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INTRODUCTION

Few writings of Paul have generated as much controversy and hardened viewpoints as have these two chapters in Second Corinthians. The issues revolve around the nature of this material. Is this material a part of the original letter? Or is it fragments of one or two independent letters written at different times from chapters one through seven? And also around the topic of monetary fund raising by Christian groups. Is this a picture of questionable fund raising for Jewish Christians? Does it represent a futile effort to bridge the huge ethnic gap between the Gentile churches of Paul and the Jewish Christian leadership in Jerusalem? Or, does it set forth numerous foundational principles for how the Christian community should handle money? The variety of viewpoints about the content of this material is substantial.

In a positive assessment of the material, these two chapters must form a major part of the scriptural basis for any theology of giving that is developed to help Christian groups know how to deal with monetary issues in church life. At the [end of this exegesis](#), an attempt will be made to draw spiritual principles from this text in regard to Christians handling money in church life.

10.2.3.2 Ministry part two, 8:1-9:15

This larger unit of material centers on the collection of funds for the relief offering to benefit the believers in Judea and Jerusalem. Far too often one of two extremes in modern interpretive understanding surfaces. On the one extreme, chapters eight and nine are seen as the 'hinge point' of the entire letter, e.g., Betz's indi-

vidual commentary on just these two chapters.¹ In giving

"The fifth argument (8:1–9:15) of the probatio, according to Long, deals with Paul's integrity in respect to 'the collection and the Corinthians' faith.'¹

"Studies on 2 Cor 8–9 are all indebted to Betz, who develops the judgment of Windisch, who writes,

Both letters (8–9) are "business letters": but the way in which "business" is conducted, the motivation for the appeal, the presentation of the "business details," as well as the ethical-religious exhortations connected with it—all this lifts Paul's epistles far above the level of ordinary business letters. Even in the business letter, Paul remains a human being, a minister, an apostle, and educator, and a witness.²

"Windisch's assessment is also endorsed by Georgi.³ More debatable is Betz's opening remark, 'These chapters constitute the hinge on which everything else concerning 2 Corinthians turns, one way or the other,' as is Meggitt's bid to describe the collection as 'economic mutualism.'⁴

"Betz's rhetorical approach is subjected to scathing criticism by O'Mahony.⁵ In particular, he faults Betz's interpretation for the following key terms: παράκλησις, 'official request or mandatum' (71); παρακαλέω, 'appoint' (71); σπουδή, 'characteristics of the ideal administrator' (70); συμπέμπω, 'to send something with someone' (72); ὑπέρ, 'authorization' (79); ὑποταγή, 'submission' (122–23); and ὁμολογία, 'contractual agreement.'⁶ Each of these terms is scrutinized carefully, and shown to have a meaning different from that proposed by Betz.

"Rather obviously, the presence of χάρις, 'grace' (but with a wide range of meanings),⁷ is so widespread in these chapters (10x) that this key to Paul's discussion is far more than anything expressible in economic or legalistic terms.⁸ More likely is Joubert's dictum that '[r]eligious reciprocity in 2 Corinthians 9:6–15 [is] generosity and gratitude as legitimate responses to the charis tou theou ['grace of God']'.⁹ Also, he argues that Paul "intended to secure his own role as apostle and benefactor in the eyes of Jerusalem,"¹⁰ but with no idea of return, unlike Greco-Roman principles, for he is similar to Seneca.¹¹

ing this much importance to this theme, chapters one through seven are thus seen largely as ‘buttering up’ the Corinthians in order to get more money out of them. The obvious falseness of this is clear since it sees Paul without integrity and honesty in dealing with the Corinthians. If this were the case, then the Corinthians accusing Paul of just being after their money would have been correct (cf. 12:13-16). The argument of chapters one through seven is so powerfully opposite of this that such a view is ludicrous. An older but now largely discredited set of views is that chapters eight and nine originally stood as part of a separate letter, disconnected from either 2 Cor. 1-7 or 10-13.² A multitude of differing proposals about how many ‘letters’ Second Corinthians represents were floated around during the last two centuries.³ What one learns from examining these proposals has far more to do with the commentators than with the scripture text. The fundamental uni-

“Concerning the significance of the collection, Lindgård writes that ‘the only concrete way of showing loyalty and acquaintance [sic] with Paul is to participate in the collection.’¹²”

[Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 416–417.]

²“At the beginning of this discussion it will be useful to recall the critical decisions made in Vol. I which may have some relevance to our understanding of the success or otherwise of Paul’s collection project. We have argued that chap. 8 belongs to the same letter as chaps. 1–7, which are themselves a unity.¹ Thus, chaps. 1–8 constitute a single letter which we regard as the second extant letter Paul wrote to the Corinthians. We take chap. 9 to be a separate letter which followed that of chaps. 1–8.² The letter of chaps. 10–13 we see as the final letter in the series.³ If this is the correct sequence, the last explicit picture we have of Paul’s relationship with the Corinthians is one of conflict. And this in turn might suggest that, although Corinth did make some contribution to the collection (Rom 15:26), it was not as substantial as Paul might have originally hoped. Whilst there could have been some renewal of support during his final stay in the city, this might not have been sufficient to make up for the initial loss of contributions from those members of the congregation who only earned (and doubtless spent) a weekly or a daily wage, and who had given up saving anything during the period of conflict. There is also the possibility that the contents of the letter of chaps. 10–13 might have become more widely known, and might have affected the attitude of the Jerusalem church towards the gift from the Pauline churches.” [Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 503.]

³“We have seen that the Pauline authorship of 2 Corinthians is a virtually universal assumption among NT scholars (see 1.a above). But when we turn to investigate the integrity, as opposed to the authenticity, of this letter, we are confronted with a complex array of data in the text, and, perhaps not surprisingly, with a bewildering variety of partition hypotheses.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 8.]

ty of the entire text of Second Corinthians has been well and successfully defended in the last decades by scholars from a variety of theological viewpoints.⁴ And this is the operating assumption behind the comments below. Also assumed is the unity between chapter eight and chapter nine. To be sure, the time of composition between these two chapters and also possibly with 1-7 and 10-13 may have varied somewhat. After all, the composition of a document as long as Second Corinthians would have always stretched itself out over a period of weeks and more likely months in Paul’s world. This does not in any way create multiple documents out of a single document.⁵

The relevant question here is the internal structure of the content of these two chapters.⁶ The process of

⁴“We have discovered difficulties both with the Hausrath hypothesis (chs. 10–13 precede chs. 1–9 as part of a separate letter) and with the Semler hypothesis (chs. 10–13 follow chs. 1–9 as [part of] a separate letter). This prepares the way for an examination of the hypothesis that chs. 1–13 constitute a single document. Twentieth-century commentators who espoused this view¹⁰⁶ include Bernard (1903) 19–28; Lietzmann (1909) 139–40; Bachmann (1909) 3; Menzies (1912) xxxiv–xlii; Goudge (1927) xxxii–lvii; Schlatter (1934) 53–55 (in second ed., 1956); Allo (1936) l–lvi; Tasker (1958) 23–35; Hughes (1962) xxi–xxxv; de Boor (1972) 17, 196–97; Harris (1976) 303–6; Danker (1989) 18–20, 147 (tentatively); Wolff (1989) 1–3; Witherington (1995) 328–39; Belleville (1996) 23–33, 247–50; Kistemaker (1997) 14–15; Barnett (1997) 15–24, 450–56; Scott (1998) 4–7, 200; Lambrecht (1999) 7–9, 158–59; Garland (1999), 33–44; McCant (1999) 20–23, 101–2; and, more recently, Hafemann (2000) 31–33. Other twentieth-century supporters of the integrity of 2 Corinthians include: Jülicher (1900) 96–102; Michaelis (1946) 176–82 (in third ed., 1961); Wikenhauser (1958) 396–98; Munck (1959) 168–71; von Loewenich (1960) 121, 123; Guthrie (1961), Introduction 430–37 (in third ed., 1970); Price (1961) 370–72, 385; “Aspects” (1967) 95–106; Kümmel (1963), Introduction 287–93 (in second ed., 1975); Stephenson, “Theories” (1964) 639–46; “Integrity” (1965) 82–97; Bates (1965) 56–69; Prümm (1967) 1.404 n. 1, 547–62; Bahr (1968) 37–38; Hyldahl, “Einheit” (1973) 289–306; Chronologie 32–42; Dahl (1977) 38–39; 107 Black (1984) 88–91; Childs (1985) 286–89; Segalla (1988) 149–66; “Struttura” 189–218; and, more recently, Goulder, Mission (2001) 241–48.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 42.]

⁵Modern technical essays, including those I have written for publishers either in the US or Germany, were not created even inside the space of a month or less. A few represent the culmination of some years of research and continual writing. Formal letter writing in the ancient world of lengthy documents, such as Second Corinthians, were not different. This is why documents such as Philemon and Jude, two of the shortest letters in the NT, comprise less than half a page in modern formatting, and could have been written in a week or less. But not the longer documents of the NT.

⁶Somewhat differing perceptions of arrangement can be noted by comparing the paragraphing of this text material:

diagramming the Greek text of these two chapters has been quite enlightening. The text reflects Paul's and his writing secretary's masterful use of ancient Koine Greek. Echoes of classical Greek surface along side Hellenistic Jewish Greek writing. The thought expression through this mixture of Greek styles also reflects the influences upon Paul's thinking from both his Greek and Jewish upbringing and heritage. The very personal nature of his subject in these two chapters adds complexity to the text expression. Doing fund raising while go to great lengths to avoid coming across as a con artist is a difficult balancing act to say the least. The apostle's genuineness and focus on helping others in need under God's leadership comes through strongly in this passage.

The block diagram suggests a four fold division of chapters eight and nine and this is reflected in the outline below of these two chapters.⁷

N-A 28th	NRSV	NIV (2011)	NLT	RSV
8:1-15	8:1-5	8:1-7	8:1-2	8:1-7
	8:6-15	8:8-9	8:3-5	
		8:10-12	8:6-7	
		8:13-15	8:8	8:8-15
8:16-24	8:16-24	8:16-21	8:9	
		8:22-24	8:10-15	
9:1-5	9:1-5	9:1-5	8:16-19	8:16-24
			8:20-21	
9:6-15	9:6-15	9:6-11	8:22-24	
		9:12-15	9:1-2	9:1-5
			9:3-5	
			9:6-10	9:6-15
			9:11-12	
			9:13-15	

What one can observe is an essentially four fold division of the text of these two chapters. With each subunit moving the general theme of the collection forward along the lines of:

- 9:6-15, voluntary generosity to be blessed
- 9:1-5, needs of the believers in Jerusalem
- 8:16-24, emphasis upon Titus' role in helping
- 8:1-15, desire for the Corinthians to excel in giving

⁷“Section Heading: TEV ‘Christian Giving.’ Some interpreters consider chapters 8 and 9 to have been originally parts of separate letters (see ‘Translating 2 Corinthians’). But in the form of 2 Corinthians as it now exists, these two chapters together form a major section of the letter. Some translations (NJB, NAB, LPD, REB) group these two chapters together under a major section heading such as ‘The collection for the church [or the Christians] in Jerusalem’ (REB, LPD, NVSR). Other translations such as RSV and NRSV, which do not use section headings, indicate by leaving extra space before and after this section that these two chapters belong together.

“Within this larger unit most translations group verses 1–15 together as a section with a title similar to that in TEV, ‘Christian Giving.’ Perhaps more precise are the section headings in LPD and NVSR, which group 8:1–5 together and 8:6–15 together; this makes verses 1–5 and verses 6–15 two separate sections. The first is entitled ‘An example of generosity’ in LPD, while NVSR has ‘The example of the churches in Macedonia.’ The section heading for verses 6–15 is then ‘An appeal to the generosity of the Corinthians’.”

[Roger L. Omanson and John Ellington, *A Handbook on Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians*, UBS Handbook Series

10.2.3.2.1 Motivated by others to give, 8:1-15

10.2.3.2.2 Role of Titus with the Corinthians, 8:16-24

10.2.3.2.3 Avoiding embarrassment, 9:1-5

10.2.3.2.4 Foundation spiritual principles of giving, 9:6-15

Something of a logical progression of thought can be traced although one should be cautious about seeing too much logic, especially from a post enlightenment sense of progression of thinking.

10.2.3.2.1 Motivated by others to give, 8:1-15

8.1 Γνωρίζομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δεδομένην ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας, 2 ὅτι ἐν πολλῇ δοκιμῇ θλίψεως ἢ περισσειᾷ τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτῶν καὶ ἢ κατὰ βάθους πτωχεῖα αὐτῶν ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἀπλότητος αὐτῶν· 3 ὅτι κατὰ δύναμιν, μαρτυρῶ, καὶ παρὰ δύναμιν, αὐθαίρετοι 4 μετὰ πολλῆς παρακλήσεως δεόμενοι ἡμῶν τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἀγίους, 5 καὶ οὐ καθὼς ἠλπίσαμεν ἀλλ’ ἐαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ 6 εἰς τὸ παρακαλέσαι ἡμᾶς Τίτον, ἵνα καθὼς προενήρξατο οὕτως καὶ ἐπιτελέσῃ εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ τὴν χάριν ταύτην. 7 Ἀλλ’ ὡσπερ ἐν παντὶ περισσεύετε, πίστει καὶ λόγῳ καὶ γνώσει καὶ πάσῃ σπουδῇ καὶ τῇ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν ἀγάπῃ, ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε. 8 Οὐ κατ’ ἐπιταγὴν λέγω ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἐτέρων σπουδῆς καὶ τὸ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγάπης γνήσιον δοκιμάζων· 9 γινώσκετε γὰρ τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτι δι’ ὑμᾶς ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος ὢν, ἵνα ὑμεῖς τῇ ἐκείνου πτωχεῖα πλουτήσητε. 10 καὶ γνώμην ἐν τούτῳ δίδωμι· τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν συμφέρει, οἵτινες οὐ μόνον τὸ ποιῆσαι ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ θέλειν προενήρξασθε ἀπὸ πέρυσι· 11 νυνὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ ποιῆσαι ἐπιτελέσατε, ὅπως καθάπερ ἢ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν, οὕτως καὶ τὸ ἐπιτελέσαι ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν. 12 εἰ γὰρ ἢ προθυμία πρόκειται, καθὼς ἐὰν ἔχη εὐπρόσδεκτος, οὐ καθὼς οὐκ ἔχει. 13 οὐ γὰρ ἵνα ἄλλοις ἀνεῖς, ὑμῖν θλίψις, ἀλλ’ ἐξ ἰσότητος· 14 ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ τὸ ὑμῶν περισσεῦμα εἰς τὸ ἐκείνων ὑστέρημα, ἵνα καὶ τὸ ἐκείνων περισσεῦμα γένηται εἰς τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα, ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης, 15 καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ τὸ πολὺ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν, καὶ ὁ τὸ ὀλίγον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν.

8.1 We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; 2 for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. 3 For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, 4 begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints— 5 and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us, 6 so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you. 7 Now as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you — so we want you

(New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 140.]

to excel also in this generous undertaking.

8 I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. 9 For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. 10 And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something — 11 now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. 12 For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has — not according to what one does not have. 13 I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between 14 your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. 15 As it is written,

“The one who had much did not have too much,

and the one who had little did not have too little.”

Here a further division of thought is merited with two distinct units in vv. 1-6 and 7-15. In the first unit the central emphasis falls upon the example of the Macedonians in enthusiastically gathering in the financial collection for the Jerusalem believers. This expression of unusual generosity in giving motivated Paul to urge Titus to come ahead of the apostle to make sure that the Corinthians didn't drop the ball in their responsibility. Their initial enthusiasm for this project (cf. 9:2) needed to be carried out by completing the project in advance of Paul's arrival with members of the Macedonian churches. In vv. 7-15, the focus is on motivating the Corinthians to give not only generously but enthusiastically.

In vv. 16-24, the focus is on Titus' coming in order to help them complete this project. Mention is made of the sending also of an unnamed brother (v. 18) with Titus to

8.1 δὲ
156 Γνωρίζομεν ὑμῖν,
| ἀδελφοί,
| τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ
| τὴν δεδομένην
| ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας,
| ἐν πολλῇ δοκιμῇ θλίψεως
8.2 ὅτι... ἡ περισσεία τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτῶν
| καὶ
| ἡ κατὰ βάθους πτωχεία αὐτῶν
| ἐπερίσσευσεν
| εἰς τὸ πλοῦτος
| τῆς ἀπλότητος αὐτῶν.
8.3 ὅτι ___ κατὰ δύναμιν,
157¹ μαρτυρῶ, | |
| | καὶ
| παρὰ δύναμιν,
(ἦσαν) ἀύθαρτοι
8.4 | μετὰ πολλῆς παρακλήσεως
(ἦσαν) δεόμενοι ἡμῶν τὴν χάριν
| καὶ
| τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας
| τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους,
8.5 καὶ
158 οὐ (ἦσαν ἀύθαρτοι)
| καθὼς ἠλπίσαμεν
| ἀλλ'
159 ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ
| καὶ
| ἡμῖν
| διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ
8.6 εἰς τὸ παρακαλέσαι ἡμᾶς Τίτον,
| καθὼς προενήρξατο
| ἵνα... οὕτως καὶ ἐπιτελέσῃ ___
| εἰς ὑμᾶς |
| καὶ |
| τὴν χάριν ταύτην.

¹The parenthetical insertion of μαρτυρῶ as an oath expression interrupts the syntactical flow of supporting ὅτι clauses.

help in the organizing of the collection. The point here is that this Christian leader has been appointed by the churches to make sure that all the money raised goes to the designated sources in Jerusalem. In Paul's world -- as much in our world also -- money raising projects were notorious for scaming people in order to pad the pockets of the money raisers.

10.2.3.2.1.1 The example of the Macedonians, 8:1-6

8.1 Γνωρίζομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δεδομένην ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας, 2 ὅτι ἐν πολλῇ δοκιμῇ θλίψεως ἢ περισσειᾷ τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτῶν καὶ ἡ κατὰ βάθους πτωχεῖα αὐτῶν ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἀπλότητος αὐτῶν· 3 ὅτι κατὰ δύναμιν, μαρτυρῶ, καὶ παρὰ δύναμιν, αὐθαίρετοι 4 μετὰ πολλῆς παρακλήσεως δεόμενοι ἡμῶν τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἀγίους, 5 καὶ οὐ καθὼς ἠλπίσαμεν ἀλλ' ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ 6 εἰς τὸ παρακαλέσαι ἡμᾶς Τίτον, ἵνα καθὼς προενήρξατο οὕτως καὶ ἐπιτελέσῃ εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ τὴν χάριν αὐτήν.

8.1 We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; 2 for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. 3 For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, 4 begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints— 5 and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us, 6 so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you. 7 Now as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you — so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.

The core idea set forth at the beginning in #156 defines the point of this unit: Paul seeks to amplify the meaning of God's grace to his readers at Corinth. The main clause Γνωρίζομεν δὲ ὑμῖν... stands as a typical topic shift in the writings of the apostle, as well as in Koine Greek generally. Also the vocative ἀδελφοί, brothers, functions the same way, although in Second Corinthians it is limited to 1:8; 8:1; and 13:11. Yet the preceding larger unit of 7:2-16 sets up this shift in emphasis through reaffirming Paul's caring concern for the Corinthians. To be sure, Γνωρίζομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ, And we are making known to you, brothers, the grace of God, does not imply that the Corinthians were unfamiliar with God's grace. The adjective relative clause τὴν δεδομένην ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας, which has been given among the churches of Macedonia, delimits the reference to a specific example of the outpouring of the dynamic grace of God: among the Macedonian congregations. The first causal ὅτι clause (v. 2)

defines the impact of divine grace upon God's people. The combination of abundant joy in the midst of severe poverty⁸ produces a wealth of financial generosity in giving to help others.⁹ Here is clearly the dynamic grace

⁸“In itself πτωχεῖα signifies ‘great poverty.’ But to emphasize that the Macedonians had reached ‘the very depths of destitution’ (Barclay), Paul adds the remarkable qualification κατὰ βάθους, literally ‘down to the depth,’ referring not to ‘ever-deeper poverty,’ but ‘poverty at the deepest,’ ‘rock-bottom poverty’ (Barrett 216), ‘extreme/profound poverty.’³⁰ Betz observes that ‘ancient sources indicate that poverty was a way of life in Macedonia generally.’³¹ But the dire poverty of the believers there was undoubtedly linked with their θλίψις: in their case persecution created or at least aggravated their destitution. Also, we cannot doubt that the radical poverty of the Macedonian Christians gave them a special empathy with ‘the poor’ (οἱ πτωχοί) in the Jerusalem church (Rom. 15:26), just as their experience of suffering gave them a particular affinity with the churches of Judea which also had suffered at the hands of their own people (1 Thess. 2:14).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 562.]

⁹The basis of the dire need of the believers in Jerusalem is not spelled out in detail and is assumed to be a point of oral explanation by Paul so that no need existed to go into those details in his written expressions, as per his statement in 2 Cor. 9:1. Note Harris' exploration of this point:

a. The Need at Jerusalem

Whether the collection was actually delivered to Jerusalem in A.D. 55 (Jeremias, *Abba* 237–38) or, as seems more probable, in A.D. 57 (Jewett, *Chronology* 101), there are numerous indications that there had been a persistent need for economic relief for impoverished members of the Jerusalem church since its inception.

(1) The constant influx of Jewish converts (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 6:7; 9:31; 21:20) put continual pressure on the resources of the church as it sought to care for those who were ostracized socially and economically as a result of their conversion (cf. Acts 8:1; 9:1–2; cf. Duncan 259–60). Also, there was a considerable number of needy widows in the church (Acts 6:1; cf. Mark 12:42; Luke 21:1–4).

(2) On two occasions Luke refers to the voluntary sharing of proceeds from the sale of goods and property (Acts 2:44–45; 4:34–35). This was no luxurious “experiment in communism” or reckless liquidation of capital assets, but an economic necessity to ensure corporate survival.²⁰⁸ But in the long run this communal sharing undoubtedly would have aggravated—though it did not cause (contra Dodd, *Romans* 230)—the poverty that had become endemic.

(3) Throughout the principate of Claudius (A.D. 41–54) there were droughts and famines (Suetonius, *Claudius* 18.2; see Bruce, *Acts* 276), the most severe and widespread spanning the years 45–47 (cf. Acts 11:28). This famine would have been prolonged and aggravated by the sabbatical year, beginning fall 47, when land had to lie fallow (Jeremias, *Jerusalem* 143; *Abba* 235 n. 15). Gapp rightly observes (261) that famine is always a class famine, affecting the poor before and more than the rich. “While all classes of society suffered serious economic discomfort during a shortage of grain, the actual hunger and starvation were restricted to the lower classes” (261), from which Christians (at least in Jerusalem) largely came.

(4) Living in Jerusalem was expensive in the first century. The city's unfavorable geographical and commercial position meant that water was always in short supply, raw materials scarce, and food

of God at work in the life of the Macedonia churches. The general poverty of this region economically is well documented.¹⁰ No wonder Paul was overjoyed. This is not mere human effort.

One should note that the core meaning of ἀπλότης, here translated as ‘generosity,’ is actually **simplicity** and **sincerity**.¹¹ The basis for the derivative meaning of ‘gen-

prices inflated.²⁰⁹ At the gates of Jerusalem custom duties were levied on agricultural produce for sale in the city (M. Stern in *Safrai* and Stern 333). Fruit purchased in Jerusalem cost three to six times its price in the country (Jeremias, *Jerusalem* 121). When a harvest failed, the normal prices—already inflated—could multiply up to sixteen times (*Jerusalem* 122–23). And Josephus mentions a house tax that was levied in Jerusalem (*Antiquities* 19.299).

(5) As the mother church of Christendom, the Jerusalem church was obliged to support a proportionately large number of teachers (cf. Acts 6:4; 1 Cor. 9:4–6) and probably to provide hospitality for frequent Christian visitors to the holy city (cf. Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9).

(6) Palestinian Jews were subject to a crippling twofold taxation—civil (Roman) and religious (Jewish)—which, in the time of Jesus, may have been between thirty and forty percent of total income (see Grant 87–105). During the reign of Tiberius (A.D. 14–37) Judea became overwhelmed by its tax burden and requested imperial relief (Tacitus, *Annals* 2.42).

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 88–89.]

¹⁰“Macedonia had been a Roman province since 146 B.C. The population was mostly Greek, largely rural, more or less Hellenized,⁸⁴ and organized along tribal lines. Michael I. Rostovtzeff has summed up the conditions in this way: ‘The ... province of MACEDONIA ... was never a land of intensive urbanization, apart from its Eastern coast. The strength of the Macedonian kingdom was based on the Macedonian peasantry, on the villages. During the Macedonian wars, the country suffered heavy losses. Under the rule of the Roman Republic, it experienced many disastrous invasions of barbarians. Then it became, with Thessaly, the main battle-field of the Roman generals during the civil wars. It was no wonder that this fertile land was less densely populated than it had been under its kings.’⁸⁵

“To make up for the loss of population, Augustus decided to establish Roman colonies in the province, thus introducing a Roman element. Roman veterans and civilians settled in the major cities (Dyrrhachium, Philippi, Dium, Pella, Cassandrea, Byblis), while other urban centers were given the status of Roman municipia (Beroea, Thessalonica, Stobi).⁸⁶ It is easy to understand why Paul called the Macedonians’ economic situation one of ‘rock-bottom poverty’ (8:2) because such was, proverbially, the condition of the country.⁸⁷ On the other hand, it is noteworthy that the churches known to have been founded by the apostle were located precisely in the Romanized cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Beroea. Could it be that the membership of these churches consisted in part of Roman settlers?”

[Hans Dieter Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*, ed. George W. MacRae, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 50.]

¹¹“Here, too, the basic meaning is a. ‘simplicity’: 2 Βασ. 15:11; 3 Macc. 3:21; Jos. Bell., 2, 151. And again this leads to such value concepts as b. ‘noble simplicity,’ ‘characteristic of the psyche of

erosity’ is well established in the ancient world, but the connection of this idea to the core idea of simplicity is never lost. The focus is not merely the amount of the giving but, more importantly, the way it is given, particularly the motivation behind the giving. The Macedonians sincerely desired to help the believers in Judea and Jerusalem through the hard times they were experiencing. The common experience of suffering shared between the Macedonian believers (ἐν πολλῇ δοκιμῇ θλίψεως) and those in Judea prompted the willingness to dip deeply in their pocketbooks to help out. Also very critical here is the overcoming of racial barriers with the dominantly non-Jewish Macedonian believers reaching out to the almost totally Jewish believers in Jerusalem.

The second ὅτι clause foundation for Paul’s informing the Corinthians of the divine grace poured out in Macedonia is the complex grammar expression in v. 3: ὅτι κατὰ δύνάμιν, μαρτυρῶ, καὶ παρὰ δύνάμιν, αὐθαίρετοι. . . . **for to the extent of ability -- I swear -- and beyond ability, they were voluntary givers.** Now the apostle focuses attention on the motivation behind the giving. No one, not even Paul, coerced the Macedonians to give so generously. As he stated at the outset, this kind of giving comes when God’s grace goes to work in the midst of His people. The Macedonians, and in particular the Philippian congregation, had a tendency toward generosity in helping others elsewhere.¹² The double prepositional phrases κατὰ δύνάμιν, καὶ παρὰ δύνάμιν stresses first the framework of their giving (**within their means**, κατὰ δύνάμιν. That is, they gave out of what they possessed. But the second phrase underscores the extent of their giving: way beyond what their lim-

heroes,’ 1 c. ‘purity’ or ‘singleness of heart’: Jos. Bell., 5, 319 and often in M. Ant., related to ἀλήθεια,² and d. ‘sufficiency’ which has something to spare for others, i.e., ‘generosity’: Jos. Ant., 7, 332; Test. Iss. 3:8: πάντα γὰρ πένησι καὶ θλιβομένοις παρείχον ... ἐν ἀπλότητι καρδίας μου.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:386–387.]

¹²“This was not the first time that the Macedonian believers had acted with warm generosity. Their record, as far as we can ascertain it, can be set out in four stages.

1. In about A.D. 50 the Christians in Philippi entered into a financial partnership with Paul sometime after his first visit (Phil. 1:5; 4:15), and even before he had left Macedonia they sent him a gift ‘more than once’ (Phil. 4:16).

2. Late in 50 Silas and Timothy brought financial aid from the Macedonians to Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:5; 2 Cor. 11:9).

3. Before the fall of 56 the Macedonians had contributed generously to Paul’s collection for Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:1–4; cf. Rom. 15:26).

4. In 60 or 61 the Philippians sent Epaphroditus to Rome to bring Paul relief supplies (Phil. 2:25; 4:18).”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 563–564.]

ited means would suggest that they might give (παρὰ δύναμιν). Here we have Paul's definition τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἀπλότητος αὐτῶν, *the wealth of their generosity*, in the preceding statement. The predicate adjective αὐθαίρετοι from αὐθαίρετος, -ον (itself from αὐτός and αἰρέω = I myself choose) stresses this giving was purely the decision of the Macedonians. Neither Paul nor others had pressured them to give x amount of money to the collection. Of course this does not preclude giving instructions or encouragement.¹³ Notice that specific amounts of giving in monetary terms is never mentioned in this discussion. Why? Because this was not the important point. Why they gave and how they gave was far more important than how much they gave.

Paul's insertion of the oath expression as a parenthesis, μαρτυρῶ, underscores his amazement over their giving to this collection. They surprised him by their sacrificial giving.¹⁴ This sets up the following statements on the Macedonians giving themselves first to the Lord (vv. 4-5).

The Macedonians passionately wanted to participate in the collection for Jerusalem, as is asserted by μετὰ πολλῆς παρακλήσεως δεόμενοι ἡμῶν τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους, *with much encouragement begging us for this grace and participation in ministry for the saints*. This elliptical expression continues the emphasis upon αὐθαίρετοι, *voluntary givers*. It amplifies this adjective with more details. The participle δεόμενοι, from δέομαι, references intense asking or requesting. This is heightened by the prepositional phrase modifier μετὰ πολλῆς παρακλήσεως. With the preposition μετὰ and the genitive case, the sense is *with repeated requests*. The compound direct objects τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους spells out the content of their pleas to the apostle. It was for this

grace and this participation in ministry for the saints.¹⁵ The genitive of personal object ἡμῶν, rather than the typical dative case, is common with δέομαι, and signals that their pleas were directed to Paul and his associates. Earlier in 1 Cor. 16:1, the apostle had labeled this offering as τῆς λογείας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους, *the collection for the saints*. The context makes it clear that he is referring to the believers in Jerusalem.¹⁶ In 9:1, he will

¹⁵“χάρις, ‘privilege,’ κοινωνία, ‘sharing,’ and διακονία, ‘service,’ are three key words in this discussion.⁸⁴ We should refuse to treat them as simple synonyms for the collection, though they do overlap in the range of their possible nuances. We have taken χάρις, ‘grace,’ here as a human ‘privilege,’ a gracious act, while recognizing that it has a theological underpinning; i.e., the Macedonians have acted in response to divine grace, which prompts and disposes all human endeavor. The thought goes back to 8:1.

“κοινωνία, ‘sharing,’ is not only a sharing or gaining of fellowship with others, but it conveys rather the idea of participation in the objective reality, the religious good,⁸⁵ which gives the basis and the norm by which the sharing is made possible and effective. In this case the proof of the Macedonians’ desire for sharing-in-fellowship was their active support of ‘the service,’ i.e., the collection.⁸⁶ So διακονία, ‘service,’ all commentators are agreed, stands for the offering that Paul was minded to collect from his people at Corinth to support the Jerusalem community. But, as we saw, since his apostolic standing was in question there and since too the collection from Gentile believers to aid Jerusalem would be regarded as a seal of his apostleship, he attached great significance to this act, giving it an ‘ecclesiological interpretation,’ as Hainz remarks.⁸⁷”

[Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 434.]

¹⁶One of the unresolved issues is Paul's use of οἱ πτωχοί, *the poverty stricken*, in reference to the saints in Jerusalem. Is he labeling all the saints or just a segment of them in Jerusalem? Harris has an interesting discussion of this issue:

b. “The Poor” in Jerusalem

There are two Pauline passages where “the poor” (οἱ πτωχοί) at Jerusalem are mentioned in connection with monetary aid—Gal. 2:10 and Rom. 15:26.

Gal. 2:1–10 recounts a visit that Paul and Barnabas paid to Jerusalem during which they received from the three “pillars,” James, Cephas, and John, not only recognition of their role as missionaries to the Gentiles but also a single urgent request: “All they asked was that we should go on remembering (ἵνα μνημονεύωμεν) the poor—which in fact, was the very thing I had shown my eagerness (ἐσπούδασα) to do” (Gal. 2:10).²¹⁰ If we equate this visit with the famine relief visit of Acts 11:30; 12:25 (see Fung, Galatians 10–28), Paul is not referring in v. 10b to his diligence after the visit in complying with the request to remember the poor but to the fact that he had already taken the initiative in this matter by helping to organize and deliver to Jerusalem the Antiochene famine relief; he was no puppet of the Twelve or the Three. This interpretation—certainly a contested one²¹¹—accords well with the central thrust of Galatians 1–2, where Paul emphasizes, not his dependence on Jerusalem as would be evidenced by obedience to a demand (“Remember the poor—and I did”), but his independence of the Jerusalem apostles especially with respect to his receipt of the gospel and his calling to proclaim it (1:1, 11–12, 15–19; 2:6–9).

But who were “the poor” to whom the “pillars” referred? It is

¹³Some two or more years earlier, the apostle laid down basic guidelines for this collection to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 16:1–4,

Περὶ δὲ τῆς λογείας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους ὡσπερ διέταξα ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιήσατε. 2 κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου ἕκαστος ὑμῶν παρ’ ἑαυτῶ τιθέτω θησαυρίζων ὃ τι ἐὰν εὐδοῶται, ἵνα μὴ ὅταν ἔλθω τότε λογεῖται γίνωνται. 3 ὅταν δὲ παραγένωμαι, οὓς ἐὰν δοκιμάσητε, δι’ ἐπιστολῶν τούτους πέμψω ἀπενεγκεῖν τὴν χάριν ὑμῶν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ· 4 ἐὰν δὲ ἄξιον ἦ τοῦ κάμει πορεύεσθαι, σὺν ἐμοὶ πορεύσονται.

Now concerning the collection for the saints: you should follow the directions I gave to the churches of Galatia. 2 On the first day of every week, *each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn*, so that collections need not be taken when I come. 3 And when I arrive, I will send any whom you approve with letters to take your gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

¹⁴If you have ever pastored a congregation and followed patterns of financial giving in your church, you understand well the giving of the Macedonians. The best and most consistent givers in your church will be the senior citizens living on a modest fixed income. Those least able to give anything will give the most.

certainly tempting to regard οἱ πτωχοί here as a technical term for Jerusalem Christians as a whole (thus Georgi 33–34), given the fact that at an earlier time the Qumranites called themselves *hā'ebyonim*, “the poor,” and at a later time Jewish Christians who claimed to be successors of the Jerusalem church were called Ebionites (from *'ebyonim*, “poor ones”).^{8.5} But 158 οὐ (ἦσαν ἀύθαίρετοι) there is no firm connection between οἱ πτωχοί of Jerusalem and the second-century Ebionites,²¹² and although Luke uses some nineteen different designations for Christians in Acts, never do we find “the poor” used in reference to any

group of Christians.²¹³ In addition, if οἱ πτωχοί were a familiar title for the whole Jerusalem church, we would have expected Gal. 2:10 to read αὐτῶν τῶν πτωχῶν: “(only they requested us to remember) them, the poor.” There is thus no reason to depart from the common, literal sense of οἱ πτωχοί, particularly since it stands without a qualification such as τῷ πνεύματι (cf. Matt. 5:3).

In Rom. 15:22–29 Paul intimates his intention to visit Jerusalem with his relief aid for the believers before continuing on to Rome and Spain. This intended journey to Jerusalem may be identified with the projected departure for Syria mentioned in Acts 20:3 (cf. 21:3, 15) if Romans was written from Corinth (Acts 20:2–3). Paul states in v. 26 that the destination of the offering is οἱ πτωχοὶ τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ. The key issue here is whether this expression means “the poor who are the saints at Jerusalem” (τῶν ἁγίων being an epexegetic genitive; thus K. Holl, 60) or “the poor among God’s people at Jerusalem” (NEB, REB, 214 τῶν ἁγίων being a partitive genitive). In other words, is the “poverty” referred to spiritual or economic?

In an influential essay written in 1928, Holl maintained (58–60) that “the poor” are not to be distinguished from “the saints,” the two titles being familiar and virtually synonymous self-designations of Jerusalem Christians, “the poor in spirit” (Matt. 5:3) and “the saints” par excellence.²¹⁵ He was unwilling to concede that when οἱ ἅγιοι is used in connection with the collection (e.g., Rom. 15:25; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1), it is an abbreviation of οἱ πτωχοὶ τῶν ἁγίων. With this longer description, then, Paul is speaking in a veiled manner because he is embarrassed to be involved in a collection that was in fact a tax imposed by and destined for the Jerusalem church as a whole (60). Against Holl we would urge that the most natural way to understand τῶν ἁγίων here is as a partitive genitive (thus also BAGD 728b), οἱ ἅγιοι ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ denoting the whole church in Jerusalem,²¹⁶ of which οἱ πτωχοί formed a part of an undisclosed size (so also Becker 259). Holl’s view would conform better with οἱ πτωχοὶ οἱ ἅγιοι or οἱ ἅγιοι οἱ πτωχοὶ or οἱ πτωχοὶ ἅγιοι. Other references to the collection support the view that οἱ πτωχοὶ in Rom. 15:26 is simply a sociological term, denoting those who are financially poor.²¹⁷

Against the backdrop of the quotation of Exod. 16:18 (the gathering of manna) in 2 Cor. 8:15, the περίσσευμα-ὑστέρημα antithesis of 8:14 must refer to economic plenty and want. 2 Cor. 9:12 shows

call it τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους, the ministry for the saints, while indicating that the Corinthians are already informed about the details of the offering.¹⁷ The use of τῆς διακονίας stresses this monetary gift as spiritual ministry for the believers in Jerusalem.¹⁸ Modern Chris-

καὶ οὐ (ἦσαν ἀύθαίρετοι) καθὼς ἠλπίσσαμεν ἀλλ’ ἐαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ εἰς τὸ παρακαλέσαι ἡμᾶς Τίτον, καθὼς προσενήρξατο οὕτως καὶ ἵνα... ἐπιτελέσῃ εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ τὴν χάριν ταύτην.

that the immediate function of the collection was to supply “the (physical) necessities of the saints” (τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν ἁγίων). Also, since Paul’s speech to the Ephesian elders was delivered en route to Jerusalem with the collection, it seems natural to hear an allusion to the poor in Jerusalem when he speaks of the necessity of helping the weak (δεῖ ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενοῦντων, Acts 20:35), the economically depressed.

We conclude that in both Gal. 2:10 and Rom. 15:26 οἱ πτωχοὶ is not a title denoting all the Jerusalem Christians but a description of a group within the Jerusalem church who had urgent material needs.²¹⁸

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 89–91.]

¹⁷“No clearer evidence exists of Paul’s commitment to social service and his abilities as a skilled strategist than the ‘collection for the poor’ to which he devoted a considerable part of his time and energy during A.D. 52–57. Of the three passages in which he discusses this collection (Rom. 15:25–32; 1 Cor. 16:1–4; 2 Corinthians 8–9), by far the longest is in 2 Corinthians (some 39 verses). We have already reviewed the various partition theories involving 2 Corinthians 8–9 (see A.3.d. above) and reached the conclusion that the objections that have been raised against the integrity of these two chapters are less potent than the evidence for their belonging together and their coherence with chs. 1–7. Their integrity within 2 Corinthians as a whole (see A.3.e.[3]) will therefore be assumed in the discussion that follows.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 87.]

¹⁸“In referring to this collection Paul uses several designations. The fullest is found in Rom. 15:26, (κοινωνία ...) εἰς τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ, ‘(contribution) for the poor among God’s people in Jerusalem.’ Other descriptions seem to be abbreviations or modifications of this: ἡ διακονία ἢ εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους (2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1; cf. Rom. 15:25; 2 Cor. 9:12, ‘the relief aid/contri-

tianity would do well to remember this core principle in the teachings of the NT.

Statements # 158 and 159 (vv. 5-6) shed additional light on the surprise of Paul over the Macedonians: 5 και οὐ καθὼς ἠλπίσαμεν ἀλλ' ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ και ἡμῖν διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ 6 εἰς τὸ παρακαλέσαι ἡμᾶς Τίτον, ἵνα καθὼς προενήρξατο οὕτως και ἐπιτελέση εἰς ὑμᾶς και τὴν χάριν ταύτην, 5 and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us, 6 so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you.

The οὐ... ἀλλ' (not this...but that) structure in ellipsis here is central to understanding Paul's idea in this part of the lengthy sentence. The first main clause is assumed and modified by the comparative dependent clause introduced by καθὼς. Out of the immediate context the assumed main clause runs along the lines of "they were not voluntary givers," as we had expected. The negative sets up the following clause which suppresses the negative in the οὐ... ἀλλ' structure. That is, the apostle had expected them to give generously out of his earlier encounter with them in their initial enthusiasm over the offering. But instead they did something far better than his expectation. And this is defined following the conjunction ἀλλ' in vv. 5b-6 (#159 above).

The first thing the Macedonians did was ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ και ἡμῖν, they gave themselves to the Lord first and to us. Their generosity toward the saints in Jerusalem flowed out of their commitment to seek and do the will of God (διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ). A fundamental spiritual truth emerges from this. Giving to help others is not a human issue of money or special needs. For God's people giving must always express obedience to God's leadership. God is the one who determines how much and when we are to give to help others. For the worldly Christian such is a nightmare come true, since God will always decide on more than the individual wants to give. But when the believer honestly seeks God's leadership in giving, he / she will discover that indeed "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). And this is spiritual, not material blessing that is promised in Paul's quote of a saying of Jesus not found in the four gospels.

The generosity of the Macedonians provided the opportunity for urging Titus to complete the relief collection/service for God's people'), which may have been the official name for the whole enterprise (so Betz 46, 90), ἡ λογεῖα ἢ εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους (1 Cor. 16:1, 'the collection for God's people'), ἡ διακονία μου ἢ εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ (Rom. 15:31, 'my service for Jerusalem'), ἡ χάρις ὑμῶν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ (1 Cor. 16:3, 'your gift for Jerusalem'). From these data, we can see that either 'Jerusalem' or 'God's people' (οἱ ἅγιοι) serve as abbreviations for the destination of the collection, 'the poor among God's people in Jerusalem'." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 87–88.]

lection among the Corinthians: εἰς τὸ παρακαλέσαι ἡμᾶς Τίτον, ἵνα καθὼς προενήρξατο οὕτως και ἐπιτελέση εἰς ὑμᾶς και τὴν χάριν ταύτην, so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you. This lengthy infinitival result phrase applies the inspiration of the Macedonians to the situation at Corinth. The scenario being envisioned here by Paul is not when he first sent Titus to Corinth prior to the writing of Second Corinthians. Instead, it is contemporary with the writing of Second Corinthians, which Titus was to carry back to Corinth from Macedonia in advance of Paul's arrival in the city. More details on this are given in 9:2-5. He wanted the Corinthian collection to be finished by the time he arrived in Corinth with the delegation from Macedonia.

When Titus first arrived in Corinth,¹⁹ he had made a beginning in organizing the relief offering among the Corinthians: καθὼς προενήρξατο, just as he had begun beforehand. The tense circumstances present when Titus first visited Corinth (cf. 2:1-4) that resulted in Paul's harsh letter that Titus took to Corinth from Ephesus very likely threw cold water on the gathering of the relief offering. As Paul goes on to describe in vv. 7-15, the gathering of the offering was stalled and not complete at the writing of Second Corinthians.

Thus the enthusiasm of the Macedonians inspired Paul to urge Titus when he returned with this letter to Corinth to light a renewed fire among the Corinthians to finish what had been begun earlier: ἵνα...οὕτως και ἐπιτελέση εἰς ὑμᾶς και τὴν χάριν ταύτην, that...so also he might complete even this 'grace' for you. The language here carefully positions Titus as an organizing leader for the offering at Corinth.

Paul's unique usage of τὴν χάριν ταύτην here stands as virtually impossible to translate accurately and thoroughly. The literal meaning of 'this grace' makes no real sense in English. And when standing as the direct object of the verb ἐπιτελέση, he might complete, it becomes even more difficult to comprehend. Yet the idea, though rich and profound, is not that complicated. The offer-

¹⁹Harris details three trips of Titus to Corinth, which is probably accurate. Clearly at least two of these three are documented in 1-2 Corinthians.

On this view, Titus was Paul's envoy to Corinth on three occasions:⁸⁰

1. After the receipt of 1 Corinthians at Corinth, to help to start the relief fund (8:6a; 12:18) (see Watson 333–35).

2. After Paul's "painful visit," to deliver the "severe letter" (7:6–15).

3. At some indefinite time after he had been reunited with Paul in Macedonia (7:6), to deliver 2 Corinthians and to help to complete the collection (8:6b, 16–17).

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 571–572.]

ing and an enthusiasm for contributing to it is an expression of the dynamic grace of God. This Paul made clear in v. 1 with τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δεδομένην ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας, *the grace of God given among the church of Macedonia*. The demonstrative pronoun modifier ταύτην, *this*, goes back to the reference in v. 1. How does Titus then ‘finish,’ ἐπιτελέσῃ, this grace of God? Assumed in this verb / object combination is the idea that Titus as an organizer of the offering must go about contacting each of the house church groups with explanation and encouragement of all the groups to take part in the offering.

Verse seven sets up a logical extension of this idea of the work of Titus and at the same time sets the parameters for the discussion in vv. 8-15: Ἄλλ’ ὥσπερ ἐν παντὶ περισσεύετε, πίστει καὶ λόγῳ καὶ γνώσει καὶ πάσῃ σπουδῇ καὶ τῇ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν ἀγάπῃ, ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε. *Now as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you — so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.*

8.7	Ἄλλ’	
		ὥσπερ
160	ἐν παντὶ	περισσεύετε,
	πίστει	
	καὶ	
	λόγῳ	
	καὶ	
	γνώσει	
	καὶ	
	πάσῃ σπουδῇ	
	καὶ	
	τῇ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν	ὑμῖν ἀγάπῃ,
		ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε.

Again more very complex syntax in Paul’s statement here as the following diagram reflects. The impossibility of literal translation into American English is reflected in the complete reshuffling of the syntax in the NRSV translation: *Now as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you — so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking*. The use of ὥσπερ as an adverbial comparative particle sets up a comparison, and often in the role of a subordinate conjunction as the protasis clause which is usually followed by the main clause as the apodosis. But not here. Instead what follows is the sub-final dependent ἵνα clause, probably here used substantively as indirect command, which is a common function of the ἵνα conjunction. There is no way under Heaven to reproduce this syntax in correct English expression. The above NRSV gets about as close to the idea in Greek as is possible, but all of the subtle nuances of the expression are lost in translation.

The challenge for exegesis is to call attention to

these details as best as is possible. The normally sharp contrast in the coordinate conjunction Ἄλλ’ is stressing a shift of emphasis from the responsibility of Titus to that on the Corinthians. The burden of responsibility for contributing to the relief offering lay on the shoulders of the Corinthians, not on Titus. His task was to be used of God to activate divine grace in the Corinthian groups needing to contribute money to this offering. But it was up to the Corinthians to decide to contribute or not.

The comparative protasis highlights positive traits already present at Corinth: ὥσπερ ἐν παντὶ περισσεύετε, πίστει καὶ λόγῳ καὶ γνώσει καὶ πάσῃ σπουδῇ καὶ τῇ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν ἀγάπῃ, *as in everything you abound, in faith and word and knowledge and in every endeavor and in the from us among you love*. The apostle specifies five areas of excellence present among the Corinthians. This sets up the sixth trait that they now need to excel in: καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι, *also in this grace*. Their faith commitment to Christ was commendable: πίστει. Also their eloquence in speaking the Gospel was good: καὶ λόγῳ. They had good understanding of the things of God:

καὶ γνώσει. They were generally enthusiastic about serving God: καὶ πάσῃ σπουδῇ. The complex structure mentioning love has occasioned uncertainty since the third century.²⁰ Most likely the love reference is that taught by Paul to the Corinthians from his initial ministry.²¹ That loving de-

²⁰ὑμῶν ἐν ἡμῖν κ C D F G K L P Ψ 81. 365. 1241. 1505 M lat sy^h
| ὑμῶν εἰς ἡμᾶς 33
| ὑμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν 326. 629. 2464

| txt P⁴⁶ B 0243. 6. 104. 630. 1175. 1739. 1881 r sy^p co; Ambst [Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 567.]

²¹“8:7 ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν (from us for/in you) {C}

“The reading in the UBS4 text has the support of several early witnesses; and since it is also the more difficult reading, copyists would have been more likely to change it to ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐν ἡμῖν (from you for us) than vice versa. The interpretation of the reading in the text is by no means certain. According to NRSV (similarly TOB) it means ‘and in our love for you.’ It may also mean ‘and among you [ἐν ὑμῖν] there is that love that we have taught you to have [for all people]’ (similarly ITCL). Matera (II Corinthians, pp. 190–91) prefers this second interpretation, that Paul refers to the gift of love that his ministry brought to the Christians in Corinth. Compare ‘and in the love we have kindled in you’ (TNIV).

“At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the reading ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐν ἡμῖν (the love from you for us), which superficially is more appropriate in the context, had very wide circulation in the early church. The variant reading ‘your love for us’ is followed by a number of modern translations (for example, RSV, REB, TEV, NIV, NJB, FC, Seg).”

[Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Page 10*

votion to God has thrived at least among most of the Corinthians.

Now what needs to flourish fully among the Corinthians is their generosity for sharing in the relief offering: ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε. The structuring of this as a dependent ἵνα clause expresses the idea as both an objective and a polite nudge to get going.²² Titus' arrival at Corinth with Second Corinthians in hand for the church will hopefully be the catalyst to get them moving on this offering. Note again the consistent use of χάρις, grace, as a label for the offering: τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ (v. 1); τὴν χάριν (v. 4); τὴν χάριν ταύτην (v. 6); ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι (v. 7). Paul is not after their money! Instead, he is passionately concerned that the Corinthians do what the Macedonians did: give themselves first to God and then open their pocket books generously to help those in need. This he makes very clear in vv. 8-15.

10.2.3.2.1.2 Desire for Corinthians to excel, 8:7-15

8 Οὐ κατ' ἐπιταγὴν λέγω ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἐτέρων σπουδῆς καὶ τὸ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγάπης γνήσιον δοκιμάζων· 9 γινώσκετε γὰρ τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτι δι' ὑμᾶς ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος ὢν, ἵνα ὑμεῖς τῇ ἐκείνου πτωχεῖα πλουτήσητε. 10 καὶ γνώμην ἐν τούτῳ δίδωμι τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν συμφέρει, οἵτινες οὐ μόνον τὸ ποιῆσαι ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ θέλειν προενήρξασθε ἀπὸ πέρυσι· 11 νυνὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ ποιῆσαι ἐπιτελέσατε, ὅπως καθάπερ ἡ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν, οὕτως καὶ τὸ ἐπιτελέσαι ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν. 12 εἰ γὰρ ἡ προθυμία πρόκειται, καθὸ ἐὰν ἔχη εὐπρόσδεκτος, οὐ καθὸ οὐκ ἔχει. 13 οὐ γὰρ ἵνα ἄλλοις ἄνεσις, ὑμῖν θλιψίς, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἰσότητος· 14 ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ τὸ ὑμῶν περίσσευμα εἰς τὸ ἐκείνων ὑστέρημα, ἵνα καὶ τὸ ἐκείνων περίσσευμα γένηται εἰς τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα, ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης, 15 καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ τὸ πολὺ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν, καὶ ὁ τὸ ὀλίγον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν.

8 I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. 9 For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. 10 And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something — 11 now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. 12 For if the eagerness is there, the gift is accepted. *Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 365.]

²²“So then, Paul uses a relatively uncommon construction¹¹ as a substitute for the imperative¹² as he entreats the Corinthians to match their rich giftedness with lavish giving.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 575.]

able according to what one has — not according to what one does not have. 13 I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between 14 your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. 15 As it is written,

“The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little.”

The complex syntax continues in this unit, though not quite as deeply as in the preceding unit.²³ The diagram below seeks to unravel this in visual expression of primary and secondary ideas in the passage. Careful examination reveals the pattern of making one or two assertions (#s 161-162; 164; 166) and then following this with one or more justifying statements (γὰρ; #s. 163; 165; 166-167, 169-171). The first two are closely linked by Οὐ... ἀλλὰ (not this...but that) in an elliptical expression (161-162). The highly elliptical expressions in #169, 170, 171 heighten emphasis dramatically. Sandwiched between is the unusual use of καθὸ twice in an anacoluthon pattern (v. 12; #s 167-168). The four assertions (#s 161-162; 164; 166) target the Corinthians while the seven justifying statements (γὰρ; #s. 163; 165; 166-167, 169-171) reach out mostly to basic spiritual principle as the foundational basis for the assertions.

The challenge facing the apostle was the difficulty of moving the Corinthians to give generously in light of the huge generosity from the Macedonian example. But the earlier enthusiasm of the Corinthians that had stalled out had been a point of emphasis to the Macedonians that prompted them in part to be so generous. Now Paul was planning on visiting the city and a delegation of Macedonian representatives of the churches would be with him. What an embarrassment for this group to show up and the Corinthians to not have completed the gathering of the relief offering. So the task before Paul is encourage the Corinthians to finish the job with the help of Titus upon his arrival and before the apostle gets there some weeks or months later. But Paul genuinely wants the gathering of the offering to be done properly as a voluntary contribution of

²³“The same group of literary features that we observed in 8:1–6 is in evidence in this section: certain anacolutha (e.g., in v 13, where the verb ‘to be’ has to be added), a cryptic style of writing seen in v 11, and in particular an ambiguous use of ἵνα, ‘that,’ to denote either final clauses or statements of command (v 7). All these items make for a confused passage, whose sense, while tolerably clear, is far from certain. There is a note of dialectic that has been traced in this Pauline argumentation.⁹²” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 437.]

Of course, one would recognize that critiques such as these reflect more the biased assumptions of an English speaking way of thinking, and not necessarily that of first century Greek ways of thinking.

161 ^{8.8} Οὐ κατ' ἐπιταγὴν λέγω
 ἀλλὰ

162 (λέγω)
 διὰ τῆς ἐτέρων σπουδῆς
 καὶ
 τὸ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγάπης γνήσιον δοκιμάζων·

^{8.9} γὰρ

163 γινώσκετε τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,
 | δι' ὑμᾶς
 ὅτι...ἐπτώχευσεν
 πλούσιος ὢν,
 ἵνα ὑμεῖς τῆ ἐκείνου πτωχεΐα πλουτήσητε.

^{8.10} καὶ

164 γνώμην ἐν τούτῳ δίδωμι·
 γὰρ

165 τοῦτο ὑμῖν συμφέρει,
 οἵτινες οὐ μόνον τὸ ποιῆσαι
 ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ θέλειν προενήρξασθε
 ἀπὸ πέρυσι·

^{8.11} δὲ

νυνὶ
 καὶ

166 τὸ ποιῆσαι ἐπιτελέσατε,
 | καθάπερ ἡ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν,
 | οὕτως καὶ
 ὅπως...τὸ ἐπιτελέσαι
 ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν.

^{8.12} γὰρ

εἰ ἡ προθυμία πρόκειται,
 167 καθὸ ἐὰν ἔχη εὐπρόσδεκτος,
 168 οὐ καθὸ οὐκ ἔχει.

^{8.13} γὰρ

169 (ἐστίν)
 οὐ ἵνα ἄλλοις ἀνεσις, ὑμῖν θλίψις,
 ἀλλ'

170 (ἐστίν)
 ἐξ ἰσότητος·

^{8.14} ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ

171 (ἐστίν) τὸ ὑμῶν περίσσευμα
 εἰς τὸ ἐκείνων ὑστέρημα,
 ἵνα καὶ τὸ ἐκείνων περίσσευμα γένηται
 εἰς τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα,
 ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης,

^{8.15} καθὼς γέγραπται·
 /-----|
 ὁ τὸ πολὺ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν,
 καὶ
 ὁ τὸ ὀλίγον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν.

a dedicated heart to God. He well understands that just giving money is ultimately worthless before God. He is not concerned as to how much money the Corinthians contribute, especially in comparison to what the Macedonian churches gave. Their example is the spirit in which they gave; not the amount they gave. He wants the Corinthians to follow this example. What can one say in order to achieve such an objective?

First we need to look at his assertions which form the core structure of his expression. Then the matching

justifying statement(s) will follow each assertion(s).

1) *Οὐ κατ' ἐπιταγὴν λέγω ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἐτέρων σπουδῆς καὶ τὸ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγάπης γνήσιον δοκιμάζων, Not by command am I speaking, but through the eagerness of others and by testing the genuineness of your devotion to the Lord* (v. 8). The apostle is very transparent with the Corinthians from the outset. One doesn't command voluntary generosity to happen. It can be encouraged, as Paul does in this passage, but it can't be made to happen by any authoritative command.²⁴ In 9:6-15, he goes into more detail here.

What Paul does indicate is that he speaks to them through the eagerness of the Macedonians (διὰ τῆς ἐτέρων σπουδῆς). The power of an inspirational example is significant, and far better than authoritative demand. This is just as true today as it was in the middle of the first Christian century.

Secondly the apostle freely acknowledges that he is 'putting the Corinthians under the microscope,' so to speak: καὶ τὸ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγάπης γνήσιον δοκιμάζων, and putting the genuineness of your love to the test. Later copyists -- D* F G -- in simplifying the grammar switched the participle δοκιμάζων over to the finite verb δοκιμάζω but the original participle preserves the secondary role of this in cautious linguistic expression. He politely reminds them that their initial enthusiasm must be matched by action if the enthusiasm is real. They claimed loving devotion to God and thus to their needy brothers. Now by completing the relief offering they have the opportunity to demonstrate that this claim is genuine.

a) **Proof for Paul's assertion.** *γινώσκετε γὰρ τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτι δι' ὑμᾶς ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος*

²⁴One should be very careful to distinguish Paul's language here from the somewhat similar language in 1 Cor. 7:6; Rom. 16:26; 1 Tim. 1:1; Tit. 1:3 where Paul differentiates between his opinion and a direct command from God. "The former negated phrase denotes Paul's refraining from dictatorial tactics (cf. 1:24) or from an assertion of his apostolic authority (cf. Phlm. 8-9). The latter qualified expression refers to the divine will or decree regarding salvation or Paul's apostleship. If in fact Paul was acknowledging in v. 8a the absence of any definitive command of the Lord regarding the collection, we would have expected ἐπιταγή to be qualified by κυρίου, as in 1 Cor. 7:25 (περὶ δὲ τῶν παρθένων ἐπιταγὴν κυρίου οὐχ ἔχω, γνώμην δὲ δίδωμι; cf. 1 Cor. 7:10; 2 Cor. 8:10a). As it is, Paul is not giving his instructions about the collection 'by way of command' (de Boor 178; Barrett 216) or 'in the spirit of a command' (Williams). He realized that if he resorted to issuing a series of commands that could be obeyed mechanically, his stress on the voluntary nature of Christian giving (see 8:3; 9:5, 7) would be compromised, he could lay himself open to the charge of domineering (cf. 1:24), and both his motivation for promoting the collection and the gift itself might become suspect in the eyes of the Corinthians and the recipients in Jerusalem." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 576.]

ὦν, ἵνα ὑμεῖς τῆ ἐκείνου πτωχεῖα πλουτήσητε, for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for your sakes He became poor even though being rich, so that you by the poverty of That One might become rich (v. 9). The ultimate justification for Paul's speaking as he did (v. 8) is found in the action of Christ. As Paul has consistently spoken of the relief offering in terms of it being χάρις he now uses the same term in reference to the incarnation and crucifixion of Christ. This action of χάρις is defined by the verb ἐπτώχευσεν, *he impoverished himself*. The contrast is between Christ in Heaven πλούσιος ὦν, *although being rich*, and Christ on earth having become poverty stricken, τῆ ἐκείνου πτωχεῖα. Spiritual riches verses material poverty is the assumption here. But the point of the contrast is the emphasis upon profound generosity in this action by Christ. As the purpose ἵνα clause asserts, by this action the Corinthians gained true spiritual wealth out of Christ's 'poverty' action of dying on the cross. Clearly here the core spiritual truth is that only in actions can we validate our claims to loving God. Christ demonstrated this; now it is time for the Corinthians to demonstrate it as well.

2) *καὶ γνώμην ἐν τούτῳ δίδωμι, and understanding by this I provide* (v. 10a). This second assertion made by Paul expands upon the first one by asserting in simple language that the apostle is giving γνώμην, that is, understanding in this matter (ἐν τούτῳ). He is not telling the Corinthians what they must do. Rather he is laying the issue of the relief offering and their history with it out in the open in the expectation that they will do what is proper. The antecedent of the neuter gender demonstrative pronouns τούτῳ and τοῦτο allude back to his recounting of the situation beginning in 8:1 and following. In a nutshell, the Corinthians initially showed great enthusiasm for the relief project a little over a year before (ἀπὸ πέρυσι). But for whatever the reason or reasons the work of gathering the offering had stalled and lay incomplete. Paul in this letter to them seeks to rekindle interest and commitment to this task, and tells them so here in direct expression.

b) **Proof for Paul's assertion.** *τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν συμφέρει, οἵτινες οὐ μόνον τὸ ποιῆσαι ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ θέλειν προενηρξασθε ἀπὸ πέρυσι· for this benefits you, who began not only to do but to desire last year* (v. 10b). The justification for this assertion that he is putting the issue on the table clearly for them to see is found in the second part of this compound sentence introduced by the causal conjunction γὰρ. The core expression τοῦτο ὑμῖν συμφέρει, *this is appropriate for you*, claims that his reminding them of their unfinished work is entirely in line with the actual situation. The root idea of the verb συμφέρω is to bring two items together in demonstration of harmony between the two. The derivative idea is that such action can be very beneficial and advantageous. Paul sees this re-

minding of the Corinthians as potentially beneficial for the Corinthians.

Why? Because of whom he believes the Corinthians to be: οἵτινες οὐ μόνον τὸ ποιῆσαι ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ θέλειν προενηρξασθε ἀπὸ πέρυσι, *you are of such character as to have begun over a year ago not just what you did but also what you desired to achieve.*²⁵ The use of the qualitative relative pronoun οἵτινες from ὅστις, ἥτις, ὃ τι, rather than the simple relative ὃς, -ῆ, -ὸ, adds a distinct quality to the reference that here asserts a character of the Corinthians that affirms Paul's confidence in them to carry out what they started. It had been over a year since they first expressed enthusiasm in this project (ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ θέλειν) and had begun collecting the offering (οὐ μόνον τὸ ποιῆσαι, note the inceptive aorist tense usage here). Now what remained was to finish it. The present tense infinitive τὸ θέλειν stresses the continuing desire to gather the offering. But with the arrival of Titus back in Corinth with this letter, the task should be completed without difficulty.

3) νυνὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ ποιῆσαι ἐπιτελέσατε, ὅπως καθάπερ ἡ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν, οὕτως καὶ τὸ ἐπιτελεῖσαι ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν. And now also complete what you started to do so according to the ea-

²⁵“Several aspects of this understanding of the verse merit more attention. Although in Biblical Greek the distinction between ὃς and ὅστις is not regularly maintained, sometimes the context supports a distinction, with ὅστις bearing a qualitative sense (‘being of such a character as to ...’) or a causal meaning (‘inasmuch as’).⁴¹ Here, either sense is suitable. The Corinthians were distinctive either as ‘people who ...’ or ‘seeing that you....’ The two articular infinitives, τὸ ποιῆσαι and τὸ θέλειν, are direct objects of προενηρξασθε⁴² and are anaphoric in import, pointing to well-known facts.⁴³ The difference in tense between the two infinitives (ποιῆσαι—θέλειν) is significant. The Corinthians’ active participation in the collection had been interrupted before the time of writing but their desire or will to contribute remained steady.⁴⁴ But why does Paul mention action before intent in a construction (οὐ μόνον ... ἀλλὰ καὶ)⁴⁵ that suggests that the second element is even more important than the first? The unexpected order reflects Paul’s emphasis throughout 2 Corinthians 8–9 on attitude and motivation rather than on the material result.⁴⁶ If intent remains present and with it motivation, from one viewpoint acting on one’s intent may be assumed to follow. On the other hand, if desire and motivation lapse, action becomes unlikely. By inverting the natural order, Paul is highlighting the priority of motivation in both time and importance⁴⁷ and also complimenting the Corinthians for their unswerving desire to participate in the project. We may explain the προ- in προενηρξασθε (literally, ‘you began earlier’) as ‘before other contributors’ or ‘before the Macedonians’ (who are not mentioned in 1 Cor. 16:1–4), or (BAGD 705b) as anticipating ἀπὸ πέρυσι. The same verb occurred in 8:6 (προενηρξάτο) in reference to Titus’s role in helping to initiate contributions to the collection in Corinth. Here the verb refers to that same general time (‘last year’) but focuses on the Corinthians’ own dual role in ‘beginning’ the collection—their desire and decision to participate and their actual initial participation.⁴⁸” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 581–582.]

gerness of wanting may also be completed out of what you have (v. 11). This third assertion turns into the imperative ἐπιτελέσατε in which Paul urges them to finish the job they had begun over a year before. The aorist imperative verb stresses the urgency of completing the task. With the gathering of this relief offering by the Corinthians the apostle uses three infinitive expressions. First, τὸ ποιῆσαι in vv. 10 and 11 defines the initial actions of collecting the offering. The use of the aorist tense in the infinitive makes this very clear. Second, τὸ θέλειν, *to be wanting to*, in v. 10 and then ἡ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν, *the eagerness of the wanting to*, in v. 11, with the present tense usage define the continuing high level desire of the Corinthians to participate in the relief offering. Third, τὸ ἐπιτελεῖσαι, *to finish*, with the aorist infinitive stresses their present obligation to complete the collection of the offering.

A positive picture of the Corinthians is painted here regarding their participation in the relief offering. And it is a realistic one as ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν, *out of what you have*, underscores. The apostle does not concern himself with setting some high amount of money as a goal. This point is then justified by more extensive expression in vv. 11–15.

c) **Proof a for Paul’s assertion. εἰ γὰρ ἡ προθυμία πρόκειται, καθὸ ἐὰν ἔχη εὐπρόσδεκτος, οὐ καθὸ οὐκ ἔχει, for since your eagerness is set up openly, do it acceptably according to what you have, not according to what you don’t have** (v. 12). The first of two sets of justification for his third point is put forth in v. 12. This very complex expression in Greek plays off adverbial comparisons that are introduced by καθὸ. The first class conditional protasis εἰ ἡ προθυμία πρόκειται, *since the eagerness is clearly present*, assumes the continuing interest by the Corinthians in participating in the relief offering as described in vv. 10–11. Now the completing of the gathering of the offering is to be done ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν, *out of what you have* (v. 11b). The justifying assertions in v. 12 base this one the spiritual principle of giving out of what one possesses, not out of what he doesn’t possess. Note the repeated use of ἔχω in ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν; ἐὰν ἔχη; and οὐκ ἔχει. The consistent use of the present tense of all three expressions underscores continual ownership of material things. Within the Corinthian community of believers a wide range of material wealth all the way from having little as slaves and peasants to a lot as wealthy persons (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26). The material level of each family defines the framework of proportional giving.²⁶ And as 1 Cor. 1:26

²⁶“Several significant principles of Christian stewardship emerge from this verse.

“1. All giving is conducted under God’s omniscient gaze. Whatever is the motivation of the giver of a gift and whatever is the reaction of its recipient, God is the final adjudicator of the gift’s value.

“2. There are two criteria by which God assesses the accept-

suggests the majority of the Corinthian believers were on the bottom end of the economic ladder. But when ἡ προθυμία, *eagerness*, is present the likelihood will be sacrificial giving as the Macedonian churches exemplified (cf. 8:3-4).

The connecting point of this principle is εὐπρόσδεκτος, *acceptable*. Given the LXX background usage in connection to offerings made to God at the temple, the sense of εὐπρόσδεκτος τῷ θεῷ, *acceptable to God*, is what Paul asserts.²⁷ God's measuring standard for what we give is in part defined by what we have. No one is exempt from giving, but everyone is to give proportionally out of their means. Behind this adjective εὐπρόσδεκτος, -ov stands the verb προσδέχομαι meaning to *welcome*.

d) **Proof b for Paul's assertion.** οὐ γὰρ ἵνα ἄλλοις ἄνευσι, ὑμῖν θλίψις, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἰσότητος· ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ τὸ ὑμῶν περισσεύμα εἰς τὸ ἐκείνων ὑστέρημα, ἵνα καὶ τὸ ἐκείνων περισσεύμα γένηται εἰς τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα, ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης, καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ τὸ πολὺ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν, καὶ ὁ τὸ ὀλίγον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν. *For not that relief for others exists and affliction for you, but out of a fair balance. At present your abundance is for the needs of others so that also the abundance of others may become your need, this so that there may be balance, just as it stands written, "the one having much may not have too much, and the one with little may not have too little"* (vv. 13-15). This second justifying principle for the assertion in

ability of a gift. First, the gift must be an expression of an 'eager desire to give' (ἡ προθυμία [12] = ἡ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν [11]). In vv. 11-12 προθυμία is not merely a willingness or eagerness to give, but an enthusiastic willingness to give that results in actual giving.⁶⁹ The corollary of this criterion is that if gifts are reluctantly or grudgingly given (cf. 9:7), they do not receive the divine approval. Second, the gift should be in proportion to one's resources.⁷⁰ On this principle no person can claim an exemption from the obligation to give; no one is too poor to give—witness the case of the desperately poor Macedonians (8:2). In enunciating this principle of giving ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν (8:11) or καθὸ ἐὰν ἔχη (8:12), Paul is advocating prudence and the avoidance of recklessness in giving. However, occasional disproportionate giving, that is, giving beyond one's actual resources (παρὰ δύναμιν, 8:3), is a tribute and testimony to God's grace (8:1-2). Yet if such disproportionate giving were the norm, resources for giving would be rapidly depleted (9:10 notwithstanding).

"3. If Paul had advocated the practice of tithing, this would have been an appropriate place for him to mention or defend it. But so far from championing the practice of giving by percentage, he argues for proportional giving."

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 586-587.]

²⁷"For explicit reference to God in connection with pleasing 'sacrifices,' see Rom. 12:1 (θυσίαν ... εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ); Phil. 4:18 (θυσίαν δεκτὴν, εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ); Heb. 13:16 (τοιαύταις ... θυσίαις εὐαρεστεῖται ὁ θεός)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005).]

v. 11 develops the idea of ἰσότητος, *balance*.²⁸ All three of the NT uses ἰσότης are Pauline (Col. 4:1; 2 Cor. 8:13, 14) and stress the idea of fairness.²⁹ The idea of balance was a major theme in the Greco-Roman world of the Corinthians.³⁰ In Christ, this principle took on new meaning in application to mutual assistance for one another, which was not very common in the patron-client driven Roman society.

But one needs to read this text carefully.³¹ It is stressing balance between the 'haves' and 'have nots'

²⁸"The term ἰσότης, here and in v 14, means 'equality, fair dealing' and is linked with justice or righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) in Philo.¹⁴² But elsewhere in Philo¹⁴³ the term suggests divine power. Georgi, then, wants to see here an appeal to God's power as providing the basis for Paul's ideal, as if the text read 'from God [ἐκ θεοῦ]'. This is possible on the ground that it makes sense of the following verse, where Paul will declare that in the future (to contrast with ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ, 'in the present age') Gentiles will be enriched by Jerusalem's overflow—and this hope is what Paul's heilsgeschichtlich, 'salvation-historical,' theology (Rom 9-11) promised as part of his understanding of how divine righteousness works. It is not simply a human sense of 'fair shares' all round, conceived as an altruistic feature. But this may be to overinterpret the text. Yet v 14 shows that Paul's thought is eschatologically controlled." [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 444.]

²⁹The derivative adjective ἰσότημος, -ov meaning equal is found in 2 Pet. 1:1. The somewhat more common adjective ἴσος, η, ov is found seven times in the NT with the idea of "**being equivalent in number, size, quality, equal.**" [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 480.]

³⁰"ἰσότης ('equality,' 'fair dealing') was an important concept in mathematics, law, philosophy, and political theory. 'The high regard of the Greeks for ἰσότης is reflected in its personification in Euripides (*Phoen.* 536) and in its evaluation by Aristotle as a means of fostering unity and solidarity in the state.'¹⁹ It was also seen as a key element in interpersonal relations, so that true friends were ἴσοι καὶ ὅμοιοι, equal in value, like-minded, and committed to each other.¹⁰ So when Paul appeals to the need for equality, he presupposes the Corinthians' commitment to the well-known principle of equality and fair dealing (cf. Col. 4:1) and in particular their awareness of the commonality, friendship, and solidarity in Christ that bound Gentile and Jewish Christians together." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 590.]

³¹Some tendency exists among commentators to look beyond the relief offering being discussed here to a theological principle of Gentiles and Jews. In part this seems to me to be a failure to grasp Paul's sense of abundance (περίσσευμα) and need (ὑστέρημα). By seeing these merely in terms of quantity there is the understanding of God's time of abundance for the Gentiles and deficiency for the Jews blinded by Torah obedience. But this is not what the apostle is stressing here. The Jewish Christian brothers in Jerusalem had material needs that the Gentiles churches, even though mostly poor themselves, could help meet.

with the Corinthians at the moment (ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ³²) being the haves and the Jerusalem believers as the have nots. This balance is needed for a future time of reversal when the Corinthians become the have nots: ἵνα καὶ τὸ ἐκείνων περίσσευμα γένηται εἰς τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα.³³ Yet the controlling principle remains always: ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης, so that equality may exist.

³²“At the present moment your surplus can meet their deficiency.’ Paul now explains how the equality (ἰσότης) he has just mentioned will be achieved between the Corinthian and Jerusalemite believers at the present time (v. 14a) and in the indefinite future (v. 14b). In the phrase ὁ νῦν καιρός, the temporal adverb νῦν functions as an adjective (cf. τὸ νῦν, 5:16). Although the phrase in Romans (Rom. 3:26; 8:18; 11:5) refers to the present Christian dispensation, and not simply to ‘the present circumstances,’ there is no justification (*pace* Martin 267–70) for finding here in v. 14 a contrast between ‘the present time (= age)’ and ‘the age to come,’ when God’s final purposes for the world will be fulfilled.¹¹ Corresponding to ‘at the present time’ is an implied indefinite time such as ‘later on’ (Weymouth) or ‘some day’ (Barclay) or ‘at some future date.’” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 590.]

³³“ἵνα καὶ τὸ ἐκείνων περίσσευμα γένηται εἰς τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα, ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης. ‘So that some day their surplus can in turn meet your deficiency, in order that there may be equality.’ At first sight it might appear that ἵνα points to a motive that could impel the Corinthians to meet the ‘deficiency’ at Jerusalem from their ‘surplus’ (v. 14a). That is, provided they contributed at the present time, they could rest assured that on some future occasion, in a reversal of circumstances and roles, those at Jerusalem would relieve their need. Such motivation, however, would fly in the face of Jesus’ call to do good, ‘expecting nothing in return’ (Luke 6:35). It is therefore preferable to treat ἵνα as introducing a divinely ordered purpose,¹⁸ or (better) as ecbatic in import, stating a consequence. On this latter view, the outcome of Corinthian giving according to their present resources would be reciprocity (cf. καί, ‘in turn’) if there were a change of economic circumstances in Corinth and Jerusalem. Certainly Paul is not predicting economic dearth in Corinth and prosperity in Jerusalem; indeed, the chronic poverty in Jerusalem and the long-standing prosperity of Corinth rendered it unlikely that there would ever be such an economic reversal. But it is the principle of reciprocal sharing that Paul is defending.

“But not all scholars understand the second περίσσευμα and ὑστέρημα in v. 14 as references to a financial surplus and shortfall. As a result of receiving financial aid from their Gentile brothers and sisters, Jerusalem believers would continue to supply them with their ‘surplus,’ the spiritual blessings of the gospel (cf. Rom. 15:27),¹⁹ including advice, example, and prayers. Such an interpretation is certainly admissible, but it has several disadvantages: (1) it compromises the parallelism between the two parts of v. 14 which is highlighted by καί, ‘in turn’; (2) it dilutes the implicit ‘now-then’ contrast in v. 14 that points to a purely future Jerusalem ‘surplus’; and (3) it does not cohere naturally with the OT allusion in v. 15 that describes purely material equality.”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 591–592.]

The interesting foundation for this sense of ἰσότης is given in verse 15 as a citation from the Torah of the Old Testament (cf. Exod. 16:11-36). Paul only uses OT citations five times in Second Corinthians: 4:13; 6:2, 16–18; 8:15; 9:9. The introductory formula to introduce the OT reference, καθὼς γέγραπται, just as it stands written, is found also in 9:9, but is the most common way to introduce an OT text among the writers of the NT in general. It points to both the authoritative nature and permanency of the OT scripture texts. He draws upon the LXX text but also differs with in in wording at certain points.³⁴ Exodus 16:18 is specifically used by the apostle here.³⁵ Paul chooses only the part that asserts his summarizing point and updates the Greek wording somewhat.

The background for the Exodus 16 text is the Exodus and God’s provision of mana to the Israelites. The situation between the Israelites in the dessert and the urban Corinthian congregation is very different from one another. Plus the apostle true to his training as a Pharisee sees a deeper spiritual principle at work that makes the Israelite experience relevant to the Corinthians. In the daily gathering of the manna some greedy Israelites harvested more than the defined allotment, and others were unable to gather enough to meet the allotment. But when each batch was measured by the omar size basket, the quantity miraculously turned out

³⁴“Paul’s citation is drawn from the LXX but differs from it in three respects.

LXX	Paul
καὶ μετρήσαντες τῷ γομῶρ ὁ τὸ πολὺ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν, καὶ ὁ τὸ ἔλαττον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν	οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν ὁ τὸ πολὺ, καὶ ὁ τὸ ὀλίγον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν

1. Paul omits “and when they measured it by the omer” because this is not relevant to his central point of the equality of divine provision in spite of initial differences.

2. He moves ὁ τὸ πολὺ to the beginning of the sentence to create precise parallelism between the two parts.

3. He replaces ἔλαττον (‘less’) by ὀλίγον to emphasize the deep poverty of the Jerusalem poor.²⁶”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 593.]

³⁵ :וַיִּמְדוּ בַעֲמֵר וְלֹא הָעֲדִיף הַמֶּזֶבֶת וְהַמְּנַעֲמִיט לֹא הִקְטִיר אִישׁ שֶׁכְּלֹו וְכִלְקוּ לְקַטְרֵוּ

LXX: καὶ μετρήσαντες τῷ γομῶρ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν ὁ τὸ πολὺ, καὶ ὁ τὸ ἔλαττον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν· ἕκαστος εἰς τοὺς καθήκοντας παρ’ ἑαυτῷ συνέλεξαν.†

NRSV: But when they measured it with an omer, those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as each of them needed.

2 Cor 8:15: καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ τὸ πολὺ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν, καὶ ὁ τὸ ὀλίγον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν.

to be the same. God saw to that. Additionally some tried to squeeze by through not eating the daily allotment and save it up over night. But God saw to it that the extra was ruined the following day (vv. 19-21).

What the apostle saw in this Exodus wandering experience was the divinely mandated principle of *ισότης*, *equity* (v. 14c). This principle he then applied to the Corinthian and Jerusalem situation of his day. At the moment the Corinthians had an abundance and needed to share that with the Jerusalem church that was suffering in need. Plus a day could potentially come when the situation would be reversed and then it would be the responsibility of the Jerusalem church to share out of its abundance.

This is an interesting example of how the apostle utilized the Hebrew Bible as authoritative scripture. He could see how God was working in a very human circumstance and the parameters of human activity that God would and wouldn't tolerate. He did not see application as warning that God would slam the Corinthians hard for not sharing out of their 'abundance.' Nor did he make false promises about material blessings coming from sharing their abundance. Instead, he reminded them that the God whom they claimed now to serve as believers operates on the principle of *ισότης*, *equity* (v. 14c). That should be incentive enough to motivate them toward generosity in this relief offering.³⁶

10.2.3.2.2 Role of Titus with the Corinthians, 8:16-24

16 Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ τῷ δόντι τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ Τίτου, 17 ὅτι τὴν μὲν παράκλησιν ἐδέξατο, σπουδαιότερος δὲ ὑπάρχων ἀυθαίρετος ἐξῆλθεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς. 18 συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ μετ' αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀδελφὸν οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, 19 οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ χειροτονηθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν συνέκδημος ἡμῶν σὺν τῇ χάριτι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένη ὑφ' ἡμῶν πρὸς τὴν [αὐτοῦ] τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν καὶ προθυμίαν ἡμῶν, 20 στελλόμενοι τοῦτο, μή τις ἡμᾶς μωμήσῃται ἐν τῇ ἀδρότῃ ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένη ὑφ' ἡμῶν· 21 προνοοῦμεν γὰρ καλὰ οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον

³⁶Neither Paul, Jesus, or the other NT writers ever use sacred scripture as a 'rule book' for beating up on people like it was some kind of religious billy club. This approach to scripture comes much later in Christianity when it has largely lost sight of the power of divine grace transforming sinful lives that are walking in obedience to Christ.

Instead, the biblical approach is to appeal, sometimes passionately, to the divinely established framework within which God expects His people to live. Add to that a strong emphasis upon divine accountability particularly on Judgment Day. The expectation is that people who actual know God in relationship with Him will be motivated to shape their lives and living accordingly. Those who don't won't and coercing them into obedience with threats won't produce acceptable obedience to God anyway. Oh that modern Christianity could recover this approach of Jesus and the apostles!

ἀνθρώπων. 22 συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ αὐτοῖς τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν ὃν ἐδοκιμάσαμεν ἐν πολλοῖς πολλακίς σπουδαῖον ὄντα, νυνὶ δὲ πολὺ σπουδαιότερον πεποιθήσει πολλῇ τῇ εἰς ὑμᾶς. 23 εἴτε ὑπὲρ Τίτου, κοινωνὸς ἐμὸς καὶ εἰς ὑμᾶς συνεργός· εἴτε ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν, ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, δόξα Χριστοῦ. 24 τὴν οὖν ἔνδειξιν τῆς ἀγάπης ὑμῶν καὶ ἡμῶν καυχήσεως ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν εἰς αὐτοὺς ἐνδεικνύμενοι εἰς πρόσωπον τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν.

16 But thanks be to God who put in the heart of Titus the same eagerness for you that I myself have. 17 For he not only accepted our appeal, but since he is more eager than ever, he is going to you of his own accord. 18 With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his proclaiming the good news; 19 and not only that, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us while we are administering this generous undertaking for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our goodwill. 20 We intend that no one should blame us about this generous gift that we are administering, 21 for we intend to do what is right not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of others. 22 And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found eager in many matters, but who is now more eager than ever because of his great confidence in you. 23 As for Titus, he is my partner and co-worker in your service; as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. 24 Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

This next unit of text both continues and shifts the emphasis upon motivation treated in vv. 7-15. It also gives insight in how safeguarding the monetary offering was being done. When Paul mentions intending to do the right thing not only before God but also in the sight of others, he signals that contemporary customs about proprietary methods of raising money are important: προνοοῦμεν γὰρ καλὰ οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων, *for we intend to do what is right not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of others* (v. 21).

Consequently some examination of perspectives becomes helpful to understanding Paul's methods. This principle of pleasing both God and men in certain behaviors and procedures is relatively common in Jewish and early Christian literature.³⁷ The use of envoys

³⁷Since the rule is found elsewhere in Jewish and Christian literature,³⁰⁶ and since its text is sufficiently different from that of Prov 3:4,³⁰⁷ it does not appear that Paul cited Scripture directly, but indirectly. That is to say, he knew and cited the saying as a proverb.³⁰⁸ The proverb was of use to Paul because it contained language typically employed in administration. The terms προνοεῖν and πρόνοια occur frequently in official letters, often in stereotypical phrases which describe forethought as a quality of an able official: 'exercising all zeal and forethought ...' (ἄπασαν σπουδὴν καὶ πρόνοιαν ποιού[με]νος ...).³⁰⁹ This usage is also found in the speech of the orator Tertullus in Acts 24:2, who praises the forethought (πρόνοια) of Felix.³¹⁰ In the Egyptian government, there

8.16 δε
172 Χάρις (ἐστὶν) τῷ θεῷ
 | τῷ δόντι τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν
 | ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν
 | ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ Τίτου,
 8.17 ὅτι τὴν μὲν παράκλησιν ἐδέξατο,
 δε
 σπουδαιότερος ὑπάρχων ἀυθαίρετος
 --- ἐξήλθεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

8.18 δε
173 συνεπέψαμεν...τὸν ἀδελφὸν
 μετ' αὐτοῦ οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν,
 8.19 δε
174 (ἐστὶν) οὐ μόνον,
 ἀλλὰ
 καὶ
175 (ἐστὶν) χειροτονηθεῖς
 ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν
 συνέκδημος ἡμῶν
 σὺν τῇ χάριτι ταύτῃ
 τῇ διακονουμένῃ
 ὑφ' ἡμῶν
 πρὸς τὴν [αὐτοῦ] τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν καὶ προθυμίαν ἡμῶν,
176 8.20 **(συνεπέψαμεν...τὸν ἀδελφὸν)**
 στελλόμενοι τοῦτο,
 μή τις ἡμᾶς μωμήσῃται
 ἐν τῇ ἀδρότητι ταύτῃ
 τῇ διακονουμένῃ
 ὑφ' ἡμῶν·

8.21 γὰρ
177 προνοοῦμεν καλὰ
 οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου
 ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων.

8.22 δε
178 συνεπέψαμεν αὐτοῖς τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν
 ὃν ἐδοκιμάσαμεν
 ἐν πολλοῖς πολλαῖς
 σπουδαῖον ὄντα,
 δε
 νυνὶ
 πολὺ
179 (ἐστὶν) σπουδαιότερον
 πεποιθήσει πολλῇ
 τῇ εἰς ὑμᾶς.

8.23 εἴτε
 ὑπὲρ Τίτου,
180 (ἐστὶν) κοινωνὸς ἐμὸς
 καὶ
 εἰς ὑμᾶς
 συνεργός·
 εἴτε
 ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν,
181 (εἰσὶν) ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν,
 δόξα Χριστοῦ.

τὴν ἐνδειξίν τῆς ἀγάπης ὑμῶν
 | καὶ
 | ἡμῶν καυχήσεως
 | ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν

εἰς αὐτοὺς |

182 (εἰσίν) ἐνδεικνύμενοι--

εἰς πρόσωπον τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν.

selected both by him and by the churches served as a precaution against charges of abuse or deceit. The principle stated here seems to be an adaptation of Prov. 3:4,

- 3 ἐλεημοσύνη καὶ πίστις μὴ ἐκλιπέτωσάν σε,
 ἄφαψαι δὲ αὐτάς ἐπὶ σῶ τραχήλῳ,
 καὶ εὐρήσεις χάριν·†
- 4 καὶ προνοῦ καλὰ ἐνώπιον κυρίου καὶ ἀνθρώπων.†
- 3 Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you;
 bind them around your neck,
 write them on the tablet of your heart.
- 4 So you will find favor and good repute
 in the sight of God and of people

Most all ancient societies expected honorableness and trustworthiness from those entrusted with responsibilities. Religious charlatans were numerous in Paul's world with a sordid reputation for raising funds for 'noble causes,' but then pocketing the funds in personal enrichment.³⁸ Thus the apostle is determined to make certain that no one can legitimately make accusations that this fund raising was done dishonestly.

What scenario then emerges from this text along with a few supplementary statements elsewhere? The primary focus of vv. 16-24 centers on the formation of a delegation of three individuals, including Titus, who were coming ahead of Paul to Corinth in order to complete the work of gathering the relief offering of the Corinthians. Titus receives most of the attention but the other two unnamed brothers are highly commended by Paul to the Corinthians.³⁹ Piecing together a timeline for ministrative Letters of the Apostle Paul, ed. George W. MacRae, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 77–78.]

³⁸“When Paul wrote 1 Thess 2:3–12, he was already obliged to draw a sharp distinction between himself and the religious charlatans who filled the Roman world. Such men had a reputation for raising funds for what were purported to be good causes, and then lining their own pockets.³⁰²” [Hans Dieter Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*, ed. George W. MacRae, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 76.]

³⁹“We have argued in the Introduction (A.4) that Paul's main purpose in writing this letter was to prepare the way so that his imminent visit to Corinth would be enjoyable. One crucial aspect of that preparation was the dispatch to Corinth of Titus, his personal delegate, and two Christian brothers, appointees of the Macedonian churches, to facilitate arrangements for the completion of the collection. Now, finally, after more than seven chapters, Paul formally introduces and commends these three men who themselves

their activities both prior and subsequent to the writing of this letter is not easy with the very limited information provided in the text.

The literary shape⁴⁰ of vv. 16-24 comes close to being a letter of recommendation (esp. vv. 16-23) with the opening phrase in v. 16: Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ, and praise be

will have delivered to the Corinthians for public reading this letter that announces that imminent visit. 8:16–23 forms Paul's own ‘letter of commendation’ (ἐπιστολὴ συστατικὴ; cf. 3:1–3; 3 John 12), with a direct appeal to the Corinthians attached (8:24). Following traditional procedures for the commissioning of an emissary or delegate,¹ Paul mentions three items regarding each of the delegates—identification, relationship to the sender(s), and credentials for the intended role.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 595.]

⁴⁰“Lietzmann is not the only reader of these verses to remark on ‘the complicated presentation’ (die umständliche Vorstellung), as Paul recommends three Christian leaders en route to Corinth. The language he uses and the stylistic traits that are evident combine to produce a piece of writing that is overweighted with heavy content. Hainz offers a key to the style of writing, in his observation that the purpose is undoubtedly polemical,¹⁵⁹ with Paul having to meet opposition and suspicion on two fronts: (1) he must clear the air at Corinth of any remaining doubts regarding the integrity of his motives and actions, especially where money matters are concerned (vv 20–21: cf. 7:2; 11:20; 12:15–18), and (2) he must pave the way for the smooth transference of the collection from his Gentile congregations to Jerusalem, where again a favorable reception cannot be assumed (Rom 15:30–31). Hence the pericope of 8:16–24 is full of terms and ideas that not only indicate how trustworthy and duly accredited are the ‘messengers’ (ἀπόστολοι) of those Gentile churches, but — more important — how Paul is ready to distance himself from the collection itself lest it should be thought that he had a personal stake in the matter. Yet he cannot completely dissociate himself, as v 19 makes clear, though he expresses his involvement in a cumbrous, roundabout style (see Comment). He therefore goes out of his way to praise Titus's eagerness (vv 16–17) to approve the mission of an unnamed yet well-reputed ‘brother’ whom the congregations have elected to carry the money (vv 18–20) and to ensure that a third member of the party is a person who has great confidence in the Corinthians and who is also highly recommended as the churches' authorized representative (vv 22–23). A final thrust in this piece of writing is an exhortation to welcome these men, with a none-too-subtle undertone that in so doing Paul's readers will be proving the sincerity of their professed allegiance to the apostle himself and acting out their declared repentance and allegiance to him (7:7–16).” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 451.]

to God. Vv. 16-17 begin the commendation of Titus and v. 23 ends with Titus as the focus of attention. Between in vv. 18-22 stands the commendation of the two unnamed Christian brothers well known to the Corinthians. Verse 24 then, via the inferential conjunction οὖν, draws the implication of an admonition to the Corinthians to warmly welcome these men as they travel to the city.

Very complementary and insightful references to these three men are used by Paul in praising them to the Corinthians.

	Titus:	2nd individual:	3rd individual:
v.17 αὐθαίρετος	X		generous
v.18 τὸν ἀδελφὸν		X	brother
v.19 χειροτονηθεῖς		X	hand chosen
v.22 τὸν ἀδελφὸν σπουδαῖον σπουδαιότερον			X brother X eager X more eager
v.23 κοινωνός	X		partner
συνεργός	X		fellow worker
ἀδελφοὶ		X	X brothers
ἀπόστολοι	X	X	X messengers
v.24 αὐτοὺς	X	X	X them

This combination of noun reference and adjectival reference to all three individual paints a very positive image of them in the thinking of the apostle Paul.⁴¹ Their intention was to serve Christ and they deeply wanted to help the Corinthians do the same through the relief

⁴¹“There are three notable characteristics of Paul’s ‘letter of accreditation’ for these emissaries. First, the authorization is markedly personal. Titus shares Paul’s own zeal (τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν) for the Corinthians (8:16) and is his partner (κοινωνός ἐμός) and comrade in toil (συνεργός) (8:23). Both the unnamed brothers are being sent by Paul (συνεπέμψαμεν, 8:18, 22) and are his brothers in Christ (τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν, 8:22; ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν, 8:23). The first brother was appointed by the churches to be Paul’s traveling companion (συνέκδημος ἡμῶν, 8:19) in dealing with the collection, while Paul himself had verified the earnestness of the second brother in many ways and often (ἐδοκιμάσαμεν, 8:22). Second, the accreditation is not only personal but also ecclesial. Although Titus was going to Corinth as Paul’s personal envoy and as leader of the delegation (see on 8:16), the two associates who were accompanying him were delegates of the (Macedonian) churches (ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, 8:23), with the first brother highly respected throughout all the (Macedonian) churches (διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, 8:18) for his services to the gospel and duly appointed by them (χειροτονηθεῖς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, 8:19) to act as Paul’s traveling companion. Third, the authorization of the two brothers is christological. They were δόξα Χριστοῦ (8:23), men whose character and conduct were a credit to Christ and brought him honor. Moreover, we may fairly assume that, along with Paul about whom this is said, they were involved in the relief operation ‘to promote the honor of the Lord himself’ (πρὸς τὴν αὐτοῦ τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν, 8:19). Already being men in whom Christ was glorified, they were aiming to honor him still further.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 595–596.]

offering.

Praise of Titus, vv. 16-17, 23. 16 Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ τῷ δόντι τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ Τίτου, 17 ὅτι τὴν μὲν παράκλησιν ἐδέξατο, σπουδαιότερος δὲ ὑπάρχων αὐθαίρετος ἐξῆλθεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς. 16 But thanks be to God who put in the heart of Titus the same eagerness for you that I myself have. 17 For he not only accepted our appeal, but since he is more eager than ever, he is going to you of his own accord. Titus receives the greater attention both here and in verse 23, most likely because he was the one chosen by the apostle to give leadership to the delegation and to the task of helping the Corinthians finish taking up their offering. ⁴²He was already familiar with the situation at Corinth (cf. 8:6; 7:13b-15) and had assisted the Corinthians in this task earlier as well.

Three times in Second Corinthians Paul suddenly bursts forth in praise to God for some divine action, 2:14; 8:16; 9:15, with the expression Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ, **Praise be to God**. Although different terms are used, these echo the prayer of thanksgiving in the letter Proem in 1:3, Εὐλογητός ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ πατὴρ τῶν οἰκτιρῶν καὶ θεὸς πάσης παρακλήσεως, **Thanks be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort**. A prayer of thanksgiving in 1:3 and doxologies of praise in 2:14; 8:16; and 9:15. The praise centers on something that God has done for His people:

2:14, Τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ πάντοτε θριαμβεύοντι ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, **Praise be to God who always leads us in Christ....**

8:16, Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ τῷ δόντι τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ Τίτου, **Praise be to God who gave the same eagerness for you in Titus’ heart....**

9:15 Χάρις τῷ θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγήτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ, **Praise be to God for His indescribable gift.**

This expression of praise to God in 8:16 amplifies the earlier depiction in 7:13b-16, where Titus’ positive feeling about the Corinthians gave Paul considerable encouragement. The apostle was elated that God had put

⁴²“That Titus was the leader of the delegation seems indicated by several facts: he is mentioned first in vv. 16–22 and also in this summary in v. 23; he alone is explicitly Paul’s appointee (vv. 16–17, 23a), the other two being sent by Paul (vv. 18, 22) but appointed by the churches (vv. 19, 23); only he is named in this ‘letter of commendation’ (vv. 16–23); the contrast between ἐμός and ἡμῶν in v. 23, along with the εἶτε ... εἶτε differentiation, suggests a distinction between Titus and his two fellow envoys. [ἐστίν] κοινωνός ἐμός, ‘my associate/partner/colleague’ or my ‘friend-in-work’ (Ollrog 77), points to shared commitments in the whole gospel enterprise as well as in the relief aid for Jerusalem.⁵⁵ The phrase εἰς ὑμᾶς συνεργός denotes collaboration between Titus and Paul in ‘the work of the Lord’⁵⁶ at Corinth.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 610.]

in Titus the same zeal and concern for the Corinthians as Paul felt (τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν). For this to be given from God to Titus ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ Τίτου, in Titus' heart, signals the same determination to minister to the Corinthians as Paul had. Thus Titus certainly merited acceptance by the Corinthians.

The causal ὅτι clause of v. 17 provides the foundation for Paul's praise by describing in greater detail Titus' σπουδὴν, eagerness, for helping the Corinthians: ὅτι τὴν μὲν παράκλησιν ἐδέξατο, σπουδαιότερος δὲ ὑπάρχων ἀυθαίρετος ἐξῆλθεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, because he not only welcomed our appeal, but being more eager he generously is going out to you. With this language Paul paints the picture of Titus being more than ready to return to Corinth in order to help them finish the offering.

In verse 23 Titus is further defined both in relationship to Paul -- κοινωνός ἐμὸς καὶ εἰς ὑμᾶς συνεργός, my partner and fellow worker for you -- and in relation to the churches -- ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, messengers of the churches -- and in relation to God -- δόξα Χριστοῦ, the Presence of Christ. The latter two sets also include the other two brothers.

The placing of the possessive adjective ἐμὸς next to the conjunction καὶ links it to both κοινωνός and συνεργός.⁴³ The name Titus is mentioned 13 times in the NT, but only in Paul's writings and with nine of them being in Second Corinthians (2:13; 7:6, 13, 14; 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18 2x).⁴⁴ Earlier he was with Paul in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1, 3) and latter in Crete (Tit. 1:4) and then in Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10). We know very little about him apart from these scattered references.⁴⁵

⁴³“Titus was Paul's co-worker or fellow laborer ‘in relation to’ (εἰς) the Corinthians, where that relation was one of service, although they had not served at Corinth at the same time.⁵⁷ Less probably, συν- indicates cooperation with God (cf. 6:1) or with the Corinthians (cf. 1:24) (so Ollrog 70).⁵⁸” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 610–611.]

⁴⁴“Titus was a traveling companion of Paul by the time of the visit to Jerusalem recorded in Gal 2:1 (identified as either Acts 11:27–30; 12:25; or 15:1–29; see JERUSALEM, COUNCIL OF). From a Gentile background (Gal 2:3), possibly in Antioch, he may have come to faith in Christ through Paul (Titus 1:4). He accompanied Paul for some years on his travels. Paul speaks of him with great affection as “our brother” (2 Cor 2:13) and “my partner (κοινωνός) and coworker (synergos συνεργός)” (2 Cor 8:23), terms that Paul rarely or never uses for others. Thus Paul asks Titus to take on the tough assignment of going to CORINTH after the apostle himself had suffered a humiliating visit to that church (2 Cor 7:14–15; on Paul's visit, 2 Cor 2:1–13). Paul regards Titus as sharing his concerns (2 Cor 7:7), notably in Titus' desire to return to Corinth (2 Cor 8:17).” [Steve Walton and Thomas A. J. McGinn, “Titus,” ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 5:610.]

⁴⁵“Titus seems to have visited Corinth at least three times. First,

Praise of second brother, vv. 18-19. 18 συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ μετ' αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀδελφὸν οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, 19 οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ χειροτονηθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν συνέκδημος ἡμῶν σὺν τῇ χάριτι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένη ὑφ' ἡμῶν πρὸς τὴν [αὐτοῦ] τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν καὶ προθυμίαν ἡμῶν, 18 With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his proclaiming the good news; 19 and not only that, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us while we are administering this generous undertaking for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our goodwill.

Who was this person?⁴⁶ Basic to this is why Paul chose to omit the personal names of both these men. In reality, we do not know the answer to this question,⁴⁷

he went after the sending of 1 Corinthians to begin arrangements for the collection on behalf of the Jerusalem church (1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 8:6a; see COLLECTION, THE). After Paul's ‘painful visit’ to Corinth (2 Cor 2:1), Titus was the bearer of Paul's ‘severe letter’ (2 Cor 7:8), which led to reconciliation between Paul and the Corinthian church (2 Cor 7:9–16). This visit may have been the occasion to revive interest in the collection, once it became clear that the ‘severe letter’ was received well (2 Cor 8:6b[?]). Finally, Titus delivered 2 Corinthians and thus was part of the delegation charged with completing the collection (2 Cor 8:16–24). As a key person in this difficult period, Titus seems to have acted with great diplomacy, for Paul describes Titus' conduct toward the Corinthians as exemplary (2 Cor 12:18).” [Steve Walton and Thomas A. J. McGinn, “Titus,” ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 5:610.]

⁴⁶“συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ μετ' αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀδελφὸν οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν. ‘With him we are sending the brother who is praised throughout all the churches for his work for the gospel.’ In order to safeguard the integrity of the collection project in Corinth (cf. 8:20–21), Paul knew that he would need to send to Corinth more than his personal assistant, Titus (8:23). In vv. 18–19 we find his commendation of the first of the two extra envoys who would act as observers and thus as guarantors of the whole collection. πέμπω is Paul's usual term for the dispatch of an envoy to a church.¹⁰ The prefix συν- implies ‘togetherness,’ in the sense of both accompaniment and comradeship; Paul was sending this additional emissary as Titus's companion in travel and also as his colleague. As in v. 22, συνεπέμψαμεν is an epistolary aorist¹¹ and an epistolary plural (as throughout vv. 16–24, except for v. 23a), but in v. 22 no μετὰ follows the συν-.¹² ἀδελφός here signifies not only a fellow Christian but also a colleague in Christian work.¹³ The article τόν does not here denote possession (‘his brother,’ Goodspeed)¹⁴ but either points to ‘the well-known brother’ (Williams) or has a forward reference (‘that brother who ...,’ Furnish 420; cf. BDF §258[1]).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 600.]

⁴⁷“So it would appear, except that we are kept guessing as to who was the individual in question. Souter wants to take the definite article in ὁ ἀδελφός, ‘the brother,’ seriously and regard the man as Titus's own natural brother.¹⁷² But Barrett dismisses the inference of Souter since ‘brother’ is too well-known a name for believers,¹⁷³ and Héring asks why he is not named if he was Ti-

although that hasn't slowed down commentary speculation about the identity of these two men.⁴⁸ I suspect interest in a personal name reflects later western curiosity far more than in Paul's world. What is more significant to Paul's description is that this individual is well known generally for his work in the Gospel: οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, **whose praise exists in the Gospel by all the churches**. Most likely he was a fellow believer who had been active in spreading the Gospel for a long time and may have traveled with Paul a good bit of this time. The context here points to πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, **all the churches**, meaning Christianity in general in the mid first century, rather than just the churches of Macedonia.⁴⁹ But still limited mainly to

tus's relative.¹⁷⁴ Other suggestions are no more convincing. The following have been proposed: (1) Luke;¹⁷⁵ (2) Barnabas;¹⁷⁶ (3) Aristarchus,¹⁷⁷ who was indeed a Macedonian and a companion of Paul according to Acts 19:29 (cf. Acts 20:4; 27:2). But if a more prominent figure is to be sought, we may offer (4) Apollos's name as candidate (cf. Acts 18:24–28). For whatever reason, Paul has chosen not to reveal his name, but Lietzmann and Windisch have a point in maintaining that Paul's letter must originally have had a name in its text, for one does not introduce unnamed persons. Yet Paul's letters do have one parallel instance of not naming an individual for his own reasons, viz., Phil 4:2, if 'true yoke fellow' (γνήσιε σύζυγε) does not conceal a proper name. Nor can we share Héring's somewhat uncharitable view that there was a name in the original text that the later church expunged because 'the evangelist, whoever he was, forfeited his credit later on.'¹⁷⁸ [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 453–454.]

⁴⁸“But why are this ‘brother’ and the ‘brother’ mentioned in v. 22 not named, especially since they are so warmly commended by Paul? Some have suggested that these two men subsequently lost their good name at Corinth, so that their names were deleted from Paul's letter.¹⁸ But rather than appealing to some putative deletion of the names by the Corinthian church or by the collector of the Pauline corpus, we should entertain the possibility that Paul himself chose to omit the names.¹⁹ Betz proposes that by the omission Paul was defending the primacy of Titus in the delegation and ensuring the limited role of the two ‘brothers’ who, as attendants (ἀκόλουθοι = Latin *legatorum comites*), lacked any authority to negotiate apart from Titus (73–74). There can be little doubt that Titus was the leader of the delegation (see on 8:23), but it is less clear that the churches, as opposed to Paul, took the initiative in the appointment of the two delegates (as Betz [73] suggests). Perhaps we can best account for the anonymity of the two brothers by submitting that although the Corinthians had heard about (at least) one of the brothers, they had not met either of the two, but since all three delegates were the bearers of the present letter, the two ἀδελφοί would be introduced to the church by Titus.²⁰ Numerous efforts have been made to identify the ‘brother’ of v. 18, but the very diversity of the suggestions indicates that certainty is impossible.²¹” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 601–602.]

⁴⁹“The identity of the electing churches is uncertain: the more likely possibilities are the congregations of Asia or Macedonia, or

those in both Macedonia and Asia, with Galatia included as well.

But what is more important than his being well known (οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ, **and not only thus but also...**) was that he had been hand chosen by the congregations to monitor the handing of the collection of the relief offering: χειροτονηθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν συνέδημος ἡμῶν σὺν τῇ χάριτι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένη ὑφ' ἡμῶν πρὸς τὴν [αὐτοῦ] τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν καὶ προθυμίαν ἡμῶν, **he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us while we are administering this generous undertaking for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our goodwill**. This very interesting expression contains several insightful elements. First, this person was χειροτονηθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, **hand chosen by the churches**. That is, each of the congregations had individually elected him via the raising of the hand to represent them in the relief offering project.⁵⁰ Thus the direct involvement of the churches in this project helped protect Paul and those with him against any charges of mishandling of the collected funds (cf. 7:2).

Second, this person was συνέδημος ἡμῶν, **our traveling companion**. The noun συνέδημος is only used here and in Acts 19:29 inside the NT. At Ephesus, Luke calls Gaius and Aristarchus Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia: Γάϊον καὶ Ἀρίσταρχον Μακεδόνας, συνεκδήμους Παύλου. This event is the riot that happened toward the end of Paul's lengthy ministry in Ephesus prior to his departure for Troas and eventually Macedonia where he met up with Titus, the setting for Second Corinthians. If one or both of these men are the unnamed brothers here, it is interesting that their reputation for faithful service went much further than just their home province of Macedonia. But Luke's list of individuals who traveled from Corinth to Jerusalem with Paul in regard to this offering is much

both.²⁹³” [Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 549.]

⁵⁰“Χειροτονεῖν is a technical term and describes the process of electing envoys by the raising of hands in the assembly.²⁸⁷ That such a process was known in the church at a later period is attested by the sources.²⁸⁸ But it is surprising to see it at work in the time of Paul. Paul's treatment of the matter is remarkable, however, because of its conflicting nuances. On the one hand, the election is reported as a matter of course, but on the other hand, it is clear that this was not his own method of appointing envoys. His method, of which the appointment of Titus furnishes an example, seems to have been that of apostolic decree. By contrast, the churches in Greece seem to have operated in accordance with the democratic procedures employed in the society at large.” [Hans Dieter Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*, ed. George W. MacRae, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 74–75.]

longer (Acts 20:4): συνείπετο δὲ αὐτῷ Σώπατρος Πύρρου Βεροιαῖος, Θεσσαλονικέων δὲ Ἀρίσταρχος καὶ Σεκοῦνδος, καὶ Γάϊος Δερβαῖος καὶ Τιμόθεος, Ἀσιανοὶ δὲ Τύχικος καὶ Τρόφιμος, *He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Beroea, by Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, by Gaius from Derbe, and by Timothy, as well as by Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia.* Thus some caution about linking any one of these individuals to the unnamed brother here is wise.

Third, the depiction of the relief offering here is quite fascinating: σὺν τῇ χάριτι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένη ὑφ' ἡμῶν πρὸς τὴν [αὐτοῦ] τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν καὶ προθυμίαν ἡμῶν, *together with this grace which is being ministered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself and for our goodwill.* Already in the gathering of the relief offering as been labeled ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι, *this grace*, in 8:7 as well as 8:6. In 8:4 it is also called τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους, *ministry for the saints*. Similarly in 1 Cor. 16:1, it is called τῆς λογείας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους, *the collection for the saints*. By using the label χάρις for the offering, the idea of generosity by the churches as a response to the generosity of God to them is injected into the understanding. Further, as seen in 8:1-6, it is the dynamic of God's grace at work that prompts the generous giving to the offering.

The objective (πρὸς is more likely purpose than result, contra Thrall in the ICC) for this ministry is two-fold: πρὸς τὴν [αὐτοῦ] τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν καὶ προθυμίαν ἡμῶν, *for the glory of the Lord Himself and for our goodwill.* The praise of the Lord through such an offering is easy to understand. These dominantly non-Jewish Christian churches were reaching out to the virtually exclusive Jewish Christian mother church in Jerusalem in a time of need. Given the huge racial tensions between Jews and non Jews, especially by Jews living in Judea, the power of the living Christ to transcend such racial barriers would be made very clear. That racial tension had plagued the Christian movement with the so-called 'Judaizing' actions that trailed the ministry of Paul during his three missionary journeys through the northeastern Mediterranean Sea region. For these Gentile churches to demonstrate traditional Jewish piety in helping the Jewish Christians in Judea would be a powerful message for the Gospel. It would stand in sharp contrast to the Jewish imposition of annual religious taxation on Diaspora Jews to contribute to the maintenance of the temple in Jerusalem, which was controlled by the wealthy, elite Sadducees.⁵¹

The other objective, καὶ προθυμίαν ἡμῶν, also the

⁵¹To be sure, Jewish benevolence did emphasize caring for fellow Jews in need. But the expectation even in the Diaspora was that local Jews took care of the needs of their fellow local Jews. Almsgiving both in Judea and the Diaspora was oriented this way.

second object of the preposition πρὸς,⁵² has posed more interpretive uncertainty. Four of the five NT uses of the noun προθυμία are in Second Corinthians 8-9. Three times Paul speaks of the προθυμία of the Corinthians to participate in this relief offering: 8:11, 12; 9:2. But here the προθυμία is that of him and his associates. The core idea of προθυμία is that of "exceptional interest in being of service."⁵³ This offering was intended to demonstrate the good intentions of Paul in Gospel ministry. In part, it goes back to the stated agreement at the Jerusalem conference in AD 48 between Paul and the apostolic leaders in Jerusalem: μόνον τῶν πτωχῶν ἵνα μνημονεύωμεν, ὃ καὶ ἐσπούδασα αὐτὸ τοῦτο ποιῆσαι, *only the poor that we would remember them, which I have also endeavored this very thing to do* (Gal. 2:10).

Paul was very eager to promote mutual care and concern for all segments of the growing Christian movement that centered on the apostolic Gospel. The proper handing of this effort that brought glory to Christ would be a clear demonstration of the sincerity of all his efforts. One cannot read chapters eight and nine of this letter without realizing the huge logistical challenges of this project. Given the widespread tendency of religious and philosophical charlatans to con people into contributing to 'worthy causes' only to pocket the money themselves, the apostle was even more concerned that everything connected to this effort be transparent and above board.

Motivation behind the delegation, vv. 20-21. 20

στελλόμενοι τοῦτο, μή τις ἡμᾶς μωμήσῃται ἐν τῇ ἀδρότητι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένη ὑφ' ἡμῶν· 21 προνοοῦμεν γὰρ καλὰ οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων. 20 *We intend that no one should blame us about this generous gift that we are administering, 21 for we intend to do what is right not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of others.* This expression

176³⁻²⁰ (συνεπέμψαμεν . . . τὸν ἀδελφὸν)

στελλόμενοι τοῦτο,
μή τις ἡμᾶς μωμήσῃται
ἐν τῇ ἀδρότητι ταύτῃ
τῇ διακονουμένη
ὑφ' ἡμῶν·

continues the idea inside the Greek sentence begun in verse eighteen and continuing to the end of verse twenty-one. The participle phrase modifies the core verb συνεπέμψαμεν in verse 18, as is illustrated in the above diagram. The sense is that Paul is sending the brother with Titus for this very reason as expressed in

⁵²What unquestionably links the two nouns δόξαν and προθυμίαν is the single article τὴν modifying both nouns, along with the sequencing of δόξαν καὶ προθυμίαν back to back. Both nouns are parallel objects of the preposition πρὸς.

⁵³William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 870.

τοῦτο, which in the neuter singular gender either goes back to the depiction of the unnamed brother as well known and elected to represent the churches. Or, more likely, it goes forward to the negative purpose clause μή τις ἡμᾶς μωμήσῃται ἐν τῇ ἀδρότητι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένη ὑφ’ ἡμῶν, *that no one should blame us regarding this generous gift that is being administered by us*. Thus what Paul states in vv. 20-21 naturally comes out of vv. 18-19 and does not represent an interruption in the thought flow.

The use of appointed representatives of the churches served to safeguard the integrity of the collection process for the offering. This individual would certify to the churches the amounts collected and that the full amount had been delivered to its desination in Jerusalem. This would eliminate any potential charge that Paul or any of his associates had pocketed some of the money for their expenses. In vv. 20-21 the apostle makes it clear that such is the intention of those collecting the offering from the different churches.

Here Paul adds another label for the offering. The noun ἀδρότης is only used here inside the NT. Some 13 different terms for abundance are used just inside the NT (cf. topics 59.48¹⁷⁸ - 59.61 in the Louw-Nida Greek lexicon). Most likely because ἀδρότης had a *terminus technicus* sense defining a large sum of money.⁵⁴ From the lengthy list of individuals accompanying Paul from Corinth to Jerusalem in Acts 20:4, the guarding of the money by a group of individuals while traveling dangerous waters seems to have been a good idea.

The justification of this plan of taking care of the offering is given in the γάρ (causal) clause in v. 21, which completes the lengthy sentence of vv. 18-21: *προνοοῦμεν γὰρ καλὰ οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων, for we intend to do what is right not only in the Lord’s sight but also in the sight of others*. The

^{8.21} γὰρ
177 προνοοῦμεν καλὰ
οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου
ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων.

mental image of this twofold saying is put in front of Paul’s mind (προνοοῦμεν) as a continuing image to remind him of something very important.

⁵⁴“The mention of the large sums of money he expected to raise points in the same direction. The term ‘abundance’ (ἀδρότης) is found only here in the New Testament,³⁰³ and it is again a *terminus technicus*.³⁰⁴ Was polemical use made of the term by those who appointed the brothers? In any case, the large sums of money called for strict supervision, particularly in the event that complaints might be made.” [Hans Dieter Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*, ed. George W. MacRae, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 77.]

The adaptation of Prov. 3:4, as [explained above](#), becomes the foundation for Paul’s strategy. Clearly the apostle is working from the LXX translation with his statement, since the Hebrew *יִרְחַמֵּנִי* literally means to “find favor”:

LXX: καὶ προνοοῦ καλὰ ἐνώπιον κυρίου καὶ ἀνθρώπων.

Paul: *προνοοῦμεν* γὰρ καλὰ οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων.

The adaptations are driven by how the apostle uses the allusion as the basis for the preceding points (vv. 18-20) made about the relief offering. In the Proverbs context, this positive appraisal from both God and men comes in recognition of one’s loyalty to others of God’s people (v. 3). This scripture affirmation provides a solid foundation for how Paul approached the collection of the offering for the saints in Jerusalem.

Praise of third brother, v. 22. συνεπέψαμεν δὲ αὐτοῖς τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν ὃν ἐδοκιμάσαμεν ἐν πολλοῖς πολλάκις σπουδαῖον ὄντα, νυνὶ δὲ πολὺ σπουδαιότερον πεποιθήσει πολλῇ τῇ εἰς ὑμᾶς. *And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found eager in many matters, but who is now more eager than ever because of his great confidence in you.*

^{8.22} δὲ
178 συνεπέψαμεν αὐτοῖς τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν
ὃν ἐδοκιμάσαμεν
ἐν πολλοῖς πολλάκις
σπουδαῖον ὄντα,
δὲ
νυνὶ
πολὺ
179 (ἐστὶν) σπουδαιότερον
πεποιθήσει πολλῇ
τῇ εἰς ὑμᾶς.

A third member of this delegation is also unnamed by the apostle, but comes highly recommended by Paul.⁵⁵ The same verb *συνεπέψαμεν*, *we are sending together*, is use as in v. 18 and the plural αὐτοῖς, *with them*, referring back to Titus and the first unnamed brother. This τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν, *our brother*, is closely linked to Paul and was evidently chosen by the apostle to accompany the other two. He has been put to the test many times, ὃν ἐδοκιμάσαμεν ἐν πολλοῖς πολλάκις, says Paul, regarding his σπουδαῖον ὄντα, *being eager to do Christ’s*

⁵⁵“The second ‘brother’ is one with whom Paul apparently has quite a history because he says of him, ‘We have tested him in many ways and many times, finding him zealous.’ But he is now even more zealous ‘because of his great confidence in you [the Corinthians]’ (8:22). So one brother has special connections with the Macedonian churches and is sent as their representative, and the other one has special connections with Paul—and apparently also with the Corinthians. Both will be traveling with Titus and are dubbed by Paul ‘representatives of the churches [ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν apostoloi ekklēsiōn], the glory of Christ’ (8:23).” [J. Paul Sampley, “The Second Letter to the Corinthians,” in *New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck, vol. 11 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994–2004), 11:126.]

will. The use of the verb ἐδοκιμάσαμεν conveys not just testing but positive outcomes of testing.

But Paul indicates an much greater eagerness (πολύ σπουδαιότερον) to participate in this mission to Corinth. Does this imply that he had already traveled to Corinth, perhaps earlier with Titus? Perhaps, but we can't be absolutely certain. The reason for this heightened eagerness to go to Corinth is given as πεποιθήσει πολλῇ τῇ εἰς ὑμᾶς, *because of a great confidence in you* (Corinthians). If this doesn't imply first hand observation, it must mean that it came from Titus' report to Paul and others at the meeting in Macedonia. He was confident of the sincerity of the Corinthians renewed interest in the relief offering.

In verse twenty-three, the apostle offers a summarizing statement including all three individuals: εἶτε ὑπὲρ Τίτου, κοινωνός ἐμός καὶ εἰς ὑμᾶς συνεργός· εἶτε ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν, ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, δόξα Χριστοῦ, *whether Titus, my partner and fellow worker for you, or our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the very Presence of Christ.*

8.23 εἶτε
 ὑπὲρ Τίτου,
 180 (ἐστίν) κοινωνός ἐμός
 καὶ
 εἰς ὑμᾶς
 συνεργός·
 εἶτε
 ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν,
 181 (εἰσίν) ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν,
 δόξα Χριστοῦ.

The elliptical syntax here adds some interpretive challenges to precise understanding of what the apostle is saying, although the general sense is relatively clear. One of the difficulties is the insertion of the preposition ὑπὲρ with Titus' name, but the parallel ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν, our brothers, is without a matching preposition and thus in the nominative case. The double εἶτε... εἶτε normally establishes two parallel expressions, but such is not the case here. What does ὑπὲρ imply about Titus, that is not implied about the other two men? The general consensus of commentators is that it signals a leadership role for Titus in the delegation of three. Several factors beyond just the preposition, however, point this direction.⁵⁶ Additional questions arise as to the intend-

⁵⁶“Once again (cf. vv. 20–21) Paul is exercising forethought and taking a precautionary measure, anticipating issues that may arise when the delegation reaches Corinth. As often in 2 Corinthians, ὑπὲρ has the sense ‘about’ or ‘concerning.’⁵⁴ That Titus was the leader of the delegation seems indicated by several facts: he is mentioned first in vv. 16–22 and also in this summary in v. 23; he alone is explicitly Paul’s appointee (vv. 16–17, 23a), the other two being sent by Paul (vv. 18, 22) but appointed by the churches (vv. 19, 23); only he is named in this ‘letter of commendation’ (vv. 16–23); the contrast between ἐμός and ἡμῶν in v. 23, along with the εἶτε ... εἶτε differentiation, suggests a distinction between Titus

ed reference to the predicate nominatives ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, δόξα Χριστοῦ, *messengers of the churches, the Presence of Christ.*⁵⁷ Contextually all three seem to be intended, but some consider that only ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν, *our brothers*, is included. This runs counter to only the first of the two unnamed brothers explicitly being designated as elected by the churches to represent them (cf. v. 19). The appositional δόξα Χριστοῦ is a reminder of the larger spiritual mission involved here, and follows the divine / human reference in v. 21. These men are doing the work of Christ for the praise of Christ in this mission to Corinth. This must never be overlooked. It

and his two fellow envoys. [ἐστίν] κοινωνός ἐμός, ‘my associate/partner/colleague’ or my ‘friend-in-work’ (Ollrog 77), points to shared commitments in the whole gospel enterprise as well as in the relief aid for Jerusalem.⁵⁵ The phrase εἰς ὑμᾶς συνεργός denotes collaboration between Titus and Paul in ‘the work of the Lord’⁵⁶ at Corinth. Titus was Paul’s co-worker or fellow laborer ‘in relation to’ (εἰς) the Corinthians, where that relation was one of service, although they had not served at Corinth at the same time.⁵⁷ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 610.]

⁵⁷“εἶτε ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν, ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, δόξα Χριστοῦ. ‘If our brothers are in question, they are envoys of the churches and an honor to Christ.’ The balance between v. 23a and b is clear: in each case there is an identification followed by a double description. We might have expected ὑπὲρ ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν to match ὑπὲρ Τίτου, but the construction is broken in dictating (Plummer 251), with the nominative ἀδελφοὶ resuming κοινωνός and συνεργός. Since εἰσίν must be supplied with ἀπόστολοι, this word is predicative and accordingly anarthrous, so that there can be no objection to rendering ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν as ‘the emissaries of the churches’ (NJB) or ‘the delegates of the congregations’ (Martin 271), also bearing in mind the canon of Apollonius. By using the term ἀπόστολος of these two Christian brothers, Paul is not suggesting that they shared his status as ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (1:1), someone who, like the Twelve (Matt. 10:2; 1 Cor. 15:5, 7), had seen the risen Lord (1 Cor. 9:1) and had been commissioned directly by Christ to exercise a distinctive leadership role within the church (1 Cor. 15:9–11; Gal. 1:1). Rather than being ἀπόστολοι Χριστοῦ (11:13; cf. 1 Thess. 2:7; Jude 17), these men were ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν ‘envoys belonging to, sent by, and representing the churches.’⁵⁹ In our discussion at 1:1 we distinguished three uses of the term ἀπόστολος in Paul—in reference to the Twelve and himself; of a limited number of church leaders who had a permanent but specific commission from Christ or the local church; and of those with a temporary and humanly approved commission, such as Epaphroditus, the envoy of the Philippian church (Phil. 2:25), and these two emissaries of 2 Cor. 8:23.⁶⁰ Which congregations appointed these two delegates is not known for sure,⁶¹ but although the churches of Judea have been proposed (see on v. 19), it was more probably the Macedonian churches (cf. 8:1, 19, 24). Significantly, it was the Christians from Macedonia who had offered Paul their services in connection with the collection project (8:5).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 611.]

the subject of my boasting about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year; and your zeal has stirred up most of them. 3 But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you may not prove to have been empty in this case, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be; 4 otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated — to say nothing of you — in this undertaking. 5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you, and arrange in advance for this bountiful gift that you have promised, so that it may be ready as a voluntary gift and not as an extortion.

^{9.1} γάρ
 Περὶ μὲν τῆς διακονίας
 τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους
183 περισσόν μοί ἐστὶν τὸ γράφειν ὑμῖν.
^{9.2} γάρ
184 οἶδα τὴν προθυμίαν ὑμῶν
 ἣν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καυχῶμαι Μακεδόσιν,
 ὅτι Ἀχαΐα παρεσκεύασται
 ἀπὸ πέρυσσι,
 καὶ
 τὸ ὑμῶν ζῆλος ἠρέθισεν τοὺς πλείονας.
^{9.3} δὲ
185 ἔπεμψα τοὺς ἀδελφούς,
 ἵνα μὴ τὸ καύχημα ἡμῶν... κενωθῆ
 τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν τῷ μέρει τούτῳ,
 καθὼς ἔλεγον
 ἵνα...παρεσκευασμένοι ᾦτε,
^{9.4} ἐὰν ἔλθωσιν σὺν ἐμοὶ Μακεδόνες
 | καὶ
 | εὐρωσιν ὑμᾶς ἀπαρασκευάστους
 μὴ πως...καταισχυνηθῶμεν ἡμεῖς,
 ἵνα μὴ λέγω ὑμεῖς,
 ἐν τῇ ὑποστάσει ταύτῃ.
^{9.5} οὖν
186 ἀναγκαῖον ἠγησάμην
 παρακαλέσαι τοὺς ἀδελφούς,
 ἵνα προέλθωσιν
 εἰς ὑμᾶς
 καὶ
 προκαταρτίσωσιν τὴν προεπηγγελμένην εὐλογίαν ὑμῶν,
 ταύτην ἐτοίμην εἶναι
 οὕτως ὡς εὐλογίαν
 καὶ
 μὴ ὡς πλεονεξίαν.

One of the interpretive issues here centers on the connection of chapters eight and nine to each other.⁵⁹

⁵⁹“In our discussion of the integrity of chs. 8 and 9 (Introduction, A.3.d.), we sought to establish that these two chapters belong together and that ch. 9 continues and elaborates the themes of ch. 8. On this view 9:1–5 belongs with 8:16–24 in dealing with one and the same ‘Mission of Titus and His Companions’ (8:16–9:5).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament*

This grows out of a host of partition theories about Second Corinthians arising over the past two centuries.⁶⁰

Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 615.]

⁶⁰“We have seen that the Pauline authorship of 2 Corinthians is a virtually universal assumption among NT scholars (see 1.a above). But when we turn to investigate the integrity, as opposed to the authenticity, of this letter, we are confronted with a complex array of data in the text, and, perhaps not surprisingly, with a bewildering variety of partition hypotheses.

“A brief descriptive survey of the most influential or noteworthy theories which propose that our canonical 2 Corinthians is composed of more than two separate letters or of several dislocated parts will indicate the main areas of dispute.

“a. Complex Partition or Dislocation Theories

“Almost all twentieth-century hypotheses regarding the original letters or fragments that now form 2 Corinthians are based on nineteenth-century antecedents. Here we shall deal only with the main theories put forward in the twentieth century.14

“In his commentary published in 1904 A. Halmel identified three letters:

Letter A: 1:1–2; 1:8–2:13; 7:5–8:24; 13:13

Letter B: 10:1–13:10

Letter C: 1:3–7; 2:14–7:4; 9:1–15; 13:11–12

“The third of these, said Halmel, incorporated several interpolations (3:12–18; 4:3–4, 6; 6:14–7:1).

“Both in his major commentary on 1 Corinthians (1910) and in his two-volume *Urchristentum* (1914–1917; ETr Earliest Christianity), J. Weiss allocated the material in 2 Corinthians to four different letters:

Letter A (referred to in 1 Cor. 5:9), which included 6:14–7:1

A letter of commendation (8:1–24) sent with Titus and the two brothers, written between

letters B1 and B2

Letter C: 2:14–6:13; 7:2–4; 10:1–13:13

Letter D: 1:1–2:13; 7:5–16; 9:1–15

Material in 1 Corinthians is found in letters A, B1, and B2 (see Weiss, *Christianity* 1.323–57, especially 356–57). Weiss’s influence may be traced in the similar reconstructions of J. T. Dean (11–14, 40–94), R. Bultmann (17–18, 52, 179–80, 256; *Probleme* 14 n. 16 = *Exegetica* 307 n. 17), E. Dinkler (“*Korintherbriefe*” 18,

22–23), and P. Vielhauer (Geschichte 150–55), especially in their linking of 2:14–7:4 (omitting 6:14–7:1) with the final four chapters as constituting the whole or the larger part of the “interim/tearful letter.”

“Undoubtedly the most influential partition hypothesis proposed in the twentieth century was that of G. Bornkamm (Aufsätze 162–94; “History”; Paul 74–77, 244–46; Guide 100–103). He isolates five letters in 2 Corinthians, in addition to two (A and B) in 1 Corinthians.

Letter C (letter of defense): 2:14–6:13; 7:2–4

Letter D (letter of tears): 10:1–13:10

Letter E (letter of reconciliation): 1:1–2:13; 7:5–16

“Letter F: 8:1–24, a letter of commendation for Titus and the two brothers, whose relationship to the rest of Paul’s correspondence with Corinth cannot be finally determined, although it could be an appendix to the letter of reconciliation.

“Letter G: 9:1–15, a letter concerning arrangements for the collection.

“A redactor added 6:14–7:1, a non-Pauline fragment, to letter C, and the exhortation, greeting, and benediction of 13:11–13 to letter E. Bornkamm’s reconstruction has been followed, sometimes with minor alterations (such as the inclusion of ch. 8 [thus Lohse] or chs. 8 and 9 [thus Fuller and Becker] in the letter of reconciliation), by D. Georgi (75–79; Opponents 9–18; “2 Corinthians” 184), R. H. Fuller (48–49), H. D. Wendland (7–11), W. Marxsen (77–82), E. Lohse (72–73), N. Perrin (104–5), H. Koester (1.53–54; 2.126–30), F. T. Fallon (6–7), H. D. Betz (142–43; “Corinthians” 1149–50; “Problem” 40–46), M. Carrez (16–18), J. A. Crafton (49–53), J. Becker (216–21), and M. M. Mitchell (75–76). Bornkamm’s proposal has proved persuasive to many partly because he paid special attention to the reconstruction of Paul’s dealings with the Corinthians and endeavored to trace the stages by which the original five letters were combined to form the canonical 2 Corinthians.

“Finally, there is the view of W. Schmithals (1984),¹⁵ who finds portions of 2 Corinthians in seven (*) of thirteen pieces written by Paul to the Corinthian church (Briefe 19–85):

A: 1 Cor. 11:2, 17–34

B: 1 Cor. 9:24–10:22; 6:12–20

*C: 1 Cor. 6:1–11; 2 Cor. 6:14–7:1

D: 1 Cor. 15:1–58; 16:13–24

E (letter of response): 1 Cor. 11:3–16; 7:1–8:13; 9:19–22; 10:23–11:1; 12:1–31a; 14:1b–40; 12:31b–13:13; 16:1–12

F: 1 Cor. 1:1–3:23; 4:14–21

G: 1 Cor. 5:1–13

*H: 1 Cor. 4:1–5; 9:1b–18; 2 Cor. 6:3–13; 7:2–4a

*J: 2 Cor. 4:2–14

*K: 1 Cor. 4:7–13; 2 Cor. 2:14–3:18; 4:16–6:2; Rom. 13:12b–14

*L: (letter of tears): 2 Cor. 10:1–13:13

*M: (collection letter): 2 Cor. 8:1–24a

*N: (joyful letter): 2 Cor. 1:1–2:13; 7:5–7, 4b, 8–16; 9:1–15; Rom. 5:1b–10.

“Whether or not these complex partition theories are valid will become apparent in the following discussion of the four passages that have become the focus of dispute: 2:14–7:4; 6:14–7:1; 8:1–9:15; 10:1–13:13. Only two comments are needed at this point. First, it is no argument against these partition hypotheses that their proponents do not agree in detail; at most we might say their disagreement shows that the arguments for dissection on which they rely fall short of demonstration. The best hypothesis is not necessarily the simplest—in this case one which posits the fewest partitions or else the integrity of the book—but rather that hypothesis

But such dissecting of this document into small pieces is done without any external manuscript transmission support and is based solely on internal analysis of thought flow of the contents of Second Corinthians. Thus the subjectivity factor behind each of these proposals is very high and usually tells the reader more about the background and orientation of the commentator than of the scripture text itself.⁶¹ Most of these proposals come out of an era when commentators very readily took scissors and paste to ancient texts in hunting for perceived sources standing behind the existing text. Most contemporary scholars have become quite suspicious of such endeavor, particularly when based solely on the internal thought flow of the ancient document. That ancient writers in Greek did not think the same was as modern western scholars is rather self evident.

With chapters eight and nine the issue revolves

which best accommodates all the evidence. Second, with this said, it remains true, in the absence of any MS tradition witnessing to textual dislocation, that the more intricate a partition theory, the more pressing and demanding the task of re-creating the possible circumstances in which 2 Corinthians as we know it was constructed from disparate letters or epistolary fragments.¹⁶⁹

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 8–10.]

⁶¹“On chaps. 8 and 9 as two letter fragments, see Betz’s commentary. However, Stowers maintains that 9:1–5 is logically connected with 8:24 and remarks that “[it is] most implausible to think of chapters 8 and 9 as fragments of two letters.”²¹⁶ Lambrecht agrees with seven points in favor of the unity of these two chapters:²¹⁷

1. γάρ, ‘for,’ in 9:1 links chap. 9 with the preceding material.

2. περισσόν μοί ἐστιν τὸ γράφειν, ‘there is no need for me to go on writing’ (for the interpretation, see point 3), in 9:1 is to be classified rhetorically as a praeteritio, ‘preterition.’

3. 9:1 means ‘there is no need for me to go on writing,’ with the article τῆς, ‘the,’ before διακονίας, ‘service,’ as anaphoric, referring to the subject matter of chap. 8.

4. μὲν (not translated) of 9:1 connects with the δέ, ‘but,’ of v 3, meaning ‘for although it is superfluous to go on writing—yet I still want to explain the implication of sending the brothers beforehand.’

5. 9:2–3 (to do with ‘boasting’) harks back to 8:24 (‘boast’).

6. There is no qualification of the brothers in 9:3, 5 because there is an implicit allusion to 8:16–23.

7. Achaia is mentioned in 9:2 because of a reference to the Macedonians.

“Also contra Barnett²¹⁸ and with a new angle on the subject, see Debanné,²¹⁹ who seeks to show that 2 Cor 8:24–9:2 is a passage spanning the extremities of both chapters as a paraenetic enthymeme, with 8:21–22 serving as a ratio or motivating factor. Both linking phrases, περὶ μὲν γάρ, ‘now concerning,’ and οἶδα γάρ, ‘for I know,’ indicate logical inference.”

[Ralph P. Martin, “The Relationship of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9,” in *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 462.]

around whether these chapters represent fragments of two separate letters not connected to the rest of Second Corinthians,⁶² or whether the two chapters are an integral part of the original composition of Second Corinthians, especially the first seven chapters.⁶³ To me the

⁶²“When we survey scholarly opinion about the integrity of chs. 8 and 9, again we are confronted by a bewildering array of views,⁵⁸ which may be conveniently summarized as follows.

“(1) Partition Theories

“It is held by some scholars that chs. 8 and 9 were originally separate letters or fragments of separate letters, divorced from the rest of the extant Corinthian correspondence, and that ch. 8 was written before ch. 9 (H. Windisch 242–43, 268–71, 286–89; G. Bornkamm, Paul 245–46; H. D. Wendland 8–9, 167, 218, 222–23; D. Georgi 75–79; “Second Corinthians” 184; H. Koester 53–54; H. D. Betz, *passim*, especially 142–43; M. Carrez 17–18, 189). They usually argue that ch. 8 was a letter addressed to the Corinthian church alone, with ch. 9 written to Christians of Achaia (cf. 9:2) other than those in Corinth.

“Sometimes other parts of 2 Corinthians are associated with either of these two chapters:

“an ‘intermediate letter’ containing 2:14–7:4 (except 6:14–7:1); chs. 10–13; and ch. 9, followed by Paul’s last letter to Corinth, containing 1:1–2:13; 7:5–16; and ch. 8 (Bultmann 18, 256; but cf. *Probleme* 14 n. 6)

“the ‘letter of tears’ containing chs. 10–13; 2:14–7:4 (except 6:14–7:1); ch. 9; and 13:11–13, followed by the ‘letter of reconciliation’ containing 1:1–2:13; 7:5–16; and ch. 8 (Dinkler, “Korintherbriefe” 18)

“an ‘apologetic letter’ containing 2:14–7:4 (except 6:14–7:1) and ch. 9, the ‘letter of tears’ containing chs. 10–13, and the ‘letter of reconciliation’ containing 1:1–2:13; 7:5–16; and ch. 8 (Schenke and Fischer 1.108–23).

“ch. 8 as one letter, and ch. 9 with 1:1–2:13 and 7:5–16 constituting the ‘letter of reconciliation’ (Weiss, *Christianity* 1.356–57; Schmithals, *Briefe* 77–8559 [ch. 8 earlier than ch. 9]; Vielhauer, *Geschichte* 153 [the two letters written at the same time]60).

“ch. 9 as one letter, and ch. 8 linked with chs. 1–7 (Semler, *praefatio* to his *Paraphrasis* II; Goguel, *Introduction* 2.85–86 [without 6:14–7:1]; Nickle 17 and n. 17, 22 and n. 36; Héring xiii–xiv, 65; Thrall 36–43) or with the ‘letter of reconciliation,’ that is, 1:1–2:13; 7:5–16 (Dean 13, 57–59; Bornkamm 186–87;61 Suhl 260–63; E. Lohse 72–7362).

“Other scholars regard chs. 8 and 9 as part of the same letter to Corinth along with 13:11–13 (Schmiedel 226–27), with 1:1–2:13 and 7:5–16, that is, the “letter of reconciliation” (Fuller 48–49), with chs. 1–7 (excluding 6:14–7:1) and 13:11–13 (Clemen 1.75–85), or with chs. 1–7, with or without chs. 10–13 (most commentators).”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 25–27.]

⁶³“A careful examination of these two chapters reveals a network of specific links between them. Μέν in 9:1 points forward to the adversative δέ in 9:3 (‘although ... still ...’) so that 9:1–3 (or 9:1–4) forms a single thought-unit. Γάρ in 9:1, on the other hand, points back to 8:24 and introduces the reason for Paul’s request there that the Corinthians show by their ready response to the three-man delegation that his boasting about their responsiveness has been justified: ‘for (γάρ) although (μέν) ... it is superfluous for

me to be writing to you like this (since [γάρ] I know your eager willingness which I am boasting about ...), yet (δέ) I am sending (ἔπεμψα) the brothers precisely so that our expressed pride about you should not prove to be unwarranted in this particular regard’ (9:1–3a). That is, this explanatory γάρ links ἡμῶν [ἡ] καύχησις ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν (8:24) with both τὴν προθυμίαν ὑμῶν ἦν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καυχῶμαι (9:2) and τὸ καύχημα ἡμῶν τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν (9:3). If 9:1 were in fact the beginning of an independent letter, we would have expected περὶ δέ (‘now concerning’), which regularly introduces a new topic (as in 1 Cor. 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12). The article τῆς before διακονίας may well be anaphoric (‘this service,’ NIV), especially since τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἀγίους (9:1a) is resumptive of the identical expression in 8:4b.63 Moreover, the present infinitive (τὸ) γράφειν suggests the meaning ‘continuing to write’ or ‘to be writing (like this).’ Then again, the unqualified reference to τοὺς ἀδελφούς (9:3, 5) presupposes some prior identification of these brothers, which is supplied by 8:6, 16–23. For other verbal links between the two chapters, see Carrez 190 (referring to the work of Rolland 76–77).

“The objections that have been brought against these two chapters originating together may all be satisfactorily answered. First, it is no evidence of the independence of the two chapters that 8:20 and 9:3–5 state differing purposes for the sending of the brothers (pace Windisch 271–72). The purposes are not mutually exclusive but complementary. In 8:18–20 Paul declares that the appointment by the churches of the renowned brother as Titus’s traveling companion and his dispatch of him with Titus were aimed at guarding against any criticism of his own handling of this charitable fund. In 9:3–5 Paul affirms that “the brothers” (presumably referring to Titus and the two anonymous envoys of the churches) were being sent to the Corinthians to show that his boasting about their willingness to contribute was fully justified (9:3), to avoid the personal embarrassment of finding them unprepared (9:4), and to ensure that arrangements for the gift were completed before his own arrival (9:5).

“Second, it has been argued that because ‘Achaia’ is found in ch. 9 but not in ch. 8 and because 1:1 distinguishes between believers in Corinth and ‘all God’s people who are in the whole of Achaia,’ ch. 9 is a circular letter addressed to churches in the province of Achaia other than at Corinth while the addressees in ch. 8 are the Corinthian Christians (Windisch 288; Georgi 77–78; similarly Betz 91–93, 139–40; Carrez 17–18, 189). But there is no need to exclude Corinth from the reference to Achaia. After all, Corinth was the capital of this province, and unlike 1:1, where the use of both ‘Corinth’ and ‘Achaia’ suggests that ‘Achaia’ excludes Corinth, 9:2 mentions only Achaia and ch. 8 mentions neither. Our options seem to be that in 9:2 ‘Achaia’ refers either to all the Christians scattered throughout the province of Achaia, including the numerically preponderant Corinthians, that is, both groups addressed in 1:1,64 or, more probably, to the Corinthians alone.⁶⁵

“Third, for some commentators (e.g., Bultmann 256) the content of Paul’s appeals is consistent only if the two letters are independent. In 8:1–5 Paul appeals to Macedonian generosity as a model for the Corinthians to follow, but in 9:2 Achaia forms the pattern for the Macedonians to follow. But this alleged inconsistency or circularity of argument is more apparent than real. Paul appeals to the Corinthians’ preparedness of intention and their eagerness in initiating the collection (8:6, 10–11) as a good example in his effort to have the Macedonians advance their own contribution (9:2). Thus it was the Corinthians’ ζῆλος (9:2), not their ἐπιτελέσαι (8:11), which stirred up the majority of the Macedonians. On the

latter seems quite obvious.

Clearly the unit of 9:1-5 continues the discussion in 8:16-24 by signaling the second strategy in implementing the spiritual principles from Prov. 3:4 alluded to in 8:21. The first way of maintaining integrity regarding the collecting of funds at Corinth was for the three representatives of both Paul and the other participating churches to come ahead in advance to help the Corinthians finish the task (8:16-24). The second strategy was for the collecting of the offering to be completed by the time Paul and those traveling with him from Macedonia arrived in Corinth, the capital of Achaia (9:1-15).⁶⁴

other side, because, by the time of writing, the Macedonians had almost brought to a successful completion what they had enthusiastically begun under the stimulus of the Corinthian example, their exemplary action was a natural ground for Paul's appeal to the Corinthians to complete their offering (8:6, 11) in order that his initial boasting about their readiness to contribute might not prove unfounded when any Macedonians arrived (9:2-4).

"Fourth, Dean believes that ch. 9 breathes a different atmosphere than ch. 8. Whereas in ch. 8 Paul 'trusts to the impulse of the joy of reconciliation to stimulate them [the Corinthians]' (93) and appeals to lofty motives, in ch. 9 a certain anxiety and urgency is in evidence and Paul appeals to self-interest (93-94). But this contrast in tone is overdrawn. Urgency is evident in 8:6-7, 10-11, 24, and in 9:8-14 Paul confidently expects a positive and cheerful response. Appeal to exalted motives may be seen in 9:11b-13, 15 and an appeal to 'self-interest' in 8:14-15.

"(3) The Two Chapters Belong with Chapters 1-7

"Few will doubt that the transition from chs. 1-7 to ch. 8 is to a large extent a move from apologetic to exhortation. The change of tone — from relief and almost excessive exuberance regarding the recent past to somewhat embarrassed admonition concerning the immediate future — may be readily accounted for by the change of subject and purpose. After seeking to explain his pastoral conduct and defend his apostolic ministry (chs. 1-7), Paul takes up the challenge of reviving the flagging collection at Corinth (chs. 8-9). His reconciliation with the Corinthians affords the secure base from which to launch his appeal. It is psychologically probable that he would encourage the Corinthians to follow through on their initial enthusiasm for the project only when he was assured that he had regained their confidence on a personal level (cf. 7:4, 16).

"This leads us to conclude that once it is agreed that chs. 8 and 9 belong together, there is no difficulty in viewing them as a natural addition to chs. 1-7, given the apostle's desire to have the Corinthians revive and complete their relief aid for Jerusalem. Few scholars who hold to the integrity of 8-9 divorce these chapters from 1-766 (or parts of 1-7).⁶⁷"

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 27-29.]

⁶⁴"In 8:21 Paul applies the general principle of Prov. 3:4 to his own conduct in organizing the collection: 'We are giving forethought to what is honorable, not only in the Lord's eyes but also in human eyes.' He planned to implement this principle in two ways. He was sending a three-man delegation to Corinth to oversee the finalization of the collection there and to guarantee the integrity of the process (8:16-24); and he was dispatching this delegation in advance of his own visit to Corinth (9:5), so that when he fi-

This way the apostle would not be directly involved in the gathering of the money for the offering. Thus 9:1-5 serves to continue Paul's transparency with the Corinthians in explaining openly what he was doing in the sending of these three men to Corinth ahead of him, and why he was doing it this way.

A level of openness about fund raising strategy is expressed here that should be exemplary for churches and religious organizations in the modern world to follow. When asking people to contribute money, absolutely everything about why, how, and what for should be kept completely clear to the contributors. Nothing should be withheld.

As the [above diagram](#) illustrates, the internal thought flow moves from two justifying (ὅτι) statements (#s 183-184; vv. 1-2) affirming the Corinthians, to a statement of Paul's plan to send the delegation on ahead (# 185; vv. 3-4), and then to the implication (οὕτως) of why he is doing it this way (# 186; v. 5). Statement #186 somewhat matches statement # 182 in 8:24 with both being introduced via the conjunction οὕτως. Both focus upon the Corinthians not embarrassing themselves by failing to get the offering ready in time. The three Greek sentences contain a lot of insight into what the apostle was doing. The ὅτι conjunction at the beginning in v. 1 ties vv. 1-5 especially back to the discussion in 8:16-24 especially and depends upon some things said in 8:1-15.

One should note that in 9:1-5 the apostle switches from the dominating first person plural "we" narrative perspective found in 8:16-24 to the first person singular "I" in 9:1-5. Here he takes more personal responsibility for what is said as opposed to the decisions etc. in 8:16-24 reflecting both his and his associates view

nally arrived contributions to the relief fund would not need to be made—the collection would be 'ready' (9:3) — and so that he himself could avoid all personal contact with the money involved. Again, in 8:24, in the course of encouraging the Corinthians to show love to the three delegates, Paul had referred to his boasting to these men about the Corinthians, presumably about their eager willingness and settled intent to contribute to the fund (cf. 8:10-11; 9:2). Now he expresses his nagging unease that if other Macedonians came to Corinth with him (perhaps bearing the completed Macedonian collection), and the Corinthian collection was discovered on their arrival to be still incomplete, Paul and the Corinthians would feel humiliated and ashamed because of his inappropriate boasting and improper confidence (9:2-4).¹ So, then, the emphasis in 9:1-5 is on a twofold need. First, the Corinthian need for "readiness" of completion before Paul's arrival, that is, the completion of their contribution to the relief fund with a willingly given and generous gift. Second, the need shared by Paul and the Corinthians to avoid the shame of having his boast about their 'readiness' of intent proved empty.²" [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 615-616.]

point. This shift is consistent with the idiomatic manner in which this scripture unit of 9:1-5 is introduced. The Corinthians need to clearly understand Paul's own motives and reasoning for sending this group of men to them.

The discussion of the relief offering was introduced in 8:1 by Γνωρίζομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δεδομένην ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας, *And we are making known to you, brothers, the grace of God given among the churches of Macedonia....* In 8:7-24, the focus shifted to the Corinthians, and in 9:1-5 this focus continues. The discussion will finish along more theoretical lines with basic spiritual principles being discussed in 9:6-15 in relation to the Corinthians.

So the opening statement in 9:1, Περὶ μὲν γὰρ τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους περισσὸν μοί ἐστιν τὸ γράφειν ὑμῖν, *For indeed concerning the ministry to the saints it is extraneous for me to continue writing to you*, is not so much a new topic signal as it is the writer's reassuring of his readers that what he is saying is not new to them.⁶⁵ Why then does Paul continue the discussion?⁶⁶ Primarily to be totally honest and above board with them about the sending of the three men on ahead of his arrival in Corinth. He went to extraordinary means to guarantee that no dishonesty about the offering would be possible. Given the wide spread dishonesty of traveling philosophers to use fund raising as a con job, the apostle was motivated to make sure that this project was totally distanced from such deception and misunderstanding. By introducing the discussion in this manner, he reassures his readers that he does not mistrust them and their willingness to keep their promises.

Note the repetition of the previous label for the relief offering: τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους, *of the ministry for the saints*. It exactly reproduces τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους in 8:4c, with τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους being taken from 1 Cor. 16:1b. The contextual sense of the present tense infinitive τὸ γράφειν ὑμῖν is *"to go on writing to you,"*

⁶⁵"While the phrase *περὶ δέ* regularly introduces a new topic,⁴ there is no evidence in extant Greek literature that the phrase *περὶ μὲν γάρ* ever has an introductory function.⁵ On the contrary, it always expresses a close relationship to what precedes."⁶⁷ [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 617.]

⁶⁶"When Paul comments 'It is superfluous¹¹ for me to write any further to you about this act of service that is intended for (εἰς) God's people,' yet proceeds to speak further (in 9:2-15) about this charitable project, he is employing the rhetorical device known as *paraleipsis*.¹² In this 'figure of thought' (σχῆμα διανοίας) a speaker or writer professes to pass over a certain matter only to mention or expound it. Heb. 11:32-38 is the most celebrated NT example." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 618.]

denoting that the continued discussion is not going to add new information so much as to serve to remind the Corinthians of some things they should already recognize. The predicate adjective *περισσὸν* defines something that goes beyond being necessary or needed.⁶⁷

The next assertion (#184 in v. 2) justifies (γὰρ) the initial one (#183) in verse one: οἶδα γὰρ τὴν προθυμίαν ὑμῶν ἣν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καυχῶμαι Μακεδόσιν..., *for I know your eagerness which I boasted about you to the Macedonians....* Once again this essentially repeats 8:11, *νυνὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ ποιῆσαι ἐπιτελέσατε, ὅπως καθάπερ ἡ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν, οὕτως καὶ τὸ ἐπιτελέσαι ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν, now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means*. Thus Paul reassures them that he is aware of their initial enthusiasm for this project. And then mentions that he had talked to the Macedonians about how eager the Corinthians were to participate.

In the amplifying *ὅτι* clause he includes the churches of the entire province of Achaia in this eagerness: *ὅτι Ἀχαΐα παρεσκευάσται ἀπὸ πέρυσι, καὶ τὸ ὑμῶν ζῆλος ἠρέθισεν τοὺς πλείονας. because Achaia has been ready since last year; and your zeal has stirred up most of them.* He told the Macedonians that Corinth and the other churches in the province had committed themselves (*παρασκευάσται*) to this project over a year before (*ἀπὸ πέρυσι*). This (*τὸ ὑμῶν ζῆλος*) had inspired (*ἠρέθισεν*) most of the Macedonians (*τοὺς πλείονας*) to want to get involved. Paul wisely encouraged the Corinthians by reminding them, along with their fellow believers across the province of Achaia, of how God had used their initial enthusiasm to encourage others to participate.

Now they needed to come through in completing this project and do it in advance of Paul's arrival at Corinth, as the second Greek sentence in vv. 3-4 affirm: 3 *ἔπεμψα δὲ τοὺς ἀδελφούς, ἵνα μὴ τὸ καύχημα ἡμῶν τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κενωθῆ ἐν τῷ μέρει τούτῳ, ἵνα καθὼς ἔλεγον παρεσκευασμένοι ἦτε, 4 μὴ πως ἐὰν ἔλθωσιν σὺν ἐμοὶ Μακεδόνες καὶ εὕρωσιν ὑμᾶς ἀπαρασκευάστους καταισχνυθῶμεν ἡμεῖς, ἵνα μὴ λέγω ὑμεῖς, ἐν τῇ ὑποστάσει ταύτῃ, 3 But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you may not prove to have been empty in this case, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be; 4 otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—in this undertaking.*

⁶⁷"*superfluous, unnecessary* (Trag. et al.; cp. 2 Macc 12:44; TestJob 47:1) *περισσὸν μοί ἐστιν τὸ γράφειν ὑμῖν* it is unnecessary for me to write to you **2 Cor 9:1** (Mitt-Wilck. I/2, 238 II, 4 *περισσὸν ἡγοῦμαι διεξοδέστερον ὑμῖν γράφειν*). *περισσὸν ἡγοῦμαι* I consider it superfluous (Appian, Prooem. 13 §50; Jos., Ant. 3, 215; cp. Philo, Agr. 59) Dg 2:10. W. ἄχρηστος 4:2." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 805.]

Only two of the three men -- Titus and the second unnamed brother -- were operating directly under Paul's encouragement, while the first unnamed brother was authorized by the churches for monitoring the collection of the offering. But the first person singular epistolary aorist verb ἔπεμψα signals that Paul's leadership is a major motivating factor in these men (τοὺς ἀδελφούς) traveling to Corinth with their defined mission of helping the church finish raising the funds for the relief offering.

The two objectives stated for the sending of these men in v. 3b-c is ἵνα μὴ τὸ καύχημα ἡμῶν τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κενωθῆ ἔν τῷ μέρει τούτῳ, ἵνα καθὼς ἔλεγον παρεσκευασμένοι ἦτε, *in order that our boasting about you may not prove to have been empty in this case, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be.* In large part, they repeat and expand what was stated in 8:6-7 in the purpose infinitive phrase: εἰς τὸ παρακαλέσαι ἡμᾶς Τίτον, ἵνα καθὼς προενήρξατο οὕτως καὶ ἐπιτελέσῃ εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ τὴν χάριν ταύτην. 7 Ἄλλ' ὡσπερ ἐν παντὶ περισσεύετε, πίστει καὶ λόγῳ καὶ γνώσει καὶ πάσῃ σπουδῇ καὶ τῇ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν ἀγάπῃ, ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε, 6 *so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you.* 7 Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking. It especially amplifies the second of the two 'demonstrations' in 8:24, τὴν ἔνδειξιν τῆς ἀγάπης ὑμῶν καὶ ἡμῶν καυχήσεως ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, *the evidence of your love and of our boasting about you.* The very personal nature of the expression in 9:3 underscores the openness and transparency of the apostle about the collection of this money. He had confidence in the Corinthians to keep their promise, and desires that this be done in a manner to does not bring any embarrassment to them, or to him in the confidence expressed about them.

The somewhat unusual phrase μὴ πως ἐάν, *lest perhaps if...*, sets up the remote possibility of the opposite scenario stated in the two previous ἵνα clauses in v. 3, especially the second one. Paul doesn't really envision it happening, but if it were to then καταισχυρθῶμεν ἡμεῖς, *we would be embarrassed.* Here both him, and his associates are included in the 'we.' The humiliation of the Corinthians is referenced explicitly by ἵνα μὴ λέγω ὑμεῖς, *lest I say you.*⁶⁸ What then is this reverse scenario?

⁶⁸When the apostle speaks of being embarrassed, καταισχυρθῶμεν ἡμεῖς, he speaks out of the context of the ancient sociological tradition of honor and shame. Modern western societies have very little perception of the huge dynamic that operated across the first century Greco-Roman world in the many ethnic versions of it. In the modern world, only those living by traditional Asian culture standards of honor and shame begin to grasp the powerfully significant impact of being publicly humiliated in some way. One early helpful secondary resource for grasping this is Matthews, Victor H., and Don C. Benjamin, eds. *Semeia* 68 (1995), which is devoted entirely to the issue of honor and shame in the

The third class conditional protasis ἐάν ἔλθωσιν σὺν ἐμοὶ Μακεδόνες καὶ εὕρωσιν ὑμᾶς ἀπαρασκευάστους, *when the Macedonians might come with me and find you unprepared,* spells out the particulars. The apostle envisions the possibility of other Macedonians beyond the two unnamed brothers in the advance delegation accompanying the apostle from Macedonia to Corinth. At least some of those who did actually make the trip are indicated by Luke in Acts 20:4.⁶⁹ Should they arrive in Corinth and discover that the Corinthians had not finished collecting the offering, serious questions about their integrity would be raised. And this would be particularly embarrassing to Paul and his associates who had bragged on the enthusiasm of the Corinthians for the offering, not to say the least for the Corinthians themselves. The adjective ἀπαρασκευάστος, -ον, used only here inside the NT, simply means not ready or unprepared. Contextually this refers to the collection not be in complete form at the arrival of these from Macedonia.

The label of the collecting of the offering, ἐν τῇ ὑποστάσει ταύτῃ, *poses some translation challenges.*⁷⁰ first century world. For a list of related terms used in the NT see Louw-Nida, Greek Lexicon, topics 25.189-25.202 for shame, disgrace, and humiliation. Then topics 87.4 through 87.18 for honor or respect. Much of this was linked to a sense of status or rank in an exceedingly class conscious society.

⁶⁹Acts 20:4. συνείπετο δὲ αὐτῷ Σώπατρος Πύρρου Βεροιαῖος, Θεσσαλονικέων δὲ Ἀρίσταρχος καὶ Σεκοῦνδος, καὶ Γάϊος Δερβαῖος καὶ Τιμόθεος, Ἀσιανοὶ δὲ Τύχικος καὶ Τρόφιμος.

He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Beroea, by Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, by Gaius from Derbe, and by Timothy, as well as by Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia

⁷⁰“The word ὑπόστασις is a verbal subst. of ὑσίστημι. Yet it has hardly any senses corresponding to the act. ὑφίστημι. It is almost always to be understood in the light of the intr. and mid. ὑφίσταμαι.¹ But it reflects only one part of the varied meaning of ὑφίσταμαι.² Whereas the verb in the mid. and pass. can mean also ‘to conjecture,’ ‘to agree,’ ‘to undertake,’ ‘to offer’ etc., the noun corresponds only to the following senses, which can involve independent derivations of the noun from the verb: 1. ‘to stand under (as a support),’ 2. ‘to place oneself under (concealment),’ 3. ‘to stand off from,’ ‘to deposit oneself as sediment on the ground,’ and hence ‘to be,’ ‘to exist,’ 4. ‘to promise.’ From these meanings we get the following meanings of the noun: 1. ‘support,’ 2. ‘ambush,’ 3. ‘deposit,’ ‘sediment,’ trans. everything that settles, hence the philosophical sense ‘existence,’ ‘reality,’ Lat. *substantia*,³ 4. ‘lease,’ a technical meaning found already in early Hell. pap. and arising independently from the verb in the 4th cent. B.C. → 579, 33 ff.

“Note should be taken of a special difficulty in assessing the use of ὑπόστασις. It is inadvisable and even misleading to start out from a gen. or indeed a biblical use,⁴ for the earliest examples are not in the least gen., but belong almost exclusively to the specialised vocabulary of science and medicine. In this sphere the word became a common tt. from Hippocr. and Aristot. One should also note the technical use in the pap. from the 3rd cent. B.C. → 579, 33 ff. In contrast, we have almost no examples of the non-technical use of the noun in everyday speech of the class. period, though the verb

Consequently quite a wide variety of translation words will be found in modern western languages. But the idea contextually for ὑπόστασις here seems to be an **undertaking** or **project** as one of the labels for the collecting of the relief offering.⁷¹ Thus the apostle puts these scenarios of what he hopes will happen and what **would happen otherwise**.⁷²

is common enough in class. lit.⁵ The only exceptions are Soph. Fr., 719 (Pearson) and Menand. Fr., 397 (Körte).⁶ While ὑπόστασις has in the first of these a sense not found elsewhere, that of ‘ambush’,⁷ ⁸ in the second the meaning seems to correspond to scientific usage.⁹ We are thus dealing with a word which was developed very early as a specialised scientific term.¹⁰ The philosophical use which grew up later is dependent on this early specialisation. Even later the range of meaning hardly goes beyond the scientific and related philosophical sense. But this means that for ὑπόστασις in its later gen. usage we must avoid deriving all kinds of senses etymologically from the different meanings of the verb ὑρίστημι/ὑφίσταμαι.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:572–573.]

⁷¹“The two instances in Paul are both in 2 C. 11:2 C. 9:4 comes in the second of the two chapters on the collection.¹¹⁶ Paul has commended the Christians of Achaia for their zeal in the matter compared to the Macedonians, 2 C. 9:2. He has also sent on helpers to prepare the way so that his boasting (→ III, 650, 23 ff.) will not prove empty in this respect (v. 3) and he and the Macedonians who accompany him will not find the Achaians unready: ἐὰν ... εὐρωσιν ὑμᾶς ἀπαρασκευάστους καταισχυθῶμεν ἡμεῖς, ἵνα μὴ λέγωμεν ὑμεῖς, ἐν τῇ ὑποστάσει ταύτῃ, 117 2 C. 9:4. It is natural to think that the expression takes up again the theme of boasting.¹¹⁸ If so, the point is that Paul will be disgraced because of his previous boasting, that he will be unmasked as a liar.¹¹⁹ But it is difficult to support this meaning of ὑπόστασις linguistically,¹²⁰ and it should also be noted that Paul is concerned about much more than whether his boasting had been right or wrong. He has expressed this concern already in v. 3. The following v. is not just a repetition of the same thought. Paul returns here to his real reason for sending on the brethren in advance. He wants to wind up the collection quickly and successfully. If he finds the Achaians unprepared, he will be confounded in his whole ‘plan,’ and not only he but the Achaians as well, since they have made this ‘project’ of the collection their own. Here, then, ὑπόστασις means ‘plan,’ ‘project,’ as often in general Greek usage (→ 588, 7 ff.) and the LXX (→ 582, 1 ff.).¹²¹ ὑπόστασις has the same sense in the second instance in Paul. In 2 C. 11:17 Paul introduces his own list of boasts with the words ὁ λαλῶ, οὐ κατὰ κύριον λαλῶ, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐν ἀφροσύνῃ, ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ὑποστάσει τῆς καυχίσεως. In a foolish comparison of himself with the Corinthian apostles he is not speaking of that which is his true glory but accepting a ‘purpose’ which is forced on him by his opponents. Hence he does not say ‘in what is my true glory’ but ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ὑποστάσει τῆς καυχίσεως, ‘in this purpose of boasting (which is forced upon me).’¹²² It is plain that in this context ὑπόστασις is almost the very opposite of the reality.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:584–585.]

⁷²“For being so confident: it is doubtful whether the meaning ‘confidence’ can be established for the Greek word translated as confident in RSV. TEV and most other English versions, however, follow the same meaning as RSV. The Greek word is better translated as ‘plan,’ ‘project,’ or ‘undertaking.’ The end of this verse

The inferential conjunction οὖν introducing **statement # 186** in v. 5 describes what Paul did in light of the scenarios put forth in vv. 3–4, ἀναγκαῖον οὖν ἠγησάμην παρακαλέσαι τοὺς ἀδελφούς, ἵνα προέλθωσιν εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ προκαταρτίσωσιν τὴν προεπηγγελμένην εὐλογίαν ὑμῶν, ταύτην ἐτοίμην εἶναι οὕτως ὡς εὐλογίαν καὶ μὴ ὡς πλεονεξίαν, **So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you, and arrange in advance for this bountiful gift that you have promised, so that it may be ready as a voluntary gift and not as an extortion.**

What Paul says here summarizes earlier statements in 8:6–7 and 8:11–12. Here it is made clear as to why this delegation of three brothers is being sent on ahead of Paul’s arrival at Corinth. Their task is ἵνα προέλθωσιν εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ προκαταρτίσωσιν τὴν προεπηγγελμένην εὐλογίαν ὑμῶν, **so that they may come ahead to you and make advance arrangements for your praiseworthy gift promised in advance.** The apostle makes it clear again, as in 8:12–15, that what the Corinthians contribute must be done out of their eager desire to participate in the relief offering: ταύτην ἐτοίμην εἶναι οὕτως ὡς εὐλογίαν καὶ μὴ ὡς πλεονεξίαν, **thus this will be prepared as praise worthy and not as extortion.**

The delegation from Macedonia will help them get it ready, but will not force them to do it. The challenge for Paul was to motivate the Corinthians to finish the collection, but to do so out of enthusiasm for the project and not out of being shamed into giving. Key to the success of this mission is for the Corinthians to clearly understand how the collection is being handled by those **in charge and what Paul’s role in all of this is. Once** should therefore be translated as ‘we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—in this undertaking’ (NRSV and AB).

“At the end of this verse, some manuscripts add the words ‘of this boasting’ (so REB footnote). The UBS Greek New Testament does not include these words, and the editors give a ‘B’ evaluation to the printed text, suggesting that the printed text is almost certainly correct. KJV is based on the manuscripts that have this addition: ‘should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.’ With the additional words the sense is clearly that Paul would be humiliated for having confidently boasted about the Corinthians (see 7:14 and 9:3). Some translations such as RSV and TEV have followed manuscripts that do not have these additional words; but the translators understand the sense to be the same, even without the addition.

“As already stated, however, the Greek word translated confident in RSV is more accurately translated ‘undertaking.’ The humiliation that Paul fears is not that he may have boasted in vain. Rather he will be humiliated if the undertaking of the fund—raising for the Christians in Jerusalem should fail. The following translation may serve as a model for this verse:

“However, if some people from Macedonia should come with me to Corinth and find out that you are not ready, how ashamed we [exclusive] would be if this project of collecting money should fail. And I will not even talk about your shame in this matter.”

[Roger L. Omanson and John Ellington, *A Handbook on Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 164–165.]

they understand and trust the process, it will be easier to get re-excited about participating in the collection of the money. The genius of Paul's strategy is simple: be completely honest and open about how everything is being done. Don't hide any aspect of the collecting of the money. There's a lot modern day churches can learn from Paul here.

10.2.3.2.4 Foundation spiritual principles of giving, 9:6-15

6 Τοῦτο δέ, ὁ σπείρων φειδομένως φειδομένως καὶ θερίσει, καὶ ὁ σπείρων ἐπ' εὐλογίαις ἐπ' εὐλογίαις καὶ θερίσει. 7 ἕκαστος καθὼς προήρηται τῇ καρδίᾳ, μὴ ἐκ λύπης ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης· ἰλαρὸν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός. 8 δυνατεῖ δὲ ὁ θεὸς πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεῦσαι εἰς ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἐν παντὶ πάντοτε πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν ἔχοντες περισσεύητε εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν, 9 καθὼς γέγραπται·

ἐσκόρπισεν, ἔδωκεν τοῖς πένησιν,

ἡ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

10 ὁ δὲ ἐπιχορηγῶν σπόρον τῷ σπείροντι καὶ ἄρτον εἰς βρῶσιν χορηγήσει καὶ πληθυνεῖ τὸν σπόρον ὑμῶν καὶ αὐξήσει τὰ γενήματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν. 11 ἐν παντὶ πλουτιζόμενοι εἰς πᾶσαν ἀπλότητα, ἥτις κατεργάζεται δι' ἡμῶν εὐχαριστίαν τῷ θεῷ. 12 ὅτι ἡ διακονία τῆς λειτουργίας ταύτης οὐ μόνον ἐστὶν προσαναπληροῦσα τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν ἁγίων, ἀλλὰ καὶ περισσεύουσα διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστιῶν τῷ θεῷ. 13 διὰ τῆς δοκιμῆς τῆς διακονίας ταύτης δοξάζοντες τὸν θεὸν ἐπὶ τῇ ὑποταγῇ τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἀπλότητι τῆς κοινωνίας εἰς αὐτοὺς καὶ εἰς πάντας, 14 καὶ αὐτῶν δεήσει ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐπιποθούτων ὑμᾶς διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφ' ὑμῖν. 15 Χάρις τῷ θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιγητῷ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ.

6 The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. 9 As it is written,

"He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor;

his righteousness endures forever."

10 He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; 12 for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. 13 Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, 14 while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing

grace of God that he has given you. 15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

In further amplification Paul turns more directly to general spiritual principles in 9:6-15 in order to complete his discussion of the relief offering. Exposition of the spiritual blessings of generosity forms the heart of this section somewhat along the lines of 8:1-15. The narrational point of view in 9:6-15 continues pretty consistently the first person singular perspective begun in 9:1-5. But the more prose orientation diminishes the historical aspects to application of the spiritual principles to the Corinthians themselves. In the background stands clearly the rich Jewish heritage of the OT teachings on the generosity of God in blessing His people in their obedience to His directives. The axiomatic saying alluded to in v. 6, although not taken from any specific OT text, effectively sums up much of the OT teaching. Then also comes the citation from Psalm 112:10 (LXX 111:10) from the Septuagint in v. 9. The initial section in vv. 6-8 lead up to the OT quote in v. 9 and then vv. 10-15 largely function as Jewish scribal exposition and application of the OT citation to the Corinthians.

The core theological point of the passage clearly is made in statement #190 (vv. 8-9) about God's ability to make every aspect of His grace abound toward His people. Everything leads up to this point (vv. 6-7) and then flows out of it in application to the Corinthians (vv. 10-14). Christian generosity in giving thus grows out of who our God is and how He touches our lives. The sowing and reaping principle here is spiritual, not crassly material in nature. It reflects our relationship to God. To understand this text in materialistic terms is the grossest of heresies and is to miss totally the point being made by Paul. The apostle speaks of God's material blessings only in terms of meeting our basic physical needs, and any extra is completely for generous sharing with others in need. The accumulation of material wealth for its own sake is always seen in scripture as sinful and disobedience to God.

The introductory Τοῦτο δέ is elliptical and has the sense of And this is the point: The idea is that what follows is in large measure summing up what preceded.⁷³

⁷³"τοῦτο δέ not only looks forward ('And remember this,' Cassirer; 'Now this I say,' NASB) but also backward, with the 'sparingly-generously' contrast restating the εὐλογίαν-πλεονεξίαν antithesis of v. 5 in reverse order, and the repeated ἐπ' εὐλογίαις reflecting the repeated εὐλογίαν also in v. 5. So τοῦτο δέ is appropriately rendered 'What I mean is this':1 or 'The point is this' (RSV, NRSV). Given the use of the full expression τοῦτο δέ φημι in 1 Cor. 7:29; 15:50, it is safe to assume that here φημί or λέγω can be supplied,² that τοῦτο is both prospective and retrospective,³ and that δέ is transitional, not adversative" [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 633.]

9.6 δέ,
187 Τοῦτο (ἐστίν)
 ὁ σπείρων
 φειδομένως
 φειδομένως
 καὶ
 θερίσει,
 καὶ
 ὁ σπείρων
 ἐπ' εὐλογίαις
 ἐπ' εὐλογίαις
 καὶ
 θερίσει.

9.7 καθὼς προήρηται
 τῇ καρδίᾳ

188 ἕκαστος (δῶση),
 μὴ ἐκ λύπης
 ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης·

γὰρ
189 ἰλαρὸν δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός.

9.8 δὲ

190 δυνατεῖ ὁ θεὸς πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεῦσαι
 εἰς ὑμᾶς,
 | ἐν παντὶ
 | πάντοτε
 | πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν ἔχοντες
 ἵνα...περισεύητε
 εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν,
 καθὼς γέγραπται·
 ἐσκόρπισεν,
 ἔδωκεν τοῖς πένησιν,
 ἢ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει
 /-----|
 εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

9.9

This happens but in a somewhat different manner than mere repetition in briefer form. The primary antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun Τοῦτο, this, is the axiom that follows:

ὁ σπείρων φειδομένως φειδομένως καὶ θερίσει,
 καὶ ὁ σπείρων ἐπ' εὐλογίαις ἐπ' εὐλογίαις καὶ θερίσει
 the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly,
 and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bounti-
 fully

This is an agricultural image of sowing and harvest-ing.⁷⁴ It has some linguistic affinity to Gal. 6:7-8,

⁷⁴“No precise parallel is known to us; indeed, the φειδομένως-ἐπ' εὐλογίαις antithesis is probably a Pauline creation. But the general thought, ‘As you have sown, so you shall reap’ (Cicero, *De Oratore* 2.65 [261]), was a commonplace in contemporary morality,¹⁰ as also in the Jewish wisdom tradition (e.g., Job 4:8; Sir. 7:3), with the closest parallel being in the Greek Apocalypse of Baruch (= 3 Baruch), possibly a product of Syrian Judaism in the second century A.D., ‘Those who have sown well, also reap well’ (3 Baruch 15:2, Greek). But what prompted Paul to cite this axiom? Gale suggests (163) that it may have been Prov. 22:8 (LXX), ὁ σπείρων φαῦλα θερίσει κακά (‘the one who sows evil will reap trouble’), since Paul immediately goes on (in v. 7) to allude to the next sen-

7 Μὴ πλανᾶσθε, θεὸς οὐ μυκτηρίζεται.

ὁ γὰρ ἐὰν σπείρῃ ἄνθρωπος,
 τοῦτο καὶ θερίσει·

8 ὅτι ὁ σπείρων εἰς τὴν σάρκα ἑαυτοῦ
 ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς θερίσει φθοράν,

ὁ δὲ σπείρων εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα
 ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος θερίσει ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

7 Do not be deceived; God is not mocked,
 for you reap
 whatever you sow.

8 If you sow to your own flesh,
 you will reap corruption from the flesh;
 but if you sow to the Spirit,
 you will reap eternal life from the Spirit.

But the Corinthians expression is shorter and less specific than the Galatians version. Plus the application is very different between the two. In Galatians it is a gen-tence in Proverbs, ἄνδρα ἰλαρὸν καὶ δότην εὐλογεῖ ὁ θεός (Prov. 22:8a, LXX) (on which see below).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 634.]

9.10	δὲ	ὁ ἐπιχορηγῶν σπόρον τῷ σπεύροντι καὶ ἄρτον εἰς βρῶσιν
191		χορηγήσει καὶ
192		πληθυνεῖ τὸν σπόρον ὑμῶν καὶ
193		αὐξήσει τὰ γενήματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν.
9.11	ἐν παντὶ	
194	(ἔστε) πλουτιζόμενοι	εἰς πᾶσαν ἀπλότητα, ἥτις κατεργάζεται...εὐχαριστίαν τῷ θεῷ. δι' ἡμῶν
9.12	ὅτι ἡ διακονία...	οὐ μόνον ἐστὶν προσαναπληροῦσα τὰ ὑστερήματα τῆς λειτουργίας ταύτης τῶν ἁγίων, ἀλλὰ καὶ ----- περισσεύουσα διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστιῶν τῷ θεῷ.
9.13	διὰ τῆς δοκιμῆς τῆς διακονίας ταύτης	
195	(ἔστε) δοξάζοντες τὸν θεὸν	ἐπὶ τῇ ὑποταγῇ τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἀπλότητι τῆς κοινωνίας εἰς αὐτοὺς καὶ εἰς πάντας, καὶ αὐτῶν δεήσει ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐπιποθούντων ὑμᾶς διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφ' ὑμῖν.
9.14		
196	9.15 Χάρις (ἔστω) τῷ θεῷ	ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγῆτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ.

eralized axiom of paraenesis targeting moral behavior. But in Corinthians the point is generosity in making an offering for fellow believers.

The central point is that generosity of sowing produces a generous harvest, and vica versa. At first glance it appears that Paul has compromised his previous emphasis upon quality (8:11-12) for quantity and is now seeking a large sum of money from the Corinthians. But such a reading is wrong and confuses the idea of generosity. Generosity is measured by sacrifice not by amount of money given. The greater the personal sacrifice in giving the greater the blessing of God upon both the giver and the recipient of the gift. God can do much more with a \$5 sacrificial gift than with a \$5,000 non-sacrificial gift! Verse seven comes back to make this point of the intended meaning of the axiom in verse

six.

The contrast between sowing / reaping is φειδομένως and ἐπ' εὐλογίας. The adverb of manner φειδομένως comes out of the verb φείδομαι, *I am a miser*. Its opposite is ἐπ' εὐλογίας with the sense of multiple blessings. The prepositional phrase with ἐπί carries the sense of expecting a harvest based upon multiple blessings from God. Verses 8ff. unpack the details of the anticipated blessings from God, while verse 7 amplifies ἐπ' εὐλογίας sowing, i.e., giving to the relief offering. Although the negative side of the axiom in v. 6 stands in the background, Paul only treats the positive side in his amplification in vv. 7-15.

The desired sowing, ὁ σπεύρων ἐπ' εὐλογίας, as opposed to its opposite in v. 6a, is then defined as cheerful giving in v. 7, ἕκαστος καθὼς προήρηται τῇ καρδίᾳ, μὴ

ἐκ λύπης ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης, each person, just as he has determined in his mind should give not out of sadness or out of compulsion.⁷⁵ The example of the Macedonians in 8:1-5 illustrates clearly what Paul has in mind here. Each person should reach deeply inside himself to determine God's leadership in making a gift to help others. The giving should not be determined by sadness at turning loose of his money, nor should it be determined by outside pressures. Paul had earlier made this point in 1 Cor. 16:2, κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου ἕκαστος ὑμῶν παρ' ἐαυτῶν τιθέτω θησαυρίζων ὅτι ἐὰν εὐδοῶται, ἵνα μὴ ὅταν ἔλθω τότε λογεῖται γίνωνται. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come. Also

would send relief to the believers living in Judea.⁷⁶

The justification for this assertion on how to give in v. 7 comes in the γὰρ clause: ἰλαρὸν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός, for God loves a cheerful giver. This statement adapts Prov. 22:8-9 (LXX) especially v. 9: 8 ἄνδρα ἰλαρὸν καὶ δότην εὐλογεῖ ὁ θεός, ματαιότητα δὲ ἔργων αὐτοῦ συντελέσει. 9 ὁ ἐλεῶν πτωχὸν αὐτὸς διατραφήσεται· τῶν γὰρ ἑαυτοῦ ἄρτων ἔδωκεν τῷ πτωχῷ. 8 Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity, and the rod of anger will fail. 9 Those who are generous are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor. The sense of voluntary generosity in giving pleases God who has acted toward His people in the same manner. Thus their actions reflect His character and presence in their lives. This point is made

9.8 δὲ
190 δυνατεῖ ὁ θεὸς πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεῦσαι
 εἰς ὑμᾶς,
 | ἐν παντὶ
 | πάντοτε
 | πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν ἔχοντες
 ἵνα...περισεύητε
 εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν,
 9.9 καθὼς γέγραπται·
 ἐσκόρπισεν,
 ἔδωκεν τοῖς πένησιν,
 ἢ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει
 /-----|
 εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

it corresponds to the earlier relief offering taken up in Antioch for the saints in Jerusalem (Acts 11:29): τῶν δὲ μαθητῶν, καθὼς εὐπορεῖτό τις, ὥρισαν ἕκαστος αὐτῶν εἰς διακονίαν πέμψαι τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἀδελφοῖς. The disciples determined that according to their ability, each

dramatically in vv. 8-15.

God is the source of blessings to givers, vv. 8-15. The mentioning of God loving cheerful gives in v. 7 prompts the expansion in the following verses on the role of God in relief offerings gathered by His people. The Greek sentence in vv. 8-9 asserts the fundamental truth of God's capacity to bless. This leads up to the citation of Psalm 112:9 (=LXX 111:9) with the standard formula introduction of scripture citation, καθὼς γέγραπται, just as it stands written. Then in typical Jewish scribal fashion, Paul 'exegetes' the citation with the dominate focus on its application to the Corinthians in vv. 10-14. Verse 15 climaxes with a doxological type praise expression already used in this discussion in these two chapters

⁷⁵“Being both asyndetic and elliptical, this statement is correspondingly forceful. With ἕκαστος we may supply the aorist optative δόη (Lietzmann 138), ‘May each give,’ or some imperative such as δότω (Winer 587) or διδότω (Robertson, Pictures 248), ‘Let each give,’ or ποιείτω (Robertson, Pictures 248), ‘Let each act,’ ‘Let each do this [sow generously, v. 6].’ The omission of a verb serves to emphasize motivation for action (cf. καρδία, λύπη, ἀνάγκη) as opposed to the act of giving itself.¹¹ As in 1 Cor. 16:2 and Acts 11:29, both passages that describe financial giving, the use of ἕκαστος highlights individual responsibility to contribute to an offering that would in fact be sent as a single corporate gift.¹² If the meaning of καθὼς (‘as,’ ‘just as’) is expanded, it will carry the sense ‘what/as much as (he has decided).’ As the perfect of προαιρέομαι, ‘choose (for oneself),’ ‘decide,’ προήρηται points to a settled decision to contribute a certain amount to the collection, whether on a regular basis (as in 1 Cor. 16:2) or in a single gift.¹³ The decision was to be private (τῇ καρδίᾳ, locative dative), not public, and the giving was to be purposeful, not impulsive.¹⁴” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 635.]

⁷⁶“The contemporary analogy for this Jerusalem collection was not the obligatory annual Temple tax that was levied on all adult male Jews,¹⁷ but the voluntary offerings that Jews, proselytes, and even Gentiles made in Jerusalem.¹⁸ More remotely, the closest OT analogy is the ‘freewill offerings’ of money and materials given by the Israelites for the construction of the tabernacle (Exod. 25:1-9; 35:4-9, 20-29; 36:2-7).” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 635-636.]

at 8:16. Titus' very positive assessment of the Corinthians prompts the first outburst of praise. Here, emphasis upon what God can do through the Corinthians prompts this second outburst.

The core assertion in v. 8a lays the conceptual foundation for everything else: δυνατεῖ δὲ ὁ θεὸς πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεῦσαι εἰς ὑμᾶς, *And God is able to make every grace abound for you*. When the Corinthians begin contemplating giving to the relief offering, they must first look to God as the Macedonians did. Their giving must originate out of the dynamic grace of God working in their lives. Our giving must become an expression of divine grace at work in us. This is the only way to become a ἱλαρὸν δότην, *cheerful giver*.

The objective of "grace giving" is not, however, for us. Rather ἵνα ἐν παντὶ πάντοτε πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν ἔχοντες περισσεύητε εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν, *so that in every way at all times every sufficiency having you may abound for every good deed*. This rather clumsy translation seeks to preserve the very emphatic repeated use of the adjective πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν.⁷⁷ First modal: ἐν παντί, *in every way*. Then temporal: πάντοτε, *at all times*. Then predicate adjectival twice: πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν, *every sufficiency*, and πᾶν ἔργον, *every deed*. The point is the absolute ability of God to fill every good deed with His powerful presence and blessing. Here with deed alluding to money contributed to the offering, Paul's point is what God can do with every amount given through His enabling. The monetary gift thus becomes a 'grace gift' from God, not some point of human bragging about having done something noteworthy.

This kind of giving matches (καθὼς γέγραπται) what the psalmist acknowledged about God's actions in this world, especially to the poor: καθὼς γέγραπται· ἐσκόρπισεν,

ἔδωκεν τοῖς
πένησιν, ἢ
δικαιοσύνη
αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς
τὸν αἰῶνα, just as
it stands written,
He distributes
generously, He
gives to the poor,

His righteousness remains forever. God is not the god of the rich. Instead He treats all, and especially the poor, with generosity. This is due to His righteous character that is a permanent part of His being. From the context of this sentence in vv. 8-9, it appears that the citation

⁷⁷"Besides the verb perisseuō, the word *pas* ('all, each') appears four times and *pan tote* ('always') once. Without any doubt, the p-alliteration is intended; cf. especially *en panti pantote pasan*. Paul's speaking of God here is solemn and impressive indeed." [Daniel J. Harrington, *Second Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 8, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 147.]

of Psalm 112 intends God as the subject of the verbs in the first line and divine righteousness in the second line. Clearly God is the subject in the following sentence beginning in verse 10. But this may not actually be the case with the Psalm reference.

Quite interestingly in Paul's use of Psalm 112:9 (LXX 111:9), the actions of a righteous person reaching out in generosity to the poor is the point in both the Hebrew text and also in the Greek LXX which Paul draws upon here.⁷⁸ Verse six defines the subject of these verbs as δίκαιος, *the righteous man*. Thus in a somewhat awkward manner the citation focuses upon divine promises to the righteous person who is generous to those in need. Clearly in the mind of the psalmist, God does bless the righteous in their generosity to the poor. This is the point that Paul seems to pick up on from the citation.

In verses 10-14, the three Greek sentences amplify his core assertion in vv. 8-9 about God's ability to bless those helping the poor. He makes it clear that the divine principle expressed in the psalm applies fully to the Corinthian believers.

In fairly standardized but yet creative Jewish scribal fashion, the apostle amplifies the words of the psalmist in application to the Corinthians. In so doing he will make allusion to other OT scriptural concepts in order to make his point even stronger.

First in v. 10, Paul returns to the farming image of verse six with the axiom: ὁ δὲ ἐπιχορηγῶν σπόρον τῷ σπείροντι καὶ ἄρτον εἰς βρῶσιν χορηγήσει καὶ πληθυνεῖ τὸν σπόρον ὑμῶν καὶ αὐξήσει τὰ γενήματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν. *Now the One supplying seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and multiply your seed⁷⁹ and will increase the harvest bounty of your righteousness.⁸⁰* Here the

ἐσκόρπισεν τοῖς
πένησιν, ἢ
δικαιοσύνη
αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς
τὸν αἰῶνα, just as
it stands written,
He distributes
generously, He
gives to the poor,
His righteousness
remains forever.

⁷⁸Psalm 112:9 (LXX 111:9). ἐσκόρπισεν, ἔδωκεν τοῖς πένησιν· ἢ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, τὸ κέρασ αὐτοῦ ὑψωθήσεται ἐν δόξῃ.

He distributes generously, he gives to the poor; his righteousness remains forever, his horn is lifted up in honor.

⁷⁹Paul switches the more general σπέρμα, *seed*, in the LXX, to σπόρον, *planting seed*.

⁸⁰What God bountifully supplies is σπόρον τῷ σπείροντι καὶ ἄρτον εἰς βρῶσιν. Since this very phrase occurs in Isa. 55:10 (LXX) (with σπέρμα instead of σπόρον), there can be little doubt that Paul is quoting this passage (see NA27); no introductory formula occurs since the citation is fragmentary. Yahweh's declaration in Isa. 55:10-11 is that his word, his decree (cf. Isa. 45:23; 55:12-13), is

asserts simply that the lives of the Corinthians is being 'enriched,' that is, made immensely more profound spiritually (πλουτιζόμενοι)⁸⁴ because of their very generous participation in this offering (εις πᾶσαν ἀπλότητα). This is an inclusive blessing from God (ἐν παντί). This is structured in the Greek in the present tense which here assumes the participation of the Corinthians by completing the gathering of the offering with the help of Titus and the two other brothers coming to Corinth (9:5).

The generosity, ἀπλότης, of the Macedonians sets the example (8:2). When the Corinthians match the same level of ἀπλότης as the Macedonians, praise to God will be produced: ἥτις κατεργάζεται δι' ἡμῶν εὐχαριστιάν τῷ θεῷ.⁸⁵ The interesting δι' ἡμῶν, *through us*, is added to the relative clause statement. The arrangements for and the ultimate responsibility for the relief offering go to back to Paul and his associates who have encouraged all of the churches from Galatia to Asia to Macedonia and now to Achaia to contribute to it. From the outset the objective has been to glorify God through the gathering of this offering for the saints in Jerusalem. As the Corinthians do their part, praise to God will be produced from Corinth and Achaia.

The lengthy but elliptical ὅτι clause in v. 12 lays the basis for the above assertion of divine blessings to come to the Corinthians. Additional the parallel causal expression here as a dependent clause to the causal prepositional phrase εις πᾶσαν ἀπλότητα establishes an amplification of the latter by the statements in v. 12 in particular.

The internal structure, as illustrated in the above diagram, revolves around the subject of both verbs: ἡ διακονία τῆς λειτουργίας ταύτης, *the ministry of this service*. Both nouns, διακονία and λειτουργία, are virtual synonyms in meaning, but the LXX use of λειτουργία highlights service done to God. Used together as here the point moves toward the action of service with implication of consequences achieved. Of course the phrase is another label for the relief offering that has been described in a variety of ways in these two chapters. Perhaps the twofold terminology anticipates the dual accomplishments of this offering. Note the standard "not only this...but also that" structure in οὐ μόνον... ἀλλὰ καί.

First, this offering ἐστὶν προσαναπληροῦσα τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν ἁγίων, *is supplying the needs of the saints*.

⁸⁴An additional implication of πλουτιζόμενοι in the present passive participle form is that God would give them the needed resources in order to make a generous contribution to the relief offering. This plays off the Psalm quote in v. 9 with the commentary on it given in verse 10: πληθυνεῖ τὸν σπῆρον ὑμῶν, *God will multiply your planting seed*.

⁸⁵The use of the qualitative form of the relative pronoun here, ἥτις, rather than the direct relative ἥ, underscores the fundamental nature of proper generosity; it leads to praise to God.

The periphrastic present tense construction ἐστὶν προσαναπληροῦσα highlights continuation of action over an extended period of time. Three times in these two chapters the apostle alludes to the ὑστέρημα, *need*, of the saints in Jerusalem: 8:14 (2x) and 9:12. The core idea is the absence of basic needs for existence. It closely relates to the label τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ, *the poor among the saints in Jerusalem* (Rom. 15:26). These Gentile dominated churches established in Paul's missionary ministry would be helping relieve the physical suffering of fellow believers in Jerusalem who were dominantly Jewish. Crossing those very great ethnic barriers would be a great witness to the power of the Gospel for uniting all peoples of the earth around common commitment to Christ. Nothing like this ever took place in the Greco-Roman world and would certainly catch the attention of many people living in the first century, not to mention the religious Jews living in Judea outside of Christianity.

Second, this offering περισσεύουσα διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστιῶν τῷ θεῷ, *is abounding through many expressions of thanksgiving to God*.⁸⁶ The ellipsis assumes the ἐστὶν of the first core statement, and thus the creation of a second periphrastic construction with the participle περισσεύουσα. An abundance of something is being generated διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστιῶν τῷ θεῷ, *through many expressions of thanksgiving to God*. Although commentators have speculated over the centuries over just what is created by this ministry to the saints in Jerusalem, it may be best to leave that question open. Instead, abundance of divine actions of many kinds is Paul's point here. The help provided through this offering will indeed evoke many expressions of thanksgiving to God. In such a context, the abundance of divine grace

⁸⁶"Hence, whilst it will supply the wants¹⁶⁴ of the Jerusalem Christians, it will do more than that. There will be an abundance of good effects. What does this 'abundance' consist of? Chrysostom suggests that the contributors to the collection will furnish its recipients with even more than they need,¹⁶⁵ but this is unlikely in view of what has been said in 8:13–15. Might Paul have in view the 'fulness of blessing' to be accorded to his missionary labours (Rom 15:29)? The following verses might suggest this, if for the Jerusalem Christians the collection is to be an expression of the obedience of the Gentiles to the gospel.¹⁶⁶ This is possible perhaps.¹⁶⁷ But if the introductory ὅτι be taken seriously, v. 12 is explanatory of v. 11, and v. 11 concludes with the assertion that the Corinthians' generosity produces thanksgiving to God. Consequently, the most likely content of the 'abundance' or 'surplus' will be this thanksgiving itself.¹⁶⁸ It is 'by means of' (διὰ)¹⁶⁹ this expected multitude of thanksgiving prayers that the collection will surpass, in its effects, the simple supply of aid. According to Boobyer, the praise and thanksgiving envisaged in vv. 12–13 are thought of as increasing God's glory in a completely realistic sense.¹⁷⁰ Whether or not, however, Paul adopted this hellenistic understanding of thanksgiving is debatable.¹⁷¹" [Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 587–588.]

and blessing flourishes to everyone connected to the offering.

Verses 13-14, the last Greek sentence in this unit, amplify the core points made in vv. 11-12, which themselves are a part of the commentary on Psalm 112 in v. 9. Note from the diagram the core expression which reproduces the periphrastic present participle construction for a third time: (έστιν) δοξάζοντες. Again this is set

9.13
 | διὰ τῆς δοκιμῆς
 | τῆς διακονίας ταύτης
195 (έστε) δοξάζοντες τὸν θεὸν
 | ἐπὶ τῇ ὑποταγῇ τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν
 | εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ
 | καὶ
 | ἀπλότητι τῆς κοινωνίας
 | εἰς αὐτοὺς
 | καὶ
 | εἰς πάντας,
 9.14
 | καὶ
 | δεήσει
 | ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν
 | αὐτῶν... ἐπιποθούτων ὑμᾶς
 | διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ
 | ἐφ' ὑμῖν.

confessing. Obedience to Christ as Lord MUST come out of such a confession. The content of the verbal confession is defined in Rom. 10: Otherwise, the confession has no validity. Paul saw the opportunity of contributing to the relief of fellow believers as one of those tests, δοκιμή, that would

up as an ellipsis and thus takes on a stronger, more forceful tone. The ellipsis once more plays off the full expression in v. 10 with the masculine nominative plural spelling and is parallel to πλουτιζόμενοι in v. 11. The stress on ongoing action here matches that in the previous two uses in v. 12. The core idea is that participation in the offering glorifies God, δοξάζοντες τὸν θεόν.⁸⁷ Thus the Corinthians and others in Achaia have the opportunity of doing this through their offering.

In this third sentence, the apostle explains how the Corinthians bring glory to God through participation in the relief offering. First, their participation represents διὰ τῆς δοκιμῆς τῆς διακονίας ταύτης, by the proving of this ministry. The noun δοκιμή refers to the testing process but it stresses successful results of the testing, in the sense of validating genuineness. Thus the διακονία, service, of contributing to the offering (cf. 9:1, 12), provides the opportunity for the Corinthians and other Achaian churches to validate the genuineness of τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, your faith confession to the Gospel of Christ. Thus active participation signals authentic faith commitment. Refusal to participate raises serious questions about the genuineness of professed commitment.

This is the identical principle to James 2:14, Τί τὸ

⁸⁷Interestingly, of the 31 times in the NT where God is the object of δοξάζω, not one of them is connected to some setting of formal worship. Rather, some action where God is seen at work prompts the spontaneous praise from the individual or group. The praise is not necessarily verbal. The obedient action is itself praise to God. The setting here of participation in the relief offering equaling praise to God is typical of the other settings in the NT.

ὄφελος, ἀδελφοί μου, ἐὰν πίστιν λέγη τις ἔχειν, ἔργα δὲ μὴ ἔχη; μὴ δύναται ἡ πίστις σῶσαι αὐτόν; What's the profit, my brothers should someone claim to have faith but not deeds of obedience? Such faith cannot save him, can it? In conversion to Christ a confession of faith is made both verbally and in the act of baptism. The question of genuineness of such confessions always depends upon the lifestyle shift to Christ taking control of the life of the one confessing. Obedience to Christ as Lord MUST come out of such a confession. The content of the verbal confession is defined in Rom. 10: Otherwise, the confession has no validity. Paul saw the opportunity of contributing to the relief of fellow believers as one of those tests, δοκιμή, that would

validate the confession.

The other qualifier of δοξάζοντες is introduced by the preposition ἐπὶ. With the dative / locative case, the preposition typically expresses the foundation or basis upon which something depends. Here the ability to δοξάζοντες τὸν θεὸν rests upon two items as set forth by the preposition ἐπὶ. First is ἐπὶ τῇ ὑποταγῇ τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, upon obedience to your confession in the Gospel of Christ. In coming to Christ in conversion, the Corinthians made a public confession of faith commitment to Christ within the framework of the apostolic Gospel that was proclaimed to them.⁸⁸ A life lived in obedience to Christ is the sole basis of glorifying God. But this obedience flows exclusively out of a specific confession of commitment that is defined by the apostolic Gospel message.

The second part of the prepositional phrase is καὶ ἀπλότητι τῆς κοινωνίας εἰς αὐτοὺς καὶ εἰς πάντας, and upon generosity of participation for them and for all.⁸⁹ What glo-

⁸⁸Contextually τῇ ὑποταγῇ τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν means most certainly the subjective role for τῆς ὁμολογίας, thus an obedience produced by confession. The preposition εἰς links back to ὑποταγῇ, i.e., obedience to.... The Gospel message about Christ is what obedience links to. The confessor commits himself / herself to obey Christ within the framework of the apostolic Gospel. Confession 'steps into' (εἰς) this message to embrace every aspect of it.

⁸⁹A basic rule of ancient Greek grammar is that an article governs two nouns when connected by καὶ. Here τῇ ὑποταγῇ . . . καὶ ἀπλότητι, upon obedience...and generosity. These two items are flip sides of the same coin. The foundation principle of both Judaism and Christianity is preserved here in the vertical / horizontal linkage. One cannot obey God without reaching out to others, and reaching out to others must be linked to obedient commitment. Page 41

ifies God is **generosity**, ἀπλότης. Again the English word conveys the implication of amount, or quantity. But ἀπλότης more basically means simplicity and sincerity, thus stressing the idea of quality of action. God is glorified by obedience that also reflects sincerity and genuineness of commitment to help others in the name of God.

The dual prepositional phrases εἰς αὐτούς καὶ εἰς πάντας, **for them and for all**, specifies the target of the generosity. It identifies both the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and Judea, as well as broadens the scope to include all people in need of help.⁹⁰ Additionally, participation in the offering is labeled as τῆς κοινωνίας, **of this partnership**. It is not an unequal contributing of those better to those in need. Instead, it is a partnership of mutual assistance of believers who all stand on the same ground before God.⁹¹

God. Humanitarianism is not Christianity! But there is no Christianity without humanitarian concern.

90 Martin's (WBC) observations here seem a bit odd: "Strangely, Paul rounds off the phrase after κοινωνίας εἰς αὐτούς, 'partnership with them,' with the supplementary phrase καὶ εἰς πάντας, 'and with everyone.' This should strictly mean that the Gentile congregations raised money gifts for other churches and worthy causes other than the needs of the people at Jerusalem. But we have no knowledge of these actions. So we must take the phrase to be a general one in praise of the generous spirit that moves the readers and would move them wherever there may be need."²⁸⁸ [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 474-475. [Perhaps this reflects on his own experience more than anything else.

Harris' (NIGTC) comments seem more natural to the text in its context: "On occasion the πάντας in καὶ ἐπὶ πάντας is restricted to fellow Christians (Barnett 446) or to other churches (Bernard 94; Georgi 106), or is taken to mean that when relief is given to the mother church all Christians benefit indirectly,⁴⁷ presumably by the example of Christian fellowship thus afforded or by the cementing of Jew-Gentile relations. But such a restriction seems unwarranted. V. 8 has already envisaged a situation of benevolence beyond the charitable offering for Jerusalem, when God would provide the Corinthians with 'every kind of blessing in abundance' so that they would have 'ample resources for every kind of good work' (εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν). So πάντας would appear to refer to 'everyone else in need,' whether believer or unbeliever.⁴⁸ Such an interpretation finds support in the close parallel in Gal. 6:10, 'As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people (πρὸς πάντας), especially to those who belong to the family of faith (πρὸς τοὺς οἰκείου τῆς πίστεως).' In both verses πάντας is all-embracing." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 655.]

⁹¹"At 8:2 we discussed the meaning of ἀπλότης and saw that although in Pauline usage it sometimes means 'sincerity' or 'simplicity,' in Rom. 12:8 and the three occurrences in 2 Corinthians 8-9 (8:2; 9:11, 13) it has the sense of 'generosity.'⁴³ It would be a generosity 'displayed in sharing' (τῆς κοινωνίας)⁴⁴ material resources with the poor in the Jerusalem church (εἰς αὐτούς) and

The third and final modifier of (ἐστὶν) δοξάζοντες comes in v. 14 as a genitive absolute construction: καὶ αὐτῶν δεήσει ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐπιποθούτων ὑμᾶς διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσιν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφ' ὑμῖν, **and while they, in prayer for you, long for you because of the abundantly surpassing grace of God because of you**. A simple English translation of this rather complex Greek expression omits most of the rich meaning contained in it. God is being glorified by the Corinthian action while something wonderful is happening on the receiving end of this relief offering. Paul states this using present tense verbals to stress ongoing actions that are anticipated when the relief offering arrives in Jerusalem. The verb ἐπιποθέω denotes an intense longing for someone who is needed and important to the one longing.⁹²

That sense of needing the Gentile Christian communities outside Judea by these Jewish believers in Jerusalem Paul asserts is being expressed δεήσει ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, **in prayer for you**, Corinthians. The basis of this longing is declared through the causal prepositional phrase introduced with διὰ. The lengthy but enormously rich expression here is impossible to adequately translate with simple English expression. The object of διὰ is τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ, **because of God's grace**. Quite eloquently the apostle χάρις to refer simultaneously to divine favor but favor from God expressed in the concrete relief offering of the Corinthians to Jerusalem. The word χάρις has been used as a label for this offering in 8:1, 4, 6, 7, 19 and 9:14. But also in dominate reference to divine favor in 8:16 and 9:15. All through the discussion of this offering in chapters eight and nine, the giving of money by the churches to help their fellow believers in Judea has been seen as the action of God moving in the hearts of the members of these Gentile dominated churches.

Here rich qualification of χάριν is made through the adjectival present tense participle ὑπερβάλλουσιν with **its modifier ἐφ' ὑμῖν**. **This divine grace is abounding** also 'with everyone' (ἐπὶ πάντας). Some, however, give κοινωνία a more specific sense arising from the present context, '(the generosity of) your contribution' (RSV, NAB2).⁴⁵ While support for this sense may be found in the expression κοινωνίαν τινά ('some contribution') in Rom. 15:26 in connection with the same collection, the difficulty in the present case is that Paul adds καὶ ἐπὶ πάντας, which seems to imply a wider circle that will, on other occasions, benefit from the Corinthians' κοινωνία.⁴⁶ It is better, therefore, to give this term a broader sense such as 'sharing' or 'fellowship' or 'partnership' or even (cf. BAGD 439b) 'altruism'." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 655.]

⁹²It is a part of numerous words denoting affection and compassion in the NT as the Louw-Nida lexicon topics 25.33 to 25.58 underscore. This compound form, ἐπιποθέω, stresses intense affection for.

astoundingly because of you Corinthians and Achaian believers. Their anticipated generosity is opening the flood gates of divine favor. This comes out of the affectionate sense of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem needing the Gentile believers in Achaia.

In light of this beautiful picture of Jewish / Gentile Christians deeply felt need of one another and helping one another, it is easy to understand why Paul breaks forth in doxological praise at the end of this discussion: Χάρις τῷ θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγῆτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ, [Praise be to God for His indescribable gift!](#) In 8:16 Paul expressed similar praise to God for how He had moved Titus' thinking about the Corinthians. Now praise is expressed over the anticipated blessing from God that will come out of this relief offering. Don't overlook the ingenious play on χάρις all through this discussion. Believers acting in generosity to help others is seen as divine favor in action and that which then brings praise to God Himself. Had we lived in the bitter animosity between Jew and Gentile that Paul experienced, the idea of God overcoming all this in Christ would also have seemed a miracle of God demanding praise of Him.

Summary of chapters eight and nine:

The profound importance of Paul's discussion of the relief offering necessitates some attempt at a theological summation of the relevant spiritual principles of financial contribution inside Christian churches.

First, the scenario of this relief offering needs to be pulled together from the available data⁹³ so as to form a foundation for interpretive understanding and application.

In the late 40s at the leadership meeting in Jerusalem ([Acts 15](#); [Gal. 2](#)), Paul and Barnabas had agreed

⁹³Inside the NT the following passages contain direct references to the relief offering: 2 Cor. 8 - 9; Rom. 15:25-26; 1 Cor. 16:1-4. Galatians 2:10 is an indirect reference to this offering. The concept for giving to those in need stands as an important principle in the Jewish religious heritage that came to Christianity in its beginning. Acts 20:24 and 24:17 contain probable allusions to this offering.

One helpful secondary discussion of this topic is Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993. Sic, "Collection for the Saints." The major failure of the article is the linking of Gal. 2:1-10 to Acts 11:27-30 rather than the obvious linkage of it to Acts 15.

Other detailed studies on this include C. H. Buck, 'The Collection for the Saints', *HTR* 43, 1950, pp. 1ff.; D. Georgi, *Die Geschichte der Kollekte des Paulus für Jerusalem*, 1965; K. Holl, 'Der Kirchenbegriff des Paulus in seinem Verhältnis zu dem der Urgemeinde', *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte* 2, 1928, pp. 44ff.; A. J. Mattill, 'The Purpose of Acts: Schneckenburger Reconsidered', in *Apostolic History and the Gospel*, ed. W. W. Gasque and R. P. Martin, 1970, pp. 108ff.; K. F. Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy*, 1966. F. F. Bruce, "Collection (Pauline Churches)," ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 214.

with the Jerusalem leadership of apostles and elders to remember to see after the poor, μόνον τῶν πτωχῶν ἵνα μνημονεύωμεν, ὃ καὶ ἐσπούδασα αὐτὸ τοῦτο ποιῆσαι, [only the poor that we would remember, which very thing we also have endeavored to do](#) ([Gal. 2:10](#)). This basic religious trait of Judaism was to be preserved inside Christianity.

At that time, Paul had no way of knowing that this agreement would funnel into a major objective for his third missionary journey covering the churches established on the first two trips. But as he left Antioch in 52 AD to revisit the churches in the Roman provinces of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia, the Lord guided him in setting up a massive collection of money from these churches in order to help τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ, [the poor among the saints in Jerusalem](#) ([Rom. 15:26](#)). Elsewhere the reference is simply εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους, [for the saints](#) (ex., 1 Cor. 16:1). This leaves some uncertainty about whether the relief offering was intended for all the believers in Jerusalem and Judea who were suffering poverty, or just those in dire need across the Christian communities there.⁹⁴ Yet the established pattern that occurred in Jerusalem is described by Luke in Acts 4:32-5:11.⁹⁵ The have gen-

⁹⁴The reason for drawing some conclusion on this becomes rather clear. If the entire Christian community were suffering poverty, it means that some kind of famine had swept through the region. Or else, that economic persecution against Christians in Judea had broken out. For the commentators adopting this assumption, a search of secular records for signals of famines and/or persecutions against Christians becomes imperative.

But in light of the almost non-existing evidence for either of these in the middle east during the middle of the first century, the second, alternative understanding becomes more certain. This offering was in line with the previously existing pattern defined in Acts 4 and did not arise from extensive famine or persecution of the Jewish Christian communities in Judea. As such not only did it preserve in part the Jerusalem conference agreement ([Gal. 2:10](#)) but served to validate that Pauline Christianity was not ignoring legitimate aspects of its Jewish religious heritage. Benevolent caring for those in need lay at the heart of Jesus' teaching in Matt. 6:1-4 et als. and also formed an important part of the emerging Gentile Christian movement under Paul's leadership.

⁹⁵**Acts 4:32-37.** 32 Τοῦ δὲ πλήθους τῶν πιστευσάντων ἦν καρδία καὶ ψυχὴ μία, καὶ οὐδὲ εἷς τι τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῶ ἔλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι ἀλλ' ἦν αὐτοῖς ἅπαντα κοινά. 33 καὶ δυνάμει μεγάλη ἀπεδίδουν τὸ μαρτύριον οἱ ἀπόστολοι τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, χάρις τε μεγάλη ἦν ἐπὶ πάντας αὐτούς. 34 οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐνδεής τις ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς: ὅσοι γὰρ κτήτορες χωρίων ἢ οἰκιῶν ὑπῆρχον, πωλοῦντες ἔφερον τὰς τιμὰς τῶν πιπρασκομένων 35 καὶ ἐτίθουν παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τῶν ἀποστόλων, διεδίετο δὲ ἐκάστῳ καθότι ἂν τις χρεῖαν εἶχεν. 36 Ἰωσήφ δὲ ὁ ἐπικληθεὶς Βαρναβᾶς ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων, ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνεύομενον υἱὸς παρακλήσεως, Λευίτης, Κύπριος τῷ γένει, 37 ὑπάρχοντος αὐτῶ ἀγροῦ πωλήσας ἤνεγκεν τὸ χρῆμα καὶ ἔθηκεν πρὸς τοὺς πόδας τῶν ἀποστόλων.

[32 Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. 33 With](#)

erously shared with the have nots inside the community of believers. The expectation would naturally be that the relief offering brought by Paul would be handled the same way.

Another example in the background for this project was the earlier collection of a relief offering by the church in Antioch that was carried to Jerusalem by Paul, which Luke describes in Acts 11:27-30. Not much detail is provided by Luke but its general depiction seems consistent with the procedural details in 2 Cor. 8-9 for this later, more massive undertaking.

In the non-Jewish Diaspora world outside Judea, sophist itinerant philosophers were notorious for sham fund raising projects. In order to protect the integrity of the offering and the reputation of the Christian leaders involved in collecting and delivering it to Jerusalem, extensive precautions were taken to avoid any appearance of this project being anything remotely connected to one of the sham projects by deceitful teachers. Apart from some awareness of this secular background in his day, one cannot understand why Paul went to the lengths that he did in order to not directly come in contact with the money raising. Some suspicions of this evidently had arisen at Corinth from Gentile Christians expecting this money raising project to be like what they were accustomed to outside their Christian faith (2 Cor. 8:20-21).

The project was also carried out against the backdrop of the annual Jewish temple tax that was collected each year from all of the Jewish communities across the Roman empire. The region of most of the Pauline churches in the northeastern Mediterranean area was populated with hundreds of thousands of Jewish residents. The annual gathering of the religious tax by local leaders to be carried to Jerusalem usually at Passover or Pentecost celebrations provided a heritage for the Jewish Christians to understand the procedure for collecting the offering.

The scope of the offering was substantial. It began as Paul and his assistants passed through Galatia (1 Cor. 16:1) at the beginning of the third missionary journey in 52 AD. It culminated in being delivered to the leaders in Jerusalem in the summer of 57 AD about the time of the Jewish festival of Pentecost. Money was collected from churches in the four Roman provinces of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia. These covered the entire region from the Greek areas of Macedonia great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. 35 They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. 36 There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"). 37 He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

and Achaia eastward to the western half of what is now modern Turkey. No amount for the offering is ever provided, but general depictions suggest that it was a very large sum of money. By this point in time, dozens of Christian communities had sprung up over these provinces from the earlier work of Paul and his assistants on the first and second missionary journeys.

As funds were collected from the Christian communities in these provinces, the churches authorized representatives to join the missionary group in order to eventually travel to Jerusalem to represent their community in giving the offering to the Jewish Christian leaders in Jerusalem. See Acts 20:4 for a partial listing of some in this delegation. This large group additionally served as protectors of the money collected so that it would not be stolen or the group robbed. Such was the common Jewish practice for the annual trip back to Jerusalem carrying the temple tax. In fact, the dangers linked to making this trip from Corinth back to Jerusalem in time for Passover when thousands of Jewish groups were traveling is what prompted a plan B by Paul to go back through Macedonia on the way to Jerusalem and thus delay his arrival until Pentecost, some 50 days after Passover (cf. Acts 20:1-6).

Of course, over this five year period typical missionary teaching and preaching of the Gospel took place. Interestingly, at least three of these five years were spent in Ephesus as home base for the Pauline ministry (cf. Acts 19:1-20:1). The first mentioning of the relief offering comes in 1 Cor. 16:1-2 which was written about half way through this lengthy ministry in Ephesus. The final mentioning of it comes in Rom. 15:25-26 written in Corinth shortly before Paul left for Jerusalem via Macedonia to deliver the offering.

Some insight can be gained from looking at the many ways this offering is labeled in the NT, and especially in Paul's references to it.⁹⁶ The more literal term

⁹⁶"In his references to the carefully planned collection from the different churches St. Paul uses seven different words. All these occur in his letters to the Corinthians and Romans, and are as follows: λογία (1 Co 16:1), χάρις (16:3, 2 Co 8:4), κοινωνία (Ro 15:26, 2 Co 8:4, etc.), ἀδροτήτης (8:20), εὐλογία (9:5), λειτουργία (9:12), διακονία (8:4; 9:1, 12f.; cf. Ac 11:29). In the report of his defence before Felix two other words occur in the same connexion (ἐλεημοσύνη and προσφοραί [Ac 24:17]). The word λογία occurs nowhere else in the NT, and is of obscure origin. By some it is supposed to be used here for the first time in Greek literature, and probably to have been coined by St. Paul for his purpose (T. C. Edwards, *Com. on 1 Cor.* 2, 1885, p. 462). A variation (λογεία), however, is found in the papyrus documents from the 3rd cent. onwards and in the compound words ἀνδρολογία, παραλογεία (A. Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, Eng. tr., 1901, pp. 142f., 219f.). It is also found associated with the Pauline word λειτουργία (F. G. Kenyon, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, 1893, i. 46), and is frequently employed 'in papyri, ostraca, and inscriptions from Egypt and elsewhere,' when the writer is speaking of 'religious collections for

for this project⁹⁷ in ancient Greek is λογεία, **collection**, which is only used twice in 1 Cor. 16:1-2.⁹⁸ But the rare use of this term highlights the religious and spiritual nature of this project rather than the mechanical process of collecting money. This is reflected in Rom. 15:25-26, 25 Νυνὶ δὲ πορεύομαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ **διακονῶν** τοῖς ἁγίοις. 26 εὐδόκησαν γὰρ Μακεδονία καὶ Ἀχαΐα κοινωῖαν τινὰ ποιήσασθαι εἰς τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ, 25 **At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem in a ministry to the saints; 26 for Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to share their resources with the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.** The detailed accounting in 2 Corinthians 8-9 make it abundantly clear that this project was not merely gathering up money to give to poor people. Additionally, it is clear that this was something far deeper than the Jewish tradition of almsgiving which by the first century was an egocentric motivation intended to earn 'browny points' with God (cf. Matt.

a god, a temple, etc.' (see Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*. Eng. tr. 2, 1911, p. 104ff.). The Codex Vaticanus (B) has the form λογεία, but as this MS shows a tendency to orthographical changes in this direction its evidence must be discounted (see Westcott, *Introd. to NT in Greek*, 1882, p. 306). It also appears in a compound form in Jewish literature (κατ' ἀνδρολογεῖον, 2 Mac 12:43) where the question of the collection of money-supplies is alluded to." [J. R. Willis, "Collection," ed. James Hastings, *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* (2 Vols.) (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916-1918), 224.]

⁹⁷The collecting or gathering of people is referenced by other ancient Greek terms: "Collection of persons: P. and V. σύλλογος, ὁ, σύνοδος, ἡ, ὄχλος, ὁ," [S. C. Woodhouse, *English-Greek Dictionary: A Vocabulary of the Attic Language* (London: George Routledge & Sons, Limited, 1910), 143.]

Ancient Latin was very distinct in its use of terminology at this point: "collection n (persons) *coetus* m, *conventus* m; (things) *congeriēs* f; (money) *exāctiō* f." [*Collins Latin Dictionary Plus Grammar* (Glasgow: HarperCollins, 1997), 16.]

⁹⁸"λογεία and the related verb λογεύω¹ are not found in literary speech.² Thus prior to acquaintance with the pap. a natural attempt was made to derive the word λογεία direct from λέγω.³ In reality both words go back to λόγος in the sense (for which there is no direct evidence) of 'collection' and 'to engage (officially) in collection.'⁴ In pap. and inscr. from Egypt and Asia Minor from the 3rd cent. B.C. on there are many instances of both words. λογεύω, 'I collect,' P. Rev., 4, 1; 39, 14; 52, 20 (258 B.C.); CIG, III, 4956 (49 A.D.) etc.⁵ λογεία, 'collection,' 'collection of money,' 'tax,' the oldest example P. Hibeh, I, 51, 2 (245 B.C.), esp., as it seems, in the sense of an extraordinary tax, cf. P. Oxy., II, 239, 8: ὁμύω ... μηδεμίαν λογείαν γεγονέναι ὑπ' ἐμοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ κόμῃ.⁶ BGU, II, 515, 7: τὰ ὑπὲρ λογίας [ἐπ]ιβληθέντα as distinct from σιτικά δημόσια. Often a 'sacral collection of money,' 'collection,'⁷ e.g., Ostraka, II, 413 (August 4th, 63 A.D.): ἀπέχω παρὰ σοῦ (δραχμὰς) δ ὀβολ(όν) τὴν λογίαν Ἴσιδος περὶ τῶν δημοσίων (collection of Isis, contribution for official services),⁸ cf. also No. 402, 412, 415-418, 420; Ditt. Syll.3, 996, 26 (Smyrna, 1st cent. A.D.): κλεῖν κεχρυσωμένην καὶ ἐμπεφασμένην⁹ πρὸς τὴν λογήαν καὶ πομπὴν τῶν θεῶν, 'a vessel which is gilded ..., for the collection and procession of the gods.'¹⁰ [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 4:282.]

6:1-4).⁹⁹ In the Second Corinthians discussion, the lead term and one of the commonly used labels for this project was τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ, **the grace of God** (8:1, 4, 6, 7, 19). The believer's giving of funds was indeed not a human effort but rather the working of God's grace in the life of the follower of Christ. Also the related religious labels of ἀδροτής (8:20), εὐλογία (9:5), λειτουργία (9:12), διακονία (8:4; 9:1, 12f.; cf. Acts 11:29) stress this spiritual understanding of the project.

Second, the relevance of this relief offering to Christians and Christian organizations in our world is important to see. Below is a listing of some of the possible links of this scriptural discussion to us today. Also remember that these are insights limited to the Pauline relief offering, and not a comprehensive analysis of the fuller biblical picture on money in religious usage.

a) Collecting money and giving money for religious purposes must never be viewed as a mere mechanical process for taking up money. This point surfaces repeatedly by the way the project is referenced in the Pauline materials of Romans and 1-2 Corinthians. Additionally the more abstract, theological depiction in 2 Cor. 9:6-15 goes into great detail about this. Christian giving of funds stands as an important test of the genuineness of our confession of faith in conversion (9:13-14). The presentation of opportunities for believers to contribute funds likewise must always come from this understanding of the nature of giving. Paul stands as the primary example on how to encourage people to give properly.

This biblical approach should prompt careful reflection on the setting of monetary goals for various projects. They may not inherently conflict with the biblical teaching but they easily can turn Christian fund raising projects into very secularized money gathering strategies. This clearly nullifies the principle of 9:10 of God's ability to bless properly given funds. He can accomplish more with \$5 given properly than with \$5,000 given inappropriately.

Remember: God doesn't give a flip about how much is given, but He cares passionately about how it is given. The term ἀπλότης, translated as **generosity** in 8:2, 9:11, 13, is a qualitative term rather than a quantitative term. That is, motivation behind giving as re-

⁹⁹In Paul's defense of his ministry before the Roman governor Felix in Acts 24:17 the traditional Jewish labels in Greek ἐλεημοσύνη and προσφοραί, **alms and offerings**, are appropriately used before the governor with a Jewish audience present listening to him speak. Even though the standard theological stance on benevolence was not adopted by Paul, the terms would clearly be understood to refer to monetary funds being brought to Jerusalem to help Jewish people. This Felix was very familiar with. And to the Jewish listeners present in the room, Paul's depiction would seem very legitimately Jewish. Hundreds of Diaspora Jews performed such actions yearly.

flecting sincerity, rather than large amounts of giving, is what matters to God. It determines whether our giving is generous or not.

b) The core spiritual perspective on giving and collecting money must always remain central both in understanding and motivation. The constant danger with fund raising is that it centers on money. Money and the love for it is a big temptation to God's people that the scripture warns against numerous times and in different ways.¹⁰⁰ This tempts Christian groups just as much as individuals. Modern church life may well face even larger temptations because of church budgets to be met, buildings to be maintained etc.

None of these concerns were faced by believers in the apostolic world. Local leaders, οἱ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ διάκονοι, were volunteer leaders without pay. The more global leaders such as ἀπόστολοι were supported by different Christian communities, and that mostly only when individual leaders were present in the region of the community (cf. 1 Cor. 9:1-18). Such entities as a set salary didn't exist in their world.

But in our modern world 'church' is a large monetary operation requiring huge sums of money that has to be raised.¹⁰¹ In most cases appeals to the church members to contribute to underwriting this cost is the dominant means of raising needed funding. And here is where the temptation of money becomes very real both to those doing the fund raising and to those giving funds.

If the fund raising that Paul did, as described in 2 Cor. 8-9, teaches us anything it is that the spiritual objectives for such projects must always remain uppermost

¹⁰⁰1 Tim. 6:6-10. Ἐστὶν δὲ πορισμὸς μέγας ἢ εὐσέβεια μετὰ αὐταρκείας· 7 οὐδὲν γὰρ εἰσηγέγκαμεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον, ὅτι οὐδὲ ἐξενεγκεῖν τι δυνάμεθα· 8 ἔχοντες δὲ διατροφὰς καὶ σκεπάσματα, τούτοις ἀρκεσθῆσόμεθα. 9 οἱ δὲ βουλόμενοι πλουτεῖν ἐμπίπτουσιν εἰς πειρασμὸν καὶ παγίδα καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν πολλὰς ἀνοήτους καὶ βλαβερὰς, αἵτινες βυθίζουσιν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους εἰς ὄλεθρον καὶ ἀπώλειαν. 10 ῥίζα γὰρ πάντων τῶν κακῶν ἐστὶν ἡ φιλαργυρία, ἧς τινες ὀρεγόμενοι ἀπεπλανήθησαν ἀπὸ τῆς πίστεως καὶ ἑαυτοὺς περιέπειραν ὀδύνας πολλὰς.

6 Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; 7 for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; 8 but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. 9 But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

¹⁰¹What I have discovered through living in various parts of the world over the past half century is how dramatically different are the ways of raising financial support for churches. The US is virtually the only country in the world where government support of the churches doesn't come into the picture in some way. Whether that's good or bad can be debated both directions. But the simple reality is that operating churches costs money. And this money has to be raised by some means.

in the appeals made for contributing money. To be sure there were flesh and blood folks back in Jerusalem who did not have enough to eat and wear (cf. τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ, [the poor among the saints in Jerusalem](#), Rom. 15:26). And their needs prompted the contributions of the various Gentile churches. But the driving motivation for contributing and for raising these funds was always the leadership of God working by His grace to prompt believers to contribute (cf. καὶ οὐ καθὼς ἠλπίζαμεν ἀλλ' ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ, [and not only as we expected but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us through the will of God](#), 2 Cor. 8:5). What we give, how it is used, -- every aspect must be prompted and guided by God. Every thing should point πρὸς τὴν αὐτοῦ τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν, [to the glory of the Lord Himself](#) (2 Cor. 8:19).

c) Extreme caution must be taken to keep the process of collecting money fully open and transparent in order to avoid any possibility of improper motives or objectives. When the apostle began the process of collecting the relief offering, several models for how to do it stood in the background. In the Greco-Roman world the model out of the patron - client social pattern was clearly available. But its class oriented structure of aristocrat down to peasant stood in contradiction to Christian principles of equality before God. The notorious example of the sophist itinerant philosopher using fund raising for needy people as a scam to cheat people out of their money had to be avoided at all costs. The Diaspora Jewish collection of the annual temple tax offered a little more positive model but it was packed full of problems for a Christian based project. It was mandatory both in requirement and specification of amounts that had to be contributed. Plus it went to maintain the Jerusalem temple under the control of the arrogant aristocratic Sadducees. It also held out the false claim of earning significant 'browny points' with God. In the Jewish heritage, however, was the deeply ingrained tradition of almsgiving for helping the poor. To be sure, many of the same theological problems with the temple tax spilled over on to the practice of alms in first century Judaism. Plus it was local in focus. Each synagogue community was to take care of its own poor and needy. But the core principle of God's love of the poor and the responsibility of His people to help them in time of need provided the solid religious foundation upon which to build a Christian based fund raising project.

This project, however, needed to be distinctly Christian from top to bottom. Christian principles of integrity and genuine caring prompted by the working of God through Christ needed to guide its structure, appeal, and carrying out. Very importantly the situation of need here meant that Jewish Christians in need back in Jeru-

salem were going to be cared for by largely non-Jewish oriented Christian churches outside Judea. This crossing of ethnic barriers, despised by most Jews, was symbolical of the universal message of salvation in the apostolic Gospel (cf. Rom. 15:27). Paul's preaching had strongly stressed that οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλληνα, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, there is no Jew or Greek, there is no slave or freedman, there is no male or female, for you all are one in Christ (Gal. 3:28). This spiritual principle was no meaningless abstraction! It had functional implications for every aspect of Christian living. The relief offering presented a wonderful occasion to apply this principle in very meaningful fashion.

Consequently everything connected to the project must be done in the open and be completely transparent to all, believers and unbelievers alike. Paul especially as concerned with the integrity of this project, as he wrote to the Corinthians, 20 στελλόμενοι τοῦτο, μή τις ἡμᾶς μωμῆσθαι ἐν τῇ ἀδρότητι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένῃ ὑφ' ἡμῶν· 21 προνοοῦμεν γὰρ καλὰ οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων, 20 *We intend that no one should blame us about this generous gift that we are administering, 21 for we intend to do what is right not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of others.* (2 Cor. 8:20-21).

An important aspect of this integrity was the appointment of church representatives from every contributing congregation by the congregations themselves to travel together to take care of the money that was raised (cf. 2 Cor. 8:18-19; 9:4). These representatives also would collectively present the offering to the Christian leadership in Jerusalem. Afterwards upon returning to their home congregations they would report the details to their own church group. They would be able to verify that everything was carried out properly and as promised by Paul and those working closely with him.

When a church or religious organization sets about raising funds for some project these principles of integrity and openness are absolutely essential. In some ways even more necessary in our world than in Paul's. Modern society is plagued with charitable groups appealing for money to help this or that need. Then large portions are siphoned off to be given to the fund raisers, if not the total amount of what is contributed. TV preachers are for the most part clever con artists after the money of naive viewers. Open and honest reporting of every penny collected and spent is the only Christian approach to fund raising! Paul's example and teaching powerfully underscores this.

d) Religious leaders such as local church pastors must never be directly involved in handling funds collected. The situation with the Corinthians underscores another critically important principle for

modern Christian leaders. Paul felt strongly that his role in the project was to give impetus to it, encourage the churches to contribute, and make sure that the wishes of the churches were faithfully carried out. But he strongly felt it important that he as a Christian leader not be directly involved in the handling of the funds contributed by the churches. He made it very clear to the Corinthians that he had no willingness to directly get involved in the contributing of money by the different house church groups at Corinth. Titus had previously helped them get started on the project about a year before the writing of Second Corinthians (2 Cor. 8:10). Now not only Titus but two other brothers were being sent ahead of Paul to Corinth to assist the church there to have the gathering of the offering completed prior to Paul's arrival with the delegation from the Macedonian churches (2 Cor. 8:6-7, 16-24; 9:4-5). In the beginning of this process the apostle was unsure whether or not he would even go to Jerusalem with the group to deliver the offering (1 Cor. 16:4). By the time of completing the collection at Corinth, it had become clear to him that God intended him to go with the group on to Jerusalem in order to deliver it to the leaders in Jerusalem (Rom. 15:28). By keeping his distance from the handling of the collected funds Paul preserved his integrity and reputation to all that he wasn't after the money of these churches for his own use and purposes.

There is much to be learned by Christian leaders today from Paul's example. *The closer the preacher gets to the money the more likely suspicions about his integrity will arise.* Paul had to deal with such even with keeping his distance (8:20-21). During my years as a local church pastor I never knew what any individual member of my church contributed. And we provided to every member a monthly detailed accounting down to every penny of what was contributed and precisely how it was spent. Consequently the churches never had "money problems," even though they had been troubled with them in their past.

e) The giving of funds by individual believers must always flow out of commitment to God and be guided by God. When a person comes to Christ in conversion, his pocketbook comes along with him. Christ is to be Lord over all in every believer's life. And this includes his / her money as well. Contributing to the support of the Gospel is one way of reflecting that lordship of Christ. We give back to God in acknowledgement of His sovereignty over our lives.

In the Hebrew religion of the Old Testament a tithe, i.e., ten percent, was consistently seen as the starting point of contribution. But as careful analysis of just the Old Testament texts alone will reveal, this was worked out in many different and sometimes contradictory ways. And usually meant more than ten percent in the

final analysis. During the intertestament period of 400 years when Judaism took basic shape and form, the system of contributing money and goods evolved into very complex systems as advocated by different Jewish groups. Even more importantly the motivation shifted from contributing out of gratitude to God to that of seeking 'browny points' of religious merit in the eyes of giving. Jesus' soundly condemns such in Matt. 6:1-4 et als.

It is interesting to watch how studiously the apostle avoids mentioned specific amounts in his discussion. It begins with the principle in 1 Cor. 16:2, κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου ἕκαστος ὑμῶν *παρ' ἑαυτῶ* τιθέτω *θησαυρίζων* ὅ τι ἐὰν εὐοδῶται, ἵνα μὴ ὅταν ἔλθω τότε λογεῖται γίνωνται, *On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come.* In 2 Cor. 8:12, a similar principle is expressed: εἰ γὰρ ἡ προθυμία πρόκειται, καθὸ ἐὰν ἔχη εὐπρόσδεκτος, οὐ καθὸ οὐκ ἔχει. *For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has—not according to what one does not have.*

This is amplified around the motif of ἀπλότης in 9:6-15. The challenge here is that the English word 'generosity' is usually used to translate this Greek word. And generosity in English normally implies amount of giving. The core meaning of ἀπλότης is unquestionably sincerity and simplicity all through ancient Greek. Thus ἀπλότης giving for Paul is centered on motivation in giving, not on amount contributed. What Paul had in mind was earlier illustrated by the Macedonian churches in 8:1-7. They gave themselves to the Lord when considering their response to the offering. Then their giving flowed out of their commitment to Christ. It enabled Paul to characterized their contribution as τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δεδομένην ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας, *the grace of God given among the churches of Macedonia* (8:1). What the Macdonians then contributed was in reality the grace of God working in their lives and surfacing in their giving. This determined how much they contributed, rather than some externally set amount.

Christian giving must always be an expression of commitment to God and be guided by His leadership. We are not seeking to please people, or even God, for that matter. Instead, we are seeking to know and obey His leadership over our lives. Then and only then does praise and glory go to God. Others thus see God at work in our lives and recognize who He is. This is authentic Gospel witness at work!

f) *The giving of funds by individual believers must always be voluntary and reflect no coercion from religious leaders.* Another key term in Paul's discussion of the relief offering is ἀυθαίρετοι, the adjective from ἀυθαίρετος, -ον (8:3, 17), translated as *volunteers*.

Further amplification in 8:7-15 stresses γνήσιον from γνήσιος, -α, -ον, *authentic, genuine* (8:8), and ἡ προθυμία, *eagerness* (8:11, 12, 19; 9:2). Paul expressly tells them that he is not commanding them to give to the offering (8:8a): Οὐ κατ' ἐπιταγὴν λέγω, *Not by commandment do I speak.* The very familiar declaration comes in 9:7, ἕκαστος καθὼς προήρηται τῇ καρδίᾳ, μὴ ἐκ λύπης ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης· ἰλαρὸν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός, *Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.* The Corinthians are to contribute to the offering because they genuinely want to participate, and not because they have been coerced into giving by Paul or anyone else.

Here is where extreme caution must be exercised in the modern setting, particularly at the point of making appeals for people to give. The TV con artist preachers of our day are experts at both putting false 'guilt trips' on their viewers as well as for making outrageous promises of what the givers will get back in their giving. For most people, Christians included, money is a sensitive topic. Many look for excuses to not give and unjustified pressure applied in an appeal is just the thing to enable them to walk away from genuine needs and opportunities.

To be sure, the opportunity to give is indeed τὸ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγάπης γνήσιον δοκιμάζων, *validating the genuineness of your love* (8:8b). Paul characterizes the opportunity to give as the chance for believers to prove clearly that they love God and others. He goes on to assert that the standard by which this is measured is Christ's sacrificial love for us (8:9). Giving to help others in need reflects that Jesus' sacrificial love has taken root in our lives as His followers.

This same idea is essentially repeated in 9:13-14, 13 διὰ τῆς δοκιμῆς τῆς διακονίας ταύτης δοξάζοντες τὸν θεὸν ἐπὶ τῇ ὑποταγῇ τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἀπλότητι τῆς κοινωνίας εἰς αὐτοὺς καὶ εἰς πάντας, 14 καὶ αὐτῶν δεήσει ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐπιποθούντων ὑμᾶς διὰ τὴν υπερβάλλουσαν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφ' ὑμῖν, 13 *Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, 14 while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you.* Giving to help others is one of those actions prompted by the lordship of Christ that signals a genuine confession of faith in conversion. One of the inherent aspects of such giving is how beautifully it builds relationships that cross over cultural and ethnic barriers. Paul's depiction is marvelous and in the Jewish / Gentile world of his day miraculous.

What God seeks most of all is a life joyfully and genuinely committed to Him. Such a life He can guide into actions that not only bring glory to His name but

bless the lives of other people profoundly. Giving that comes for any other reason and in any other manner than this is not glorifying of God and is of no real help to other people. God clearly is not accepting of such alterative giving.

Twice in 8:16 and 9:15 Paul bursts forth in doxological praise with Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ, And thanks be to God.... Both occasions surface out of the apostle's excitement over the adoption of proper commitment to participating in the relief offering. Titus was convinced that they had 'gotten their act' together regarding this offering. The depiction of how God desires to work through the giving of His people to help others generates words of praise lifted verbally up to God.

Oh how we in today's world need to understand this kind of giving to the cause of Christ! In over half a century of church involvement and serving in Christian institutions of higher education, I have far too often seen Christian groups miss the mark here severely. But in those isolated instances where they have 'gotten it' right, what a blessing giving money becomes. Truly when Paul was making his way from Corinth to Jerusalem with this offering, he quoted to the Ephesian leaders at Miletus the saying of Jesus (not found in any of the four gospels): πάντα υπέδειξα ὑμῖν ὅτι οὕτως κοπιῶντας δεῖ ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενούντων, μνημονεύειν τε τῶν λόγων τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ὅτι αὐτὸς εἶπεν· μακάριόν ἐστιν μᾶλλον διδόναι ἢ λαμβάνειν. *In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."* The correctness of these words from Christ Paul knew well out of his own experience. Indeed the opportunity for modern Christian groups and individuals to make this same discovery stands before every fund raising effort.