

1 Corinthians 11:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

Analysis

For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you—Controversial verse. Δεῖ γάρ (dei gar, for there must be) suggests divine necessity. Αἵρεσεῖς (haireseis, heresies) originally meant factions or parties (related to schismata, v. 18), not doctrinal error (later technical meaning). God uses even sinful divisions for His purposes: revealing character.

That they which are approved may be made manifest (ἴνα οἱ δόκιμοι φανεροὶ γένωνται)—dokimoi (approved/tested) is a metallurgical term for refined gold. Divisions act as fire that tests and reveals genuine faith versus false profession. Those who pursue unity, love, and humility prove themselves genuine; those who foster division for selfish gain expose their carnal nature. Paul doesn't endorse divisions but acknowledges God's sovereignty in using even sin to refine His church. This echoes Jesus's warning: "offenses must come" (Matthew 18:7).

Historical Context

Greek philosophical schools (Stoics, Epicureans) were rife with factions and personality cults. Corinthian Christians, steeped in this culture, imported divisive attitudes into the church. Paul's theology of testing (1:18-31, 3:10-15) views trials as revelatory—they expose hearts. Persecution, false teaching, and internal division all serve God's refining purpose. First-century believers understood

suffering and division as eschatological tribulations preceding Christ's return, testing who would endure.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does God use church divisions and conflicts to reveal genuine versus false faith?
2. What distinguishes those 'approved' by God versus those who fail the test of division?
3. How should churches respond to inevitable conflicts—with despair, or with trust in God's refining purposes?

Interlinear Text

δεῖ	γὰρ	καὶ	αἱρέσεις	ἐν	ὑμῖν	εῖναι	ἴνα	οἱ
there must	For	also	heresies	among	you	be	that	G3588
G1163	G1063	G2532	G139	G1722	G5213	G1511	G2443	
δόκιμοι	φανεροὶ	γένωνται	ἐν	ὑμῖν				
they which are approved	manifest	may be made	among	you				
G1384	G5318	G1096	G1722	G5213				

Additional Cross-References

1 John 2:19 (Creation): They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

Titus 3:10 (Parallel theme): A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

Acts 20:30 (Parallel theme): Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Deuteronomy 13:3 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Luke 17:1 (Parallel theme): Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!

Matthew 18:7 (Parallel theme): Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

Galatians 5:20 (Parallel theme): Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,