

1 Corinthians 16:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.

Analysis

As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you—Apollos, the eloquent Alexandrian preacher (Acts 18:24-28), had worked in Corinth and became a focal point for one faction (1 Corinthians 1:12, 3:4-6). Despite the Apollos party's divisiveness, Paul warmly calls him **our brother** (*adelphos*, ἀδελφός), rejecting any personal rivalry. Paul strongly encouraged (*polla parekalesa*, πολλὰ παρεκάλεσα, "I greatly urged") Apollos to return to Corinth.

But his will was not at all to come at this time—*Ou pantes ēn thelēma* (οὐ πάντως ἦν θέλημα, literally "it was by no means the will") is ambiguous—either Apollos's will or God's will. Most translations favor Apollos's personal decision. His refusal to return suggests wisdom; his presence might inflame factions rather than heal them. **But he will come when he shall have convenient time**—*Eukairēō* (εὔκαιρέω, "have opportunity, be convenient") indicates Apollos remained willing but awaited better timing.

Historical Context

Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew trained in Philonic allegorical exegesis and rhetorically gifted, had been instructed more perfectly by Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:26). Though some Corinthians preferred him over Paul, no evidence suggests

Apollos encouraged this faction. His refusal to return to Corinth demonstrates maturity and unwillingness to be used divisively. Later tradition says he became bishop of Corinth.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does Paul's warm commendation of Apollos despite the Apollos faction teach about handling ministry rivalries?
2. Why might Apollos wisely refuse to return to Corinth even though Paul urged him to go?
3. How do you know when your presence in a situation will help versus inflame existing tensions?

Interlinear Text

Περὶ	δὲ	Ἀπολλῶ	τοῦ	ἀδελφῶν·	πολλὰ	παρεκάλεσα	
touching	As	Apollos	G3588	our brother	greatly	I	
G4012	G1161	G625		G80	G4183	G3870	
αὐτὸν	ἵνα	έλευσεται	πρὸς	ὑμᾶς	μετὰ	τῶν	ἀδελφῶν·
him	to	come	unto	you	with	G3588	our brother
G846	G2443	G2064	G4314	G5209	G3326		G80
καὶ	πάντως	οὐκ	ἴν	θέλημα	ἵνα	νῦν	έλευσεται
but	at all	not	was	his will	to	at this	come
G2532	G3843	G3756	G2258	G2307	G2443	G3568	G2064
έλευσεται	δὲ	ὅταν		εὐκαιρήσῃ			
come	As	when	he shall have convenient time				
G2064	G1161	G3752		G2119			

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 1:12 (Parallel theme): Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:5 (Parallel theme): Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

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