

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 (σαργάνη) 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 (*exephagon 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 ἐχαλάσθη 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 hands his
G5038 G2532 G1628 G3588 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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