

# Fill In The Blank

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by Steve Higginbotham

In a moment, I am going to give you the opportunity to “fill in the blank” with either the word, “and” or the word, “but.” Although you may not recognize the passage I am about to share with you, I want you to insert the word you think best fits the context and belongs in the blank. Okay, here it is...

“For a great and effective door has opened to me, \_\_\_\_\_ there are many adversaries” (1 Corinthians 16:9).

So, what word did you think best fits, “and” or “but?” If you filled the blank with the word “but,” you chose the wrong word. The translators used the word, “and.”

The significance of this can be that Paul wasn’t necessarily making a contrast between the good and the bad in his life – (e.g. I have an open door, but I also have many adversaries). Instead, of translating the word, “but” and making these two thoughts stand in contrast with each other, the translators used the word “and,” allowing for us to join the two thoughts together and see them as complimentary. In other words, the “many adversaries” Paul had can be viewed together with his “open door.”

My point? Let’s stop complaining about our adversaries and take advantage of the opportunities with which they present us. Return good for evil; love for hatred; compassion for brutality; and justice for prejudice. The darker the “backdrop of our culture” becomes, the greater the contrast as we show people the “light of the world” (Philippians 2:15; Matthew 5:16). Stop feeling hopeless and worrying about present and future persecution directed toward children of God. Instead, consider how that adversity can be an open door! Instead of simply lamenting the direction our government and politics have taken, use that as an opportunity to point dissatisfied and disillusioned people to a better kingdom and a better King.

In short, open your eyes to the open doors AND the many adversaries we have. Take advantage of both of them to glorify God!