

Acts of the Apostles – Chapter 18 (NIV)

In Corinth

18:1 After this, Paul 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 Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, 3 and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.

Paul arrives in Corinth, a major city of the Roman Empire. He met a Jew named Aquilla and his wife Priscilla. They were in Athens because Claudius had expelled all the Jews from Rome. They hit it off because both men were tentmakers.

“It is significant that it was from this city that Paul wrote his Roman letter; and when one reads his description of Gentile corruption in that Roman letter, one has almost certainly a mirror of what he found in Corinth. (Romans 1:22-32)” (Morgan)

18:4 Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

5 When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. 6 But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

There must be a significant number of Jews (more than 10) because there is a synagogue in Corinth. Paul continues to reason and persuade Jews and Greeks. It has been a while since we heard from Silas and Timothy. In 17:14, Paul left them in Berea. Paul preached in Athens without them and now they are rejoining him.

Things did go the way Paul had hoped. The Jews opposed him and became abusive. His response was the same as Jesus’ response in Matthew 10:14 which says, “*If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet.*” They had rejected and not Paul.

18:7 Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. 8 Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

Paul had more luck with the Gentiles. Even though Paul was left the synagogue less than positive, he had truly had some success with the Jews. Specifically listed were Crispus, the synagogue leader and his household, as well as many other Corinthians.

18:9 One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. 10 For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” 11 So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

God spoke to Paul in a vision. God encouraged Paul to not be afraid, to keep speaking and do not be silent. God told Paul that He would be with Paul, no one is going to attack or harm you and God has many people in this city. It must have worked, Paul stayed in Corinth much longer than any of the other stops thus far, a year and a half

“The duration of Paul’s stay in Corinth shows where his heart was in ministry. He was no “in and out” evangelist, but a man committed to making disciples.” (Guzik)

18:12 While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews of Corinth made a united attack on Paul and brought him to the place of judgment. 13 “This man,” they charged, “is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law.”

14 Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to them, “If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. 15 But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law—settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things.” 16 So he drove them off. 17 Then the crowd there turned on Sosthenes the synagogue leader and beat him in front of the proconsul; and Gallio showed no concern whatever.

By talking to Gallio, the proconsul or governor of Achaia they were trying to stop Paul from preaching in the entire province. Gallio’s response was like that of Pontius Pilate when he tried Jesus (see John 18:31). This is a Jewish matter. Gallio washed his hands of Paul so the mob turned on Sosthenes, the synagogue leader and beat him. Gallio still did nothing.

“If Gallio had accepted the Jewish charge and found Paul guilty of the alleged offense, provincial governors everywhere would have had a precedent, and Paul’s ministry would have been severely restricted. As it was, Gallio’s refusal to act in the matter was tantamount to the recognition of Christianity as a *religio licita* (permitted religion)” (Longenecker)

Priscilla, Aquila and Apollos

18:18 Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchreae because of a vow he had taken. 19 They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. 21 But as he left, he promised, “I will come back if it is God’s will.” Then he set sail from Ephesus. 22 When he landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch.

Paul left Corinth after about a year and a half with Priscilla and Aquila. No mention is made of Silas and Timothy. Are they still in Corinth or have they moved on? Notice again that Priscilla’s name is mentioned first this is very unusual. No explanation is given for the order of the names.

“He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow: 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.” (Guzik)

In Numbers 6, an entire chapter is dedicated to the vow of a Nazirite. They are not to touch or drink anything related to grapes.

“Paul’s performance of this vow shows that Jewish opposition to his preaching had not made him anti-Jewish. He never forgot that he was Jewish, His Messiah was Jewish, that Christianity is Jewish, and that Old Testament forms and rituals might still be used to good purpose. Apparently, though Paul was adamant that Jewish ceremonies and rituals must not be required of Gentiles, he saw nothing wrong with Jewish believers who wished to observe such ceremonies, presumably if their fulfillment in Jesus was also recognized.” (Guzik)

When they arrived in Ephesus, Paul went on alone. Of course, he headed to the synagogue. Paul wrote a letter or epistle to this church and it is one of the seven churches written to by Jesus in Revelation. Paul stayed a year and a half in Corinth but he only reasoned one time in Ephesus and then headed off. Only the NKJV or the KJV tells us why he was in such a hurry. Paul tells them that he must make it to the feast in Jerusalem. Paul went from Ephesus to Caesarea and then to Jerusalem and ended up in Antioch in Syria. In Antioch, Paul reports on his work for the last two years. This ends his second missionary journey,

18:23 After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

Paul begins to his third missionary journey by heading to Galatia and Phrygia. He was interested in doing what he had done as part of his second missionary journey, strengthening disciples.

“If Paul were to visit one of our modern congregations, he would want to know: “How strong of a disciple are you? What can I do to strengthen your walk with Jesus Christ?” He would remind us all that it isn’t enough to make a strong beginning with Jesus, but we must be always grow in strength.” (Guzik)

24 Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue.

While Paul is in Galatia and Phrygia, a man named Apollos from Alexandria came to Ephesus. We are told that Apollos was:

- a. A certain Jew
- b. Born at Alexandria so he was an Egyptian.
- c. An eloquent man
- d. Mighty in the Scriptures
- e. Instructed in the way of the Lord
- f. Fervent in spirit
- g. He spoke and taught accurately the things of the Jesus or the Lord
- h. He knew only the baptism of John
- i. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue.

The choice of the words, “though he knew only the baptism of John” and “he spoke and taught accurately the things of Jesus” seems contradictory. He must have been influenced by the teaching of John the Baptist or his disciples while visiting Jerusalem.

18:26b When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

27 When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. 28 For he vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.

Apollos met Priscilla and Aquila. They filled in the Apollos' gaps about Jesus. He wanted to leave Ephesus and head to Achaia. Priscilla and Aquilla wrote him a letter of Introduction or recommendation so that he would be welcomed there. He had a successful ministry in Achaia because he was able to help the believers.

“Apollos was Jewish, and is described as *eloquent* and *fervent in spirit* (Acts 18:24-25). He also vigorously refuted the Jews, and was able to demonstrate from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ. Because of these things, some scholars consider him the type of person who could have wrote the letter to the Hebrews. (Guzik)