

1 CORINTHIANS 16.5-24

Closing Words

VSS. 5-9, PAUL'S PLANS.

1. Paul's plans as outlined in this passage seem to be exactly what happened. When he left Ephesus he went through Macedonia (likely visiting the saints at Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea) before arriving in Achaia, where he stayed approximately 3 months. See Acts 20:1-3.
2. Before Paul arrived in Achaia he wrote a second letter to the Corinthians, apparently from Macedonia. There we see Paul's anxiety as he awaited word from Titus regarding the Corinthians' reception of his first letter (see 2Cor. 2.12-13; 7.5-7).
3. Note that Paul hopes they could "send me on my way" in vs. 6. "The verb "help me on my journey" is a technical one for providing a person with food, money, and traveling companions so as to ensure a safe and successful arrival at his or her destination. It seems to be a key means of Christian hospitality in antiquity. In light of the tensions over his refusal to accept monetary support while among them (see on chap. 9), this has all the earmarks of being a peace offering on this matter. Although he has refused to take money while with them so that his gospel might be offered "free of charge," he now offers them the opportunity to assist him on his further journeys, so that in this way they, too, can have a share in his ministry." (Gordon Fee)

VSS. 10-11, REGARDING TIMOTHY.

1. Timothy had earlier been sent to Macedonia (Acts 19.22) and then on to Corinth (see 1Cor. 4.17).
2. Timothy would "remind you of my ways which are in Christ," (4.17), which given what we know of in Corinth could have led to hostility toward him. Thus, Paul's exhortation that they receive him in a brotherly manner.



VS. 12, REGARDING APOLLOS.

1. Recall that one of the main issues in Corinth was division, with various parties forming around the names of specific teachers (see 1.11-12).
2. Paul's words here show the absolute harmony between the two teachers, something also seen in his earlier appraisal of their work (3.5-9).
3. It's possible that Apollos' reluctance was related to how the Corinthians had used his name for one of their divisive parties.

VSS. 13-14, EXHORTATION

1. Given the prevalence of false doctrine and practice in Corinth, culminating in false teachings regarding the resurrection (15.12), it is not surprising that the first part of Paul's exhortation appealed to them to stand firm, to act like men and be strong. The doctrine that had been given to them needed to be adhered to (4.17; 15.1-2).
2. But the exhortation concluded with an appeal that everything they do be done in love (see chapter 13).
3. Thus we see that the right things should be done, but in the right way. There should be no tension between those two concepts.

VSS. 15-18, REGARDING HOUSEHOLD OF STEPHANUS

1. This household was baptized by Paul (see 1.16). This family “did not assume a place of leadership or prominence, but one of lowly service.” (Leon Morris).
2. Such servants make good leaders, so the saints at Corinth would do well to submit to them (see also 1Thess 5.12-13).

VSS. 19-20, GREETINGS.

1. Paul had spent over 2 years at Ephesus, during which time “all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord,” (Acts 19.10). Thus, there were by this time several churches in Asia.
2. Aquila and Prisca had labored with Paul in Corinth (Acts 18.1-4), but they had travelled to Ephesus with Paul at the conclusion of the second missionary journey (Acts 18.18-21).

VSS. 21-24, PERSONAL REMARKS.

1. Paul does not define those that do “not love the Lord” (vs. 22), but given all that he has addressed in this letter it is likely that Paul has in mind those who would persist in their divisive ways and reject his teachings.
2. Maranatha: Aramaic for “Come, O Lord!”
 - » Paul had earlier exhorted the Christians to eagerly await the Lord’s coming (see 1:7).
 - » The coming of the Lord is when He will set all things right. God’s people long for that day! Rev. 22:20.
3. Finally, note that Paul concludes his letter by saying, “my love be with you all in Christ Jesus.” He had some tough things to say to these saints, but it was all said for their benefit, all said out of love (see 1Cor. 13).