

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 (εὐκαιρέω, "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** **our brother** **greatly** **I**
G4012 G1161 G625 G3588 G80 G4183 G3870

αὐτὸν ἵνα ἐλεύσεται πρὸς ὑμᾶς μετὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν·
him **to** **come** **unto** **you** **with** **our brother**
G846 G2443 G2064 G4314 G5209 G3326 G3588 G80

καὶ πάντως οὐκ ἦν θέλημα ἵνα νῦν ἐλεύσεται
but **at all** **not** **was** **his will** **to** **at this** **come**
G2532 G3843 G3756 G2258 G2307 G2443 G3568 G2064

ἐλεύσεται 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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