

Dr. Gary Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 33, Jerusalem Collection and Closing, 1 Cor. 16 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 33, Jerusalem Collection and Closing, 1 Cor. 16, Biblicalelearning.org

This source is the transcript of the final lecture in a series on Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, specifically focusing on **chapter 16**. Dr. Gary Meadors examines **Paul's instructions regarding a collection for the Jerusalem saints** and analyzes the **closing remarks of the epistle**. The lecture explores the **practical aspects of giving in the early church**, Paul's **travel plans and insights into early missionary work**, and the **significance of the letter's conclusion**, including greetings, Paul's signature, and final pronouncements. Meadors also touches upon the **historical context of the first century** and encourages further personal study of the scriptures.

2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 33 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → 1 Corinthians).



Meadors_1Cor_Session33.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 33, Jerusalem Collection and Closing, 1 Cor. 16

Briefing Document: Dr. Gary Meadors on 1 Corinthians 16 - Collection for Jerusalem and Closing Remarks

Overview: This lecture by Dr. Gary Meadors focuses on the final chapter of 1 Corinthians, specifically Paul's instructions regarding the collection for the saints in Jerusalem (16:1-4), his travel plans and personal notes (16:5-12), and the concluding exhortations and greetings (16:13-24). Meadors emphasizes the historical context, theological implications, and practical lessons that can be gleaned from this concluding section of the epistle.

Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

1. The Collection for the Jerusalem Saints (16:1-4):

- **Significance:** Paul considered this collection a "major, major project." It aimed to alleviate economic hardship and famine among Jewish Christians in Jerusalem.
- **Paul's Motivations:** Meadors suggests Paul's passions as a Jew who loved Jerusalem and its traditions were key. He also wanted to demonstrate to the Jewish church in Jerusalem that the Gentile mission had not forgotten them, viewing Jerusalem as their "mother, who has provided them with the opportunity to see Jesus in terms of the Old Testament."
- **Acknowledgement of Spiritual Debt:** The collection symbolized the Gentile church's recognition of its "spiritual debt to their Jewish origins." Meadors stresses the interconnectedness of the Old and New Testaments, cautioning against separating them. He highlights the Old Testament's continued relevance for moral teaching, including areas not fully addressed in the New Testament.
- **Token of Genuine Faith:** The offering also served as "a token of the genuine faith of the Gentile church," linking their faith to the faith of Abraham transmitted through Israel.
- **Bridge-Building:** Meadors sees the collection as a "palm branch" in light of potential tensions between Jerusalem and the broader Greco-Roman world, fostering goodwill towards the "mother church."

- **Logistics and Timing:** Paul instructed the Corinthians to set aside money "on the first day of each week, every week, each of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income... saving it up so that when I come, no collections will have to be made." This ensured the funds would be ready upon his arrival.
- **No Prescribed Standard:** Meadors emphasizes that Paul makes "no appeal to a standard like tithing or any other standard other than whatever one could afford." He quotes the RSV ("whatever extra you earn") and the NIV 2011 ("a sum of money in keeping with your income") to illustrate this point.
- **Giving After Necessities:** The implication is that giving should occur "after necessities are cared for," out of their abundance, not necessarily sacrificially. Meadors critiques the common use of the "widow's mite" story as a standard for giving, arguing it was about "commitment and faithfulness" in a specific context of Jesus's temple encounter.
- **Paul's Role and Accountability:** While Paul would likely "supervise the project," he distanced himself from direct control of the offering, asking the Corinthians to approve men to carry the gift to Jerusalem.

2. Paul's Entourage and Travel Plans (16:5-12):

- **Insights into Early Missionary Ministry:** These sections reveal that early missionary projects were "always itinerant." Resident leadership emerged from the founding congregations.
- **Financial Dependence:** Missionaries were "dominantly dependent upon the places to which they ministered" for physical and financial support. Churches provided housing, food, and funds to help them move to the next location ("sent on their way in a manner worthy of them").
- **Variations in Support:** While local support was common, some churches like Philippi sent Paul money directly.
- **Hospitality:** Meadors highlights the importance of "hospitality in Semitic settings" as a crucial aspect of supporting itinerant ministers.
- **Technical Phrase "Send me on my way":** This phrase, also found in 3 John, refers to providing the necessary support for travel.
- **Timothy's Status:** Paul expresses concern for Timothy, urging the Corinthians to "see to it that he has nothing to fear" and that "no one despise him," possibly due

to Timothy's personality or the challenging environment of Corinth. He instructs them to "send him on his way in peace."

- **Apollos's Independence:** Despite Paul's strong urging, "Apollos was quite unwilling to go now, but he would go when he had the opportunity." Meadors notes Apollos was likely a "freelancer" who, while respected by Paul, operated independently. This illustrates Paul's ability to work with individuals who had their own direction.

3. Epistolary Closing (16:13-24):

- **Transition and Exhortations (16:13-14):** The closing begins with a typical call to action: "Be on your guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong." Meadors connects "be on your guard" to eschatological alertness and emphasizes that "stand firm in the faith" involves adhering to biblical principles and resisting worldliness. Verse 14, "Do everything in love," echoes chapter 13, highlighting that love is an active principle for community operation.
- **Commendation of Corinthian Workers (16:15-18):** Paul commends the "household of Stephanas," the "first converts in Achaia," who "have devoted themselves to the service of the Lord's people." He urges the Corinthians to "submit to such people." Meadors notes Stephanas's household may have been patrons who unusually used their influence to benefit the community rather than just themselves. He also acknowledges the positive impact of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaïas on his and their spirit, stating, "Such men deserve recognition."
- **Final Greetings and Network of Churches (16:19-20):** Paul mentions greetings from "the churches in the province of Asia," including Ephesus (his current location), and specifically from "Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house." Meadors provides historical context about Ephesus and the later ministry of John in that region. He notes Aquila and Prisca's prominence and their role as "teachers and promoters of the growth of the Christian church." The instruction to "Greet one another with a holy kiss" is presented as a cultural custom, with a "good handshake" being its equivalent in some cultures.

- **Paul's Authentic Signature and Amanuensis (16:21):** Paul's statement, "I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand," illustrates the common use of an "amanuensis" (professional writer) for writing letters in the first century. Paul's handwritten addition served to authenticate the letter. Meadors speculates on potential reasons Paul didn't write the entire letter himself, including possible vision impairment from his stoning in Lystra.
- **Serious Anathema and Maranatha (16:22):** The strong statement, "If anyone does not love the Lord, let that person be cursed" (anathema), is highlighted as a unique "imprecation" in the New Testament, akin to imprecatory psalms. The Aramaic phrase "Maranatha" ("Come, Lord") is also unique to 1 Corinthians and may have been a common early Christian expression. Meadors emphasizes the seriousness of Paul's tone.
- **Final Benediction (16:23-24):** The epistle concludes with "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you" and "My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen." Meadors points out that 1 Corinthians is the only Pauline epistle where he explicitly states his love for the recipients at the end, possibly due to the challenging nature of the letter. He defines biblical love as "covenant loyalty" and "a commitment... to persevere in a relationship," emphasizing it's more than just an emotion.

Conclusion:

Dr. Meadors's lecture on 1 Corinthians 16 provides valuable insights into the practical aspects of early Christian life, including fundraising, missionary travel, and community dynamics. He underscores the enduring theological principles related to giving, the interconnectedness of Jewish and Gentile Christianity, and the importance of genuine love and commitment to the Lord. He encourages listeners to further research these topics to develop their own convictions and understanding.

4. Study Guide: Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 33, Jerusalem Collection and Closing, 1 Cor. 16

1 Corinthians 16 Study Guide: Collection, Travel Plans, and Closing Remarks

Quiz

1. What was the primary purpose of the collection that Paul discusses in 1 Corinthians 16?
2. According to Paul's instructions, when were the Corinthian Christians to set aside money for this collection, and what principle guided the amount they were to give?
3. What does Dr. Meadors suggest were some of the significances of the Gentile churches' offering to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem? Provide at least two reasons.
4. What does Dr. Meadors explain about the concept of tithing in the Old Testament in contrast to the New Testament's teaching on giving?
5. Describe the nature of early missionary work as discussed in the lecture, highlighting the role of itinerancy and support.
6. What does Paul request concerning Timothy's arrival in Corinth, and what reasons does Dr. Meadors suggest for these requests?
7. What was Apollos's response to Paul's urging him to visit the Corinthians, and what does this reveal about Apollos's relationship with Paul?
8. Identify two key exhortations that Paul gives in the transitional closing of his letter (1 Corinthians 16:13-14).
9. Who were Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, and why does Paul commend them to the Corinthian church?
10. Explain the significance of Paul writing his greeting in his own hand at the end of the letter and the potential reasons behind his use of an amanuensis.

Quiz Answer Key

1. The primary purpose of the collection was to aid the saints in Jerusalem who were facing economic hardship and famine. Paul viewed this as a major project

that would not only provide practical help but also demonstrate the Gentile mission's connection and gratitude to the Jewish roots of Christianity.

2. The Corinthians were to set aside a sum of money on the first day of each week, in keeping with their income, saving it up so that no collections would need to be made when Paul arrived. The principle guiding the amount was based on their ability and what they were blessed with above their needs, not a fixed standard like tithing.
3. Two significances of the Gentile offering include: (1) it was an acknowledgment of the Gentile church's spiritual debt to their Jewish origins and the Old Testament; (2) it served as a token of the genuine faith of the Gentile church, connecting them to the faith of Abraham transmitted through Israel.
4. Dr. Meadors explains that the Old Testament tithe in Israel was essentially a tax that served both religious and civil purposes, funding the temple and the nation's infrastructure. The New Testament, however, never raises the issue of tithing as a standard for giving in the church, emphasizing giving based on one's ability and blessings.
5. Early missionary work was predominantly itinerant, with leaders and their entourages traveling to establish congregations. These missionaries depended on the communities they ministered to for their physical and financial needs, with local leadership emerging from the newly founded churches.
6. Paul requests that the Corinthians ensure Timothy has nothing to fear and that no one treats him with contempt. Dr. Meadors suggests this might be due to the strong personality of Corinth contrasting with Timothy's potentially weaker personality, as well as Timothy's youth, which some might have disrespected.
7. Apollos was quite unwilling to go to Corinth at that time, stating he would go when he had the opportunity, despite Paul strongly urging him. This suggests that Apollos, while respected by Paul, was not part of Paul's direct entourage and operated with a degree of independence in his ministry.
8. Two key exhortations Paul gives are: (1) "Be on your guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong," urging vigilance and perseverance in their Christian commitment; and (2) "Do everything in love," emphasizing that love should be the guiding principle for all their actions as a community.
9. Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus were members of the Corinthian church who had visited Paul and provided what was lacking from the Corinthian

community. Paul commends them and urges the Corinthians to submit to such people and anyone who joins in their work, recognizing their valuable service.

10. Paul's authenticating signature served to verify the letter's authenticity, a common practice when using an amanuensis (professional writer) to write the main body of the letter. The use of an amanuensis may have been due to practical reasons, such as Paul's possibly impaired eyesight resulting from the stoning in Lystra.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the multifaceted significance of Paul's instructions regarding the collection for the Jerusalem saints in 1 Corinthians 16. How does this passage illuminate Paul's understanding of the relationship between Jewish and Gentile Christians and the nature of Christian giving?
2. Analyze Dr. Meadors's explanation of early missionary practices based on Paul's travel plans and the examples provided in 1 Corinthians 16. How does this understanding of first-century mission compare to modern missionary endeavors, and what principles might contemporary missions learn from this historical context?
3. Examine Paul's interactions with Timothy and Apollos as revealed in 1 Corinthians 16. What do these interactions suggest about Paul's leadership style, his relationships with his fellow workers, and the challenges of ministry in the early church?
4. Explore the closing exhortations and greetings in 1 Corinthians 16 (verses 13-24). How do these final words summarize the major themes and concerns of the letter, and what do they reveal about Paul's relationship with the Corinthian church?
5. Discuss the unique elements of the closing in 1 Corinthians 16, such as the "holy kiss," Paul's personal signature, and the Aramaic phrase "Maranatha." What do these details contribute to our understanding of early Christian practices, communication, and eschatological hope?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Amanuensis:** A professional scribe or secretary employed to write from dictation or to copy manuscripts.
- **Anathema:** A strong denunciation or curse; in a religious context, it can mean something or someone is accursed or condemned.
- **Christologized:** Interpreted or understood in the context of Jesus Christ and his role in salvation.
- **Collection for Jerusalem Saints:** A fundraising effort organized by Paul among the Gentile churches to support the impoverished Jewish Christians in Jerusalem facing economic hardship and famine.
- **Diaspora:** The dispersion of the Jews beyond Israel, particularly after the Babylonian captivity. In the New Testament context, it can also refer to Christians scattered throughout the Roman world.
- **Epistle:** A letter, particularly a formal or didactic one; the New Testament contains many epistles written by apostles like Paul.
- **Eschatological:** Relating to the end times or the final events in the history of the world.
- **Itinerant:** Traveling from place to place, often in the course of duty or ministry.
- **Maranatha:** An Aramaic phrase meaning "Our Lord, come!" or "The Lord has come!" expressing a prayer or affirmation related to Christ's return.
- **Patronage System:** A social system in the Roman world characterized by reciprocal relationships between patrons (wealthy benefactors) and clients (those who received benefits and offered loyalty and service in return).
- **Peri de:** A Greek phrase meaning "now concerning" or "now about," often used by Paul to introduce a new topic in response to questions or concerns.
- **Synagogue:** A Jewish house of worship and communal gathering place, used for prayer, reading of scripture, and community activities. It is distinct from the Temple in Jerusalem.

5. FAQs on Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 33, Jerusalem Collection and Closing, 1 Cor. 16, BiblicaleLearning.org

Frequently Asked Questions on 1 Corinthians 16 and Closing Remarks

1. What was the primary purpose of the collection Paul discusses in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4?

Paul's main reason for initiating this collection among the Gentile churches was to provide financial assistance to the Jewish Christians and the poor in Jerusalem. This was a significant project for Paul, driven by his love for his Jewish heritage and the city of Jerusalem, which he viewed as the origin of their spiritual understanding of Jesus through the Old Testament. He also intended it to demonstrate to the Jewish church in Jerusalem that the Gentile mission had not forgotten them and to foster goodwill between the two groups.

2. What instructions did Paul give regarding how the Corinthians should contribute to this collection?

Paul instructed each person to set aside a sum of money every week, on the first day of the week (Sunday), in proportion to their income. This was to be saved up so that when Paul arrived, no further collections would need to be made. He emphasized that giving should be based on individual ability and blessing, without imposing a specific standard like tithing or any implication of guilt. The focus was on giving from their surplus after their needs were met.

3. What does this passage reveal about the practices of the early Christian community regarding worship and giving?

This passage indicates that the early Christians were beginning to establish a practice of meeting regularly on the first day of the week for worship. It also highlights that giving was a voluntary act, done in accordance with one's ability, and was intended to support specific needs within the broader Christian community, such as the impoverished saints in Jerusalem. It distinguishes this specific collection from general church support, noting that it was a unique offering for a particular purpose.

4. What insights does Paul's discussion of his travel plans and the mention of individuals like Timothy and Apollos provide about early missionary work?

Paul's travel plans and mentions of his companions illustrate that early missionary efforts were largely itinerant. Missionaries like Paul and his entourage traveled from place to place, establishing churches and mentoring new believers. These missionaries depended on the hospitality and financial support of the communities they served. The passage also reveals the challenges of leadership in new congregations, as seen in Paul's concern for Timothy's reception. Apollos's independence in his ministry, even when differing with

Paul's immediate plans, demonstrates a degree of autonomy among early Christian workers.

5. How did the concept of "tithe" in ancient Israel differ from the New Testament understanding of giving? In ancient Israel, the tithe was more akin to a tax, serving both religious (support of the temple and priesthood) and civil (infrastructure of the nation) purposes. It may have even amounted to a larger percentage than ten percent when various forms of giving were considered. The New Testament, however, does not establish the tithe as a standard for giving in the church. Instead, it emphasizes voluntary, proportional giving based on one's ability and blessings, primarily focused on supporting the needs of the community and the spread of the gospel.

6. What is the significance of Paul's closing exhortations in 1 Corinthians 16:13-14? Paul's final encouragements – "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love" – serve as a summary call to action for the Corinthian believers. They emphasize the need for vigilance, steadfastness in their beliefs, bravery in the face of opposition, and the overarching principle of love as the guiding force for all their actions within the community. This echoes earlier themes in the letter, particularly the importance of unity and love over division and worldly values.

7. What does Paul's mention of an "amanuensis" and his own handwritten greeting reveal about the composition of his letters? The reference to Paul writing his greeting in his own hand indicates that he likely used an amanuensis, a professional scribe, to write the main body of his letters. This was a common practice in the first century. Paul's personal handwritten addition served as an authentication of the letter, ensuring its genuineness to the recipients. Some speculate that Paul may have relied on a scribe due to potential vision problems resulting from past persecution.

8. What is the meaning and significance of Paul's use of "anathema" and "Maranatha" in his closing remarks? Paul's statement, "If anyone does not love the Lord, let that person be cursed (anathema). Come, Lord (Maranatha)!" is a powerful and unique closing to this epistle. "Anathema" signifies a curse or being set apart for destruction, reflecting the serious consequences of rejecting love for the Lord. "Maranatha" is an Aramaic phrase meaning "Our Lord, come!" or "The Lord has come!" and expresses a hopeful anticipation of Christ's return. This juxtaposition underscores the critical importance of genuine faith and love for Christ while looking forward to his ultimate coming.