

2 Corinthians 8:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.

Analysis

Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ—Paul provides credentials: eite hyper Titou (εἴτε ὑπὲρ Τίτου, 'if about Titus'), he's Paul's koinōnos kai eis hymas synergos (κοινωνός καὶ εἰς ὑμᾶς συνεργός, 'partner and fellow-worker for you'). Koinōnos (κοινωνός, 'partner/sharer') indicates shared ministry and mutual accountability. Synergos (συνεργός, 'co-worker') emphasizes joint labor specifically directed eis hymas ('toward you')—for Corinthian benefit.

Eite adelphoi hēmōn ('if our brothers'), the two unnamed delegates are apostoloi ekklēsiōn (ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, 'apostles/messengers of churches')—note this non-technical use of apostolos meaning 'sent ones,' not THE Apostles. The climactic phrase: doxa Christou (δόξα Χριστοῦ, 'glory of Christ')—these delegates embody and advance Christ's reputation. Paul brackets his credentials (Titus) with church credentials (the brothers), creating comprehensive authorization. The phrase 'glory of Christ' elevates the mundane collection to sacred mission: receiving these delegates means receiving Christ's own representatives, making the collection Christ's work, not merely Paul's project.

Historical Context

The dual credentialing—Paul's personal commendation (Titus) and church corporate appointment (the brothers)—balanced apostolic authority with congregational governance. Neither apostolic fiat nor democratic vote alone sufficed; both functioned together. The phrase 'apostles of the churches' shows flexible use of apostolic language: churches could 'send' representatives with delegated authority, not just Christ-appointed Apostles like Paul.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How do different types of authorization (personal commendation, church appointment) work together?
2. What does it mean practically that faithful Christian workers are 'the glory of Christ'?
3. How should churches balance pastoral authority and congregational participation in leadership?

Interlinear Text

εἴτε	ὑπὲρ	Τίτου	κοινωνὸς	έμδος	καὶ	εἰς
Whether	any do enquire of	Titus	partner	he is my	and	concerning
G1535	G5228	G5103	G2844	G1699	G2532	G1519
ὑμᾶς	συνεργός·	εἴτε	ἀδελφοὶ	ἡμῶν		
you	fellowhelper	Whether	brethren	our		
G5209	G4904	G1535	G80	G2257		
ἀπόστολοι			ἐκκλησιῶν	δόξα	Χριστοῦ	
be enquired of	they are the messengers		of the churches	and the glory	of Christ	
	G652		G1577	G1391	G5547	

Additional Cross-References

Philippians 2:25 (Parallel theme): Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

Philemon 1:17 (Parallel theme): If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

2 Corinthians 8:6 (Parallel theme): Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.

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