

2 Corinthians 11:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall,
and escaped his hands.

Analysis

And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands. The final verse of Paul's 'fool's speech' catalog describes his inglorious escape: *dia thyidos en sargane* (διὰ θυρίδος ἐν σαργάνῃ, 'through a window in a basket'). *Sargane* (σαργάνῃ) was a large wicker basket used for cargo or fish—undignified transport for an apostle! *Echalasthēn dia tou teichous* (ἐχαλάσθην διὰ τοῦ τείχους, 'I was let down through the wall')—passive voice shows Paul's helplessness, dependent on others.

Escaped his hands (*exephygon tas cheiras autou, ἐξέφυγον τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ*)—barely escaped capture. The image is comical if not tragic: the great apostle Paul smuggled out of Damascus like contraband, lowered in a fish basket, fleeing under cover of darkness. This is the crescendo of his 'boasting'—not miraculous deliverance or bold confrontation but humiliating escape.

Yet this is precisely the point: Paul's ministry began with weakness and flight, establishing the pattern that continues. God delivers not through making Paul impressive but through preserving him in vulnerability. The basket escape embodies the theology of treasure in earthen vessels (4:7)—God's power displayed through human weakness and humiliation. This is how Paul 'boasts'—by exposing his utter dependence on God.

Historical Context

Damascus's city walls had houses built into them with windows overlooking the exterior (like Rahab's house, Josh 2:15). Disciples lowered Paul through such a window in a cargo basket, evading guards at the gates. Acts 9:25 says 'the disciples' lowered him; 2 Corinthians emphasizes Paul's passive role, being 'let down' rather than escaping by his own prowess.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does ending the 'boasting' catalog with a basket escape subvert everything the false apostles valued about impressive ministry?
2. In what ways does Paul's Damascus escape establish the theology of 2 Corinthians—power perfected in weakness, treasure in earthen vessels?
3. What humiliating experiences in your Christian life might actually be God's way of displaying His power through your weakness?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	διὰ	θυρίδος	ἐν	σαργάνῃ	ἐχαλάσθην	διὰ	τοῦ
And	by	a window	in	a basket	was I let down	by	G3588
G2532	G1223	G2376	G1722	G4553	G5465	G1223	
τείχους	καὶ	ἐξέφυγον	τὰς	χεῖρας	αὐτοῦ		
the wall	And	escaped	G3588	hands	his		
G5038	G2532	G1628		G5495	G846		

Additional Cross-References

Acts 9:25 (Parallel theme): Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.

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