

2 Corinthians 10:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

Analysis

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh (ἐν σαρκὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦντες οὐ κατὰ σάρκα στρατευόμεθα)—Paul distinguishes between inevitable human embodiment (en sarki, "in flesh") and sinful methods (kata sarka, "according to flesh"). Strateuometha (στρατευόμεθα, "we wage war") introduces the military metaphor that dominates verses 3-6. Christian ministry is not merely religious activity but spiritual warfare—a cosmic conflict requiring divine weapons.

This verse establishes the foundational antithesis: apostles operate in the physical realm but employ spiritual weapons. The opponents' error was inverting this—using fleshly weapons (eloquence, credentials, manipulation) in spiritual conflict. Paul's ministry model reflects the incarnation: fully human (en sarki) yet divinely empowered (kata pneuma).

Historical Context

Military imagery was ubiquitous in the Roman Empire. Corinthian Christians would have seen soldiers daily, understood siege warfare, and recognized the language of conquest. Paul appropriates this imagery to describe gospel ministry—not physical violence but spiritual conquest of rebellious thoughts and false ideologies that oppose God's truth.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What areas of ministry are you fighting with fleshly weapons (human wisdom, manipulation, guilt) rather than spiritual power (prayer, truth, Spirit's conviction)?
2. How does recognizing spiritual warfare change your response to opposition—from self-defense to prayer-dependent reliance on God?
3. What does it practically mean to 'walk in the flesh' (live as a human) while refusing to 'war according to the flesh' (use worldly methods)?

Interlinear Text

ἐν	σάρκα	γὰρ	περιπατοῦντες	οὐ	κατὰ	σάρκα
in	the flesh	For	though we walk	not	after	the flesh
G1722	G4561	G1063	G4043	G3756	G2596	G4561

στρατεύομεθα

war
G4754

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 10:4 (Parallel theme): (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

Galatians 2:20 (Parallel theme): I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Romans 8:13 (Parallel theme): For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

1 Timothy 1:18 (Parallel theme): This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

2 Timothy 4:7 (Parallel theme): I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

Hebrews 12:1 (Parallel theme): Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

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