

1 Corinthians 4:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.

Analysis

Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us. Paul unleashes biting irony. The three assertions—kekoresmenoi (κεκορεσμένοι, "you are satiated"), eploutēsate (ἐπλουτήσατε, "you have become rich"), ebasilensate (ἐβασιλεύσατε, "you have reigned as kings")—mock their realized eschatology. They acted as if the kingdom had fully arrived, enjoying its benefits while apostles still suffered. The perfect tenses suggest they viewed their spiritual prosperity as a settled achievement.

And I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. The optative ophelon (ὄφελον, "would that") expresses unfulfilled desire. Paul sarcastically wishes their delusion were reality—if the kingdom had truly arrived, apostolic suffering would also cease. Instead, the "already/not yet" tension means believers currently share Christ's suffering before sharing His glory (Rom 8:17). The Corinthians' triumphalism betrayed theological confusion, mistaking spiritual gifts for eschatological fulfillment.

Historical Context

Corinth's wealth and strategic location bred prosperity consciousness. Some scholars detect early "proto-gnostic" influences—an over-realized eschatology that emphasized present spiritual enlightenment over future bodily resurrection. Paul's irony recalls Jesus's Beatitudes, which pronounced blessing on the poor,

persecuted, and mourning—not the self-satisfied rich (Luke 6:20-26). The apostolic suffering catalog that follows (vv. 9-13) provides devastating contrast to Corinthian complacency.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. In what ways does contemporary Western Christianity mirror the Corinthians' triumphalism—emphasizing prosperity, comfort, and spiritual "victory" while minimizing costly discipleship?
2. How have you confused spiritual blessings or emotional experiences with the kingdom's final consummation?
3. What would it look like for you to embrace the "already/not yet" tension—grateful for Christ's inaugurated victory while still bearing your cross in a fallen world?

Interlinear Text

ἡδη κεκορεσμένοι ἐστέ ἡδη ἐπλουτήσατε χωρὶς ἡμῶν

Now **full** **ye are** **Now** **ye are rich** **without** **us**
G2235 G2880 G2075 G2235 G4147 G5565 G2257

ἐβασιλεύσατε καὶ ὅφελόν γε ἐβασιλεύσατε ἵνα καὶ

ye did reign **also** **I would to God** **G1065** **ye did reign** **that** **also**
G936 G2532 G3785 G1065 G936 G2443 G2532

ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν συμβασιλεύσωμεν

we **you** **might reign with**
G2249 G5213 G4821

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 5:10 (Kingdom): And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Proverbs 13:7 (Parallel theme): There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.

Romans 12:3 (References God): 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.

1 Corinthians 5:6 (Parallel theme): Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

1 Corinthians 1:5 (Parallel theme): That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;

2 Corinthians 13:9 (Parallel theme): For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection.

Luke 6:25 (Parallel theme): Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

Galatians 6:3 (Parallel theme): For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.