

# Book of Acts

## Chapter 18

*Theme: The second missionary journey of Paul continued  
(Paul in Corinth; Apollos in Ephesus)*

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We are still on the second missionary journey of Paul. He is in Athens alone waiting for Timothy and Silas to come and join him and to bring reports from the churches in Berea and in Thessalonica. After his missionary thrust in Athens Paul goes on his journey to Corinth.

### **Acts 18:1**

**After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;**

**Paul departed from Athens**—It does not say how long Paul stayed in Athens, we cannot tell; it is probable it could not be less than three months; but, finding that the Gospel made little progress among the Athenians, he resolved to go to Corinth.

#### **Corinth**

Corinth, 50 miles W of Athens, the center for sensuality. On the isthmus which connects the Peloponnesus with the rest of Greece, separating the Aegean from the Ionian Sea.

Two ports:

Cenchraea on the east, on the Aegean toward Asia, 8 miles distant;

Lecheum, on the west, or Ionian Sea toward Italy, 1 ½ miles distant.

Hill, Citadel Acrocorinthus, 2000 ft high.

Julius Caesar, appreciating its natural military and commercial potential, made it a Roman colony, and capital of the Roman province of Greece, Achaia.

Seaport: goods between orient and Rome passed through (Farrar).

Arabian balsam, Egyptian papyrus, Phoenician dates, Lybian ivory, Babylonian carpets, Sicilian goats, Lycaonian wool, Phrygian slaves...markets at Corinth.

Art capital: simple Doric and Ionic columns developed in the Corinthian column; architecture achieved the highest ever in history...

Center of worship of Aphrodite, goddess of Sex. 1,000 temple prostitutes (Rom 1:21-32).

Proverbial: "He corinthinizes..." (1 Cor 6:9-11).

Athens: Minerva, the goddess of wisdom;

Corinth: Venus, the goddess of love.

[2 enslaving twins: Athens: intellectual pride; Corinth: sensual lust.]

...emptiness and lack of purpose paganism produces... like our own cities today...<sup>1</sup>

**[Corinth]** The capital of Greece at this time and seat of the Roman proconsul (Acts 18:12), as Athens was its center of learning. It was 46 miles west of Athens. The worship of Aphrodite (Latin: Venus) and the Astoreth of Judges 2:13, was carried on here, with all the Eastern immorality, probably introduced by Phoenicians (1 Kings 11:33).

**LAN: Corinth** was the political and commercial center of Greece, surpassing Athens in importance. It had a reputation for great wickedness and immorality. A temple to Aphrodite—goddess of love and war—had been built on the large hill behind the city. In

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<sup>1</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on The Book of Acts, khouse.org

this popular religion, people worshiped the goddess by giving money to the temple and taking part in sexual acts with male and female temple prostitutes. Paul found Corinth a challenge and a great ministry opportunity. Later, he would write a series of letters to the Corinthians dealing in part with the problems of immorality. First and Second Corinthians are two of those letters.<sup>2</sup>

**McGee:** I have made the trip from Athens to Corinth by bus. Paul probably walked it. It would take a long time to walk that distance although it would be a beautiful walk. I enjoyed the scenery more since I was riding than I would have if I had been walking, I assure you. It goes past the site where the Battle of Salamis was fought at sea. This is where the Persian fleet was destroyed. There are other historical places along that way before arriving at Corinth.

In our study of the Epistle to the Corinthians, we will see the reason Paul wrote as he did to the believers at Corinth.

For now let me say that the city of Corinth was probably the most wicked city of that day. It was the Hollywood and the Las Vegas of the Roman Empire. It was the place where you could go to live it up. Sex and drink and all other sensual pleasures were there. In Corinth today one can see the remains of a great Roman bath. That is where they went to sober up. In the distance is the temple that was dedicated to Aphrodite (or Venus) in which there were a thousand so-called vestal virgins. They were anything but virgins; they were prostitutes—sex was a religion. Corinth was one of the most wicked cities of the day. Also there were two tremendous theatres there. People came from all over the empire to the city of Corinth.

Paul came to Corinth on his second missionary journey and again on his third journey. I believe it was here where Paul had one of his most effective ministries. It is my judgment that in Corinth and in Ephesus Paul had his greatest ministries. Ephesus was a religious center; Corinth was a sin center. Both cities were great commercial centers.

Now notice what Paul does on his first visit to Corinth.<sup>3</sup>

### **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.**

Claudius Caesar banished Jews (disturbances instigated by Chresto(?)). Paul speaks of relatives who “were in Christ before me” Rom 16:7.

Aquilla & Priscilla - interesting couple: later more to Ephesus (v. 19) and still there when 1 Cor was written (1 Cor 16:19). Later back in Rome (Rom 16:3). Later back in Ephesus (2 Tim 4:19).

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<sup>2</sup> Life Application Notes, Life Application Bible

<sup>3</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:592). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

[**Aquila**] Romans 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19. He is always mentioned with Priscilla.

**a Jew ... Aquila ... with his wife Priscilla**—From these *Latin* names one would conclude that they had resided so long in Rome as to lose their Jewish family names.

**Born in Pontus**—the most easterly province of Asia Minor, stretching along the southern shore of the Black Sea. From this province there were Jews at Jerusalem on the great Pentecost (Ac 2:9), and the Christians of it are included among “the strangers of the dispersion,” to whom Peter addressed his first Epistle (1Pe 1:1). Whether this couple were converted before Paul made their acquaintance, commentators are much divided. They may have brought their Christianity with them from Rome [OLSHAUSEN], or Paul may have been drawn to them merely by like occupation, and, lodging with them, have been the instrument of their conversion [MEYER]. They appear to have been in good circumstances, and after travelling much, to have eventually settled at Ephesus. The Christian friendship now first formed continued warm and unbroken, and the highest testimony is once and again borne to them by the apostle.<sup>4</sup>

**Barnes: And found a certain Jew.** Aquila is elsewhere mentioned as the friend of Paul, Romans 16:3, 2 Timothy 4:19, 1 Corinthians 16:19. Though a Jew by birth, yet it is evident that he became a convert to the Christian faith.<sup>5</sup>

[**commanded all Jews to depart from Rome**] This happened in A.D. 52.

**Clarke: Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome**—This edict of the Roman emperor is not mentioned by Josephus; but it is probably the same to which Suetonius refers in his life of Claudius; where he says, “He expelled the Jews from Rome, as they were making continual insurrections, under their leader Chrestus.” Who this Chrestus was we cannot tell; probably Suetonius means Christ; but this I confess does not appear to me likely. There might have been a Jew of the name of Chrestus, who had made some disturbances, and, in consequence, Claudius thought proper to banish all Jews from the city. But how could he intend Christ, who was never at Rome? nor did any one ever personate him in that city; and it is evident he could not refer to any spiritual influence exerted by Christ on the minds of the people. Indeed he speaks of Chrestus as being the person who was the cause of the disturbances. It is no fictitious name, no name of an absent person, nor of a sect; but of one who was well known by the disturbances which he occasioned, and for which it is likely he suffered, and those of his nation were expelled. This decree, which was made, not by the senate, but by the emperor himself, continued only in force during his life, if so long; for in a short time after this Rome again abounded with Jews.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Ac 18:2). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>5</sup> Barnes' Notes On the New Testament

<sup>6</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary on the New Testament

**Barnes: Lately come from Italy.** Though the command of Claudius extended only to Rome, yet it was probably deemed not safe to remain, or it might have been difficult to procure occupation in any part of Italy.

**BBC:** Like Tiberius, an earlier emperor, Claudius expelled the Jewish community from Rome (possibly around A.D. 49). Suetonius, a Roman historian, is often understood as indicating that the Jewish community was expelled because of disturbances about the Messiah, perhaps caused by opposition to Jewish Christians. Given Luke's emphasis on legal precedents in favor of Christianity (Acts 18:14-16), it is easy to see why he would omit that detail.<sup>7</sup>

**ESV:** Claudius's expulsion of the Jews from Rome in a.d. 49 seems to have resulted from a disturbance in the Jewish synagogues created by the Christian message. Aquila and Priscilla had much in common with Paul, being Jews, tentmakers, and possibly already Christians when they fled from Rome.

### **Acts 18:3**

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

Earned his own way. 2 Cor 11:9. Tents made from hair from a special breed of goats in Cilicia...

**[craft]** Greek: *homotechnos* (GSN-3673). Only here. It was a word used by physicians.

**Barnes: And wrought.** And worked at that occupation. Why he did it, the historian does not affirm; but it seems pretty evident that it was because he had no other means of maintenance. He also labored for his own support in Ephesus, Acts 20:34 and also at Thessalonica, 2 Thessalonians 3:9,10. The apostle was not ashamed of honest industry for a livelihood; nor did he deem it any disparagement that a minister of the gospel should labour with his own hands.

**[tentmakers]** Among Jews, the boys were all compelled to learn trades. It was considered disreputable not to be acquainted with some branch of handicraft. A practical knowledge of a trade was regarded as an asset of personal independence. The Rabbis said, "Whosoever does not teach his son a trade is as if he brought him up to be a robber." Tentmakers wove the black cloth of goat or camel's hair of which tents were made. Paul supported himself in certain places (Acts 20:34; 1 Cor. 4:12; 1 Thes. 2:9; 2 Thes. 3:8), and for reasons given in 2 Cor. 11:9-12. This was not the best policy in some places, as Paul later learned, for it did not properly train new converts to support the work (2 Cor. 12:13; cp. Galatians 6:6).

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<sup>7</sup> Bible Background Commentary – New Testament

**Barnes: For by their occupation.** By their trade; that is, they had been brought up to this business. Paul had been designed originally for a lawyer, and had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. But it was a regular custom among the Jews to train up their sons to some useful employment, that they might have the means of an honest livelihood. Even though they were trained up to the liberal sciences, yet they deemed a handicraft trade, or some honourable occupation, an indispensable part of education. Thus Maimonides (in the Tract Talmud. Tors, c. i. and it is equally plain that a custom of this kind now might preserve the health and lives of many professional men, and save from ignoble dependence or vice, in future years, many who are trained up in the lap of indulgence and wealth.

**BBC:** In the ancient economy, people of the same trade did not compete with one another as they do today. They usually lived together in the same part of town and formed trade guilds. Their trade guilds normally adopted a patron deity, and they ate sacrificial food at their regular banquets together. This cultic orientation of trade guilds would exclude practicing Jews from the fellowship, making Jews delighted to find other Jews of their own trade.

By this period, the term translated “tentmaker” was also applied to leatherworking in general. As a leatherworker, Paul would have been an artisan. Artisans were typically proud of their work, despite the long hours they had to invest to succeed, and were higher than peasants in status and income; but they were despised by higher classes, who thought labor with one’s hands degrading (see the conflicts described in the introduction to 1 Corinthians). Their long hours in their shops afforded them much time to talk while doing their work, but Paul apparently is able to discontinue the labor (1 Cor. 4:12) when his companions bring a gift from the Macedonian church (Acts 18:5; 2 Cor. 11:7-8; 2 Cor. 12:13; Phil. 4:15). Corinth’s *agora* (central marketplace) had the longest line of colonnaded shops in the empire.

“The same trade” or “technology” is the Greek word *homotechnos*. One rabbi was recorded as having said, “He who teaches not his son a trade does the same as if he taught him to steal.” Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla accordingly had a skill, tentmaking, by which they could make a living. These three “worked” together profitably. For the unmarried, lonely, and traveling Paul, the opportunity to live in the home of this gifted couple, with whom he had much in common, was uplifting to his soul and a source of great encouragement at this period of his ministry.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Believer’s Study Bible

### **Acts 18:4**

**And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.**

**Clarke: He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath**—Discoursed at large concerning Jesus as the Messiah, proving this point from their own Scriptures, collated with the facts of our Lord's life, etc.

**Clarke: And persuaded the Jews and the Greeks**—Many, both Jews and proselytes, were convinced of the truth of his doctrine. Among his converts was Epenetus, the first fruit of his labor in Achaia, Romans 16:5; and the family of Stephanas was the next; and then Crispus and Caius, or Gaius; all of whom the apostle himself baptized, 1 Corinthians 1:14-16.

**ESV: he reasoned . . . and tried to persuade.** See note on 17:17. synagogue. The first-century-a.d. Jewish philosopher Philo emphasized the city of Corinth as a home for Jewish people (*Embassy to Gaius* 281; cf. neighboring Sicyon in *1 Macc.* 15:23). Several funerary epigraphs also confirm a later Jewish presence, as does a rather crude post-Pauline inscription found near the road to Lechaion designating the “Synagogue of the Hebrews.” Greeks in a synagogue context are God-fearers.

### **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.**

Paul “pressed in the Spirit”? “Engrossed in the word,” NIV “devoted himself exclusively to preaching.” Timothy brings love offerings from Thessalonica which may have allowed Paul to minister full time (1 Thess 3:6).

**Clarke: When Silas and Timotheus were come**—We have seen, Acts 17:13, that when Paul was obliged to leave Berea, because of the persecution raised up against him in that place, he left Silas and Timotheus behind; to whom he afterwards sent word to rejoin him at Athens with all speed. It appears, from 1 Thessalonians 3:10, that, on Timothy's coming to Athens, Paul immediately sent him, and probably Silas with him, to comfort and establish the Church at Thessalonica. How long they labored here is uncertain, but they did not rejoin him till some time after he came to Corinth. It appears that he was greatly rejoiced at the account which Timothy brought of the Church at Thessalonica; and it must have been immediately after this that he wrote his first epistle to that Church, which is probably the first, in order of time, of all his epistles.

**Barnes: And when Silas and Timotheus, etc.** They came to Paul according to his request, which he had sent by the brethren who accompanied him from Thessalonica, Acts 17:16.

[**Jesus was Christ**] This was to Jews a horrible scandal (1 Cor. 1:22-23).

**Barnes: In spirit.** In his mind, in his feelings. His love to Christ was so great, and his conviction of the truth so strong, that he laboured to make known to them the truth that Jesus was the Messiah.

**Barnes: That Jesus was Christ.** That Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. Comp. Acts 17:16. The presence of Silas and Timothy animated him; and the certainty of aid in his work urged him to zeal in making known the Saviour.

**ESV:** Paul apparently had sent Silas and Timothy from Athens to visit the Macedonian churches (see note on 17:15). When they again joined Paul in Corinth, they probably were the ones who brought a contribution for Paul's ministry from the Macedonian churches (see 2 Cor. 11:9).

### **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.**

Our ancestors living on acorns and raw meat in the German forest: hadn't learned to cultivate fields. (Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, German, English, Scotch, Irish, Dutch, et al...barbarians.)

[**opposed**] Greek: *antitassomai* (GSN-498), to set the battle in array. Translated elsewhere resist (Romans 13:2; James 4:6; James 5:6; 1 Peter 5:5).

[**blasphemed**] This is all that is left for men to do when they have no arguments against Jesus being the Messiah; so, having sold themselves to rebellion, they were pressed to the point of blasphemy.

**And blasphemed**—This is precisely the way in which they still act. They have no arguments against Jesus being the Messiah; but, having made a covenant with unbelief, as soon as they are pressed on this point, they rail and blaspheme.

[**shook his raiment**] Same as shaking dust from the feet (Matthew 10:14, note; Mark 6:11; Luke 9:5; Luke 10:11; Acts 13:51).

**Barnes: He shook his raiment.** As an expressive act of shaking off the guilt of their condemnation. Comp. Acts 13:45. He shook his raiment to show that he was resolved henceforward to have nothing to do with them; perhaps, also, to express the fact that God would soon shake them off, or reject them. (*Doddridge.*)

**Clarke: He shook his raiment**—This was an action similar to that of shaking the dust of the feet; see on Matthew 10:14 (note). See a parallel act, and its signification, in

Nehemiah 5:13: Also I SHOOK MY LAP, and said, So shall God SHAKE every man FROM HIS HOUSE and FROM his LABOR; even thus shall he be SHAKEN OUT and EMPTIED. St. Paul's act on this occasion seems to have been the same with this of Nehemiah, and with the same signification; and it is likely that he was led by a Divine impulse to do it—thus signifying the shaking and emptying out of this disobedient people, which took place about sixteen years afterwards.

**[Your blood be upon your own heads]** Paul was now at the point, temporarily at least, where Christ was when He pronounced desolation upon them (Matthew 23:37-39). He still continued going to the synagogues and put forth every effort to win Israel (Acts 19:8; Romans 9-11).

**Your blood be upon your own heads**—That is, you alone are the cause of the destruction that is coming upon yourselves and upon your country.

**Barnes: I am clean.** I am not to blame for your destruction. I have done my duty. The gospel had been fairly offered, and deliberately rejected; and Paul was not to blame for their ruin, which he saw was coming upon them.

**[clean]** Free from responsibility (Acts 20:26; Ezekiel 3:17-21; Ezekiel 33:1-6).

**Paul was pressed in the spirit**—rather (according to what is certainly the true reading) “was pressed with the word”; expressing not only his zeal and assiduity in preaching it, but some inward *pressure* which at this time he experienced in the work (to convey which more clearly was probably the origin of the common reading). What that pressure was we happen to know, with singular minuteness and vividness of description, from the apostle himself, in his first Epistles to the Corinthians and Thessalonians (1Co 2:1-5; 1Th 3:1-10). He had come away from Athens, as he remained there, in a depressed and anxious state of mind, having there met, for the first time, with unwilling Gentile ears. He continued, apparently for some time, laboring alone in the synagogue of Corinth, full of deep and anxious solicitude for his Thessalonian converts. His early ministry at Corinth was colored by these feelings. Himself deeply humbled, his power as a preacher was more than ever felt to lie in demonstration of the Spirit. At length Silas and Timotheus arrived with exhilarating tidings of the faith and love of his Thessalonian children, and of their earnest longing again to see their father in Christ; bringing with them also, in token of their love and duty, a pecuniary contribution for the supply of his wants. This seems to have so lifted him as to put new life and vigor into his ministry. *He now wrote his FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS*, in which the “pressure” which resulted from all this strikingly appears. (See Introduction to First Thessalonians). Such emotions are known only to the ministers of Christ, and, even of them, only to such as “travail in birth until Christ be formed in” their hearers.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Ac 18:5). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Apparently it was at this time that Paul made the break that took him to the Gentile world. It would seem that from this point Paul's ministry was largely to the Gentiles. We will find that true in Ephesus and less obviously in Rome.<sup>10</sup>

**ESV: when they opposed and reviled him.** Paul will spend much time with audiences where there is interest and response, even if they don't immediately believe (see v. 4), but he will not spend time where he simply faces hostile opposition. Shaking garments was a gesture of rejection, much like shaking the dust from one's feet (cf. 13:51). Your blood be on your own heads reflects Ezekiel's words about God's prophetic watchman (Ezek. 33:1–7). “Blood” means “the responsibility for your judgment by God.” Paul had faithfully discharged his responsibility, so that at the final judgment no part of these Jews' failure to believe could be attributed to his failure to tell them about Christ (but cf. note on Acts 18:7).

### **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.**

Now independent; moved closed to danger.

**[departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus]** Left the place where he stayed with Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:3) and lodged with Justus, who is called Titus Justus in some MSS and versions.

**Clarke: And he departed thence**—From his former lodging, or that quarter of the city where he had dwelt before with Aquila and Priscilla; and went to lodge with Justus, apparently a proselyte of the gate. This person is called Titus, and Titus Justus, in several MSS. and versions.

**BBC:** The church met in houses for the first three centuries (Acts 12:12; Romans 16:5). Synagogues also sometimes gathered in homes until the Jewish community could afford a special building, and between persecution and the need for funds to free slaves, feed the poor and support missionaries, the churches had no money left for buildings anyway. Patrons' homes in Corinth normally seated nine in the *triclinium* (the best room) and as many as forty others in the adjoining *atrium* (the largest furnished room).

The status and thoroughly Latin name of “Titus Justus” identify him as a Roman citizen and part of the Roman culture (Corinth was both Greek and Roman in this period); he may have been from one of the Roman families established there in the time of Julius Caesar. His first name may be Gaius (Romans 16:23; 1 Cor. 1:14).

**ESV:** Paul did not completely give up on witnessing to the Jews of Corinth, as his relocating next door to the synagogue indicates. Paul's Jewish opponents cannot have

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<sup>10</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:593). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

been very pleased about his choice of a new location in such close proximity to the synagogue. Nothing more is known of Titius Justus. He is not the Titus who was with Paul long before the founding of the Corinthian church (Gal. 2:1).

### **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.**

[Crispus (& Gaius & household of Stephanas) baptized by Paul himself (1 Cor 1:14-16). Crispus was the head of the synagogue!

“To the Jews, a stumbling block...” 1 Cor 1:23, 24.

**[Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house]**

This must have been galling to the Jews to have their chief ruler of the synagogue converted to Christ. The chief ruler presided in all assemblies, interpreted the law, decided what was lawful and unlawful, punished and executed the rebellious, solemnized marriages, and issued divorces. Upon his conversion Sosthenes succeeded him (Acts 18:17). He also became a convert (1 Cor. 1:1).

**Clarke: Many of the Corinthians**—Those to whom the sacred historian refers were probably Gentiles, and were the fruits of the apostle’s labors after he had ceased to preach among the Jews.

**Barnes: And Crispus.** He is mentioned, in 1 Corinthians 1:14, as having been one of the few whom Paul baptized with his own hands. The conversion of such a man must have tended greatly to exasperate the other Jews, and to further the progress of the Christian faith among the Corinthians.

**he departed thence, and entered into a certain man’s house, named Justus**—not changing his lodging, as if Aquila and Priscilla up to this time were with the opponents of the apostle [ALFORD], but merely ceasing any more to testify in the synagogue, and henceforth carrying on his labors in this house of Justus, which “joining hard to the synagogue,” would be easily accessible to such of its worshippers as were still open to light. Justus, too, being probably a proselyte, would more easily draw a mixed audience than the synagogue. From this time forth conversions rapidly increased.<sup>11</sup>

**Ordinances, Baptismal Candidate**—Always the order is absolutely important: first, believe in the Lord; then, be baptized. Baptism was the outward expression of the inward belief. In the case of Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, his entire household was not baptized because he believed. Rather, as Luke says, he and his entire household believed in the Lord. Because of this belief in Jesus, they were baptized.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Ac 18:7). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>12</sup>Disciple’s Study Bible

## **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:**

Pattern developing (of Jews resisting), but he is to keep right on speaking...  
He suffered just as we do, with apprehensions, forebodings, etc. 1 Cor 2:3.

[**vision, Be not afraid, but speak and hold not they peace**] See Vision. Paul evidently became weary of continued fights with the Jews here and probably was in danger of his life, so to encourage and comfort him and prevent him from leaving Corinth, the Lord made clear His will to stay here.

**Clarke: Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision**—It is likely that Paul was at this time much discouraged by the violent opposition of the Jews, and probably was in danger of his life; see Acts 18:10; and might have been entertaining serious thoughts of ceasing to preach, or leaving Corinth. To prevent this, and comfort him, God was pleased to give him this vision.

**Clarke: Be not afraid**—That this comfort and assurance were necessary himself shows us in his first epistle to these Corinthians, Acts 2:3: I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

**Barnes: Be not afraid. Perhaps** Paul might have been intimidated by the learning, refinement, and splendour of Corinth; *perhaps* embarrassed in view of his duty of addressing the rich, the polite, and the great. To this he may allude in 1 Corinthians 2:3: "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." In such circumstances it pleased God to meet him, and disarm his fears. This he did by assuring him of success. The fact that God had much people in that city, Acts 18:10, was employed to remove his apprehensions. The prospect of success in the ministry, and the certainty of the presence of God, will take away the fear of the rich, the learned, and the great.

**ESV: 9–11** Up to this point, opposition to his ministry had usually forced Paul to leave a place of witness. But the Lord in a vision assured him that he would have a successful ministry in Corinth and would suffer no further harm. In obedience Paul remained there for 18 months (c. a.d. 49–51, during which time he wrote 1–2 Thessalonians). God's assurance was immediately confirmed by Paul's deliverance from an attempt to condemn him before the proconsul. Acts 18:10–11 gives helpful insight into Paul's understanding of God's providence and predestination in relation to human responsibility for preaching the gospel. Though God had told Paul, "I have many in this city who are my people," indicating that many in Corinth would come to faith in Christ, this did not lead Paul to conclude that he had no further part to play. Rather, Paul stayed a year and six months, longer than he stayed at any city except Ephesus, preaching the gospel *in order that through his preaching* those whom God had chosen would come to faith (cf. note on 27:30). Predestination implied successful evangelism.

### **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.**

**Barnes: No man shall set on thee.** No one who shall rise up against thee shall be able to hurt thee. His life was in God's hands, and he would preserve him, in order that his people might be collected into the church.

Assurance oracles such as "I will be with you" were standard in the Old Testament (e.g., Genesis 15:1; Genesis 26:24; Genesis 28:15; Jeremiah 1:8; Jeremiah 15:20). In Greek literature gods or goddesses often appeared to people at night, frequently while they slept; but such revelations from God or his angels are no less common in the Old Testament (e.g., Genesis 26:24; Genesis 28:12-15; Genesis 31:24).

In a vision, Christ told Paul that he had many people in Corinth. Sometimes we can feel alone or isolated, especially when we see wickedness all around us and when we are persecuted for our faith. Usually, however, there are others in the neighborhood or community who also follow Christ. Ask God to lead you to them.

**McGee:** Corinth was about the last place that you would expect the Lord to "have much people." I have been through Las Vegas quite a few times. I'll be honest with you—when I look at that crowd, I wouldn't get the impression that the Lord might have people there. If the Lord were to say to me, "I have much people in this city," I wouldn't question the Lord, but it surely would be the opposite from my own impression.

Paul had already been in Corinth for quite a while, and I am sure that he was wondering about that city. I'm of the opinion that when he received this opposition, he was ready to leave and go somewhere else. However, the Lord Himself steps in and detains Paul. He tells him, "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.**

Read 1 & 2 Corinthians to see the impressive results of his efforts in that vile city.. During this period, he wrote the Thessalonian letters. He wrote the Epistle to the Romans from Corinth.

**[a year and six months]** This was A.D. 54-55, during which time he wrote 1 Thessalonians (54 A.D.) and 2 Thessalonians (55 A.D.).

**Barnes: And he continued.** etc. Paul was not accustomed to remain long in a place. At Ephesus, indeed, he remained three years, Acts 20:31; and his stay at Corinth was caused by his success, and by the necessity of placing a church, collected out of such corrupt and dissolute materials, on a firm foundation.

**LAN:** Others who became Christians in Corinth were Phoebe (Romans 16:1—Cenchrea was the port city of Corinth), Tertius (Romans 16:22), Erastus (Romans 16:23), Quartus (Romans 16:23), Chloe (1 Cor. 1:11), Gaius (1 Cor. 1:14), Stephanas and his household (1 Cor. 16:15), Fortunatus (1 Cor. 16:17), and Achaicus (1 Cor. 16:17).

**LAN:** During the year and a half that Paul stayed in wicked Corinth, he established a church and wrote two letters to the believers in Thessalonica (the books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians). Although Paul had been in Thessalonica for only a short time (Acts 17:1-15), he commended the believers there for their loving deeds, strong faith, and endurance inspired by hope. While encouraging them to stay away from immorality, he dealt with the themes of salvation, suffering, and the second coming of Jesus Christ. Paul told them to continue to work hard while they awaited Christ's return.

### **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,**

Proconsul. (Tiberias had changed this province from a senatorial to an imperial one, accordingly "procurator" would be the correct term.

Claudius restored its senatorial character, its proper governor would be, as here stated, a proconsul.)

Gallio, ruler of Greece, originally known as Marcus Annaeus Novatus; adopted by Roman orator called Lucius Junius Gallio. Gallio was brother to the celebrated philosopher Seneca, Nero's tutor, who would become the emperor after Claudius (and who afterwards passed the sentence of death on both of them).

**[Gallio]** He was proconsul, all of Achaia being governed by the Roman senate again in 44 A.D. It was not an imperial province, as under Tiberias. Gallio was an elder brother of Seneca, who was Nero's tutor. He was an amiable and gracious man, as proved in his handling the Christian cause in Acts 18:14-16. He and his two brothers were later executed by Nero the tyrant.

**Clarke: Gallio**—This deputy, or proconsul, was eldest brother to the celebrated Lucius Annaeus Seneca, the stoic philosopher, preceptor of Nero, and who is so well known among the learned by his works. The name of Gallio, was at first Marcus Annaeus Novatus; but, having been adopted in the family of Gallio, he took the name of Lucius Junius Gallio. He, and Annaeus Mela his brother, father of the poet Lucan, shared in the disgrace of their brother Seneca; and by this tyrant, Nero, whose early years were so promising, the three brothers were put to death

**Barnes: And when Gallio.** After the Romans had conquered Greece, they reduced it to two provinces, Macedonia and Achaia, which were each governed by a proconsul. Gallio was the brother of the celebrated philosopher Seneca, and was made proconsul of Achaia, A.D. 53. His proper name was Marcus Annaeus Novatus; but having been adopted into the family of Gallio, a rhetorician, he took his name. He is described by ancient writers as

having been of a remarkably mild and amiable disposition. His brother Seneca (Pref. Quest. Natu. 4) describes him as being of the most lovely temper: "No mortal," says he, "was ever so mild to any one, as he was to all; and in him there was such a natural power of goodness, that there was no semblance of art or dissimulation."

[**Achaia**] All of Greece south of Thessaly.

[**judgment seat**] Greek: *bema* (GSN-968), a seat on a platform on which the judge sat between the accused and the accuser on two other platforms in the court. Jews had no power to punish any person in a Roman province, so were obliged to bring Paul before the Roman governor. Had they possessed power of death here Paul would have been put to death.

**Clarke: And brought him to the judgment seat**—They had no power to punish any person in the Roman provinces, and therefore were obliged to bring their complaint before the Roman governor. The powers that be are ordained of God. Had the Jews possessed the power here, Paul had been put to death!

**BBC:** A proconsul governed Achaia (most of Greece) from 27 B.C. to A.D. 15 and from A.D. 44 on. Gallio began his two-year term of office July 1 of A.D. 51; it was cut short by sickness, so we may reasonably date this appearance in A.D. 51-52, probably before the end of 51. Like his brother, the Stoic philosopher Seneca, he was ultimately killed by Nero. Luke could not have had access to names of such officials at precise dates unless he learned them from Paul; there were no reference works listing them.

As proconsul, Gallio would decide important cases at his judgment seat in the morning. This "judgment seat" (KJV, NASB) is probably the ceremonial rostrum on the eastern end of the Corinthian forum, in full view of the public, although some scholars have suggested a tribunal (cf. NRSV) in an administrative building (cf. NIV). Juries decided cases about murder, adultery and several other offenses; a magistrate had to try other crimes.

**ESV:** The **proconsul** of a province was its chief judicial officer. Since Gallio served in this role a.d. 51–52, this provides one of the key dates used in computing dates for Paul's various missionary journeys. The tribunal (Gk. *bēma*) was the proconsul's judgment seat. It has been excavated in Corinth and was located in the open air in the marketplace.

### **Acts 18:13**

**Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.**

**Clarke: Persuaded men to worship God contrary to the law**—This accusation was very insidious. The Jews had permission by the Romans to worship their own God in their own way: this the laws allowed. The Roman worship was also established by the law. The Jews probably intended to accuse Paul of acting contrary to both laws. "He is not a Jew, for he does not admit of circumcision; he is not a Gentile, for he preaches against the worship of the gods. He is setting up a worship of his own, in opposition to all

laws, and persuading many people to join with him: he is therefore a most dangerous man, and should be put to death.”

**Barnes: Contrary to the law.** Evidently intending contrary to *all* law—the laws of the Romans and of the Jews. It was permitted to the Jews to worship God according to their own views in Greece; but they could easily pretend that Paul had departed from that mode of worshipping God. It was easy for them to maintain that he taught contrary to the laws of the Romans, and their acknowledged religion; and their design seems to have been, to accuse him of teaching men to worship God in an unlawful and irregular way, a way unknown to any of the laws of the empire.

If Paul’s views put him outside Judaism, his followers would not have the protection Roman tradition gave to Judaism by virtue of its antiquity.

Paul was charged with promoting a religion not approved by Roman law. This charge amounted to treason. Paul was not encouraging obedience to a human king other than Caesar (see Acts 17:7), nor was he speaking against the Roman empire. Instead he was speaking about Christ’s eternal kingdom.

### **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:**

[**wrong or wicked lewdness**] Gallio perceived that it was a matter of envy and malice and not of injustice or mockery of Jewish faith, so he drove them from the judgment seat.

**Clarke: Paul was now about to open his mouth**—He was about to enter on his defense; but Gallio, perceiving that the prosecution was through envy and malice, would not put Paul to any farther trouble, but determined the matter as follows.

**Barnes: Or wicked lewdness.** Any flagrant and gross offence. The word used here occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It denotes, properly, an act committed by him who is skilled, facile, or an adept in iniquity—an act of a veteran offender. Such crimes Gallio was willing to take cognizance of.

Paul did not even have to open his **mouth** to defend the faith. God had already provided for Paul’s defense; he had prepared Gallio to make the correct decision. No crime had been committed against Rome. Gallio considered Christianity to be a Jewish sect. Because Judaism was an established religion in the Roman Empire, this “sect” was not in violation of Roman law. Gallio had his bailiffs drive the accusers out of his presence. Once again the sovereign hand of God preserved the life of His faithful servant.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The Nelson Study Bible

## 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.**

**Clarke: But if it be a question of words**—Περι λογου, Concerning doctrine and names—whether the person called Jesus be the person you call the Messiah. And of your law—any particular nicety, concerning that law which is peculiar to yourselves: Look ye to it—settle the business among yourselves; the Roman government does not meddle with such matters, and I will not take upon me to—decide in a case that does not concern my office. As if he had said: “The Roman laws give religious liberty to Jews and Greeks; but, if controversies arise among you on these subjects, decide them among yourselves, or dispute about them as much as you please.” A better answer could not be given by man; and it was highly becoming the acknowledged meekness, gentleness, and benevolence of this amiable man. He concluded that the state had no right to control any man’s religious opinion; that was between the object of his worship and his own conscience; and therefore he was not authorized to intermeddle with subjects of this nature, which the law left to every man’s private judgment. Had all the rulers of the people in every country acted as this sensible and benevolent Roman, laws against liberty of conscience, concerning religious persecution, would not be found to be, as they not are, blots and disgraces on the statute books of almost all the civilized nations of Europe.

**Barnes: And names.** Probably he had heard something of the nature of the controversy, and understood it to be a dispute about *names*; i.e., whether Jesus was to be called the Messiah or not. To him this would appear as a matter pertaining to the Jews alone, and to be ranked with their other disputes arising from the difference of sect and name.

**Barnes: Of your law.** A question respecting the proper interpretation of the law, or the rites and ceremonies which it commanded. The Jews had many such disputes, and Gallio did not regard them as coming under his cognizance as a magistrate.

**BBC:** Gallio dismisses the case. Roman courts decided violations of Roman law; but various individual edicts throughout the empire had given Jewish courts jurisdiction over internal Jewish affairs, and Gallio is not about to meddle in them. Gallio thus accepts Paul’s religion as a variant form of Judaism, rather than a new and illegal religion (*religio illicita*). Although precedent was not binding in Roman law, it was important and would likely be followed by other provincial governors; if involved in legal cases, Luke’s Christian readers can cite this case on their own behalf.

## Acts 18:16

**And he drave them from the judgment seat.**

Very important decision! Paul was now free to preach the gospel throughout the Roman empire without being charged with breaking the law. (Gallio declared, in effect, that Christianity was, in the eyes of Romans, officially a Jewish sect.)

**[drive them from the judgment seat]** The Jews perhaps persisted in their accusation so the lictors were ordered to drive them from the judgment seat.

**BBC:** That Gallio “drove them away” (NASB), perhaps with the force of his lictors’ (attendants’) rods, betrays more than a tinge of Roman impatience for Jewish religious disputes. Many upper-class Romans viewed Jews as uncultured troublemakers, classing them alongside other religions from Syria and Egypt (cf. Acts 16:20-21).

**Clarke:** **And he drive them from the judgment seat**—He saw that their accusation was both frivolous and vexatious, and he ordered them to depart, and the assembly to disperse. The word which we translate he drive, does not signify here any act of violence on the part of Gallio or the Roman officers, but simply an authoritative dismissal.

**LAN:** This was an important judicial decision for the spread of the gospel in the Roman empire. Judaism was a recognized religion under Roman law. As long as Christians were seen as part of Judaism, the court refused to hear cases brought against them. If they had claimed to be a new religion, they could easily have been outlawed by the government. In effect Gallio was saying, “I don’t understand all your terminology and finer points of theology. Handle the matter yourself and don’t bother me.”

### **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.**

Sosthenes apparently succeeded Crispus after his conversion. Sosthenes also later converts. (Beating is not recommended method for evangelism...) 1 Cor 1:1.

**[beat him before the judgment seat]** He became a convert also (2 Cor. 1:1). This may be the reason for his beating.

**Clarke:** **Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes**—As this man is termed the chief ruler of the synagogue, it is probable that he had lately succeeded Crispus in that office; see Acts 18:8; and that he was known either to have embraced Christianity, or to have favored the cause of St. Paul. He is supposed to be the same person whom St. Paul associates with himself in the first epistle to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 1:1. Crispus might have been removed from his presidency in the synagogue as soon as the Jews found he had embraced Christianity, and Sosthenes appointed in his place. And, as he seems to have speedily embraced the same doctrine, the Jews would be the more enraged, and their malice be directed strongly against him, when they found that the proconsul would not support them in their opposition to Paul.

**Barnes:** **Took Sosthenes,** etc. As he was the chief ruler of the synagogue, he had probably been a leader in the opposition to Paul, and in the prosecution. Indignant at the

Jews-at their bringing such questions before the tribunal-at their bigotry, and rage, and contentious spirit-they probably fell upon him in a tumultuous and disorderly manner as he was leaving the tribunal. The Greeks would feel no small measure of indignation at these disturbers of the public peace, and they took this opportunity to express their rage.

**LAN:** Crispus had been the ruler of the synagogue, but he and his family were converted and joined the Christians (Acts 18:8). Sosthenes was chosen to take his place. The mob could have been Greeks venting their feelings against the Jews for causing turmoil, or the crowd may have included some Jews. In any case, they beat Sosthenes for losing the case and leaving the synagogue worse off than before. A person named Sosthenes is mentioned in 1 Cor. 1:1, and many believe this was the same man who, in time, became a convert and a companion of Paul.

**McGee:** I have read and heard Bible expositors condemn this man Gallio in no uncertain terms. He is pictured as an unfeeling typical judge of that day. I want to say something for the defense of Gallio. I thank God for him, and I personally think that he took the right position. I'll tell you what I mean by that. He is probably the first person who made a decision between church and state. Gallio said that if the matter was concerning religion or about some religious thing, then they should take it and handle it themselves. He was a Roman magistrate and he was concerned with enforcing Roman law. But when the case did not involve Roman law, he would not interfere. He told them to handle religious matters themselves. He adopted a "hands off" policy. I like Gallio. He separated church and state. He would not interfere with Paul preaching in the city of Corinth. Corinth was a city of freedom, including religious freedom. Since the issue had to do with religion, he asked them to settle it themselves.

Now I want to say this: I wish the Supreme Court of the United States would adopt the same policy. I wish they would adopt a "hands off" policy when it comes to matters of religion. What right does a group of secular men have to come along and make a decision that you can't have prayer in the schools? If a community wants prayer in their school, then they should have prayer in their school. If they are not having prayer in school, then the state should not force prayer in school. We claim to have freedom of speech and freedom of religion in our land. The unfortunate thing is that our freedoms are often curtailed. They are abused and misdirected. Under the guise of separating church and state, the freedom of religion is actually curtailed. If we are going to separate church and state, then the state should keep its nose out of that which refers to the church.

If this man Gallio were running for office, I would vote for him. I think we need men with this kind of vision. It says Gallio cared for none of those things. Of course not! He is a secular magistrate. He is not going to try to settle an argument about differences in doctrine. That's not his business, and he'll stay out of it. I would vote for him.

**ESV: Sosthenes** may have been a Jewish convert to Christianity, for Paul mentions someone by that name as his "coauthor" in 1 Cor. 1:1. In Acts 18:8, Crispus had been called "the ruler of the synagogue," but Sosthenes may have succeeded him when Crispus became a Christian, or there may have been more than one person with this office in that synagogue.

## **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.***

Syria = Antioch. Silas, Timothy, Caius, and Aristarchus also accompany him, as well as Aquilla and Priscilla.

Of Silas as Paul's companion we read no more. He apparently accompanies him as far as Jerusalem (from which he initially had come to Antioch as one of the deputies of the council). He later appears to put himself with Peter (1 Pet 5:12).

Cenchrea: Eastern harbor of Corinth.

**Vow:** not a Nazarite vow (Num 6)  
("euchen" = prayer or vow: Jas 5:15)

A Jewish way of giving thanks, etc.

Shorn: upon release of the vow (1 Cor 11:14)

Sacrifice within prescribed 30 days possible reason for Paul's haste to leave Ephesus to Jerusalem (v. 21)

(Similar vow: 21:23,24.) [Christian does not take a vow? John 15:5.]

**[having shorn his head in Cenchrea]** Paul made a vow which was to be completed at Jerusalem (Acts 21:24-27). Aquila appears to have remained at Ephesus (Acts 18:26).

**[vow]** Greek: *euche* (GSN-2171), here; Acts 21:23; James 5:15.

**Clarke: And Paul—tarried there yet a good while—**The persecuting Jews plainly saw, from the manner in which the proconsul had conducted this business, that they could have no hope of raising a state persecution against the apostles; and the laws provided so amply for the personal safety of every Roman citizen that then were afraid to proceed any farther in their violence. It would not be unknown that Paul was possessed of the right of Roman citizenship; and therefore his person was sacred as long as he did nothing contrary to the laws.

It is probable that at this time Paul stayed, on the whole, as Corinth, about two years.

**Clarke: Having shorn his head in Cenchrea—**But who was it that shorn his head? Paul or Aquila? Some think the latter, who had bound himself by the Nazarite vow, probably before he became a Christian; and, being under that vow, his conscience would not permit him to disregard it. There is nothing in the text that absolutely obliges us to understand this action as belonging to St. Paul. It seems to have been the act of Aquila alone; and therefore both Paul and Priscilla are mentioned before Aquila; and it is

natural to refer the vow to the latter. Yet there are certainly some weighty reasons why the vow should be referred to St. Paul, and not to Aquila; and interpreters are greatly divided on the subject. Chrysostom, Isidore of Seville, Grotius, Hammond, Zegerus, Erasmus, Baronius, Pearce, Wesley, and others, refer the vow to Aquila.—Jerome, Augustin, Bede, Calmet, Dodd, Rosenmuller, and others, refer it to St. Paul. Each party has its strong reasons—the matter is doubtful—the bare letter of the text determines nothing: yet I cannot help leaning to the latter opinion. Perhaps it was from feeling the difficulty of deciding which was under the vow that the Ethiopic and two Latin versions, instead of *χειρομενος*, having shaved, in the singular, appear to have read *χειρομενοι*, they shaved; and thus put both Paul and Aquila under the vow.

Cenchrea. This was a port on the east side of the isthmus of Corinth, opposite to the Lecheum, which was the other port on the west. And it is likely that it was at Cenchrea that St. Paul took shipping for Syria, as it would be more convenient for him, and a shorter passage to embark at Cenchrea, in order to go by the Aegean Sea to Syria, than to embark at the Lecheum, and sail down into the Mediterranean. This isthmus is generally described now as dividing the Gulf of Lepanto, on the west, from the Gulf of Engia, or Eginaon, on the east.

**McGee:** There are a great many folk who find fault with Paul because he made a vow. They say that this is the man who preached that we are not under Law but we are under grace, and so he should not have made a vow. Anyone who says this about Paul is actually making a little law for Paul. Such folk are saying that Paul is to do things their way. Under grace, friend, if you want to make a vow, you can make it. And if you do not want to make a vow, you don't have to. Paul didn't force anyone else to make a vow. In fact, he said emphatically that no one has to do that. But if Paul wants to make a vow, that is his business. That is the marvelous freedom that we have in the grace of God today.

There are some super-saints who form little cliques and make laws for the Christian. They say we can't do this and we can't do that. May I say to you very candidly that our relationship is to the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is a love affair. If we love Him, of course we will not do anything that will break our fellowship with Him. Don't insist that I go through your little wicket gate; I am to follow Him. He shows me what I can and cannot do in order to maintain fellowship with Him.

If one wishes to eat meat, there is freedom to eat meat. If one wishes to observe a certain day, there is freedom to observe it. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). The important thing is to do all to the glory of God. Eating meat will not commend you to God and neither will abstaining from meat commend you to God.

Let's not find fault with Paul here. Poor Gallio and Paul surely do get in trouble with their critics right in this particular passage. I want to defend both of them.

Paul is now returning from his second missionary journey. He has made Corinth the terminus of his journey and now he is going back to Antioch. He sails from Cenchrea, which is the seaport over on the east side. There is a canal through the Corinthian peninsula today, but there was none in that day. They would actually pull the boats overland. I have a picture taken to show the rocks that are worn by the boats which were pulled over the isthmus to the other side. Cenchrea was the port of Corinth on the

eastward side. Paul goes there with Aquila and Priscilla, and they take ship there. He is not going westward any farther; he is sailing for home.

**Discipleship, Women**—Priscilla’s level of leadership is indicated by the fact that she and her husband, Aquila, traveled with Paul in ministry. Christians gathered in Priscilla’s homes in Corinth and Ephesus. She was a great encouragement to other leaders. Paul gave her special greetings (2 Ti 4:19). Clearly she was a leader in her own right. It may be significant that her name precedes that of her husband at times.<sup>14</sup>

**ESV:** The **many days longer** that Paul continued in Corinth seems to be in addition to the 18 months of v. 11. Syria refers to his sponsoring church of Antioch in Syria. Cenchreae was about 6.5 miles (10.5 km) east of Corinth and was Corinth's main port to the Aegean Sea. The Roman harbor of Cenchreae is still visible (though largely submerged), and excavators have identified warehouses, fish tanks, and what they believe may be temples to Isis and Aphrodite. Paul left Priscilla and Aquila at Ephesus (v. 19) to establish the ministry there. The cutting of Paul's hair probably indicates he had completed a vow (see Num. 6:1–21; Acts 21:20–24). Besides not cutting the hair, such a vow mandated strict purity and refraining from strong drink. One would have undergone such a vow in seeking divine blessing for an undertaking or to express thanksgiving.

### **Acts 18:19**

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

Never forgot his friends (Rom 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19).

**[Ephesus]** Across the Aegean Sea from Cenchrea and Corinth. The most flourishing city in Asia Minor. It had many eminent orators and philosophers. The famous temple of Diana—one of the seven ancient wonders of the world—was here. Not in existence today.

**Clarke: He came to Ephesus**—Where it appears he spent but one Sabbath. It is supposed that Paul left Aquila and Priscilla at this place, and that he went on alone to Jerusalem; for it is certain they were at Ephesus when Apollos arrived there. See Acts 18:24, 26. EPHESUS was at the time in which St. Paul visited it, one of the most flourishing cities of Asia Minor. It was situated in that part anciently called Ionia, but now Natolia. It abounded with the most eminent orators, philosophers, etc., in the world; and was adorned with the most splendid buildings. Here was that famous temple of Diana, reputed one of the seven wonders of the world. This city is now under the dominion of the Turks, and is in a state of almost entire ruin. The temple of Minerva, which had long served as a Christian church, is now so completely ruined that its site cannot be easily determined; though some ruins of the walls are still standing, with five or six marble columns, forty feet in length, and seven in diameter, all of one piece. It still

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<sup>14</sup> Disciple’s Study Bible

has a good harbour, and is about forty miles from Smyrna. In Chandler's Travels in Asia Minor, some curious information is given concerning this once eminent city. His account concludes thus: "The Ephesians are now a few Greek peasants, living in extreme wretchedness, dependence, and insensibility: the representative of an illustrious people, and inhabiting the wrecks of their greatness: some beneath the vaults of the Stadium, once the crowded scene of their diversions; and some live by the abrupt precipice, in the sepulchres which received the ashes of their ancestors. Such are the present citizens of Ephesus; and such is the condition to which that renowned city has been gradually reduced. Its streets are obscured and overgrown; a herd of goats was driven to it for shelter from the sun at noon; and a noisy flight of crows from the quarries seemed to insult its silence. We heard the partridge call in the area of the theater, and of the Stadium. The glorious pomp of its heathen worship is no longer remembered; and Christianity, which was there nursed by apostles, and fostered by general councils, until it increased to fullness of stature, barely lingers on, in an existence hardly visible." Travels in Asia Minor, p. 130. Reader! This city was once the capital of Asia Minor; and its ruins alone prove that it has existed: and it was one of those seven Churches to which a letter was expressly dictated by Jesus Christ himself! Ephesus is properly no more! and the Church of Ephesus is blotted put of the map of Christianity! Be silent and adore.

**Barnes: And he came to Ephesus.** This was a celebrated city in Ionia, in Asia Minor, about forty miles south of Smyrna. It was chiefly famous for the temple of Diana, usually reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world. Pliny styles this city the ornament of Asia. In the times of the Romans it was the metropolis of Asia. This city is now under the dominion of the Turks, and is almost in a state of ruin. Dr. Chandler, in his travels in Asia Minor, says-"The inhabitants are a few Greek peasants, living in extreme wretchedness, dependence, and insensibility; the representatives of an illustrious people, and inhabiting the wreck of their greatness; some in the substructions of the glorious edifices which they raised; some beneath the vaults of the stadium, once the crowded scene of their diversions; and some in the sepulchres which received their ashes."-Travels, p. 131, Oxford, 1775. The Jews, according to Josephus, were very numerous in Ephesus, and had obtained the privilege of citizenship.

**and reasoned with the Jews**—the *tense* here not being the usual one denoting *continuous* action (as in Ac 17:2; 18:4), but that expressing a *transient act*. He had been forbidden to preach the word in Asia (Ac 16:6), but he would not consider that as precluding this passing exercise of his ministry when Providence brought him to its capital; nor did it follow that the prohibition was still in force.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Ac 18:19). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

### **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.

Later returns and spends two years.

[**this feast that cometh in Jerusalem**] Perhaps the passover.

[**but I will return again unto you, if God will**] Paul did return to Ephesus again and spent three years there (Acts 19:1; Acts 20:31).

### **Acts 18:22**

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

4th visit to Jerusalem.

[**gone up**] That is, gone up to Jerusalem. After the feast he went back to Antioch, thus ending his second missionary journey. See Paul's Second Missionary Journey.

**Clarke: Saluted the Church**—That is, the Church at Jerusalem, called emphatically THE CHURCH, because it was the FIRST Church—the MOTHER, or APOSTOLIC Church; and from it all other Christian Churches proceeded: those in Galatia, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, etc. Therefore, even this last was only a daughter Church, when in its purest state.

**Clarke: Went down to Antioch**—That is, Antioch in Syria, as the word is generally to be understood when without addition, so Caesarea is always to be understood Caesarea in Palestine, when without the addition of Philippi.

**BBC:** Summer winds were generally northerly but often east of north, which made Caesarea easier to reach than Antioch's port city of Seleucia.

**LAN:** This verse marks the end of Paul's second missionary journey and the beginning of the third, which lasted from A.D. 53-57. Leaving the church at Antioch (his home base), Paul headed toward Ephesus, but along the way he revisited the churches in Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18:23). The heart of this trip was a lengthy stay (two to three years) in Ephesus. Before returning to Jerusalem, he also visited believers in Macedonia and Greece.

**ESV:** Leaving from the main Palestinian port of Caesarea (cf. 8:40; 9:30; 21:8) in the spring of a.d. 51, Paul went up and greeted the church, which most interpreters understand to mean the church in Jerusalem, which in that region could be called “the church” without further specification, and which was the location to which one would “go up” from Caesarea, given the higher altitude of Jerusalem. Then Paul went down (from Jerusalem) to Antioch (cf. 13:1–3; 14:26–28; 15:30–35; and see note on 11:19).

### **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.**

#### **Third Missionary Journey**

To strengthen..teach.. the existing churches (his last days at liberty...). Threat of Judaizing teachers (Gal 2:21, 4:4). Galatians written on 2<sup>nd</sup> visit to Ephesus.

“In order”: nothing haphazard; he planned every movement.  
How could a sick man accomplish so much? (Phil 4:12-13).

Raising of contributions a key part of cementing the Jewish and Gentile factions: Gal 2:9,10; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8,9; Rom 15:25,26.

Timothy, Erastus, Gaius, Aristarchus (and probably Titus) accompany him on this journey.

**Ephesus:** Outstanding church; 2 letters addressed to it: the Lord’s and Paul’s. Paul’s summit.

Romans = foundation truths.  
Corinthians = correction of failures  
Ephesus = sublimest truths of the Church.

Given to idolatry, demonism, witchcraft, sorcery. Temple of Artemis, or Diana.

**BBC:** Only by late spring or early summer was the land route from Antioch through Galatia and Phrygia open, another indication of the time of year.

**[departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia]** Paul's third missionary journey:

1. Went by land again through Syria, Cilicia, Galatia, and Phrygia (Acts 15:41-16:6 with Acts 18:23)
2. Ephesus, Ionia, Asia Minor (Acts 19:1-41)
3. Macedonia (tour of churches, Acts 20:1)
4. Greece (tour of churches, Acts 20:2)
5. Macedonia (tour of churches, Acts 20:3)
6. Philippi, to Troas, Mysia, across the Aegean to Asia Minor (Acts 20:4-12)
7. Assos, Mysia (Acts 20:13)
8. Mitylene, Isle of Lesbos (Acts 20:14)
9. Trogyllium (Acts 20:15)

10. Miletus, Caria, Asia Minor (Acts 20:15-38)
11. Isle of Coos (Acts 21:1)
12. Isle of Rhodes (Acts 21:1)
13. Patara, Syria (Acts 21:1)
14. Tyre, Phoenicia (Acts 21:2-6)
15. Ptolemais, Galilee (Acts 21:7)
16. Caesarea, Samaria (Acts 21:8-14)
17. Back to Jerusalem (Acts 21:15-23:30)

Acts 18:23-21:17 is the record of Paul's third missionary journey. It is the last recorded journey of Paul, though early church tradition would seem to suggest a fourth journey westward toward Spain, which occurred after Acts was completed.<sup>16</sup>

**ESV:** Again sponsored by Antioch in Syria, Paul began his third missionary journey in the spring of a.d. 52, traveling by foot through the region of his first mission on into Galatia and Phrygia. On the second missionary journey the Spirit had prevented him from continuing west into Asia (16:6), but that did not happen this time, for Paul was headed directly toward the west, in order to reach Ephesus according to his promise in 18:21.

### **Acts 18:24**

**And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.**

#### **Apollos**

(A parenthetical anecdote in anticipation of 19:1-7.)

**Alexandria:** southern shore of the Mediterranean in Egypt. Founded by Alexander the Great, major Greek and Hebrew cultural center. Source of the LXX. Philo reckons population about 1,000,000.

**[Apollos]** A shortened name of Apollonius. An eloquent Christian of Alexandria (Acts 18:24-28; Acts 19:1; 1 Cor. 1:12; 1 Cor. 3:4-7; 1 Cor. 16:12; Titus 3:13).

**[Alexandria]** A city in Egypt, built by Alexander the Great under the direction of Dinocrates, the celebrated architect of the temple of Diana at Ephesus. Ptolemy Soter founded the famous academy called the Museum in which learned men devoted themselves to philosophical studies. Some of the most celebrated schools of antiquity flourished here. The Tower of Pharos, one of the seven wonders of the world, was here. It was here that the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, was translated in 285 B.C..

**[and mighty in the scriptures]** Thoroughly acquainted with the law and the prophets and skilled in the Jewish method of interpreting them.

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<sup>16</sup> Believer's Study Bible

**Clarke: Born at Alexandria**—This was a celebrated city of Egypt, built by Alexander the Great, from whom it took its name. It was seated on the Mediterranean Sea, between the Lake Mareotis and the beautiful harbour formed by the Isle of Pharos, about twelve miles west of the Canopic branch of the Nile, in lat. 31°. 10'. N. This city was built under the direction of Dinocrates, the celebrated architect of the temple of Diana at Ephesus. It was in this city that Ptolemy Soter founded the famous academy called the Museum, in which a society of learned men devoted themselves to philosophical studies. Some of the most celebrated schools of antiquity flourished here; and here was the Tower of Pharos, esteemed one of the seven wonders of the world. Alexandria was taken by the French, July 4, 1798, under the command of Bonaparte; and was surrendered to the English under General, now Lord, Hutchinson, in 1801. And, in consequence of the treaty of peace between France and England, it was restored to the Turks. Near this place was the celebrated obelisk, called Cleopatra's Needle; and the no less famous column, called Pompey's Pillar. This city exhibits but very slender remains of its ancient splendor.

**An eloquent man**—Having strong rhetorical powers; highly cultivated, no doubt, in the Alexandrian schools.

**BBC:** Many Alexandrian Jews had names compounded with “Apollo,” a prominent Greek god (Apollos may be a contraction for Apollonius). As in other ancient uses of the term, “eloquent” (NASB) or “learned” (NIV) most likely means “formally skilled in rhetoric,” the more practical form of advanced learning to which well-to-do pupils could attain (the other was philosophy).

Alexandria may have had the largest Jewish community in the empire outside Syria-Palestine, with numerous synagogues. The Jewish aristocracy had worked hard to be culturally acceptable to the Greek privileged class, and they resented their own inferior status. (Most of the ethnocentric Greeks in Alexandria despised Jews and Egyptians, who made up the other two-thirds of their city; thus they spoke of “Alexandria near Egypt.”) The clash of cultures and oppression of Jews ultimately led to a Jewish revolt—and the massacre of the entire Jewish community.

**McGee:** Apollos was a Jew, which meant he had the background of the Mosaic Law. His name, *Apollos*, is Greek. So he was a Hellenist of the Diaspora. He hadn't been born in Greece or in that area of Macedonia; he was born at Alexandria in North Africa.

Alexandria, founded by Alexander the Great, was one of the great centers of Greek culture. A great university was there and it had one of the finest libraries in the world. It was there that a Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, was made. There was a Jewish temple in Alexandria. The great center of the early church moved from Jerusalem and Antioch to Alexandria, and it remained important for several centuries of early church history. Athanasius, Tertullian, and Augustine, three great men of the early church, came from there. Philo, a contemporary of Apollos, mingled Greek philosophy with Judaism. This combined Platonism and Judaism. Apollos was obviously influenced by this background.

We are told that he was “an eloquent man,” a great preacher. Also he was “mighty in the scriptures,” which means he was well trained in the Old Testament.

**ESV: Alexandria** was an intellectual center in Egypt with a world-renowned library. Apollos's eloquence (Gk. *logios*, “learned, skilled, eloquent”) was undoubtedly accompanied by great learning, particularly in the OT Scriptures. He is described as being competent (or “powerful,” Gk. *dynatos*) in his use of the OT Scriptures in public preaching and debate, no doubt accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### **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.**

**[instructed]** Greek: *katecheo* (GSN-2727), to teach or instruct (Acts 18:25; Acts 21:21,24; Luke 1:4; Romans 2:18).

**[fervent]** Greek: *zeo* (GSN-2204), to boil. Here; Romans 12:11. boiling hot. “Way of the Lord” (Matt 3:3; Isa 40:3).

**[knowing only the baptism of John]** He was exceedingly zealous of all the light he had, knowing only the baptism of John. God now led him into full gospel light through Paul's companions (Acts 18:26). Joining Christians he ministered with them (Acts 18:27-28).

**McGee:** That he had been “instructed in the way of the Lord” means he had an education by word of mouth not by revelation. And he was “fervent in the spirit”—not the Holy Spirit. He had a passion for the things of God. This is the Holy Spirit’s testimony about him. Frankly, friend, he was a great man, an outstanding man.

Apollos spoke and taught “diligently the things of the Lord.” He taught everything that he had learned, but he knew only about the baptism of John. He couldn’t go any further than that. He had not heard of Jesus.

Apollos was “instructed in the way of the Lord” with much thoroughness. The Greek word translated “instructed” is the source of our word “catechized,” a compound of “again” (*kata*, Gk.) and “to echo” or “to sound” (*echeo*, Gk.). The idea is to re-echo or to teach a student by repetitious sounding, an old and proven method of oral instruction which was popular among Hebrews. Apollos was also “fervent in the spirit” and could teach “accurately” or diligently concerning the faith. One great gap loomed in his total makeup: he knew “only the baptism of John.” At this point the sensitivity for ministry of Aquila and Priscilla appeared. On hearing Apollos preach accurately, in fervent spirit and with boldness, they were moved to take “him aside” and to expound to him “the way of God more accurately” (v. 26). Therefore, a sensitivity to someone’s need, a concern for his spiritual instruction and accurate information, resulted in Apollos joining the efforts of the apostles. His expertise and eloquence may explain why some have suggested that he wrote the Book of Hebrews. Before

embracing the faith, which centered in a Christ who had already come rather than in the message implied by the knowledge of the “baptism of John,” Apollos had already shown great acumen and fervor. He was also bold “in the synagogue” at a time when all care and tact were necessary in approaching the Hebrews with the gospel of a Messiah who had already come and accomplished His work of redemption. Apollos gained the confidence of the brethren of the area. When he wanted to go over into Achaia, the brethren wrote to the disciples to receive him despite his unusual preparation and his background (v. 27). He was a very persuasive and convincing speaker, inasmuch as he presented the O.T. Scriptures in a vigorous manner that inspired many Jews in Achaia to believe Jesus was the Christ (v. 28).<sup>17</sup>

**ESV:** Apollos **knew only the baptism of John**, which suggests that he had not heard about the baptism that Jesus commanded after his resurrection (see Matt. 28:19), and which began to be administered to all believers in Christ on and after the day of Pentecost (see Acts 2:41; 8:12; etc.). Therefore Apollos's knowledge of the Christian gospel must have been deficient in some ways, though he taught accurately the things concerning Jesus as far as he knew them. He certainly knew about Jesus' life and teachings, but he may not have known about Jesus' death and resurrection, or about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

### **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.**

Providential that Priscilla and Aquila left in Ephesus. (Right people, right place, at the right time.)

**BBC:** Aquila and Priscilla apparently accompanied Paul on his voyage, then stayed to help in the synagogue at Ephesus, which was open to teaching about Jesus.

John the Baptist = three great truths:

- 1) Forgiveness of sins (only) on the basis of repentance.
- 2) Expression through baptism.
- 3) One was coming who complete their salvation.

Missing:

- 4) Cross.
- 5) Resurrection.
- 6) Holy Spirit's baptism.

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<sup>17</sup> Believer's Study Bible

How impressive that Apollos was open to correction. The teachable will be humble...Apollos received that and became a mighty evangelist, he then went on to Achaia.

**Clarke: They took him unto them**—This eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, who was even a public teacher, was not ashamed to be indebted to the instructions of a Christian woman, in matters that not only concerned his own salvation, but also the work of the ministry, in which he was engaged. It is disgraceful to a man to be ignorant, when he may acquire wisdom; but it is no disgrace to acquire wisdom from the meanest person or thing. The adage is good: Despise not advice, even of the meanest: the gagging of geese preserved the Roman state.

**LAN:** Apollos had heard only what John the Baptist had said about Jesus (see Luke 3:1-18), so his message was not the complete story. John focused on repentance from sin, the first step. But the whole message is to repent from sin and then believe in Christ. Apollos did not know about Jesus' life, crucifixion, and resurrection. Nor did he know about the coming of the Holy Spirit. Priscilla and Aquila explained the way of salvation to him.

**and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly**—opening up those truths, to him as yet unknown, on which the Spirit had shed such glorious light. (In what appears to be the true reading of this verse, Priscilla is put before Aquila, as in Ac 18:18 [see on Ac 18:18]; she being probably the more intelligent and devoted of the two). One cannot but observe how providential it was that this couple should have been left at Ephesus when Paul sailed thence for Syria; and no doubt it was chiefly to pave the way for. the better understanding of this episode that the fact is expressly mentioned by the historian in Ac 18:19. We see here also an example of not only *lay* agency (as it is called), but *female* agency of the highest kind and with the most admirable fruit. Nor can one help admiring the humility and teachableness of so gifted a teacher in sitting at the feet of a Christian woman and her husband.<sup>18</sup>

**Education, Christians**—The Apollos episode tells us a great deal about Christian teaching in the early church. His previous instruction “in the way of the Lord” reflected the universal practice during the New Testament period of schooling every convert in the teachings of Jesus. The spontaneous lesson in the home of Priscilla and Aquila showed that the teaching function was not restricted to “official” teachers in the church. He taught with enthusiasm and fervor, convinced of the truth. Apollos learned an important lesson. Even the skilled teacher may be corrected and taught by people with less training and skill.<sup>19</sup>

**ESV:** The presence of a synagogue in Ephesus (also in v. 19; 19:8) is further evidenced in an ancient inscription mentioning “the leaders of the synagogue and the elders” (on Jewish presence in Ephesus, see Introduction to Ephesians: The Ancient City of

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<sup>18</sup>Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Ac 18:26). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>19</sup>Disciple's Study Bible

Ephesus). Presumably Priscilla and Aquila . . . explained the things about Jesus that Apollos did not yet know (see note on Acts 18:25). It is noteworthy that *both* of them “explained” (the verb *exethento* is a plural form of *ektithēmi*, “explain, elaborate, expound”) to Apollos the way of God more accurately. They took him means they did not correct him publicly but took him aside and talked to him privately (Gk. *proslambanō*; cf. Matt. 16:22; Mark 8:32). As an example of the Holy Spirit's work in bringing about the growth of the church in Acts, this verse provides positive support for the idea that both men and women can explain God's Word to each other in private or informal settings (such as personal conversation or a small group Bible study) without violating the prohibition in 1 Tim. 2:12 against women teaching an assembled group of men.

### **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:**

Capital of Achaia: Corinth.

He becomes the subject of schisms: 1 Cor 1:10-17;

Apollos not the cause: 1 Cor 3:6; Titus 3:13;

He resists Paul's requests to revisit: 1 Cor 16:12.

Letters of recommendation were standard in Greco-Roman society. Apollos's learning might well appeal to the educated elite of the Corinthian church (see the introduction to 1 Corinthians).

### **Acts 18:28**

**For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.**

**Barnes: For he mightily convinced the Jews.** He did it by strong arguments; he bore down all opposition, and effectually silenced them. *And that publicly.* In his public preaching in the synagogue and elsewhere.

**Barnes: Showing by the Scriptures.** Proving from the Old Testament. Showing that Jesus of Nazareth corresponded with the account of the Messiah given by the prophets. John 5:39.

**LAN:** Apollos was from Alexandria in Egypt, the second most important city in the Roman empire, and the home of a great university. There was a thriving Jewish population in Alexandria. Apollos was a scholar, orator, and debater; and after his knowledge about Christ was made more complete, God greatly used these gifts to strengthen and encourage the church. Reason is a powerful tool in the right hands and in the right situation. Apollos used the gift of reason to convince many in Greece of the

truth of the gospel. You don't have to turn off your mind when you turn to Christ. If you have an ability in logic or debate, use it to bring others to God.

**27-28** Not all the work of a minister or missionary is drudgery, setback, or suffering. Acts 18 is triumphant, showing victories in key cities and the addition of exciting new leaders such as Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos to the church. Rejoice in the victories Christ brings, and don't let the hazards create a negative mind-set.

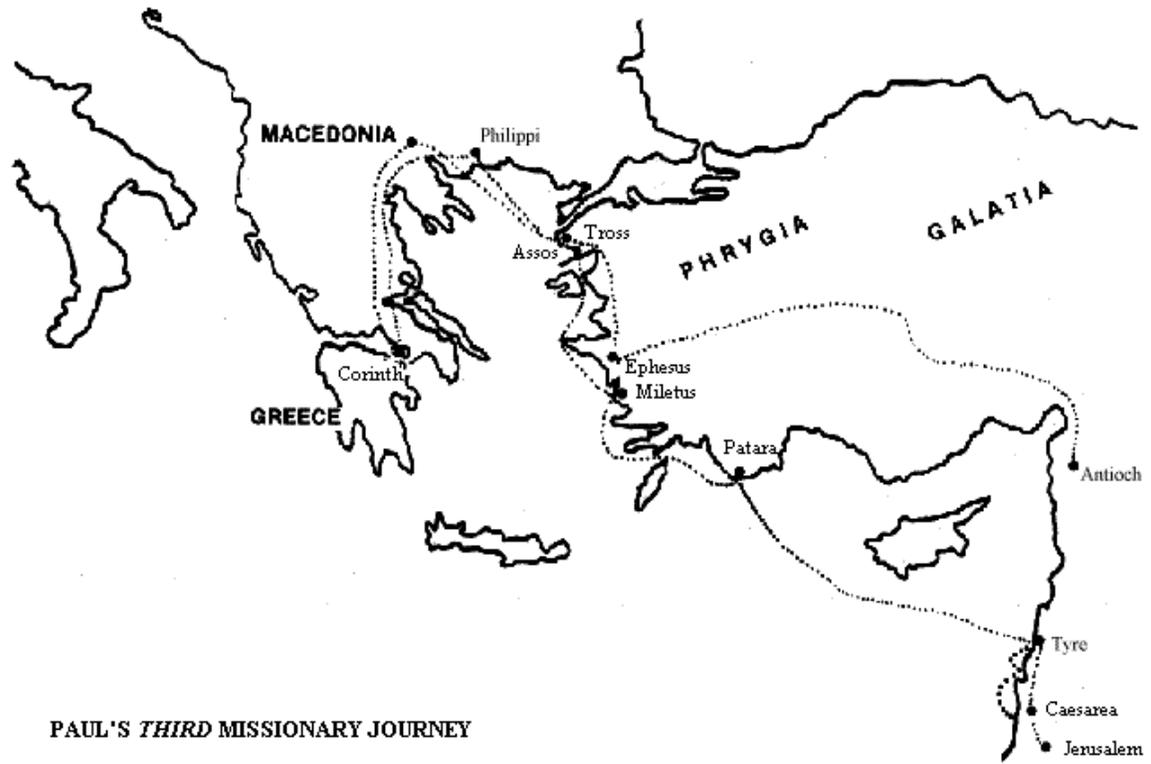
**ESV: he powerfully refuted the Jews in public.** Though Paul had been in Corinth one and a half years, the church still benefited greatly from this help from a skilled scholar and speaker (Apollos) who apparently had advanced academic knowledge accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

**Clarke: He mightily convinced the Jews**— He vehemently confuted the Jews; and that publicly, not in private conferences, but in his public preaching: showing by the scriptures of the Old Testament, which the Jews received as divinely inspired, that Jesus, who had lately appeared among them, and whom they had crucified, was the Christ, the promised Messiah, and that there was salvation in none other; and that they must receive him as the Messiah, in order to escape the wrath to come. This they refused to do; and we know the consequence. Their city was sacked, their temple burnt, their whole civil and religious polity subverted, more than a million of themselves killed, and the rest scattered over the face of the earth.

1. The Christian religion did not hide itself in corners and obscure places at first, in order, privately, to get strength, before it dared to show itself publicly. Error, conscious of its weakness, and that its pretensions cannot bear examination, is obliged to observe such a cautious procedure. With what caution, circumspection, and privacy, did Mohammed propose his new religion! He formed a party by little and little, in the most private manner, before he ventured to exhibit his pretensions openly. Not so Christianity: it showed itself in the most public manner, not only in the teaching of Christ, but also in that of the apostles. Even after the crucifixion of our Lord, the apostles and believers went to the temple, the most public place; and in the most public manner taught and worked miracles. Jerusalem, the seat of the doctors, the judge of religion, was the first place in which, by the command of their Lord, the disciples preached Christ crucified. They were, therefore, not afraid to have their cause tried by the most rigid test of Scripture; and in the very place, too, where that Scripture was best understood.
2. When the same apostles carried this Gospel to heathen countries, did they go to the villages, among the less informed or comparatively ignorant Greeks, in order to form a party, and shield themselves by getting the multitude on their side? No! They went to Caesarea, to Antioch, to Thessalonica, to ATHENS, to CORINTH, to EPHESUS; to the very places where learning flourished most, where sciences were best cultivated, where imposture was most likely to be detected, and where the secular power existed in the most despotic manner, and could at once have crushed them to nothing could they have been proved to be impostors, or had they not been under the immediate protection of Heaven! Hence it is evident that these holy men

feared no rational investigation of their doctrines, for they taught them in the face of the most celebrated schools in the universe!

3. They preached Christ crucified in JERUSALEM, where it was the most solemn interest of the Jews to disprove their doctrine, that they might exculpate themselves from the murder of Jesus Christ. They preached the same Christ, and the vanity of idolatry, in Athens, in Corinth, and in Ephesus, where idolatry existed in the plenitude of its power; and where all its interests required it to make the moat desperate and formidable stand against those innovators. What but the fullest confidence of the truth of what they preached, the fullest conviction of the Divinity of their doctrine, and the supernatural influence of God upon their souls, could ever have induced these men to preach Christ crucified, either at Jerusalem, or at Athens? I scruple not to assert that the bold, public manner in which the apostles preached the Gospel, among the Jews and Greeks, is a most incontestable proof of the conviction they had of its truth; and the success with which they were favored is a demonstration that what they preached as truth God proved to be the truth, by stretching forth his hand to heal, and causing signs and wonders to be wrought in the name of the holy child Jesus. This is an additional proof of the sincerity of the apostles, and of the truth of Christianity. If Paul and Peter, Barnabas and Silas, had not had the fullest persuasion that their doctrine was of God, they would never have ventured to propose it before the Sanhedrin in JERUSALEM, the literati of CORINTH, and the Stoics and inexorable judges of the Areopagus at ATHENS.
4. We may be surprised to find that, even among the Jews as well as the Gentiles, there were persons who used curious arts. Those were inexcusable; these were to be pitied. Blind as every man is by nature, yet he is conscious that without supernatural assistance he can neither secure the good he needs, nor avoid the evil he fears: therefore, he endeavors to associate to himself the influence of supernatural agents, in order to preserve him in safety, and make him happy. Thus forsaking and forgetting the fountain of living water, he hews out to himself cisterns that can hold no water. The existence of magical arts and incantations, whether real or pretended, prove the general belief of the existence of a spiritual world, and man's consciousness of his own weakness, and his need of supernatural help. When shall the eye be directed solely to HIM from whom alone true help can come, by whom evil is banished, and happiness restored!



PAUL'S *THIRD* MISSIONARY JOURNEY

