

## A Study of *Prolambanō* and *Ekdechomai* from a Socio-Historical-Cultural Context:

1 Corinthians 11:17-34 Revisited

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### Introduction

Given the difficulty of translating from a source language to a receptor one, the Italian maxim which reads, *Traduttore traditor* (A translator is a traitor), may be right.<sup>1)</sup> The gist of the maxim is not that a translator intentionally becomes a traitor, but that a translator unintentionally becomes a traitor. In that sense, it is the unavoidable betrayal caused by the nature that language intrinsically possesses. Realizing such a difficulty of translation, Silva offers an insightful point on who a translator is, saying, “Translator is

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1) Moisés Silva, “Are translators traitors? Some personal reflections,” *The Challenge of Bible Translation: Communicating God’s Word to the World*, eds., Glen G. Scorgie, Mark L. Strauss, Steven M. Voth (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 37; D. A. Carson, *The Inclusive Language Debate: A Plea for Realism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 47-52; Raymond Van Leeuwen, “On Bible Translation and Hermeneutics” *After Pentecost: Language and Biblical Interpretation*, eds., Craig Bartholomew, Colin Greene, and Karl Moller, Scripture and Hermeneutics (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2001), 285-287.

someone who transforms a text by transferring it from one linguistic-cultural context to another.”<sup>2)</sup> In other words, a translation can be made very accurately on the basis of understanding the linguistic and cultural context of a source language.<sup>3)</sup>

The paper will investigate possible translation of two verbs in 1 Corinthians 11 in light of the cultural context along with the lexical analysis: *προλαμβάνω*<sup>4)</sup> (v. 21) and *ἐκδέχομαι*<sup>5)</sup> (v. 33). The two are so close that the translation of the former influences that of the latter. Admittedly the main English versions and the Korean versions render the former into “take before” and the latter “wait for” in a temporal sense.<sup>6)</sup> It is more probable, however, that the two should be translated in light of cultural circumstances in those days; the former signifies “consume” (or “devour”), the latter “accept.” Another translation of the two would make readers comprehend why Paul lays emphasis on one spiritual community and what he exhorts the Corinthian members to do in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. In order to reveal the two, after identifying the points at issue between the present translation and another possible translation, the next section will examine the identification of the problem in the Corinthian church. The following section will explore the two verbs in light of the archeological and linguistic study. The last section will illuminate 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 on the basis of another possible translation.

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2) Silva, “Are translators traitors?” 47.

3) Mark L. Strauss, “Current Issues in the Gender-Language Debate: A Response to Vern Poythress and Wayne Grudem,” in *The Challenge of Bible Translation: Communicating God’s Word to the World*, edited by Glen G. Scorgie, Mark L. Strauss, Steven M. Voth (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 116-17.

4) It is possible to render ‘take before’ in a temporal sense and ‘take’ in an intensified form. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, ed. And trans. William F. Arndt, F. Wilber Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker [BDAG], 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. *λαμβάνω*, *πρό*, and *προλαμβάνω*.

5) Both “wait” in a temporal sense and “receive” are possible. BDAG, *ἐκδέχομαι*.

6) E.g., ESV, KJV, NASB, NIV, RSV, NRSV.

## 1. Points at Issue between a Prevalent Translation and a Possible Translation

The existing translation understands the verbs in the light of the social stratum regardless of the practice of Greco-Roman banquets.<sup>7)</sup> Its presupposition is that believers gathered at a different time: a few affluent believers in Corinth gathered earlier to eat the better food, and the needy believers arrived late because they as a lower class had to work late. As a necessary result, Paul exhorts the rich believers to wait for the poor. However, there are some counterarguments that are obviously found in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. Above all, the verb *συνέρχομαι* occurs five times. Paul alludes to the fact that believers in Corinth gathered together at the same time. In addition, the phrase *ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό* (“at the same place,” v. 20) drops a hint that they gathered together at one place.<sup>8)</sup> Decidedly, if the rich arrived to the place earlier and ate food there, why would Paul say that “if anyone is hungry,

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7) Carl R. Holladay, *The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians*, Living Word Commentary (Austin, TX: Sweet Publishing, 1979), 145. Peter Lampe, “The Eucharist: Identifying with Christ on the Cross,” *Interpretation* 48 (1994), 39; Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2010), 545; Craig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 228; Barry D. Smith, “The Problem with the Observance of the Lord’s Supper in the Corinthian Church,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 20:4 (2010), 518-521.

8) Metzger maintains that “The phrase (*ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό*) which is common enough in classical Greek and in the Septuagint, acquired a quasi-technical meaning in the early church. This meaning, which is required in [Acts] 1:15; 2:1, 47; 1 Cor 11:20; 14:23, signifies the union of the Christian body, and perhaps could be rendered ‘in church fellowship.’” Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1975), 305.

let him eat at home” (v. 34 [ESV])<sup>9)</sup> For those reasons it is inappropriate to grasp the two verbs in a temporal sense.

Unlike the established translation, the premise of the possible translation that will be presented in this paper is that believers gathered together at the same time and at one place (or building), but they were separated and ate different food in quality and quantity. Here, the prefix *πρό* of *προλαμβάνω* is taken as an intensive form rather than a temporal marker, rendering it “consume.”<sup>10)</sup> Consequently, Paul admonishes the Corinthian believers to accept (*ἐκδέχονται*) each other in one community rather than “wait for” one another in a temporal sense.<sup>11)</sup>

## 2. Identification of the Problem in the Corinthian Church

The serious problem in Corinth can be traced by two factors: lexical occurrences in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 and the meaning of the repeatedly occurred words. These make to reconstruct the context, that is, *the* fundamental problem among the Corinthians.

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9) Fee asserts that the phrase “If anyone is hungry” is an exhortation for a few rich believers who caused the trouble in the Corinthian church. He presents the phrase on the basis of dynamic equivalence, “if anyone wants to gorge” or “if you want to satisfy your desire for the kinds of meals that the wealthy are accustomed to eat together.” Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1987), 568.

10) *πρό* has three meanings: 1) “marker of a position in front of an object,” 2) “marker of a point of time prior to another point of time,” and 3) “marker of precedence in importance or rank.” (BDAG, 864) The nuance of *πρό* in 1 Cor 11:21 is related not to 2) but to 3).

11) Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 542. David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2003), 540, 554.

## 2.1. Trace of the Problem by Lexical Occurrences

The problem that the Corinthian church faces seems to be intimately correlated to three lexical coherences that show that verses 17-34 can be considered as one pericope; the verb *συνέρχομαι* (come together) is repeated five times in both verses 17-22 and verses 33-34.<sup>12)</sup> In addition, two verbs *ἐσθίω* (eat) and *πίνω* (drink) occur together and sometimes alone 17 times throughout verses 17-34.<sup>13)</sup> Along with the lexical consistencies, it is obvious in light of verse 20 that Paul deals with the problem of “eating” (*ἐσθίω*) and “drinking” (*πίνω*) that happened at the time when the believers in Corinth came together (*συνέρχομαι*).

The inclusio of the phrase *οὐκ ἐπαινῶ* (I do not commend) in verses 17-22 hints that there is serious trouble in their gathering that Paul cannot speak well of the Corinthian believers. In verses 23-26, Paul refers to the Lord’s Supper tradition, employing two words, *παρέλαβον* (I received) and *παρέδωκα* (I delivered), common in the rabbinical literature.<sup>14)</sup> For the intent of resolving a difficulty in the church, Paul focuses on the genuine sense of what he received from the Lord and delivered to Corinthian believers.

## 2.2. Nature of the Problem in the Corinthian Church

The gatherings of believers in the earliest churches began short-

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12) It appears in v. 17, v. 18, v. 20, v. 33, and v. 34. Fee notices that the verb, *συνέρχομαι* (come together) might become “semi-technical term” to describe assembly that God’s people gather together to worship (14:23, 26). Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 536.

13) It occurs as follows; once in v. 20, once in v. 21, twice in v. 22, once in v. 25, twice in v. 26, twice in v. 27, twice in v. 28, four times in v. 29, once in v. 33, once in v. 34. If the verb, *προλαμβάνει* (v. 21) is translated “to eat,” the total number of it occurs 18 times in vv. 17-34.

14) *Ibid.*, 548.

ly after Jesus' ascension; Luke reports that "they [believers] devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship (*κοινωνία*), to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42 [ESV]).<sup>15)</sup> Such a gathering appears in Paul's life. When Paul was in Troas, he gathered together to break bread and preached on an appointed day (Acts 20:7, 11; cf. 27:35). The meetings were not compulsory but voluntary in Jesus Christ. Unlike the situation of today's churches, believers in the early churches might have celebrated the Lord's Supper in combination with a meal. When gathering together, they celebrated their common life, breaking bread and drinking wine to remember Jesus' death and resurrection. Such an assembly might play a crucial role in ascertaining their common identities created by Jesus' redemptive work.

Strictly speaking, there are various opinions on the order of Eucharistic rituals (breaking bread and drinking wine) and a meal between the Gospels<sup>16)</sup> and among scholars.<sup>17)</sup> It is perceivable

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15) Ellen Bradshaw Aitken, "The Ordering of Community: New Testament Perspectives," *Anglican Theological Review* 85:1 (2003), 20-22.

16) With respects to the order, there seems to be differences between the Synoptic; in Matthew and Mark version, there are bread sayings (Mt 26:26; Mk 14:22) and cup sayings (Mt 26:27-28; Mk 14:23) after communal meal (Mt 26:22; Mk 14:22). However, in Luke version Jesus did bread sayings (Lk 22:19), ate the meal (v. 20) and then cup sayings (v. 20).

17) Theissen claims that the meal was between the bread saying and cup saying. Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1982), 152-153. Das also supports Theissen's argument in light of an ordinary Jewish custom, "The early Christians would simply be following the Jewish custom of placing the sacramental cup of blessing after their meal even as the breaking of sacramental bread opened the meal." A. Andrew Das, "1 Corinthians 11:17-34 Revisited," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 62 (1998), 196; Contra Peter Lampe who maintains in a pagan Greco-Roman dinner party of the first century C. E. that the meal happened twice because of constituents of the Corinthian believers who were Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. Peter Lampe, "The Corinthian Eucharistic Dinner Party: Exegesis of a Cultural Context (1 Cor 11:17-34)," *Affirmation* 4 (1991): 2. Contra Robertson and Plummer who claim, "The Eucharist proper seems to have

that there were Eucharistic rituals and a meal in the gatherings.<sup>18)</sup> The Corinthian church that followed the tradition of Luke's Gospel might have the order as follows:<sup>19)</sup> first their meeting begins with blessing bread and breaking it, and then the meal is eaten, and finally, the meeting ends with blessing the cup and drinking from it.

### 3. Two Verbs in light of the Archeological Study and the Lexical Approach

This section focuses on understanding more clearly the problem among the Corinthians and the verbs, *προλαμβάνω* and *ἐκδέχομαι*. First, the archeological approach to a villa in those days will

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followed the Agape or Love-feast, being a continuation of it.” Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, vol. 32 (New York: C. Scribner, 1925), 240.

18) Acts 2:46 also shows that believers continued to gather together in the temple, broke bread in their houses, and shared their food with joy. Cf. *ταῖς ἀγάπαις* (“Love feasts”) in Jude 12 and *ἐν ταῖς ἀπάταις αὐτῶν συνεωχούμενοι ὑμῖν* (“while they feast with you”) in 1 Peter 2:13.

19) It seems that the tradition of institution of Lord's Supper had been preserved in two distinct forms; one is by Mark and Matthew, and another is by Luke and Paul. 19) Paul seems to follow the Lukan tradition regarding the Lord's Supper (vv. 23-26) because, in particular, there are three important things that are not stated in the Matthean and Markan traditions: “which is for you” in the bread saying, “new covenant in my blood” in the cup saying, and “Do this in remembrance of me” in the bread saying and cup saying. Jeremias compares the Lord's Supper between the Gospels, and between the Gospels and 1 Corinthian. Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, translated by Norman Perrin. 3rd ed. (New York: Scribner, 1966), 160-173. Fee neatly presents Matthew, Mark, Luke and 1 Corinthian. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 546-47.

shed light on the two verbs along with the problem in Corinth. Second, the lexically various usages of the two verbs will clear the way for another translation.

### 3.1. Archeological Evidence of Roman Villa

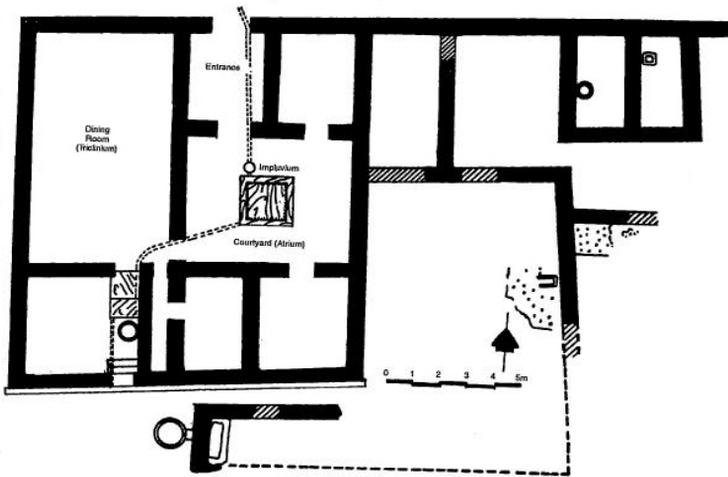
Given the fact that the church was located in Corinth, the meal that the Corinthian believers had should be understood in light of the Greco-Roman banquets of those days. One of the primary reasons is that Christianity did not gain public recognition in the first century, and believers gathered in the private dwellings of a few affluent believers rather than a public place such as a synagogue. It might be natural for them to follow the practice of Greco-Roman meals as contemporaries did at home.<sup>20)</sup>

James Wiseman made it possible to understand the practice of a meal that must have been performed in the first century. Leading an American team in the late 1970s, Wiseman excavated some sites that included a villa dated between AD 50 and 75 at Anaploga.<sup>21)</sup> He opened the way for a possible translation of the two verbs in 1 Corinthians 11 along with an understanding of the buildings in the first century. The plan of the Roman villa is as follows:

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20) Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2002), 178. He cites Dennis E. Smith's dissertation, *Social Obligation in the Context of Communal Meals: A Study of the Christian Meal in 1 Corinthians in Comparison with Graeco-Roman Meals* (Th.D. diss., Harvard University, 1980), 156. Cf. George May, "The Lord's Supper: Ritual of Relationship? Making a Meal of it in Corinth Part 2: Meals at Corinth," *The Reformed Theological Review* 61:1 (2002), 3-6.

21) Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000), 860.



The Roman Villa at the Anaploga<sup>22)</sup>

The triclinium was approximately 37 square meters (398 square feet), and 9-12 guests could recline in it. The atrium was a larger entry courtyard which was approximately 74 square meters (797 square feet), and 30-50 guests ate there but were not well protected from the weather.<sup>23)</sup> Under the custom of Greco Roman banquets the wealthy host invited guests and provided the wealthy with a high class a meal in the triclinium and the poor with a lower class a meal in the atrium.

The gatherings in the Corinthian church should be understood

22) Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 179.

23) Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 180; Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1995); Willi Braun, "The Greco-Roman Meal: Typology of Form or Form of Typology?" Meals in the Greco-Roman World Consultation, SBL annual meeting (Atlanta, November, 2003), 2, 241; Anthony C. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical and Pastoral Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2006), 182; Rachel M. McRae, "Eating with Honor: The Corinthian Lord's Supper in light of Voluntary Association Meal Practices," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130:1 (2011), 166-168.

in the structure of a Greco-Roman villa. It is evident that the believers in Corinth must have gathered to celebrate the Lord's Supper in the house of Gaius who was the richest in the church.<sup>24)</sup> They might be divided into two groups: those who could recline in the triclinium and those who had to stay in the area of the atrium.<sup>25)</sup> The Corinthian believers might treat a congregational meal as an ordinary banquet eaten in Corinth. They had followed the cultural custom under the practice of Greco-Roman banquets, serving people according to differences in social status.<sup>26)</sup> Even though they gathered together at one place, rich believers might be provided the better, more sufficient food at a different place in the villa, and the underprivileged believers the less qualified,

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24) Bruce suggests that believers in Corinth might gather together in the house of Gaius who was considered as the one who hosted the whole church (Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 1:14). F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, New century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1971), 109. Cf. Gregory Linton, "House Church Meetings in the New Testament Era," *Stone-Campbell Journal* 8:2 (2005), 229-244; Ernst Käsemann, "Guests of the Crucified," trans. Frederick J. Gaiser, *Word & World* 33:1 (2013), 62-64.

25) Two scenarios are possible: first, they gathered, blessed Eucharistic bread, broke it, went to triclinium (or atrium), ate food (meal), gathered again, blessed Eucharistic cup, and drunk from it. Second, each group went to either the triclinium or the atrium and performed in the order of Eucharistic bread, meal, and Eucharistic cup.

26) This phenomenon can be interpreted by honor-shame values in the Roman world. For helpful discussion, see J. E. Lendon, *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 58-60; John S. Kloppenborg, "Edwin Hatch, Churches and Collegia," *Origins and Method: Towards a New Understanding of Judaism and Christianity*, ed., Bradley H. McLean, JSNTSup 86 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 228; Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 38-40; Peter Richardson, *Building Jewish in the Roman East* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004), 187; McRae, "Eating with Honor: The Corinthian Lord's Supper in light of Voluntary Association Meal Practices," 165-81; Alisha Paddock, "First Corinthians 11 in a Post-Honor Culture," *Stone-Campbell Journal* 16:1 (2013), 85-96.

insufficient food in another place in it.

## 3.2. Lexical Approach to the Two Verbs

### 3.2.1. *προλαμβάνω* (v. 21)

As is mentioned above, the main English versions render *προλαμβάνω*(v. 21) in a temporal sense because of the meanings of *πρό* and *λαμβάνω*. The prefix *πρό* usually indicates something in front of an object or a time prior to another point of time.<sup>27)</sup> On the other hand, *λαμβάνω* typically signifies “take” as a representative meaning even though it has the nuance of the various extent.<sup>28)</sup> If *πρό* and *λαμβάνω* are combined, *προλαμβάνω* primarily seems to mean “take before.” However, the verb *προλαμβάνω* is not always used only in a temporal sense: Gal. 6:1 says, *ἐὰν καὶ προλημφθῆ ἄνθρωπος ἐν τινι παραπτώματι ...* (“If anyone is caught in any transgression ...” [ESV]). In addition, Wisdom 17:16 says, *εἴ τε γὰρ γεωργὸς ἦν τις ἢ ποιμὴν ἢ τῶν κατ’ ἐρημίαν ἐργάτης μόχθων προλημφθ εἰς τὴν δυσάλυκτον ἔμενεν ἀνάγκην μιᾷ γὰρ ἀλύσει σκότους πάντες ἐδέθησαν* (“For whether he was a farmer or a shepherd or a workman who toiled in the wilderness, he was seized, and endured the inescapable fate; for with one chain of darkness they all were bound.” Wisdom 17:17 [RSV]). It is observable that the verb *προλαμβάνω* should be decided in the context relevant to the text.<sup>29)</sup>

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27) BDAG, *πρό*.

28) Ibid., *λαμβάνω*.

29) Das, “1 Corinthians 11:17-34 Revisited,” 190; Bruce W. Winter, “Lord’s Supper at Corinth: an Alternative Reconstruction,” *Reformed Theological Review* 37 (1978), 74.

## 3.2.2. ἐκδέχομαι (v. 33)

The verb ἐκδέχομαι is used six times in the New Testament including 1 Corinthians 11:33; one of them means “look forward to” (Heb. 11:10), and four of them has the meaning of “wait for” (Acts 17:16; 1 Cor 16:11; Heb 10:13; James 5:7). However, there are places that have sense of “accept” (or “receive”) rather than “wait.” Genesis 44:32 says, ὁ γὰρ παῖς σου ἐκδέδεκται τὸ παιδίον ἰὸν παρα τοῦ πατρός (“For your servant *became a pledge of safety* for the boy to my father.” [ESV], italics mine). 3 Maccabees 5:26 says, οὐπω δὲ ἡλίου βολαὶ κατεσπείροντο καὶ τοῦ βασιλέως τοὺς φίλους ἐκδεχομένου ὁ Ἔρμων παραστάς ἐκάλει πρὸς τὴν ἔξοδον ὑποδεικνύων τὸ προθυμον τοῦ βασιλέως ἐν ἐτοίμῳ κείσθαι (“The rays of the sun were not yet shed abroad, and while the king was *receiving* his friends, Hermon arrived and invited him to come out, indicating that what the king desired was ready for action.” [RSV], italics mine). Sirach 32:14 says, ὁ φοβούμενος κύριον ἐκδέξεται παιδείαν καὶ οἱ ὀρθρίζοντες εὐρήσουσιν εὐδοκίαν (“He who fears the Lord will *accept* his discipline, and those who rise early to seek him will find favor.” [RSV], italics mine). Josephus frequently uses it in Jewish War in the sense of “receive”: 3:32 says, τότε γε μὴν φιλοφρόνως ἐκδεξάμενοι τὸν ἡρεμόνα προθύμως ... (“Now they offered a cordial *welcome* to the commander-in-chief...”)30) 6:140 says, τὸν ὑποστρέφοντα γὰρ ἕκαστος οἰκεῖον διὰ σκότους ὡς ἐπιόντα Ῥωμαῖον ἐξεδέχετο (“each man in the darkness *receiving* a returning comrade as if he were an advancing Roman.”)31); 7:74 says, ἡ μὲν οὖν Ῥωμαίων πόλις οὕτως Οὐεσπασιανὸν ἐκδεξαμένη προθύμως εὐθὺς εἰς πολλὴν εὐδαιμονίαν ἐπεδίδου (“And this was the manner in which Rome so joyfully

30) Flavius Josephus, The Jewish War, Books I-III, trsn., St. J. Thackeray, vol. 203 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1976-1981), 585, italics mine.

31) Flavius Josephus, The Jewish War, Books IV-VII, translated by St. J. Thackeray, vol. 210 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1976-1981), 417 italics mine.

received Vespasian, and hence grew immediately into a state of great prosperity.”).<sup>32)</sup> These examples demonstrate that the meaning of the verb ἐκδέχομαι should be decided in the context of text.

## 4. 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 Revisited

The possible translation of the two verbs provides the seriousness of the outward problem between the believers in Corinth, and then the horizontal problem has closely to do with the vertical problem. Paul reminds the Corinthians believers of what Jesus said in the Last Supper and then exhorts them to discern the spiritual community and to receive “the have-nots,” addressing the existing problem in the church.

### 4.1. Outward, Horizontal Problem

Paul asserts that he cannot praise some of the Corinthian believers who gathered to celebrate the Lord’s Supper (vv. 17, 22): “It is not the Lord’s supper that you eat” (v. 20 [ESV]). Paul’s criticism is not that they did not gather together, but that they did not appropriately practice the Lord’s Supper.<sup>33)</sup> Along with the criticism, Paul simultaneously gives them a hint that there is a serious conflict in the church: *σχίσματα* (divisions, v. 18) and *αἰρέσεις* (factions, v. 19). Unlike various discords that had existed in the church, this conflict seems to be closely connected to social difference between Corinthian believers. Paul reproaches “those who have” for humiliating “those who have nothing” (v. 22).<sup>34)</sup>

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32) Ibid., 527, italics mine.

33) For Paul, the well-to-do had not performed the Lord’s Supper (vv. 20, 22). Cf. Willem S. Vorster, “On Early Christian Communities and Theological Perspectives,” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 59, (1987), 26-34.

The seeds of trouble might already be sown at the outset of the church because the constituents of the church were a minority of rich people and a majority of poor people. “For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth” (1:26 [ESV]). It is conceivable that the current problem in the church was a conflict between a few rich believers and the large mass of needy ones.<sup>35)</sup> For Paul, the split between believers in the church was not appropriate to the identity of believers and the Christian community. In this respect, the Corinthian believers failed not to gather together but to realize genuinely the new community that consisted of those who had new identities.<sup>36)</sup>

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34) It does not need to say that all conflicts in Corinth were between rich believers and poor ones; it is clear that there was a conflict between the cliques related to leaderships in the church: Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or Christ (1 Cor 1:10-12, 3:1-9).

35) Contra Conzelmann and Schmithals. Conzelmann argues that “individualistic pneumatism” made to be divided into individual groups; they were “overheated enthusiasts for faith in the Spirit” and believed that sacraments had magical effect. Thus, they did not do Lord’s Supper to celebrate together, and ate earlier for physical satisfaction and spiritual edification. Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Hermeneia-A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible, vol. 43 (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1975), 194; Schmithals divides the Corinthian believers into “the Christ people who had come in, i.e., the Gnostics, and an apostle people, who defended the ecclesiastical tradition.”; the Christ people rejected sacrament of Christ’s body and blood because they believed that bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper is principally the same as food offered to idols. Walter Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth: an Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1971), 250, 254-255; Opposing the understandings of Conzelmann and Schmithals, Fee rightly points out that both of them cannot explain about “despising the church of God and humiliating those who have nothing” (v. 22 [ESV]). Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 531.

36) Käsemann, “Guests of the Crucified,” 65-68.

## 4.2. Inward, Vertical Problem

The Corinthians' outward problem, "abusing those who are underprivileged," revealed the inner problem, "abusing the Lord's Supper."<sup>37)</sup> Paul evokes the Lord's Supper tradition because, even though the Corinthian believers were familiar with the tradition,<sup>38)</sup> the erroneous actions of a few believers were denying the heart of the Lord's Supper.

Communion was to be performed on the basis of what Jesus said in the Last Supper and what Jesus fulfilled on the cross. Beginning with the backdrop of the Last Supper in the Synoptic Gospels, "on the night when he [Jesus] was betrayed," Paul lays emphasis on one spiritual community based on new covenant in Jesus' blood. Jesus' death and "newness" signifies the creation of a new relationship with God, decisively different from the Sinai covenant and the Law in light of the Jeremianic promise.<sup>39)</sup> Jeremiah 31:33 says, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (ESV). By taking part in the cup, believers in Corinth participated in the new covenant and confirmed their identities in the new relationship created between God and his people on the basis of Christ's blood shed on the cross.<sup>40)</sup> Partaking in the

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37) Christopher Wells, "Word of Love: The Sacramental Itinerary of 1 Corinthians," *Anglican Theological Review* 93:4 (2011), 583-586.

38) It appears that Paul received from the Lord and delivered to them, saying, "I received from the Lord" (v. 23 [ESV]). Regarding v. 23, Robertson and Plummer correctly argue that what matters is not "the mode of the communication" but "the source" and "the contents of the communication." Robertson and Plummer, *The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 242-243; Bruce also asserts that even though the preposition *para*, may mean the direct delivery from Jesus rather than *ἀπὸ* that is used here, two words (received, delivered) should be emphasized rather than the preposition; Paul seems to emphasize Jesus, the ultimate source of tradition of the Lord's Supper. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 110.

39) Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 555.

40) *Ibid.*, 557.

wine marks the establishment of a new community that is made up of believers who share the same identity in the new relationship with God. In this regard, for the Corinthian believers, participation in the Lord's Supper is not merely a memorial of both the Last Supper and Christ's death itself,<sup>41)</sup> but also a celebration of their new identities and their new relationship with God fulfilled in Jesus' salvific death and resurrection.<sup>42)</sup>

### 4.3. Two Solutions for the Believers in Corinth

In light of the significance of what Jesus said in the Last Supper, the trouble between the Corinthian believers was serious. For Paul, it was an unimaginable conflict in a spiritual community built on the basis of Jesus' death. Making them recognize anew the horizontal relationship with others (v. 24) and the vertical relationship with God (v. 25) resulting from Jesus' death, Paul gives them two practical solutions beginning with the conjunction, *ὥστε* (so then) respectively in verses 27-32 and verses 33-34.

#### 4.3.1. First Solution: Discern the Spiritual Community, the Church!

For Paul, the fact that a few affluent believers ate the better food at the privileged place was to humiliate the other believers (v. 22). In the light of the phase of escalation, Paul considers the outward problem as abusing the spiritual community, the Corinthian church that is composed of those who share a new identity on the basis of Jesus' death; Paul sees a few believers' action as an unworthy manner and as being "guilty concerning

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41) Käsemann, "Guests of the Crucified," 71-73; Aitken, "The Ordering of Community: New Testament Perspectives," 27-29.

42) Eugene LaVerdiere, *The Eucharist in the New Testament and the Early Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 31-32.

the body and blood of the Lord” (v. 27).<sup>43</sup> Thus, as a corrective for them, Paul says, “Let a person examine himself” (v. 28 [ESV]); they should scrutinize how their action will influence their relationship with other believers in one spiritual community.<sup>44</sup>

As a subsequent corrective, Paul exhorts them to discern the body, namely, the spiritual community (v. 29).<sup>45</sup> Here, it should be noted that there are debates on how “body” should be understood; the point of debate is whether “body” signifies Jesus’ physical body or the spiritual community of believers, *the church*. Above all, the reason that it is understood as a physical body is that Jesus’ body is mentioned in verse 24 and verse 27. With this view, Andrew A. Das provides a grammatical approach to prove that it refers to a physical body. He thinks it is a sacramental body in terms of the rhetorical structure of the text γάρ in verse 29 is connected to verse 28, and δέ in verse 28 is linked to verse 27. The link seems to indicate that as the body in verse 27 means the body of the Lord, as body in verse 29 is used as the same sense in terms of a grammatical link;<sup>46</sup> Das sees verse 27 as a parallel of verse 29.<sup>47</sup> However, one must ask why Paul does not

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43) Hays may be right about vv. 27-28 when he maintains: “The statement in verse 27 about eating the bread and drinking the cup “unworthily” has often been misunderstood to mean that only the perfectly righteous can partake of the Lord’s Supper, and the call for self-examination in verse 28 has been heard as a call for intense introspection.” Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1997), 200.

44) Hays asserts that the clause, “let a person examine himself” in the context of the Corinthian church is “self-scrutiny of relationship with others” rather than “spiritual and introspective scrutiny.” *Ibid.*, 200.

45) For helpful discussion on “body” see Thomas J. Davis, “Discerning the Body: The Eucharist and the Christian Social Body in Sixteenth Century Protestant Exegesis,” *Fides et historia* 37-38, nos. 2- 1 (2005-2006), 67-81.

46) Das, “1 Corinthians 11:17-34 Revisited,” 199.

47) *Ibid.* Das asserts that “body” is used as the abbreviated form of the body and blood of the Lord.

use the genitive phrase, τοῦ κυρίου<sup>48)</sup> and only uses “body” without mention of blood, if “body” should be understood as Jesus’ physical body in previous verses. Furthermore, when Paul mentions “body” in 1 Corinthians, he used to regard it as the spiritual community, the church (10:17), saying, “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (ESV). Paul also employs the image of “one body” to describe the concept of the church, the spiritual body (12:12-26).<sup>49)</sup>

Paul says that anyone who eats and drinks without discerning one spiritual community would be under the judgment of God. Paul notes that such judgment had already been executed in the Corinthian church (v. 30),<sup>50)</sup> saying, “That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died” (ESV). Above all, the judgment is understood as a divine way to correct the community’s action, it is not to “be condemned along with the world” (v. 32 [ESV]). With respect to the judgment as a divine corrective, Paul’s intention reveals the logical reasoning that flows between verses 28-29 and verses 30-31, and verses 30-31 and verse 32.<sup>51)</sup> If they

48) Robertson and Plummer claim that putting τοῦ κυρίου behind τὸ σῶμα is obviously an interpolation. Robertson and Plummer, *The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 252. Many early copyists seem to understand that it was proper to put τοῦ κυρίου behind it (Ⲙ<sup>2</sup> C<sup>3</sup> D F G). However, it does not appear in authoritative texts (P<sup>46</sup> Ⲙ\* A B C\*) Nestle Alan 27<sup>th</sup>, 460.

49) Bruce sees the body as “the corporate unity of all who share his life.” Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 115. Cf. Kei Eun Chang, *The Community, the Individual and the Common Good: ‘To Idion’ and ‘To Sympheron’ in the Greco-Roman World and Paul*, The Library of New Testament Studies (Bloomsbury: T & T Clark, 2015), 181-82; Wolfgang Vondey, *People of Bread: Rediscovering Ecclesiology* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2008), 288-289.

50) Fee asserts that the situation of judgment in the Corinthian church (v. 30) might be temporary, and this can be understood in expansion of the modern Christian society; in light of prophetic insight Paul relates the temporary judgment of God to the intertwined problem in the church and sees “death and sickness that happened recently in the church” as the judgment of God toward the whole community. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 565.

51) Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 566.

examined themselves and discerned the community (vv. 28-29), they would not be under judgment (vv. 30-31).<sup>52)</sup> The phenomenal results of judgment in the church (vv. 30-31) do not mean perpetual destruction but divine discipline through which God corrects his people (v. 32).<sup>53)</sup>

#### 4.3.2. Second Solution: Accept One Another! (v. 33)

Beginning with the conjunction, ὥστε (so then) in verse 33, Paul reaches the most exterior problem that a few believers humiliated the other believers at the time when believers in Corinth gathered together to celebrate the Lord's Supper (vv. 17-22). Paul exhorts them to accept genuinely one another as those who have a new identity through a new relationship with God on the basis of Jesus' death. In this regard, his advice is to leap over the wall of social status.<sup>54)</sup> Paul clarifies his view of sociological categories based on the new covenant in his blood in 1 Corinthians 12:13, saying, "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit" (ESV).<sup>55)</sup>

A subsequent practical advice of Paul is addressed to a few believers who dishonored the other believers. He does not con-

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52) Hays asserts that the word, "judgment" can be understood in communal dimension as well as personal dimension because when the word διακρίνω is used in 6:5 and 14:29, it means the whole community rather than merely individuals. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 201.

53) Bruce sees it as "a disciplinary chastisement" for the people of the Lord himself (5:5), saying, "You are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 116.

54) Hays, *First Corinthians*, 203.

55) Paul also presents his understanding of sociological category in Gal 3:28, saying, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (ESV)

demn the wealthy but simply exhorts them to eat and drink at home in order not to humiliate those who have nothing but share the same identity in one spiritual community.

## Conclusion

The paper shows how historical and archaeological research influences the translation of the Bible. The main English versions render the two verbs *προλαμβάνω* (v. 21) and *ἐκδέχομαι* (v. 33) in 1 Corinthians 11 in a temporal sense. However, the excavation of the Roman villa in the region of Corinth sheds light on another possible translation, and the various usages of the two terms open another possibility of the words' translation that is fit to Paul's exhortations relevant to the problem in the Corinthian church. Paul exhorts them to share food in the same level, discern the church and accept one another in one new community that is made up of believers who have the same identity in their new relationship with God based on the new covenant.

### <Key words>

1 Corinthians 11:17-34, Translations, *προλαμβάνω*, *ἐκδέχομαι*, Socio-Historical-Cultural Context

### <주제어>

고린도전서 11:17-34, 번역, *προλαμβάνω*, *ἐκδέχομαι*, 사회-역사-문화적인 정황

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<초록>

A Study of *Prolambanō* and *Ekdechomai* from  
a Socio-Historical-Cultural Context:

1 Corinthians 11:17-34 Revisited

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한 언어에서 다른 언어로 번역할 때 생기는 어려움을 감안한다면, “번역가는 반역자다”(“Traduttore traditor”)라는 이탈리아의 유명한 격언이 어느 정도 일리가 있다고 할 수 있다. 사실 이 속담은 “의도적이지 아니라, 어쩔 수 없이 번역가는 반역자가 된다”는 진의를 내포한다. 그런 의미에서, 한 언어를 다른 언어로 완벽하게 담아낼 수 없는, 즉 한 언어가 고유하게 가지는 특성들 때문에 생기는 “피할 수 없는 반역”임이 틀림없다. 여기서 그 “특성들”은 사회적·역사적·문화적 정황과 관련되는데, 필자는 이 정황들을 정확하게 이해할 때에야 비로소 정확한 번역이 이루어진다고 믿는다.

본 논문에서 필자는 다양한 정황을 고려해서 고린도전서 11장에 등장하는 두 동사인, *προλαμβάνω*(21절)와 *ἐκδέχομαι*(33절)의 번역을 기존의 것보다 더 정확하게 이해하려고 시도한다. 이 두 동사는 매우 밀접하게 관련되는데, 일반적으로 영어번역본들과 한글번역본들은 시간적인 의미에 강조점을 두어, *προλαμβάνω*를 “먼저 취하다”로, *ἐκδέχομαι*를 “기다리다”로 번역한다. 그러나 이 논문에서 필자는 그 두 단어의 시간적인 의미를 배제하고, *προλαμβάνω*를 “게걸스럽게 먹다”로, *ἐκδέχομαι*를 “받아들이다”로 번역되어야 한다고 제안한다. 만약 이렇게 그 두 단어가 이해된다면, 고린도전서

11:17-34에서 바울이 영적으로 하나된 공동체를 강조하는 이유와 더불어 바울이 고린도 교인들에게 권면하는 내용들을 올바르게 이해하게 된다. 이것을 위해, 필자는 “기존의 번역”과 본 논문에서 “제안하는 번역”의 논쟁점이 무엇인지 설명한 이후, 고린도 교회에서 일어났던 문제가 무엇이었는지 조사한다. 그런 다음, 필자는 두 단어가 여러 문서에서 다양한 의미로 사용되었다는 것을 밝힘으로서 다른 번역의 가능성을 열어놓고, 고고학적인 연구를 통해 두 동사를 새롭게 이해한다. 마지막으로, 필자는 두 동사의 새로운 의미를 기초로 해서, 고린도전서 11:17-34를 새롭게 조명한다.

<Abstract>

**A Study of *Prolambanō* and *Ekdechomai* from  
a Socio-Historical-Cultural Context:**

1 Corinthians 11:17-34 Revisited

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Given the difficulty of translating from a source language to a receptor one, the Italian maxim which reads, *Traduttore traditor* (A translator is a traitor), may be right. The gist of the maxim is not that a translator intentionally becomes a traitor, but that a translator unintentionally becomes a traitor. In that sense, it is the unavoidable betrayal caused by the nature that language intrinsically possesses. Realizing such a difficulty of translation, I believe that a translation can be made rather accurately on the basis of understanding the linguistic and cultural context of a source language.

The paper investigates possible translations of the two verbs in 1 Corinthians 11 in light of the cultural context along with the lexical analysis: *προλαμβάνω* (v. 21) and *ἐκδέχομαι* (v. 33). The two terms occur relatively close to one another that the translation of the former influences that of the latter. Admittedly, the main versions of the Bible (in both English and Korean) render the former into “take before” and the latter “wait for” in a temporal sense. It is more probable, however, that the two should be translated in light of cultural circumstances in those days: the former signifies “consume” (or devour), the latter “accept.” The newly proposed translation of the two would make readers comprehend why Paul lays emphasis on one spiritual community and what he

exhorts the Corinthian members to do in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. After identifying the points at issue between the present translations and another possible translations, the next section examines the identification of the problem in the Corinthian church. The following section explores the two verbs in light of the archeological and linguistic considerations. The last section illuminates 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 on the basis of another possible translations.