

15.3

Collection for Jerusalem

The “collection for Jerusalem” or “collection for the saints” was an offering gathered by Paul from primarily gentile Christians for Jewish Christians in Jerusalem.

In 1 Corinthians 16:1–2, Paul gives instructions to the Corinthian Christians about this fund. His churches in Galatia (1 Cor. 16:1) and Macedonia (2 Cor. 8:1–5; 9:1–2) had also been urged to make contributions, and the latter, at least, seem to have responded generously (2 Cor. 8:3–5). The Corinthians, while quick to pledge their support, may have been slow to follow through with any gifts (2 Cor. 8:6; 9:1–5). There are hints that opponents of Paul may have caused the Corinthian Christians to suspect Paul’s motives in soliciting their money (2 Cor. 12:14–18).

At least two factors account for the high priority Paul seems to have placed on this project over a several-year period. First, he considered it a needed act of charity (Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:4), perhaps an extension of the relief fund he and Barnabas had delivered to the Jerusalem church on behalf of the Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:27–30). Second, he had committed himself to it as a part of the agreement reached when the Jewish-Christian leaders in Jerusalem approved his mission to the gentiles (Gal. 2:1–10);

therefore, it symbolized the partnership of Jews and gentiles in the gospel.

Little information is available concerning the actual completion and delivery of the collection. For what can be known, see Romans 15:25–31 (cf. Acts 20:24; 24:17; 1 Cor. 16:3–4).