

WHOSE PRIDE/REJOICING/GLORY(ING) IN I CORINTHIANS 15.31?

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The people who read Tyndale's version of (1525)1535 encountered the phrase "By **oure** rejoysinge" in 1 Corinthians 15.31. This was also how the *Great Bible* of (1539)1540 rendered it, as did, with variant spelling ("By **our** rejoicing"), the *Geneva Bible* of (1560)1562 and the *Bishops' Bible* of (1568)1602. This rendering was based on the reading τὴν ἡμετέραν καύχησιν, which is that of Robert Estienne's Textus Receptus of 1550, as well as the Codex Alexandrinus (fifth-century uncial) and several minuscules.¹

J. B. Phillips, following Estienne's Textus Receptus, which not only reads τὴν ἡμετέραν καύχησιν, but also omits ἀδελφοί, "brothers", translated the entire verse: "I assure you, by the proud certainty which **we** share in Christ Jesus our Lord, that I face death every day of my life!" It will be noted that Phillips claimed, in his revised edition of 1972, to have followed the United Bible Societies' 1966 text, which has another reading here (see below). But as can be seen, he did not do so here, nor did he in a number of other verses, either.²

Earlier manuscripts, however, read τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν, in this verse, a reading which is found in the Textus Receptus of the Elzevir brothers of (1624)1633, as well as in the United Bible Societies' text and Nestle-Aland.²⁶ This reading was translated by *Rheims* in 1582 as "by **your** glorie" and by the *King James (Authorized) Version* in (1611)1873 as "by **your** rejoicing". This is an exception to the rule that the King James usually follows the Estienne text.

J. W. C. Wand, omitting ἀδελφοί, translated this whole verse as follows: "I swear by **your** pride in me, which I cherish so much in Christ Jesus our Lord, I do die every day in voluntary suffering and self-denial."

Schonfield, in the *Authentic New Testament*, including ἀδελφοί, translated this same verse as "I am ready to die any day', you say. Yes, that is **your** boast, brothers, which I make good in Christ Jesus our Master."

The *New American Bible*, following the same text, rendered it as "I swear to you, brothers, by the very pride *you* take in me, which I cherish in Christ Jesus our Lord, that I face death every day."

In 1928 the French *Bible du Centenaire* had followed a similar line, translating "Tous les jours, je suis exposé à la mort; j'en atteste, frères, celui qui est **votre** sujet de gloire [the one who is **your** reason for glorying], Jésus, le Christ, notre Seigneur."

But the text (as opposed to the margin) of the (*English*) *Revised Version* (1881) had another way of rendering the same Greek, namely "by that glorying in you", which goes better with the following ἣν ἔχω, "which I have". The

¹ See B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. Stuttgart: German Bible Society 1971, and the critical apparatus in Nestle-Aland-Aland²⁶, Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1979.

² Matthew 5.11, 21.18, 26.28; Mark 7.19, 14.24; Luke 14.5; John 3.25, 5.4, 7.8, 19.29; 1 Corinthians 13.3, 14.22a; Hebrews 11.11; and 2 John 3.

Revised Standard Version ((1946)1960) gave “by my pride in you (which I have)” here.

Whose pride/rejoicing/glory(ing) is Paul talking about here? Is he saying “our pride” or “your pride” or “my pride (in you)”? If we turn to Bauer’s lexicon, s.v. καύχησις 1, we read, as the translation of the phrase νῆ τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν, “as surely as I may boast of you”, which supports the interpretation of the (*English*) *Revised Version* and the *Revised Standard Version*. The same lexicon, s.v. ὑμέτερος 2, translates the longer phrase νῆ τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν ἣν ἔχω by “by the pride that I have in you=as surely as I may boast about you”, and says that the possessive [adjective] is here used for an objective genitive, referring to another example, in Romans 11.31— τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλέει “by the mercy shown to you”. This may be compared with the translation, in Bauer’s lexicon, s.v. νῆ, of the phrase νῆ τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν, “(yes, truly) by my pride in you”.

Both Abel’s grammar §33.r.Rem.I and Blass-Debrunner’s grammar §284.2 list Romans 11.31 as an example of the possessive adjective used for an objective genitive. Abel also lists Luke 22.19, Romans 15.4 and 1 Corinthians 15.31; Blass-Debrunner also lists 1 Corinthians 11.24. The same interpretation of the possessive adjective in 1 Corinthians 15.31 is found in Zerwick-Grosvenor’s *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, *ad loc*, and in Héring’s, Conzelmann’s and Orr and Walther’s commentaries.

This interpretation is followed in the *Twentieth Century New Testament*, Weymouth, Moffatt, Goodspeed, Montgomery, the *New English Bible*, Beck, the *Jerusalem Bible*, the *Good News Bible*, Barclay, the *New International Version* and the *Translator’s New Testament*, in English; and in Segond, *Synodale*, Osty-Trinquet, *Maredsous*, Benoit, the *Bible de Jérusalem*, the *Bible de la Pléiade*, the *Traduction œcuménique de la Bible*, Beaumont and the *Bible en français courant*, in French.

Did Paul indeed mean for the possessive adjective in 1 Corinthians 15.31 to be interpreted as the equivalent of an objective genitive? A comparison of that verse with the other verses in Paul’s letters mentioned above might help reassure us that it is legitimate to follow that interpretation.

In Romans 11.31 we have τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλέει. Is this “your mercie/mercy” (*Rheims* and *King James*), or “the mercy you receive/have received/have shown to you (by God)”? Most versions follow the latter interpretation.

In Romans 15.4 is it a case of something being written for “our learning” (with different spellings, Tyndale to the (*English*) *Revised Version*), that is, “so that we will learn”, or for “our instruction/guidance”, that is, “to instruct/teach us”? Here again, the context seems to support most versions in following the latter interpretation. Note especially Wand, Phillips, Beck, the *Jerusalem Bible*, the *Good News Bible* and the *New International Version*, which have “were/was/are written/meant to instruct/teach us”, as the translation of εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν διδασκαλίαν ἐγράφη. Instead of “we” as subject, we have “us” as object.

In 1 Corinthians 11.24 εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν, it is commonly agreed that the possessive adjective is the equivalent of an objective genitive (see Blass-Debrunner §284.2): “so that I may be remembered”. The only question that is debated here is the identification of the agent that is to do the remembering. Is it Jesus’ disciples, or God (as Joachim Jeremias would have it)? The nature of the

genitive, however, is not questioned. It is not the Lord who is to do the remembering, it is the Lord who is to be remembered. This is an undisputed case of a possessive adjective used as the equivalent of an objective genitive. The same is true of the same phrase in Luke 22.19.

The conclusion of this review of these examples leads us therefore to say that 1 Corinthians 15.31 τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχην (v.1. τὴν ἡμετέραν καύχην) is an instance where

- (1) we should not follow the v.1., . . . ἡμετέραν . . ., which has inferior manuscript support, and probably arose as a misunderstanding of the objective genitive and its relation to ἦν ἔχω (see Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, ad loc)—as did J. B. Phillips: “the proud certainty which we share”;
- (2) nor should we interpret the possessive adjective of the text as “**your** pride in me”, as did the *Bible du Centenaire*, J. W. C. Wand, Schonfield and the *New American Bible*;
- (3) but rather, with the majority of translations, we should interpret this possessive adjective as the equivalent of an objective genitive (as in Luke 22.19, Romans 11.31, Romans 15.4 and 1 Corinthians 11.24) and translate “**my** pride (in you)”.

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