

2 Corinthians 8:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over;
and he that had gathered little had no lack.

Analysis

As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack—Paul quotes Exodus 16:18, which describes manna distribution in the wilderness. The phrase *ho to poly ouk epleonasen* (ο τὸ πολὺ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν, 'the one with much had no excess') and *ho to oligon ouk ēlattonēsen* (ο τὸ ὀλίγον οὐκ ἡλαττόνησεν, 'the one with little had no lack') demonstrates divine provision principles. In the Exodus narrative, regardless of how much individuals gathered, everyone had exactly enough manna—no hoarding, no shortage.

Paul applies this typologically: Christian community should mirror wilderness Israel's experience of divine provision through sharing. Those with surplus shouldn't hoard (it would rot, like hoarded manna); those with little shouldn't lack (the community provides). This isn't advocating laziness—Exodus 16 required daily gathering—but rather condemning hoarding while celebrating sufficiency. The *isotēs* (equality) of v. 14 finds Old Testament precedent: God designs economic ecosystems where generosity prevents both excess and insufficiency. This vision challenges both consumerist accumulation and prosperity gospel materialism, proposing instead contentment with enough and concern that all have enough.

Historical Context

The manna narrative (Exodus 16) served as Israel's foundational lesson in trusting God's daily provision rather than human accumulation. Paul invokes this tradition

to teach Corinthian Christians—mostly urban, commerce-oriented Gentiles—that kingdom economics operate on trust and sharing, not market competition. The collection becomes a concrete way to experience the 'equality' God intended through manna.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the manna principle challenge a consumer culture built on accumulation?
2. What 'excess' in your life might be someone else's provision if you shared it?
3. How can Christian community create 'equality' where none have excess and none lack?

Interlinear Text

καθὼς	γέγραπται	τὸ	τὸ	πολὺ	οὐκ
As	it is written	He that had gathered	He that had gathered	much	no
G2531	G1125	G3588	G3588	G4183	G3756
ἐπλεόνασεν	καὶ	τὸ	τὸ	ολίγον	
had	and	He that had gathered	He that had gathered	little	
G4121	G2532	G3588	G3588	G3641	
οὐκ	ἡλαττόνησεν				
no	had				
G3756	G1641				

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 16:18 (Parallel theme): And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating.

Luke 22:35 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

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