

1 Corinthians 3:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's;

Analysis

Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's (πάντα ὑμῶν, panta hymōn)—Paul catalogs seven possessions spanning human, cosmic, temporal, and eternal realms. First, the disputed leaders (Paul, Apollos, Cephas) belong to believers as servants, not vice versa. Second, **the world** (ὁ κόσμος)—not as domain of sin but as creation, redeemed and inherited (Romans 4:13, 'the promise... that he should be the heir of the world').

Third, **life** (ζωή) and **death** (θάνατος)—both serve believers' good. Life provides opportunity for service; death is gain (Philippians 1:21), the doorway to glory. Death has lost its sting (1 Corinthians 15:55); even in dying, believers conquer. Fourth, **things present** and **things to come**—temporal and eternal blessings. Nothing lies outside believers' possession in Christ. This breathtaking comprehensiveness echoes Romans 8:28 ('all things work together for good') and 8:38-39 (nothing can separate us from God's love). The Corinthians' partisan bickering appears infinitely petty against this cosmic inheritance.

Historical Context

Ancient philosophy distinguished between those possessing wisdom (who 'owned' reality through understanding) and the ignorant masses. Stoics spoke of the wise man possessing everything through rational alignment with nature. Paul radically democratizes and Christianizes this: all believers, through union with Christ,

possess literally everything—not through philosophical achievement but through grace.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the truth that 'all things are yours'—including difficult circumstances, past failures, and future uncertainties—transform your perspective on present trials?
2. What does it mean practically that 'death' is yours—how can you live unafraid of mortality and even see death as gain?
3. How should possessing 'Paul, Apollos, and Cephas' as your servants change how you relate to teachers, pastors, and Christian leaders?

Interlinear Text

εἴτε	Παῦλος	εἴτε	Ἀπολλῶς	εἴτε	Κηφᾶς	εἴτε
Whether	Paul	Whether	Apollos	Whether	Cephas	Whether
G1535	G3972	G1535	G625	G1535	G2786	G1535
κόσμος	εἴτε	ζωή	εἴτε	θάνατος	εἴτε	ἐνεστώτα
the world	Whether	life	Whether	death	Whether	things present
G2889	G1535	G2222	G1535	G2288	G1535	G1764
εἴτε	μέλλοντα·	πάντα	ὑμῶν	ἐστίν,		
Whether	things to come	all	yours	are		
G1535	G3195	G3956	G5216	G2076		

Additional Cross-References

Philippians 1:21 (Parallel theme): For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

2 Corinthians 4:5 (Parallel theme): For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

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