

ACTS CHAPTER 18

THE MINISTRY OF PAUL AT CORINTH

- **This is the 21st Century.... It is an age in which we are becoming lesser by the day:**

Our communication - Wireless

Our dress - Topless

- **Our telephones - Cordless**

Our cooking - Fireless

- **Our youth - Jobless**

Our food - Fatless

Our labour - Effortless

Our conduct - Worthless

- **Our relations Loveless**

- Our degrees - **Useless**
- Our attitude - **Careless**
- Our feelings - **Heartless**
- Our politics – **Shameless**
- Our education - **Valueless**
- Our follies - **Countless**
- Our arguments - **Baseless**
- Our Job - **Thankless**
- Our Bosses - **Brainless**
- *Our Salaries - Way too less.*

- In some places our worship is **CHRISTLESS!**
- This is of course contrary to the two key verses in Acts 18

- Before I share the outline of the chapter, permit me to note the **KEY WORDS/ PHRASES c.f Vs 5 & vs 28...**
- **“that Jesus was Christ.”**
- **In these verses we note that both Paul, and Aquila testified and proved by the scriptures (not philosophy or their ideology)... “that Jesus was Christ.”**
- **This message has not changed even up until today.**
- **This is still the message that we are to proclaim JESUS IS CHRIST!**
- **We are still mandated to testify and prove by the scriptures “that Jesus is Christ.”**
- **Worship that is CHRISTLESS is NOT worship!**
- **Thank God for our CHRISTOCENTRIC MEETINGS!**

ACTS CHAPTER 18

THE MINISTRY OF PAUL AT CORINTH

- Acts 18 describes the last stop in **Paul's second missionary journey, which is covered in Acts 15:41—18:22**
- **It also describes the start of Paul's third missionary journey, which is covered in Acts 18:23—21:14**

- **THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY OF PAUL (ACTS 15:41—18:22).**
- **A. First stop, Lystra (16:1-5).**
- **B. Second stop, Troas (16:6-10).**
 - 1. Forbidden by the Holy Spirit to go north or south (16:6, 7).
 - 2. Bidden by the Holy Spirit to go west (16:9, 10).
 - » "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them" (16:9, 10).
- **C. Third stop, Philippi (16:11-40).**

- **D. Fourth stop, Thessalonica (17:1-9).**
- **E. Fifth stop, Berea (17:10-14).** *****
- **F. Sixth stop, Athens (17:15-34).**
 - Here Paul preaches his famous sermon on Mars' Hill.
- **G. Seventh stop, Corinth (18:1-18).**
- **H. Eighth stop, Ephesus (18:19-21).**
 - 1. He is accompanied by his friends Aquila and Priscilla (18:18).
 - 2. He is asked by his converts to dwell in Ephesus (18:20, 21).
- **I. Final stop, back to Antioch (18:22).**

- **THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY OF PAUL (ACTS 18:23—21:14) BEGINS.**
- **A. First stop, Asia Minor (18:23).**
- Paul revisits these churches to exhort and strengthen them.
- **B. Second stop, Ephesus (18:24—19:41).**
- 1. The forerunner of Paul in Ephesus—
Apollos (18:24-28).
- **a. The teaching of Apollos (18:25)**
- **b. The teachers of Apollos (18:26).**

- Having placed chapter 18 in the context of the book of Acts, let us now divide or outline the chapter, before exegeting a small part of it further.

- **1. Paul's friends in this city (18:1-5).**
- **a. The tentmakers (18:1-3).**
- He meets a godly couple, Aquila and Priscilla who, like Paul, are tentmakers by trade.
- **b. The team members (18:5).**
- Silas and Timothy now catch up with Paul from Macedonia.

- Lets point out here that where folk are serious about the work of the Lord and NOT doing it for filthy lucre's sake, there are, and will always be
- **TEAM MEMBERS** and
- **TENT MAKERS**
- The concept of “tent maker” is an interesting one practiced mainly by the Plymouth Brethren. It originates from this passage.

- **TENTMAKERS**

- **In the city of Corinth on this his very first visit there, Paul found a very wonderful couple Jewish, Aquila and Priscilla, who had recently come from Rome because of anti-Semitism which had rolled like a wave over the earth during the days of the Roman Empire.**

Luke's accuracy as a historian

- The Roman writer Suetonius referred to an edict by Emperor Claudius ordering non-Roman citizen Jews to leave Rome, and he dated this expulsion at A.D. 49
- "Because the Jews at Rome caused continuous disturbances at the instigation of Crestus, he [Claudius] expelled them from the city."
- "It was commonly supposed that Suetonius was referring to riots in the Jewish community over the preaching of Christ, but that he has misspelled the name and has perhaps erroneously thought that Christ was actually a rebel leader in Rome (Suetonius was born in A.D. 69, and wrote considerably after the event)."

- **TENTMAKERS** continued
- At this time (A.D 49) Claudius commanded all Jews to leave Rome, and Aquila had come to Corinth and set up his business there.
- Normally trades people set up shop on the ground floor of a building and lived on the floor above.
- When Paul arrived, Aquila and Priscilla apparently invited Paul to stay with them because they had the same trade- tent makers.
- We do not know if Aquila and Priscilla were Christians when Paul first met them, but it seems likely that they were, since Luke did not mention their conversion.
- Paul evidently had a financial need, so he went to work practicing his trade of tentmaking (cf. 20:34; 1 Cor. 4:12; 9:1-18; 2 Cor. 11:9; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:7-10).

- "Apart from occasional gifts (Phil. 4:15ff), Paul's practice was to be self-supporting by working at his trade and not to be dependent on the charity of church members . . ."
- Always he gloried in the fact that he was a burden to no man (1 Thessalonians 2: 9; 2 Thessalonians 3: 8; 2 Corinthians 11:9).
- The Greek word, *skenopoioi*, translated "Tent-makers" used means more than a tent-maker; it means a leather-worker since they made and repaired all kinds of leather goods, not just tents.
- Paul must have been a skilled craftsman as this was a common trade in Paul's home province of Cilicia, which produced a fabric made from goats' skins called *cilicium*.
- Tarsus was in Cilicia; in that province there were herds of a certain kind of goat with special kind of fleece.
- Out of that fleece a cloth called cilicium was made which was much used for making tents and curtains and hangings.

- Here we have a vivid light on the kind of life that Paul lived.
- **Paul was a Rabbi, but according to Jewish practice, every Rabbi must have a trade. He must take no money for preaching and teaching and must make his living by his own work and his own efforts.**
- It was common practice for Jewish rabbis to practice a trade as well as study and teach the Hebrew Scriptures
- The Jew glorified work.
- 'Love work,' they said. 'He who does not teach his son a trade teaches him robbery.'
- 'Excellent,' they said, 'is the study of the law along with a worldly trade; for the practice of them both makes a man forget iniquity; but all law without work must in the end fail and causes iniquity.'
- **So we find Rabbis like Paul following every respectable trade.**
- **It meant that they never became detached scholars and always knew what the life of the working-man was like.**

- Now you may argue that Paul taught elsewhere that the workman is worthy of his hire, but he himself depended on God and his trade for his sustenance.
- This practice has certainly been adopted by the Brethren, as they seek to follow the apostles doctrine and practice.
- Certainly this is yet another instance where our church group follows the practices set out by God's word.

- The other instance in this chapter is the matter of letter's of commendation from "friends" and team members" in one church to "friends" and team members." **(18:24-27).**
- These are principles that we have seen practiced even in this week in this assembly.
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- **2. Paul's foes in this city (18:5, 6, 12-17).**
- **a. Their identity (18:5).**
- "Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ" (18:5).
- **b. Their insolence (18:6).**
- **c. Their insurrection (18:12-17).**
- **(1) The futility of their efforts (18:12-16).**
They unsuccessfully attempt to indict Paul before Gallio, the Roman deputy.
- **(2) The irony of their efforts (18:17).**

- **3. Paul's fruits in this city (18:8, 11).**
"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.**
- And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them" (18:8, 11).
- **Ministry of 18 months obviously probably produced much fruit!**

- 4. Paul's heavenly **Father** in this city (18:9, 10).
- "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, **Be not afraid, but speak**, and **hold not thy peace**: For **I am with thee**, and **no man shall set on thee to hurt thee**: for **I have much people in this city**" (18:9, 10).

- **Be not afraid, but speak**
- **hold not thy peace**
- **I am with thee**
- **no man shall set on thee to hurt thee**
- **I have much people in this city"**

- 5 Paul's **farewell** from this city (18:18).
- 6 Paul's **feast** in Jerusalem (18:20).
- **Note the second missionary journey ends at its starting point at Antioch (18:22).**

- **7 Paul goes forward at the start of his third missionary journey (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.

- **8. Apollos' fervor in teaching in Ephesus (18:24-27).**
- eloquent man: **His homiletics**
- mighty in the scriptures: **His hermeneutics.**
- instructed in the way of the Lord
-
- fervent in the spirit,
- spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord (which he knew) ,
- boldness
- need for further teaching
- **Concept of letters of commendation**
- helped the disciples in Achaia, who had believed through grace by showing **from the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.**
- ***Note his message and its source.**

ACTS 18:24-28

- **AND A CERTAIN JEW NAMED APOLLOS, *BORN AT ALEXANDRIA*, AN ELOQUENT MAN, AND MIGHTY IN THE SCRIPTURES, CAME TO EPHESUS [ACTS 18:24].**

ACTS 18:24-28

- The rest of the chapter concerns Apollos, the forerunner of Paul in Ephesus—(18:24-28).
- The purpose of this section (18:24-28) seems primarily to be to **bring us up to date on what had transpired in Ephesus since Paul left that city.**
- **Luke also introduces us to Apollos, another important servant of the Lord in the early church, to whom Paul referred elsewhere (1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4-6, 22; 4:6; 16:12; Titus 3:13).**
- **Luke gives the impression that Apollos arrived in Ephesus after Paul had departed for Jerusalem.**
- He is not as well known as Paul, but we can learn a great deal about him.

- **The ministry of Apollos 18:24-28**
- **a. The teaching of Apollos (18:25)**
- **b. The teachers of Apollos (18:26).**
- Who was Apollos – his **PERSONA and PEDIGREE**
- What was special about him his **PROMINENCE.**
- **BORN AT ALEXANDRIA,**
- **AN ELOQUENT MAN, AND**
- **MIGHTY IN THE SCRIPTURES,**
- **His PROBLEM (limitations)**
- **HIS PROGRESS**

- **Apollos was from Alexandria, the capital of Egypt.**
- **He was a Christian**
- **He was a Hellenistic Jew who had**
- **1- a thorough understanding of the Old Testament,**
- **2- a gift for communicating and defending the faith, and**
- **3- enthusiasm.**
- **Apollos had the background of the Mosaic Law. 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.**
- **Because of this Apollos would be exceedingly useful in convincing the Jews, for he would be able to find Christ all over the Old Testament and to prove to them that the Old Testament looked forward all the time to his coming**

- Apollos was a Hellenist Jew of the Diaspora, who was born at Alexandria in North Africa
- **Alexandria was founded by Alexander the Great, and 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.
- **In time, the great center of the early church would move 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.**

- **Alexandria was the city of scholars.**
- **It was specially the place where scholars believed in the allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament. They believed that not only did the Old Testament record history but that every recorded event had an inner meaning.**

- 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 [Acts 18:25]**.

- **Christianity is here described as "The way of the Lord"**
- **"The way of the Lord" was one of the commonest titles in Acts to describe the Christian faith (i.e., the gospel- c.f 9:2; 16:17; 18:26; 19:9, 23; 22: 4; 24: 14, 22). and**
- **This title shows us at once that Christianity means not only believing certain things but putting them into practice.**

Apollos had a few limitations though!

- 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 was proclaiming and teaching everything that he **had learned** and knew of the gospel in the Ephesian synagogue, but couldn’t go any further than that, because . He had not heard of Jesus **he did not know about Christian baptism.**
- For all that there was a lack in his training. He knew only **about John the Baptist's baptism that expressed repentance for sins (cf. 19:3).**

[Acts 18:26].

- And he began to **spea**k** 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 [Acts 18:26].

- Priscilla and Aquila realized that Apollos was very limited; in that he was teaching zealously the things of the Old Testament up through the ministry of John the Baptist, but that he knew nothing beyond the baptism of John.
- So Aquila and Priscilla wisely took Apollos aside and privately instructed him in subsequent revelations about "the way of God" (i.e., the gospel) that he did not know.
- Before the encounter with Aquila and Priscilla, it is best to regard Apollos in the same class as OT saints, who hoped for salvation in Messiah and had not rejected him.
- The entire Book of Acts depicts the transition from Judaism to Christianity. It is not surprising, therefore, to find imperfect forms of faith during the days of the early church. **NOTE THERE WERE PERFECT PRACTICES THOUGH.**

- **Apollos must have seen the need for repentance and have recognized Jesus as the Messiah; but as yet he did not know the good news of Jesus as the Saviour of men and of the coming of the Holy Spirit in power.**
- **He knew of the task Jesus gave men to do but he did not yet fully know of the help Jesus gave men to do it.**
- **By the words of Aquila and Priscilla he was more fully instructed.**
- **What seems clear is that although Apollos was a brilliant man, who was bubbling with enthusiasm for God; but up until the time that Aquila and Priscilla took him home for dinner, he didn't know the gospel of the grace of God. He had not yet learned as much as Priscilla and Aquila had about their faith. He needed teaching!**

- **Aquila and Priscilla had the privilege of bringing him up to date and possibly also to conversion.**
- **The result was that Apollos, who already knew Jesus as a figure in history, came also to know him as a living presence; and his power as a preacher must have been increased a hundredfold.**
- **Here is a case where a woman helped a preacher a great deal. She taught him something that he didn't know.**
- **I quote "It is a needed and delicate task, this thing of teaching gifted young ministers. They do not learn it all in schools. More of it comes from contact with men and women rich in grace and in the knowledge of God's ways."**
- **Aquila and Priscilla were Apollos' TEACHERS**
- **Now we will look at Apollos' TEACHING!**

[Acts 18:27-28].

- 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
- For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ [Acts 18:27-28].

- **We read in verses 27 & 28 that armed with this new understanding Apollos proceeded west where he ministered at Corinth by watering the gospel seed that Paul had planted (1 Cor. 3:6).**
- **The Christians in Ephesus encouraged him in this endeavour by providing letters of commendation that introduced him to the Corinthian church (cf. 2 Cor. 3:1).**
- **This is the first mention of a church in Ephesus.**
- **Perhaps Paul planted it (vv. 19-21), but someone else may have done so since he appears to have been there only briefly.**
- **Maybe Priscilla and Aquila planted it.**

- **Apollos“helped them much which had believed through grace”**
- **The word order in the Greek text favors the view that "through grace“ modifies "believed" rather than "helped."**
- **That is the Corinthian Christians had believed the gospel through the grace of God (v. 27; cf. Eph. 2:8-9).**

- **“He mightily convinced” the Jews, by showing them from the Old Testament scriptures. that Jesus was the Messiah..... that Jesus was Christ (cf.8:35; 18:5; 1 John 5:9).**
- **He proved publicly that Jesus was Christ and was preaching Jesus as the Messiah and Savior by referencing the Old Testament scriptures.**

- **Apollos was so effective at instructing the Corinthian believers and refuting Jewish objectors that he developed a strong personal following in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4), even though he does not seem to have been responsible for encouraging the party spirit that his presence there generated (1 Cor. 4:6;16:12).**
- **We too are to urge others to follow us as we FOLLOW CHRIST.**