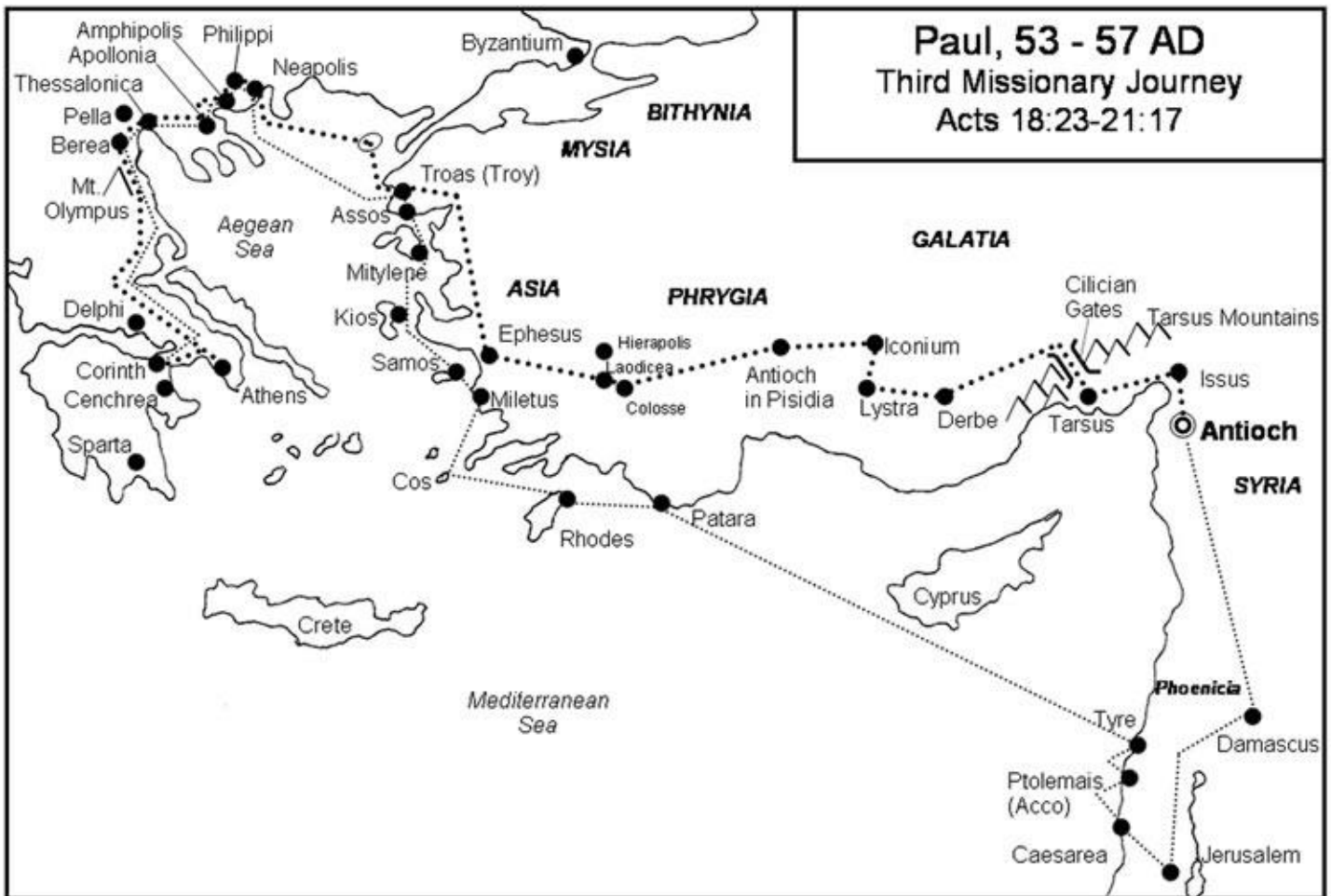


First Corinthians 16

16:1 – “Now about” is “*peri de*” and begins the fifth of Paul’s responses to questions in a letter brought to him by the delegation from Corinth. Paul’s response to these issues began in 7:1, “Now about matters that you wrote about.”

1. 7:1 – Marriage
2. 7:25 – “Now about virgins”
3. 8:1 – “Now about food sacrificed to idols”
4. 12:1 – Now about spiritual gifts”
5. (15:1 – Paul corrects their deviant doctrine of resurrection
6. 16:1 – “Now about the collection for God’s people”
7. 16:12 – “Now about Apollos”



Timeline

53 AD – Paul left Antioch, Syria

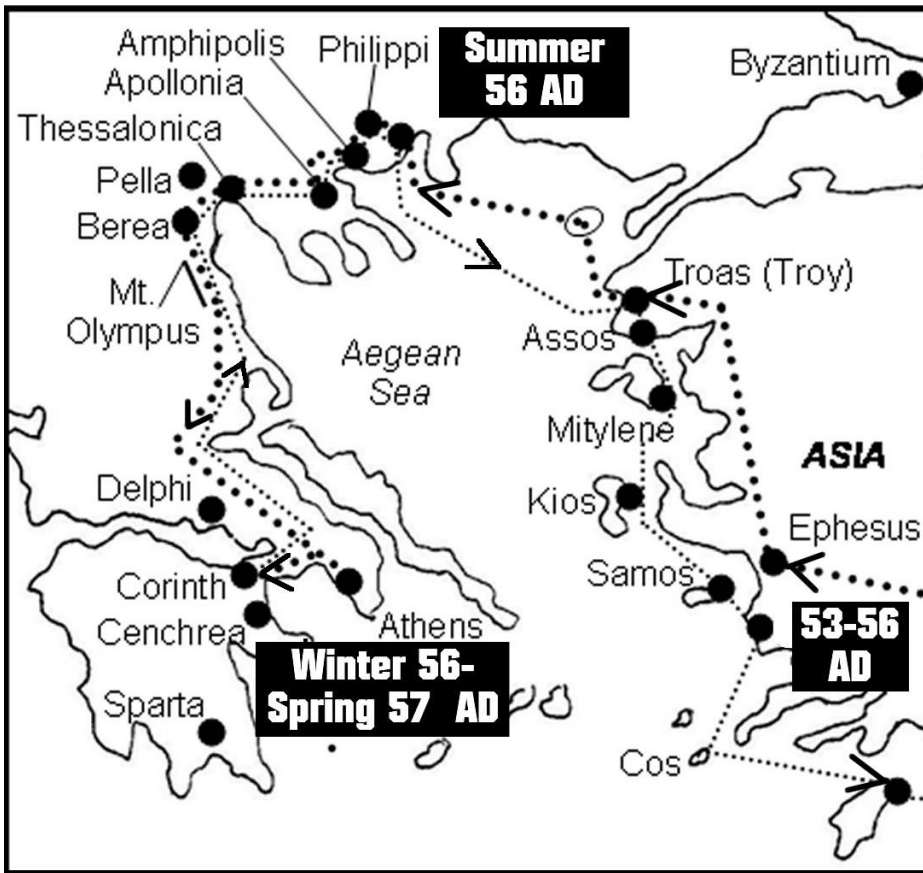
53 AD – Paul traveled across Galatia, Phrygia and into Asia

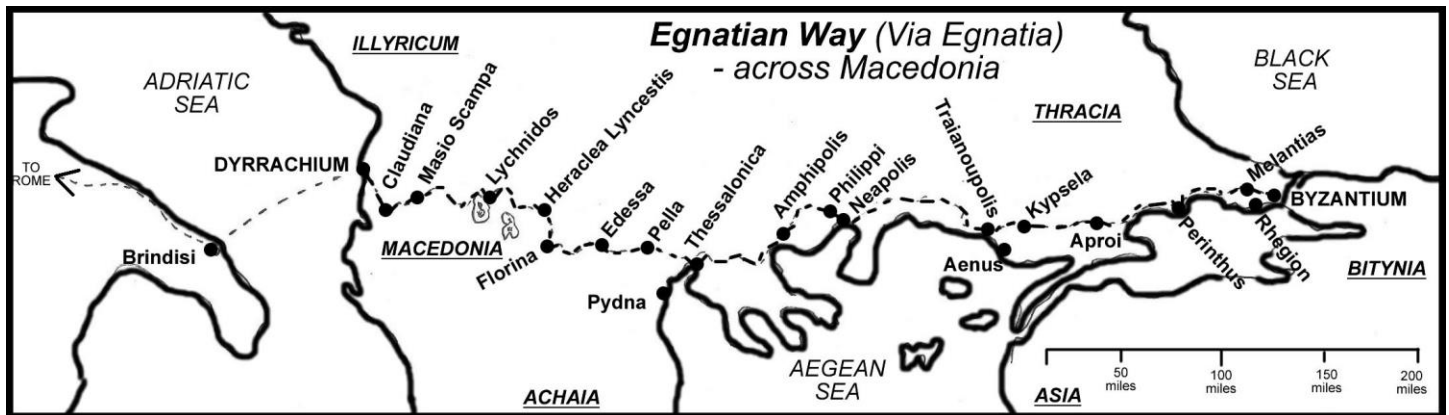
53-Spring of 56 AD – Paul is in Ephesus

56 AD – Paul travels through Macedonia

56 AD Winter-57 AD Spring – Paul is in Corinth, Achaia

57 AD Spring – Paul leaves Corinth to pass through Macedonia to Jerusalem





More details concerning this collection must have been given in Paul's previous letter (mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:9, "In have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people – not at all meaning the people of this world...."). In these four verses in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 Paul only mentions:

1. 16:1-2 – Directions on collection of money
2. 16:3-4 – information on delivering money.

The Corinthians already know about this offering since they had asked about it in their letter to Paul that was sent with the delegation.

16:1 – In Roman Empire Jewish communities throughout the provinces would send money back to Jerusalem

Philo records a letter from the Roman proconsul Gaius Norbanus Flaccus to his governmental leaders in Ephesus that tells them he had received a written letter from Caesar explaining that it was the Jewish ancestral custom to hold meetings wherever they lived and contribute money which was sent to Jerusalem. Caesar says in the letter this practice should be allowed to continue.

The Jerusalem Church was poor and Paul wanted to help the poor Jewish believers in Jerusalem because of these possible reasons:

1. Famine – Acts 11:29
2. They had socialized early in 30 AD as a congregation according to Acts 4:34
3. They were ostracized from family, occupation and society. Or, persecuted.
4. Jerusalem Jews were dependent on outside support from Jews around the world. If a Jerusalem Jew became a believer they would be cut off from this worldwide Jewish support.
5. Paul is trying to win the Jewish believers support of this Gentile ministry. And, money helps
6. Romans 15:27 – the Gentiles owe the Jews a physical blessing for having received the spiritual blessing.
7. Part of the Jerusalem Council’s decision of 48 AD was that Paul remember the poor which would apparently refer to the poor Jewish believers in Jerusalem:
 - a. “James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. All they asked as that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.” – Galatians 2:9-10
 - b. Notice Paul was released to go to the Gentiles, but the only Jewish obligation they asked him to meet was to remember the poor among the Jews
8. Create Gentile/Jewish unity

This collection by Paul was not an annual collection nor was it an obligation.

“**Collection**” comes from a common Greek word **logeia** (λογεῖα) for a collection of money for religious purposes. This word **logeia** appears to be the word used by the Corinthians and picked up by Paul since Paul uses this word 2x in 16:1-2, and nowhere else. In other places Paul refers to this process with words that indicate more than business or social taxation. Paul calls it:

1. **Koinonia** – “**Fellowship**” in 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13; Rom. 15:26
2. **Diakonia** – “**Service**” - in 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1, 12, 13; Romans 15:31
3. **Charis** – “**Grace**” – in 2 Cor. 8:4, 6, 7, 9 and 19
4. **Eulogia** – “**Blessing**” – 2 Cor. 9:5
5. **Leitourgia** – “**Divine Service**” – 2 Cor. 9:12; Rom. 15:27

All of these together make this money a response to God and an act of accepted responsibility for being part of the body.

This collection is referred to in:

- Acts 24:17 – Paul speaking in court in Caesarea before Judean governor Antonius Felix says, “*After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings. I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this.*”
- Romans 15:26 – “*Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there. For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution (**koinonia**) for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.*” They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them.”
- 2 Corinthians 8:1 and on
- 2 Corinthians 9:1 and on
- The Collection was for poor believers in Jerusalem according to 1 Corinthians 16:3

Paul had just come through Galatian churches (Acts 18:23) on his way into Ephesus in Asia in 53 AD and had apparently spoke to the Galatian churches about this same collection.

In Corinth the Gentile believers are encouraged to pick up this same practice and identify with their Jewish brothers in Christ

This collection of money for Jerusalem was likely a key feature of Paul’s 3rd missionary journey.

16:2 – Key words:

- “First day of the week” –
 - Sunday, the day after the Jewish Sabbath.
 - This day was used for meeting by Christians from the beginning: John 20:19; John 20:26; Acts 20:7 in Troas; Rev. 1:10
 - Term used to refer to the day of the Lord’s resurrection
 - If Paul meant set aside money “once a week” he likely would have said, “once a week” instead of “first day of the week.”
- “Each one” – means every believer independent of their financial condition.
 - The “Greek says, “Each should give whatever has been prospered”
 - But, the subject (“God”, “he”, “the business”, “it”) that prospered or caused the prospering is not in the Greet
- “**set aside a sum**” – naturally means to set aside in their own home (or, bank accounts). But, Paul seems to be saying set aside at the meeting of the church and collect it weekly. Paul does not want to “take a collection” when he arrives, but he merely wants to pick up what is already provided. By 120 AD Justin Martyr mentions church collections on Sundays is clear the church is collecting money every Sunday.
- “**o ti ean euodotai**” (“whatever profit he makes”)
 - NIV translates/interprets this as “in keeping with his income”, but that is more of an interpretation than it is a translation.
 - Not everyone (slaves, servants) had a weekly income
 - The Greek wording could be translated to say “all his profits”
 - It appears Paul is referring to a donation taken FROM all the profits of each individual.
 - No tithe is mentioned

Paul is asking for an offering that is:

1. Systematic
2. Ordered
3. Self-determined
4. Pre-determined – Paul wants thought and reflection to be premeditated.
5. Individually proportionate to income
6. Paul wants a larger, more substantial offering than a one-time offering taken from whatever change the believers have brought with them to the church service.
7. For benefit of Jews
8. Collected, carried and delivered

Point:

1. Giving is proportion to prosperity
2. % is not established (the word “tithe” or phrase “ten percent” is not used)
3. Giving is a planned and principled practice
4. Giving was not an emotional, manipulated event.

It would have all been in coin. Some church members may not have had access to cash.

16:3 – Paul will write letters to the Jerusalem church leaders to introduce the men the Corinthians selected to accompany the gift

This type of letter was common:

- Acts 15:23-29 –
- Romans 16:1-2 –
- 2 Corinthians 8:16-24 –

Paul had decided to send Gentile representatives to Jerusalem with the money.

Read the account of the delegations arrival in Jerusalem in **Acts 21:15-20**

This large amount of \$\$\$\$\$ would:

- Be all in coin form
- Need travel protection from bandits
- Need accountability
- Need representation of each of the Gentile churches donating

The traveling representatives would:

- Greet the recipients of the money for those who gave the money
- Deliver letters of greeting that would be exchanged between friends

16:4 –

“**advisable**” is **axion** (ἀξίον)(also in 2 Thes. 1:3, “*We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and **RIGHTLY SO**, because your faith is growing*”). The word ἀξίον means “fitting” and indicates the appropriateness of the action in the given circumstances.

- Paul may be saying if he is considered by the Corinthians to be “worthy” of traveling with THEIR gift then he will go along.
 - The idea here then would be that Paul is keeping the collection and the Corinthian’s opinion of Paul as two separate issues.
 - In other words, the Corinthians may accept the concept of an offering taken to Jerusalem, yet reject Paul’s ministry. Paul is alright with that. He doesn’t make it personal.
 - The good news is that within a few months Paul says he has decided to go along with the delegation to Jerusalem. (2 Cor. 1:16 and Romans 15:25) This is because by this time Titus has returned to Paul and told him that the Corinthian rebellion has been appeased.

55 AD → Paul is writing 1 Corinthians and is unsure of their response to this letter and Timothy’s visit.

56 AD, fall → 2 Corinthians 8:10-11 – The Corinthians had restarted the process, but had not fully completed the collection. Thus, Titus was sent back to Corinth a second time to help finish the work

57 AD, spring → Romans 15:26-27 – The gift was collected

16:5 – See Acts 20:1-3 and Romans 15:19

16:6 – “Help me on my way” is a request for personal support of Paul

16:8 – Stay in Ephesus until Pentecost (50 days after Passover) or springtime of 56 AD