

Acts 18:1 ¶ After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; Acts 18:2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

Acts 18:3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

Luke now records that when Paul left Athens, he headed to Corinth. According to Easton's Dictionary, Corinth was "a Grecian city, on the isthmus which joins the Peloponnesus to the mainland of Greece. It is about 48 miles west of Athens." The NIV Commentary adds the following insight: "Thanks to its commercial advantages, the city greatly prospered. But along with its wealth and luxury, there was immorality of every kind. Beginning with the fifth century B.C., the verb "to corinthianize" meant to be sexually immoral. Corinth was also the center for the worship of the goddess Aphrodite...."

Upon arriving, Paul met Aquila, a Jewish man from Pontus, that had just recently come with his wife Priscilla to Corinth from Rome. The reason this couple came to Corinth was because Claudius had expelled all the Jews from Rome. Paul quickly found out that this husband and wife were fellow tentmakers, and they decided to work together.

Acts 18:4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

Acts 18:5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus was Christ.*

Acts 18:6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; *I am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

As was his custom, Paul went to the synagogue every Sabbath to present the gospel to the Jews and Greeks that attended. Luke notes that when Silas and Timothy finally rejoined him from Macedonia, Paul felt an urgency to get the Jews to recognize Jesus as the Christ, the promised Messiah.

Note: We know from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians that Silas and Timothy brought financial support that evidently allowed Paul to spend less time working as a tentmaker and more time evangelizing.

As was often the case, the Jews refused to believe him and began abusing and insulting him. Paul "shook his raiment" in an act of disgust against them. He basically declared that because they had rejected the truth he presented, they would suffer God's judgment. He, however, would be held guiltless because he had tried to give them the truth. Paul seems to be referencing the principal declared by the prophet Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 33:8-9 "When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his

way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."

Because they had rejected him, he would concentrate his efforts among the Gentiles of that city.

Acts 18:7 ¶ And he departed thence, and entered into a certain *man's* house, named Justus, *one* that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

Acts 18:8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

After leaving the synagogue, Justus (a Gentile) invited Paul to teach from his house—which just happened to be right next to the synagogue. Despite the opposition, Paul's ministry in the synagogue did produce fruit. Even Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and his family along with many of the Corinthians became believers in Jesus as the Messiah and were baptized.

Acts 18:9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:

Acts 18:10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

Acts 18:11 And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Evidently, the opposition against Paul was so great that the Lord decided to give him extra encouragement by appearing to him in a night vision and telling him to continue to speak boldly and fearlessly. According to Ray Stedman, the wording is literally, "Stop being afraid, but keep right on speaking." The Lord assured Paul that He was with him and would allow no man to hurt him. He also told Paul that there were many in Corinth that would respond in faith to the message of the gospel (another statement showing God's omniscience). So Paul continued teaching the word of God in Corinth for 18 months.

Acts 18:12 ¶ And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,

Acts 18:13 Saying, This *fellow* persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

Luke provides an identifying time marker at this point—"when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia." According to Easton's Dictionary, Gallio was "the elder brother of Seneca the philosopher, who was tutor and for some time minister of the emperor Nero." The NIV Commentary adds the following information: "An inscription at Delphi mentions Gallio as being proconsul of Achaia during the period of Claudius's twenty-sixth acclamation as imperator—that is, during the first seven months of A.D. 52."

Paul had been in Corinth for several months when Gallio took office. The Jews probably thought they would be more likely to get a ruling in their favor from a new judge, so they made an accusation of insurrection against Paul. They accused him of persuading men to worship God, action they declared was against the law.

Acts 18:14 And when Paul was now about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O *ye* Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:

Acts 18:15 But if it be a question of words and names, and *of* your law, look ye *to it*; for I will be no judge of such *matters*.

Acts 18:16 And he drave them from the judgment seat.

Acts 18:17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

Before Paul could even say a word, Gallio had a ready answer for the Jewish accusers. Because he saw no action worthy of punishment according to Roman law, he basically declared that he would not be bothered with adjudicating matters pertinent to “your law,” in reference to Jewish law; and he dismissed the case.

Evidently, the Greeks responded by taking Sosthenes, the new chief ruler of the synagogue, and beating him before the judgment seat—in front of Gallio seems to be implied—without censure. (“Greeks” - followers of Paul or just “Jew haters” taking advantage of an opportunity—commentators are of different opinions.)

Ray Stedman provides further insight: “Now, the beating did Sosthenes a lot of good. If you turn to the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians you will find a most interesting item in the very first verse:

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

I have never considered beating as a method of Christian evangelism before, but it worked in this case. Evidently Sosthenes' eyes were opened when these Jews turned against him, and he decided that maybe their cause was not so just after all. He gave heed to the gospel, and now, here he is, a co-laborer with Paul in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Acts 18:18 ¶ And Paul *after this* tarried *there* yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn *his* head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

After Gallio's favorable ruling, Paul continued his ministry in Corinth for several more months. He finally decided to leave Corinth and sail to Syria, taking Priscilla and Aquila with him.

Luke notes that Paul shaved his head in Cenchrea in connection with a vow he had made. David Guzik offers the following insight: “The **vow** was almost certainly the vow of a Nazirite (Numbers 6). Usually this vow was taken for a

certain period of time and when completed, the hair (which had been allowed to freely grow) was cut off and offered to the Lord at a special ceremony at the temple in Jerusalem.”

Acts 18:19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

Acts 18:20 When they desired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;

Acts 18:21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

Paul eventually arrived in Ephesus and took advantage of an opportunity to “reason” with the Jews in the synagogue there. He was evidently well received and asked to stay longer, but he was determined to get to Jerusalem in time for the feast. He did, however, promise to come back “if God will.”

Paul was very aware of two important truths:

- 1) We are not promised tomorrow.
- 2) We should always seek to make our plans in accordance with God’s will.

James 4:13–15 “Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.”

Acts 18:22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

Acts 18:23 And after he had spent some time *there*, he departed, and went over *all* the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

After arriving in Israel at Caesarea, the port city for Jerusalem (another 60+ miles southeast), he immediately went up (to Jerusalem seems to be understood) and greeted the church there before continuing on to Antioch (where he had begun this missionary journey). Antioch is about 300 miles north of Jerusalem, but I guess in the Jewish mindset everything was “down” from Jerusalem.

Paul then set out to revisit some of the places he had ministered previously in Galatia and Phrygia in order to “strengthen all the disciples. He wanted to be sure that these believers in whom he had personally invested time and energy were continuing to build on a firm foundation of the truth of God’s word. His heart for those to whom he ministered is beautifully reflected in the introductions to each one of his epistles, e.g.:

Philippians 1:9–11 “And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”

Acts 18:24 ¶ And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

Acts 18:25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

At this point, Luke provides a little insight as to events in Ephesus before Paul returned. He tells us about a Jewish man named Apollos from Alexandria, at that time recognized as the chief seat of Hebrew learning. He was evidently a very charismatic speaker who was well versed in the scriptures. This man showed up as a missionary in Ephesus. He spoke powerfully and taught accurately according to all that he knew about Jesus, but that knowledge was limited to John's baptism—the message of the need for repentance and the fact that Jesus was the promised Messiah. I think that means that he was unaware of the death and resurrection of Jesus and had not received the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Acts 18:26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

When Apollos boldly spoke in the synagogue, Aquila and Priscilla heard him and recognized that he needed more instruction. They evidently invited him to their home to teach him what he was lacking.

Acts 18:27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:

Acts 18:28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

The fact that when Apollos left to minister in Achaia (including Corinth according to the next chapter) with a recommendation from the brethren in Ephesus that he be well received indicates that he was also an humble man willing to receive instruction. Because of that his ministry in Achaia was very helpful to the body of believers there. He very effectively reasoned with the Jews from the scripture declaring Jesus as the Messiah; where Paul had met with opposition, he found some success.

JFB's note on "mightily convinced" – "The word is very strong: "stoutly bore them down in argument," "vigorously argued them down," and the *tense* in that he *continued* to do it, or that this was the characteristic of his ministry."

We know from other scriptures that Apollos was evidently well respected—especially in Corinth where he was esteemed on a level with Paul and Peter. It is also clear in his letter to the Corinthians, that Paul respected Apollos as a fellow laborer for the gospel.

1 Corinthians 1:12 "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ."

1 Corinthians 3:5-6 & 21-23 "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase....Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

1 Corinthians 16:12 "As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time."