

Paul did not run from Ephesus because there were those who lined up against him. Opposition was no cause for him to believe his work was done. He acknowledged and was persuaded that it was all part of the "good fight of faith" (2 Tim. 4:7).

b. Thru Macedonia v. 5. Some disdain a servant of God when he modifies his plans. Here is an example of an apostle who modified his plans! apparently he had intended to make a brief stop at Corinth enroute to Macedonia, but this did not eventuate. He finally decided to defer his trip so that he could spend more time with the Corinthians (vv. 6, 7). It is interesting to note that in Macedonia he apparently "passed through" the region which means he travelled extensively.

c. To Corinth. vv. 6, 7. The opening words of v. 6 show that Paul had some uncertainty about his visit: "it may be." This he changes to more familiar words to us: "if the Lord permit" (v. 7). There is always a divine contingency on plans which we set down (cf. 4:19 and see Acts 16:6, 7). Those who make out the will of God as something unalterably known to man are hard pressed with texts like these. Infallibility has never found a residence in humanity, save in the Son of Man! Through the interchange of two Greek verbs, Paul shows that he will be "fixed" at Corinth ("abide" in v. 6) and "stay" there a determined time ("tarry" in v. 7). This turned out to be 3 months in which he gave himself unreservedly to the assembly to clear up the problems which were there (Acts 20:3). He gave them the full benefit of his ministry and did not travel around as it had been his lot in Macedonia (v. 5).

Conclusion Purposeful visiting is worthy of every child of God. The assembly at Corinth received dynamic contacts with men of God. How they must have cherished these in the light of eternity. May the Lord move us to make our associations with the saints profitable. Amen.

THE BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS
"Visits To Corinth"
1 Cor. 16:5-12

Introduction

1. There are many personal notations which the Spirit of God has included in the Scriptures. These are not designed to pamper the flesh, but to give instruction for the man of God (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

2. There are three outstanding men who are treated here in connection with visits to the assembly at Corinth. Each one has his own place to fill in the labour of the Gospel at Corinth. How God arranges to complement His servants one with another!

3. Study these visits and the matters associated with them. Your soul will profit from the lessons presented.

1. THE VISIT OF APOLLOS, A BROTHER. v. 12.

a. His relation. He is called a "brother" and this means so much in the context of the Corinthian problems. It was requested in the Corinthian letter sent to Paul that Apollos be sent in view of the Greek construction "as touching." This fluent and eloquent preacher (cf. Acts 18:24ff) found himself an object of the conflict at Corinth (1:12). Paul shows great love for him by using this endearing term. If only we could remember that we are brothers in the Lord!

b. His invitation. Clearly Paul notes that he did all within his power to get Apollos to go to Corinth. The verb "desired" really is the term for exhort or beseech. It is the root from which the term Paraclete comes in reference to the Holy Spirit. He "called alongside" of Apollos in this matter!

c. His intention. The Greek shows that Apollos "absolutely" did not will to come at this time. It was not that he did not have the ability, but it was a matter of his will. Apparently he was disgusted to be set down as a rival to Paul.

Notwithstanding all that Paul may have said, Apollos refused. He felt that the present ferment of the assembly was not good for him. He had had enough of partisan strife over preachers! At a "convenient time" (a good opportunity) he would go, but not now.

NOTE: Apollos stands as an example of one of the brethren equipped of God for ministry who refused to get embroiled in petty strife. He knew his role in the spread of the Gospel and sought to maintain it as a "brother."

2. THE VISIT OF TIMOTHY, A SON. vv. 10, 11.

a. His coming. It is clear from the Word that Timothy was a "son" to Paul in the faith (cf. 1 Tim. 1:2). He was sent by Paul with Erastus from Ephesus via Macedonia to Corinth (Acts 19:22). Although Paul was not an archbishop exercising authority over a group of subordinates, it is clear that he exercised certain directives in the early church and over certain of the brethren. Timothy was one of them. Paul was not certain when Timothy would arrive as the subjunctive mode of the verb indicates.

b. His working. Not all who worked with Paul were given accolades. Timothy, however, was a young man who served the Lord with Paul who warranted highest eulogies (cf. Phil. 2:19-21). Here Paul exhorts the Corinthians to allow him as a neophyte to minister to them without fear. Timothy was naturally timid (2 Tim. 1:6, 7). The temper of the Corinthian church could easily bring discouragement. Paul trusts that regard for Timothy as an emissary of Paul and the Lord will restrain them. The highest complement Paul could pay Timothy is that he worked the work of the Lord just as Paul did! If any single verse in the Bible puts the lie to modern thinking on independence, it is this one. Today's world thinks it is a virtue if you can find yourself in conflict with the preacher so that you demonstrate your independent thinking. Nothing is further from the truth. Timothy had learned his lessons well (2 Tim. 2:2; Heb. 13:17). We need that sort of arrangement in the house of God because it is Scripture and nothing more! In view of all of

this, Paul urges the Corinthians not to treat Timothy with contempt. This is a strong word and urged upon Timothy also (1 Tim. 4:12).

c. His going. Paul gave Timothy a hard assignment (4:17). Apparently Paul felt that if Timothy did reinforce the saints in the manner he had already instructed them, a rupture was very likely. It is learned later (2 Cor. 2) that this is exactly what did take place. Some just will not heed the Word of God. Nonetheless, Paul urges the assembly to send him on his journey and provide for that journey (cf. v. 6). It was all to be done in peace (not pieces!) and therefore voluntarily.

NOTE: Here is a striking illustration of a son in the faith to an apostle. The gracious and tender fashion with which Paul arranges for this messenger of his is exemplary indeed. It provides a lesson on the way and authority with which true servants of God operate and the manner in which they are to be treated.

3. THE VISIT OF PAUL, AN APOSTLE.

a. From Ephesus. Paul is apparently writing his letter from Ephesus (v. 19). He intends to stay there till Pentecost (v. 8). Paul was mindful of the feasts of the Lord which would provide him an excellent opportunity to witness. His intent to stay on at Ephesus is linked with the great opportunities afforded him (v. 9). The perfect tense for "opened" shows that here is a door which stood opened (cf. Col. 4:3; Acts 14:27). It was a wide door, for it was great and not small. It was effectual and therefore full of energy and not in any wise impotent (cf. Phil. 6; Heb. 14:12 for same word). The door was a personalized one for it was "unto me." He entered this opened door for three years (Acts 20:31). His final hours with the saints of Ephesus were spent in spiritual charges for defense in the Gospel and affectionate tears (Acts 20:17-38). The Greek for "adversaries" is the root meaning to "lie opposed to one."