

The Altruism Of Paul

EGOISM is excessive love and thought of self. ALTRUISM is regard for and devotion to others.

1 Cor.16:8-9 is our text for this lesson. Paul wrote this epistle about 57 A.D. during his three-year stay in Ephesus. Let us notice some words of our text:

DOOR - This is an obvious reference to opportunity. But, this is not just a “run-of-the-mill” opportunity; for Paul said “a great door”. So, he considered this what we might call a “fantastic” opportunity.

EFFECTUAL - This word refers to something that is adequate for the occasion; or, powerful enough to produce.

ADVERSARIES - One turned against another with a design to oppose, resist, etc.

AND - This word is from the Greek KAI; and, it means and, even, or also. It never expresses doubt as the word BUT might express.

With something of these four words in mind, let us take a look at Paul’s situation in Ephesus at or near the time that he wrote the above epistle, found in Acts 19:

V1-7, He spends some time correcting the believers there.

V8-10, He spends three months in the synagogue, then 2 years in the school. All Asia heard word.

V11-12, God works special miracles through Paul.

V13-18, He deals with the exorcists. The Spirit of God does not mix with Satan.

V19, The people burn ill-used books, worth 50,000 pieces of silver.

V20-34, These verses relate to the uproar against Paul. The whole city was filled with confusion, and most of those involved did not know why they were there. Gaius, Aristarchus, and Alexander are called in question. It is obvious that Paul’s life is in danger. It appears that it was about this time that Paul wrote the above epistle!

Now, tie the meaning of the above four words into Paul’s experience here at Ephesus and you have him saying, “This is a fantastic opportunity, it is adequate enough to produce good results. There are many adversaries who seek our hurt; but I have not one bit of doubt as to the success.” Altruism, you bet! And, Paul was filled with it! It doesn’t fit very well with today’s definition of either opportunity or attitude. Pause, Ponder, and Profit!

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