



Temple to Apollo,
Corinth



Temple of Domitian,
Ephesus

Acts of the Apostles Chapter 18

Paul travels to Corinth, to Ephesus and on to Antioch.
Pricilla, Aquila and Apollos join the Christian mission.

In Chapter 17..



- ▶ Paul and Silas visited Thessalonica and preached three Sabbaths in the synagogue. Many Jews and Greeks became believers.
- ▶ Those who did not believe formed a mob and “set the city in turmoil.”
- ▶ They marched into Jason’s house looking for Paul and Silas. Not finding them there they take Jason to the magistrate and make charges against Paul, Silas and Jason.
- ▶ Their followers send Paul and Silas to Beroea, and the Jews in Beroea were more open minded.

Chapter 17...



- ▶ The rioters and accusers from Thessalonica hear that they are in Beroea, and again Paul and Silas are in danger.
- ▶ Paul is sent on to Athens, while Silas and Timothy remain behind in Beroea for a time.
- ▶ In Athens, Paul discusses the Christian message to pagan philosophers. He tries to reach them by referring to their “unknown god” as the God and creator of all that exists.
- ▶ Teaching about the resurrection was a stumbling block for many, but a few notable Greeks did come to believe.

Paul's second missionary tour



Acts 15:36-18:22
~51-54 AD

In Ch 18 Paul visits Corinth, Cenchraea, Ephesus, and then returns to Antioch. In 18:23, the third missionary journey begins.

PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY



~54-58 AD

Acts 18:23 -
21:14.

**Three years spent
in Ephesus, four
years total.
2525+ miles long.
1190 by sea and
1325 by land.**

Acts 18:1-5

Paul in Corinth

Temple of Apollo
in Corinth



- ▶ ¹ After this he left Athens and went to Corinth. ² There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. He went to visit them ³ and, because he practiced the same trade, stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. ⁴ Every sabbath, he entered into discussions in the synagogue, attempting to convince both Jews and Greeks.
- ▶ ⁵ When Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began to occupy himself totally with preaching the word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus. ⁶

Paul travels to Corinth

- ▶ Corinth was a city in Greece on an isthmus about 44 miles from Athens. In the first century it was located between two major ports.
- ▶ It was a vibrant city for trade as early as 687 BC. However, it was damaged greatly during the Peloponnesian War in 431 BC.
- ▶ In 44 BC it was restored as a Roman colony. In 27 BC it became the capital city in the province of Achaia and the seat of the proconsul.
- ▶ By the time the apostle Paul arrives, Corinth had the largest population in Greece with Greeks, Jews and Romans.

The Challenges for the Christian message in Corinth.

- ▶ Many Corinthians worshiped Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, beauty, pleasure and procreation. And the temple of Aphrodite was so rich that it owned more than a thousand temple slaves and courtesans. The temple of Aphrodite was the center of a culture of promiscuity.
- ▶ The cult of Isis, originally from Egypt, was also prevalent in Corinth, and placed an emphasis on "wisdom".
- ▶ The cult of Mithras, the god of the sun, began sometime during the first century.
- ▶ A temple to Apollo was also present in Corinth.
- ▶ Roman / Greek society permitted prostitution, and the legal process of taking disputes to the city magistrate was customary.

Pricilla and Aquila



- ▶ Pricilla and Aquila became a missionary couple with Paul. Apparently Paul lodged with them for a while in Corinth and they engaged in their shared trade of tentmaking.
- ▶ The couple was displaced when Jews and Christians were asked to leave Rome, probably because of tension between the two groups. Apparently, while in Rome they had already accepted Jesus as Messiah. **When Paul left Corinth they accompanied him as far as Ephesus. They were there to instruct and correct Apollos as noted in Acts 18:26.**
- ▶ **Acts 18:18** Paul remained for quite some time, and after saying farewell to the brothers he sailed for Syria, together with Priscilla and Aquila.

Aquila and Pricilla (Prisca) in Paul's Letters

Aquila and Pricilla had a “house Church” in their home!

- ▶ **1 Corinthians 16:19-20** ¹⁹ The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca together with **the church at their house** send you many greetings in the Lord. ²⁰ All the brothers greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.
- ▶ **Romans 16:3-5** ³ Greet Prisca and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴ *who risked their necks for my life*, to whom not only I am grateful but also all the churches of the Gentiles; ⁵ greet also the church at their house.

This may have been assistance or defense of Paul at the riot of the silversmiths or during an imprisonment

.....because he practiced the same trade, stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade.

▶ Paul and work ethic- 2 Thessalonians 3:7-10

- ▶ ⁷ For you know how one must imitate us. For we did not act in a disorderly way among you, ⁸ nor did we eat food received free from anyone. On the contrary, in toil and drudgery, night and day we worked, **so as not to burden any of you.** ⁹ Not that we do not have the right. Rather, we wanted to present ourselves as a model for you, so that you might imitate us. ¹⁰ In fact, when we were with you, **we instructed you that if anyone was unwilling to work, neither should that one eat.**



With help of Silas and Timothy Paul could preach more and sew less...

- ▶ ⁴ Every sabbath, he entered into discussions in the synagogue, attempting to convince both Jews and Greeks.
- ▶ ⁵ When Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, **Paul began to occupy himself totally with preaching the word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus.**



Acts 18:6-8 Titus Justus and Crispus and the reluctant Jews

- ▶ ⁶ When they opposed him and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood be on your heads! I am clear of responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” ⁷ So he left there and went to a house belonging to a man named Titus Justus, a worshiper of God; his house was next to a synagogue. ⁸ Crispus, the synagogue official, came to believe in the Lord along with his entire household, and many of the Corinthians who heard believed and were baptized.

This is a sign of protest or claiming innocence after one is insulted.

Your demise or your fate is your responsibility alone. I am not to blame.

Titus Justus and Crispus



- ▶ Titus Justus is not mentioned elsewhere in the NT. He is described as a person who is sympathetic to Judaism. He has a Roman name and is a Gentile, however. He lives next to the synagogue so it was not far to go “to the Gentiles” as he threatened to do.
- ▶ Crispus is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:14 “I give thanks [to God] that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ so that no one can say you were baptized in my name.”
- ▶ Crispus and his entire household are baptized. As a leader of the synagogue, he would be quite influential in the Jewish community in Corinth. By believing, Crispus joins many others who have put their faith in the LORD.

Acts 18:9-11 A vision



- ▶ **⁹ One night in a vision the Lord said to Paul, “Do not be afraid. Go on speaking, and do not be silent, ¹⁰ for I am with you. No one will attack and harm you, for I have many people in this city.” ¹¹ He settled there for a year and a half and taught the word of God among them.**

The Lord's words to Paul are like those to other prophets.



- ▶ **Exodus 3:11-12** ¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” ¹² God answered: **I will be with you**; and this will be your sign that I have sent you. When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will serve God at this mountain.

The Lord to Joshua:

- ▶ **Josh 3:9** ⁹ I command you: **be strong and steadfast! Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD, your God, is with you wherever you go.**

Acts 18:12-17 Accusations Before Gallio.

- ▶ ¹² But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews rose up together against Paul and brought him to the tribunal, ¹³ saying, “This man is inducing people to worship God contrary to the law.”^[f] ¹⁴ When Paul was about to reply, Gallio spoke to the Jews, “If it were a matter of some crime or malicious fraud, I should with reason hear the complaint of you Jews; ¹⁵ but since it is a question of arguments over doctrine and titles and your own law, see to it yourselves. I do not wish to be a judge of such matters.” ¹⁶ And he drove them away from the tribunal. ¹⁷ They all seized Sosthenes, the synagogue official, and beat him in full view of the tribunal. But none of this was of concern to Gallio.

According to an inscription in Delphi, this was around 51-52 AD

Sosthenes may have been a Christian believer or sympathizer

Gallio and Sosthenes

Gallio allowed the beating of Sosthenes. Perhaps the Jews hoped that would get him involved.

- ▶ Gallio was a brother of the stoic philosopher Seneca. He was adopted in Rome by Lucius Iunius Gallio. Corinth is the capital of the Roman province of Achaia. He dismisses the case against Paul as a matter of Jewish Law or religion and not a civil crime.
- ▶ Sosthenes may have been a Christian sympathizer and Jews vented on him when they were not heard. He is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:1-2 as a co-writer of that letter:
- ▶ “Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, ² to the church of God that is in Corinth, to you who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy, with all those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. ³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Second Missionary Journey ends in Antioch where it started. Acts 18:18-22

- ▶ ¹⁸ Paul remained for quite some time, and after saying farewell to the brothers he sailed for Syria, together with Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had his hair cut because he had taken a vow.¹⁹ When they reached Ephesus, he left them there, while he entered the synagogue and held discussions with the Jews.²⁰ Although they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not consent,²¹ but as he said farewell he promised, “I shall come back to you again, God willing.” Then he set sail from Ephesus.²² Upon landing at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch.

A Year and a half in Corinth

On the *next* voyage he spends 3 years in Ephesus

At Cenchreae he had his hair cut because he had taken a vow?



- ▶ Luke doesn't mention what kind of vow, but it is assumed to be a Nazarite vow because that is the only vow that involves the shaving of the head. Traditionally the head is shaved at the start of the vow and then again at the end of vow. The hair that grew during the vow was then offered as a peace offering to God.
- ▶ The vow was taken to dedicate oneself to God for a period of time. During that time, they had to abstain entirely from wine or drinking anything with alcohol in it. A Nazarite had to abstain from eating any grapes or any product made from them like juice, raisins and so on.
- ▶ Both men and women could make such a vow.

The beginning of the Third Missionary Journey Acts 18:23

- ▶ 23 After staying there some time, he left and traveled in orderly sequence through the Galatian country and Phrygia, bringing strength to all the disciples.

PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY



Apollos

Acts 18:24-28

- ▶ ²⁴ A Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, an eloquent speaker, arrived in Ephesus. He was an authority on the scriptures. ²⁵ He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord and, with ardent spirit, spoke and taught accurately about Jesus, although he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶ He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the Way [of God] more accurately. ²⁷ And when he wanted to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. After his arrival he gave great assistance to those who had come to believe through grace. ²⁸ He vigorously refuted the Jews in public, establishing from the scriptures that the Messiah is Jesus.

Apollos

- ▶ Apollos was a diaspora Jew with the name of the Greek God Apollo! He is from Alexandria, a city in Northern Africa on the western edge of the Nile delta and the Mediterranean Sea. While educated, he seems to have been instructed in an immature form of Christianity, possibly by one of John's disciples.
- ▶ Priscilla and Aquila explain baptism of the Spirit, and provide Apollos with a fuller understanding of the role of baptism to the divine plan of salvation. (Anchor Bible)
- ▶ The brothers then feel he is ready to take the Word to Corinth. They give him letters of recommendation. Apollos goes on to vigorously debate with the Jews in public using scripture to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah

Quick review

- ▶ Paul left Athens after preaching to the philosophers there and arrived in Corinth. In Corinth he preaches every Sabbath in the synagogue.
- ▶ There he met Aquila and Pricilla who wind up being an ideal married, missionary couple.
- ▶ Timothy and Silas rejoin him for a time. This allows Paul to dedicate all his time to preaching. (No more tent making)
- ▶ Paul becomes frustrated by the Jews, shakes dirt off his clothes and says that he will take his message to Gentiles.
- ▶ Paul baptizes Crispus, a synagogue official and all of his household.
- ▶ Paul has a vision. The LORD encourages Paul to continue. He will not be harmed in Corinth. He remained there 18 months. ²⁴

Review

- ▶ Paul is brought before proconsul Gallio but Gallio dismisses the case without hearing it. It is a matter for the Jews to deal with, not the courts.
- ▶ Angered, the Jews beat Sosthenes, a synagogue official.
- ▶ Paul takes a vow and cuts his hair.
- ▶ Paul heads on to Syria and Antioch stopping in Ephesus. Priscilla and Aquila accompany him but they remain in Ephesus.
- ▶ Apollos, a Jew who is an expert in the scriptures, and is a believer in Jesus arrives in Ephesus. His knowledge does not include baptism of the Spirit, but the baptism of repentance from John. Aquila and Priscilla complete his education. He is sent on to Corinth.
- ▶ The Third Missionary Journey begins for Paul, from Antioch.

What should we take away from this lesson.

- ▶ The Lord puts people in our lives for a reason.
- ▶ The Lord speaks to us when we need it **or when we are listening**. We need to include prayer time where we listen and sit in the presence of the Lord.
- ▶ Like Apollos, we should never stop learning about the Lord. We can never know all there is to know about God.
- ▶ Aquila and Priscilla are a model of a faith filled marriage.

Psalm 145:17-21

Let us Pray

- ▶ The LORD is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does.
 - ¹⁸ The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.
 - ¹⁹ He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.
 - ²⁰ The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.
- ▶ ²¹ My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.

