

Sunday, August 5, 2018—I Corinthians 16:5-11 Here & There: The Travel Plans of Paul and Timothy

### **I Corinthians 16:5-10**

- Verse 5—we already know from previous studies that Paul was in Ephesus in Acts 19 when he wrote I Corinthians.
  - I Corinthians 16:8
- In verse 5, Paul begins to layout for the Corinthians his tentative travel itinerary.
  - Acts 19:21
- After leaving Ephesus, Paul intends to travel into Macedonia before visiting the Corinthians in Achaia. Why?
  - Romans 15:25-27—recall that the saints in Macedonia were also taking up a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem.
  - II Corinthians 8:1-6
- Verse 6—note the flexibility of the language in verse 6, “and it may be.” Paul’s plans are subject to change depending upon the circumstances. If Paul comes, he expresses a desire to “winter” with them i.e., stay for an extended period.
- Verse 7—Paul did not want to just stop in on his way to somewhere else. Rather he wanted to “tarry a while” with the Corinthians. As far as I can tell, there is no clear evidenced that Paul ever made it to Corinth again.
  - Acts 20:1-3—after traveling through Macedonia, Paul spent 3 months in Greece. It is unclear, however, if this time was spent in Corinth or some other Greek city.
  - II Corinthians 1:15-24—it seems to me that Paul never made it to Corinth a second time. It may very well be that his inability to return unto them was the impetus for the writing of II Corinthians. Instead of instructing them in person Paul wrote them an epistle providing further instruction and edification.
- Verse 8—once again makes it clear that Paul was in Ephesus when he wrote I Corinthians.
  - Acts 19:10, 22; Acts 20:31—two years (Acts 19:10) plus the season (Acts 19:22) equaled 3 years total in Ephesus (Acts 20:31).
- Verse 9—Paul stayed in Ephesus (Asia) for a long time because he was having fruitful and profitable ministry there despite the abundance of adversaries.

- I Corinthians 15:32
- Acts 19:23-41
- II Corinthians 1:8-9

### **I Corinthians 16:10-11**

- Verse 10—the condition “if” is followed by the verb “come” which is in the subjunctive mood. Paul is not saying that Timothy will come unto them as a matter of fact. Rather, Paul is saying “if” perchance Timothy came unto them this is how the Corinthians are to receive and treat him.
  - Acts 18:5—it is important to note that the Corinthians already knew how Timothy was.
- I Corinthians 4:17—Paul explains that he has sent Timothy unto the Corinthians. From that passage alone, however, we cannot tell whether he has sent him *before* the letter or *with* it, in which case the language of “sending” would be in anticipation of the act.
- I Corinthians 16:10-11—makes it plain that Paul had sent Timothy before writing the letter, as he speaks of Timothy’s arrival as something independent from their receipt of the letter itself.
- “But the comparison of these two passages raises an interesting question. If Timothy had been sent first, why should he not arrive first? And if he arrived first, what use would it be to send, after the fact, instructions on how they were to receive him?”

The only plausible resolution is that Timothy, though sent first, must have taken some indirect route to Corinth. The fastest method of travel from Ephesus, where Paul was writing, to Corinth would be to take a ship; with a fair wind, the journey between these two cities on opposite sides of the archipelago can be made in a very short time.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 6](#))

- Acts 19:21-22—“we discover that Timothy, when he left Ephesus, took the land route, and went up through Macedonia. Here once again we have the characteristic of undesigned coincidences that neither the historical account nor the letters could plausibly be said to have been written up from the other. The letter does not mention Timothy’s journey through Macedonia at all; the book of Acts does not mention Paul’s letter. But what we find in the book of Acts is the only plausible way of reconciling those stray comments Paul makes in the letter.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 6](#))
- II Corinthians 1:1—Paul includes Timothy in his greeting.