

## Acts 18:1-17

- I. 18:1-3 Paul Comes to Corinth
- II. 18:4-7 Initial Efforts
- III. 18:8-11 Fruitful Ministry
- IV. 18:12-17 Paul Before Gallio

*Acts 18:9-10 (NKJV) <sup>9</sup> ... “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; <sup>10</sup>for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.”*

- I. 18:1-3 Paul Comes to Corinth
  - A. 18:1 The City of Corinth
    - i. About 50 miles from Athens – continuing the theme of evangelism in the cities.
    - ii. Place settled since the Stone Age, but destroyed and rebuilt repeatedly.
    - iii. Current city was about 100 years old, built by Romans and site of Roman government.
    - iv. Wealthy Commercial Center – site of 2 seaports separated by a 4-mile land bridge.
      - a) Land bridge saved 200 miles of sailing.
      - b) Boats would be removed and placed on rollers to cross the isthmus.
      - c) Canal started in 67 AD by Nero, not finished until 1893.
    - v. Home of the Isthmian Games held every 2 years, 1 year before and after Olympic.
    - vi. Several pagan temples, ruins of Apollo are in the best condition today.
      - a) Most famous was the Temple of Aphrodite (Roman *Venus*), one of the very few sites in the Greek world where sacred prostitution took place as in the ancient Mideast.
        - Located on the Acrocorinthus, a hill 1800 ft above the seaport
        - In 464 BC a man named Xenophon, a citizen of Corinth, an acclaimed runner and winner of the pentathlon at the Olympic Games, dedicated one hundred young girls to the temple of the goddess as a sign of thanksgiving.
        - About Paul's day, Strabo (geographer, historian) states that the temple had more than a thousand sacred slave-prostitutes (VIII, 6, 20). [Source: Wikipedia](#)
    - vii. Slang terms:
      - Corinthian* – anyone known for loose, extravagant, living
      - *corinthianize* – wild partying – think Vegas, NO Mardi Gras
      - *Corinthian girl* – prostitute
    - viii. In that environment, what kind of people became Christians? Corinthians.

*1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NKJV) <sup>9</sup>Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, <sup>10</sup>nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup>**And such were some of you.** But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*

- **Application: What Kind of People in Indianapolis become Christians?** Exactly the kind of people that are here. God is no respecter of persons.

B. 18:2 Priscilla and Aquila

- i. *Claudius had commanded* – This expulsion order was issued in A.D. 49. According to the historian Suetonius it was because “the Jews were indulging in constant riots at the instigation of Chrestus.” (Christus misspelled?) (Source: *The Bible Reader's Companion*)
  - ii. *Priscilla and Aquila* always mentioned together.
    - a) 3x in Acts 18: vv. 2, 18, 26
    - b) 3x elsewhere: Romans 16:13, 1 Corinthians 16:19, 2 Timothy 4:19
    - c) Three different cities: Corinth, Rome, Ephesus
- **Application: A Husband and Wife Partnership in Ministry**
    - Sometimes it seems like one person is *called* while the other is *hailed* into serving the Lord. As a result the two never really experience one another's benefits.
    - Advantages of a partnership
      - Strengths and weaknesses that balance one another out, enabling a couple to better serve as a team.
      - Ginger and I have real differences in our gifts or natural abilities.
        - She's multi-talented, caring, sensitive to others' needs, thoughtful, helpful, considerate, great with kids.
        - I'm good at Bible trivia; maybe there's something else, I'm not sure.

C. Tentmaking

- i. Young Jewish men always learned a trade – even if they were going to become rabbis. This became very useful in Paul's missionary endeavors.
- ii. Paul did accept financial support, notably from the Philippians:

*Philippians 4:15-18 (NKJV)* <sup>15</sup>Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. <sup>16</sup>For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. <sup>17</sup>Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. <sup>18</sup>Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.

- iii. Yet he never took anything from the Corinthians and seemed determined not to do so:

*1 Corinthians 9:14-15 (NKJV)* <sup>14</sup>Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. <sup>15</sup>But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void.

*2 Corinthians 11:8 (NKJV)* I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you.

- **Application: Missions and Missionary Support** In missions settings, or church planting, it can be very useful for the missionary or church planter to come in having a trade or a good job, so that he can earn a living while trying to start a church.
  - Thanks to Paul, this practice is now normally referred to as “tentmaking”.

II. 18:4-7 Initial Efforts

A. 18:5-6 Silas and Timothy – The Completion of the Team

- i. At this point Paul is compelled by the Spirit, to do what we really find in v.6, since v.5 merely describes what he had been doing already. Paul's boldness increased when he was able to work with his friends.
  - **Application: Ministry is a Team Effort** Paul liked to always work as part of a group. In Acts 17 we saw Paul working solo, but he was waiting for Silas and Timothy. It was never his desire to serve alone. We too, need to always think of the functioning of the church as a group effort. The church is a body and a body is made up of many interdependent parts. Just like Paul's, our boldness will increase when we serve surrounded by friends.

III. 18:8-11 Fruitful Ministry

A. 18:8 Look at the fruit.

- B. 18:9 The Lord Encourages Paul Literally, “stop being afraid” ... , but go on speaking and do not become silent.” (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*) Living next door to the synagogue, Paul no doubt felt the hatred of the unbelieving Jews. He was familiar with it by now, and remembering what already happened to him in Damascus, Jerusalem, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Thessalonica, Berea. He was probably wondering whether he should move on again.

- i. In 2 Thessalonians (written from Corinth) we see Paul's heart at this time:

*2 Thessalonians 3:1-2 (NKJV) <sup>1</sup>Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, <sup>2</sup>and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.*

- ii. Paul needed encouragement to keep going and the Lord gave it to him at this time.

- **Application: Our Faithfulness Helps to Fulfill God's Plan.** Ever wonder how or why you ended up right where you are? Maybe you are in in your neighborhood, your job, your family, your circle of friends, as part of God's loving plan to bless others through you. Remember Mordecai's words to Esther (only slightly edited)

*Esther 4:14 (NKJV) For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise ... from another place ... Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”*

- You may feel you are surrounded by a bunch of Christophobic Corinthians that would never in a million years respond to Jesus. Consider this: The Lord may have you right where He wants you, and He may be telling you the same thing He told Paul:

*Acts 18:9-10 (NKJV) <sup>9</sup>... “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; <sup>10</sup>for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.”*

#### IV. 18:12-17 Paul Before Gallio

A. 18:12 Junius Annaeus *Gallio* Born in Spain. He was the older brother of the philosopher *Seneca the Younger*, who was tutor and later advisor to Nero.

- i. The time that Gallio was proconsul of Achaia can be fairly accurately dated to between 51-53 AD. The events of Acts 18 can therefore be dated to this period. This is the most accurately known date in the life of Paul. [Source: Wikipedia](#)
- ii. The date also fits with the date we know the Jews were kicked out of Rome in v.2.

B. *Judgment seat* Greek *bema* Same word is used in the following:

*Romans 14:10 (NKJV) But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before **the judgment seat of Christ.***

*2 Corinthians 5:10 (NKJV) For we must all appear before **the judgment seat of Christ**, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

C. Gallio's Decision: "I really don't have time for this." He is a loyal Roman. Remember his brother was the private tutor of the next emperor. He is evidently in no mood to settle what he sees are simply Jewish arguments. In Corinth he probably had enough to do judging real criminal issues. Might Gallio have harbored some anti-Jewish sentiment? Possibly.

D. *Sosthenes* Is the new ruler of the synagogue because Crispus became a Christian back in v.8. After this Paul remained in Corinth a good while (v.18). And guess what:

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

- i. Because Paul was faithful to fulfill his ministry in Corinth, two rulers of the synagogue, Crispus and Sosthenes, and many others came to saving faith in Christ. We are reading about it after the fact, but Paul couldn't have accurately foreseen the results of his efforts.
  - **Application:** We don't know all that the Lord is doing and still plans to do through us. What we do know is that He wants to do something. Allow me to suggest once again that He may be telling us the same thing He told Paul:

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