

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