

As Paul winds down this epistle to the Corinthians, he addresses some final details concerning his eventual return to the church and the collections that were being made for the suffering saints in Jerusalem. Paul extends to them the greetings from other churches and the various people who have worked with him in the ministry. He then closes with a hand-written expression of his love for them.

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

“Now concerning the collection for the saints” – Paul is likely speaking of the saints at Jerusalem that were suffering hardship because of a famine predicted by a Jewish prophet that had come to Antioch (**Acts 11:28** “*And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar*”). Paul had arranged for collections to be made in the churches to help the saints at Jerusalem (v. 3).

“as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye” – Paul was giving the same instructions to the Corinthian church as he had to the churches in Galatia.

“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him” – Paul’s instructions to the churches was for them to take up the collection each Sunday until he could arrive and make arrangements for the money to be taken to Jerusalem.

“that there be no gatherings when I come” – Paul is thinking practically and perhaps to make the collection of money easier for the Corinthians. Rather than expecting the Corinthians to take a last minute collection and forcing the people to make lump-sum contributions, they were allowed to bring their gifts on a weekly incremental basis, which would be easier on the less wealthy members.

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

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

“And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality [grace; kindness] unto Jerusalem” – Once Paul arrived to accept the collected funds, he would send their gracious gift to Jerusalem in the possession of the whoever the Corinthians chose to send along with letters of recommendation. No doubt Paul wanted the Corinthians to be assured that the money would go where it was intended in the custody of their own people. They did not have to merely trust that Paul was not a thief that might disappear with the money.

“And if it be meet [fitting; appropriate] that I go also, they shall go with me” – Paul made no assumption that he would accompany the money to Jerusalem. If the circumstances made it appropriate for him to go, then Paul would lead the men that the Corinthians were sending to deliver the collection to the church in Jerusalem.

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

“Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia” – In Paul’s day the peninsula that is modern day Greece was divided into two regions. The northern region was Macedonia and the southern region was Achaia, where Corinth was located. Paul was planning to pass through Macedonia, likely to revisit the churches he had started in the region as well as seeking new evangelistic opportunities. It was his hope that his circumstances would allow him to return to Corinth after passing through Macedonia.

“And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you” – Winter was a difficult time to travel and so Paul mentions the possibility of spending the winter at Corinth before continuing his journey. This would give him opportunity to fellowship with the Corinthians and minister to them while he was there.

“that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go” – Paul anticipated that the Corinthians would want to supply him with whatever he needed to continue his journey when it came time to leave and perhaps even accompany him part of the way.

7 For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit. 8 But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. 9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

“For I will [to intend] not see you now by the way” – Paul’s intention was not to pass through Corinth on his way to Macedonia. Apparently the logistics and/or timing were not favorable for him to stay with them as long as he would like.

“but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit” – Paul anticipated that if he returned to Corinth after his journey through Macedonia then he would be able to stay with them for a while, although he knew that his plans depended on whether or not it was in the Lord’s will.

“But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost [the fiftieth day]” – Paul was apparently writing this epistle while he was at Ephesus and was planning on remaining there until time for him to travel to Jerusalem for the celebration of Pentecost. Pentecost took its name from the fact that it was 50 days after Passover. It was also known as the Feast of Weeks because it was seven weeks after Passover.

“For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries” – Being an important Jewish holiday, Jerusalem would be full of pilgrims that had come to celebrate Pentecost. Paul saw this as “a great door and effectual” (i.e. a great opportunity) for him to spread the gospel because of the larger than normal numbers of people in Jerusalem for him to preach to. Paul recognized that there would also be many who would be adversaries because they would resist and even actively fight against the preaching of the gospel.

Verses 10-18: Paul instructs the Corinthians to welcome Timothy if he should stop by the city on his way back to rejoin Paul. Paul then mentions that he had wanted Apollos to visit Corinth but Apollos promised to visit at a later time if possible. Paul also asks the Corinthians to cooperate with his coworkers in the gospel, men such as Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus, who were helpful to Paul in the ministry and also in supplying his needs.

19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. 20 All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.

“The churches of Asia salute you” – The region of Asia refers to the western end of what is now known as Asia Minor and is now occupied by the nation of Turkey. Cities like Ephesus and Colossae were located in Asia and Paul is passing the greetings from the churches in these and other cities of the region to the Corinthian church.

“Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house” – Paul had already presented the greetings from the churches of Asia as a group, but now extends the greetings by name from a husband and wife and the church that they led in their house. Apparently the reason he mentions them by name is because the Corinthians were familiar with Aquila and Priscilla and that the couple were sending enthusiastic greetings (“salute you much”). Aquila and Priscilla were living in Corinth when Paul first arrived in the city. Since he shared the occupation of tent making with Aquila and Priscilla, Paul stayed and worked with them while he was in Corinth in order to support himself (Acts 18:1-3). After ministering to the believers in Corinth for some 18 months, he left Corinth and came to Ephesus, accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:18-19). Paul did not stay long in Ephesus but Aquila and Priscilla remained there after Paul left. They were still in Ephesus when Apollos came to the city preaching and they took him aside to explain “the way of God more perfectly” (Acts 18:24-26). The fact that Paul sends the greeting of Aquila and Priscilla is another evidence that he was writing this epistle from Ephesus.

“All the brethren greet you” – Apparently this covers everyone not already covered by the list in v. 19. This may include those in the Ephesian church and/or Paul’s ministry partners that were traveling with him from city to city.

“Greet ye one another with an holy kiss” – Paul encourages love and fellowship between the believers in the Corinthian church.

21 The salutation of *me* Paul with mine own hand.

Paul’s usual practice was to dictate his epistles to another person who did the actual handwriting onto parchment. However, to show that the document was genuine, he would write his final salutation himself. Paul explained this to the Thessalonians because they had apparently received counterfeit letters supposedly from Paul that stated that the tribulation period had already started. Thus, he hand-signed that epistle with the statement that this was the “token” or sign that an epistle was written by him (**2 Th. 3:17** “*The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write*”). It appears that Paul personally hand-wrote vs. 21-23.

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

This verse ends with two words that the KJV translators chose not to translate into English. The word “anathema” means “to be accursed or doomed to destruction.” The word “Maranatha” is of Aramaic origin meaning “our Lord is coming.” Likely Paul intended these two words to be in different sentences due to the contrast in their meanings. Paul seems to be saying that anyone who does not love Jesus Christ is doomed for destruction (“Anathema”). He then follows it up with the (possibly celebratory) statement that the Lord is coming again (“Maranatha”). Paul may be saying that these people are doomed because the Lord is coming and their time is running out.

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. 24 My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you” – Paul’s desire and prayer is that the Corinthians would be blessed by the grace shown by the Lord Jesus Christ through His death on the cross.

“My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen” – Paul uses his final handwritten words in this epistle to express his love for them.