

1 Corinthians 5:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,

Analysis

For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit—Paul's apostolic authority transcended physical presence. Though in Ephesus (16:8), he was spiritually united with the Corinthian church and could exercise apostolic judgment. **Have judged already, as though I were present** (ἤδη κέκρικα ὡς παρών)—the perfect tense kekrisa indicates a settled, completed decision. Paul didn't need more information; the facts were clear, and judgment was rendered.

Concerning him that hath so done this deed (τὸν οὕτως τοῦτο κατεργασάμενον)—the verb katēgazomai suggests deliberate, ongoing action, not a one-time fall. This was persistent, unrepentant immorality. Paul's decisive judgment models pastoral courage—some situations demand immediate action, not endless deliberation. The church is called to judge those within (vv. 12-13), distinguishing truth from error, holiness from sin. Discipline isn't optional when the gospel's witness is at stake.

Historical Context

Paul wrote from Ephesus during his three-year ministry there (Acts 19-20), maintaining pastoral oversight of churches he founded. Ancient letters often substituted for personal presence, with apostolic letters carrying full authority. The Corinthians had sent him questions (7:1) and received reports from Chloe's household (1:11).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Do you have the courage to make clear judgments about sin, or do you delay hoping problems resolve themselves?
2. How do you exercise discernment without becoming judgmental—judging actions while extending grace to persons?
3. What role does spiritual authority play in the church, and how should it be exercised today?

Interlinear Text

ἐγὼ	μὲν	γάρ	ὥς	ἀπὸν	τῷ	σώματι	παρὼν	δὲ	τῷ
I	verily	For	as	absent	G3588	in body	present	but	G3588
G1473	G3303	G1063	G5613	G548		G4983	G3918	G1161	
πνεύματι	ἤδη	κέκρικα	ὥς	παρὼν	τὸν	οὕτως	τοῦτο		
in spirit	already	have judged	as	present	G3588	so	this deed		
G4151	G2235	G2919	G5613	G3918		G3779	G5124		
κατεργασάμενον·									
concerning him that hath									
G2716									

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 2:5 (Spirit): For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

1 Thessalonians 2:17 (Parallel theme): But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

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