

1 Corinthians 16 - Collection for the Saints; Giving; Paul's Plans for Travel; Final Instructions

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1 Corinthians 16

(7) The collection (16:1-12)

(A) Arrangements for the collection (16:1-4)

1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you are to do as well.

1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also.

1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, you should follow the directions I gave to the churches in Galatia.

1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

- "Now concerning" - *Peri de*, Paul's formula introducing topics mentioned in the letter from Corinth; it indicates that Paul is resuming his responses to issues raised by the Corinthians in their letter to him, which began in 7:1

- "...the collection" - *logeias*, an extra collection; it seems the Corinthians had heard about an additional financial collection that Paul was getting together for the poor (and persecuted) saints in Jerusalem (Cf. Acts 11:27-30; 24:17; Rom 15:26; 2 Cor 8:13; 9:9-12), and the Corinthians wanted to participate.

— James, Peter, and John had encouraged Paul and Barnabas to remember the poor when they were in Jerusalem (Gal 2:10; Cf. Acts 11:27-30)

— Paul's purpose for writing this was to give instructions as to how this collection should be done. It was to be done in the same way as it was being done in the churches of Galatia. However, there is no record of the directions that Paul gave the Galatian churches in any of his surviving epistles.

2 On the **first day of every week, each of you** is to **put aside and save as he may prosper**, so that no collections *need to* be made when I come.

2 On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.

2 After the Sabbath ends, each of you should set aside and save something from your surplus in proportion to what you have, so that no collections will have to be made when I arrive.

2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

- "...first day of the week" - Sunday; from the earliest days of the church, Christians assembled on Sunday to worship, to commemorate the Resurrection (John 10:19,26; Acts 20:7; Rev 1:10). The early church did not meet on the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday) but on Sunday because Jesus was resurrected on Sunday. This distinguished the church from Israel.

- "...each of you" - every believer

- "...put aside and save" - set aside; separate from personal funds for the purpose of giving. Paul's recommendation is: regularly set aside funds now so that you will not need to make a major withdrawal later.

- "...as he may prosper" - Paul doesn't mention anything here about giving proportionally to one's income. He did not provide a formula (i.e. a 10% tithe) for how much to set aside; it was to be in proportion to how the Lord blessed them. The amount was entirely up to the giver (Cf. 2 Cor 9:7).

Our giving should be strict, careful, and systematic. Separate His funds upon arrival (a separate box, checking account, whatever). Keep records. Use the Portfolio Concept: "Need" is not the criteria: evidence that the Lord is in the action is the criteria. You can take it with you: Luke 16:1-13...you can send it on ahead!

3 When I arrive, whomever you approve, I will send them with letters to take your gift to Jerusalem;

3 When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem;

3 When I arrive, I will send letters along with the men you approve to take your gift to Jerusalem.

3 And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.

- Paul planned to send a man from each of the contributing churches (or possibly from each group of churches) to Jerusalem with the "gift"

- Paul was not planning to make the trip himself, so he wanted to guarantee the money would arrive safely, and that people would view the whole project as honest (Cf. 2 Cor 8:21)

4 and if it is appropriate for me to go also, they will go with me.

4 and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me.

4 If it is worthwhile for me to go, too, they can go with me.

4 And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.

- Paul was open to the possibility of going to Jerusalem as part of the group, if this seemed best, as a measure of fiscal responsibility

- After he wrote this epistle, he decided to go (Rom 15:25-26), and indeed went (Acts 20:16,22; 21:17; 24:17)

These few verses, along with 2 Cor 8-9, as well as statements in Phil 4:10-19 and Rom 12:8, provide guidelines for individual Christians and churches in giving. The principles Paul advocated were: saving up for giving should be regular, and giving should be in response to the Lord's material provision. The believers should manage their gifts with integrity. Everything they did should be above reproach and other people should perceive it as such. Notice that Paul made no mention of tithing—here or elsewhere in the NT. Tithing is a method of giving that God prescribed for the Israelites under the Mosaic Law. People commonly practiced tithing as an act of worship in the ancient Near East (Cf. Gen 28:22). It was also a common tax. This is still true in some modern countries. For example, in England a part of every person's taxes goes to maintain the Church of England. Some residents regard this part of their tax as their contribution to the church, or their tithe. The Mosaic Law actually required that the Israelites give back to God about one-third of their incomes. However, Christians are not under the Mosaic Law (Rom 10:4; et al.). It is therefore understandable that neither Jesus Christ, nor the apostles, commanded tithing. Some Christians believe that, because Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek (Gen 14:20), and Jacob tithed (Gen 28:22), tithing thus precedes the Mosaic Law and is therefore binding on Christians. However, *a practice is not the same as a precept*. Moreover, the absence of any reference to tithing in the NT, plus the teaching of other guidelines, strongly suggest that

God wants us to follow a different method. The principles that should govern Christians in our giving appear throughout the NT but mainly in 1 Cor 16, 2 Cor 8-9, and Phil 4.

(B) Future travel plans (16:5-12)

(a) From Paul (16:5-9)

5 But I will come to you after I go through Macedonia; for I am going through Macedonia,

5 But I will come to you after I go through Macedonia, for I am going through Macedonia;

5 I will visit you when I go through Macedonia—for I intend to go through Macedonia—

5 Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia.

- Paul wrote this epistle from Ephesus. His plan was to leave Ephesus, head north, then west to Macedonia (near Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea). He then planned to travel south to Corinth.

— Paul later changed his plan and traveled directly from Ephesus to Corinth (2 Cor 2:1; 12:14; 13:1-2), then returned to Ephesus (Cf. 2 Cor 2:5-8; 7:12). He later visited Macedonia, then Corinth again (2 Cor 2:12-13; 7:6-16).

6 and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way wherever I go.

6 and perhaps I will stay with you, or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way wherever I may go.

6 and will probably stay with you for a while or even spend the winter with you. Then you can send me on my way, wherever I decide to go.

6 And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.

- He ultimately did “spend the winter” in Corinth, but it was the winter after the one when he expected to be there (57-58 AD instead of 56-57 AD, Acts 20:2-3; Rom 16:1,23)

— God’s people should always have their plans subject to God’s will (Acts 18:21; Rom 1:10; 15:32; 1 Cor 4:19; Heb 6:3; James 4:13-15)

7 For I do not want to see you now *just* in passing; for I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits.

7 For I do not wish to see you now *just* in passing; for I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits.

7 I do not want to visit with you now just in passing, because I hope to spend a longer time with you if the Lord permits.

7 For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.

- Paul sensed the need to spend a good long time in Corinth, not just make a "quick visit"

8 But I will remain in Ephesus until **Pentecost**;

8 But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost;

8 However, I'll stay on in Ephesus until Pentecost,

8 But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.

- Paul wrote this epistle from Ephesus, and planned to stay there until Pentecost

- "...Pentecost" - late May or early June; this means that Paul probably wrote this epistle in the spring (56 AD)

9 for a wide **door** for effective *service* has opened to me, and there are many **adversaries**.

9 for a wide door for effective *service* has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

9 because a door has opened wide for me to do effective work, although many people are opposing me.

9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

- "...door" - Paul occasionally used this as a metaphor to describe an opportunity for the gospel (Cf. 2 Cor 2:12; Col 4:3)

— He stayed in Ephesus for three years to take advantage of this opportunity

- "...adversaries" - it's interesting that Paul interpreted effective ministry as that which was being opposed. Many believers think opposition is God closing a door, but Paul said it meant God was opening a "wide door." He did not regard "adversaries" as an indication of a closed door, or a sign that God wanted him to move somewhere else.

— Paul described these adversaries as "wild beasts" (15:32). Acts 19:1-22 describes how great Paul's victories were in Ephesus; Acts 19:23ff describes the tenacity of his adversaries at Ephesus.

— Paul knew that when unbelievers are converting or growing in their faith at a rapid rate, it is alarming to Satan who begins to try to block evangelism (Cf. 2 Cor 4:4) and persecute believers

(b) From Timothy (16:10-11)

10 Now if Timothy comes, see that he has no reason to be afraid *while* among you, for he is **doing the Lord's work**, as I also am.

10 Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid, for he is doing the Lord's work, as I also am.

10 If Timothy comes, see to it that he does not have anything to be afraid of while he is with you, for he is doing the Lord's work as I am.

10 Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do.

- Paul spoke earlier (4:17) of sending Timothy to Corinth. Timothy, accompanied by Erastus, was en route to Corinth but went first to Macedonia (Acts 19:22). This letter would precede Timothy's arrival in Corinth.

— Paul is aware of Timothy's timid disposition (2 Tim 1:7) and his youth (1 Tim 4:12), so he advised the Corinthians, who judged by external appearances, to give Timothy the respect he deserved for doing the Lord's work.

- "...doing the Lord's work" - active in the ministry of the Word and prayer on behalf of believers (Cf. Acts 6:4)

11 So do not look down on him, anyone. But send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brothers.

11 So let no one despise him. But send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brethren.

11 Therefore, no one should treat him with contempt. Send him on his way in peace so that he may come to me, because I am expecting him along with the brothers.

11 Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.

- It may have been Timothy's report of conditions in Corinth, when he returned to Ephesus, that moved Paul to go directly to Corinth himself, rather than waiting until he had visited Macedonia

— Paul later referred to this visit as "painful" because while in Corinth he encountered strong opposition (Cf. 2 Cor 2:1-8; 7:12; 12:14; 13:1-2)

(c) From Apollos (16:12)

12 Now concerning our brother **Apollos**, I strongly encouraged him to come to you with the brothers; and it was not at all *his* desire to come now, but he will come when he has the opportunity.

12 But concerning Apollos our brother, I encouraged him greatly to come to you with the brethren; and it was not at all *his* desire to come now, but he will come when he has opportunity.

12 Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers, but he was not inclined to do so just now. However, he will visit you when the time is right.

12 As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.

- "Now concerning" - *Peri de*, last occurrence in this epistle

- "...Apollos" - means "destroyer"; one of the men who went to Corinth after Paul's initial visit. Paul planted the church in Corinth, Apollos watered it, but God was causing the growth (Cf. 3:6).

— He was very learned and mighty in the Scriptures (Cf. Acts 18:24-28) to such an extent that some of the Corinthians had created an Apollos faction because of his teaching ability (Cf. 1:13)

— We do not know why Apollos did not want to revisit Corinth with Timothy, or whether he ever did visit that city again, but Paul assured them that he would come when he had an opportunity

IV. Conclusion (1 Cor 16:13-24)

(1) Exhortation (16:13-18)

13 Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.

13 Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.

13 Remain alert. Keep standing firm in your faith. Keep on being courageous and strong.

13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

- Like a drill sergeant, Paul gives short orders in rapid succession, with expectancy of obedience...

- "Be on the alert" - *grēgoreō*, be on your guard; implies a determined effort at wakefulness. The problems in Corinth stemmed from pagan influences in the church, so Paul exhorted them to be on guard (Cf. Acts 20:31).

- "...stand firm" - *stēkō*, some Corinthians did not believe in the resurrection (15:1-12), so after correcting that notion, Paul exhorted them to be "steadfast" and "immovable" regarding this doctrine (Cf. 15:58).

— Now he exhorts them to "stand firm" in the faith, which he expected most of the Corinthians were doing

- "...act like men" - *andrizomai*, has the notion of being brave, with the likely application of requiring them to do something about (separate from) overt sin and sexual immorality within the church (i.e. incest, 5:1-13). This is a call to bravery and maturity, especially in the face of heavy pagan and worldly influences.

- "...be strong" - *krataioō*, they should "increase in strength" in the Lord rather than be weak in the faith

— All verbs in these two verses are present imperative: not momentary or one-time actions, but of continuing states of obedience

14 All that you do must be done in love.

14 Let all that you do be done in love.

14 Everything you do should be done lovingly.

14 Let all your things be done with charity.

- This was the greatest need of the Corinthian church (Cf. 1 Cor 13); Paul exhorted the Corinthians to have agapē love as the foundation and motivation for everything they did — Love is the most important command we are given to follow. Christians should be known for their love (Cf. John 13:34-35; Gal 5:13-14; 6:9-10; 1 Thess 4:9-12; Eph 5:1-2)

15 Now I **urge** you, brothers *and sisters*: you know the household of Stephanas, that they are the **first fruits** of **Achaia**, and that they have devoted themselves to ministry to the **saints**;

15 Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints),

15 Now I urge you, brothers—for you know that the members of the family of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to serving the saints—

15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)

- "...urge" - *parakaleō*, less than a command but more than a suggestion; a strong appeal (v16)

- "...first fruits" - the household of Stephanas were the first responders to Paul's preaching of the gospel, and one of the only households he baptized at Corinth (Cf. 1:16)

- "...Achaia" - the province where Corinth was located

- "...saints" - even though the Corinthians were worldly, Paul considered them saints (Cf. 1:2)

— Because they were saints, they should subject themselves to their church leaders (Cf. 1 Thess 5:12-13; Heb 13:17) and "to everyone who helps in the work and labors" (v16) of the ministry

16 I *urge* that you also **besubjectto** such as these and to everyone who helps in the work and labors.

16 that you also be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors.

16 to submit yourselves to people like these and to anyone else who shares their labor and hard work.

16 That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.

- "...be subject to" - *hypotassō*, place oneself subordinate to; to arrange under; to submit to their governing authority

— There are plenty of ministers and pastors within the church today who are not gifted teachers nor are fit to be in ministry. However, that doesn't mean that all of them are corrupt or inept in the Word. God has given gifted teachers to the church in every generation and they should be sought out and submitted to since they labor in the Word.

17 I rejoice over the coming of **Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus**, because they have **supplied what was lacking** on your part.

17 I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have supplied what was lacking on your part.

17 I am glad that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus came here, because what was lacking they have supplied through you.

17 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.

- "...Stephanas" - means "crowned"; perhaps the same Stephanas as in v15

- "...Fortunatus" - means "prosperous"

- "...Achaicus" - means "belonging to Achaia"; "Achaia" means "trouble" or "wailing"

- "...supplied what was lacking" - these three men had supplied a financial gift for Paul, which was lacking from the Corinthians (Cf. 9:11ff)

18 For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men.

18 For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men.

18 They refreshed my spirit—and yours, too. Therefore, appreciate men like that.

18 For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.

- Their gift and their fellowship with Paul "refreshed" his spirit (Cf. Philemon 7,20)

(2) Greeting and benediction (16:19-24)

19 The **churches of Asia** greet you. **Aquila and Prisca** greet you heartily in the Lord, with **the church that is in their house**.

19 The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

19 The churches in Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca and the church in their house greet you warmly in union with the Lord.

19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

- "...churches of Asia" - included the seven churches of Rev 2-3, as well as Colossae

— Several churches were planted while Paul used Ephesus as his base of operations (Cf. Acts 19:10)

- "...Aquila and Prisca" - Jewish believers from Rome who had been expelled by Claudias in 49-50 AD. They settled in Corinth as tentmakers. When Paul first came to Corinth he lived and worked with them (Acts 18:1-3).
- "...the church that is in their house" - the early church met in homes (Acts 20:20) spread throughout larger cities

Students of Paul became founding pastors in the western part of Asia Minor:

- Epaphras: Colosse, Laodicea, & Hierapolis (Col 4:12-13)
- Tychicus: Colosse & Ephesus (Acts 20:4; Col 4:7; Eph 6:21)
- Philemon & Archippus: Colosse (Philemon 1-2)
- Trophimus: Ephesus

20 All the brothers *and sisters* greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

20 All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

20 All the brothers greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

20 All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.

- Paul frequently suggested a holy kiss (Rom 16:16; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26; Cf. 1 Peter 5:14). A warm greeting dissolves cliquishness.

— It demonstrated a family bond, and was expressed between members of both sexes

21 The greeting is in my own hand—*that* of Paul.

21 The greeting is in my own hand—Paul.

21 I, Paul, am writing this greeting with my own hand.

21 The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.

- Paul learned a lesson from the forgery he responded to in 2 Thess 3:17 (Cf. also Gal 6:11; Col 4:18)

— Many of Paul's epistles were dictated by Paul but actually written down by an amanuensis (Cf. Rom 16:22)

22 If anyone does not **love** the Lord, he is to be **accursed**. **Maranatha!**

22 If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha.

22 If anyone doesn't love the Lord, let him be anathema! Maranatha!

22 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.

- "...love" - *phileo*, brotherly love. Paul usually used *agape* for "love" (except Titus 3:15); this may have been a saying believers used in congregational worship.

- "...accursed" - *anathema*, to be put under the ban and reserved for God's judgment (divine discipline, Cf. Gal 1:8-9)

- "...Maranatha!" - English transliteration of two Greek words that express an Aramaic formula; means "Our Lord, come."

— Probably an imperative similar to Rev 22:20; implies the imminence of the Rapture; see [Doctrine of Imminency](#).

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

23 May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you!

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

24 My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

24 My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

24 May my love remain with all of you in union with the Messiah Jesus.

24 My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.