

1 Corinthians 3:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

Analysis

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation (ὡς σοφὸς ἀρχιτέκτων θεμέλιον ἔθηκα, hōs sophos architektōn themelion ethēka)—architektōn (architect/master builder) denotes the chief contractor who designs and oversees construction. Paul founded the Corinthian church (Acts 18), establishing the themelion (foundation). Yet he attributes this role to charis (χάρις, grace), not personal skill.

And another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon (βλεπέτω πῶς ἐποικοδομεῖ, blepetō pōs epikodomei)—the present imperative blepetō ('let him watch carefully') introduces solemn warning. Apollos and subsequent teachers build on Paul's foundation, but the quality of their work matters eternally. Pōs ('how,' 'in what manner') emphasizes method and material, not just activity. Careless building on a true foundation still invites judgment (verse 15).

Historical Context

Ancient construction required master builders who understood architecture, engineering, and materials. Foundations were especially critical—buildings erected on inadequate foundations collapsed. Paul's metaphor would resonate in a

city that, after destruction in 146 BC, was rebuilt under Roman engineering standards emphasizing strong foundations for earthquake resistance.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's claim to have 'laid the foundation' as God's grace, not personal achievement, model proper understanding of ministerial calling?
2. What does it mean to 'take heed how you build' on the foundation others have laid—in your family, church, or sphere of influence?
3. What building materials (doctrines, methods, emphases) are you adding to the church's structure—gold or stubble?

Interlinear Text

Κατὰ	τὴν	χάριν	τὴν	θεοῦ	τὴν	δοθεῖσάν	μοι
According	which	to the grace	which	of God	which	is given	unto me
G2596	G3588	G5485	G3588	G2316	G3588	G1325	G3427

ὥς	σοφὸς	ἀρχιτέκτων	θεμέλιον	τέθεικα,	ἄλλος	δὲ
as	a wise	masterbuilder	the foundation	I have laid	another	But
G5613	G4680	G753	G2310	G5087	G243	G1161

ἐποικοδομεῖ	ἕκαστος	δὲ	βλεπέτω	πῶς	ἐποικοδομεῖ
buildeth thereon	every man	But	let	how	buildeth thereon
G2026	G1538	G1161	G991	G4459	G2026

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 3:11 (Parallel theme): For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:20 (Parallel theme): Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

Ephesians 2:20 (Parallel theme): And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

1 Corinthians 9:2 (Parallel theme): If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

Daniel 12:3 (Parallel theme): And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

Ecclesiastes 12:9 (Parallel theme): And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.

Romans 12:3 (Grace): For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Matthew 24:45 (Parallel theme): Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

Matthew 7:24 (Parallel theme): Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

Luke 11:35 (Parallel theme): Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.