

Exegetical Notes – 1 Corinthians 16:5-23

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen for Cornerstone Fellowship

101 Kyllies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320

610-384-1375

charleshjensen@aol.com

1 Corinthians 16:5-23

Verses 5-9

After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you—for I will be going through Macedonia. ⁶ Perhaps I will stay with you for a while, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. ⁷ For I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. ⁸ But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹ because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

- Paul was in Ephesus when he wrote 1 Corinthians. His plan was to remain there until after Pentecost because there was a “door opened for effective work” there.
- After Pentecost, he planned to travel into Greece to visit the churches there. On his way to Macedonia, he planned to visit the Corinthians. He did not want to make a quick visit to Corinth but hoped to stay with them for some time, perhaps the entire winter.
- Paul ran into opposition in his work from “many” people. This opposition did not discourage him, nor did it turn him away from the opportunity he had in Ephesus.

Verses 10-11

¹⁰ When Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am. ¹¹ No one, then, should treat him with contempt. Send him on his way in peace so that he may return to me. I am expecting him along with the brothers.

- The books of 1 & 2 Timothy were written by Paul to guide this younger man as he began his ministry. Paul regarded Timothy as his son in the Lord.
- Paul was concerned that the Corinthians might not receive Timothy in the way that they should. So, he tells them not to mistreat Timothy by showing him contempt.

- When Timothy leaves Corinth, he will return to Paul.
- We do not know who “the brothers” are. Apparently, they are a group of men who are really brothers or who are called “the brothers.” They will join Timothy when he leaves Corinth and comes to Paul.

Verse 12

¹² Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity.

- Paul urged Apollos to go to Corinth when “the brothers” went there, but he was unwilling to go there. Apollos is mentioned in chapter 3 when Paul is discussing divisions in the Corinthian church. It may be that Apollos’ refusal to go to Corinth, against Paul’s urging, was related to this matter.
- Apparently, Apollos’ absence had caused the Corinthians to ask about him.

Verses 13-14

¹³ Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. ¹⁴ Do everything in love.

- This is Paul’s final exhortation to the Corinthians in this letter. They must not waver in their faith and in their devotion to Jesus. They must stand firm, be courageous, and strong.
- However, they must also be loving (see 1 Corinthians 13).

Verses 15-18

¹⁵ You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the Lord’s people. I urge you, brothers and sisters, ¹⁶ to submit to such people and to everyone who joins in the work and labors at it. ¹⁷ I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. ¹⁸ For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition.

- Stephanas and all the members of his household were baptized by Paul. Stephanas was an early convert to Christianity. His name is mentioned here and in 1 Corinthians 1:16. Apart from this, we know nothing more about him.
- Paul urges the Corinthians to follow men who, like Stephanas, are devoted to the Lord and work hard in Christ’s service.
- Stephanas was, apparently, one of the men who brought Paul the questions from the Corinthian church. They refreshed Paul’s spirit because they

brought news that the Corinthians were still seeking to know his opinion in matters of faith and practice.

Verses 19-20

¹⁹ The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house. ²⁰ All the brothers and sisters here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

- This is the formal conclusion to the letter. Paul sends greetings to the Corinthians from other churches and church leaders.
- It was the custom in the early Church for Christians to greet each other with a kiss. Men kissed men and women kissed women. Men did not kiss women. It was a form of greeting which Paul encouraged. Some Christian denominations still practice this form of greeting today.

Verses 21-23

²¹ I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand.

²² If anyone does not love the Lord, let that person be cursed! Come, Lord!

²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

- This is Paul's personal conclusion to the letter.
- The letter proper was dictated. So, it was not written in Paul's own handwriting. This portion IS in Paul's own hand. It shows that he knows about and approves of all that was written above.
- He calls down God's curse against those who reject the Gospel. This seems harsh to us, but perhaps Paul hopes that living without God's grace will cause those so cursed to want God's blessing and so accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- "Come, Lord" was a prayer offered in the early Church for the quick return of the Lord. The return of Jesus is still our hope, and we should pray for it to happen. Instead of saying "goodbye," early Christians said these words when parting. It was a prayer that Christ would come back soon.
- Paul blesses the Corinthians by calling Jesus' grace to be with them.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon based on 1 Corinthians 16:5-23. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. All rights are reserved by Cornerstone Fellowship & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)