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Item Type	Article
Authors	Bagalawis, Manuel A.
Publisher	Asia Pacific Theological Seminary
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Download date	2026-11-14 13:39:31
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/237053

[*AJPS* 3/1 (2000), pp. 5-18]

MINISTRY AS WARFARE: AN EXEGESIS OF 2 CORINTHIANS 10:2B-6

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As the new millenium dawns, countless false teachers and false teachings arise to continually batter the gates of our Christian faith. Long ago, Paul already waged war among the false teachers and false teachings in the Corinthian church. Our text in 2 Cor 10:2b-6, which is an excerpt of Paul's encounter with the false apostles in Corinth, gives us valuables insights concerning the nature of Christian ministry as warfare.

This paper will focus more on the flow of thought of 2 Corinthians 10:2b-6, although detailed exegesis will also be attempted on some pertinent issues. The first part will set the stage for an extensive two-section discussion on the κατα σαρκα accusation. Then an exegesis section will be devoted to understanding the flow of thought of 10:3-6. A conclusion will include a short reflection concerning doing ministry in our current situation.

1. The Flow of Thought of 2 Corinthians 10:1-11

Although the main focus of this paper is on the military metaphor of vv. 3-6, it seems necessary to define on the outset the relationship of vv. 3-6 with its immediate context in 2 Cor 10:1-11.[1] This will be a very important consideration in my detailed exegesis of vv. 3-6 in the next

[1] I have limited the immediate context of vv. 3-6 to 2 Cor 10:1-11 for three main reasons. Firstly, I find Paul in a more defensive and apologetic stance in vv. 1-11, over the more offensive tone of Paul in vv. 12-18. Secondly, the issue in vv. 12-18 is more homogenously referring to the false apostles misplaced boasting (καυχησις), while vv. 1-11 is a rather convoluted introduction of (1) his appeal and entreaty to the Corinthians (vv. 1a, 2a); (2) his description of the accusations of his opponents (vv. 1b, 2b, 7b); and (3) his refutation of these accusations (vv. 3-6, 7c, 8-11).

section. I will begin with the flow of thought of 10:1-11 and discuss the function of vv. 3-6 within this context.

Paul opens chapters 10-13 with the passage in 10:1-11 primarily by way of alluding to his purpose of writing chapters 10-13 (clearly stated in 13:10).[2] He is appealing to the Corinthians ("I appeal" - παρακαλω, v. 1a and "I beg" - δεομαι, v. 2a) that they do something so that when he comes for the third time (13:1, 10) he need not "be bold" (θαρρησαι, v. 2a) against them. This pertains to a kind of boldness that he will display to his opponents who accuse him falsely of many things (vv. 1b, 2b, 7b). The central point of 10:1-11 is probably also Paul's purpose for writing. He is writing so that "when he comes in person, he would not be bold with the confidence with which he proposes against some" (θαρρησαι τη πεποιθησαι η λογιζομαι τολμησαι επι τινας, v. 2a) who accuse him falsely. He then mentions the three accusations made by his opponents (10:1b, 2b, 7b) and refutes them point blank (3-6, 7c, 8-11). These can be more conveniently summarized in outline form below.

A. Paul *appeals* to the Corinthians that when he comes in person he would rather not be bold against his opponents who *accuse* him falsely when he comes in person (vv. 1a, 2a).

B. Paul mentions three accusations by his opponents and refutes them directly.

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[2] It would be too lengthy to discuss in this paper my reasons for assuming that 2 Corinthians 10-13 is Paul's subsequent letter to chapters 1-9. This is a result of certain turn of events in Corinth where his opponents are succeeding in their attempt to demean and discredit Paul in the eyes of the Corinthian Christians. Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians*, Anchor Bible 32A (New York: Doubleday, 1984), p. 454. See also Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *The Theology of the Second Letter to the Corinthians*, New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 96; Colin Kruse, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, TNC 8 (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1994), pp. 169-70; Dieter Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians*, Studies of the New Testament and its World (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987), pp. 9-14; Ralph Martin, *2 Corinthians*, WBC 40 (Waco, TX: Word, 1986), p. 298; C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, BNTC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1973), pp. 243-44.

[Accusation 1] Paul is weak and unimpressive when present in person but strong and bold in his letters when absent (vv. 1b, 8-10).
[Refutation 1] What they are in word by letter when absent, such persons they are in deed when present (v. 11).

[Accusation 2] Paul and company is regarded as walking in the flesh (v. 2b).
[Refutation 2] Though they may walk in the flesh, they certainly do not war in the flesh (vv. 3-6).

[Accusation 3] It is implied that Paul is not of Christ (v. 7b).
[Refutation 3] If the opponents think that they are of Christ, Paul and company are also of Christ (v. 7c).

While it is not the primary focus of this paper to identify the connections or interrelationships among the three accusations, some of these will be discussed in the next section. The more important observation, however, is the connection of Paul's appeal to the Corinthians (A) and the three accusations and refutations (B). What is the relationship between Paul's appeal[3] to the Corinthians in A and the three accusations and refutations in B? Paul is probably implying that his boldness to his opponents when he comes could be averted if the Corinthian believers reject the false accusations of his opponents and restore their allegiance to him. His opponent's false accusations have probably polluted the minds of the Corinthian believers and have caused them to transfer their allegiance from Paul to them. Paul will not allow this to happen because his opponents are actually Satan's servants (11:14-15). Thus, Paul had to help his children reject his opponents by enumerating the latter's false accusations one by one and refute them in the process. If the Corinthian believers will not change their allegiance despite his refutations, Paul may have to demonstrate his "boldness" towards his opponents when he visits (v. 2a).

[3] "I ask that when I am present I may not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some," δεομαι δε το μη παρων θαρρησαι τη πεποιθησαι η τολμησαι επιτινας (v. 2).

2. The Relationship of the Κατα Σαρκα Accusation (10:2b) with the Other Accusations in 2 Cor 10:1-11

I have already stated my reservation in the previous section concerning any absolute connection among the three accusations made by Paul's opponents to him. These accusations are not necessarily identical and need not be limited to only one issue. The accusation against Paul as "walking according to the flesh" (κατα σαρκα περιπατουντας, v. 2b) need not be equated to Paul's alleged inconsistent behavior. Κατα σαρκα does not necessarily mean that Paul is being perceived as bold (θαρρω) in his letters when absent, while humble (ταπεινος) in his demeanor when present (v. 1b, 10). However, many commentators think otherwise. To them, the accusation that Paul is "walking according to the flesh" pertains to his duplicity and inconsistent behavior (v. 1b, 10). Some also stress that Paul's use of κατα σαρκα in 1:17, referring to some kind of inconsistency or insincerity in words, further lend concreteness to its use here in 10:2b.[4]

It is not necessary to postulate that there is absolutely no interrelationship whatsoever with the accusations that Paul is *walking in the flesh* (v. 2b), on the one hand, and his alleged duplicity and inconsistency, on the other hand.[5] However, I am inclined to take the position that the two accusations, and for that matter, all three accusations in 10:1-11, constitute different issues which Paul's opponents find fault with him.

Paul is not consistent in his use of the prepositional phrase κατα σαρκα even in 2 Corinthians. In 5:16 he used the phrase twice, both pertaining to Paul and company's perspective of regarding Christ and humanity in general, no longer *from a human point of view* (κατα σαρκα).[6] This certainly connotes a different meaning when compared to how κατα σαρκα is used in 10:26. Barrett also points out

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[4] Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus," p. 167. See also P. Hughes, *The Second Epistle*, p. 348; R. Hughes, *Second Corinthians*, p. 91; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 461.

[5] I am not even saying that the connection and interrelationship in the accusations are merely literary and not substantive.

[6] Kruse, *The Second Epistle*, pp. 124-25. Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), p. 438 argues that what Paul said in 5:16-21 pertains more to the way in which he had previously evaluated Christ, thus, not referring to any behavioral phenomena.

that it is probable that Paul's opponents' understanding of κατα σαρκα may not be consistent with how Paul understood the word.[7] Thus, there seems to be a case for understanding the κατα σαρκα accusation as not necessarily equivalent to Paul's alleged duplicity and inconsistent behavior.

In my exegesis portion, I will be coming from the perspective that the military metaphor of 10:3-6 is Paul's refutation of the accusation that he is "walking according to the flesh." It will demonstrate, among other things, that he is primarily not responding to the accusation that he is given over to duplicity and inconsistency in behavior. Whatever meaning "walking according to the flesh" has will be discussed in the next section. For the mean time, whatever the phrase connotes, Paul refutes it before the Corinthian's *face* (προσωπον, v. 7a). This will give them further reason to heed his appeal and do something (i.e., reject the false accusations of Paul's opponents and restore their allegiance to him) to avert Paul's demonstration of boldness ("he would not be bold with the confidence with which he proposes against some" (θαρρησαι τη πεποιθησαι η λογιζομαι τολμησαι επι τινας, v. 2a).

3. "Walking According to the Flesh" (10:2b)

The exegesis of vv. 3-6 depends to a great extent on the meaning one attributes to "walking according to the flesh."[8] If its meaning is not directly equivalent to the other accusation concerning Paul's alleged duplicity and inconsistent behavior (v. 1b, 10), "walking according to the flesh" may pertain to a different accusation. It is possible that Paul's opponents evaluate (λογιζομενους) him as κατα σαρκα in the sense that he was merely walking as a common human being with all its attendant weaknesses and inadequacies.[9] He is not a pneumatic person[10]

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[7] Barrett, *The Second Epistle*, p. 249.

[8] I will skip over the exegesis of vv. 1-2a since they form part of the accusation to Paul concerning his alleged duplicity and inconsistent behavior which I have discussed above as quite different and independent from the other accusation (κατα σαρκα περιπατουντας v. 2b) which concerns this paper.

[9] On the basis of 2:16, Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul*, pp. 231-34 comments that Paul's opponents claim themselves to be *competent* or *adequate* (ικανος). See also Francis T. Fallon, "Self's Sufficiency or God's Sufficiency: 2 Corinthians 2:16," *Harvard Theological Review* 76:4 (1983), pp. 369-74. This claim for

like his opponents. He falls short of the high, spiritual standards they claim for themselves,[11] and lacks in the following aspects:[12]

1. Charismatic and authoritative gifts of leadership (11:20-21)[13]
2. Spiritual experiences of visions and revelations (οπτασιας καιαποκαλυψεις, 12:1)[14]
3. Supernatural mighty signs, wonders and powerful deeds (σημειοις τε και τερασιν και δυναμεσιν, 12:11-12)[15]
4. Spiritual manifestation of Christ speaking through him (13:3).

Probably in this perspective, Paul is being accused as "walking according to the flesh."[16] He now responds to this accusation by way of employing a military metaphor in vv. 3-6.

Verse 3

Paul starts by quoting his opponents' accusation and reinterpreting it to refute their charge ("For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh," v. 3). While περιπατεω may carry the metaphorical meaning of one's conduct and behavior in 4:2 and 12:18, in 4:6-7 it is used in the broader and more general sense of describing the

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competence or adequacy may have further strengthened their view that they are pneumatic and that Paul is not.

[10] Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p. 304.

[11] Donald A. Carson, *From Triumphalism to Maturity: An Exposition of 2 Corinthians 10-13* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), p. 42.

[12] These characteristics of the pneumatic person are also found at Kruse, *The Second Epistle*, p. 173. The charismatic demonstrations of the opponents is described by Barrett, *The Second Epistle*, p. 250 as "external pomp or show, the only standards by which the false apostles usually commend themselves."

[13] Barrett, *The Second Epistle*, p. 250.

[14] Barrett, *The Second Epistle*, p. 250.

[15] In this verse Paul claims that such signs, wonders and powerful deeds were performed among the Corinthians. It is possible, however, that Paul mentions this because they claim that Paul lacks these aspects.

[16] Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, trans. John H. Schutz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), p. 45 interprets κατα σαρκα that Paul is being accused of being "too concerned with his livelihood and with worldly things, trusting too little in Christ." But this interpretation seems to be quite foreign to the immediate context of 10:2b-6.

Christian's overall life character and perspective. A life characterized by faith (δια πιστεως, v. 7) in the sense that *we are (still) at home in the body and absent in the Lord* (ενδημουντες εν τω σωματι εκδημουμεν απο του κυριου, v. 6) with all the attendant imperfections of human existence. Thus, it is possible that while the Corinthians accuse Paul of behaving and conducting himself according to the flesh in v. 2b, he partly agrees with their charge in the sense that his life, countenance and person *in* the flesh is indeed, fraught with limitations and inadequacies. This echoes his consistent emphasis in 2 Corinthians concerning human weakness and God's power in ministry (weakness - 1:3-11; 12-13 vs. God's power - 2:14-17; weakness vs. God's power in 4:7-15; 12:7-10; 13:4. If the pervading theme of the paradox of *human weakness* and *God's power* in ministry is brought to bear in our discussion in v. 3, and that *human weakness* corresponds to the first element of the paradox (life in the flesh), then it is possible that κατα σαρκα στρατευομεθα ("not warring according to the flesh"), and the entire military imagery in 10:3-6 corresponds to *God's power* in ministry.

Paul characterizes his ministry and that of his co-workers using a military imagery: The apostle and missionary is a soldier.[17] He calls his co-workers "my fellow soldiers" (συστρατιωτης, Phil 2:25; Philm 2). Whoever has been in prison with him has been a "fellow-captive" (συναιχμαλωτος, Rom 16:7; Col 4:10; Philm 23), and requires support for his living as a soldier (1 Cor 9:7).[18] Thus, it is probably unlikely that Paul employs military metaphor in this passage for a special reason because he is rebutting a charge of cowardice,[19] and that his "warlike reply reveals that he lacks neither spirituality nor courage."[20] Malherbe ably demonstrated that the military imagery that Paul uses was quite common in ancient literature (more discussions on this will follow in the succeeding verses) during the time of Thucydides,[21] Polybius,[22] and

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[17] Adolf Harnack, *Militia Christi: The Christian Religion and the Military in the First Three Centuries*, trans. David McInnes Gracie (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), p. 37.

[18] Harnack, *Militia Christi*, p. 37.

[19] Contra, Alfred Plummer, *Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1970), p. 275.

[20] Contra, Larry J. Waters, "Military Imagery in Pauline Literature: An Exegetical-Theological Study of the Military Metaphors of Paul" (Th.M. thesis, Asia Graduate School of Theology, Philippines, 1992), p. 99.

[21] Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus," p. 145 n. 9.

Philo.[23] With this in view, it is not necessary to be too specific about the origin of such metaphor. The fact that the imagery was "in the air" probably explains Paul's numerous citations of it in his letters.

In sum, while Paul partly concedes that he is in some sense living as a mere human (εν σαρκι περιπατουντες, v. 3a) fraught with weaknesses and limitations, he nonetheless disclaims that his apostolate and ministry towards the Corinthians (κατα σαρκα στρατευομεθα, v. 3b) is likewise. In v. 4, Paul gives the reason to his disclaimer.

Verse 4a,b

Although Paul may concede that his life and person is indeed one characterized by human weakness and limitation (v. 3a), he can never concur even to the thought that his ministry is one of weakness and inadequacy. For his ministry and the weapons of his warfare are not "merely human" (NEB) and weak (τα γαρ οπλα της στρατειας ημων ου σαρκικα, v. 4a). They are "not of this world,"[24] neither are they "subject to the limitations of created objects."[25] They are of a totally different nature and can never be compared to his weak human life and limited personhood, or anybody else.[26] His apostolic ministry (i.e., his *warfare*, στρατειας, v. 4a)[27] and the tools[28] or weapons (οπλα, v. 4a) he employ are "mighty before God for the destruction of fortresses" (αλλα δυνατα τω θεω προς καθαιρεσιν οχυρωματων, λογισμο υς καθαιρουντες, v. 4b).

The thematic similarity of 10:3-6 and 4:1-18 illustrates my point earlier that 10:3-6 is another reflection of Paul's emphasis in 2 Corinthians regarding the paradox of human weakness and God's power in ministry. In 10:3-6, Paul, whose life is characterized by human weaknesses and limitations (εν σαρκι περιπατουντες, v. 3a), is

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[22] Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus," p.145 n. 10.

[23] Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus," p.145 n. 10.

[24] Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 457.

[25] Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 457.

[26] R. Hughes, *Second Corinthians*, p. 92.

[27] Rudolph Bultmann, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, trans. Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), p. 184.

[28] Bultmann, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, p. 184.

confident (πεποιθησει, v. 2a) as a minister, because his ministry and the weapons (οπλα, v. 4a) he employs in such warfare (ου κατα σαρκα στρατευομεθα, v. 3b), do not share the same weaknesses and human limitations that he has. They are "mighty before God" (δυνατα τω θεω, v. 4b) to accomplish its tasks. In the same manner, in 4:1-18, Paul accepts the fact that he is merely an "earthen vessel" (οστρακινοις σκευεσιν, v. 7) who is subjected to all kinds of weaknesses and handicap (vv. 7-12). He does not lose heart (ουκ εγκακουμεν, 4:1, 16), however, because they have in themselves the "treasure" (θησαυρον, v. 7) of the "surpassing greatness of the power of God" (v. 7) which causes "God's grace to spread to more and more people" (v. 15).

Paul does not identify in v. 4a what these weapons are. Kruse suggests that these weapons consist of the "proclamation of the gospel, through which divine power is released."[29] I think this is correct in that:

1. Statements elsewhere in the Corinthian correspondence (1 Cor 1:17-25; 2:1-5; 2 Cor 4:1-6; cf. Rom 1:16) certainly support this view; [30]
2. The participles in vv. 4d-5b (καθαιρουντες, "overthrowing," vv. 4d-5a and αιχμαλωτιζοντες, "taking captive," v. 5b) could also pertain to the power of the gospel demolishing "...intellectual arguments, the reasonings erected by human beings against the gospel;"[31]
3. If οπλα pertains to the "proclamation of the gospel, through which divine power is released," then it squares well with Paul's consistent emphasis in 2 Corinthians regarding the paradox of human weakness (εν σαρκι γαρ περιπατουντες, v. 3a) and God's power in ministry (vv. 3b-4b).

However, it is possible that, although οπλα includes the proclamation of the gospel, Paul uses it to include other divine provisions in the ministry to accomplish his divine tasks. Two examples can be cited:

1. In the context of 10:3-6, one of the participles used to explain the purpose for which Paul is equipped by the divine resources (οπλα της στρατειας) for his apostolic task[32] ("destruction of

[29] Kruse, *The Second Epistle*, pp. 173-74.

[30] Kruse, *The Second Epistle*, pp. 173-74.

[31] Kruse, *The Second Epistle*, pp. 173-74.

[32] Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p. 306.

fortresses," προς καθαιρεσιν οχυρωματων, v. 4c), is that Paul and company are ready to punish all disobedience (εν ετοιμω εχοντες εκδικησαι πασαν παρακοην, v. 6b). If v. 6b refers to Paul's possible punishment of his opponents, which would imply the utilization of the οπλα της στρατειας to execute the punishment, then it is highly unlikely that οπλα pertains only to the proclamation of the gospel to these opponents.

2. In 2 Cor 6:7 (οπλων της δικαιοσυνης) and Rom 13:12 (οπλα του φωτος) the word weapon alludes to the element of Christian character and behavior and not necessarily to the proclamation of the gospel. This is also the case with Eph 6:10-20, where, although πανοπλιαν and not οπλων was used, the underlying military metaphor is the same.[33] In this passage, the weaponry does not only pertain to the preparation of the Gospel of peace (vv. 15, 17), but also truth (v. 14a), righteousness (v. 14b), faith (v. 16), and prayer (vv. 18-20).[34]

The weapons of Paul's warfare as δυνατα τω θεω can be interpreted in various ways below:

1. As a Semitism and translated as Hebrew intensive – "divinely powerful."[35]
2. As a dative of advantage – "in God's cause"[36] or "for God"[37] or "God can work powerfully through these weapons"[38] or "mighty before God."[39]

In view of Paul's consistent treatment of human weakness and God's power in ministry in 2 Corinthians,[40] where 10:2b-6 is another restatement of such a paradox, the second option is to be preferred. However, Carson is right in saying that even if there is ambiguity in the

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[33] Kruse, *The Second Epistle*, p.133.

[34] Waters, "Military Imagery in Pauline Literature," p. 101 n. 59.

[35] P. Hughes, *The Second Epistle*, p. 351 n. 6.

[36] Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 457.

[37] Bultmann, *The Second Letter*, p. 185; Barrett, *The Second Epistle*, p. 251; Plummer, *Second Epistle*, p. 276; Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus," p. 171.

[38] Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p. 305.

[39] R. Hughes, *Second Corinthians*, p. 92 and *NASB* margin.

[40] Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus," p. 171.

phrase δυνατα τω θεω, "...the main point is clear: Paul's weapons are powerful because they are related to God."[41]

Verses 4c-6

The effectiveness of Paul's οπλα της στρατειας for the apostolic ministry is seen in the result clause: "to pulling down of strongholds" (προς καθαιρεσιν οχυρωματων, v. 4c).[42] This is also further described metaphorically in vv.4d-6a using three nominative absolute participles (in italics):[43]

1. λογισμους *καθαιρουντες* και παν υψωμα επαιρομενον κατα της γνωσεως του θεου (pulling down arguments and every high thing raised up against the knowledge of God, vv. 4d-5a).
2. *αιχμαλωτιζοντες* παν νοημα εις την υπακοην του Χριστου (taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, v. 5b).
3. εν ετοιμω *εχοντες* εκδικησαι πασαν παρακοην, οταν πληρω θη υμων η υπακοη (being ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete, v.6).

In the phrase προς καθαιρεσιν οχυρωματων (v. 4c) and πεποιθησει (confidence, v. 2), Plummer comments that Paul is possibly thinking of Prov 21:22 LXX ("A wise man scales the strong cities and brings down the stronghold [καθειλεν το οχυρωμα] in which the ungodly trust [επεποιθεισαν]").[44] However, Paul's description of his attack which is much more detailed than that of Prov 21:22, and the widespread usage of siege craft warfare in antiquity, renders Paul's dependence to Proverbs quite unlikely.[45]

Philo's *On the Confusion of Tongues* (*De Confusione Linguarum*)[46] 107-114 and 128-131 is probably more relevant in our discussion in

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[41] Carson, *From Triumphalism to Maturity*, p. 46.

[42] Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p. 305.

[43] Furnish, *II Corinthians*, pp. 458-59.

[44] Plummer, *Second Epistle*, p.305.

[45] Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus," p. 144.

[46] *Loeb Classical Library*, Philo IV, "On the Confusion of Tongues," pp. 69-73, 79-81.

10:4d-6a. In 107-114, Philo allegorizes Gen 11:4a[47] as cities and towers of vices (i.e., injustice and lawlessness or mob-rule, 108), built in the souls of men (107) as an "impregnable castle."[48] These vices also seek to rise to the region of celestial things, with the arguments of impiety and godlessness in its van (114).[49] In 128-131, the cities and towers of vices that menace the souls of man (128) was built and fortified through persuasive argument (λογων, 129; cf. λογισμους [arguments] in 2 Cor 10:4d). These persuasive arguments, which were used to divert and deflect the mind from honoring God (129), are strongholds that are ready to be destroyed[50] by Gideon (Judg 8:8,9,17; allegorized as Justice). Gideon receives the strength *to pull down every argument* [51] and despoils the enemy who is injustice (130).[52]

Finally, Malherbe[53] cites a number of fragments in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 3.26 and *Diogenes Laertius* 6.12, 13 and 105.[54] They represent the thought of Epiphanius and the Cynic Antisthenes who applied the image of the fortified city to the sage's soul.[55] Malherbe quotes Epiphanius, "...for while cities' walls are ineffectual against a traitor

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[47] "And they said, 'Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven.'"

[48] Βασιλειον οχυρωτατον, 113; cf. οχυρωματων "strongholds" in 2 Cor 10:4c.

[49] Cf. παν υψωμα επαιρομενον κατα της γνωσεως του θεου [every high thing raised up in the knowledge of God] in 2 Cor 10:5a.

[50] Προς γε την του οχυρωματος τουτου καθαιρεσιν, 130; cf. εϖ ετοιμω εχοντες [being ready] in 2 Cor 10:6a and προς καθαιρεσιν οχυρωματων [to pulling down of strongholds] in 2 Cor 10:4c).

[51] Καθαιρησειν παντα λογον, 131; cf. λογισμους καθαιρουντες [pulling down arguments] in 2 Cor 10:4.

[52] Cf. αιχμαλωτιζοντες παν νοημα εις την υπακοην του Χριστου [taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ] in 2 Cor 10:6a. See also Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus," pp. 145-47.

[53] I have not included Malherbe's discussion on the Odysseus, who acts in secret and willingly suffers ill treatment. I think it is too contrived to explain the phrase δυνατα τω θεω (2 Cor 10:4b) using the discussion on the philosopher's dress as armament.

[54] Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus," p. 150.

[55] Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus," p. 150.

within, the souls walls are unshakeable and cannot be broken down."[56] Thus, this common imagery caused Antisthenes to affirm that, "We must build walls of defense with our own impregnable *reasonings*" (τειχη κατασκευαστεον εν τοις αυτων αναλωτοις λογισμος; cf. λογισμους καθαιρουντες [pulling down reasonings or arguments] in 2 Cor 4:d).[57]

In sum, we have encountered the military metaphor employed in philosophical discussions of Philo and Antisthenes, where the souls of men can be fortified with either good (i.e., virtue as in the case of *Diogenes Laertius* 6.13) or bad (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 3:26) arguments and reasonings. In Philo, the evil arguments and reasonings of injustice and lawlessness (*De Confusione Linguarum* 108) that menace the souls of men, ought to be pulled down (130) by Justice and despoil them in the process (130).

While there still remains substantial differences between Paul on the one hand, and Philo and the Cynics on the other hand,[58] it is possible that Paul was aware of this military metaphor involving the fortification of the soul with vicious arguments and reasonings and its subsequent demolition. He modified and employed such imagery in 2 Cor 10:4c-6 in response to his opponents' accusation that he is merely human and not powerful and pneumatic (10:2b). Probably, behind Paul's opponent's accusations against him, are ungodly theologies and reasonings (10:5a) concerning Paul and the ministry, that has not only fortified the minds of his opponents in rebellion (10:6a), but has also captured the thoughts and allegiance of the Corinthian congregation (11:3). Although, Paul concedes that he is weak and handicapped as far as his human life and personhood is concerned (10:3a), his ministry and the tools he uses are not (10:3b). They are divine and are therefore powerful (10:4a,b) to destroy these fortified ungodly theologies and reasonings (10:4c-5a). Through these divine weapons, the minds that have been captured (10:5b) and menaced by this different gospel (11:3-4) can be delivered

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[56] Malherbe quotes Epiphanius, *Panarion* 3.26. Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus," p. 150 n. 37.

[57] Malherbe quotes *Diogenes Laertius* 6:13. Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus," p. 150 n. 41.

[58] In Paul, the structures that he attacks were built by his opponents, but in Philo, it is the people themselves who build injustice and mob-rule in their own souls. Also, the positive fortification of the soul by impregnable reasonings advocated by the Cynics, is totally foreign to the negative usage of fortification through reasonings, by Paul.

and restored in obedience to Christ (10:5b). With the minds of Corinthians delivered and restored in obedience to Christ, and their obedience completed in rejecting these ungodly teachers and thoughts (10:6b), the perpetrators of these evil strongholds can now be punished (10:6a).

Thus, Paul's appeal in 10:2a for the Corinthians to do something so that they may be spared from the boldness with which he reserves for his accusers, has gone full circle in 10:6. He restates his appeal for the Corinthians to complete their obedience (v. 6b) and reject Paul's opponents and their false accusations and teachings. When this has been done, Paul can finally demonstrate his boldness to his opponents by punishing their disobedience.

4. Conclusion

The gospel and other weapons that we have for Christian ministry is divine. They are capable of pulling down strongholds erected by various false teachers and false teachings. Philippines for a long time has been the Asian melting pot of false teachers and false teachings all in the guise of Christian ministry. The situation will hardly change in the new millenium. What should change is the apparent lack of biblical literacy among the laity and among the clergy in rural situated ministries. Christian ministry is warfare. Missionaries and educators, privileged to attain higher education, must work hard in indigenizing bible and Christian ministry education down to the level of the laity and rural clergy. In this way, the church will be greatly empowered to wage war "not according to the flesh."