

1 Corinthians 16:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.

Analysis

Whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send—Paul insists on financial accountability, delegating authority to the Corinthian congregation to select trustworthy envoys. *Dokimazō* (δοκιμάζω, "approve") implies careful testing and verification of character. The phrase *di' epistolōn* ("by letters") suggests written credentials or letters of recommendation, a common practice in the ancient church (2 Corinthians 3:1).

To bring your liberality unto Jerusalem—*Charis* (χάρις), typically translated "grace," here means "generous gift" or "liberality." Grace received from God produces grace given to others. This theological linkage pervades 2 Corinthians 8-9, where Paul calls the collection *charis* repeatedly. Christian generosity is grace flowing through redeemed hearts, not mere philanthropy.

Historical Context

Ancient letters of recommendation authenticated travelers in a world without modern identification systems. Paul himself wrote such letters (Romans 16:1-2, Philemon 1:8-17). The requirement that Corinthians choose their own representatives demonstrates primitive church democracy and financial transparency, protecting both the gift and Paul's reputation.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What safeguards does Paul build into the collection process, and what do they teach about handling church finances?
2. How does understanding giving as "grace" (charis) rather than duty transform the motivation for generosity?
3. Why is it important that churches select their own representatives for financial matters rather than deferring entirely to apostolic authority?

Interlinear Text

ὅταν δὲ παραγένωμαι οὓς ἐὰν δοκιμάσητε δι'

when **And** **I come** **G3739** **whomsoever** **ye shall approve** **by**
G3752 G1161 G3854 G1437 G1381 G1223

ἐπιστολῶν τούτους πέμψω ἀπενεγκεῖν τὴν χάριν ὑμῶν

your letters **them** **will I send** **to bring** **G3588** **liberality** **your**
G1992 G5128 G3992 G667 G5485 G5216

εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ.

unto **Jerusalem**
G1519 G2419

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