who follow Peter and the Gentile believers who follow Paul, Goulder similarly understands the problem to be Apollos and Paul against Cephas.[23] Although Paul identifies four parties, Goulder believes Paul has in mind only two parties and instead mentions four parties in order to avoid confrontation with Peter. Paul consequently transforms "these things" (ταῦτα) in 4:6 onto himself and Apollos for pastoral reasons, while Cephas remains anonymous throughout Paul's discussion (τοῦ ἑνός here, ἄλλος in 3:10, and τὶς in 3:12-17). The real issue for Goulder is between the Pauline and Petrine Christians on their interpretations of the Law, which he cites as the cause of the σχίσμα. Goulder concludes that the Jewish Christians (Petrine Christians) became a faction in the Corinthian community and invoked rulings on *halakha* drawn from scripture (λόγοι σοφίας), understood the kingdom of God to be a present reality (4:8; 15:50), and "boasted" in the authority of Peter. The σχίσμα issue, however, is not a result of the Jewish Christians following Cephas instead of Paul, as Goulder maintains. Goulder's assertion that "words of wisdom" (λόγοι σοφίας) in 1:17-2:13 refer to the interpretations of the Law rather than human eloquence misconstrues Paul's argument.[24] Paul condemns the Corinthian community's love of worldly wisdom and eloquence and their fruitless efforts to

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[21] Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Paul: The Apostle of Jesus Christ* (ET; vol. 1 of 2; London: Williams and Norgate, 1873), 275.

[22] See Margaret Y. MacDonald, "The Shifting Centre: Ideology and the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians," in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church* (ed. Edward Adams and David G. Horrell; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 273-94.

[23] Michael D. Goulder, "ΣΟΦΙΑ in 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 37 (1991): 516-34.

[24] Goulder, "ΣΟΦΙΑ in 1 Corinthians," 523, comments on the meaning of λόγοι σοφίας: "It has nothing whatever to do with eloquence. It is the delivery of *dibre hokmah*, which are not (Paul says) divine law at all, but mere human cleverness, taught in the Church as the Tannaim taught them in Judaism."

increase their social status and honor. The Corinthian community's interpretation of the Law has nothing to do either with the formation of factions or Paul's discourse on λόγοι σοφίας.

Disagreeing with Baur's conclusion regarding the Jewish and Gentile Christian factions, Munck instead argues that Paul does not speak of factions among the Corinthians but rather speaks of bickerings that arose from individual members within the community professing Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or Christ as their teacher while excluding other teachers.[25] Munck proposes that there are there no factions and no trace of a Judaizing movement among the Corinthians at the time of Paul's writing 1 Corinthians.[26] Following Munck, if Paul were speaking of two or even four different factions, then we would expect Paul to speak of those factions elsewhere in the epistle. Munck contends that references to factions outside of 1 Cor 1:10-4:21 are lacking, but he does not take into consideration 9:1-27, where Paul subtly compares his *modus operandi* with Apollos', as another text that deals with factions. While Munck rightly argues that the groups do not have different doctrines, Munck mistakenly minimizes the situation by characterizing the divisiveness as merely "bickerings." The issue for Paul is not that other Christian teachers are being excluded but that some of the Corinthians judge Paul and Apollos by the same standards as professional orators, thereby following Apollos at the expense of Paul.

Also arguing against Baur, Dahl maintains that Paul's opponents in 1:10-4:21 are not Judaizers. Instead, Dahl rightly understands Paul's observance of the slogans in 1:12 to be declarations of independence from Paul.[27] Dahl suggests the slogan "I belong to Christ" means "I belong myself to Christ—and am independent of Paul." Viewing these chapters as an apology in which Paul justifies his apostolic ministry, Dahl concludes that the quarrels in Corinth are due mainly to their opposition against Paul. Dahl adds that the letter and delegation that were sent to

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[25] Munck, *Paul and the Salvation*, 135-67, esp. 139.

[26] Munck, *Paul and the Salvation*, 167.

[27] Nils A. Dahl, "Paul and the Church at Corinth According to 1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21," in *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox* (ed. W. R. Farmer, C. F. D. Moule, and R. R. Niebuhr; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 313-35; cf. Barnett, "Paul, Apologist," 316. Dahl pictures the situation of 1:10-4:21 as follows: "Why write Paul? He has left us and is not likely to come back. He lacks eloquence and wisdom. He supported himself by his own work; either he does not have the full rights of an apostle, or he did not esteem us to be worthy of supporting him. Why not rather write to Apollos, who is a wise teacher? I am his man! Or, if we do turn to anybody, why not write to Cephas, who is the foremost of the twelve. I am for Cephas! But, why ask any one for counsel? Should we not rather say: I belong myself to Christ? As spiritual men we ought to be wise enough to decide for ourselves" (p. 325).

Paul may have actualized these quarrels. Thus, Paul must address the community's objections and negative appraisal of him and must reestablish his apostolic authority as the founding spiritual father of the Corinthian community.

Although we cannot decisively determine why Paul includes the Christ and Cephas parties because of a lack of contextual evidence, we can conclude that Paul does not include Cephas' or Christ's name simply for the sole purpose of being tactful. Whether a Christ party even existed is a topic of contention among scholars. Paul also does not refer to unnamed teachers with the inclusion of Apollos' name in the slogans. More likely, Paul mentions these names in 1:12 because they are the only other "big" named Christian leaders in whom the Corinthians could profess loyalty. Paul therefore includes Cephas' and Christ's names for rhetorical reasons. Paul introduces these two slogans in order to demonstrate the absurdity of the Corinthians forming factions around their leaders. Paul does not include the Christ and Cephas parties, as Hall suggests, in order to avoid naming Chloe's household as the informants.[28] Rather, these four names serve as a warning against developing unhealthy allegiances to them or to any other leaders who may enter Corinth, either in the present or the future. There are no unnamed men veiled under the names of Paul and Apollos who are causing division in the community. Instead, Paul and Apollos are in danger of being exalted—not some unidentified men. Paul planted, Apollos watered, and the so-called unnamed did nothing.

Against Furnish, Paul does not pinpoint faulty theology or theological differences within the specific parties mentioned, nor does he explicitly chastise the divisive groups along doctrinal lines.[29] Paul's concern primarily is with the Corinthians who are aligning themselves with specific personalities, or more accurately Apollos. Paul emphasizes in 1:13-17 that loyalty to Christ matters, not loyalty to a particular leader. Paul's statement in 3:5 supports that theological issues are not Paul's priority, for 3:5 suggests that specific leaders are at the center of the factions rather than unnamed doctrinal issues. This point is reinforced later in 3:21 and 4:6, where Paul declares that "boasting" in leaders has instigated the emergence of factions. Party slogans and "boasting" in leaders are therefore intimately

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[28] David R. Hall, "A Disguise for the Wise: ΜΕΤΑΣΧΗΜΑΤΙΣΜΟΣ in 1 Corinthians 4.6," *NTS* 40 (1994): 145.
[29] Victor Paul Furnish, "Belonging to Christ: A Paradigm for Ethics in First Corinthians," *Int* 44/2 (1990): 151, nevertheless claims that doctrinal issues are involved since the integrity of the Corinthians' faith is at stake.

connected. The factions are not derivative of theological distinctions between Gentile and Jewish believers but rather distinctions based on the perceived prestige and social status of their leaders. As correctly noted by Clarke, these distinctions are a result of the Corinthians' adopting secular practices.[30] Hence, Baur's Pauline-Petrine division must be rejected.

Observing the emergence of allegiances, Paul confronts them head on before these allegiances escalate into a serious problem that threatens both Paul's apostolicity and the spiritual condition of the Corinthian community. Paul begins 1 Corinthians with an attempt to restore his authority as the founding father of the community. Since the Corinthians' relationship with Apollos encapsulates the root of the Corinthians' adulation of wisdom and eloquence, Paul does not need to deal with the various groups but only needs to concentrate on his relationship with Apollos. Paul's declaration that he preached Christ crucified (1:23) and did not proclaim the gospel with σοφίᾳ λόγου (1:17; cf. 2:4) suggests that Paul reproves the Corinthians' allegiance to Apollos, who is described by Luke as possessing oratorical expertise. The real issue for Paul is the slogan Ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, as demonstrated in the inclusion of his name alongside Paul's in 1:12 and 3:4 and then again at the beginning of the sections 3:5-4:5 and 4:6-21. The other slogans, according to Smit, are "a kind of maneuver to bring about an indirect, diffuse approach. In this manner Paul evades a direct confrontation immediately antagonizing the adherents of Apollos, who are already not favorably disposed toward him."[31] Paul is not opposed to rhetorical eloquence per se but to personality rhetoric, which is at the expense of the welfare of the believing community. Those expressing their loyalty to Apollos are Paul's principal target because their loyalty has created factions and indicates an improper admiration for wisdom, eloquence, and people in positions of leadership.

§4 The Relationship between Paul and Apollos Defined

Contrary to what the slogans may suggest, there is a non-competitive partnership between Paul and Apollos. Rather than blaming Apollos for instigating

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[30] Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 94-95.
[31] Joop F. M. Smit, "'What is Apollos? What is Paul?' In Search for the Coherence of First Corinthians 1:10-4:21," *NovT* 44/3 (2002): 242-43.

the factions, Paul shifts the blame onto the Corinthians. In order to combat the unhealthy allegiance to Apollos among some of the Corinthians, Paul offers himself and Apollos as models to help the Corinthians learn how to properly evaluate leaders within their community. Because some Corinthians measure status by the wrong standard, Paul presents himself and Apollos as examples of those who do not exaggerate their own importance over others. Hoping to remove the cause of the community's "boastful" division, Paul speaks of himself and Apollos in terms reflecting their missionary functions, not their social status.

The Corinthian community regularly witnessed public declamations given by sophists during which sophists displayed their virtuoso rhetorical skills and competed with fellow sophists through verbal taunts and, in some cases, physical contact in order to win their audience's acclaim, financial support, and special distinctions. Because the Corinthians were accustomed to observing competitive rivalry between traveling orators, they must have assumed that there would be a similar rivalry between Paul and Apollos. Paul, however, puts an end to this speculation by presenting himself and Apollos as co-workers in God's mission field.

Self-presentation features prominently in 3:1-4:21, where Paul's portrayal of himself and Apollos is set against the Corinthians' favoritism of one leader over another (3:3-4). Paul employs three metaphors to describe his and Apollos' ministry: agriculture (3:6-9), architecture (3:10-17), and household management (4:1-2). Each of these metaphors emphasizes the cooperative work of Paul and Apollos. Not only do these metaphors preclude the Corinthians forming factions in the names of Paul and Apollos, but they also provide an opportunity for Paul to reassert his own authority over those who have depreciated it in favor of aligning themselves with Apollos, whom they deem to be the wiser and more eloquent leader and the one who would improve their social status the most. The hierarchical system of leadership Paul speaks of between himself and Apollos is not one in which Paul proclaims a superior leadership or social status. Both he and Apollos serve the community, both belong to the Corinthian community, and both are enslaved to proclaiming the gospel message.

Although Paul does not avow a superior status to that of Apollos, the hierarchical system nevertheless establishes Paul as the founding father of the Corinthian community and differentiates himself from Apollos and other leaders. Contrary to Callan who overemphasizes Paul's competitive nature and suggests that

Paul thinks lowly of those he "competes" against, the presence of other apostles or coworkers does not threaten Paul.[32] Paul subtly proclaims his superior role to Apollos within the Corinthian community through the agricultural and architectural metaphors and his statement of being the Corinthians' father (3:10; 4:15), but he does not look unfavorably upon Apollos or dismiss his missionary work altogether. Despite considering both himself and Apollos as coworkers in ministry and servants of the Lord (3:5), Paul nevertheless relegates an auxiliary role to Apollos: he planted, while Apollos watered (3:6); he laid the foundation, while someone else (i.e. Apollos) has built upon it (3:10). Paul demands the Corinthians respect the authority and status which, as their founding father, is his due, for Apollos is only numbered among the ten thousand guardians (4:15). In speaking of the hierarchical relationship between Apollos and himself, Paul does not intend to contest Apollos' ministry by distinguishing between their ministerial roles but rather to chastise the Corinthians' for their divisive loyalty to Apollos and future personalities.

The metaphors Paul employs to describe his and Apollos' ministry represent a rhetorical form of figured speech called σχήματος λόγου.[33] If an individual would be offended if he were overtly accused, Greco-Roman rhetors employed figured speech in order to avoid offending an individual charged with a fault.[34] The rhetor employed this form of "figured speech" not simply because he desired to speak indirectly but more often because he desired to use irony. While the accusation is not overt, the censure would be plain to the audience. According to Quintilian, covert allusion is successful because "the listener takes pleasure in detecting the speaker's concealed meaning, applauds his own penetration, and regards the other's eloquence as a compliment to himself."[35] Similarly, Demetrius contends that veiled language is

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[32] Terrance Callan, *Psychological Perspectives on the Life of Paul: An Application of the Methodology of Gerd Theissen* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 16-50.

[33] For Paul's use of covert allusion, see Benjamin Fiore, "'Covert Allusion' in 1 Corinthians 1-4," *CBQ* 47 (1985): 85-102; John T. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence* (SBLDS 99; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 120-22; Stanley K. Stowers, "Paul on the Use and Abuse of Reason" in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*. (ed. David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson, and Wayne A. Meeks; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 257; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 136-37.

[34] For the use of covert allusion among rhetoricians, see Martial 3.68.7; Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.1.4ff.; 9.2.65-66, 78; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rhet.* 2.1.323; 7.341; 8.2.281f.; 9.32.1; Demetrius, *Eloc.* 288-93, 298.

[35] Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.2.78. Quintilian warns that if a figure of speech is plainly obvious, it fails to be a figure (9.2.69).

a judicious method of censuring an individual for haughty pride.[36] The advantage of veiled speech, Demetrius adds, is that the censure is dignified and circumspect.[37] By praising individuals who have acted in the opposite way, the listener is reprimanded without himself feeling censured, and he emulates the one praised and desires praise for himself.[38] Thus, according to the premise of covert allusion, scholars maintain that Paul proceeds with caution in order to avoid offending the influential group in the Corinthian community.

Instead of indirectly praising the Corinthians' for their ability to identify the subject of Paul's veiled language, Paul humbles them by having to explain the meaning of his metaphors. Paul addresses the Corinthians as though they were not connoisseurs of rhetorical acumen by explaining the meaning of his use of covert allusion. Paul's interest is in presenting an appropriate paradigm of leadership so that he might confront the Corinthians' love for eloquence and wisdom. The covert allusion is not specifically about the Corinthians searching for additional wisdom but rather about the way the Corinthians should evaluate their leaders. The allusions exhort the Corinthians to adopt a biblical view of leaders in which they view them not as professional orators but as servants of God who have no effect on their social status or status before God.

Paul stresses the unity between himself and Apollos in 3:5-23 so that the Corinthian community might begin viewing various leaders appropriately and cease their anthropocentric "boasting." The planting, building, and household management metaphors target the Corinthian community's spiritual immaturity and worldly perspective regarding wisdom, leadership, and honor (cf. 3:1-5). A specific example of the transference of secular values into the believing community is in their rallying behind their leaders Paul and Apollos (1:12; 3:4-5). Because Paul and other leaders are simply God's servants and stewards (3:5; 4:1-2), all "boasting" must be in the Lord (1:31) rather than in personalities (3:21; 4:6).

The agricultural and architectural metaphors in 3:6-17 emphasize the unity of the missionary task and focus on the active role of God through the work of missionaries. God owns the fields, building, and workers, and God causes the growth. While Paul and Apollos have different functions, the plural nouns διάκονοι

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[36] Demetrius, *Eloc*. 289.
[37] Demetrius, *Eloc*. 290.
[38] Demetrius, *Eloc*. 292.

(3:5) and συνεργοί (3:9) indicate that Paul and Apollos are unified in their endeavor. Paul's missionary role cannot be separated from Apollos' role and vice versa. Even in 3:10, where Paul emphasizes the nature of his work in establishing the foundation of the church, building on top of the foundation set by him is not a covert reference to competition between Paul and Apollos because Paul understands that building and edifying a believing community involves a number of individuals.[39] Paul does not view Apollos as his opponent (cf. 16:12); otherwise, his argument for unity collapses. Instead, Paul acknowledges that the ministry of each depends on the ministry of the other.

The agricultural metaphor (3:6-9) demonstrates that God alone is the one causing growth. Verses 8-9 emphasize the unity of Paul and Apollos and their joint role as fellow workers in God's service. With the term συνεργός, Paul declares that he and Apollos do not experience discord but rather mutually cooperate with each other and with God.[40] Paul depicts the Corinthian community as God's field (θεοῦ γεώργιον, 3:9). As the one who first brought them the gospel, Paul is the sower of seed, and as the one who continued spreading the gospel after Paul's departure, Apollos is the cultivator who waters the field. A successful harvest of the field depends on the work of both the planter and the cultivator, but neither can claim responsibility for the harvest since God is the one who causes growth.

Paul drops the agricultural metaphor and picks up the architectural metaphor (3:10-17) as a warning to the Corinthian community and leaders of the future eschatological judgment. Paul likens the Corinthians to a building, with Paul as the layer of the foundation and Apollos as the constructor of the superstructure. The building metaphor highlights the manner of building and the type of work involved. Paul momentarily digresses with a specific application of the architectural metaphor to the Corinthian situation. Possibly fearing that the community's adoption of secular philosophies could result in a foundation other than Christ being laid, Paul shifts his argument to discuss a leader's responsibility for the quality of his

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[39] For the background of laying a foundation, see J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Paul as Master-builder," *EvQ* 69/2 (1997): 129-37; Jay Shanor, "Paul as Master Builder: Construction Terms in First Corinthians," *NTS* 34/3 (1988): 461-71.

[40] Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (HUT 28; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 98. For συνεργεῖν βειν being the opposite of στάσις, see Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 48.15; 40.40; Polybius 6.18.1-3; Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.3.18. For συνεργός being used of a comrade or a co-partisanship, see Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. Rom.* 7.7.1; Polybius 21.31.12; Josephus, *AJ* 6.237.

workmanship. Furthermore, the architectural metaphor advocates unity for the divided community.[41] Through these metaphors, Paul undercuts self-exaltation, minimizes personal status, and focuses on the menial role of leaders that God allotted.[42]

Because of the close proximity to Paul's reference of Apollos (3:4-9), we must conclude that the ἄλλος of 3:10 not only is a covert allusion to Apollos but more importantly is an allusion to unnamed individuals in the community who have encouraged divisive loyalties. As Kuck rightly notes, Paul does not root out some false teaching or different gospel that is not centered on Christ since he speaks of someone else building upon the foundation, not laying another foundation.[43] Thus, 3:10 is a warning to anyone who might build upon the foundation carelessly. Along these lines and despite his general strategy of presenting himself and Apollos as colleagues, Paul's strategy perhaps also includes a gentle warning to Apollos for not tackling the issue of factions head on when he was in Corinth. Paul's statement, ἕκαστος δὲ βλεπέτω πῶς ἐποικοδομεῖ (3:10), could be interpreted as a criticism of Apollos' *modus operandi* and inexperience in dealing with those believing communities which have not abandoned their secular values and behaviors upon conversion. Paul possibly credits Apollos' mistakes to him not residing in Corinth long enough to know the cultural dynamics and how the Corinthian community continues to be influenced by the customs and standards of sophistic rhetoric. Similar to Acts 18:26, where Apollos needed to be instructed further in the way of God by Priscilla and Aquila, Paul too must correct Apollos' *modus operandi* while at the same time acknowledging the fruit of Apollos' ministry.

The household management metaphor (4:1-2) serves to facilitate the Corinthian community with assessing leaders from a cruciform perspective rather than from a "worldly" perspective partially established by the presence of sophists.[44] Paul proclaims that the community is to regard leaders as servants of Christ (ὑπηρέτας Χριστοῦ) and stewards of God's mysteries (οἰκονόμους μυστηρίων θεοῦ). As servants and stewards who will ultimately be judged by God, leaders are required

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[41] For the building metaphor being used in discussions of discord and concord, see Xenophon, *Cyr.* 8.15; *Mem.* 4.4.16; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 38.15; 48.14; Sophocles, *Ant.* 559-662; Aristides, *Or.* 23.62; 24.8, 32-33; Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric*, 99-111.
[42] Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 118-22.
[43] David W. Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict: Paul's Use of Apocalyptic Judgment Language in 1 Corinthians 3:5-4:5* (NovTSup 66. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), 172.
[44] See ch. 5.1 for detailed analysis of 4:1-2.

to be faithful in their preaching duties. Being judged wise or eloquent according to the world's standards is therefore irrelevant.

The reference to rewards (μισθός) in 3:8 and 14 highlights the inappropriateness of the Corinthian community's worldly evaluations. Paul reminds the Corinthians that it is not with their evaluation that Paul and other leaders must be concerned but with God's. Unlike the competitive rivalry between pupils of sophists, there is to be no competition in Christianity. All leaders and members in the believing community serve God and all are judged by God. The Corinthians must heed Paul's example of there being no rivalry between himself and Apollos. More importantly, the Corinthian community is to mature in the faith by abandoning their worldly perspective, with its focus on social status and honor, and adopting God's perspective of dependence and harmonious servanthood.

Paul does not deny that Apollos is rhetorically eloquent, and both would agree that personality rhetoric impedes instruction in the true wisdom of God. While in Corinth, Apollos believed he was effectively preaching the gospel without noticing that his preaching style played right into the hands of the sophist-loving Corinthians. Because Paul was stationed in Corinth for an extended time and had more experience being an itinerant preacher, Paul was better able to perceive how enamored the Corinthians were with professional orators and how employing personality rhetoric would create followers of some "trendy" philosophy and new type of orator rather than creating authentic followers of Christ. Although the Corinthians may disagree, Paul's *modus operandi* reflects more mature thought and is more in line with true wisdom. Perhaps we can attribute Apollos' disinterest in returning immediately to Corinth (16:12) to him acknowledging that he made a mistake in how he dealt with the Corinthians and believes it would be in the best interest of the community if he distances himself from them until they amend their behavior. Maybe the Apollos faction did not form because Apollos is rhetorically superior to Paul, but that Apollos is more physically attractive and dresses more like a sophist, whereas Paul wears garb characteristic of tentmakers. If this is the case that rhetorically speaking there are no major differences between Paul's and Apollos' style of preaching, then this would explain why Paul thinks allegiance to Apollos is completely absurd and why he addresses the situation so forcefully and directly with the implementation of the καυχ-stem.

> 18 Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise in this age, let him become a fool so that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," 20 and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." 21 So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future; all are yours, 23 and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God. (1 Cor 3:18-23)

First Corinthians 3:18-23 contains an additional warning against admiration for the wisdom of the world and against forming allegiances in the name of a specific leader. The problem is not with Apollos or other leaders but with the Corinthians themselves. Paul exhorts the Corinthians not to be deceived by what appears to be wisdom but in reality is not (3:18). Their wisdom (σοφία) belongs to the present age and is regarded as foolishness to God (3:19). Paul's comments are a subtle criticism of the wisdom of persuasive speech adored by the sophists themselves and their fans. The Corinthians have become mesmerized by this type of thinking and have "grotesquely applied these standards to Paul and his fellow ministers, giving rise to slogans which centered on personalities."[45] Therefore, Paul exhorts the Corinthians not to "boast" in people (3:21) because it is such a divisive force within the community and is contrary to God's standard.

Paul picks up the Corinthians' language and uses it against them in 3:18-23. The Corinthians' self-deception is on the brink of destroying the community. The Corinthians believe they are wise, but according to Paul, they are wise only according to the standards of the world (3:18). Whereas Paul states in 1:18-25 that the wisdom of God is foolishness to the world, here he repeats the statement but in the converse. Now Paul speaks in terms of the divine perspective: "the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God" (3:19). The Corinthians do not realize that the cross has inverted the world's standards—worldly wisdom has become folly, folly has become wisdom, weakness has become power, and leaders have become servants. Since Christian leaders are servants, forming allegiances to them cannot

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[45] Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*, 226.

increase their follower's level of social status and honor neither in the believing community nor the society at large.

Paul's discourse on worldly wisdom versus godly wisdom is connected to the theme of "boasting" in one's leaders. The phrase ὥστε μηδεὶς καυχάσθω ἐν ἀνθρώποις (3:21a) concludes 3:18-20, addresses the issue of factionalism in 1:10-12 and 3:4, recapitulates Paul's argument in 1:18-31, and points forward to the Corinthians' glorying in one leader over another in 4:6. With this statement, Paul weaves together the slogans in 1:12 (cf. 3:4) and the Corinthians' self-sufficient and arrogant "boasting" (1:29, 31). The negative exhortation not to "boast" in leaders in 3:21 recalls the earlier commands that no one should "boast" before God (1:29), with its positive corollary in 1:31 that one should "boast" only in the Lord. To "boast" in leaders is the opposite of "boasting" in the Lord.

The conjunction γάρ (3:21b) indicates that what follows is the theological basis for not "boasting" in people, or human leaders. Paul answers the question why they are not to "boast" with the statement "for all things are yours" (πάντα γὰρ ὑμῶν ἐστιν).[46] The pronoun is changed from the singular to the plural. No longer may the Corinthians proclaim their allegiance to a specific leader because that would be to "boast" in human beings. The list which follows πάντα looks back to the slogans in 1:10-12. Paul inverts the source of the Corinthians' quarrel by asserting that their leaders Paul, Apollos, and Cephas belong to the Corinthians, not vice versa (3:21-22). All things belong to them because they belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God (3:22-23). The emphasis of the repeated πάντα ὑμῶν is on their being of Christ rather than their being of human leaders. Because leaders are in a position of servanthood and instruments used to carry out the purposes of God, they are functionally subordinate to the members of their community.

Paul's aim therefore is to demonstrate to the Corinthians that they view leaders from the wrong perspective. They want to elevate the status of their leader, which in turn would elevate their own status by being a follower of that leader, but

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[46] The statement "all things are yours" mirrors Stoic thought. See Diogenes Laertius, *Vit.* 6.37, 72; 7.125; Seneca, *Ep.* 109.1; *Benef.* 7.2.4-5; 7.3.2-3; 7.4.1; 7.7.1-3; 7.8.1; 7.10.6; 8.3.3; Cicero, *Fin.* 3.22.75; 4.27.74; *Acad.* 2.44.136; Luther H. Martin, "Graeco-Roman Philosophy and Religion," in vol. 1 of *The Early Christian World* (ed. Philip F. Esler; 2 vols.; London: Routledge, 2000), 64-65; Terence Paige, "Stoicism, ἐλευθερία and Community at Corinth," in *Worship, Theology and Ministry in the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Ralph. P. Martin* (ed. M. J. Wilkins and Terence Paige; JSNTSup 87; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 180-93. See Graham Tomlin, "Christians and Epicureans in 1 Corinthians," *JSNT* 68 (1997): 51-72, for his discussion of Epicurean influence on the Corinthian community and Paul's divergence from Epicureanism.

Paul proclaims that leaders actually are their servants. Paul highlights the folly in forming allegiances to specific leaders, thereby continuing the agricultural metaphor in 3:5-9. Leaders are servants of God, nothing more, nothing less.

## §6 Summary

In 1 Cor 1:10-4:21, Paul criticizes the Corinthians' perception of social status (1:26-31; 4:8-13) and their unhealthy and divisive reverence for leaders (1:10-16; 3:18-23; 4:6, 10-17). Paul begins his discussion of the proper regard for leaders by highlighting the Corinthian community's tendency to display "boastful" zeal to specific leaders. The Corinthian community has evaluated Paul and Apollos' gospel message and ministries in light of the expectations and standards of popular oratory. Paul's admonition in 1:10-4:21 therefore criticizes their worldly standards of judgment and reorients them to the standards set by the cross. Paul's exhortation not to "boast" in leaders focuses the Corinthians' attention on God and the true wisdom that is found in the cross.

The Corinthians' adoration of wisdom has contributed to their glorying in Christian leaders and judging the success of their ministries according to the standards set by the secular sophists. In their hastiness to make much of Paul and Apollos without consideration for how God views leaders, some of the Corinthians have incorrectly estimated Paul and Apollos. In response, Paul emphasizes the harmonious relationship between himself and Apollos through agricultural, architectural, and household management metaphors to target the competitive rivalry between members of the Paul and Apollos factions (1:10-12; 3:3-5, 21; 4:6). As we shall observe in the next chapter, Paul presents himself as a paradigm in 4:1-21 of someone who has implemented God's perspective in his ministry so that he may confront the Corinthian community's overestimation of rhetoric and anthropocentric "boasting" on a more direct and personal level.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# PAUL'S REAPPRAISAL OF LEADERSHIP

Having seen in the previous chapter that Paul addresses the beginnings of favoritism to Apollos and establishes the pattern of cruciform life that he and Apollos model, which the community as a whole is to emulate, this chapter will focus on Paul's personal response to the "boastful" independence from him among some members of the Corinthian community (4:1-21). Attributing the formation of factions to their estimations of Paul's rhetorical proficiency and *modus operandi* in comparison with Apollos', Paul seizes the opportunity to re-establish his apostolic authority as their founding spiritual father. While the legitimacy of his apostleship is not in jeopardy as it is in 2 Corinthians, a group of Corinthians nonetheless has undermined Paul's authority by esteeming Apollos over Paul. In response, Paul presents himself not as one of the countless pedagogues (4:15) but as their founding spiritual father. By reckoning Apollos as one pedagogue among the many pedagogues, Paul reprehends the destructive behavior of those who have an unhealthy adulation of Apollos. Paul expects that the Corinthians, including the followers of Apollos, will obediently follow his ways in Christ, of which Timothy will remind them upon his arrival (4:17).

Up until 4:1-21, Paul has remained somewhat emotionally unaffected by the formation of allegiances and has dealt with the factions methodically. Throughout the first three chapters, Paul decisively differentiates between gospel rhetoric that he, Apollos, and other Christian ministers espouse in order to advance God's kingdom and personality rhetoric that select Corinthians are attracted to which seeks to bolster the profile of a particular rhetor and advance the social status of that rhetor's followers. In the opening chapters, Paul first acknowledges the presence of division among some members of the community; then he exhorts the Corinthians to consider their own calling and place in the kingdom of God so that they might have a different view of wisdom, eloquence, self-praise, and "boasting;" and concludes 1:10-3:23 with an elucidation of his and Apollos' leadership roles so that the Corinthians might see the absurdity with forming allegiances around specific

personalities. However, 4:1-5 marks a shift in Paul's approach to those Corinthians who are "boasting" in being disciples of Apollos at the expense of Paul and the other members in the community. Paul no longer can refrain from showing his true emotions regarding this favoritism. By the time Paul writes ch. 4, he has become exasperated by the behavior of some of the Corinthians and is incensed that he must explain himself here and later in 9:1-27. He expects the Corinthians to be at one place spiritually, but some of them have remained stagnant, or perhaps have backslidden, in their spiritual development regarding the "boasting" issue. Because "boasting" plays a principal role in Paul's discourse in 1:10-4:21 (and also in 2 Cor 10-13), we can assume that Paul has repeatedly defined his categorical distinction between anthropocentric and theocentric "boasting." Here in 4:1-21, Paul rebukes those Corinthians who have an inflated sense of self (4:7-8), pleads with the community to consider what he has endured for them (4:9-13), and exerts his authority by threatening to punish the guilty party unless they immediately begin to respect his position as their founding spiritual father (4:14-21). This chapter will explore Paul's pastoral response to the Corinthian situation by dividing 4:1-21 into three manageable sections: 4:1-5 (§1); 4:6-13 (§2); and 4:14-21 (§3). By doing so, we shall observe that Paul demonstrates a consistent rejection of personality rhetoric and anthropocentric "boasting" that are in the service of self-aggrandizement and demonstrates a uniform employment of gospel rhetoric and theocentric "boasting" that are in the service of the cruciform gospel.

§1 Paul's Preliminary Response to the Corinthians' Assessment of Him

1 So then let a person evaluate us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 In this case, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. 3 But to me it is an insignificant thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. 4 For I am aware of nothing against myself, but I am not acquitted and treated as righteous by this, but the one who judges me is the Lord. 5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the appointed time, before the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the things hidden in darkness and reveal the motives of the heart. At that time each one will receive commendation from God. (1 Cor 4:1-5)

Paul's argument in 4:1-5 not only conjoins Paul's discourse on the apostles being servants (3:5-9), the discourse on future judgment for a believer's work (3:13-15), and the exhortation not to "boast" in one's leaders (3:21-23), but it fundamentally serves as an introduction to Paul's exhortation to imitate him in 4:16. The force of Paul's argument is to instill among the Corinthian community the proper attitude toward leadership, especially toward himself. He directs his argument not solely to those guilty of creating factions within the community through the transference of personality rhetoric into the cruciform context, but to the entire community since this is a crucial problem for Paul. Favoritism of Apollos is not simply an issue of Paul's ego being crushed, but rather it testifies to the level of spiritual immaturity among the community as a whole. The Corinthians have not completely renounced secular standards and behaviors and embraced godly standards and behaviors in their stead.

Furthermore, this section reiterates Paul's perception that some Corinthians are passing judgment on him for failing to speak with eloquent wisdom (1:17), for coming before them in much fear and trembling (2:3), and for addressing them as though they were infants in the faith (3:1-2). As discussed in the preceding two chapters, the Corinthians' evaluation of him centers on his speech and example as a professional orator and on their attraction to personality rhetoric. Paul's assessment of the situation is that some of the Corinthians feel they are entitled to judge his rhetorical abilities since it is common practice for an audience to judge rhetoricians. This judgment has more to do with his delivery, self-presentation, and ability to elevate the social status of his followers than with the legitimacy of his apostolicity. Paul therefore attributes the fuel of their criticisms to the fact that he does not conform to the standards set by the sophists and expected by one's audience.

Because those Corinthians who view leaders according to worldly standards have not considered the eschatological ramifications of their judgments of Paul and Apollos, Paul introduces the eschatological element to shock them into viewing leaders from God's perspective and to instruct them that judgment lies in the future and accordingly is inappropriate for believers in the present. Since the only judgment of theological import is the one administered by the Lord at the appointed time, neither the Corinthians' nor any other person's judgment, including his own, has any eternal significance (4:3-5). Hence, the Corinthians have neither the right nor authority to judge Paul or any other leader, for this right belongs solely to the

Lord. By judging Paul and others according to worldly standards of wisdom and eloquence, the Corinthians demonstrate their lack of eschatological awareness.

Paul thus continues his attempts in 4:1-5 to get every member of the community to regard leaders not from the worldly perspective but from God's perspective. In order to dispel personality rhetoric and advance gospel rhetoric in its place (and perhaps all rhetoric that enhances cruciform sovereignty), Paul characterizes not only the form and character of his apostolic role but that of all Christian ministers (cf. 3:22; 4:6). Following the example and teachings of Christ, all leaders, including Paul and Apollos, are to be considered servants of Christ (ὑπηρέτας Χριστοῦ) and stewards of the mysteries of God (οἰκονόμους μυστηρίων θεοῦ; 3:5; 4:1) rather than a means to increase one's social status and honor. Drawing a contrast between himself and Apollos on the one hand and Christ and God on the other hand, Paul emphasizes that both he and Apollos are subservient to the Godhead. Preachers are not required to be wise or eloquent according to the world's standards; instead, they are required to be faithful in their commission as stewards (4:2). Although Paul uses the first person plural (ἡμᾶς), his primary concern is to set forth his own apostleship within the context of the Corinthian community's divisiveness.

Paul no longer characterizes the servant nature of his and Apollos' ministry with the term διάκονος, as he does in the agricultural metaphor of 3:5-9. Instead, Paul employs the terms ὑπηρέτης and οἰκονόμος in the metaphor of household management to emphasize the servile aspect of Christian leadership. The term ὑπηρέτης covers a variety of service duty titles such as a menial household servant, an assistant, or one who receives orders. Originally, ὑπηρέτης denoted those who rowed in the lower tier of a trireme but later evolved to denote anyone in a subservient position, with an emphasis being on the relationship between a superior and the one who served a superior.[1] Unlike the slave (δοῦλος), the ὑπηρέτης was a free person who, in some cases, could claim a reward for his service. With the duty of the ὑπηρέτης being to execute the orders of his master, any status his duty carried was only in relation to his master. Similarly, the office of οἰκονόμος (steward) likewise carried a servile connotation and was used to designate the chief household

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[1] Plutarch, *Lyc.* 11.2; *Publ.* 6.3; *Cat. Min.* 36.4; Herodotus, *Hist.* 3.63; 5.111; Demosthenes, *Timocr.* 162, 197; Aeschines, *Fals. leg.* 103; Xenophon, *Anab.* 1.9.27; 2.5.14; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 3.40; 4.97; Prov 14:35; Dan 3:46; Wis 6:4; Luke 1:2; John 18:36.

slave who was entrusted with managing the household.[2] The steward's duties included overseeing the household budget, assigning tasks to other slaves, and ensuring the household runs smoothly. Despite being in a position of leadership and trust, the steward was accountable to his employer and had to follow his employer's guidelines. The inclusion of these two terms thus highlights the connotation of servanthood in ministry.

The clause in 4:2, "that they be found trustworthy" (ἵνα πιστός τις εὑρεθῇ), reintroduces the idea of a performance review by the steward's master (3:8, 14-15). According to Paul's usage of the servile terms ὑπηρέτης and οἰκονόμος, leaders must faithfully carry out the orders of God, their master. To be regarded as πιστός implies that the steward has accomplished his duties as ordered without deviation. For Paul, to be found faithful or trustworthy means absolute loyalty to the gospel message. Paul and other leaders therefore are not entitled to preach the gospel in whatever fashion they or the Corinthians desire. As ὑπηρέτης and οἰκονόμος, they are to proclaim the gospel in the manner instructed by God since they ultimately are accountable to him. This is the single criterion by which the Lord could judge him and which would nullify the Corinthians' examination of Paul and his ministry. The Lord requires faithfulness of his servants—not eloquence or wisdom, as the Corinthians believe. While in a humble position as Christ's servants, Paul and other leaders also are in a position of trust and authority as stewards of God's mysteries. They are responsible for overseeing the life of the church as instructed by the Lord, with their primary duty being to proclaim the revelation of the gospel (μυστηρίων θεοῦ). Though Paul and Apollos may belong to the Corinthians (3:21-22), they nevertheless are accountable only to God, the one who will assume the role of judge on the judgment day.

Applying the maxim of 4:2 to himself and to the Corinthians' view of him, Paul presents a principle that applies not only to himself or to Apollos but also to all who believe in Christ (4:3-5). After acknowledging the need for the steward to be faithful, Paul adds that it is not to the Corinthians that he, as the steward, must give account. By juxtaposing human judgment and eschatological judgment, Paul demonstrates the prematurity of human evaluations and contrasts the fallibility of

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[2] Josephus, *Ant*. 11.138; 11.272; Lucian, *Gall*. 22.13; Plutarch, *Cat. Min*. 39.4; Xenophon, *Anab.* 1.9.19; *P.Oxy.* 2419; 1 Kgs 4:6; 16:9; 2 Kgs 18:18; Esth 1:8; Isa 36:3; Luke 12:42; 16:1; Gal 4:2; Tit 1:7.

human courts (ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας) and one's own conscience with God, the only legitimate judge.[3] Upon asserting that neither people's evaluations nor one's own conscience are the final verdict, Paul proclaims that he cognitively knows the limitations and fallibility of public scrutiny. Unlike public scrutiny, God can examine the hidden motives behind a servant's work and, more importantly, will overturn human judgments. Paul is not overtly on the defensive nor is he responding to a specific negative accusation against his character that has been verbalized by the Corinthian community at large. Instead, Paul merely asserts that human judgment is eschatologically inconsequential, thereby expressing his own eschatological freedom. Since Paul understands that the only competent tribunal is the eschatological one, he refuses to submit himself to any examination (ἀνακρίνω) by a human authority (i.e. the Corinthian community), including his own examination.[4] Whether the Corinthians award him with accolades or criticize his ministry, although he would prefer accolades, ultimately is irrelevant in that "it counts for very little" (εἰς ἐλάχιστόν ἐστιν; 4:3).[5] Because neither a positive nor negative human verdict holds any weight with God, it should not matter to Paul or to the Corinthians what other people's perceptions are of themselves.

Even though Paul proclaims he is unaware of anything against himself (οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐμαυτῷ σύνοιδα) and believes he has been faithful in his apostolic ministry, this does not necessarily mean the Lord will acquit him. Paul does not profess his complete innocence but rather asserts that a clear conscience in and of itself will not acquit him and does not indicate absence of guilt. The point is that human judgment is fallible, whether it is one's own conscience or another person's evaluation. God's

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[3] The reference to the final judgment in 4:3-5 is anticipated by Paul's use of ἡμέρα in 1 Cor 3:13 (cf. 1 Cor 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2; 2 Pet 3:10; Isa 13:6, 9; Ezek 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11; 44:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obad 1:15; Zeph 1:7-9, 14; Sir 11:26). Some commentators note the eschatological nature of Paul's remarks on judgment. Ben Witherington, III, *Conflict and Community: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 139-40; Anthony C. Thiselton, "Realized Eschatology at Corinth," *NTS* 24 (1978): 510-26; and Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 161, maintain that Paul introduces future eschatology in order to correct the over-realized and over-spiritualized eschatology of the Corinthian believers. Timothy L. Carter, "'Big Men' in Corinth," *JSNT* 66 (1997): 66, similarly argues that the reference to Paul being judged by the Corinthians in 4:2-5 suggests that the accusations leveled against him are related to the over-realized eschatology that surfaces in 4:7-10.
[4] For the judicial use of ἀνακρίνω, see Laurence L. Welborn, "Discord in Corinth: First Corinthians 1-4 and Ancient Politics," *JBL* 106/1 (1987): 85-111. Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 17.5.7; Demosthenes, *Or.* 48.31; 57.66, 70; *SIG* 953.46.
[5] The translation "it counts for very little," according to Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 338, "signals the verdictive flavor of the speech-act of pronouncing an evaluation."

verdict alone is absolute, infallible, and able to acquit (δικαιόω).[6] Paul does not imply that he is completely indifferent to public scrutiny, nor does he advocate that the Corinthians adopt a similar approach. Instead, Paul highlights the limitations of both public and personal examination.

With the conjunction ὥστε, Paul concludes his argument with the imperative not to pronounce judgment before the appointed time. The present imperative κρίνετε functions as an illocutionary speech-act, meaning "do not pronounce judgments."[7] Paul proclaims that the proper time (καιρός) for definitive judgments lies in the future. Because an infallible verdict requires complete knowledge of a person's hidden motives and desires, to attempt to judge another without this knowledge is nothing more than futile arrogance. Since God will bring to light the hidden motives—both good and bad—behind each servant's work, Paul knows to leave the evaluation of his faithfulness as a steward to God. Paul also warns the Corinthians that God will similarly examine them. The Corinthians therefore are to amend their practice of judging leaders and their criterion by which they judge their leaders.

Paul reveals in 4:5 that the reward he alluded to in 3:8 and 3:14 is commendation from God.[8] Paul reminds the Corinthians in 4:5 that the Lord will reveal (φωτίζω and φανερόω) "the things hidden in darkness" (τὰ κρυπτὰ τοῦ σκότους) and "the motives of the heart" (τὰς βουλὰς τῶν καρδιῶν). At this time, each person will receive commendation (ἔπαινος) from God (cf. Rom 2:29; 2 Cor 10:18). The noun ἔπαινος describes that which is worthy or deserving of praise. In Greco-Roman literature, ἔπαινος oftentimes appears in a discussion of honor[9] and refers to self-commendation or commendation, which frequently was received at the

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[6] By employing the perfect tense of δικαιόω, Paul highlights the ongoing nature of the Lord's review of one's faithfulness.

[7] Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 342. Fee, *The First Epistle*, 163, translates the imperative as a present prohibition (cf. the situation revealed in 4:3 and 9:3): "So then, *stop* reaching a verdict on anything before the appointed time."

[8] For commendation, see Efrain Agosto, "Paul and Commendation," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 101-33. Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 344, translates ἔπαινος in 4:5 as "recognition," arguing that the positive connotation of recognition includes recognition of "achievement, worth, or salvation, but not excluding the possible recognition of other traits." See similar meaning in *1 Clem* 30:6.

[9] Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 2.1219b; *Eth. nic.* 1101b; 1127b; Plato, *Leg.* 2.663a; Sophocles, *Oed. col.* 1411; Polybius, *Hist.* 1.14.5; 2.60.2; 10.21.7; Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 2.34.6; Demosthenes, *Speeches* 12.20; 60.1; 61.23; Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 10.34.7; 11.23.3; Pausanias, *Descr.* 3.4.9; 3.8.2; Aeschines, *Ctes.* 3.249; Xenophon, *Anab.* 6.6.16.

time of death.[10] Thus, one of the highest goals in the ancient world was receiving praise, or commendation, since it increased one's honor and helped locate one's social standing in society. Similarly, in the LXX and elsewhere in the NT, ἔπαινος refers to speaking of the praises bestowed upon the Lord and to be commended by others.[11] Ultimately only God can give this recognition at the final judgment (cf. Rom 2:29; 1 Pet 1:7).

Within the Corinthian context, we may deduce that individuals within the Corinthian community go to extremes commending individual leaders for their wisdom and rhetorical abilities while reproaching others for their apparent lack thereof. The practice of singling out Apollos for praise at the expense of Paul has resulted in the divisive friction within the Corinthian community. In 4:1-5, Paul reinforces the point that ultimate commendation comes from God at the appointed time, and this is the only praise that has any real significance. Paul's discussion of commendation bestowed upon believers by God fills the void of the Corinthians' inherent desire to be commended by their peers as a means of increasing their social status and honor. While Paul rejects the pursuit of worldly commendation (i.e. honor), he presents a different kind of commendation, one that is eternal and in unlimited supply. Whereas honor in the Greco-Roman world is a commodity of limited supply,[12] God's commendation is of limitless supply. Because the potential commendation the Corinthians could receive by God outweighs that which they could receive from other members in the community, the allegiances and divisions are counterproductive, which Paul sarcastically demonstrates in 4:6-13.

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[10] Demosthenes, *Aristocr.* 23.160; *Speeches*, 19.32; Josephus, *Ant.* 17.153; 19.231; Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 3.61.1; Polybius, *Hist*. 2.61.7.

[11] In the LXX and NT, ἔπαινος is used to speak of God's majesty and the praises bestowed upon him (1 Chron 16:27; Pss 21:4, 26; 34:28; Eph 1:6, 12, 14; Phil 1:11), proclaiming the praise of another (Sir 39:10; 44:8, 15; Rom 2:29; 13:3; 2 Cor 8:18; 1 Pet 1:7; 2:14), being without honor or escaping praise (2 Chron 21:20; Wis 15:19), and something worthy of praise (Phil 4:8). The verb ἐπαινέω appears in greater frequency than ἔπαινος in the LXX. In the LXX and NT, ἐπαινέω denotes praising another, sometimes within the context of death (Gen 12:15; Pss 62:12; 63:11; Ecc 4:2; 8:10; Jdt 6:20; 4 Macc 1:10; 2:2; 4:4; 13:17; Sir 9:17; Luke 16:8; 1 Cor 11:2, 17, 22), improper praise of self, akin to negative "boasting" (Ps 9:24), to glory in the Lord (Pss 33:3; 43:9; 104:3; 105:5), and praising God in general (Pss 55:5; 62:4; 116:1; 144:4; 147:1; Rom 15:11).

[12] For discussion of limited good, see Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (3d ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 81-107.

6 Now these things, brothers and sisters, I have applied to myself and Apollos for your sake, so that in us you might learn not to go beyond what is written, so that none of you might become arrogant in favor of one against another. 7 For who considers you superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if received it, why do you boast as though you had not received it? 8 Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have become kings apart from us! Indeed I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign together as kings with you! 9 For I think that God has exhibited us apostles last of all as men condemned to death because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to humanity. 10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are honored, but we are dishonored. 11 To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and we are poorly clothed and we are beaten, and we are homeless, 12 and we grow weary from the work of our own hands. When we are spoken evil of, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; 13 when we are slandered, we speak words of encouragement. We have become like the rubbish of the world, the scum of all things, to this present time. (1 Cor 4:6-13)

In 4:6, Paul amplifies what he has been driving at all along in 1:10-4:5. In addition to presenting the apostles as models of the wisdom of the cross, Paul exposes the absurdity of exalting one leader over another. Forming cliques around certain leaders and idolizing human wisdom and eloquence demonstrate how far the Corinthians have strayed from the message of the cross. The stark contrast between the Corinthians' arrogance and the apostles' humbling circumstances reveals the root cause of why the Corinthian community is plagued with dissension. Paul applies a cruciform spin to the Greco-Roman convention of self-praise. For the Corinthians, the self-praise that results in increased social status and honor includes praising one's civic responsibilities, donations, etc. In contrast, Paul's praise includes beatings, hardships, and the like.[13] What Paul praises is contrary to that

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[13] For Pauline "boasts" in suffering, see Anitra Bingham Kolenkow, "Paul and Opponents in 2 Cor 10-13 – *Theioi Andres* and Spiritual Guides," in *Religious Propaganda and Missionary Competition in the New Testament World: Essays Honoring Dieter Georgi* (ed. Lukas Bormann et al.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 351-74; Jan Lambrecht, "Dangerous Boasting: Paul's Self-Commendation in 2 Corinthians 10-13," *The Corinthian Correspondence* (ed. R. Bieringer; BETL 125; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 325-46; idem, "Strength in Weakness," *NTS* 43 (1997): 285-90.

which brings honor and status in the secular world. To secular society, his glories bring shame; to God's kingdom, his glories result in commendation (cf. 4:5).

Despite Paul cognitively comprehending that the Corinthians' assessment of him has no eternal value (cf. 4:1-5), Paul nonetheless reacts to those Corinthians who proclaim allegiance to Apollos and consequently have failed to exhibit proper respect of his apostolic role as one commissioned by God. Although Paul would like to be able to shrug off all human criticism, under certain circumstances he feels obligated to respond to overt or perceived criticism of his ministerial role. Having individuals question his *modus operandi* and forming factions at the detriment of the community are such circumstances. The Corinthians' attraction to personality rhetoric and propensity to "boast" anthropocentrically has forced Paul to confront the situation on a personal level. Along these lines, Paul's rehearsal of his catalog of hardship (4:6-13; cf. 2 Cor 4:7-12; 6:4-10; 11:23-29) can be interpreted as him saying to the Corinthians who diminish his apostolic role by favoring Apollos:

> I have endured all this for the church, and not just for you Corinthians, and still you question my motives and authority? Has Apollos or any other leader you are acquainted with experienced the hardships I have borne for the advancement of the kingdom of God? So why do you then think Apollos is intrinsically better or more qualified to serve as your spiritual father? I am flabbergasted that you would even consider forming factions around Apollos at the expense of me and the work I have done for you. Shame on you! Don't you understand what it means to "boast" in the Lord, and only in the Lord, and how that should play out in your lives?

Paul believes he is entitled to the Corinthians' allegiance because he has been commissioned by God to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and because he has poured his heart, sweat, and tears into sharing the gospel with the Corinthians.

Verses 6-13 set forth Paul's reproof of some of the community's feelings of superiority and elucidate why he has previously referred to his and Apollos' ministries and why he has contrasted the apostles' self-deprecation with the arrogance of some of the Corinthians. Whereas individuals in the Corinthian community believe they already have received the future blessings (4:7-8), Paul sarcastically presents the apostles as those experiencing dishonor and suffering (4:9-

13). Unlike the Corinthians, the apostles have not received any of the future blessings. Paul contrasts the Corinthians' arrogance, which leads to strife, with the apostles' humility, which enables them to view each other as co-workers. Paul characterizes the apostles as weak, fools, and in disrepute, while the Corinthians are ironically characterized as wise, strong, and honorable. Because suffering is fundamental to being an apostle, what the Corinthians view as weakness in Paul, Paul views as faithfulness in carrying out his commission.

Paul employs his personal example as an explicit literary strategy in 1 Corinthians, in which his personal example is at the heart of his argument throughout the epistle. Paul expects the Corinthian community to remember his behavior when he was present. When Paul visits his churches and when he writes to his churches, he places himself as a model for others to follow. In some texts, Paul explicitly refers to his own personal example as the model of emulation for his churches (1 Cor 4:6, 16; 7:7; 11:1; Gal 4:12; Phil 3:17; 4:9; 1 Thess 1:5-6). While reference to his personal example is a common feature within these texts, the manner in which he refers to his personal example varies in 1 Corinthians. For example, Paul exhorts the Corinthians to learn from his example (4:6) and later encourages them to become imitators of him (4:16; 11:1). In 1 Cor 1:1-4:13, Paul presents his own example in the context of comparison. Here he does not present himself as the example above others nor does he explicitly call for the Corinthians to imitate him. Instead, Paul presents himself and Apollos as examples for the purpose of instructing the Corinthians (4:6). Paul and Apollos are the models of what it means not to "boast" in leaders or in the gifts one has been given without giving due credit to the Lord.

The evidence available relating to Paul's practice of leadership, however, is limited since the evidence is occasional letters written with a specific agenda in mind and consequently provides an incomplete picture of Paul's leadership. Dodd's study examines how Paul employs his personal example within his argument in the seven undisputed letters and contends that scholars have generally ignored Paul's practice of leadership while placing more emphasis on the content of Paul's message.[14] Paul not only presents himself as an example through self-presentation, self-discussion, and self-characterizations in apologetic contexts, such as in 2

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[14] Brian J. Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I': Personal Example as Literary Strategy* (JSNTSup 177; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 13.

Corinthians, but also in hortatory contexts, as in 1 Cor 1:10-4:21. Dodd correctly argues that Paul uses his personal example "to ground and illustrate his argumentation in a rhetorically sophisticated manner, that he employs modelling as a technique of effective psychagogy, and that he often structures his argument on the basis of his personal example."[15] It is from this understanding of personal example that we interpret Paul's pastoral response to the Corinthian situation.

Paul's discourse in 4:6-13 does not seek to correct the Corinthians' understanding of eschatology, as Barrett and others suggest, but rather to correct their arrogance.[16] Paul concerns himself not with eschatology as he does in the preceding section but with the Corinthians' independence from him and the manner of life he models (cf. 4:1, 8). Some Corinthians do not comprehend that Christian leaders such as Paul and Apollos live in humble circumstances to effect God's purposes. Their mission is not to increase their own social status nor the social status of fellow believers. Paul thus refers to himself and to Apollos in humble terms in order to instruct and exhort the Corinthians who have elevated themselves over others.

The direct address ἀδελφοί in 4:6 signals a transition in the direction of Paul's argument (cf. 1:10, 26; 2:1; 3:1) as he summarizes his purpose in what he has previously written. Paul proclaims that he has applied the metaphors in ch. 3 to himself and Apollos so that the Corinthians would learn the maxim, "Let the one who boasts, boast of the Lord" (1:31; cf. 3:21), refrain from taking pride in one leader against another, and adopt an attitude towards rhetoric that is driven by cruciformity rather than personality. The pronoun ταῦτα in 4:6 therefore refers to the entire discourse of 1:10-4:5, with 1:18-3:4 setting the foundation for what Paul states in 3:5-4:5. Paul juxtaposes his and Apollos' behavior with the Corinthians' current behavior and attitudes. Unlike the conceit and strife characteristic of some of the Corinthians, Paul and Apollos cooperate in their ministry, considering themselves servants of God and attributing the growth of the believing community to God rather than to themselves (3:5-9). Paul's purpose in applying "these things"

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[15] Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I,'* 32.

[16] C. K. Barrett, "Sectarian Diversity at Corinth," in *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict. Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall* (ed. Trevor J. Burke and J. Keith Elliott; NovTSup 109; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 290, attributes the Corinthians' tendency to exalt one leader over others to their adoption of "a triumphalist realized eschatology." Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I,'* 58, remarks that the contrast between the Corinthians and apostles critiques the Corinthians' "overestimation of eschatological realization."

(ταῦτα) to himself and Apollos is to instruct the Corinthians in how to view themselves and their leaders according to the cross, thereby "boasting" only in the Lord.

Most commentators agree that in Greco-Roman literature the term μετασχηματίζω has a consistent meaning—"to change the form or appearance of something into something else."[17] However, scholars aver that the regular meaning is not appropriate for Paul's usage in 4:6 and subsequently have proposed that some other meaning must be discovered. Anderson notes one such additional meaning in Homer's *Iliad*, where the term means "to apply these things" or "to transfer these things."[18] The verb μετασχηματίζω appears only five times in the NT, all within the Pauline epistles (1 Cor 4:6; 2 Cor 11:13, 14, 15; Phil 3:21), and appears only once in the LXX (4 Macc 9:22).[19] In Phil 3:21 and 4 Macc 9:22, μετασχηματίζω refers to bodily transformation. The passages in 2 Corinthians speak of changing one's appearance, or of disguising oneself: the false apostles disguise themselves as apostles of Christ; Satan disguises himself as an angel of light; and Satan's servants disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Since the meaning of μετασχηματίζω differs in 1 Cor 4:6 from its use in 2 Cor 11:13-15 and Phil 3:21, other interpretive options must be entertained.

Some scholars unpersuasively assert that the verb μετασχηματίζω in 4:6 signals that Paul has employed a covert allusion in order to address the Corinthians' division and overzealous allegiance to Christian leaders.[20] Thus, according to Lampe, μετασχηματίζω means "to hint at something in a disguised speech without

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[17] David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 131; David R. Hall, "A Disguise for the Wise: ΜΕΤΑΣΧΗΜΑΤΙΣΜΟΣ in 1 Corinthians 4.6," *NTS* 40 (1994): 143-49; Michael D. Goulder, "ΣΟΦΙΑ in 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 37 (1991): 519. See Phil 3:21; Philo, *Aet. Mund.* 79; Plutarch, *Mor.* 680A; Josephus, *Ant.* 7.257; Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Cor.* 12.1.

[18] R. Dean Anderson, Jr., *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul* (CBET 18; Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1996), 245-50, cites examples in Homer, *Il.* 2.284-86.

[19] Hall, "A Disguise," 144, notes that when μετασχηματίζω is followed by εἰς, the preposition introduces the final product of the transformation (4 Macc 9:22; 2 Cor 11:13-14). Hall also examines the use of the μετα-compound when attached to other verbs and concludes that the μετα-compound indicates change from one state into another (John 5:24; Rom 1:26; 2 Cor 3:18; Jude 4; Jas 4:9; Acts 2:20).

[20] Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 81, paraphrase the meaning of μετασχηματίζω: "'I have transferred these warnings to myself and Apollos for the purpose of a covert allusion, and that for your sakes, that in our persons you may get instruction.' The μετασχηματισμός, therefore, consists in putting forward the names of those not really responsible for the στάσεις instead of the names of others who were more to blame."

saying it *expressis verbis*."[21] According to the proponents of the covert allusion interpretation, Paul uses the names of himself and Apollos to illustrate a principle that would have been obvious if other names were listed. Although Paul speaks of loyalties around himself, Apollos, and Cephas (1:12; 3:4-9, 22), they hold that loyalties were not the true cause of the factions; in fact, there actually were no parties in Corinth rallying around these individuals. Instead, they suggest that the root of divisiveness is overzealous allegiances to the community's own unnamed leaders (3:16-17).[22] While Paul speaks of himself and Apollos, he has in mind other leaders and expects the Corinthians to apply his argument to the rivalry among those unnamed leaders.

Observing the rhetorical function of covert allusion in Paul's use of μετασχηματίζω, Fiore contends that Paul must proceed with caution in order to avoid offending the influential contingent in the Corinthian community.[23] Similarly, Hall follows the verb's normal usage and proclaims that Paul refers to a transformation from statements about something or someone else into statements about himself and Apollos.[24] Hall suggests there are two rational reasons for Paul not attacking the divisive party leaders directly.[25] First, since Chloe's household informed Paul of the factions, Paul's naming names would identify Chloe's household as the informants. Second, Paul is on the defensive and must be tactful. The hypothesis that Paul refrains from directly naming the guilty party leaders in order to avoid indirectly naming his informants is creative but unlikely. There are no

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[21] Peter Lampe, "Theological Wisdom and the Word about the Cross: The Rhetorical Scheme in 1 Corinthians 1-4," *Int* 44/2 (1990): 129n.15.

[22] Henry L. Goudge, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Westminster Commentaries; London: Methuen & Co., 1903), 32; Frederic L. Godet, *A Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Clarks 27, vol. 1; trans. A. Cusin; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1898), 215-16; Robertson and Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, 80-81; Raymond F. Collins, *1 Corinthians* (SP 7; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1999), 176; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 132-33; John T. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence* (SBLDS 99; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 118-19; Bruce W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among Sophists: Alexandrian and Corinthian Responses to a Julio-Claudian Movement* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 196-98; Benjamin Fiore, "'Covert Allusion' in 1 Corinthians 1-4," *CBQ* 47 (1985): 85-102. Cf. Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Cor.* 12.1. C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC 7; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1968), 105-106, incorrectly asserts that Paul deliberately omitted Peter's name and possibly the false apostles mentioned in 2 Corinthians.

[23] Fiore, "'Covert Allusion,'" 95, comments: "If, then, it was these same highly placed Christians who were guilty of lionizing one teacher over another (1:10; 3:4), of vaunting their own knowledge (3:1; 6:12; 8:1-13), of making distinctions in the community rooted in pride (4:7; 5:2), or of slighting the poor at the assemblies (11:17-34), then Paul would have to proceed with caution, both for the good of the church and for the improvement of those at fault."

[24] Hall, "A Disguise," 143-49.

[25] Hall, "A Disguise," 145.

unnamed individuals like the false apostles in 2 Corinthians veiled under the names of Paul and Apollos who are causing the faction in the community and are beginning to wreak havoc on the Corinthian community. Paul's concern is that some Corinthians are improperly exulting Apollos. Paul planted, Apollos watered, and the unnamed did nothing to build the community. The covert allusion is untenable for additional reasons, as described below.

In noting that Paul does not wish to shame any of the Corinthians by name and so uses himself and Apollos as examples to help them learn how to properly evaluate leaders, Garland and others misconstrue the internal dynamics of Paul's relationship with the Corinthian community. Paul's purpose is not simply to avoid a "knee-jerk resistance to his reprimand" by presenting himself and Apollos as aliases instead of identifying the real culprits.[26] While Paul may have other leaders in mind in his warning about how other leaders have built upon the foundation he laid (3:10-17), Garland does not acknowledge the possibility that some Corinthians are developing an unhealthy esteem towards Apollos. Against Garland and other advocates of the covert allusion interpretation, Paul must address the Corinthians' attraction to personality rhetoric over gospel rhetoric and the subsequent unintended effects of Apollos' arrival.

Contrary to those who support the covert allusion proposal, numerous scholars rightly argue that μετασχηματίζω should be understood to refer to the example of Paul and his colleague Apollos that teaches a general lesson of humility.[27] For example, Colson disagrees with the tradition that attributes the Corinthian factions to other unnamed men who are veiled under the names of Paul and Apollos. Colson proclaims that covert allusion interpretation "attributes a certain amount of unreality to the names Paul and Apollos."[28] The translation "figure," Colson argues, is misleading since it implies that the thing mentioned actually stands for something else. According to Colson the term σχῆμα in Greek has no such

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[26] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 133.

[27] Francis H. Colson, "Μετεσχημάτισα I Cor. iv 6," *JTS* 17 (1916): 379-84; Johannes Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1925), 101; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 140; Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Hermeneia; trans. James W. Leitch; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 85-86; Fee, *First Epistle*, 166-67; Jean Héring, *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (trans. A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock; London: Epworth Press, 1962), 28; Friedrich Lang, *Die Briefe an die Korinther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1986), 62-63; Christian Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (THKNT 7; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1996), 84; Johan S. Vos, "Der μετασχηματισμός in 1 Kor 4,6," *ZNW* 86 (1995): 154-72.

[28] Colson, "Μετεσχημάτισα," 379.

associations, for in Greek it denotes arrangement or formation.[29] Colson adds that if the names of Paul and Apollos were disguises for the names of Corinthian party leaders, then it would not be a "figure" but rather a "trope" or "allegory."[30]

Hooker also correctly remarks on the improbability of μετασχηματίζω referring to someone else other than Paul and Apollos.[31] While elsewhere in Paul's writings the verb is used in the sense of "to change the form of," many commentators have mistakenly interpreted it to signify that Paul has substituted his own name and that of Apollos to denote the troublemakers. This interpretation, Hooker maintains, "not only gives an unusual sense to the verb, but overlooks the fact that what is said of Paul and Apollos is not in fact appropriate to anyone else in Corinth" (3:6, 10).[32] Instead, Hooker argues that it is the impersonal ταῦτα whose form is changed. The figures of the gardener, builder, and architect have been changed into Paul and Apollos. Following Hooker, it seems unlikely that Paul would have transferred his warnings against exalting certain leaders from those who were at fault to Apollos and himself. While it is possible that other leaders may have been targets of the Corinthians' divisive loyalty, the predominate tendency among the Corinthians was to exalt Apollos over Paul, the ones responsible for founding and nurturing the Corinthian community. Hooker therefore rightly concludes that Paul could not have meant in 4:6: "For Paul read *X*, and for Apollos substitute *Y*."[33] Thus, the better rendering of μετασχηματίζω is the Corinthians should apply the example of noncompetitive partnership Paul shares with Apollos, as illustrated through the metaphors in 3:5-17, to their own competitive and divisive situation.[34]

Although Paul's primary addressees in 1:10-4:21 are the unnamed arrogant and divisive members within the community who aspire to climb socially, Paul seizes the opportunity to address the larger behavioral pattern of forming unhealthy loyalties to Christian teachers. Despite the absence of inherent conflict between Paul and Apollos, here we have suggested that Paul observes an unhealthy allegiance

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[29] Colson, "Μετεσχημάτισα," 380.
[30] Colson, "Μετεσχημάτισα," 382.
[31] Morna D. Hooker, "'Beyond the Things which are Written': An Examination of I Cor. IV. 6," *NTS* 10 (1963): 127-32.
[32] Hooker, "'Beyond the Things which are Written,'" 131.
[33] Hooker, "'Beyond the Things which are Written,'" 131.
[34] Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 351, interestingly suggests a new interpretation of μετασχηματίζω, the "allusive application," because he believes the example interpretation undertranslates, and the covert rhetoric interpretation overtranslates. He therefore proposes the translation "I have allusively applied all this to myself and to Apollos" to convey "precisely the balance between probability and openness latent in the Greek" (p. 351).

developing among the Corinthians towards Apollos. This emerging allegiance resembles the manner in which disciples of sophists demonstrate their loyalty. Paul must address this issue before it escalates into a situation like that described in 2 Cor 10:1-13:10, where the Corinthians exalt false apostles above Paul and question the legitimacy of his apostleship. By applying the argument to himself and Apollos, Paul demonstrates the necessity for all believers including all present and future leaders in the Corinthian community to similarly conduct themselves according to the exhortation in Jer 9:22-23 (LXX) to "boast" only in the Lord.

Verse 6 summarizes the thrust of 1:10-4:21 and calls for a reorientation in which God's view of wisdom and leadership would replace the Corinthians' view of wisdom and leadership. The earlier analogies of Paul and Apollos were for their benefit. Paul's statement in 4:6 declares the overriding purpose of 1:10-4:21—the elimination of factions.[35] Both ἵνα clauses in 4:6 aim to deter the emergence of factions and promote unity among the Corinthians,[36] through which Paul attempts to set before the Corinthians a proper view of God and humanity. Upon hearing 4:6, the Corinthians should cease viewing themselves and their leaders too highly and taking pride in one against another, a point Paul brings out with the clause τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται.

Critical Note: The Referent of ἃ γέγραπται Proposals

The clause τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται in 4:6 is a well-known *crux interpretum* in Paul's letters and subsequently has generated much discussion among English translators as they have wrestled with locating a referent for ἃ γέγραπται. Since 4:6 applies to Paul's entire argument in 1:10-4:5 and to what immediately follows, unpacking the meaning of the clause in 4:6b is crucial for comprehending Paul's argument. Literally, the phrase means "not beyond what is/has been written." The arguments for and against each of the possible solutions have been well-stated

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[35] 1 Cor 1:10-12; 3:3-4; 3:21; cf. 11:18-19; 12:25; 2 Cor 12:20.

[36] Laurence L. Welborn, "A Conciliatory Principle in 1 Cor 4:6," *NovT* 29/4 (1987): 345-46; Charles A. Wanamaker, "A Rhetoric of Power: Ideology and 1 Corinthians 1-4," in *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict. Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall* (ed. Trevor J. Burke and J. Keith Elliott; NovTSup 109; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 135; Robertson and Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, 81. See Welborn, "A Conciliatory Principle," 335-40, for parallels with the metaphors and images used by ancient orators to describe factious communities. Cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 39.3-4, 8; 40.28; Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 24.37

elsewhere and need not occupy us here in great detail. Our examination of "boasting" in 4:1-21 only requires a cursory summary of the proposed solutions, with more focus being drawn to two viable interpretations. The position held here is that the phrase in 4:6 connects with Paul's allusions to Jer 9:22-23 (LXX) in 1:31 and 3:21 and also draws upon the Greco-Roman analogy of a pupil learning to write. Paul applies the OT text and relates it to an experience the predominately Gentile believers would understand. Thus, Paul's application of Jer 9:22-23 (LXX) and educational practices proves his ability both as a preacher and a rhetor.

(1) Some scholars hold that the phrase either is completely unintelligible[37] or is a marginal gloss that was mistakenly incorporated into the text.[38] Those who hold that the clause represents a marginal gloss maintain that Paul originally wrote ἵνα ἐν ἡμῖν μάθητε ἵνα μὴ εἷς, and the words in question (τὸ μὲ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται, that is "the μή is written above the ἅ") were later added by a scribe. Legault presents a reconstruction to explain how the marginal gloss crept into the text during the early stages of the textual tradition and attributes the gloss to three copyists' errors.[39] The first scribe forgot the μὴ between the ἵνα and εἷς in the second clause and inserted it over the line above the α of ἵνα. The second copyist correctly located the μὴ in its proper location and wrote in the margin the following gloss: τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ α γέγραπται ("the 'not' was written above the a"). The third scribe did not understand the meaning of the gloss from the previous scribe and consequently inserted these five enigmatic words into the text. Without these five words, Legault contends that the verse makes sense and therefore argues for the abandonment of these five words

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[37] Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (LCBI; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 106; Héring, *The First Epistle*, 28. James Moffatt, *The Fist Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938), 46, also holds that the meaning of this phrase "lies beyond recovery" but acknowledges that other interpretive options might exist such as a slogan.
[38] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 86; André Legault, "'Beyond the Things which are Written' (I Cor IV. 6)," *NTS* 18 (1972): 230-31; John Strugnell, "A Plea for Conjectural Emendation in the New Testament, with a Coda on 1 Cor 4:6," *CBQ* 36 (1974): 556-57. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 86, adds that those who do not see it as gloss "do not get beyond the guesswork." So Baljon, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Groningen: Wolters, 1898), *ad loc.*; J. M. S. Baljon, *De Tekst der Brieven van Paulus aan de Romeinen, de Corinthiërs en de Galatiërs als voorwerp van de conjecturalkritiek beschouwd* (Utrecht: J. van Boekhoven, 1884), 49-51; Bousset, *Die Schriften des N.T.* (ed. J. Weiss; Göttingen, 1917); Héring, *The First Epistle*, 28; O. Linton, "'Nicht über das hinaus, was geschrieben ist' (1 Kor 4,6)," *TSK* 102 (1930): 425-37; Walter Schmithals, *Die Gnosis in Korinth* (FRLANT 66; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 115n.1; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Interpolations in 1 Corinthians," *CBQ* 48/1 (1986): 84-85.
[39] Legault, "Beyond the Things," 230-31.

based on the data.[40] However, no evidence exists that this phrase was not originally in the text.[41] Legault's and others' reconstruction of the gloss theory is purely conjectural. While some believe the scribal gloss explanation to be appropriate, this interpretation appears too speculative. Too many stages would have had to occur in a relatively short period of time for the marginal gloss theory to be a valid interpretation.

       (2) The second proposal suggests that ἃ γέγραπται refers to cult bylaws that laid out the guidelines and principles for the group's prosperity and denotes not to go beyond these bylaws, or rules. Hanges, for example, interprets this clause as a reference to the terms of a document or legal contract of the community.[42] Hanges maintains that what Paul writes in his letters supplements his previous oral instruction (cf. 1 Cor 1:17, 23; 2:4, 6-7, 13; 3:1; 5:3-5, 9-11).[43] Hanges cites a text from Dio Chrysostom that speaks of the process of amending a law code.[44] According to this text, anyone who proposed an amendment to the written laws had to place his neck in a noose while the proposal was being debated. If the proposal passed, he could remove his neck from the noose, but if it failed, he was to be hanged immediately. Hanges concludes that the referent of the phrase ἃ γέγραπται is a document of the Corinthian community in which Paul laid out the principles to ensure the community's longevity and growth. While inventive, the legal contract hypothesis must be rejected. If there were specific rules being broken, then it would seem improbable that Paul would not cite them specifically, especially when he does not gingerly tiptoe around addressing specific sinful behaviors in the community elsewhere in the Corinthian correspondence (e.g. sexual immorality in 1 Cor 5:1-13).

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[40] Legault, "Beyond the Things," 231, comments: "The double ἵνα is Pauline, but however is best explained by an anacoluthon; the sentence is clear and coherent with the context and one can wonder why the biblical scholars are so timid in adopting this reading."

[41] See Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 102-104; Hooker, "'Beyond the Things which are Written,'" 128. J. M. Ross, "Not Above what is Written," *ExpTim* 82 (1971): 215-17, asks how these stages could have happened at all and asks whether it is credible to believe multiple stages occurred within approximately 120 years from the actual writing of 1 Corinthians since it is unlikely that this epistle was copied extensively until the second century. Ross adds that if it were a marginal gloss, the scribe would have written ὑπὲρ τὸ ἅ, not ὑπέρ ἅ. Furthermore, because the Alexandrian schools generally favor shorter versions, the shorter reading would have appeared in P46.

[42] James C. Hanges, "1 Corinthians 4:6 and the Possibility of Written Bylaws in the Corinthian Church," *JBL* 117/2 (1998): 275-98.

[43] Hanges, "1 Corinthians 4:6," 287. Hanges comments: "since Paul regularly provided his churches with written, authoritative instructions in his letters, there is no reason to assume that his foundational instructions could not have been preserved as a written document" (p. 288).

[44] Hanges, "1 Corinthians 4:6," 291-92; cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 12.17.1-2.

(3) Others interpret the τό as anaphoric and claim that it signals a quotation of some proverbial idiom such as a well-known maxim[45] or a familiar proverb drawn from the experience of children learning to write.[46] Both Welborn and Tyler suggest that the neuter article τό coupled with the elliptical structure indicates that Paul quotes a commonplace saying that originated with the Corinthian community.[47] The proposal that τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται represents a commonplace slogan or at least a slogan recited by the Corinthians is rejected due to the lack of evidence supporting the hypothesis. If, as Welborn maintains, the statement is one with "broad cultural currency," then it would seem probable that scholars would have discovered parallels in the extant Greco-Roman literature, but they presently have been unable to do so. What is clear, however, is that Paul expects the Corinthian community would have recognized the phrase.

The proposal that Paul's phrase alludes to the common practice of children learning to write seems to fit Paul's rhetorical strategy in dealing with the problems in the Corinthian community more so than the other proposals summarized above.[48] Paul refers to a pedagogical conception the Corinthians would have recognized from their early education where they learned to write the letters of the alphabet. In order to teach penmanship, the teacher would write the letter, word, or sentence. The student would then copy it or trace over the lines, being careful not to write either above or below the lines.[49] Seneca, Plato, and Quintilian all describe the process of learning to write in which a teacher would provide a model for his students to

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[45] Welborn, "A Conciliatory Principle," 320-46; H. G. Ewald, *Die Sendschreiben des Apostels Paulus* (Göttingen: Dieterichschen, 1857); Robertson and Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, 81.
[46] Ronald L. Tyler, "First Corinthians 4:6 and Hellenistic Pedagogy," *CBQ* 60/1 (1998): 97-103; idem, "The History of the Interpretation of τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται in 1 Corinthians 4:6," *ResQ* 43/4 (2001): 252; Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel,* 124; Stanley K. Stowers, "Paul on the Use and Abuse of Reason" in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*. (ed. David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson, and Wayne A. Meeks; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 257; Benjamin Fiore, *The Function of Personal Example in the Socratic and Pastoral Epistles* (AnBib 105; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1986), 165-66.
[47] Welborn, "A Conciliatory Principle," 327-28, 332-33; Tyler, "First Corinthians 4:6," 98-99. Tyler, "First Corinthians 4:6," 99-101, unpersuasively provides five observations attempting to demonstrate that Paul cites a well-known proverb: (1) the neuter article τό introduces a quotation of a popular proverb; (2) the elliptical omission of the verb after μή would indicate to the Corinthians that Paul was quoting a proverb; (3) the citation of a popular proverb is in keeping with Paul's general approach to the Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor 2:7); (4) the citation of a proverb is consistent with Paul's use of infant and familial language in 1 Corinthians (e.g. 3:1-2; 4:14-15; 13:11); and (5) Paul employs a rhetorical form (images and metaphors) familiar to the Corinthians.
[48] Contra, Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 134, who finds weakness with the reference to learning to write because the adage does not appear to be a well-known cliché.
[49] For writing in Greco-Roman Egypt, see R. Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (American Studies in Papyrology 36; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996).

follow.[50] For example, Seneca explicates this process: "Boys study according to direction. Their fingers are held and guided by others so that they may follow the outlines of the letters; next they are ordered to imitate a copy and base thereon a style of penmanship."[51] Through this method, the student learned by following the teacher's model how to write correctly by making letters that are neither too short nor too large, thereby neither falling short of the model nor exceeding it.

Protagoras also describes the process of learning to write where children are provided a model in which they learn how to write correctly. The passage that deals with children learning to write appears in a passage where a sophist delivers a speech addressing the claim that virtue can be taught. In Plato's text, Protagoras argues that children are taught and admonished from early childhood by the nurse, mother, pedagogue, and father.[52] Under a teacher's tutelage, students read and memorize works that would provide them with admonitions and praises of good men. These works function as models for children to imitate.[53] Even when they have completed their schooling, their guidance continues through learning the laws and living in accordance with them.[54] Protagoras latter connects the process of learning to write with his discussion of governmental laws: "writing-masters first draw letters in faint outline with the pen for their less advanced pupils, and then give them the copy-book and make them write according to the guidance of their lines."[55] For Protagoras, learning to write serves as an analogy of the moral model provided by a city's laws.

Thus, one of the most compelling backgrounds for locating the proverb is found in the instruction given to young children learning to write. This background also relates to 1 Cor 3:1-3, where Paul presents the Corinthians as children and alludes to their childish behavior. The principle "not beyond what is written," according to Fitzgerald, refers to a lesson to be learned (cf. Heb 5:11-14).[56] By referring to the Corinthians as children in need of milk, Paul treats them as nurslings and schoolboys. As schoolchildren are to imitate the written model, so are the

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[50] Seneca, *Ep.* 94.51; Plato, *Prot.* 320-28; Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.1.27-29.
[51] Seneca, *Ep.* 94.51.
[52] Plato, *Prot.* 325C.
[53] Plato, *Prot.* 326A.
[54] Plato, *Prot.* 326C.
[55] Plato, *Prot.* 326D.
[56] Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 124-27; cf. Tyler, "First Corinthians 4:6," 101-103; Fiore, *The Function of Personal Example*, 165-66.

Corinthians to imitate the model provided by Paul and Apollos (4:6, 16). Fitzgerald paraphrases the verse as follows:

> By our example in attitude and action Apollos and I provide you with a model for your imitation. Copy us, learn how to write "not over the lines." By doing so you will cease being puffed up, neither attributing to us an importance in excess of what is proper (cf. 2 Cor 12:6) nor denying us our due (4:6; κατὰ τοῦ ἑτέρου) as faithful servants and stewards of God (4:1-2).[57]

The saying points to Paul's recommendation of himself and Apollos as examples of mutual cooperation in the community, with the call for imitation countering against the arrogance that has spawned the formation of divisive factions among some members within the community.

The background of children learning penmanship seems reasonable but is not the only meaning of the clause τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται. Paul draws upon the imagery of a child learning the alphabet because it is an image known to the Corinthians and they consequently would have been able to decipher his meaning. Like children learning not to write outside the lines of their teacher, so the Corinthians are to not go below the model of cooperation set by Paul and Apollos. While this image fits the theological and rhetorical context of Paul's use of childhood language in 3:1-3, this background is not the predominant one in Paul's mind.

(4) Many scholars interpret τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται as a reference to the OT.[58] Related to this interpretation is the view that the phrase refers to the Scriptures Paul has quoted already in the epistle.[59] Though this is an unusual way for Paul to

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[57] Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 127. Tyler, "First Corinthians 4:6," 102, similarly paraphrases the verse: "Copy us, imitate us, being careful, just as you were as children learning to write letters, not to write above or below the lines."

[58] John Ruef, *Paul's First Letter to Corinth* (PNTC; Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1971), 32; Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (EKK 7; Zürich: Düsseldorf, 1991), 1:334-35; F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 48; Barrett, *The First Epistle*, 106-107; Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), 69; Hare, *1 Corinthians* (EBC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 212; Goudge, *The First Epistle*, 32.

[59] Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I,'* 46-47; Morna D. Hooker, "Beyond the Things that are Written? St Paul's Use of Scripture," *NTS* 27 (1981): 259-309; idem, "'Beyond the Things which are Written,'" 127-32; J. Ross Wagner, "'Not Beyond the Things which are Written': A Call to Boast Only in the Lord (1 Cor 4.6)," *NTS* 44/2 (1998): 279-87; Fee, *First Epistle*, 167-68; Wolff, *Der erste Brief*, 85; Lang, *Die Briefe*, 63; K. T. Kleinknecht, *Der Leidende Gerechtfertigte*, 224; E. E. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 61.

refer to Scripture, these scholars nevertheless suggest this is the best solution. Where these scholars differ, however, is in which of the five previous OT citations, which are all introduced by γέγραπται (1 Cor 1:19 [Isa 29:14], 31 [Jer 9:22-23 LXX]; 2:9 [Isa 64:4 LXX]; 3:19 [Job 5:13], 20 [Ps 93:11 LXX]), does Paul refer to in 4:6. Some commentators argue that Paul refers to all of these aforementioned OT quotations,[60] others maintain Paul only refers to a few of these OT quotations,[61] while others propose that Paul refers to the entire OT.[62] Hays correctly maintains that these quotations have a "cumulative force."[63] The texts cited in 1:19; 3:19, 20 demonstrate the foolishness of human wisdom before God; the text in 2:9 highlights the mystery of God's wisdom before humanity; and the text in 1:31 locates perfect wisdom in "boasting" in the Lord. The clause in 4:6 draws upon the previous OT quotations as a general warning against excessive behavior caused by pride.[64] "What is written" therefore refers to the boundaries that encourage moderate behavior, thereby preventing them from being puffed up on behalf of one against another.

The belief that the quotation refers to the OT is anchored in the word γέγραπται. Paul introduces an OT quotation or allusion thirty other times with γέγραπται.[65] The term γέγραπται also signals a quotation or allusion to the OT elsewhere in the NT, with most occurrences located in the Gospels.[66] While Paul predominately introduces the OT with καθὼς γέγραπται, other variations are present: γέγραπται γάρ (Rom 12:19; 14:11; 1 Cor 1:19; 3:19; Gal 3:10; 4:22, 27), ὥσπερ γέγραπται (1 Cor 10:7), οὕτως καὶ γέγραπται (1 Cor 15:45), ἐν γὰρ τῷ Μωϋσέως νόμῳ γέγραπται (1 Cor 9:9), ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γέγραπται ὅτι (1 Cor 14:21), and ὅτι γέγραπται (Gal 3:13). With the exception of Rom 2:24, γέγραπται

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[60] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 135; Hays, *1 Corinthians*, 69.

[61] Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I,'* 47-48, omits the OT quotation in 2:9. Hooker, "'Beyond the Things which are Written,'" 129, maintains that "the things which are written" refers primarily to the two OT references (Job 5:13; Ps. 44:11) cited in Paul's discussion of poor workmanship and the destruction of the temple in 3:10-20 and to the false teaching that has resulted in the rivalry. Wagner, "'Not Beyond,'" 279-87, proposes that the phrase refers specifically to the scriptural admonition of Jer 9:23 cited in 1:31.

[62] Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 140.

[63] Hays, *1 Corinthians*, 69; cf. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 135.

[64] Peter Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians* (WUNT 23; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1987), 194-202, argues that the idea of *hybris* underlies the entire passage even though that term itself does not appear in 4:6-13.

[65] Rom 1:17; 2:24; 3:4, 10; 4:17; 8:36; 9:13, 33; 10:15; 11:8, 26; 12:19; 14:11; 15:3, 9, 21; 1 Cor 1:19, 31; 2:9; 3:19; 9:9; 10:7; 14:21; 15:45; 2 Cor 8:15; 9:9; Gal 3:10, 13; 4:22, 27; cf. Acts 13:33; 23:5.

[66] Matt 2:5; 4:4, 6, 7, 10; 11:10; 21:13; 26:24, 31; Mark 1:2; 7:6; 9:12, 13; 11:17; 14:21, 27; Luke 2:23; 3:4; 4:4, 8, 10; 7:27; 10:26; 19:46; 24:46; John 8:17; Acts 1:20; 7:42; 13:33; 15:15; 23:5; 1 Pet 1:16.

immediately precedes the Scripture citation. If one were to argue that Paul does not refer to an OT citation in 4:6, then this instance would be the only exception in Paul's writings.[67]

The function of the clause in 4:6 is to connect Paul's self-presentation with those Scriptures whereby Paul can demonstrate the futility of human wisdom and arrogance. Paul's own example illustrates the Scripture's condemnation of human arrogance. By not going "beyond what is written," the Corinthians should cease exaggerating their own importance over another and instead become a unified community. Paul and Apollos are therefore "symbolic" of the Corinthian factions. The purpose of Paul's argument is to confront one cause of the Corinthians' divisions and to stress the importance of unity. However, Paul does not mean to exaggerate his own importance over that of Apollos, especially at the expense of Apollos' ministry.

Hooker contends that false Corinthian teachers seek to add "wisdom" to Paul's message of Christ crucified, a message Paul believes to be the fulfillment of "the things which are written." By adding foolish wisdom of man to Paul's message, the Corinthian teachers instigate rivalry and divisions among the community, and hence the community goes "beyond the things which are written."[68] Hooker maintains that the statement in 4:6 refers to Paul reminding the Corinthians of the OT passages he cited in 1:10-3:23. Hooker thus paraphrases Paul's meaning: "You Corinthians must learn to keep scripture," that is, "you must not start trying to add philosophical notions to the basic Christian gospel."[69] According to Hooker's paraphrase, Paul believes Christ is the key to understanding the entire Old Testament since he is the one about whom all Scriptures speak.[70] The gospel is the fulfillment of the Scriptures and to add rhetoric and human wisdom to the gospel is to go "beyond what is written." One of the difficulties with Hooker's argument, with the exception of 1:31, is that it appears unclear from Paul's discourse how one could "go

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[67] Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I,'* 46-47, adds that those who maintain that Paul only introduces Scripture with ἡ γραφή or τὸ γράμμα likewise are mistaken.

[68] Hooker, "'Beyond the Things which are Written,'" 130.

[69] Hooker, "Beyond the Things that are Written," 295-96. Hooker continues: "If the phrase 'nothing beyond what is written' seems an odd way of putting this, it is worth remembering that for Paul the death and resurrection of Christ were 'in accordance with the scriptures,' and that throughout these early chapters of 1 Corinthians, he is concerned to demonstrate—from scripture—the folly of human wisdom, with which the Corinthians want to clothe the gospel. For Paul, to stick to *this* understanding of scripture *is* to stick to the gospel" (p. 296).

[70] Hooker, "Beyond the Things that are Written," 306-307.

beyond" those OT citations. Furthermore, the context of 4:6 prohibits arrogance and calls for unity. Hooker's argument that 4:6 refers to adding rhetoric and wisdom to the gospel does not necessarily fit this particular context.

Instead, the key passage suggested here for interpreting the meaning of the clause τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται is the quotation from Jer 9:22-23 (LXX) cited in 1:31 and alluded to in 3:21.[71] Of the texts Paul cites in 1:10-3:23, the Jeremiah text best fits the context of 4:6. The reference to "boasting" in 1:31 connects with the second ἵνα clause in 4:6, "that no one may become puffed up." The second ἵνα clause in 4:6 functions epexegetically, explaining what is meant by not becoming "puffed up." The terms φυσιοῦσαι in 4:6 and καυχᾶσαι in 4:7 both describe divisive behavior and link this passage with 3:21 and 1:31. Paul's admonition ὥστε μηδεὶς καυχάσθω ἐν ἀνθρώποις in 3:21 echoes Paul's use of καυχάομαι in 1:31. To "boast" in the Lord (1:31) is to eschew "boasting" in leaders (3:21). Similarly in 4:6, Paul exhorts the Corinthians to learn from his and Apollos' example not to "boast" in human beings. Hence, the antidote to factious "boasting" (3:21; 4:6) is to "boast" only in the Lord (1:31). The passage in 1:31 suggests how the Corinthians go beyond what is written by "boasting" in people. In 1:31, Paul explains why "boasting" in anything other than the Lord is unacceptable. God has put to shame what the world considers wisdom, powerful, and honorable (1:27-31) so that no one may "boast" before him (1:29). In summation, the differentiation between anthropocentric and theocentric "boasting" links the OT quotations and allusions in 1:10-3:23 and explicates how the Corinthians are not to go "beyond what is written."

Against our interpretation, Welborn claims that a reference to the OT is irrelevant in Paul's argument.[72] Welborn argues against the hypothesis that γέγραπται refers to what Paul himself has written in the preceding chapters regarding appropriate Christian behavior. According to Welborn, nowhere in 1:10-4:21 does Paul demonstrate that he and Apollos live according to the Scriptures, which would be what the Corinthians are to learn from them if ἃ γέγραπται refers

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[71] Timothy B. Savage, *Power through Weakness: Paul's Understanding of the Christian Ministry in 2 Corinthians* (SNTSMS 86; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 61, concurs: "The citations teach that while it is the wisdom of the world to indulge in human boasting there is a simpler, more perfect kind of wisdom, that of boasting only of the Lord. Paul enjoins his converts not to go beyond this OT teaching." Cf. Wagner, "'Not Beyond,'" 279-87.

[72] Welborn, "A Conciliatory Principle," 320-46.

to the OT.[73] He also incorrectly contends that it is impossible to discover the OT text Paul intends.[74] Since Paul normally does not introduce Scripture in this manner, Welborn surmises that Paul does not refer to Scripture in 4:6, and an allusion to Scripture would be irrelevant in Paul's present argument. Welborn fails to see the relevance of an allusion to the OT, or more specifically an allusion to Jer 9:22-23 (LXX), to Paul's argument. Paul's discourse seeks to promote unity, humility, and concord among the Corinthian community by offering himself and Apollos as models of servanthood and harmonious conduct and as advocates of gospel rhetoric. The best way for Paul to reproach the Corinthians' divisiveness is to ground the conduct of all believers in the exhortation to "boast" in the Lord (1:31). The observation that Paul has chosen an unusual way to refer to Jer 9:22-23 (LXX) when he could have quoted the text as he does in 1:31 carries some weight but does not demand that our hypothesis be rejected. The clause μὴ ὑπὲρ ἅ γέγραπται is therefore an allusion to Jer 9:22-23 (LXX), which Paul cites earlier in 1:31 and alludes to in 3:21.

Even the structure of 1:10-4:21 and the function of the unit 4:1-13 indicate that the statement in 4:6 refers to the Jeremiah passage cited in 1:31. Wagner correctly notes that the repetition of παρακαλῶ in 1:10 and 4:16 function as an *inclusio* to connect these chapters together around the issue of factionalism within the community.[75] Within the argument of 1:10-4:21, 4:1-13 serves as the final section of epideictic proof (the σύγκρισις), in which a comparison is made between the subject of dissension and the example of Paul and Apollos' conduct. "Boasting" in leaders (3:21) has created factions, dissension, and feelings of superiority among some members of the Corinthian community. These Corinthians have misunderstood the reversal of the world's standards of what constitutes wisdom, power, and honor which was wrought by the cross. By measuring social status by the wrong standard, some Corinthians fail to recognize that God has turned the world's values upside down. Paul draws upon Jer 9:22-23 (LXX) in order to reshape the identity of the Corinthian community and to warn the Corinthians of God's impending judgment. Thus, the exhortation to "boast" in the Lord functions as a reproach of the

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[73] Welborn, "A Conciliatory Principle," 323-24, maintains that if Paul's intention was to highlight his own teaching, he would have written ἅ (προ)έγραψα instead.
[74] Welborn, "A Conciliatory Principle," 326-27.
[75] Wagner, "'Not Beyond," 281-82.

Corinthians' arrogant behavior and advances Paul's call to imitate the example set by the apostles, and more importantly himself (4:6-13).[76]

Because Paul introduces the saying in 4:6 slightly differently than elsewhere in his letters, here it is suggested that the Corinthians are to understand that Paul has in mind the image of a pupil learning to write in addition to an allusion of Jer 9:22-23 (LXX). Following Protagoras' speech where copying letters serve as an analogy to the moral model provided by a city's laws, Paul similarly views spiritual shepherding in terms of educating believers though instruction, admonition, and observance of exemplary cruciform conduct. The analogy of learning one's ABC's does not relate to abiding by a city's laws but to abiding by God's laws, thus the allusion to the Jeremiah. The metaphor of learning to write the alphabet appears in 4:6 in conjunction with God's moral model of "boasting" only in him. Paul does not quote a slogan or the Jeremiah text but rather speaks in generalities,[77] thereby paralleling the use of γέγραπται in the Gospels when it does not introduce a direct quotation (e.g. Matt 2:5; 26:24; Mark 9:12-13; Luke 10:26).[78] The term γέγραπται is therefore part of Paul's statement and does not introduce a particular scriptural quotation.[79] Paul refrains from quoting Jer 9:22-23 (LXX) specifically because he has in mind the pupil image and because Jer 9:22-23 (LXX) is meant to govern 1 Corinthians. Since Paul has already quoted the Jeremiah passage once (1:31) and has alluded to it (3:21), Paul may feel it is unnecessary to cite the text an additional time. Furthermore, Paul may have repeatedly cited that passage when he visited the Corinthians, so it became ingrained much like a slogan into the Corinthians' minds, though not in practice. Paul might also have instructed Timothy to refer to it during his visit. If the Corinthians have questions on what Paul means, Timothy could elaborate by citing Jer 9:22-23 (LXX).

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[76] Richard B. Hays, "The Conversion of the Imagination: Scripture and Eschatology in 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 45 (1999): 406, claims that allusions to the OT oftentimes are more powerful when least explicit. Though Hays is referring to the Jeremiah allusion in 1 Cor 1:31, this statement is equally applicable, if not more so, since the allusion in 4:6 is more covert than in 1:31.

[77] If γέγραπται refers to a scriptural quotation or scripture in general, Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, 198, suggests that Paul could be instructing the Corinthians "not to be unscriptural" or "not to think unscripturally."

[78] See 150n.65-66.

[79] Thus, NASB has a more accurate translation: "Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that in us you might learn not to exceed what is written, in order that no one of you might become arrogant in behalf of one against the other." Cf. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 123-24.

After having set forth the allusion to Jer 9:22-23 (LXX) and the practice of children learning to write with the clause τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται, as discussed above, Paul begins a new unit in 4:6 in which he applies the theology of the cross that he expounded in 1:18-2:6. The second ἵνα clause in 4:6 (ἵνα μὴ εἷς ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἑνὸς φυσιοῦσθε κατὰ τοῦ ἑτέρου) is subordinate to the first clause (ἵνα ἐν ἡμῖν μάθετε τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται) and shows that everything Paul has spoken of in the preceding verses is meant to exhort them not to be puffed up with false pride and wisdom against one another.[80] The first purpose clause refers to the situation of competitive factions described in the second clause. The allusion to Jer 9:22-23 (LXX) in 4:6b serves as the guiding principle of not taking pride in one person over another.

The connotation of the verb φυσιόω in 4:6 is almost synonymous with καυχάομαι in 4:7.[81] The verb appears later in this chapter (4:18-19), where Paul describes the arrogant behavior of some within the Corinthian community.[82] The verb and its cognate φυσάω, Welborn interestingly notes, appear in the writings of orators and political historians "to paint an image of the self-conceit which gives rise to partisanship."[83] For instance, Xenophon characterizes Alicibiades and Critias, leaders of a faction, as "puffed up at their own power" (πεφυσημένω ἐπὶ δυνάμει).[84] Philo likewise employs the term to individuals as being "puffed up beyond measure" (πλέον ἐφυσήθη τοῦ μετρίου) and "puffed up" (πεφύσησαι) with pride.[85] Following Welborn's observation, Paul's choice of terminology plays directly into his method for dealing with the factiousness in the Corinthian community. With the verb φυσιόω, Paul draws attention to the "puffed up" and prideful behavior and casts it in a negative light. In so doing, Paul combats the arrogance that has infiltrated the Corinthian community by reminding them that they have received everything from God, so they have no ground for anthropocentric "boasting" (4:7).

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[80] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 136; Hooker, "'Beyond the Things which are Written,'" 128. Welborn, "A Conciliatory Principle," 332, suggests turning to 4:6c to aid in deciphering the meaning of 4:6b.
[81] The verb φυσιόω appears seven times in the NT, with six of those occurrences located in 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4; Col 2:18). The noun φυσίωσις appears only one time in 2 Cor 12:20. See Philo, *Cong.* 107, 127; *Vit. Mos.* 1.6.30; Plutarch, *Dem. and Cic.* 2.1-3; Cicero, *Off.* 1.26.91; Suetonius, *Ner.* 37.3. Cf. Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (HUT 28; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 95; Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 104.
[82] Even Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 9.8, 21, remarks that the Corinthians are infamous for being arrogant.
[83] Welborn, "A Conciliatory Principle," 332. Cf. Demosthenes, *Speeches*, 19.314; 59.97; Plutarch, *Cic.* 887B; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 30.19; 58.5.
[84] Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.2.25.
[85] Philo, *Legat.* 69, 86, 154, 255.

The mention of being in favor of "one against another" in 4:6 refers to the formation of allegiances to Paul and Apollos and targets sophistic influence and clearly demonstrates that the entire verse is a call for unity, a call that continues into 4:7. Coupled with φυσιόω, Paul rebukes those Corinthians who have become puffed up through their devotion to Apollos, whom they claim possesses superior rhetorical skill. The phrase "of one against the other" therefore points to Paul countering "factiousness that included rivalry, quarrels, boasting, and other sorts of bad behavior all too common during the empire among students of rival Sophistic rhetors."[86] Paul finds the Corinthians' tendency to glory in specific leaders absurd since leaders simply are servants in the Lord (3:5). The Corinthians' arrogance and "boastfulness" have no place in the believing community, for Paul has demonstrated that even he and Apollos can minister together without any "boastful" or competitive inclinations. If anyone has grounds for a competitive spirit and "boasting," it would be Paul and Apollos, but they modestly view themselves as comrades in God's overall redemptive plan.

Intending to deflate some of the Corinthians' pretensions, Paul asks them a series of rhetorical questions in 4:7 relating to what they feel makes them superior. With the γάρ introducing the reason why such arrogance is out of place, the rhetorical questions target those Corinthians who have been "boasting" about the gifts they have received and have been using these gifts to distinguish themselves from other members in the community in the attempt to increase their own social status. Paul connects their being puffed up to a false estimation of themselves and a false "boasting" in their achievements, which is another facet of the factionalism within the community.[87] Paul counters these claims throughout 1 Corinthians. In 1:4-9, Paul emphasizes the passive nature of their possessions—they are gifts of God and are not to be "boasted" in. In addition, Paul stresses that all things belong to the Corinthians, including leaders and gifts (3:18-23). Through a series of rhetorical questions in 4:7, Paul thus rebukes the Corinthians for their anthropocentric "boasting" and introduces the contrast between their pretensions and the present state of the apostles (4:8-13).

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[86] Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 141; cf. A. Strobel, *Der este Brief an die Korinther* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1989), 38-39.
[87] Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric*, 95.

Paul's questions in 4:7 highlight that if there truly are any distinctions among the Corinthians, they would be the result of God's gifts, thereby eliminating any grounds for illegitimate "boasting." The first question, τίς γάρ σε διακρίνει, may be interpreted either positively (the Corinthians have forgotten what makes them unique) or negatively (there is nothing intrinsically special about the Corinthians). Thiselton suggests that διακρίνω ("to separate between, sift out") in 4:7 may mean either "who separates you from anyone else" or "who separates one from another among you?"[88] The next two questions suggest that Paul has in mind the positive interpretation in which he reinforces the fact that the Corinthian believers are special. Because God has chosen them (1:26-28) and has bestowed upon them that which they are inappropriately "boasting" of, there should be no anthropocentric "boasting" (1:29). They therefore have no grounds for arrogance or "boasting," even in regards to being a disciple of one's favorite leader. Instead, they are to imitate Paul, who considers himself nothing more than God's servant and recipient of God's grace (3:5-10). When the Corinthians take pride in one leader over another, they are in effect denying that God is the one who has given them all things.

With the four hyperbolic statements in 4:8, Paul undermines the Corinthians' anthropocentric "boasting" by contrasting their state with the situation of the apostles while also addressing the Corinthians' eschatological misunderstanding.[89] Some of the Corinthians have an unhealthy adulation of the elite and long to be included as part of the entourage of the elite ranks. While Paul describes apostles in terms suggestive of low social status, he describes the Corinthians in terms usually reserved for the social elite. From Paul's perspective, some Corinthians have mistakenly viewed their conversion as a means to increase their social status. Paul therefore seeks in 4:8 to admonish those individuals who view their conversion as an event that gives them a new status, at least within the confines of the believing community. The problems in the Corinthian community are not a result of the actions of outsiders, as in 2 Corinthians, but rather are a result of some members

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[88] Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 356. Walter Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians* (trans. John Steely; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), 180, contends that the term διακρίνει implies that these select Corinthians consider themselves separate from all "non-Pneumatic persons," which Schmithals states is the "most fundamental expression of the self-consciousness of the Gnostic."

[89] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 87, maintains that whether one interprets the sentences as rhetorical questions or as statements, Paul nevertheless resorts to irony. Robertson and Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, 83, consider v. 8 to be a direct attack on the Corinthians' self-esteem through a tone of "grave irony."

within the community who have carried secular beliefs and behaviors into the believing community. Some have even become arrogant because they assumed Paul has abandoned them by not returning to Corinth (4:18). Because of these individuals' destructive influence on the broader community, Paul addresses the entire Corinthian community as though they are all instigators of these problems.

Paul's sarcastic wish that the Corinthians would be kings emphasizes the contrast between the Corinthians and the apostles. Paul presents a ludicrous possibility that the Corinthians already have attained the eschatological hope of reigning while Paul and the apostles have been left in their state of weakness. "Without us" (χωρὶς ἡμῶν) denotes that the Corinthians reign without the apostles having a share in their reign.[90] As we discovered earlier, wisdom, eloquence, and wealth were prerequisites in the first-century Greco-Roman world for political power and being included among the top echelons of society. Those who possessed these attributes were included among the honored elite in Greco-Roman society. Paul employs the terms referring to being rich (πλουτέω) and reigning (βασιλεύω) in order to highlight the difference between true and false wisdom.[91] Because within the Corinthian community, the pursuit of acquiring worldly wisdom results in factions, rivalries, and arrogance, Dodd rightly suggests 4:8 should be read in an ironic sense as a parody of the Corinthians' self-praise and desire for honor.[92] While the Corinthians believe they possess wisdom and pass themselves off as kings, they fail to recognize that they do not reign as kings because they do not possess the wisdom of God.

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[90] Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 142, warns against taking these exclamations as a "straightforward social commentary," for Paul does not imply that majority of the Corinthians are of high social status. According to Witherington, the ἤδη indicates that the Corinthians have received some status or teaching without the aid of Paul, their spiritual father. Witherington suggests this status or teaching relates to wisdom, eloquence, and rhetoric. In contrast, Robertson and Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, 84, interpret χωρὶς ἡμῶν not "without our aid" but "without our company."

[91] The notion of being rich (πλουτέω) and reigning (βασιλεύω) in 4:8 parallels Stoic expressions, where the Stoics viewed themselves as happy, wealthy, free, and fit to rule. The Stoics also regarded wisdom to be equivalent to kingship (Seneca, *Ep.* 85.2; *De Benef.* 7.2.3; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.22.63; Horace, *Ep.* 1.1.106; Plutarch, *Mor.* 1058B-C; *Tranq. an.* 472A; Philo, *Abr.* 261; Suetonius, *Cal.* 29.1; *Nero* 37.3). For a summary of Stoic thought, see Luther H. Martin, "Graeco-Roman Philosophy and Religion," in vol. 1 of *The Early Christian World* (ed. Philip F. Esler; 2 vols.; London: Routledge, 2000), 64-65. Contra, F. Gerald Downing, *Cynics, Paul and the Pauline Churches*, 85-127, who argues against a Stoic background and instead offers that the Corinthian thought and behavior were shaped by the Cynic philosophy. He maintains that Stoics never would have thought they attained perfection, whereas the Cynics would have believed that they already were enjoying the golden age.

[92] Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I,'* 59.

Numerous scholars have noted the eschatological tone within Paul's comment in 4:8. For instance, Witherington surmises that the Corinthians' "pneumatic sapiential mentality" has been exacerbated by the arrival of Apollos and possibly by the teachings offered by some of the local Christians in the absence of Paul and Apollos.[93] This pneumatic eschatology leads the Corinthians to believe that they are in possession of wisdom and have already achieved kingdom status. Along similar lines, Thiselton explains the Corinthians' problems in terms of their construction of a realized eschatology, in which the future promises of the gospel are realized in the present. While also attributing the problems within the community to some Corinthians' distortion of Paul's teaching, Thiselton argues that ἤδη coupled with χωρὶς ἡμῶν is "a clear signal of an over-realized eschatology."[94] Although it is uncertain whether 4:8 reflects the Corinthians' eschatological perspective or only Paul's, we may assume that any eschatological element in 4:8 functions as a reminder of the future reality of the Corinthians reigning with Christ despite the present world viewing them as insignificant, weak, and foolish.

Litfin correctly cautions against reading over-realized eschatology into 4:8 and suggests that the eschatological language present in the verse represents Paul's own terminology, through which he castigates the Corinthians' emulation of the worldly elite and their "misplaced values."[95] As noted by Garland, imagining oneself to be rich, filled, and kingly was a widespread fantasy in the Greco-Roman world and does not necessarily have any eschatological undertones.[96] The language in 4:8 may represent an over-realized eschatological understanding, but such an interpretation is not necessary. What is evident is that because the Corinthians have

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[93] Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 142, adds: "If it was possible for one like Apollos to combine *sophia* of form so ably with the *sophia* of Christian content, then surely the Corinthians inspired by the Spirit could do no less!" See also Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 87-88.

[94] Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 358; cf. idem, "Realized Eschatology," 510-26; Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 1:338. B. J. Oropeza, "Apostasy in the Wilderness: Paul's Message to the Corinthians in a State of Eschatological Liminality," *JSNT* 75 (1999): 83, similarly suggests that the "strong" Corinthians view themselves as eschatologically realized (1 Cor. 4:7-8; 13:8-12).

[95] A. Duane Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric* (SNTSMS 79; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 168-69.

[96] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 138-39. Cf. Wis 6:20; 7:8, 11; 8:14, 18; Philo, *Alleg. Interp*. 1.13.34; 3.56.163; *Heir* 6.27; *Abr*. 44.261; *Virt*. 39.212-19. Dale B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 210, asks whether some Corinthians were styling themselves as kings in order to claim a patronal position among others in the community. Martin suggests that the word "king" may have sociological connotations since it was a client's term for a rich patron (cf. Juvenal, *Sat*. 5.14, 130, 137, 161; 7.45; 10.161). Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 198-99, draws a connection between the sophists' "boasts" and claims to reign and be full of wisdom (cf. Philo, *Det*. 34).

continued to adopt secular practices, Paul must offer his voice as an authoritative corrective. Although Paul acknowledges that the kingdom has not yet come, his focus centers on the Corinthians' arrogance rather than on eschatology.[97] This focus becomes more apparent in 4:9-13, where Paul contrasts the lowly state of the apostles with the self-exalted state of the Corinthians. The comparison between the apostles and the Corinthians is not one based on realized eschatology but on the Corinthians' arrogance to think they are superior to others, including the apostles. This rendering has affinities with Philo, who likewise connects arrogance and haughtiness with those who possess great riches, renown, authority, and learning and consequently elevate themselves above others:

> He considers himself superior to all in riches, estimation, beauty, strength, wisdom, temperance, justice, eloquence, knowledge; while everyone else he regards as poor, disesteemed, unhonoured, foolish, unjust, ignorant, outcast, in fact good-for-nothing. (Philo, *Virt*. 174)[98]

We may therefore conclude that the Corinthians' illegitimate "boasting" stems from their arrogance and reverence for wisdom, eloquence, wealth, influence, and honor rather than from mistaken views of the end-times.

Paul continues the comparison between the Corinthians and apostles in his hardship catalogue in 4:9-13, where he illustrates that the cruciform life frequently entails suffering and, according to the world's standards, dishonor.[99] By referring to apostles as being exhibited last (ἔσχατος), Paul draws attention to the low status of apostles and the supposedly exalted status of the Corinthian community.[100] Plank in

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[97] Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*, 168-69; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 138; cf. David W. Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict: Paul's Use of Apocalyptic Judgment Language in 1 Corinthians 3:5-4:5* (NovTSup 66. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), 216-19.

[98] Cf. Philo, *Virt*. 161-74.

[99] Anitra Bingham Kolenkow, "Paul and Opponents in 2 Cor 10-13 – *Theioi Andres* and Spiritual Guides," in *Religious Propaganda and Missionary Competition in the New Testament World: Essays Honoring Dieter Georgi*. (eds. Lukas Bormann, Kelly Del Tredici, and Angela Standhartinger; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 358, identifies four different catalogues of "boasting" in suffering in 1 Cor 4:1-21: contrast catalogue, list of lowliness characteristics, a Joseph type catalogue, and a refuse motif.

[100] Because ἔσχατος can be defined as either (1) "least" or "of no worth," or (2) "last" in the sense of a final event in the process of redemptive history, numerous scholars have incorrectly connected the apostles being a spectacle to eschatology (Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 359-60; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 140; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 88-89). Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 88n.37 comments: "Apparently he has in mind the eschatological idea of the reversal of first and last; in terms of Paul's anticipatory eschatology this idea now serves the interpretation of present existence in

his *Paul and the Irony of Affliction* examines Paul's self-description of his catalogue of afflictions in 4:9-13 and asserts that Paul offers a rhetorical *poiesis* of irony.[101] Plank argues that Paul consciously and ironically overstates his case in 4:8-9 and 4:10-13 in order to offer a reappraisal of the Corinthians' lack of realism.[102] Following Plank's interpretation, the life of the apostles, and more specifically the life of Paul, represents the antithesis of the world's values of wisdom, strength, and honor (4:10). Paul contrasts the state of the apostles with that of the Corinthians so that he might censure the arrogance of particular Corinthians and reorient them to the wisdom of the cross.

The hardship catalog also offers an example for the Corinthians to imitate. Paul introduces the apostolic life of suffering as the life that is commendable to God and as a paradigm for the Corinthians' own existence. Paul presents not his own life of suffering but the way of life demanded by the cross, which is modeled by the apostles and detailed through the metaphor of a procession where prisoners and gladiators head towards the gladiatorial ring.[103] While the Corinthians are merely spectators, the apostles enter the ring at the end of the procession as condemned criminals destined to die (ἐπιθανάτιος).[104] The apostles are not introduced in the arena as heroes who are admired for their valor but as those publicly shamed as a spectacle (θέατρον).[105]

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the world." John Howard Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* (SNTSMS 26; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 103-105, contends that the temporal aspect is present in 4:9 since the immediate context emphasizes the eschatological significance of the apostolic ministry. However, the eschatological interpretation oftentimes wrongly interprets 4:9 in relation to 15:18, despite the differing contexts of these two verses. For Paul being the last chronologically to see the risen Lord, see Peter R. Jones, "1 Corinthians 15:8: Paul the Last Apostle," *TynBul* 36 (1985): 3-34. For ἔσχατος referring to "least" or "of no worth," see Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 136n.58.

[101] Karl A. Plank, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 33-70. See also Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 117-48.

[102] Plank, *Paul and the Irony*, 48-52.

[103] Contra, Robertson and Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, 85, who argue that the clause δοκῶ γάρ, ὁ θεὸς . . . ἀπέδειξεν refers strictly to Paul: "There is a great pageant in which the Apostles form the ignominious finale, consisting of doomed men, who will have to fight in the arena till they are killed. St Paul is thinking chiefly of himself; but, to avoid the appearance of egoism, he associates himself with other Apostles."

[104] The adjective ἐπιθανάτιος occurs nowhere else in the NT. In the LXX of Bel 31, it is used of the condemned conspirators who were thrown two at a time to the lions. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 7.35, uses ἐπιθανάτιος of those who were thrown from the Tarpeian rock.

[105] See Peter Marshall, "A Metaphor of Social Shame: θριαμβεύειν in 2 Cor 2:14," *NovT* 25/4 (1983): 314-16, where Marshall touches upon Paul being displayed as a figure of social shame through the metaphor drawn from the arena. See also Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 8.18.2; Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 359; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 88-89; Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 122-24.

In these verses, Paul presents apostles as examples in a paradoxical sense by emphasizing that apostles are destined to suffer, thereby differentiating between the lives of those who have adopted God's perspective with those who continue to abide by the world's operating system. By employing a catalogue of suffering as a criterion for servants in Christ, Paul offers an "ironic critique" of the Corinthians' worldly mind-set.[106] Paul's "boasting" about the hardships of his apostolic calling normally are the last things one would parade before a status-conscious audience. Paul and the apostles are regarded as fools, weak, and in disrepute, whereas the Corinthians are considered wise, honorable, and strong. Coupled with his characterization of the community in 1:26-28, Paul's comment in 4:10 suggests that he critiques those Corinthians who feel that their newfound status in Christ has enhanced their social status in some way and has transformed them into someone special. Ambitious to make a name for themselves, these Corinthians aspire to climb socially partly through demonstrating their zeal for their leader. The vulnerable state of Paul thus begs the question how can the Corinthians be so highly exalted if they received their teachings from such a lowly apostle?

Paul continues to contrast the Corinthians' behavior with the apostles' behavior in 4:10-13 through a series of ironic antitheses.[107] Paul presents himself and the apostles as counter examples to the wise, powerful, and wealthy. Unlike the characteristics extolled by the Corinthians, Paul's picture of ministry in 4:10-13 involves foolishness (μωρός), weakness (ἀσθενής), dishonor (ἄτιμος), hunger (πεινάω), thirst (διψάω), being poorly clothed (γυμνιτεύω) and slandered (δυσφημέω), punishment (καλιφίζω), homelessness (ἀστατέω), and physical labor (κοπιάω).[108] By juxtaposing the Corinthians with the state of the apostles, Paul shames the Corinthians for their arrogance and triumphant attitude. The antithetical comparison between the Corinthians and the apostles focuses on what the Corinthians have obtained from Christ. With the prepositions διά and ἐν, Paul grounds the situation of the Corinthians and apostles in the cross. Thus, the

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[106] Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 148; John M. G. Barclay, "Thessalonica and Corinth: Social Contrasts in Pauline Christianity," *JSNT* 47 (1992): 49-74. Kleinknecht, *Der leidende Gerechtfertigte,* 208-304, considers 4:8-13 as the climax of 1:1-4:21 through which Paul provides the final critique of "boasting" in leaders in light of the cross (1:29-31; 3:18-20; 4:6-7).

[107] Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric*, 221, comments: "Each of the examples given is a variation on the theme of boasting and humility, wisdom and foolishness, each with its own twist, with v. 13 as the resounding culmination."

[108] While the use of the plural in 4:10-13 may be rhetorical, it most likely includes other Christian leaders who were likewise experiencing this same catalogue of suffering.

comparison emphasizes the superiority of what the Corinthians receive from Christ rather than what they receive from their being affiliated with Paul or Apollos (cf. 1:5; 3:21).[109]

Whether Paul's discourse is directed towards specific individuals within the Corinthian community or towards the entire community has been an issue of debate among commentators. Barclay argues that Paul's catalogue in 4:10, with its similar language in 1:26-28, is "directed at the whole church and may reflect a consciousness among the Corinthians that, whatever their social origins, their status had been enhanced by their adoption of Christianity."[110] While agreeing with Barclay that Paul addresses the entire community in 4:10, Meggitt contends that Paul does not refer to a socially elite group and argues against those who claim that Paul's comments inform us of the Corinthians' socio-economic location. Instead, Meggitt proposes that Paul refers to the Corinthians' sense of spiritual (rather than social) self-importance.[111] Thus, Paul contrasts the lowly state of being an apostle with the Corinthians' spiritually "exalted" state in order to demonstrate the absurdity of their claims and bring them back to reality. Against Meggitt, relegating the Corinthians' arrogance only to spiritual importance oversimplifies the situation. Meggitt leaves no room for the possibility that the Corinthians' newfound spiritual state has lead them to believe they have advanced their social standing, at least only in their dealings with the other members of the community. If this is the case, the Corinthians' social status most likely is higher in the confines of the believing community than in the outside secular world. Accordingly, their status inconsistency fuels their exaggerated sense of self-importance in the community. This is why Paul must humble them through a series of ironic antitheses so that he might jolt them into adopting a life of cruciformity in which they abandon their drive for social status and engage in theocentric "boasting."

Paul describes the apostles as examples of those who have become fools for Christ's sake and suffered a loss of status in order to discredit those who pass themselves off as powerful, wise, and honored. Paul's description of the apostles'

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[109] Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I,'* 60-61.
[110] John M. G. Barclay, "Thessalonica and Corinth: Social Contrasts in Pauline Christianity," *JSNT* 47 (1992): 57. Barclay adds that the terms in 4:10 do not refer to the original social status of the Corinthians (57n.11).
[111] Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 106-107.

destitution identifies them as lovers of virtue.[112] On account of preaching the gospel, the apostles are foolish, weak, and dishonored according to the world's estimation. The inclusion of the terms μωροὶ, φρόνιμοι, ἀσθενεῖς, ἰσχυροί, ἔνδοξοι, and ἄτιμοι recalls the themes presented in 1:18-2:5. "Wise" versus "fools" resumes the theme of divine foolishness versus the world's wisdom (1:18-27), while "strong" versus "weak" resumes the theme of divine weakness versus the world's strength.[113] Paul employs the term φρόνιμοι instead of σοφοί to refer to the Corinthians' wisdom. The term φρόνιμος denotes a wise person with the nuance of being sensible, discerning, or shrewd and is sometimes contrasted with the fool.[114] Paul employs φρόνιμος in several texts to denote being wise in one's own estimation along the lines of arrogance.[115] The fact that Paul uses this term instead of σόφος for the antithesis of μωρός is "merely a rhetorical variation without inherent meaning."[116] The antithesis between honor and dishonor recollects Paul's assertion in 1:26-28 that God chooses the dishonored in order to shame the honored.

Scholars have suggested several meanings for the verb κολαφίζω in 4:11. While speaking of a period of ill health in 2 Cor 12:7, Paul employs the term metaphorically in his discussion of the "messenger of Satan." Within the NT, κολαφίζω refers to being beaten in the sense of formal punishment or mob violence.[117] Thiselton, however, maintains that κολαφίζω should not be restricted to specific acts of violence within the context of 4:11, although acts of violence are certainly included here.[118] Instead, Thiselton proposes that κολαφίζω refers here to the type of harsh treatment indicative of a lack of respect. Thiselton's interpretation fits well into our reading of the situation of allegiances to Apollos, as defined by Paul. By elevating Apollos over Paul and questioning Paul's *modus operandi*, they, in essence, show their disrespect for Paul's apostolic role within the community.

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[112] Cf. Philo, *Det.* 10.34.

[113] Goulder, "ΣΟΦΙΑ," 526, wrongly believes the contrast between the weak and the strong in 4:10 refers to Pauline Christian and Petrine Christian, respectively.

[114] Seneca, *Ep.* 85.2; Plutarch, *Mor.* 1043A-B; 1071B; Philo, *Prob.* 59; *Mut.* 152; Gen 41:33, 39; 1 Kgs 3:12; 5:10; Prov 11:12, 29; 14:6; 15:21; 17:10, 27; 18:15; Tob 4:18; 6:12; Wis 6:24; Sir 20:27; 221:17, 21, 25; Matt 7:24; 10:16; 25:2, 4, 8-9; Luke 12:42; 16:8; 1 Cor 10:15; cf. Gen 3:1; Prov 15:1; Matt 24:45.

[115] Rom 11:25; 12:16; 1 Cor 4:10; 2 Cor 11:19; cf. Prov 3:7.

[116] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 89. Contra, Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel,* 137-38, who argues that Paul's word choice is deliberate and anticipates his treatment of sexual immorality and litigation in chs. 5-6.

[117] Matt 26:67; Mark 14:65; 1 Pet 2:20. According to BAGD, 441, κολαφίζω appears almost exclusively in Christian literature.

[118] Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 362.

Paul repeatedly mentions in his letters that he works with his own hands.[119] Paul does not merely engage in physical labor, but he engages in exhaustive physical labor (κοπιάω) and even glories in it because he can maintain his independence from patron-client obligations (cf. 9:1-27). The mention of working with his own hands (4:12) is important since it separates him from Cynic preachers, rhetors, and especially the sophists who accept payment for their teaching. Furthermore, Paul's view of physical labor as an acceptable practice speaks against the relatively well-off members in the community who despise manual labor and speaks against those who aspire to climb socially by claiming loyalty to their leader in a similar fashion as disciples to sophists.[120] Individuals in both camps would have considered manual labor inappropriate and demeaning for a teacher or philosopher and would have disapproved of Paul choosing to support himself. Moreover, these individuals are upset that Paul would not accept their financial support as his patrons, which would increase his own social status as a professional rhetorician, and more importantly increase their own social status.

Though the apostles are cursed, persecuted, and slandered, they follow Christ's example by responding with blessing, endurance, and words of encouragement (4:12b-13a).[121] The apostles understand the reversal of status effected by the cross. The cross reverses the worldly standards of wisdom, status, and honor. Thus, the truly wise in the godly sense oftentimes are viewed as fools and insignificant to the world. The problem with the Corinthians is that they do not associate the apostles' weakness and dishonor with godly power and wisdom, a point Paul draws out in his description of his *modus operandi* and definition of wisdom in 1:10-3:23.

Paul concludes the catalogue of suffering by depicting apostles as the refuse and scum of the earth. The final two terms περικάθαρμα and περίψημα denote

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[119] 1 Cor 9:6; 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:8; cf. 2 Cor 11:7; Eph 4:28; Col 3:23; 1 Thess 4:11; 2 Thess 3:10-12.

[120] E.g. Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.22.45-47; Seneca, *Helv.* 12.4 See Ronald F. Hock, "Paul's Tentmaking and the Problem of His Social Class," *JBL* 97 (1978): 555-64; idem, *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (ed. and trans. J. H. Schütz; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 69-174. Against Hock, Paul does not despise manual labor. Paul's inclusion of the term κοπιάω merely describes his labor and does not express a negative aristocratic view of labor. So, Todd D. Still, "Did Paul Loathe Manual Labor? Revisiting the Work of Ronald F. Hock on the Apostle's Tentmaking and Social Class," *JBL* 125/4 (2006): 781-95. See ch. 6 for further elaboration of the Corinthians' disapproval of Paul working at a trade and for Paul's explanation of his practice.

[121] Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 144, notes that Paul seems to be drawing on the Sermon on the Mount (Luke 6:28) and on the Jesus tradition.

"rubbish" and "scum" and are almost synonymous terms employed to epitomize the world's perception of the apostles. The first term, περικάθαρμα, indicates things that are discarded—the filthy residue that is removed upon cleaning, or the dust that is swept from a floor. Epictetus refers to the offscourings of humanity as the scum which clings to unwanted surfaces.[122] The second term, περίψημα, refers to the scrapings that are scrubbed or scraped off something. Together these terms denote self-depreciation and highlight the mistreatment of the apostles.[123]

The purpose of the hardship catalogue in 4:9-13 is not meant to be interpreted as an explicit exhortation for the Corinthian community to conform to Paul's extreme example of suffering and hardship by suffering what he suffers since his hardships are a result of his work as an apostle rather than to his simply being a believer. While Paul may imply this, Dodd rightly does not consider this to be "the most apparent application of the list of sufferings as far as these chapters are concerned, nor is it an exhortation that emerges explicitly anywhere else in Paul."[124] The Corinthians are not to imitate his sufferings necessarily; they are to imitate his cruciform valuation of things. While cruciform valuation might include or lead to suffering, suffering is not a prerequisite. The descriptive state of the apostles therefore functions as a corrective to those Corinthians in the Apollos faction, and perhaps others, who have an illegitimate, exaggerated sense of self. After expounding what it means to be foolish, weak, and without honor in the world, Paul offers another admonishment in 4:14-21 for the Corinthians to conform their behaviors and perspectives according to the standards set by Christ or else there will be serious consequences.

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[122] Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.22.78. Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 364, adds: " Without its compound κάθαρμα means sweepings which are swept up from the floor, i.e., the unwanted dirt. But with the addition of the compound περικάθαρμα means what is removed as a result of scouring round a utensil. Hence the filthy residue is the scum which clings to surfaces unwanted."

[123] Some have observed that these terms were used for human scapegoats who were sacrificed to the gods in order to ward off evil and avert the wrath of the gods (e.g. Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 364-65; Robertson and Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, 88; Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 1:350). While we make room here for the possibility that Paul may have intended to educe pictures of vicarious suffering, we nonetheless reject the scapegoat theory and hold instead that περικάθαρμα and περίψημα state the same thing—apostles are being treated like the scum of the earth (cf. Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 146).

[124] Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I,'* 62.

§3 Paul's Fatherly Admonition

14 I do not write these things to shame you, but to instruct you as my beloved children. 15 For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. 16 Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me. 17 For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, just as I teach everywhere in every church. 18 Now some have become arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the words of those who are arrogant but their power. 20 For the kingdom of God is not in words but in power. 21 What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod or with love in a spirit of gentleness? (1 Cor 4:14-21)

The final section in chapter 4 (vv. 14-21) concludes the discussion in 1:10-4:13 of wisdom, leadership, divisions (σχίσματα), and proper self-evaluation and also launches Paul's instructions in the subsequent chapters. This section integrates the topics of sophistic presence in Corinth, the Corinthians' perception of Paul and Apollos, the value the community places on wisdom and power, and Paul's role as their founding apostolic father. Throughout the first four chapters, Paul has consistently presented himself as an authoritative example of one who properly "boasts" in the Lord, but now in 4:14-21 he begins to address the problems in the Corinthian community more so as an authoritative fatherly figure.[125] However, even when Paul deals with specific problem areas in the following chapters, he continues to present himself as a model to imitate throughout the epistle, which is evident in 9:1-27. Verses 14-21 summarize the entire unit of 1:10-4:21 and state the purpose of Paul's argument in the whole epistle: to effect change in the Corinthians' behavior.[126] The things (ταῦτα) Paul has written (4:14) could refer retrospectively either to the contrast in 4:6-13 between the Corinthians' arrogance and the lowly

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[125] For Paul's rhetoric in 1 Cor 1:10-4:21 functioning as a reassertion of his power among the community, see Wanamaker, "A Rhetoric of Power," 115-37; Kathy Ehrensperger, "Power in Pauline Discourse from a Feminist Perspective" (paper presented at the British New Testament Conference, Exeter, England, 6-8 September 2007).

[126] Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric*, 222-23, rejects the claim among partition theorists that 4:17-21 signals the end of a letter fragment. Mitchell asks: "Rather than immediately assuming that this extensive 'presence' and 'visit-talk' is a sign of the edges of letter fragments, we should first ask if these constant references to Paul's distance from the church could not play a *rhetorical* role in the argument of the letter" (p. 223).

state of the apostles or to Paul's entire discussion of the Corinthians' factions beginning in 1:10. The latter interpretation, however, seems more likely since the function of 4:14-21 is to conclude Paul's entire discourse from 1:10-4:21.[127] Paul reiterates his concern for their love of eloquence, attraction to personality rhetoric, and criticism of his preaching.

Paul writes that he does not intend to put the Corinthians to shame (ἐντρέπω)[128] but rather to admonish (νουθετέω) them as his "beloved children" (τέκνα μου ἀγαπητά). Addressing them as beloved children expresses Paul's affection for the Corinthians. His overall purpose is to encourage the Corinthian community and provide them with a solemn fatherly warning when needed, not chastise them needlessly and make them hold their head in shame, thereby suffering a loss of honor.[129] Paul's tone is both severe and tender, demonstrating that he has assumed a paternal role among the Corinthians as their founder (cf. 1 Cor 3:6; 4:15; 2 Cor 10:14). Paul's statement is thus a rhetorical move since he is, in fact, subtly attempting to shame particular Corinthians into redefining their perspective of true honor in terms of suffering, servanthood, and "boasting" in the Lord.[130] Paul ultimately desires that the Corinthian community put aside their worldly framework and adopt an eschatological framework in their appraisal of their leaders and themselves.

As previously discovered, accumulation of honor and avoidance of disgrace were of paramount concern for the Corinthians, with social interactions being governed by elaborate codes of honor and shame. In the Greco-Roman world to be honored established status, whereas to be shamed was to have one's claim to honor rejected by society. Where individuals erected inscriptions praising their own

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[127] Contra, Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I,'* 68, who notes the forward nature of ταῦτα in 4:14 despite concluding that it applies equally well to the following chapters as to those that precede it. Dodd does not deny that ταῦτα "most naturally refers to 4.6-13." Dodd adds that commentators must not ignore the transitional nature of 4:14 in which it anticipates the admonition that follows (i.e. the shame attached to the incestuous relationship, lawsuits, disregard for the weak and poor, disorderly conduct, etc.).

[128] The verb ἐντρέπω signifies hanging one's head in shame (2 Thess 3:14; Tit 2:8; Num 12:14; Jdg 3:30; 2 Chron 12:12; 34:27; Ezra 9:6; Aelian, *Var. hist.* 3.17; Sextus Empiricus, *Psych.* 3.16).

[129] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 145, writes about Paul's intention: "But the shame Paul wishes to avoid causing the Corinthians is their losing face. Although he does not shy away from speaking openly about shameful behavior (cf. 5:1-13), he wants to communicate that it is their values and behavior, not their personhoods, that are unacceptable. He may intuit that their hunger for status is attributable to core feelings of shame that lead them to crave some external, compensating validation of who they are."

[130] Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 368-69; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 147. For the contrast between putting to shame and "boasting" see Rom 5:2-5; 2 Cor 7:14; 9:2-4.

accomplishments, social status, and contributions to building projects, being put to shame (καταισχύνω) attacked the core of the Corinthian civic and individual pride. Quite possibly the degrading treatment and inferior social status of Paul and the other apostles may have contributed to the Corinthians' sense of shame. According to Paul, the Corinthians experience none of the hardships the apostles experience. Through irony, Paul seeks to achieve realism among the Corinthians and "to instill in them a sense of self-worth that comes from God's grace and power in their lives, which is able to eradicate any hunger for the mercurial, inconsequential honor bestowed by the world."[131]

The term παιδαγωγός refers not to a "teacher" as to a "guardian" (cf. Gal 3:24). In the Greco-Roman world, the guardian's (παιδαγωγός) responsibility was to escort a child to and from school, protect the child from suffering harm, chaperone the child at athletic contests, and help the child with his recitations at home, oftentimes carried out with a sense of duty to their master's instructions rather than purely out of love for the child.[132] Pedagogues were usually slaves or foreign captives and were responsible for children from the age of seven until late adolescence. Because of their stereotypical sternness, pedagogues frequently were depicted in Greek vase paintings as old men holding a rod in their hand.[133] Though Young cautions against automatically assuming the hooked staff is a corrective rod rather than a status symbol, Young nevertheless asserts that their role was not one of nurturance but of discipline: "Pedagogues pinched and threatened, shouted and ranted, and cuffed and caned. They carried the boy's books or lyre and even the boy. One expected discipline from a pedagogue, not succour."[134] Young's article, however, is much too one-sided. The παιδαγωγός Paul refers to in 4:15 is not one who administers beatings but one who protects and guards those under his care (cf.

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[131] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 145.
[132] Plutarch, *Marc*. 9.4; *Mor*. 4A; 439F; *Mem*. 94C; *Them*. 12.3-4; *Alex*. 5.7-8; Aristides, *Or*. 12.83; Libanius, *Or*. 58.7, 31; Herodotus, *Hist*. 8.75; Suetonius, *Claud*. 5.2; Epictetus, *Diatr*. 3.19.5; Philostratus, *Vit. soph*. 604; Plato, *Resp*. 373C. For an examination of the pedagogue's description and role in the Greco-Roman world, see Norman H. Young, "*Paidagogos*: The Social Setting of a Pauline Metaphor," *NovT* 29/2 (1987): 150-76; Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 370; Ben Witherington, III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 262-69; James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to Galatians* (BNTC 9; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993), 198-200; Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Waco: Word Books, 1990), 146-50; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 182-83; Bruce W. Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 54, passim.
[133] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 145-46; Young, "*Paidagogos*," 151-52. Cf. Plutarch, *Mor*. 4B; Suetonius, *Nero* 6.37.2; Quintilian, *Inst*. 1.3.13.
[134] Young, "*Paidagogos*," 163-64.

Gal 3:24). More importantly, Paul contrasts the temporary role of the pedagogue with his enduring role as their father, thereby distinguishing himself from the transient nature of the μυρίους παιδαγωγούς.

Paul stresses his unique relationship with the Corinthians as the one who "fathered" (ἐγέννησα) them "through the gospel" (διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου).[135] Unlike the pedagogues who come and go offering guidance for limited periods, Paul's paternal role endures for life. Paul presents himself in 4:14-21 as the father whose role is similar to that of the *paterfamilias*. Like the *paterfamilias* who is responsible for maintaining order and peace within his family, Paul too works to foster unity among the Corinthian community. Paul also presents himself in authoritative terms. By referring to himself as their father, Paul highlights the subordinate relationship between himself and the Corinthians, his spiritual offspring.[136] Paul occupies the exclusive position of being their spiritual father (made explicit in 4:14-15, 17, 21). Paul's paternal role did not end after giving birth to the Corinthian community by being the first to proclaim the gospel to them—it is an ongoing role that is connected to his preaching without persuasive words (2:4-5), planting the seeds (3:6), and laying the foundation (3:10). Paul's paternal authority is not simply a rhetorical image but a reality and therefore is not open for debate. What is interesting about Paul's use of the father-figure image is his redefinition of it in terms of servanthood and suffering. In Greco-Roman literature, the father image indicated a hierarchical relationship between the father and his household. As Witherington notes, even Roman imperial ideology utilized the father-figure image to "support social stratification and to legitimate a steeply inclined hierarchy of power."[137] Romans employed the father image in order to assert imperial authority in Roman colonies and consequently unite the Roman empire. For Paul, however, being a spiritual father does not signify that he has the right to excessively display his power. Instead,

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[135] For Paul's use of the familial metaphor in 4:14-21 and the Greco-Roman attitudes regarding the conduct between fathers and children, see Trevor J. Burke, "Paul's Role as 'Father' to His Corinthian 'Children' in Socio-Historical Context (1 Corinthians 4:14-21)," in *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict. Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall* (ed. Trevor J. Burke and J. Keith Elliott; NovTSup 109; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 95-113; L. Michael White, "Paul and *Pater Familias*." in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 457-87; Eva Maria Lassen, "The Use of the Father Image in Imperial Propaganda and 1 Corinthians 4:14-21," *TynBul* 42/1 (1991): 127-36.

[136] Burke, "Paul's Role as Father," 107-108, notes that Paul never describes himself by using the sibling metaphor, where he is their brother or any church's brother. Cf. Burke, "Pauline Paternity in 1 Thessalonians," *TynBul* 51/1 (2000): 59-80.

[137] Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 138, cf. 295-98. See also Lassen, "The Use of the Father Image," 127-36.

being a spiritual father means being in a position to serve, encourage, instruct, and work for the redemption of others. Only as a last resort will Paul consider displaying his power (cf. 4:21).

Paul's hyperbolic reference to a thousand guardians (μύριους παιδαγωγοὺς) is a subtle criticism of those Corinthians who have elevated Apollos over Paul.[138] The relational bond between Paul and the Corinthians should be stronger than that between the pedagogues and the Corinthians. Just as a child has one father, so too the Corinthians have only one father in the gospel. Paul does not identify who these guardians are, but they are unlikely to be Apollos or other apostles. Instead, they are more likely to be the key instigators in the formation of competitive factions in the Corinthian community.

With the repetition of παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς, Paul links 4:16 with 1:10 and ties 1:10-4:21 into a cohesive unit since both 1:10 and 4:16 begin with Paul's appeal to the Corinthians.[139] Paul appeals to the Corinthians to be imitators of him (μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε) as a consequence (οὖν) of his spiritual parenthood of the Corinthian community.[140] Paul alone founded the community and established among them the principles of cruciform conduct from the moment of his arrival in Corinth. As their spiritual father and model of how to live as a believer and leader in a fallen world, Paul exhorts them to emulate him. Paul's life is worthy of imitation because the cross defines it.

Exploring the theme of imitation in Paul and how it functions in Paul's letters as a strategy of power, Castelli maintains that Paul uses mimetic examples in 1:10-18 and 4:14-21 as a call for unity and to establish Paul's authoritative role.[141] Despite not adequately defining ideology and failing to delineate the relationship

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[138] Young, "*Paidagogos*," 169-70, comments that Paul's language is hyperbolic since Greek households generally had a single family pedagogue, not myriads.

[139] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 146; Castelli, *Imitating Paul*, 102. Contra, Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I,'* 66-67, who suggests that 4:16 forms an *inclusio* with 11:1 rather than with 1:10.

[140] For imitation in Greco-Roman literature and Paul's letters, see Benjamin Fiore, "Paul, Exemplification, and Imitation," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 228-57; David M. Stanley, "Imitation in Paul's Letters: Its Significance for His Relationship to Jesus and to His Own Christian Foundations," in *From Jesus to Paul: Studies in Honour of Francis Wright Beare* (ed. Peter Richardson and John C. Hurd; Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984), 127-41; idem, "'Become Imitators of Me': The Pauline Conception of Apostolic Tradition," *Bib* 15 (1959): 859-77.

[141] Castelli, *Imitating Paul*, esp. 97-111. One of the weaknesses of Castelli's study is the limited scope of her survey of mimesis in antiquity (p. 59-87). She could have included examples of imitation rather than only instances where the term "imitate" is employed. Though Castelli acknowledges that she provides a "sweeping survey" without producing a "monolithic definition" (86), the amount of primary texts she cites are limited and could have been expanded.

between ideology and power, Castelli's investigation nevertheless illuminates the rhetorical function of mimesis within Paul's discussion of the issue of divisiveness within the Corinthian community. Paul's call for imitation, according to Castelli,

> is not simply the benign call to emulate a laudable ethical model, as some have argued, nor does it represent some self-evident social pragmatism, as others have asserted. Rather, Paul's command, "Be imitators of me," evokes a complex structural and thematic weave that resists reduction to any sort of self-evident or obvious ethical action or social expediency. At the root of this exhortation is a far more profoundly embedded understanding of the privileged position of the apostle to construct the early communities within a hierarchical "economy of sameness," the structuring of thought and social life around the uniquely valued concept of *identity*. Furthermore, the exhortation to imitation underwrites the apostle's demand for the erasure of difference, and links that erasure to the very possibility of salvation.[142]

Following Castelli, imitation therefore functions as a discourse of power that achieves unity, harmony, and sameness. Paul's exhortation in 4:16 (cf. 11:1) concerns the unity and identity of the Corinthian community and refers to his singular and authoritative model. Castelli equates discord as being different and being outside the community.[143] Because Paul values unity and sameness, difference has no place in community. Castelli notes that the community's sameness is their salvation, whereas the difference of those outside the community is their salvific condemnation.[144] Reading the patriarchal imagery in 4:14-17 in terms of the father possessing total authority over his children, Castelli declares that to oppose Paul is to oppose the community.[145] Castelli's stress on Paul employing mimetic language in order to exert his authoritative power builds upon the unity component within Paul's call. Paul's call for imitation not only highlights his authoritative role as their

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[142] Castelli, *Imitating Paul*, 16-17.
[143] Castelli, *Imitating Paul*, 103.
[144] Castelli, *Imitating Paul*, 114-15, comments: "Paul's call to imitation has a socially expedient function to be sure, but it also possesses a more profound level of meaning because the imitation of Paul's example is itself a privileged mode of access to salvation" (p. 115).
[145] Castelli, *Imitating Paul*, 100-103.

founding father, but it also serves to exhort the Corinthians to exhibit the same harmonious relationship with one another that Paul has with his coworkers.[146]

Although he distinguishes himself from the sophists, Paul's call for imitation (παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε, 4:16) nonetheless draws upon the background of the teaching methods of the sophists and rhetoricians in general, which are based upon imitation.[147] The word group for imitation frequently appears in the Greco-Roman world to describe the pupil's relation to his teacher.[148] Within this teacher-pupil context, imitation is dependent upon the character or ethos of the teacher. Paul, however, distinguishes himself from the sophists by placing no value on personality rhetoric as the sophists do. Paul declares himself that he purposefully does not employ lofty words of wisdom in the Corinthian context but instead relies on God's power that works through weakness, fear, and trembling (2:1-5). Paul once again reiterates that the kingdom of God depends not on words but on power (οὐ γὰρ ἐν λόγῳ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλ᾽ ἐν δυνάμει, 4:20). The kingdom of God is not defined by rhetoric but rather the transforming power of God through the work of Christ's death on the cross and the Holy Spirit.[149] With this declaration, Paul once again addresses those members in the Corinthian community who define wisdom (σοφία) and eloquence according to sophistic practices (cf. 1:17-21; 2:4-8; 3:18-20). Thus, one of the purposes of Paul's inclusion of the catalogue of suffering is to separate himself and other apostles from the popular orators of the day. Paul believes that the message of the cross establishes his ethos, not the oratorical skill and commanding physical presence that the sophists treasure.

Furthermore, Paul models his conduct on the pattern set by Christ's sacrificial giving, in which leaders serve their community, not the reverse. Hence, the cruciform model of leadership contrasts sharply with the hierarchical Greco-

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[146] See B. Sanders, "Imitating Paul: 1 Cor. 4:16," *HTR* 74 (1981): 353-63.

[147] Isocrates, *Soph.* 17; Quintilian, *Inst.* 10.2; Longinus, *Subl.* 13; Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.6.3. See also Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian*, 116-19; Castelli, *Imitating Paul*, 83; Elaine Fantham, "Imitation and Decline: Rhetorical Theory and Practice in the First Century after Christ," *CP* 73 (1978): 102-16.

[148] Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.2.3; 1.6.3; Plutarch, *Alex.* 332A-B; Plato, *Theaet.* 176B; *Resp.* 613A; *Leg.* 715f; Seneca, *Ep.* 95.50; Philo, *Op. Mund.* 79.

[149] See 1 Cor 1:18, 24; 2:4-5; 6:14; 2 Cor 12:9; 13:4; cf. Rom 1:16; 15:19; Eph 3:16, 20; Phil 3:10; Col 1:11; 1 Thess 1:5. The phrase "kingdom of God" appears relatively infrequently within Paul's letters (Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; 6:9, 10; 15:24, 50; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; Col 4:11; 2 Thess 1:5; cf. Acts 14:22; 19:8; 28:23, 31). The majority of occurrences appear in the gospels (e.g. Matt 12:28; 21:31; Mark 1:15; 4:11; 9:1; 10:23-25; 14:25; Luke 4:43; 6:20; 8:10; 11:20; 13:28-29; 17:20-21; John 3:3). See also Acts 1:3; 8:12; Rev 12:10. Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 377, advises against translating βασιλεία as reign since that definition is more characteristic of Jesus than of Paul. Within the Gospels, kingdom refers to God's sovereign reigning which is partially veiled until the last judgment.

Roman society where the elite generally despise being in a position of servanthood or slavehood. Unlike the Corinthians' secular counterparts, Paul proclaims that their behavior should reflect their experience of being a follower of Christ. This type of behavior is modeled in the apostles' lifestyle.

The call to imitation centers around the Corinthians' adoration for increasing their own status and honor. The honor that has any eternal significance is that which comes from following Christ (cf. 4:5), not a particular leader. Paul offers himself as a model of someone who has voluntarily accepted a low social status according to the world's standards by willingly becoming a fool, weak, and dishonored for Christ. Instead of there being a competitive spirit with other teachers like there is among sophists, Paul presents himself as one who cooperates with Apollos and other ministers.

Paul provides those Corinthians he calls arrogant with an alternative: he can arrive either with a rod or with love and gentleness (4:19; cf. 16:5-9).[150] According to Dahl, the indefinite pronoun τινες in 4:18 refers to specific individuals whose names Paul refrains from mentioning.[151] Along similar lines, Witherington speculates that these individuals are the pedagogues he has referred to in 4:15.[152] The more accurate rendering would be that Paul refers to those who have incited the Apollos faction. Paul prefers not to use the rod and therefore hopes that his letter will rectify the situation before his arrival (cf. 2 Cor 13:1-3, 10). Paul, however, will not shirk from his apostolic duties. For the sake of the entire community, if the situation demands it he will not hesitate to confront those individuals responsible for the divisions. The contrastive options are between Paul exercising his fatherly love or exercising discipline with the rod. The image of the rod may refer to parental discipline described in the OT,[153] the shepherd's rod of Ps 22:4 (LXX), or the Roman imperial usage of the father asserting authority. The shepherd's rod interpretation is ruled out because it does not fit this context and would mean that Paul introduces a new metaphor without any elaboration.[154] The better interpretive

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[150] Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 377-78, translates the verb ἔλθω as a deliberative subjunctive, thus translated "Am I to come?" rather than "Shall I come?"

[151] Nils A. Dahl, "Paul and the Church at Corinth According to 1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21," in *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox* (ed. W. R. Farmer, C. F. D. Moule, and R. R. Niebuhr; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 319.

[152] Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 147-48.

[153] Exod 21:20; Prov 10:13; 13:24; 2 Sam 7:14; Isa 10:24; Lam 3:1.

[154] Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I,'* 72-74.

option is that which speaks of parental authority and discipline. Paul declares his wish that he does not have to confront the Corinthians with harsh discipline. However, if some persist in ignoring his argument of 1:10-4:21, he will have no other choice than to come to them with a rod.[155]

In 4:14-21, Paul indirectly admonishes the arrogant Corinthians' preference for words of wisdom and allegiances to specific personalities at his expense. While these individuals may possess rhetorical skill according to worldly standards, Paul proclaims that the gospel does not depend on rhetorical ability but on God's power (4:20). According to Paul, these unnamed individuals lack true wisdom and power, which should be obvious to the rest of the Corinthians. Although some perceive Paul as weak because of his refusal to demonstrate his physical power with the Corinthians during his previous visit, he is in fact not weak in character. If the Corinthians want him to be harsh, he can oblige them.

## §4 Summary

Paul directs his entire argument in 1:10-4:21 to the Corinthians' perceptions of social status, wisdom, and power. From Paul's perspective, the cross establishes a paradox that radically alters the criterion by which people are to evaluate others and redefines the categories of power/weakness and wisdom/foolishness. The cross is counter-cultural and requires the Corinthian community to relinquish its admiration of eloquence, social status, and power. As Witherington notes, "Paul's message here profoundly disturbs the social equilibrium that the Corinthians appear to take for granted."[156] Within 1:10-4:21, ch. 4 emphasizes behavior that promotes unity within the Corinthian community. The call to imitate Paul is a call to reform their worldly perspective of social status into one that ultimately follows Christ's example of servanthood. Thus, the Corinthians are to learn from the examples of Paul and Apollos how to view themselves and their leaders with respect to social status, wisdom, and power.

Within deliberative rhetoric, examples serve to move one's audience to action. This function is evident in Paul's own example, which serves as a paradigm

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[155] See Lassen, "The Use of the Father Image," 127-36.

[156] Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 148; cf. Plank, *Paul and the Irony*, 83; Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 126-27.

for dealing with the community's problems of factionalism, anthropocentric "boasting," and self-serving attitudes and behaviors. Paul's presentation of himself as a model for the Corinthians to imitate does not reflect Paul's self-reliant nature and sense of himself as a "person of notable achievement" as Callan suggests.[157] It is not a matter of Paul exuding arrogance or pride or competitively striving to excel over others. Callan's conclusion represents his insensitivity to the cultural and theological dynamics of Paul's usage of "boasting" terminology as a pastoral corrective to some of the Corinthians' inappropriate self-exalting behavior that generally has been encouraged or condoned by secular society.

Paul really is a model for the Corinthians to imitate because he has made massive inroads from the type of person he was before the Damascus Road incident and how he perceived his own self-importance to the type of person he has become as a believer. Paul's whole outlook shifted once he was confronted with the insignificance of what he once held dear, as a means of self-worth and self-importance (cf. Phil 3:4-9; 2 Cor 6:4-10; 11:16-30). Paul is fallible, and like the Corinthians, is in a process of maturing in the faith. Despite being further along in his pilgrimage than the Corinthians, he nonetheless is not perfected yet, as exhibited by his competitive tendencies. Paul's spiritual development represents an internal struggle. Before his conversion, Paul was competitive, proud of his accomplishments, and thought he was superior to others. After his conversion, Paul is being molded into a person marked by humility, servanthood, and self-sacrifice and self-deprecation for God's glory. Paul tries to refrain from consciously putting his confidence in matters of the flesh since he knows there is no comparison between being esteemed by the world and knowing Christ.

As in 1:10-3:23, Paul demonstrates in 4:1-21 that his pastoral approach is consistent through his disapproval of personality rhetoric and anthropocentric "boasting." His model of a life of cruciformity fits with his earlier call to "boast" in the Lord (1:26-31; 3:21). "Boasting" in the Lord entails glorying in one's weakness as a form of worshipping the Lord. Paul's catalogue of hardships and criticism of the Corinthians' exalted sense of self lucidly illustrate that the quest for social status and worldly honor have no place in the believing community. Not only is the command to "boast in the Lord" a prescription for Paul overcoming his own competitiveness

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[157] Terrance Callan, *Psychological Perspectives on the Life of Paul: An Application of the Methodology of Gerd Theissen* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 21.

and self-reliance, but it is also an appropriate prescription for the Corinthians' emphasis on social status and advancement.

Paul recognizes that the divisions in Corinthian community do not represent a monolithic voice and acknowledges that some Corinthians do not require his discourse on "boasting" and leadership. Despite knowing that any overt or perceived criticisms of Paul by the Corinthian community is intrinsically meaningless, Paul cannot refrain from showing his emotions for long. Paul's annoyance toward those Corinthians who have put him in the position of having to explain himself evinces itself in 4:1-21. Paul is utterly frustrated with these individuals' pettiness, arrogance, and lack of trust in his character—so much so that he returns to his example in 9:1-27 (cf. 13:1-13; 15:30-32), of which we shall turn to in the following chapter.

# CHAPTER SIX

## PAUL'S PARADIGMATIC FORBEARANCE OF HIS APOSTOLIC RIGHTS AND CALL FOR LOVE

As previously discovered, the competitive environment of Corinth manifests itself through members of the Corinthian community comparing Paul with Apollos. After Apollos visited Corinth, some Corinthians chose him as their favorite preacher, thereby creating divisions based on whom they deemed the better orator. Not only have some Corinthians critiqued Paul's oratorical skill, but they also have criticized his insistence upon supporting himself and rejecting their financial support. During Paul's ministry in Corinth, some relatively well-off members wanted to become Paul's benefactors, which, in essence, would have made Paul their own personal apostle and would have prevented him from being able to freely proclaim the gospel. However, within the Greco-Roman context, to refuse benefaction was a social affront to those extending it, particularly when the refusal came from a supposed social inferior. It is from this context that we examine Paul's apostleship (§1; 9:1-2), inherent apostolic rights (§2; 9:3-14), renunciation of those rights (§3; 9:15-18), self-imposed slavery of accommodation (§4; 9:19-23), and self-discipline (§5; 9:24-27).

First Corinthians 8:1-11:1 advances Paul's argument concerning how believers are to exert their inherent cruciform rights and freedoms for the benefit of others in the context of eating sacrificial meat. While addressing the question raised by some of the Corinthians regarding the acceptability of believers eating food offered to idols (ch. 8), Paul takes issue with those Corinthians who exercise their theological rights at the expense of weaker believers (8:9-13).[1] In response, Paul

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[1] Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (ed. and trans. J. H. Schütz; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 121-43; idem, "The Strong and the Weak in Corinth: A Sociological Analysis of a Theological Quarrel," in *Understanding Paul's Ethics: Twentieth Century Approaches* (ed. Brian S. Rosner; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 107-28; idem, "Social Conflicts in the Corinthian Community: Further Remarks on J. J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*," *JSNT* 25/3 (2003): 371-91, attributes the problem of meat offered to idols to be social class divisions. The wealthy consumed meat regularly and therefore did not associate eating meat with cultic practices, whereas the poor at meat rarely and only as part of cultic celebrations. On the weak being led into idolatry, see Bruce W. Winter, "Theological and Ethical Responses to Religious Pluralism – 1

presents himself as a positive example of one who does not abuse his rights

(ἐξουσία) and freedom (ἐλεύθερος) by putting a stumbling block before the weaker

members (9:1-23).[2] After warning of eschatological disqualification because of

overconfidence (9:24-27), Paul applies to the Corinthian situation an illustration of

disqualification from Israel's history (10:1-13). Finally, in 10:14-11:1 Paul resumes

the matters of eating food sacrificed to idols and seeking the advantage of others and

exhorts the Corinthians to imitate him. Twice in 1 Corinthians Paul explicitly directs

the Corinthians to imitate him (μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε, 4:16; 11:1), a rhetorical tactic

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Corinthians 8-10," *TynBul* 41/2 (1990): 209-26; Gregory W. Dawes, "The Danger of Idolatry: First
Corinthians 8:7-13," *CBQ* 58/1 (1996): 82-98. Contra, Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*
(Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 107-18; idem, "Meat Consumption and Social Conflict in
Corinth," *JTS* 45 (1994): 137-41, who refutes the proposal that the conflict between two socio-
economic groups, (the indigent "weak" and the affluent "strong") lies behind the Corinthians' dispute
over meat consumption.

[2] The place of 9:1-27 within Paul's discussion of idol meat (8:1-11:1) has been debated among
commentators regarding the integrity of 1 Corinthians. Some argue that Paul's discourse on his
rejection of an apostolic right of support seems ill-placed between his discussion of food sacrificed to
idols. Since a smooth transition is lacking from Paul's discussion of idol food in 8:1-13 to his
discussion of the rights of an apostle in 9:1-27, some have suggested that the section beginning in
8:13 or 9:1 represents an interpolation (Johannes Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* [Göttingen:
Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1925], xl-xliii, 212-13, 231-49; Walter Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth*:
*An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians* [trans. John Steely; Nashville: Abingdon Press,
1971], 92-95, 334; idem, "Die Korintherbriefe as Briefsammlung," *ZNW* 64 [1973]: 263-88; Jean
Héring, *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* [trans. A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock;
London: Epworth Press, 1962], xii-xiv, 75), digression (Raymond F. Collins, "'It was Indeed Written
for Our Sake' [1 Cor 9,10]: Paul's Use of Scripture in the First Letter to the Corinthians," *SNTSU* 20
[1995]: 160; David D. Horrell, "Theological Principle or Christological Praxis? Pauline Ethics in 1
Corinthians 8.1-11.1," *JSNT* 67 [1997]: 91; Wilhelm Wuellner, "Greek Rhetoric and Pauline
Argumentation," in *Early Christian Literature and Classical Intellectual Tradition: In Honorem
Robert M. Grant* [ed. R. Schoedel and Robert Wilken; Paris: Beauchesne, 1979], 186-88; C. K.
Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* [BNTC 7; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1968], 200), or
interruption (Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* [Hermeneia; trans. James W. Leitch; Philadelphia:
Fortress Press, 1975], 151). However, others note the vocabulary parallels between 8:1-13; 9:1-27;
and 10:1-11:1 and rightly conclude that 9:1-27 is integral to Paul's argument concerning idol food
since it is there that Paul exemplifies the instructions he has given the Corinthians in the preceding
chapter (Joop F. M. Smit, "The Rhetorical Disposition of First Corinthians 8:7-9:27," *CBQ* 59/3
[1997]: 476-91; Jerry L. Sumney, "The Place of 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 in Paul's Argument," *JBL* 119
[2000]: 329-33; Brian J. Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I': Personal Example as Literary Strategy*
[JSNTSup 177; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 98-100; Archibald Robertson and Alfred
Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*
[ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911], 176-77). Some who argue for the integrity of 1
Corinthians view 9:24-27 as a separate subsection that is related to 9:1-23 (Sumney, "The Place,"
329-33; Joost Smit Sibinga, "The Composition of 1 Cor. 9 and Its Context," *NovT* 40/2 [1998]: 136-
63; Willis, "An Apostolic Apologia," 34-38; W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* [EKKNT
7; 4 vols.; Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1991-2001], 2:361). Those who maintain that 9:1-27 constitutes a
separate letter from 8:1-13 miss Paul's overall argument within 8:1-11:1. Paul's argument about his
apostolic rights runs parallel to the Corinthian argument about their right to choose to consume idol
meat at the expense of others. Paul first establishes the validity of his right to receive compensation
so that he can model to the Corinthian community the practice of relinquishing one's rights to avoid
harming the welfare of the community.

Mitchell rightly labels as "proof from example."[3] By living as an example of one who properly exercises his apostolic rights and freedom, Paul illustrates how cruciform belief and conduct must be intimately interwoven.

Paul provides an example from his own life in 9:1-27 and 13:1-13 (cf. 15:30-32) in order to illustrate the behavior he advocates in 8:1-13 of relinquishing one's freedom in order to win others to Christ. Despite providing several arguments supporting his apostolic right to receive payment from the Corinthians, Paul declares that he has abstained from this right so that he might be independent and subsequently free to witness to whomever. Paul's self-presentation (§1-5) functions as a paradigm of voluntary self-restraint and concern for others to combat the self-serving and status-conscious behavior prevalent among the Corinthian community's membership, which is buttressed by his statements in 13:1-13 (§6) and 15:30-32 (§7).

## §1 Paul's Apostleship

In response to anticipated or perceived criticism, Paul poses four rhetorical questions, with each question beginning with the interrogative particle οὐ and expecting an affirmative answer: "Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?" (9:1). The first two questions frame Paul's discussion in 9:2-23 and are addressed later in reverse order (apostleship in 9:1c-18 and freedom in 9:19-23). The second question pertaining to Paul's identity as an apostle establishes his authoritative role and forms the underpinning of his argument in 9:1-27. The assertion that the Corinthians are his seal (9:2) authenticates his apostolic role, for to call Paul's apostleship into question would also be to call the Corinthians' faith into question. The mere existence of a believing community in Corinth validates that God has commissioned Paul to proclaim the gospel in Corinth. Thus, through a series of rhetorical questions, Paul emphatically highlights his legitimate apostolic right (ἐξουσία) either to accept or decline the Corinthians' patronage.

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[3] Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (HUT 28; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 47-50, 130-38.

The question οὐκ εἰμὶ ἀπόστολος does not challenge any criticisms concerning Paul's apostolic rank but rather establishes the premise of Paul's discussion about receiving the Corinthians' support.[4] Against Best, Paul does not employ the title ἀπόστολος because the Corinthians dispute his position on the grounds that he does not accept maintenance from them.[5] As an apostle, Paul is entitled to their support, but as they know and to their disappointment, he has willingly forgone that right. By asserting his apostolic right, Paul is not requesting the Corinthian community begins supporting him financially (9:15). Instead, Paul emphasizes the sacrifice he continues to make for the greater good of the community by engaging in manual labor.

From Paul's questions regarding his witnessing the Lord's resurrection and the Corinthians being his work, we may deduce that Paul considers seeing the risen Lord and founding believing communities as the essential criteria for apostleship. Though Paul does not defend these criteria here, he nevertheless holds that he has met them (cf. 1:1). Furthermore, Paul's reference to seeing the resurrected Christ should not be interpreted as Paul defending his qualifications as an apostle, particularly since he mentions the resurrection again in 15:8 with no indication that he is defending his apostolic credentials. The very existence of a believing community in Corinth is a seal (σφραγίς) of his apostleship (3:6, 9; 9:1-2) and attests to the Lord authenticating his apostolic work.

Though the opening verses have a forensic tone, they should not be interpreted as a formal ἀπολογία but rather be interpreted in light of 9:1-27 serving a larger deliberative purpose, that of Paul reasserting his apostolic authority in order to provide an example of self-sacrificial conduct for the Corinthian community to imitate.[6] Interpreting these verses strictly as a defense of Paul's apostleship obscures

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[4] Against this view, Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 393; Kenneth E. Bailey, "The Structure of 1 Corinthians and Paul's Theological Method with Special Reference to 4:17," *NovT* 25/2 (1983): 166-67, contend that 9:1-27 represents Paul's response to those Corinthians who question his practice of eating idol food in the presence of Gentiles but declining it while in the presence of Jews.

[5] Ernest Best, "Paul's Apostolic Authority—?" *JSNT* 27 (1986): 3-25.

[6] For those who note both a paradigmatic and apologetic function in 9:1-27, see Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 2:280-81; Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 233-34; Fee, *The First Epistle*, 392-94; idem, "Εἰδωλόθυτα Once Again: An Interpretation of 1 Cor 8-10," *Bib* 61/2 (1980): 172-97; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 153; Barrett, *The First Epistle*, 200-202; Theissen, *The Social Setting*, 42-46; Peter Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians* (WUNT 23; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1987), 284; John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* (JSNTSup 75; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 107-08; David G. Horrell, "'The

Paul's pastoral objective not only in 9:1-27 but also in the larger unit of 8:1-11:1.[7] It is essential for Paul to establish his apostolicity at the onset of his argument so that he can explain in depth his rationale for relinquishing his apostolic rights. If the Corinthians doubt his apostleship, then his whole argument crumbles.

Moreover, if Paul were defending the legitimacy of his apostleship, then we would expect him to devote more attention to the issue as he does in 2 Corinthians rather than two laconic verses followed by more rhetorical questions and illustrations drawn from common experiences.[8] The rhetorical questions in 9:1-2 merely are a component of Paul's style in 1 Corinthians (cf. 3:16; 6:2-3, 15, 19; 10:16-22; 14:36) and anticipate affirmative answers. Thus, Mitchell rightly refers to 9:1-27 as a "mock" self-defense speech.[9] While Paul's announcement of his defense in 9:3 presupposes that some charges, unspecified by Paul, have been made against him, we may safely assume that these charges pertain to his failure to demand payment for his services.[10] From Paul's discussion of factions and leadership in 1:10-4:21, we may deduce that the Corinthians do not question Paul's apostolic standing but rather question his *modus operandi*, particularly in comparison to Apollos' *modus operandi*.

Furthermore, if the Corinthians doubt Paul's apostolic status, it would seem unlikely that they would be eager to support him. Paul would be wasting his energy defending his right to waive their support if they did not view him as a true apostle. Therefore, these verses are not to be regarded as a formal apology of the legitimacy of Paul's apostleship against real opposition among the Corinthian community but rather are to be interpreted as an additional explanation of Paul's *modus operandi*

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Lord Commanded . . . but I Have Not Used . . .' Exegetical and Hermeneutical Reflections on 1 Cor 9:14-15," *NTS* 43/4 (1997): 587-603; idem, "Theological Principle," 83-114.

[7] Paul W. Barnett, "Paul, Apologist to the Corinthians," in *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict. Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall* (ed. Trevor J. Burke and J. Keith Elliott; NovTSup 109; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 320, incorrectly surmises that it is Peter himself, not the Corinthians, who has raised doubts concerning Paul's equal apostolic status.

[8] Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 232; Willis, "An Apostolic Apologia," 34-35; David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 397-403; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 666; Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I,'* 97-98.

[9] Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric*, 130; cf. Ben Witherington, III, *Conflict and Community: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 207.

[10] Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 666, comments: "Paul is keen to establish the credentials of true apostleship not because they were held in doubt as such, but because his freely chosen decision to renounce 'rights' which 'the strong' undoubtedly regarded as part of the status and signs of apostleship . . . was perceived to imply thereby something deficient about his status in relation to such 'rights.'" Cf. Horrell, "'The Lord Commanded," 592.

with an overriding paradigmatic function through which Paul presents himself as an example of one who properly exercises his freedom for the benefit of the entire community.

## §2 Paul's Establishment of Apostolic Rights

Freedom (ἐλεύθερος, 9:1, 19) and rights (ἐξουσία, 9:4, 6, 12) form the dominant themes of Paul's argument in 9:1-27. Collins appropriately labels Paul's discourse as a "fictive apology in which the use of examples is integral to the deliberative style of Paul's rhetoric."[11] Paul's discussion of his own freedom and his restraint of that freedom functions as an object lesson for the Corinthians who need to learn how to conduct themselves with regard to idol food (cf. 8:13).[12] Paul redefines freedom for those Corinthians who believe freedom means the pursuit of self-interest (cf. 6:12) and instead equates freedom with seeking the welfare of the greater community.

Although Paul refers to his "defense" (ἀπολογία) in v. 3, the αὕτη at the end of the clause indicates that this "defense" refers to what follows in the next section (9:4-14) rather than to Paul's references to his apostleship in the preceding two verses.[13] While the terms ἀπολογία and ἀνακρίνω in 9:3 may have forensic overtones (cf. 4:3-4), a forensic connotation alone does not signify that Paul is responding to Corinthian accusers. If 9:3-14 were an apology of Paul's apostolic standing, it would be an unusual defensive strategy for him to highlight several ways in which he has not conducted himself as an apostle. Paul does not relate the issue of factions to some Corinthians doubting whether he truly is an apostle. Willis contends that the participle in the clause τοῖς ἐμὲ ἀνακρίνουσίν could be understood as future whereby Paul anticipates criticism rather than answers a previous complaint.[14] Following Willis, we may conclude that Paul responds to anyone who might challenge his exhortation that the "knowledgeable" Corinthians should restrict

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[11] Collins, "'It was Indeed Written,'" 160.

[12] For personal example in Greco-Roman literature, see Carl R. Holladay, "1 Corinthians 13: Paul as Apostolic Paradigm," in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (ed. David L. Balch et al.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 80-98.

[13] Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 2:290-91, notes that 9:1-2 concerns Paul's apostleship while the following verses speak of rights in relation to apostolic rights rather than to rights in a broader sense of basic human rights. Contra, Robertson and Plummer, *First Epistle*, 179, who hold that 9:3 refers to what precedes and is a response to the Judaizers who dispute Paul's apostleship.

[14] Willis, "An Apostolic Apologia," 34.

their ἐξουσία in consideration of the weaker and less enlightened members of their community (8:9-12) and presents himself as an example of one who limits his ἐξουσία. Paul must therefore answer any possible objections to his *modus operandi* not only to persuade the Corinthians to refrain from eating idol meat but also to defuse any critical assessment of him in comparison to Apollos in hopes of eliminating the presence of factions.

After establishing his apostolic role, Paul introduces the discussion of the relinquishment of his rights and freedom through three additional rhetorical questions: "Do we not have the right to eat and drink? Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?" (9:4-6). Paul shifts from the singular in 9:1-3 to the plural (ἔχομεν) in 9:4-6. Wolff contends that the plural denotes the "we" of Pauline authorship, whereas Barrett asserts that the plural anticipates the reference to Paul and Barnabas in 9:6, and Murphy-O'Connor suggests that Paul includes Sosthenes in the plural.[15] In support of Wolff, the singular ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα follows the plural ἔχομεν (9:5). If Paul were speaking of both himself and Barnabas taking along their spouses, then we would expect the plural γυναῖκας (wives) rather than the singular γυναῖκα (wife). Moreover, the context suggests that Paul is primarily concerned with his own ministry rather than with those who accompany him on his missionary travels. Regardless, the key term in all of these questions is ἐξουσία, with the nuance of "authority" or "rights" rather than "freedom."

The third question asserts that Paul and Barnabas work to support themselves, not because they are not entitled to receive support from the communities they minister to, but because they have waived their right (9:6). We may assume from this question that the Corinthians know of Barnabas' practice of refusing financial support at least by reputation. We may also infer that the Corinthian community never has have supported Paul financially, neither when he first visited Corinth nor during his other missionary travels. The deeper issue for Paul is not with his right to receive the Corinthians' support but with his right to

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[15] For the singular, see Christian Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (THKNT 7; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1996), 190; Fee, *The First Epistle*, 402. For Paul and Apollos, see Barrett, *The First Epistle*, 204; F. Lang, Die Briefe an die Korinther (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1986), 115. For Paul and Sosthenes, see Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Co-authorship in the Corinthian Correspondence," *RB* 100 (1993): 562-79

work at a trade (cf. 4:12) and refuse to be indebted to patrons who would limit the scope of his ministry.[16]

Because Paul considers the "others'" (ἄλλοι) claim to receive financial support legitimate (9:11-12), it is appropriate to assume that they must be individuals who likewise minister among the Corinthians. While it could refer to the multitude of pedagogues in 4:15, Apollos is the most likely candidate for accepting the Corinthians' financial support since Paul earlier referred to him as the one who "watered" (3:6).[17] According to Paul, if others have the right to share in the benefits of material support, then how much more does he have the right, despite not making use of it, since he is their founding spiritual father. Being the first to sow the seeds of the gospel in Corinth (1 Cor 3:6; cf. 2 Cor 10:14), Paul should be the first to receive their support.

Paul asks three more rhetorical questions in 9:7 that draw upon commonplace examples where individuals receive some form of compensation for their labor. The purpose mentioning these three illustrations is clear: just as soldiers, farmers, and shepherds are entitled to be sustained by their labors, so too are apostles entitled to be sustained by those they convert to the gospel. Each of the questions anticipates a negative answer: no soldier serves at his own expense by providing his own provisions (ὀψώνιον);[18] everyone who cultivates a vineyard eats the grapes; and every shepherd drinks the milk from his flock. Together these analogies refer to the right to receive compensation for one's work, which Paul then applies to the Christian context. Thus, those who serve in God's army, work in his vineyard, and shepherd his flock are entitled to recompense. The metaphor of sowing to refer to his missionary work resumes the agricultural metaphor in 3:5-9 and points to Paul classifying his first converts in Achaia as his firstfruits (ἀπαρχή, 16:15).

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[16] See Ronald F. Hock, *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 59-62; and "The Workshop as a Social Setting for Paul's Missionary Preaching," *CBQ* 41 (1979): 438-50, for his description of the menial status and exhaustive labor involved in the tentmaking and leather working trades.

[17] So, Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 412. Fee, *The First Epistle*, 409-10, holds that the "others" refers to Apollos and Peter. Timothy L. Carter, "'Big Men' in Corinth," *JSNT* 66 (1997): 64-65, argues that Peter is in mind. Robertson and Plummer, *First Epistle*, 185; Henry L. Goudge, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Westminster Commentaries; London: Methuen & Co., 1903), 75, incorrectly assert that ἄλλοι refers to Judaizing teachers.

[18] Since Paul speaks of his right to refuse the Corinthians' patronage, the context demands that ὀψώνιον denotes the wider sense of provisions that encompasses both monetary pay and rations. See Polybius 1.66-68; 3.13.8; Chrys C. Caragounis, "Ὀψώνιον: A Reconsideration of Its Meaning," *NovT* 16 (1974): 51-52; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 408; Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 2:296-97.

Instead of including more illustrations from everyday life to support his right to financial support, Paul turns to the law (9:8), and specifically to the law of Moses (9:9; cf. Deut 25:4), as the climax of his examples.[19] The analogy of oxen from Scripture (Deut 25:4) demonstrates that apostles have an ordained right to receive maintenance from their labors.[20] If God forbids preventing an ox from eating while it is threshing grain, then how much more is an apostle entitled to receive benefits from his labor. Paul does not imply that God does not care for oxen but that the prohibition has a higher significance. Paul does not deny the literal observance of the law but seeks to highlight that the benefit to the individual who obeys the command is greater than the benefit the ox would receive.[21]

Although these four examples justify the rights of apostles to be supported by believing communities, Paul continues to offer more illustrations affirming his right to be supported by believing communities by drawing upon cultic regulations that are applicable to both the Jewish and Gentile members of the Corinthian community. Paul reminds the Corinthians of the Jewish practice of priests receiving food from the temple (9:13) and more importantly reminds them of Jesus' command for "those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel" (9:14; cf. Luke 10:7; 1 Tim 5:18). Paul does not see his refusal of support as a direct violation of the Lord's command for missionaries to live from the gospel but rather interprets this command as a right that he can either accept or refuse. For whatever reasons, Paul believes that the Lord's instruction regarding the right of apostles to receive support is inappropriate in the Corinthian context. While these examples buttress his

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[19] The term νόμος interestingly appears nine times in 1 Corinthians (9:8, 9, 20 [4x]; 14:21, 34; 15:56) and never in 2 Corinthians. Harm W. Hollander, "The Meaning of the Term 'Law' (ΝΟΜΟΣ) in 1 Corinthians," *NovT* 40/2 (1998): 117-35, warns against the tendency to assume *a priori* that any reference to νόμος by Paul refers to the Jewish law unless the context clearly suggests otherwise. Since the Corinthians may have had a different interpretation of the term νόμος, Hollander concludes: "Paul understood and used the term νόμος in a rather broad, unspecific sense, and that he relatively often referred to legal codes other than Jewish law" (p. 119).

[20] Paul's interpretation of the Deuteronomy passage regarding muzzling an ox has drawn much attention from scholars, many of whom argue that Paul allegorizes the OT text. J. Jeremias, "Paulus als Hillelit," in *Neotestamentica et Semitica: Studies in Honor of Matthew Black* (ed. E. Ellis and M. Wilcox; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1969), 89, views 1 Cor 9:9-11 as an example of Hellenistic Jewish allegory. See also Robertson and Plummer, *First Epistle*, 183-84; Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 2:299-301; Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), 151; idem, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 165-66; Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 236; Barrett, *The First Epistle*, 205. Contra, D. Instone Brewer, "1 Corinthians 9.9-11: A Literal Interpretation of 'Do Not Muzzle the Ox,'" *NTS* 38/4 (1992): 554-65, who maintains that Paul's reading is not an allegorical reading but the development of "new halakah."

[21] For the divinely ordained right to be nourished from one's labor, see *b. B. Mesiʿa* 88b; 87a-91b; *m. B. Mesiʿa* 7:2.

right to receive support, Paul's intention for employing them is not to support his apostolic standing. Despite having the right to receive support from the Corinthians, Paul has refused to make use of this privilege and professes that he will continue to refuse this right in order to avoid putting an obstacle in the way of his preaching the gospel (9:12, 15).

While some Corinthians may have questioned the matter of Paul's refusal to accept their patronage during his stay in Corinth, here it is Paul, not the Corinthians, who raises the matter of financial support in order to present a pastoral example for the Corinthians to emulate. Following his exhortation in chs. 8 and 10 that the Corinthians are not to put a stumbling block (πρόσκομμα, 8:9) before other believers or do anything that would cause them to stumble (σκανδαλίζω, 8:13), Paul offers himself as an illustration of a believer who has waived his right (ἐξουσία) in order not to hinder (ἐγκοπή, 9:12) the advancement of the gospel. If Paul can relinquish his inherent apostolic rights for the benefit of others, then so should the Corinthians be able to do everything in their power to be inoffensive (ἀπρόσκοπος, 10:32), trying to please everyone and seeking the advantage (σύμφορον) of others rather than their own advantage (10:33).

## §3 Paul's Renunciation of His ἐξουσία through Free Service

After speaking of the right to be supported, Paul proceeds to discuss his own practice of not receiving support and his avoidance of forming any dependencies on donors that would have been understood in terms of the patron-client relationship.[22] In 9:15-18, Paul explains why he has deliberately rejected the Corinthians' patronage in terms of his relationship to the gospel. Paul begins each of the five clauses in 9:15b-17 with γάρ, thus underscoring that his intention never was to exploit the Corinthian community. While others may have done so, Paul has never accepted monetary gifts from the Corinthians and will never ask them to financially support him as long as they view patronage in terms of honor and prestige. Paul vehemently proclaims that he would rather die, which is then interrupted by his assertion "no one will deprive me of my ground for boasting" (τὸ καύχημά μου

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[22] For Paul's practice of refusal of pay, see Jerry L. Sumney, "Paul's Weakness: An Integral Part of His Conception of Apostleship," *JSNT* 52 (1993): 71-91.

οὐδεὶς κενώσει, 9:15c).[23] Paul's refusal of support is not a response to his being deeply insulted by the Corinthians, as Aejmelaeus contends.[24] The issue is much deeper than Paul simply being upset that the Corinthians have mistaken his motives. Instead, Paul's ground for "boasting" refers to his *not* accepting patronage, which would have hindered the spread of the gospel had he accepted it (9:12, 18).

Sociological studies on friendship and patronage illuminate our understanding of the extent of social obligations Paul would have obligated himself to if he had made use of his full rights with the Corinthian community.[25] Success in first-century Greco-Roman society depended on status and public estimation, which in part depended on relationships that were maintained through generosity. The patron-client relationship thus functioned as a means of heightening social status, honor, and power. In a world where wealth and property were concentrated in the hands of a small segment of the population, numerous residents sometimes found themselves in need of assistance and sought the patronage of someone better situated than them. As noted by Clarke, "what was in theory a voluntary practice, was in reality a convention bound by extensive obligations and debts; and what was apparently an act of great generosity, in fact was in many ways self-regarding in motivation."[26] In the patron-client relationship, the client responded to the patron's financial support by honoring the patron through serving his patron from morning until late at night and publicizing the patron's generosity.[27] Clients would arrive at

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[23] Paul's "boasting" here is not meant to be a critical comparison with the "others" who accept patronage. Instead, Paul's "boasting" is to be viewed as a continuation of the theme of "boasting" in the Lord earlier expounded in 1:18-31.

[24] Lars Aejmelaeus, "The Question of Salary in the Conflict Between Paul and the 'Super Apostles' in Corinth," in *Fair Play: Diversity and Conflicts in Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Heikki Räisänen*. (ed. Ismo Dunderberg et al.; NovTSup 103; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 364.

[25] Marshall, *Enmity at Corinth*, esp. 173-258; Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 106-12, 130-66; Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 184-205; idem, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 42-60; Peter Lampe, "Paul, Patrons, and Clients," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 488-523. Cf. Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[26] Andrew D. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1-6* (AGAJU 18; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993), 32.

[27] Edwin A. Judge, "The Social Identity of the First Christians: A Question of Method in Religious History," *JRH* 11 (1980): 201-17, notes that money was generally given downward in the Greco-Roman world while honor was given upward. Thus, according to Judge, "Cultural Conformity and Innovation in Paul: Some Clues from Contemporary Documents," *TynBul* 35 (1984): 3-24, receiving money is akin to being dependent, weak, and bound to others. Contra, Bengt Holmberg, *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1978), 92-95; idem, "The Methods of Historical Reconstruction in the Scholarly 'Recovery' of Corinthian Christianity," in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church*

the patron's house at dawn ready to greet their patron for the morning greeting (*salutatio*). They then would follow their patron in a procession to the forum, remain with him throughout the day's activities, and follow him back to his residence at night. One of the purposes of entering a financial relationship with a client was for the patron to ensure that the client would focus solely on doing the patron's public bidding rather than attending to his own affairs. The client strengthened the patron's social prestige, and in return, the patron protected the client's economic, legal, and social interests. Since the client's routine consumed his entire day, Paul would have had little or no time to preach the gospel to those outside his patron-client circle. Because Paul does not want to compromise his ministry by carrying the burden of obligation and gratitude incumbent upon a client towards a patron, he adamantly refuses the patronage offered by select influential members of the Corinthian community, thereby abrogating the social convention of the patron-client relationship and its perpetual chain of obligations.

In his survey of friendship and enmity in the Greco-Roman world, Marshall presents these conventions as a backdrop from which to examine the social dynamics between Paul and the Corinthian community.[28] Upon noting two types of relationships (those between equals and those between unequals), Marshall observes the transactional nature of friendship, with the chief end of wealth being the acquisition of friends.[29] According to the strictly defined social expectations between friendly and hostile relationships, the recipient was socially obligated to exceed the benefactor's generosity. Interpreting the Corinthians' offer of aid as an offer of friendship, Marshall maintains that Paul's refusal of their gift dishonored them and resulted in enmity. Contrary to Marshall, Paul betrays no evidence in 1 Corinthians indicating that his refusal of their gift amounted to a breach of friendship, where the Corinthians labeled him a flatterer and publicly humiliated him. It seems unlikely that Paul would deliberately compromise the gospel by disregarding the social convention of friendship. From Paul's perspective, the matter of aid is deeper than a simple gesture of friendship. Rather, Paul's refusal signals his refusal to enter into a patron-client relationship in which he would have to abide by

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(ed. Edward Adams and David G. Horrell; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2004), 255-71, who mistakenly imports modern social theories to the NT world and argues that money can flow upward to people with authority.

[28] Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, esp. 1-69, 165-258, 278-340.
[29] Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, 1-34. Cf. Seneca, *Ben*. 1.4.2; Cicero, *Fam*. 2.6.1; *Amic*. 14.51.

the reciprocal exchange of goods and services at the detriment of his ministry in Corinth. Since Paul would be unable to reciprocate or outdo his patron's generosity in monetary terms, the benefactor would expect some quid pro quo in terms of leadership role, status, or influence within the community. There should be no grounds for enmity since Paul never establishes a patron-client relationship. Paul is not socially obligated to return a patron's favor with a show of greater generosity.

Paul's refusal of aid has a pastoral function in that it deprives the "patron" Corinthians of an opportunity to increase their social standing in the community and to gain honor for themselves through their acts of service to the community and ultimately denies them the opportunity to "boast" anthropocentrically. Viewing their offer of patronage in terms of power, social status, and honor, their social status in the community would increase exponentially if they could claim both Paul and Apollos among their clientele. For them, it is not enough that they have the opportunity to serve the church; they want the social status, honor, and power that accompany their benefactions. Contrary to the patron-client relationship in secular society that is formed on the basis of vertical relationships between social classes, Paul proposes a symmetrical model where the Corinthian community no longer governs itself based on social class distinctions but on equality, love, and respect for all members.[30] For Paul, patronage within the believing community is never meant to be pursued as a means of advancing one's honor or social prestige. If strings are attached to a gift, Paul will refuse the gift without hesitancy. Paul only accepts the assistance of others if they do not view their benefactions as a means of gaining honor and social status but consider themselves partners in Paul's ministry.[31] Paul purposefully rejects the Corinthians' patronage because the context demands it. If Paul were to accept their support, that would only exacerbate their preoccupation with social status and arrogant behavior. This is not to say that Paul is completely opposed to ever relying on the Corinthians' aid in the future. The Corinthians could play a vital role in Paul's ministry if they would view themselves as humble

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[30] Lampe. "Paul, Patrons," 494-505.

[31] E.g. Acts 16:14-15; 18:2-3; Rom 16:1-4, 23; 1 Cor 1:14-16; 16:15, 19; 2 Cor 11:9; Phil 2:25-30; 4:10-18. Perhaps the Corinthians' criticism of Paul's *modus operandi* stems from their competitive rivalry with the Philippian community (unbeknownst to the Philippians). The Corinthians question why Paul rejects their offer of support when he receives assistance from the Philippians. The Philippians are not consumed with elevating their social status like the Corinthians are and understand how to serve others, which is why their support is a mute issue for Paul.

servants. However, until the Corinthians regard themselves as partners in his missionary journeys, Paul will continue to reject their patronage.

Reviewing the issues regarding Paul's social class, Hock examines Paul's statements referring to his trade and then compares these texts with Greco-Roman sources in order to determine whether Paul's attitudes toward work correspond more closely to those of the upper class or of the lower class. Hock concludes that Paul's attitude towards work corresponds to the attitude of the upper classes by sharing their negative view of work.[32]

However, Paul's language does not reflect the "the snobbish and scornful attitude so typical of upper class," as Hock proclaims,[33] but rather reflects the depth of his love for converts, his commitment to spreading the gospel, and his intrinsic understanding of what it means to imitate Christ's self-sacrificial example. Paul considers this temporary loss of social status in the worldly perspective worth the gain in converts. Verses 19-23 further demonstrate the great lengths Paul goes for the sake of the gospel. Hock overstates his case by noting that working at a trade would result in a "considerable loss of status" since the workshop is not an appropriate place for a free man.[34] Against Hock, to be free does not automatically correlate with being wealthy since free men frequently worked in the shops. Moreover, Hock's interpretation of Paul's view of working a trade contradicts Paul's pastoral directives in dealing with the social class divisions in the Corinthian community, as noted by Still:

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[32] Hock, "Paul's Tentmaking," 560. Adding that Paul's loss of status only makes sense if he were from a relatively high social class, Hock, "Paul and Greco-Roman Education," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 198-227, maintains that Paul was an aristocrat, despite his occupation as a tentmaker: "while Paul surely marginalized himself by working at a trade during his years as a missionary, that does not preclude an aristocratic status during his pre-Christian years, precisely when he would have received an education. Particularly telling are the status terms that Paul used for his tent-making—for example, 'slavish' (1 Cor 9:19) and 'demeaning' (2 Cor 11:7)—which correspond to those that aristocrats used for working at a trade . . . Paul was probably born into modest aristocratic circumstances, and only after his conversion and subsequent commitment to supporting himself as a tentmaker does he experience loss of status" (p. 218n.1). Contra, Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty*, 75-97, who locates Paul among the *misera ac ieiunia* and declares that Paul's existence "was nothing less than the arduous and bitter experience of the urban poor" (p. 97). Despite placing early converts on the lower levels of the economic scale, Steven J. Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus," *JSNT* 26/3 (2004): 323–61, nevertheless suggests that Paul "may have chosen a life of downward mobility" (p. 359).

[33] Hock, "Paul's Tentmaking," 562. Against Hock, see Todd D. Still, "Did Paul Loathe Manual Labor? Revisiting the Work of Ronald F. Hock on the Apostle's Tentmaking and Social Class," *JBL* 125/4 (2006): 781-95. See also Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 208-09; Timothy H. Lim, "Not in Persuasive Words of Wisdom, but in the Demonstration of the Spirit and Power," *NovT* 29/2 (1987): 144.

[34] Hock, "Paul's Tentmaking," 559. Cf. Cicero, *De off.* 1.150.

By confirming and even affirming the wise, powerful, and noble in their aristocratic arrogance and upper-class snobbery, Paul would have been shaking the very hands he was seeking to slap in Corinth! . . . by sharing the Corinthian elite's jaundiced view of work(ers) he would have only widened the chasm he was seeking to bridge . . . he would have been building up precisely those whom he was seeking to tear down elsewhere in the letter (cf. Gal 2:18). That Paul . . . would have wittingly employed a derisive, upper-class description of work (δουλοῦν) that would have in effect degraded lower-class Corinthians, the ones for whom he was advocating, is implausible.[35]

Hock's reading implies that Paul is hypocritical in his preaching and praxis—Paul preaches servanthood and self-sacrifice while arrogantly looking down upon manual laborers—which fortunately is not the case.

While Paul's tentmaking is central to his apostolic self-understanding and defines his social identity as a traveling artisan-missionary, it results in conflict at Corinth regarding his social status and apostleship. Because in the Greco-Roman context it is a source of pride and prestige for patrons to have the best orator as the recipient of their benefaction, Paul's refusal of their patronage creates a rift in their relationship and fuels the formation of factions. Instead of viewing Paul's voluntary poverty as conformity to the pattern of Christ's sacrifice, they interpret his self-imposed poverty as an embarrassment to themselves. His refusal subsequently raises questions concerning how he can elevate the social status of his followers if he remains in a state of weakness by engaging in "demeaning" manual labor.[36] Not only is his working demeaning to himself, but it also is demeaning to the Corinthians and particularly to the few reasonably well-off Corinthians who desire

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[35] Still, "Did Paul Loathe," 788-89.

[36] Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (3rd ed.; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2001), 44, observes that honor-shame within Mediterranean societies is based on the status of the family or clan, where persons within the group are not viewed in individualistic terms but rather as part of the group. One's identity is thus based upon one's kinship group, which is responsible for achieving and maintaining honor. An individual's conduct within the group reflects back on the group and the group's honor. The head of the group is responsible for and symbolizes the group's honor, whether the group comprises a family, kingdom, or community. Malina's observation that the leader of the group determines the group's collective societal honor illuminates why members of the Corinthian community would frown upon Paul's insistence to support himself.

to be Paul's patrons.[37] Paul's seemingly humble social status implies that the Corinthian community lacks the necessary means to support their apostle.

The Corinthians' negative evaluation of Paul's refusal of payment has some affinities with the relationship between the sophists and their disciples. The sophists traveled to major cities, exhibiting their rhetorical prowess and charging students fees for listening to their lectures. Dissimilar to the sophists of his day, Paul refuses to peddle the gospel for financial gain because he believes that to peddle the gospel for profit would be to adulterate the gospel and to treat it simply as a commodity for sale. Paul does not want to be identified with the sophists who charged fees or even the Cynics who begged for money.[38] Since Paul does desire to forgo his calling as an itinerant church planter and does not want to be regarded as a patron's in-house preacher, he refuses to charge the Corinthians a fee for hearing him proclaim the gospel. Consequently, some Corinthians interpret Paul's refusal of payment as an indication of his inferior status and qualification, particularly when compared to Apollos and his possible acceptance of their benefactions.[39] Some Corinthians fail to grasp that Paul's social status is "lesser" than Apollos' simply by choice. Paul and Apollos could be equals on the social ladder but Paul purposefully chooses to lower himself by working a trade for the sake of being obedient to his commission to proclaim the gospel.

The conjunction γάρ that begins 9:16 explains the final clause in 9:15 (τὸ καύχημά μου οὐδεὶς κενώσει) and defines what his "boasting" does not consist of in order to avoid misunderstanding on the part of the Corinthian community. Paul

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[37] Scholars have noted inscriptional evidence that reveals that individuals of lower social status took pride in their work. See Timothy B. Savage, *Power through Weakness: Paul's Understanding of the Christian Ministry in 2 Corinthians* (SNTSMS 86; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 84-88; Dale B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 45-48. However, the fact that some manual laborers took pride in their work does not eliminate the possibility that they would have disapproved of Paul supporting himself through manual labor. Cf. Ronald F. Hock, "Paul's Tentmaking and the Problem of His Social Class," *JBL* 97 (1978): 555-64.

[38] Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 208; Hock, *The Social Context*, 52-59. See Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 495-97, 526-27; Isocrates, *Antid.* 155-56, 157, 224; *Soph.* 3-9; Quintilian, *Inst.* 12.7.9; Xenophon, *Anab.* 2.6.16; *Mem.* 1.2.60.

[39] In our reconstruction of the text, we are not imagining that Apollos is involved in the *salutatio* and the rest. Although Apollos did not enter a formal patronage relationship with the Corinthians, he may have accepted some degree of support from the Corinthians or at least made a gesture that allowed them to exert their "superior" status. Both Luke and Paul are silent on whether Apollos worked a trade like Paul and could likewise support himself. It may be that neither Paul nor Apollos accepted financial support from the Corinthians. If this is the case, then some Corinthians might have expected Paul over anyone else to receive their support because of his unique authoritative role as their founding spiritual father, which would have fueled their disappointment with their apostle.

intimately interweaves his "boasting" with proclaiming the gospel, and more specifically with proclaiming it without accepting payment so as to avoid putting a hindrance in its way. Paul does not refuse financial support out of choice but out of necessity. For Paul, proclaiming the gospel in itself is not grounds for "boasting" since he is under compulsion (ἀνάγκη γάρ μοι ἐπίκειται, 9:16b). While Paul acknowledges his freedom (ἐλεύθερος) in 9:1, he understands that this freedom does not entail freedom from preaching (9:16). Paul is constrained (ἀνάγκη), thus shifting the language of freedom in 9:1-15 to the language of slavery in 9:16-17. Paul's reference to the necessity of preaching the good news connects his trade as a tentmaker with his self-understanding as an apostle.[40] Fee rightly understands ἀνάγκη not in terms of being compelled in the sense of Paul being internally driven to compensate for his past as a persecutor of the church but rather in terms of his divine destiny.[41] Following Fee's interpretation, Paul believes that he will face divine judgment if he were to fail to preach the gospel. Thus, Paul emphatically declares: οὐαὶ γάρ μοί ἐστιν ἐὰν μὴ εὐαγγελίσωμαι (9:16c). Paul cannot "boast" simply in proclaiming the gospel to the Corinthians since he is called by God to do precisely this. Paul's purpose in life is to preach the gospel without financial profit. While preaching exposes him to death and hardships (cf. 4:9), failure to preach the gospel would bring upon him a fate worse than death.

In 9:17-18, Paul continues to define his "boasting" in terms of his divine destiny and distinguishes between the compulsory nature of his missionary activity with that of voluntarily proclaiming the gospel. If Paul freely chose to proclaim the good news in Corinth, then he could expect a reward from the Corinthian community. However, since he does not preach out of his own volition, he is not entitled to material compensation (cf. 9:16). While some of the Corinthians hold that Paul's refusal of their patronage is indicative of his inferior status to Apollos, Paul contends that his ἐξουσία prohibits him from misusing the gospel for personal gain. Drawing upon 4:1, Paul views his apostolic role akin to the role of a steward entrusted with managing a household. Garland notes that the slavery imagery explains why Paul can "boast": "He does not boast in what he is doing of his own

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[40] Hock, *The Social Context*, 61-62. See 2 Cor 11:7-15 and 12:13-16a for Paul's defense of tentmaking.
[41] Fee, *The First Epistle*, 418-19; cf. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 158; Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (trans. Frank Clarke; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1977), 20-30; Wolff, *Der erste Brief*, 200.

accord as he heroically answers God's call but in what, by God's grace, he is constrained to do. The impetus to preach does not come from himself but from the nature of the gospel as good news for all humanity."[42] Similar to the steward who is not entitled to pay, Paul likewise is not entitled to recompense from believing communities under his care. As one entitled to no reward, Paul asks τίς οὖν μού ἐστιν ὁ μισθός (9:18). He equates receiving payment with his ability to freely proclaim the gospel to everyone without any patronal obligations impeding his ministry. By offering the gospel free of charge (ἀδάπανος), Paul avoids abusing his authority by making full use of his right (καταχρήσασθαι τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ μου) in the gospel. Paul's argument thus comes to full circle in that he reiterates his declaration that he does nothing to hinder the spread of the gospel (cf. 9:12, 15). Paul goes beyond his call to proclaim the gospel free of charge and refrains from using his full rights as an apostle "in order to do something truly gracious, meritorious, and deserving of the sort of reward discussed in ch. 3."[43]

Consistent with Paul's usage of "boasting" in 1:26-31, where he differentiates between anthropocentric and theocentric "boasting," Paul's "boasting" in 9:15-18 reflects this categorical differentiation. According to Paul's usage, acceptable "boasting" consists of that which stands in contradiction to the aims of anthropocentric "boasting," i.e. that which increases one's worldly social standing. Paul considers admissible "boasting" of Christ crucified and of the weaknesses, suffering, and persecution he endures from proclaiming the gospel (cf. 1 Cor 1:26-31; 2 Cor 10:1-13:10; Gal 6:14) because this type of "boasting" attests to God's redemptive work in a praiseworthy manner. Since God has called him to proclaim the gospel, he can "boast" of preaching the gospel free of charge as an extension of his ministerial weakness and suffering, as noted by Fee:

> The paradox of his boasting in his apostleship is related to this reality: God has called him and his churches into being; therefore he may "boast" in what God does, even through Paul's own weaknesses. . . . Thus his preaching the gospel without pay is both a calculated decision so as not to hinder the gospel and an expression of his apostolic "weakness."[44]

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[42] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 425.
[43] Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 210.
[44] Fee, *The First Epistle*, 417-18.

Paul's declaration therefore is not an example of him unconsciously "boasting" in a pejorative sense, as Callan propounds.[45] Paul is not inconsistent since he identifies his "boast" indirectly with God and "boasts" in a state of weakness, not in a state of achievement in a secular sense.

## §4 Paul's Apostolic Freedom Defined as Everything for the Gospel

After discussing the basis for receiving support (9:4-14) and his practice of foregoing his right of support for the sake of the gospel (9:15-18), Paul reveals the principle behind his refusal to seek support (9:19-23). Earlier in 9:12, Paul hinted at his reasoning: so that he would not "cause a hindrance (ἐγκοπή) to the gospel of Christ." Paul now divulges the cost of renouncing his freedom: "For though I am free (ἐλεύθερος) from all people, I have made myself a slave (δουλόω) to all, so that I might win more of them" (9:19). While viewing himself as free, Paul willingly makes himself a slave in order to win more people to Christ. Paul proclaims that he does all things for the sake of the gospel (9:23) and views himself as an active participant in the work of the gospel.

In 9:19-23, Paul defines how he lives by a slavery of accommodation so that he might evangelize to multiple audiences. Four times Paul employs the verb κερδαίνω in relation to winning each targeted group to Christ: "the Jews" (9:20), "those under the law" (ὑπὸ νόμον, 9:20), "those outside the law" (ἄνομος, 9:21), and "the weak" (ἀσθενής, 9:22).[46] Paul's confession, "I have become all things to all people so that I might by all means save some" (9:22) should not be interpreted as Paul became like a chameleon adapting his conduct to manipulate his audience into accepting the cruciform faith.[47] Paul's motives for adapting are not self-serving like the sophists of his day. Instead, Paul's motives are to assist others in adopting the

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[45] Terrance Callan, "Competition and Boasting: Toward a Psychological Portrait of Paul," *ST* 40/2 (1986): 146-47.

[46] Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 705, asserts that ἀσθενής refers to "those whose options for life and conduct were severely restricted because of their dependence on the wishes of patrons, employers, or slave owners."

[47] Clarence E. Glad, *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy* (NovTSup 81; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 240, interprets "I became like" to mean "I associated with." For Paul being flexible and accommodating, see Clarence E. Glad, "Paul and Adaptability," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 17-41; idem, *Paul and Philodemus*, 43-45, 240-77.

faith with no personal gain whatsoever for himself. Choosing to live in a manner to accommodate others is costly, for it requires him to renounce his apostolic right to be supported by believing communities. His obligation to Christ in being a faithful servant and steward limits the extent of his accommodation (cf. 4:1-2). He neither will violate the standards of conduct required by God nor will he misrepresent himself or the God he serves in trying to reach his audience.

Paul contrasts his behavioral modifications in 9:19-23 with the effects of those Corinthians who participate at temple meals without regard for their fellow community members (8:9-13).[48] Unlike those strong Corinthians who create a stumbling block for those with weaker consciences, Paul's behavior results in saving individuals. Because Paul conducts himself only with regard for the benefit of others, he distances himself from those strong members who focus on self-advancement at the expense of weaker members' spiritual well-being. Consequently, he never proclaims that he became "strong" to win the "strong" as he does with the aforementioned groups because it is the strong members to whom he addresses his admonitions. Paul therefore provides himself as an example of appropriate behavioral modification for the strong Corinthians to imitate with regards to the consumption of idol food.

Paul's being "all things to all people" reflects his missionary strategy and defines his "role as a conciliator of the Corinthian factions."[49] Paul's missionary strategy takes into account those who are vulnerable and dependent on others of higher social status for their livelihood. Not only do the "weak" stand in contrast to the "strong" in the wider Greco-Roman society, but they also stand in contrast in Paul's strategy of accommodation. The fact that Paul resigns himself to becoming a professional orator of the gospel and abdicates all the benefits associated with being a professional orator and instead resigns himself to toil as a tradesman demonstrates his solidarity with the weaker members of the community. For Paul, following Christ's example and living out the gospel entails this strategy of becoming weak for the sake of others. Thus, "to stand alongside the Jew, the Gentile, and the socially dependent and vulnerable, or to live and act in solidarity with every kind of person

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[48] Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left*, 6-7, notes that the Corinthian believers would have had access to meat that was not offered to idols prior to it being sold at the market. If this is the case that the "strong" Corinthians have the option to avoid offending their weaker brethren by purchasing different meat, then their behavior is even more of an affront to the weaker members of the community and signals the magnitude of their arrogance.

[49] Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 204.

in every kind of situation is to have a share in the nature of the gospel, i.e., to instantiate what the gospel is and how it operates."[50]

<p style="text-align:center">§5 The Need for Self-Discipline</p>

Paul advances another example, the example of the athlete (9:24-27), to strengthen his admonition against consuming idol food and continue the motif of imitation. Presenting himself as an example, Paul illustrates that self-discipline is required for inheriting spiritual life. Despite his apostolic calling and living in conformity to the gospel, Paul proclaims he must remain diligent in his spiritual walk and refrain from becoming overconfident. Although one may proclaim the gospel, this act does not automatically guarantee that the individual will receive eternal salvation. Paul has been approved and commissioned by God; nevertheless, he does not want to risk becoming disqualified (ἀδόκιμος, 9:27). Paul's example throughout 9:1-27 illustrates the need to surrender one's rights for the sake of a higher theological purpose.

Paul's analogy of runners competing to win a prize compellingly demonstrates the need for discipline throughout one's spiritual walk, not simply with the issue of consuming food sacrificed to idols. Paul draws upon the Corinthians' experience of the Isthmian games where they witnessed the winning athletes receiving a perishable wreath to stress the need for the community to take matters of conduct seriously.[51] The crown at the Isthmian games during the first-century was made of celery that already began to wither when bestowed upon the winning athletes.[52] If athletes strictly discipline and punish their bodies simply to win a perishable crown (φθαρτὸν στέφανον),[53] then how much more believers should

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[50] Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 707.

[51] While it is not necessary to have the Isthmian games in mind, the use of the athletic metaphor was widespread and would have been readily understood by the Corinthians. See Oscar T. Broneer, "The Apostle Paul and the Isthmian Games," *BA* 25 (1962): 2-31; Roman Garrison, "Paul's Use of the Athlete Metaphor in I Corinthians 9," *SR* 22/2 (1993): 209-17; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* (Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier, 1983), 16-17; Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 709-13; Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I,'* 108-10; Edgar Krentz, "Paul, Games, and the Military," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 344-83.

[52] Plutarch, *Quaest. conv.* 675D. See Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 214n.35; Oscar T. Broneer, "The Isthmian Victory Crown," *AJA* 66 (1962): 259-63; Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 95, 99.

[53] For athletes having a strict diet, see Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.15.10; Philo, *Somn.* 2.2.9; Horace, *Ars* 412-14; Xenophon, *Symp.* 8.37. For athletes having rigid training, see Tertullian, *Mart.* 3.3; Seneca, *Ep.*

discipline their moral conduct so that they might receive an imperishable crown. Paul does not mean to suggest that the believer's life is competitive where all must try to outrun each other to win the eternal prize and avoid the shame of defeat. Rather, Paul emphasizes through the athletic metaphor that becoming baptized into the faith does not guarantee salvation in and of itself; righteous conduct throughout a believer's life is required.

The athletic metaphor in 9:24-27 confirms that Paul intends the Corinthians to interpret this section as him offering himself as a model of one who voluntarily relinquishes his rights.[54] Paul does not run aimlessly, nor is he a shadow boxer who throws punches in the air, as do some boxers and sophists.[55] Furthermore, Paul separates himself from the sophists who live a self-indulgent lifestyle by emphasizing his disciplined lifestyle with the statement that he willingly beats (ὑπωπιάζω) his body so that he does not disqualify himself from the final prize.[56] Paul subjects himself to weakness, hardship, and physical exhaustion for the sake of larger theological and apostolic purposes.[57] The importance of the prize is far more than winning a mere athletic contest. Paul's presentation of himself as a boxer battling in the arena serves as a paradigm for the Corinthians to follow. Without suggesting the Corinthian community adopts an ascetic lifestyle, Paul presents the theological urgency and necessity for self-restraint. Thus, Paul's "personal example as an apostle who unselfishly sacrifices for others in his missionary service is particularly appropriate for those Corinthians who have demonstrated a tendency to seek personal gain."[58]

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78.16. Tertullian states that the more rigorous their training is and the stricter their diet is, their chances of victory increase. Pausanias (*Descr.* 9.24.9) reports that the athletes participating in the Olympic games were required to swear an oath stating that they will not sin against the Olympic games and that they have followed the regulations for training for ten successive months. Epictetus (*Diatr.* 1.24.1-2; 3.15.2-4; 4.4.11-13, 30) employs the metaphor of the athletic contest to illustrate the arduous training of the philosophers.

[54] Hock, "Paul and Greco-Roman Education," 216, remarks that the activities mentioned in 1 Cor 9:24-27 (running, boxing, and exercising) demonstrate Paul's familiarity with the gymnasium, which was the principal site for educational instruction. For the term ἀγωνίζομαι, see Victor C. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif: Traditional Athletic Imagery in the Pauline Literature* (NovTSup 16; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 1-75.

[55] Philo, *Det.* 1.41, refers to sophists as shadow boxers throwing punches in the air against imaginary opponents.

[56] For the self-indulgence of sophists, see Philo, *Det.* 33. B. Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I,'* 109, suggests that Paul employs the metaphor of beating his body to make his discussion of his own conduct more palatable to his audience.

[57] Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 248-49.

[58] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 400.

Dutch notes that the athletic imagery is important because of its link with the gymnasium, education, social status, and rewards.[59] The gymnasium is an important educational institution for the social elite. Because education is another avenue for competitively distinguishing oneself from others and results in anthropocentric "boasting," Paul chooses the ideological status scenario of the games to challenge the strong, who claim their superiority over Paul and the weak members.[60] Hence, through a reference to the Isthmian games, Paul addresses issues of social status, wealth, and education and moves them into an eschatological context.

The example of the Israelites that follows in 10:1-22 further illustrates the type of overconfident behavior to be avoided since it has led to the downfall of many. The themes of self-discipline and perseverance in 9:24-27 are the same themes emphasized by the examples from Israel's history in 10:1-22.[61] The Israelites began the race, but through lack of self-discipline by engaging in idolatry, they did not receive the reward. Paul parallels the situation in Corinth with that of the Israelites so that the similarity of their situations would be evident. Paul therefore exhorts the Corinthians not to repeat the mistakes of the Israelites, who failed to exercise the self-discipline he describes in 9:24-27 and consequently were found ἀδόκιμος.

Paul attributes the Corinthians' questions regarding their right to eat food offered to idols to some of them misunderstanding their freedom as followers of Christ. Some of the Corinthians view freedom in terms of what it allows them to do, whereas Paul views freedom in terms of behavior that is required for the greater benefit of others. The athletic metaphor therefore bolsters Paul's argument that everything is not permitted for the athlete who hopes to win. While the cruciform life entails the enjoyment of the believer's freedom, it also involves the limitation of one's freedom.

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[59] Robert S. Dutch, "The Educated Elite in First Corinthians: A Social-Scientific Study of Education and Community Conflict in a Graeco-Roman Context" (Ph.D. diss., University of Bristol, 1998), 204-30.

[60] See Dutch, "The Educated Elite," 154-99, 237-38.

[61] B. J. Oropeza, "Apostasy in the Wilderness: Paul's Message to the Corinthians in a State of Eschatological Liminality," *JSNT* 75 (1999): 69-86; Sumney, "The Place," 333; Horrell, "Theological Principle," 95; Willis, "An Apostolic Apologia," 39-40.

Similar to Paul's personal account of his ministry in 9:1-27, Paul again highlights his own conduct as being grounded in love in 13:1-13 in order to offer the solution of love to the Corinthians' anthropocentric "boasting" and to their focus on social status and honor. By amplifying love and minimizing the charismata, Paul diminishes the value of the charismata that are so cherished by members of the Corinthian community. Distinguishing love from the other gifts, Paul establishes love as the as the central component of all spiritual gifts (cf. 12:1-31), thereby demonstrating how useless the gifts are without love. Paul's discussion of love in 13:1-13 continues Paul's concern in 8:1-13 for the weak and the care they should receive from the stronger members of the community.[62] Contrary to knowledge which contributes to divisiveness and arrogance, love unites the community (8:1). As the greatest virtue, love excludes "boasting" in the self, the specific type of "boasting" that Paul condemns. Writing that that love does not "boast" (περπερεύομαι) and is not arrogant (φυσιόω), Paul appeals to love as the answer to their divisiveness and anthropocentric "boasting."

Rather than speak in the second person plural, Paul speaks in the first person singular through which he presents an example of love by casting himself as the embodiment of acting purely out of love and not out of selfish gain. Following Holladay, each of the activities mentioned in 13:1-13 are "self-referential in the sense that they function as part of Paul's own self-presentation. As such, they are directly anchored in his own apostolic behavior."[63] Here we expand Holladay's argument and propose that the entire chapter, not just 13:1-3, is self-referential. Through each example, Paul declares the principle that governs his ministry and should govern the Corinthians' conduct: love for all.

Verses 1-3 emphasize that love is the indispensable and absolute condition without which spiritual gifts are worthless. Paul equates the individual who speaks in tongues while lacking love to a noisy gong or clanging cymbal (13:1). Both

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[62] Proposing that Paul patterns his argument within a genus demonstrativum framework, Joop Smit, "The Genre of 1 Corinthians 13 in the Light of Classical Rhetoric," *NovT* 33/3 (1991): 193-216, argues that 13:1-13 plays an important role in 12:1-14:40 and therefore should not be regarded as a ready-made piece inserted into its present location. Cf. Cicero, *De or.* 8-17. See also James Patrick, "Insights from Cicero on Paul's Reasoning in 1 Corinthians 12-14: Love Sandwich or Five Course Meal?" *TynBul* 55/1 (2004): 43-64; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 605.

[63] Holladay, "1 Corinthians 13," 89.

instruments played some role in the mystery religions, such as in the cult of Cybele.[64] To speak in tongues without concern for the edification of the community is akin to making hollow noises like that of pagan worship. As Garland correctly asserts, "Paul's strategy is to place in center stage the gift that the Corinthians prized the most and that was causing the greatest disruption in their assembly and then to bring it down several notches by showing its emptiness without love. It becomes a hollow performance that falls flat."[65] Love, therefore, is "the disposition that brings sense out of attempted communication, while the lack of love reduces the vocal sounds to noise."[66] Even prophecy, knowledge, and faith are not enough without love.

The self-sacrifice involved with giving away all one's possessions is intensified by the extreme case of delivering the body. Héring maintains that the act of giving one's body evokes the idea of selling oneself into slavery upon which the slave is branded with a hot iron. According to Héring, this act "constitutes the superlative of charity."[67] In contrast, Thiselton argues that selling oneself into slavery in order to provide money for the needy is too specific (cf. 7:17-24). Instead, Paul refers to "putting one's whole being, including the physical body, at the disposal of others. Presumably Paul imagines that this may be done out of a sense of duty rather than out of concern for others' welfare."[68] Whether Paul explicitly relates παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά μου to being branded with a hot iron or to dutifully becoming like a slave, the idea essentially is the same. Paul presents an extreme case of self-sacrificial love, which is exemplified in his own ministry by becoming a "slave" for the Corinthians (3:5; 4:1-2; 9:19, 27).[69]

Despite the textual difficulty of 13:3b, whether the text proclaims the purpose of Paul's giving (παραδίδωμι) of his body is so "that I may 'boast'" (ἵνα καυχήσωμαι) or so "that I may be burned" (ἵνα καυθήσομαι), the former reading not only supports Paul's self-referential tone of 13:1-3 but also enjoys better textual

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[64] Héring, *The First Epistle*, 135-36; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 221n.31; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 267; C. Jan Swearingen, "The Tongues of Men: Understanding Greek Rhetorical Sources for Paul's Letters to the Romans and 1 Corinthians," in *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts* (eds. Anders Eriksson et al.; Emory Studies in Early Christianity 8; Harrisburg, Pa.; Trinity Press International, 2002), 239-42.

[65] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 611.

[66] William F. Orr and James A. Walther, *1 Corinthians* (AB 32; Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 293.

[67] Héring, *The First Epistle*, 138.

[68] Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 1044.

[69] Holladay, "1 Corinthians 13," 90, holds the statement is a hyperbole.

support. Textually, there are three possible readings: καυχήσωμαι (P[46] ℵ A B 6 0150 33 69 1739 cop Clement Origen Jerome), καυθήσωμαι (K Ψ 6 256 365 1881 Maj Chrysostom Cyprian Theodoret), or καυθήσομαι (C D F G L 6 81 104 263 630 945 1175 1985 latt arm). Because καυθήσωμαι as a future subjunctive grammatically is uncommon during the *koinē* period, scholars reject that reading and claim it is "a grammatical monstrosity that cannot be attributed to Paul."[70] The choice then is between καυχήσωμαι and καυθήσωμαι. Robertson and Plummer follow the καυθήσομαι reading, proclaiming that Paul does not have in mind burning as a form of punishment but rather "the most painful death which any one can voluntarily suffer."[71] Against the proponents of the καυθήσομαι reading, it is difficult to conceive that a scribe would change καυθήσομαι into καυχήσωμαι, either intentionally or accidentally.[72] Furthermore, though there were cases among the Jews (e.g. Dan 3:1-30; 2 Macc 7:5; 4 Macc 6:26; 7:12; 9:17-25), martyrdom by fire had not yet become a Christian phenomenon as it had under Nero's reign. Holladay avers that the καυθήσομαι reading is a later scribal interpolation reflecting a time when martyrdom by fire became a reality for believers.[73] As Holladay and others propose, a later pious scribe changed καυχήσωμαι to καυθήσομαι because he believed martyrdom was virtuous whereas "boasting" was wicked. Given the frequency of martyrdom of believers after the time of Paul, it seems conceivable and understandable that a later scribe would have changed καυχήσωμαι to καυθήσομαι.

Additionally, the καυχήσωμαι reading builds upon Paul's discussion of "boasting" in relation to his paradigmatic forbearance of his apostolic rights (9:1-27) and draws upon his catalogue of suffering (4:6-13).[74] The life of voluntary poverty, hardships, and suffering for the sake of the gospel permits Paul to "boast" legitimately. This form of theocentric "boasting" is precisely what Paul refers to 13:3b. The support of the καυθήσομαι reading among scholars may be attributed to

[70] Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2nd ed.; New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), 498.
[71] Robertson and Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, 290. For others supporting καυθήσομαι, see Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 615, 627-28; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 222-23; Fee, *The First Epistle*, 629; Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 314-15; Raymond F. Collins, *1 Corinthians* (SP 7; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1999), 476-77; Chrys C. Caragounis, "'To Boast' or 'To be Burned'? The Crux of 1 Cor 13:3," *SEÅ* 60 (1995): 115-27; James K. Elliott, "In Favour of καυθήσομαι at I Corinthians 13.3," *ZNW* 62 (1971): 297-98.
[72] For support of καυχήσωμαι, see J. H. Petzer, "Contextual Evidence in Favor of καυχήσωμαι in 1 Corinthians 13.3," *NTS* 35 (1989): 229-53; Holladay, "1 Corinthians 13," 90-91; Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 1026, 1043; Lang, *Die Briefe*, 183; Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 3:290.
[73] Holladay, "1 Corinthians 13," 91.
[74] Cf. 2 Cor 3:9b-10; 6:3-10; 11:7-11.

their confusion regarding the connection between the "boasting" motif with the preceding clause as well as to their general assumption that "boasting" in Paul is most often pejorative. Our discussion of 1:31 and 9:15-16 has revealed that "boasting" can have a positive meaning denoting "boasting" in the Lord for what he has accomplished and is accomplishing among the lives of believers (cf. 15:31). Those scholars who support the καυθήσομαι reading therefore misinterpret Paul's point in 13:3b. It seems unlikely that Paul would have had martyrdom in mind. Instead, Paul continues his earlier critique of anthropocentric "boasting" and presentation of justifiable theocentric "boasting." According to Paul, demonstrations of selfless love through handing over one's body and relinquishing one's earthly possessions are legitimate grounds for "boasting" as long as they are done in love for the glory of God.

Rather than provide a straightforward definition of love, Paul moves to a series descriptive statements outlining what love does and does not do (13:4-7). By employing fifteen verbs to describe love, Paul "proceeds to describe the love that he has just insisted is the *sine qua non* of Christian behavior."[75] Paul's characterization of love in this section alludes to the destructive behaviors and attitudes prevalent in the Corinthian community (cf. 1:10-4:21; 5:1-13). Love's negative aspects have direct bearing on the community's divisiveness and arrogance. Continuing the self-referential aspect of 13:1-3, Paul contrasts the way he has conducted himself as epitomizing laudable behavior with the destructive behavior characterized by some members of the community. In every respect, Paul presents himself as a model worthy of imitation.

By reading the converse into the positive aspects of love, we are able to decipher Paul's assessment of the Corinthian community's behavior.[76] Paul characterizes their behavior as impatient, unkind, envious (ζηλόω), conceited or "boastful" (περπερεύομαι), arrogant (φυσιόω), rude, self-seeking, irritable, retaliatory, and unjust (13:4-6). Occurring rarely in the extant Greco-Roman literature, περπερεύομαι also is a hapax legomenon in NT usage.[77] According to Braun, περπερεύομαι conveys the sense of arrogant self-referential speech: "If πέρπερος/περπερεύεσθαι are to be translated 'braggart,' 'bragging,' the emphasis is

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[75] Fee, *The First Epistle*, 636.

[76] James G. Sigountos, "The Genre of 1 Corinthians 13," *NTS* 40/2 (1994): 256, observes the ironic nature of Paul's statements.

[77] Marcus Antonius 5.5.4; cf. Polybius 32.2.5; 39.1.2; Epictetus, *Diss.* 2.1.34; 3.2.14.

thus on the rhetorical or literary form of boasting, on the element of exaggeration, obtrusiveness, offensiveness, unsettlement, or flattery, on the mere show as opposed to genuine culture."[78] περπερεύομαι thus conveys in 13:4 the sense of "boastful" bragging through which some Corinthians attempt to enhance their social status. Similarly, φυσιόω refers to inflating one's sense of self-importance. Paul has already chastised those who were arrogant (φυσιόω) with pride (4:6, 18-20; 5:2) and contrasted knowledge, which puffs up, with love (8:1). It is interesting that six of the seven occurrences of φυσιόω in the NT appear in this letter (1 Cor 4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 81; 13:4; Col 2:18). While he praises the positive attributes of love, Paul indirectly rebukes the Corinthians for their arrogance, divisiveness, insensitivity to the "weaker" members, and inappropriate focus on social-status.

Verses 8-13 comprise the longest section of the chapter in which Paul explains the permanence of love. Through his statement, "love never comes to an end" (ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει; 13:8), Paul introduces an eschatological perspective on love and spiritual gifts. Despite the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge being particularly esteemed by the Corinthian community, only love will never cease. In contrast to the spiritual gifts being imperfect and temporary, love is permanent and will continue into the new eschatological age.[79]

Paul's reference to speaking and children (13:11) is not meant to convey tongues as an immature spiritual sign but rather to convey speaking in tongues as an imperfect sign, suited only for the present eschatological age. When this present age ends, speaking in tongues will no longer be necessary.[80] Fee rightly maintains that 13:11 has nothing to do with childish behavior but with the contrast between the present and future age: "He is illustrating that there will come a time when the gifts will pass away. The analogy, therefore, says that behavior from one period in one's life is not appropriate to the other; the one is 'done away with' when the other comes."[81] Drawing upon the city of Corinth's experience in manufacturing bronze mirrors, Paul compares a believer's present knowledge of God to gazing at a

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[78] Herbert Braun, "περπερεύομαι," *TDNT* 6:93-94.
[79] On the eschatological nature of love, see Jan Lambrecht, "The Most Eminent Way: A Study of 1 Corinthians 13," in *Pauline Studies: Collected Essays by Jan Lambrecht* (BETL 115; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994), 79-103; Holladay, "1 Corinthians 13," 97; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 272; Fee, *The First Epistle*, 641.
[80] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 623.
[81] Fee, *The First Epistle*, 646.

reflection in a mirror rather than to seeing a person face to face (13:12).[82] As Thiselton notes, the mirror is a metaphor for "indirect knowledge."[83] Thus, the mirror metaphor highlights that believers in the present eschatological age have an incomplete knowledge of the Lord, which pales in comparison to the knowledge believers will have of the Lord in the future eschatological age.

The discourse on love continues Paul's call for imitation in 10:33-11:1, where he exhorted the Corinthians to imitate him as he imitates Christ. Just as Paul does not seek his own advantage but that of others, the Corinthians are to adopt a similar practice of self-denial. "Paul's discussion of love is not intended to persuade the Corinthians to abandon their prized spiritual gifts but is meant to convince them to employ the gifts with love. Unless they are governed by love, they are spiritually barren."[84] First Corinthians 13:1-13 therefore reveals two opposing views of what it means to be "spiritual." According to the Corinthians, being "spiritual" encompasses tongues, wisdom, and knowledge, with little or no concern for the "weaker" members of the community. For Paul, however, being "spiritual" entails conducting oneself as one who has been sanctified and called by God to be his holy people (1:2, 26-31; 3:16-17). The ultimate expression of this new life in Christ is to act in love, caring for fellow believers.

## §7 Paul's Suffering and the Resurrection

Paul adds another dimension to his previous discussion of his weaknesses and sufferings by relating them to the resurrection of the dead and to his "boasting" about the Corinthians (15:30-32). The question τί καὶ ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν πᾶσαν ὥραν (15:30) encapsulates the reality of Paul's apostolic ministry. Why would Paul willingly endanger his personhood on a daily basis unless there was a higher purpose? If there were no resurrection of the dead, his sacrifice would be for naught. Without the resurrection, it would be utter foolishness to suffer voluntarily and to deny oneself of sensual pleasures (15:30-32). As Fee aptly notes on the centrality of Christ's resurrection in Paul's theology, "One must remember throughout that to deny the resurrection of the dead meant to deny the resurrection of Christ (vv. 12-

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[82] Michael Fishbane, "Through the Looking Glass: Reflections on Ezek 43:3; Num 12:8 and 1 Cor 13:12," *HAR* 10 (1986): 63-75, observes wordplay with the Hebrew מראה.
[83] Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 1069. Cf. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 625; Fee, *The First Epistle*, 648.
[84] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 622.

19), which meant for Paul the denial of Christian life altogether. Thus everything Christians do as Christians—and especially the labors of an apostle—are an absurdity if there is no resurrection."[85] Paul's declaration, καθ' ἡμέραν ἀποθνῃσκω (15:31a), attests to his conscious identification with Christ's death and the hardships that entails so that both he and others might share in Christ's resurrection.

Despite the community's problems, Paul nevertheless expresses his καύχησις in the Corinthians (15:31). As denoted with the νή, Paul solemnly swears that the personal risks and humiliations he experiences are an inevitable reality of his apostolic ministry. By proclaiming that the Corinthians are his καύχησις, Paul affirms that the Corinthians' redemption is of utmost importance to him and is worth the personal sacrifice.[86] It is not, as Garland rightly observes, "a self-serving boast, but rather confirms that Christ has worked in and through him as his apostle."[87] Paul's "boast" rests entirely on what Christ has done through his ministry (15:9-11). Since Paul has been personally involved in the Corinthians' conversion (cf. 9:1-2), he proclaims that their faith is his "boast." He "boasts" of the community in Christ Jesus, thereby suggesting that he has confidence in Christ regarding the community's spiritual progress and salvation. Once again, Paul demonstrates to the Corinthian community what it means to "boast" in the Lord. Thus, while the Corinthians are his "boast," Paul's καύχησις ultimately signifies "boasting" in the Lord.

## §8 Summary

Paul focuses his argument in 9:1-27; 13:1-13; and 15:30-32 on his apostolic rights and the waiving of those rights for the benefit of the Corinthian community as an example of one who sets aside his own advantages for the sake of others. Paul's practice of relinquishing his right to receive their patronage illustrates how the strong Corinthians can avoid having their liberties (ἐξουσία) become a stumbling block to the weak (8:9). Paul understands the strong Corinthians' justification for eating meat offered to idols (8:1-6), but argues that proper Christian conduct should model Christ's paradigm of self-sacrifice. Thus within the larger context of 8:1-11:1,

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[85] Fee, *The First Epistle*, 768.
[86] So, Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 1251.
[87] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 720.

Paul presents himself as an example of voluntary refusal of one's rights for the sake of a weak believer. According to Paul, knowledge (γνῶσις, 8:1), rights (ἐξουσία, 8:9), and freedom (ἐλεύθερος, 9:1, 19) must be guided by concern for the spiritual well-being of others, which he elaborates in his discussion of love (13:1-13; cf. 15:30-32). Paul therefore deliberately relinquishes his right to receive support and adapts himself for the sake of the weak (9:22). The implication of Paul's self-sacrificial conduct is that the strong Corinthians would imitate his example by abdicating their right to eat idol food in order to prevent the weaker Corinthians from falling back into idolatry and that all members of the community would cease "boasting" anthropocentrically.

# CONCLUSION

The Greco-Roman world of the first century CE was a competitive one that highly valued honor, social status, wealth, and power. For many, upward mobility became a passion and the acquisition, maintenance, and display of social status through such means as benefactions, wealth, power, education, and self-display were of utmost importance. Individuals engaged in the activities of self-praise and "boasting" as a means of securing and maintaining their social status and honor. In a competitive society where honor was limited and its citizens sought to elevate and maintain their social standing, the drive for public recognition flourished. Competition for honor encouraged expressions of pride, and for many self-praise and "boasting" became respectable activities. However, the pursuit of honor through these means was not without its critics, particularly in regards to sophists who were criticized for their ostentatious display of self-praise.

From our survey of "boasting" and self-praise in Part One, we observed that despite the semantic fields of self-praise and "boasting" frequently overlapping, the ancients nevertheless categorically distinguished between self-praise and "boasting." Although self-praise could be deemed a positive or negative attribute by an orator's audience (depending on several factors), "self-boasting" was virtually unanimously seen as a negative attribute (though "boasting" in the work of another was not necessarily negative). The extant Greco-Roman texts reveal that within the Greco-Roman world there were certain prescribed grounds and restrictions for engaging in self-praise. These guidelines for engaging in self-praise did not necessarily imply that self-praise was intrinsically improper but rather reflected an orator's methodological attempts to avoid offending his audience.

### §1 Paul's Response to the Corinthians' Anthropocentric "Boasting"

Because Corinth comprised a large percentage of individuals of servile descent, its residents placed more value on social advancement and achievements through displays of self-praise and "boasting" than in other regions in the Greco-

Roman world where social class structures were less fluid. With a society so consumed with elevating and maintaining their social status, it is no surprise that the Corinthian community has difficulty separating itself from secular society. Accordingly, members in the Corinthian community engage in dynamics of self-praise, hoping that their audience would favorably approve. They imagine they are practicing socially acceptable self-praise, not "boasting," in their attempts to excel in the cultural game of honor. Although a small but influential contingent has infected the community, Paul broadens his discussion and addresses the entire community in order to confront the havoc these individuals have been creating within the Corinthian community.

The frequency of references to "boasting" in 1 Corinthians suggests that Paul's overarching agenda is to redefine some of the Corinthians' understanding of the true basis of honor through which he offers the precept "'boast' in the Lord" as a corrective to the problem of factionalism and improper focus on social status. Demonstrating his disapproval of the Corinthians' self-praise, Paul shifts their self-praise from the positive context (as they see it) to the negative "boasting" context by employing the καυχ- stem (cf. ἀλαζ- stem) in order to target the destructive manifestations of pride, self-praise, competitive allegiances, and obsession with social status and honor within the believing community. With the employment of the καυχ- stem, Paul refashions the language connected with the pursuit and securing of social status into theological language centered on Christ crucified, thereby contrasting God's operating system with the world's operating system and focusing the Corinthians' attention on kingdom advancement rather than self-advancement.

Although Paul's use of the καυχ- stem demonstrates his sensitivity to the Greco-Roman conventions of "boasting" and self-praise, his employment of the καυχ- stem represents a clash of cultures between the Greco-Roman and cruciform views of what constitutes appropriate self-praise and "boasting," particularly in relation to the secular focus on self-advancement and honor. Paul's "boasting" passages are informed by Greco-Roman rhetorical conventions but are transformed by his own experience of divine grace and power through the cross of Christ. Paul employs "boasting" terminology in situations prescribed as appropriate use of self-praise by Greco-Roman writers. For instance, Paul's behavioral correctives parallel some of Plutarch's stratagems: Paul includes reference to God (1:31; cf. 15:31); focuses on his sufferings, weaknesses, and labors (2:1-5; 3:5-17; 4:8-13; 9:12-23; cf.

15:8-10); and exposes the illegitimacy of anthropocentric "boasting" (1:10-12, 26-29; 3:3-4, 18-23; 4:6-8; 5:1-6; 13:4). However, unlike the Greco-Roman emphasis on the relationship between the orator and audience as a determinant of whether one's self-referential speech could be categorized as acceptable self-praise or unacceptable "boasting," Paul removes the subjective element in judging between self-praise and "boasting" entirely by minimizing the role of the audience and elevating the role of the Lord.

Moreover, Paul demonstrates his indebtedness to Jer 9:22-23 (LXX) for his understanding of legitimate "boasting" from which he adapts Jeremiah's theocentric "boasting" to incorporate aspects of Christ's redemptive activity. As in Jer 9:22-23 (LXX) where legitimate "boasting" is connected with knowledge of the Lord and illegitimate "boasting" is reflective of self-confidence and independence from God, Paul similarly defines appropriate "boasting" and inappropriate self-praise in terms of one's relationship with the Lord. Paul redefines the worldly values of honor and pride in wisdom, strength, wealth, following a specific leader, and patronage in terms of theocentric "boasting," which encompasses "boasting" in one's work done through the Lord and "boasting" of one's weaknesses. "Boasting" for Paul is an expression of worship, thanksgiving, and confidence in the Lord instead of a means to achieve honor and social status. For Paul, God's grace and the cross abrogate any justification for human self-confidence. Hence, any declarations seeking to advance one's social status or honor are deemed inappropriate self-praise, whereas any declarations seeking to glorify God for what he has done or is doing among the created order are deemed appropriate "boasting."

In our analysis of "boasting" in 1 Cor 1:10-4:21; 5:1-13; 9:1-27; 13:1-13; and 15:30-32, we have not sought to prove that Paul directly depends on any of the Greco-Roman sources beyond the supposition that he utilizes the conventions of self-praise and "boasting" that those sources systematize in order to develop a distinctive and consistent view of "boasting" that shares, in some respects, the attitudes toward self-praise and "boasting" in the Greco-Roman world. Cognizant of the rhetorical opinions regarding these conventions, Paul adapts these conventions in accordance with Jer 9:22-23 (LXX) in order to introduce the Corinthian community to a new understanding of them. In these passages, Paul puts a theological spin on "boasting" and its related themes in order to exhort the Corinthians to focus their attention on their relationship with Christ rather than on improving their social status

or on increasing their honor. When Paul speaks of his apostolic commission and the Corinthians' calling, he focuses not on that which results in attaining higher social status according to secular standards but with that which secures one's relationship with the Lord and eschatological redemption. Paul's "boasting" reorients the value system of the Corinthians to the message of the cross so that their anthropocentric "boasting" is cast in a negative eschatological light and is replaced by "boasting" in the Lord and in the Lord's redemptive work in and through them.

While building upon Winter's survey of sophists in the first-century, we have deviated from his study by interpreting Paul's *modus operandi* from the standpoint of gospel rhetoric versus personality rhetoric and demonstrating that Paul develops these two outlooks of rhetoric deliberately in response to sophistic presence in Corinth and to the Corinthians' inclination to engage in anthropocentric "boasting." Answering the Corinthians' criticism of his oratorical proficiency and self-support, Paul subtly contrasts his *modus operandi* and personal conduct with that of the sophists. Whereas the sophists focus on pleasing the crowd and gaining fame and wealth, Paul focuses on pleasing the Lord through obediently proclaiming the gospel, serving others, and working a trade so as not to burden others. Furthermore, we have shown that Paul can "boast" of his efforts because he knows wholeheartedly that he has devoted his life to a higher calling, that of winning others to Christ. Paul does not "boast" of his efforts because he believes his ministry is more important than the ministry of others (such as Apollos' ministry) but that he views his ministry as operating through the work of the Lord. He considers his apostolic role as one of privilege in that he can be regarded as God's steward, servant, and coworker (cf. 3:1-4:1). Accordingly, neither Paul's "boasting" of preaching the gospel in Corinth nor "boasting" of his weaknesses nor "boasting" of relinquishing his right to the Corinthians' financial support are the result of an inflated ego or feelings of superiority over others; on the contrary, his "boasting" is an expression of gratitude for what the Lord is doing in and through him. Though Paul engages in a form of self-praise, he brings out the paradoxical nature of his "boasting" by "boasting" of his weaknesses and sufferings by expanding the principle of "boasting" in the Lord to include "boasting" of what pertains to his weaknesses and hardships because through them God manifests his all-sufficient grace and power. Therefore, his "boasts" do not display an inconsistency in his *modus operandi*, or more specifically inconsistency in his rejection of

anthropocentric "boasting" and personality rhetoric, since they are not intended to improve his secular social standing but rather to express gratitude for being commissioned as an apostle to the Corinthians.

Because Paul views self-praise negatively, he never believes he engages in illegitimate self-praise but only legitimate theocentric "boasting." It is primarily his motivation for speaking about his hardships, weaknesses, and *modus operandi* that places his speech into the theocentric "boasting" category. The motivation behind his self-referential speech also demonstrates the consistency in his pastoral approach. Upon initial reading of his discourse, it would appear that Paul's speech falls into the unacceptable self-praise category and that Paul is hypocritical in his rejection of anthropocentric "boasting." However, closer examination of the Greco-Roman rhetorical conventions of self-praise and "boasting," Jeremiah's understanding of legitimate "boasting," and Paul's overriding pastoral approach reveals that Paul never waivers in his categorical distinction between anthropocentric and theocentric "boasting" in 1 Corinthians. His self-referential speech is invariably about giving glory to the Lord and preaching what is in the best interest of his audience. It is never about securing social status and honor for himself, for there is always a theological purpose behind it.

§2 Implications for the Study of "Boasting" and Self-Praise
and Areas of Further Study

While this study builds upon previous treatments of "boasting" (e.g. Savage, Bultmann, Davis), leadership (Clarke), and rhetoric (Winter, Litfin), it departs from them primarily in its concentration on the "boasting" motif in 1 Corinthians, with leadership and sophistic rhetoric being components of "boasting" as understood by Paul and the Corinthian community. This treatment gives 1 Corinthians its rightful place in analyzing Paul's "boasting" in relation to his *modus operandi* and response to the Corinthians' divisiveness and focus on social status. As we have discovered, our understanding of "boasting" and self-praise in 1:10-4:21; 5:1-13; 9:1-27; 13:1-13; and 15:30-32 is bound in the language and culture of the first-century Corinth. Comprehending Paul's language therefore requires an investigation of the language as heard, used, and interpreted by Paul and the Corinthian community. While Paul's discourse represents only one side of the dialogue between him and the Corinthian

community, it nevertheless betrays much regarding his *modus operandi*, his relationship with the Corinthian community, and the secular cultural influences on the life of the community. Subsequently, our reading of Paul's text calls for a reassessment and refinement of our conception of "boasting" and self-praise as they relate to social status, personal and group identity, leadership, wisdom, and patronage in the Corinthian community.

Having a better understanding of Paul's usage of the καυχ- stem in 1 Corinthians has direct bearing on the interpretation of the "boasting" passages elsewhere in the Pauline literature and contributes to developing a comprehensive theology of "boasting." For example, how Paul views the secular Greco-Roman conventions of "boasting" and self-praise and distinguishes between anthropocentric and theocentric "boasting" in 1 Corinthians sets the foundation for interpreting the foolish discourse in 2 Cor 10-13 and helps resolve the issue of whether Paul is inconsistent in his "boasting." These passages in 1 Corinthians should not be neglected or de-emphasized since they form the foundation upon which Paul's apology in 2 Corinthians is built. Against Betz, Judge, Forbes, Davis, and others, scholars cannot adequately decipher the meaning of "boasting" in 2 Corinthians without first exhaustively collecting the extant Greco-Roman lexical data pertaining to self-praise and "boasting," and without first grasping its meaning in 1 Corinthians. Our examination of the καυχ- stem attempts to rectify this methodological error.

The fact that Paul rebukes some of the Corinthians for their anthropocentric "boasting" and focus on social status offers additional support for the "New Consensus" view and exposes flaws in both Meggitt's binary construction of the elite and non-elite and Friesen's seven-category poverty scale. In secular Corinth, there was social mobility—more than the binary model allows. If we were to follow Meggitt and Friesen's assertion that the Corinthian community comprises those who live at or below the subsistence level, it would appear inconceivable that anyone at the lower levels of the economic scale would "boast" of possessing wisdom, power, and wealth (cf. 1:26-29). Those at Friesen's PS5 through PS7 scale would not have had the opportunity to be passionate about upward mobility like the elite or those of the middling group since their daily lives would have been consumed with securing the basic resources for their family's survival. More likely, the Corinthians' "boasting" and drive for acquiring social status points to the presence of an

influential percentage of individuals with some degree of surplus resources (i.e., Friesen's PS4 level, at the minimum) being included among the community's membership. Thus, Meggitt and Friesen's constructions of the social constituency of the Corinthian community do not align with Paul's pastoral approach and the community's propensity to "boast" illegitimately.

Because we have limited the scope of our investigation of self-praise and "boasting" to Paul's discourse in 1 Corinthians, our study evokes several questions and areas for further research. For example, is Paul's "boasting" language consistent throughout his epistles or does his language reflect a substantial theological development and refinement as he matures in his faith? How do the rhetorical conventions of self-praise and "boasting" fit into Paul's overall theological agenda? Does Paul draw upon Greco-Roman conventions of acceptable self-praise and "boasting" more so in the Corinthian correspondence and then draw upon the theological meanings of appropriate "boasting" elsewhere? How does the eschatological backdrop of the theme of "boasting" in 1 Corinthians relate to the way Paul envisages the "boast" of Israel, either in its covenant relationship or its legalism, so further developing Gathercole's study of the role of "boasting" in early Jewish soteriology as a criterion for eschatological vindication of the righteous in Rom 1-5?[1] This work represents the beginning trend of having the maxim "'boast' in the Lord" be the umbrella from which to interpret the behavioral and theological issues addressed by Paul in the Corinthian correspondence (e.g. sexuality, spiritual gifts, inaugurated eschatology, etc.), which can be further developed to encompass the entirety of Paul's discourse and to explore Paul's personal identity as an apostle and follower of the Lord.

Our examination of the rhetorical conventions of self-praise and "boasting" in the Greco-Roman context and in Paul's usage in 1 Corinthians reveals that Paul comprehends the precarious nature of these conventions. Paul is critical of any self-praise or "boasting" that focuses on self-advancement. He "boasts" not because he is unconscious of doing so, as proposed by Callan, for Paul is fully conscious of his tactics for dealing with the Corinthian community's preoccupation with social status,

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[1] Simon J. Gathercole, *Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1-5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

honor, and self-praise as a means of acquiring status and honor.[2] Paul transforms the Greco-Roman understanding of legitimate self-praise by presenting it with a theological nuance. "Boasting" in the Lord entails not only "boasting" in Christ's redemptive work on the cross but also "boasting" in one's weaknesses and work in cruciform service as a means of honoring the Lord. In order to dissuade the Corinthians from engaging in anthropocentric "boasting," Paul casts the secular conventions of acceptable self-praise into a negative eschatological context and in their stead presents himself as a paradigm of one who "boasts" only in the Lord. Thus, Paul's employment of "boasting" does not represent "a man in conflict" between his faith and his self-reliant and self-promoting personality, as Callan claims.[3] Paul's competitive nature does not exhibit itself in his conscious attitude toward "boasting." Rather, Paul's attitude toward "boasting" and call to "boast" in the Lord in 1 Corinthians display his awareness of (1) the Greco-Roman rhetorical conventions of self-praise and "boasting" and (2) the eschatological ramifications of inappropriate self-praise and "boasting" and the destructive effects anthropocentric "boasting" can have on the welfare of a believing community, points which, until now, have been overlooked or glossed over in other scholars' treatment of "boasting" and rhetoric in the Corinthian epistles. Therefore, because "boasting" is intimately related not only to Paul's apostleship and *modus operandi* but also to his theology of the cross, justification, sanctification, theology proper, and eschatology as well as to his understanding of the law, circumcision, wisdom, and honor/shame, the significance of "boasting" in Paul's thought should not be minimized and must be taken into consideration when dealing with the larger theological issues in Paul's epistles.

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[2] Terrance Callan, "Competition and Boasting: Toward a Psychological Portrait of Paul," *ST* 40/2 (1986): 137-56; idem, *Psychological Perspectives on the Life of Paul: An Application of the Methodology of Gerd Theissen* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 16-50.
[3] Callan, "Competition," 151.

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