

## Acts Chapter Eighteen

### Acts 18:1-4

**After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working; for by trade they were tent-makers. And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.**

- Corinth was probably the most wicked city of its day. Sex—drink—every fleshly pleasure is exalted here. Sexual immorality permitted—under worship of Aphrodite/Venus—goddess of fertility/sexuality. There was a temple to her with 1000 vestal virgins. To 'act like a Corinthian'—meant to practice fornication. 'A Corinthian companion'=a prostitute.
- In 146 BC, Corinth had rebelled against Rome, and their city was destroyed. It was rebuilt in 44 BC as a Roman colony. It lay in ruins until Julius Caesar rebuilt it.
- Paul came to Corinth on both 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey. He wrote his letter to the Romans from this city. When you read Romans 1—about steps to depravity—this view of Corinth was right in front of him.
- Paul returns to pattern of approaching synagogue with message.
- Paul refers to Priscilla and Aquila in I Cor 16:19, Rom 16:3, Acts 18:26—calls them fellow workers.
- Paul indicates here that he is also a laborer—I Thes 2:9, 3:11, II Thes 3:7-13, I Cor 9
- Paul describes his preaching to both Jews and Greeks in I Cor 2:1-16
- Two cities where Paul made his greatest impact—Ephesus and Corinth

### Acts 18:5-8

**But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul *began* devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. And when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood *be* upon your own heads! I am clean. From now on I shall go to the Gentiles." And he departed from there and went to the house of a certain man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue. And Crispus, the**

**leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.**

- Paul had waited for Silas and Timothy in Athens—but they meet up again here. They bring word of the work in Thessalonica (that they were remaining steadfast in faith)—and Paul responds by writing them a letter (I Thes 3:6-10)
- He is rejected here as he proclaims Jesus as the Christ—he responds to rejection by shaking out his garments (Luke 10:10-11). This is the turning point of his ministry.
- Crispus—one of the few that Paul personally baptized (I Cor 1:14)

### **Acts 18:9-11**

**And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid *any longer*, but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city.” And he settled *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.**

- In the past—Paul moves when he faces opposition. God calls him to stay.
- This is why he can stand in the face of fear.
- Given a strong vision of protection and that this is a fertile field.

### **Acts 18:12-17**

**But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat, saying, “This man persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.” But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrong or of vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you; but if there are questions about words and names and your own law, look after it yourselves; I am unwilling to be a judge of these matters.” And he drove them away from the judgment seat. And they all took hold of Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and *began* beating him in front of the judgment seat. And Gallio was not concerned about any of these things.**

- Gallio was proconsul in Achaia—gives ability to date Paul's ministry. Gallio is the younger brother to Seneca—who was tutor to Nero—He was proconsul from 51-52 AD—before leaving due to poor health.

- This places Paul in Corinth approx 49-51 AD.
- Gallio addresses the question—does being a Christian come in conflict with Roman law? He takes a stand that there is a difference between church and state. He was a Roman magistrate and interested in enforcing Roman law.
- So—in Achaia—it is declared permissible to proclaim Christ. This will change later in 110AD—when Pliny, governor of Bithynia declares it a serious offense.

## **Acts 18:18-22**

**And Paul, having remained many days longer, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow. And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there. Now he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. And when they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not consent, but taking leave of them and saying, "I will return to you again if God wills," he set sail from Ephesus.**

**And when he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and went down to Antioch.**

- In Cenchrea had hair cut to keep a vow—most likely a Nazarite vow—to express a time of unique devotion rather than the keeping of the Law. Nazarite vow included not cutting hair, or drinking from 'the vine', plus staying away from the 'dead'.
- Cenchrea is an eastern port for Corinth (later we hear that a deacon named Phoebe comes from here).
- Forbidden to go to Ephesus at beginning of trip—on the way home he stays for a short time.

## **Acts 18:23-28**

**And having spent some time *there*, he departed and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.**

**Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; and he began to speak out 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. And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he helped greatly those who had believed through grace; for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.**

- This is where the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey begins.
- There is the insertion of what is taking place in Ephesus—with Priscilla, Aquila and Apollos.
- Apollos—a Greek name—so he is a Hellenist from the Diaspora. Had been born in North Africa/Alexandria.
- Alexandria was founded by Alexander the Great—a great center of Greek culture. It had one of the finest libraries in the world.
- Septuagint—a Greek version of the OT was written here. They also had a Jewish temple.
- Became a great center for the early church—which moved from Jerusalem and Antioch to here.
- Tertullian, Athanasius and Augustine all came from Alexandria.
- Apollos was well trained in the OT scriptures—familiar with the gospel of Jesus. Had an education in the scriptures but not from revelation. Understood the things of God, but unfamiliar with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- Both Priscilla and Aquila take him aside to give further instruction.
- In I Cor 3:1-9—we see that some in Corinth preferred Apollos over Paul.

# Acts Chapter Eighteen—Workbook

## Key Words:

## Harmonize:

Read I Corinthians

## Dig:

- 1) What reasons might contribute to Paul spending time as a tentmaker in Corinth?
- 2) Why did this change when Silas and Timothy arrive from Macedonia?
- 3) What caused Paul to turn from reasoning with the Jews in Corinth?
- 4) What did God convey to Paul through a vision in Corinth? Why do you suppose the Lord chose to speak what He did at this time and place?
- 5) What does the judgment seat in vs 12 and 16 represent? What would the equivalent be in our city?
- 6) What happened to Crispus' successor, Sosthenes (see I Cor 1:1)? What effect might these two conversions have on the Jewish community?
- 7) When Paul leaves Corinth in verse 18—where are all of his ministry partners (what city)?
- 8) How is Apollos described? What were his strengths? What was he missing?

9) Do you see different ministry gifts in those who are mentioned in chapter 18?

10) What is the last city Paul spends time in on his second missionary journey?

**Discuss:**

- 1) What people groups are being forced to leave their homelands today? How are they being forced out of their homelands?
- 2) The Philippians sent an offering for Paul while he was in Thessalonica. How did missionaries operate in the early church. How are they provided for today?

**Point of Prayer:**

Pray for a fresh work of the Spirit for missionaries you regularly support.

**Integrate:**

What other scriptures come to mind as you read this chapter?

**Application:**

- 1) What is the first job—outside your family—where you received a paycheck? What good memories do you have about the people you worked with?
- 2) Do you regularly provide financial support to any missionaries? How did you make your decision who to support?

- 3) Do you see any benefit to our government having a separation between church and state? How was this a benefit in Corinth?
  
- 4) Do you have someone who is willing to give you spiritual counsel and correction? How did they establish this role in your life?
  
- 5) If you could be on a team of 4 people to do ministry with—who would you choose? Why? What giftings do they have?