

Acts Chapter 18

V: 1-4 (**Map**) Paul moves on from Athen, where there was minimal fruit, onto Corinth. Leaving the apathetic Athenians this is one of the few times Paul just left, without being driven out in some way. Sadly they just didn't care.

- Corinth was a major commercial port that led to Rome. Ships would be unloaded there they would transport the cargo 3 miles across the isthmus and put it on another ship headed to Rome.
- As a result this was a major crossroads in the empire, lots of sailors looking for fun, known for it's drunkenness and prostitution and all kinds of bad things.
- (**Picture**) On a steep cliff, 2,000 feet above the city of Corinth was the Acropolis, on which stood the great temple to Aphrodite, the female goddess of fertility.
- A thousand priestesses or "vestal priestesses" basically temple prostitutes would come down into the city every night to ply their trade in support of the temple to Aphrodite.
- It was a very pagan, hedonistic environment - that's where Paul started a church!
- **To say that someone lived like a Corinthian meant that they were really a bad person. Bear in mind that Romans Ch. 1 was written while Paul was in Corinth!**
- In Corinth Paul came across Aquila who was born in Pontus, and his wife Priscilla, both Jewish believers.
- Claudius, the Roman Emperor had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome in 49 AD. So this puts the time from at around 50-54 AD or so.
- Aquila and Priscilla were tent makers so they hired Paul who was trained as such.
- **Rabbis didn't get paid for their work in the ministry, so each Rabbi needed a trade by which he could support himself.**
- The Jews placed a great emphasis on providing their children with a trade that they could fall back on. They said that if you weren't teaching your son a trade that you were preparing him to be a thief.
- By working for a living Paul would also put to rest any accusations that he was there to make money off the people, as many other charlatans and con artists had.

- As usual, Paul went to the Synagogue first and began first with those who had a rudimentary understanding of the things of God. (Tradition / traveling Rabbi) Paul attempted to reason with them, no doubt expounding the scriptures in Isaiah and the Psalms, and so on that related to the Messiah - and that Jesus is the Messiah.

V: 5-6 Paul had gone to Athens and was waiting for Silas and Timothy who had been in Macedonia (Thessalonica and Berea) and were on the way to Paul in Athens when he left, now he's in Corinth, and Silas and Timothy finally catch up with him.

Map

- Paul was a bold preacher but now with the support of his brethren he is even more bold as he is pressed in the Spirit and begins to testify of Jesus, that He is the Christ.
- Paul was accustomed to opposition, but when it was combined with blasphemy he was done with them.

Blasphemy: To speak irreverently about God, to revile, to hurt the reputation of God (misrepresent), to smite with words, speak evil of, or slander. To speak with impious irreverence concerning God.

- We might be thinking that it seems unlikely that the Jews would do this with concern to God; but they didn't think that Jesus was God, so more than likely their comments and speech were directed at Jesus - whom Paul knew to be God, and he wouldn't put up with it! Neither should we!

“... *when they opposed themselves*...” All the other newer translations say that “... *when they opposed him*...” meaning Paul, but they were working against their own best interests, they were hurting themselves, condemning themselves.

Jesus said:

John 3:17-18 “¹⁷For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

- When it became apparent that they were not receptive he realized that he was wasting his time. Shaking out his garments was the same as shaking the dust of your sandals and he declared that he was innocent of their blood, it would be upon their own heads.

Mark 6:10-11 “¹⁰... In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.”

- If they died and went to hell it wasn't because he didn't share the Gospel with them, it wasn't because he didn't try to help them.

Ezekiel 3:17-21 “¹⁷ Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from Me. ¹⁸When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. ¹⁹Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. ²⁰Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. ²¹Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.”

- Sometimes there comes a point when you realize that you're just wasting your time, and that God's Word is being trampled upon.

Matthew 7:6 “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you.”

V: 7-8 Leaving the synagogue he went right next door into the house of Justus, who's house had a common wall with the synagogue. Justice was a God worshipper and believer who received Paul, and his message.

- Later while imprisoned in Rome, Paul writes to the Colossians that Justus was there with him, he might be the same one mentioned here. (Colossians 4:11)
- Crispus the leader, the Chief Ruler of the synagogue also believed along with his household, many of the Corinthians believed, and were baptized.
- Being the chief ruler of the synagogue was a prominent position in the community. He presided over all the assemblies, he interpreted the law to the people, enforced discipline or punishment as needed, presided over weddings and so on.
- His conversion must have cost him his position because we see in another couple of verses that Sosthenes is now the chief ruler of the synagogue.
- Faith simply means obeying God's will in spite of feelings, circumstances, or consequences.

- The benefits to following Jesus always outweigh the cost, but there's always a cost.

Philippians 3:7-8 “⁷But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.”

- Notice the order or chronology: Hearing, first they heard. Then they believed.

Romans 10:17 “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

- Hearing, believing, then action - they Got baptized.
- Believed first, got saved / regenerated, then got baptized.
 1. Obedience.
 2. Identifying with Jesus.
 3. Public statement of faith, Testifying of the inward change through the outward action.

V: 9-11 The Lord Jesus then spoke to Paul in the night by a vision. Considering the location and environment, Paul no doubt needed the encouragement.

- Visions and dreams are similar, but the difference is that with a dream you're asleep and have a dream, whereas a vision whether by day or by night is a “waking dream” similar to day dreaming.
- The Lord speaks to me daily through His Word. Many times the Lord has spoken through others in my life through the gift of prophesy, teachings, through the gift of the Word of knowledge, I had a dream where the Lord spoke to me once, and sometimes through circumstances.
- Jesus tells Paul 5 specific things.
 1. Don't be afraid.
 2. Speak and don't hold back - give them the truth.
 3. I am with you. His presence dispels all out fears!
 4. No man shall hurt you.
 5. There are many who will believe and get saved in Corinth.
- Paul was obedient to what Jesus said and he stayed there for a year and a half teaching the Word of God in their midst.

V: 12-17 Paul had been there for 18 months preaching the Gospel and teaching the new believers and the Jews finally had enough, and they had an insurrection against Paul - really against Jesus.

- Part of the motive in this attack was that the Corinthian church had become one of the largest of the early churches - and the Jews had become jealous of Paul's success.
- That success was simply based on the teaching of the Word of God, turning it loose and watching it change people's lives.
- Corinth was the capital city of Achaia, the surrounding region, and Gallio was the governor of that area.
- The Jews brought Paul to the civil court, the judgment seat expecting that Gallio would somehow deal with them.
- They bring a similar charge against Paul as the others had done in Philippi, that Paul was persuading men to worship God contrary to the law. (Which law?)
- Meaning the declaration that Jesus is Lord, as opposed to Caesar is lord.
- Paul was about to speak when Gallio rendered his judgment, perhaps having already seen through the Jews, as he relates that he doesn't much care for their religious convictions, as opposed to a true civil or criminal matter.
- Then he kicked them out. In the process the Greeks took Sosthenes, the new ruler of the synagogue who replaced Crispus the old ruler who had become a believer in Jesus (V:8); they took Sosthenes and beat him there at the judgment seat, which Gallio ignored.
- The newer translations imply that it was the Jews who took Sosthenes and beat him which would be interesting.

Later Paul would write to the church in Corinth, which included Sosthenes.

1 Corinthians 1:1 "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,"

- Looks like Sosthenes got saved. Some people have to get pretty beat up in life to finally come to know the Lord.
- The judgment seat or Bema seat of Corinth is still intact today in the ruins of the city which have been preserved.

- When you put it all together, Gallio may have had this attitude because he was anti-Semitic. Ignoring the charges that the Jews brought against Paul, and further ignoring the beating of the leader of the synagogue.
- Jesus told Paul that he wouldn't be harmed, and he wasn't - and the one who wanted to harm him was taught a severe lesson.

V: 18-23 Paul stayed in Corinth for a “good while” which I’m guessing is on top of the 18 month description earlier.

- (Map) Now Paul is on the move, this is a travel log / summary of his activities.
- He begins his return initially accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla.
- Paul had taken a “vow” and had shaved his head. We don’t know specifically what he vowed but shaving his head is consistent with a “Nazarite vow.” They would shave their heads, then not drink wine, or eat anything from the vine, not touch dead things and so on. By this time and currently the Nazarite vow had become a vow of consecration and gratitude, a recommitment of sorts. It could be for 30 days or a year or whatever time they chose. They would start off with a fresh hair cut, then not cut their hair for whatever time they chose to commit to the vow.
- In preparation for the feast of Passover. The Jews had a lot of animosity towards Paul, he may have been trying to demonstrate to them that he still abided by the Jewish customs.
- They moved onto Ephesus, where Paul would part from Aquila and Priscilla - but before he did he went into the synagogue to preach and teach.
- Paul had been prevented by the Spirit from going into Ephesus two years earlier (Acts 16:6), but now God’s timing is right, and there he is.
- Apparently he was well received because they asked him to stay, but the timing of the feast didn’t allow for it. “*If God wills*” he would come back sometime.
- Paul sailed on to **Caesarea**, the main Roman port in Israel. When he had “*gone up*” this is a reference to **Jerusalem** - from whatever direction you approach Jerusalem it is going up, and going away from Jerusalem is always going down.
- Paul stopped in and “saluted” the church, spent some time catching up, he’d been gone 3 years, people come and go, things change.
- Then he “went down,” away from Jerusalem, heading North to **Antioch** which was more or less his home base.

- After spending some time in Antioch he determined to return to **Galatia** and **Phrygia** (Derbe, Lystra, Iconium) and strengthen the brethren in all the churches that he started, which would amount to his third missionary journey.
- Paul was becoming a circuit preacher, on a pretty big circuit.

V: 24-28 A Jewish man with a Greek name, named Apolos, of Alexandria, Egypt.

- Alexandria was the 2nd largest city in the Roman empire, it housed the largest library in the world, and 1/3 of the population was Jewish.
- He is described as an eloquent man, well versed in the scriptures, instructed in the ways of the Lord, and fervent in spirit, passionate, and Spirit filled.
- Paul couldn't stay in Ephesus so God sent Apollos there.
- Apollos was both a good teacher and a good student. He knew about the baptism of John, the baptism of repentance, and about the Lord.
- As he spoke boldly about the Lord in the synagogue Aquila and Priscilla got to hear him and they took him aside and explained a few things, filling in some of the gaps, explaining the way of God more perfectly, which probably included the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- It would appear that he received it, because true believers always want to know more about God and His ways.

Jesus said:

Matthew 5:6 "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

- It would appear that after this he was "disposed" or perhaps led of the Spirit to go to Achaia the area of Corinth and minister to the believers there.
- The brethren in Ephesus wrote letters of introduction for him encouraging them to receive him.
- When he got there they were all very blessed, apparently he took another crack at the Jews there in Corinth, mightily convincing them from the scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.
- Paul paved the way, plowing, breaking up the soil, Apollos came in afterwards scattering more seed, and the Holy Spirit watered it and made it grow.
- Paul later wrote to the Corinthians describing this very thing:

1 Corinthians 3:6 “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.”

- God is never limited to any one person.