

Message #71**I Corinthians 16:1-4**

Giving money to the Lord's work IS NOT something we do to gain the approbation or approval of God; it is a stewardship that is expected of each and every believer. Those who have taken this stewardship seriously have discovered the Word of God is very true: "he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully" (II Cor. 9:6).

A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH HAS A BIBLICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO FINANCIALLY HELP THOSE BELIEVERS WHO ARE POOR, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ARE JEWISH.

QUESTION #1 – For whom was this offering to be taken?

This offering was to be taken for the "saints" (16:1) in "Jerusalem" (16:3). In other words, this offering was specifically to be taken for poor Jewish believers who lived in Jerusalem.

QUESTION #2 – Why was there such a special emphasis on the poor Jews of Jerusalem?

The answer to this question is found in Rom. 15:26-27.

Reason #1 - Because of the Jewish need. 15:26

The word "poor" indicates there was a very real need. The word actually refers to a destitution that is to the point of begging (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 393).

Reason #2 - Because of Gentile debt. 15:27

We have a debt we owe to Israel. The Scriptures, the promises of God, Jesus Christ, and even our salvation is rooted in the nation Israel (Rom. 9:1-5).

QUESTION #3 – Why was there such a great need about Jewish believers?

Reason #1 - Because of overpopulation.

Jerusalem drew a large number of Jews who believed, especially after Christ said He would return to the spot from where He left, which was a spot located just outside of Jerusalem (Acts 1:4, 11).

Reason #2 - Because of personal sacrifice.

All believers in Jerusalem had personally sacrificed all of their resources for God and for each other.

Reason #3 - Because of severe persecution .

Paul himself has literally chased Jewish believers out of their homes (i.e. Acts 8:1-3).

They had to leave jobs and give up their possessions.

Reason #4 - Because of severe famine .

During the days when Claudius was Caesar (A.D. 41-54), a severe famine hit and the already struggling Jewish believers were hit with another financial strain (i.e. Acts 11:27-28).

Reason #5 - Because of heavy taxes .

The Romans heavily taxed everyone and Paul exhorted believers to pay their taxes (Rom. 13:6-7).

Reason #6 - Because of satanic oppression .

Satan hates God's people. He hates believers and wants to devour them (I Pet. 5:8). He hates Israel and wants to destroy her (Rev. 12:13).

If one is a believer in Christ and is Jewish, he is undoubtedly a prime target for satanic assault.

QUESTION #4 – Who is responsible to give to the poor Jewish believer?

The words “I directed” (**16:1**) are, as Dr. Charles Hodges says in his commentary, “the language of authority.” Paul is not suggesting this offering, he is directing it. **Verse 2** makes it clear that “each one” is responsible to obey this command.

QUESTION #5 – What were the principles for giving this offering?

Principle #1 - This offering was to be systematically given . **16:2a**

On the first day of each week, this offering was to be given. Every week the believer was to think in terms of God with his paycheck.

Principle #2 - This offering was to be individually given . **16:2b**

The words “each one of you” indicates no one is exempt. Every believer is responsible and accountable.

Principle #3 - This offering was to be systematically stored. **16:2c**

The words “put aside and save” refer to the fact that each person was to systematically take some money and personally set it aside and save it toward this special offering.

Principle #4 - This offering was to be proportionately given. **16:2d**

There was no set percentage or set amount to give. The determining factor as to how much one gives to the offering is to be in view of how God has prospered the individual.

For most people, the thought of prosperity causes them to think in terms of what more they can do for themselves. But it ought to prompt one to think how much extra they can do for God.

Principle #5 - This offering was to be temporarily saved. **16:2e**

This offering was to be saved until Paul came to Corinth. The church that makes their key teacher use his time and energy on financial matters is a very foolish and carnal church. Financial matters wastes the time and zaps the energy of the minister.

QUESTION #6 – How was the offering to get to Jerusalem? **16:3-4**

The Corinthians were to approve certain people to travel to Jerusalem with their offering. Not everyone was to go, but those who were “approved.” Faithfulness is to be noticed and rewarded with responsibility.

QUESTION #7 – Did the Corinthians collect a good offering?

A key passage to answer this question is II Cor. 9:1-2, which seems to suggest that the offering was sizeable.

There is no doubt that a N.T. church is to be a place where financial things happen. One thing a church must always be concerned about is the nation Israel.

Naturally in order for one to give God the control of his money, he must first give God control of his heart. Does God control your heart?

Are you investing your money more for this life or the next life?