

Paul and Company are now in Corinth; they've been joined by Aquila and his wife, Priscilla; Paul has begun working with them making tents together in order to help finance his further missionary endeavors.

Athens was an intellectual city, a city of thinkers and reasoners, made up of people who wanted to know and understand. Corinth was an evil and debauched city, a place through which traveled caravans and sailors, a place catering to every evil lust; about the only place to escape would have been the synagogue where Paul could find semi-like-minded people: Jews and Gentiles who worshipped God.

The Acropolis is in Corinth: a huge stone hill upon which stood the enormous temple to the goddess Aphrodite who was the goddess of all things sexual... in her temple 1000 priestesses 'ministered' their 'sacrament' of prostitution. Later, in Paul's letters to the Corinthian church, we see how the evil of Corinth actually crept into the church as well.

Paul was discouraged when he got to Corinth; he had been chased from town to town, threatened and attacked by evil men, Jews and Gentiles alike. We know he was discouraged in Corinth: in his first letter back to the Corinthians, in 1Cor 2:1, he wrote: *'And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. <sup>2</sup> For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. <sup>3</sup> And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.'* He was discouraged but God encouraged him with his traveling companions and especially through the ones who came to faith through his Words from God.

**Acts 18:4:** *'And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. <sup>5</sup> And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.'*

This sounds redundant: he reasoned and persuaded Jews and Greeks and then was pressed in the Spirit to testify that Jesus is Christ, but I think it's more. First, he did what he always did: go into the synagogue to reason and persuade but then, it sounds like he just let it fly - there's no time for niceties, time is short; the Jews are coming to stir up trouble again; the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the promised Messiah; turn to Him in faith while you still have the chance!

**Verse 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.'*

But it wasn't the Jews who've followed from city to city seeking to disrupt Paul's evangelism... it's the Jews right there in the Corinthian synagogue! They couldn't just politely decline Paul's message of Truth; no, they had to do what so many Jews have been doing all along: they oppose and blaspheme and, so, once more, Paul begins anew to fulfill God's plan, and command, that he is to take the Message of God's Love, Grace, Mercy, Forgiveness and Salvation to the Gentiles who will eventually make up the greater percentage of the True Church, and aren't we ever so glad it is so! Paul offers the Words of Life but they are thrown back in his face and he says, in effect, *'Take yourself to Hell if you so desire, you'll have brought it upon yourselves and you will remember this day for all eternity! I'm done with you!'*

**Verse 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. <sup>8</sup> 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.'*

Now we see the church of the Corinthians being born; Paul brings the Gospel to this city of sin but God has chosen, for Himself, many people here and He will lead them to Paul and, Paul to them. Paul begins, as usual, in the synagogue where he finds Jews and Gentiles who are already disposed to spiritual things and worshipping the True God.

As has been true through the centuries, intellectual people are often 'too smart' to believe such silly things as the Gospel but people who know they are sinners can often be the far quicker ones to hear and believe the Truth of the Gospel. Paul didn't stay long in Athens where they thought of themselves as highly intelligent,

always seeking new knowledge but disbelieving the Truth when offered but here, in Corinth, Paul will stay a very long time, establishing and strengthening the new church there. Even the chief ruler of the synagogue was ready to hear and believe the Gospel. Like finding gold nuggets in a sewage filled stream, Paul hits the jackpot in Corinth: many Corinthians believed and were baptized and it will be in Paul's two letters to these Corinthians where we will learn much of our doctrine for the Church; it's there we'll understand just what true love, God's Love, really is: patient, kind, long-suffering, not envying, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things: true love, God's Love never fails; that is the love which we, God's children, are commanded to extend to each other.

**Verse 9:** *'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. <sup>11</sup> And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.'*

What a wonderful Word of encouragement to Paul, directly from God: *'I am with you and I will protect you; get busy collecting all these gold nuggets from this river of sewage: I have chosen many people in Corinth who's hearts I've been preparing to hear and respond to your Gospel message! Chop chop! Get to it!'*

Of course, we have that same Word of encouragement from God: *'I will never leave you or forsake you! I have given My angels charge over you! Lift up your eyes, see the fields white unto harvest!'*

*'Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.'* Isaiah 41:10

*'Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.'* Joshua 1:9

*'The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.'* Psalm 34: 7

Being so encouraged by the Lord, Paul stayed in Corinth for 18 months. The church of the Corinthians must have been strongly established having been taught by Paul for so long and, yet, when he sends them his first letter, they will have already begun to fall into error and worldliness: 1Cor 5 tells us of the Christian in that church who is engaging in a sexual relationship with his stepmother and the church not only fails to discipline that one but that they are actually 'puffed up' about it! That must have been a discouraging report when it found its way to Paul but here, now, at the church's beginnings, Paul is finding great success.

**Verse 12:** *'And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia/ach-ah-ee'-ah, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, <sup>13</sup> Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.'*

Once again... the Jews, forming an insurrection, all of them together this time, to come against Paul; they are demonically inspired to destroy the Work of God but it was the Lord Jesus Christ Who said: *'I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'* Matt 16:19' And He cannot lie!

Gallio is the Roman governor over Achaia/ ach-ah-ee'-ah which is the Roman province of northern Greece which included Athens and Corinth. These evil Jews bringing Paul before the Roman governor is just like they did in bringing Jesus before Pilate, and Gallio does just what Pilate did: you Jews handle it! I'm not interested in your silly religious laws and traditions.

What a terrible life poor Lucifer has led for so, so long! Everything around him is filthy and dirty; all of his fellow fallen angels, and every evil spirit, they lie to him constantly and worst of all, everything he tries to do to thwart and to destroy the Work of God, fails! Everything! God turns all of it around for the good of His called and chosen ones!\* The only slight satisfaction Lucifer might gain is in seeing so many humans dying outside of God's Salvation but even that is as sour grapes in that it offers no real pleasure because he knows that God is actually glorified in the Lost ones, as well; their judgment serves to glorify God's Justice, Righteousness, Holiness and Wrath and Satan knows that the eternal destination and punishment of every non-elect human mirrors his own eternal destination and punishment: the Lake of Fire, forever! And every small amusement he might derive from his hatred and evil simply moves him that much closer to his own

eternal damnation! And never forget... Satan's eternity in the Lake of Fire will be just as bad and surely far more terrible than that of any human toward whom he spent so much time and energy in trying to lead there.

*\*'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup> For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. <sup>30</sup> Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

*<sup>31</sup> What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?' Rom 8:28*

**Verse 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: <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> And he drove them from the judgment seat.'*

If this were about wicked lewdness which is often the case, here in Corinth, I would bear with you Jews but since it's concerning your incomprehensible rules and regulations which no civilized people care about, Get out! I will drive you out! Out!

**Verse 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.'*

See what happened there? All the Jews begin an insurrection because of Paul's preaching; Roman governors do not like their Jews insurrecting! They tattle and whine to Gallio, the Roman governor who drives them out of the courtroom. Then all the Greeks rise up and attack the Jews, even beating Sosthenes, the new chief ruler of the synagogue. Remember, the previous chief ruler of the synagogue, Crispus, believed Paul's wise explanation of the Scriptures and turned in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ and he would have immediately resigned or been removed from the office of chief ruler of the synagogue and these Greeks, who value wisdom and learning, probably were drawn to Paul's wise erudition.

The Jews are like Satan: everything they try to do in thwarting God's will, He turns it around against them! All the Greeks rise up against the Jews and Gallio couldn't care less: the bullying bullies are bullied back while God sovereignly looks on.

And so, Paul stayed there and the new church was even more strengthened than if the Jews had just left it alone and let Paul be... but no... they had to stir it up and they paid the price again.

**Verse 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/ keng-khreh-a'-hee: for he had a vow.'*

Paul takes Priscilla and Aquila back to Syria with him and to Ephesus in modern Turkey. We don't know what Paul's vow was and God didn't care to enlighten us so... there it is.

**Verse 19:** *'And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.'*

In spite of all that the Jews have tried to do to Paul since he began seeking only their good... once again: Paul's first thought, his first action in every city, everywhere he goes, he goes right to the city's synagogue to try to lead Jews to Salvation, ready to risk it, all over again... even after shaking his coat off against the Jews, saying he would henceforth go to the Gentiles, he goes back to the synagogue... in spite of their hatred and cruelty he continues to offer the Words of God leading to Salvation while most of them simply throw his Words back in his face... I would have given up preaching to the Jews a long, long time before... long before!

**Verse 20:** *'When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;'*

It's not clear if those wanting him to stay longer are the Christians or the Jews he's been reasoning with but Paul says, 'No... I have to go to Jerusalem...'

**Verse 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.'*

Paul leaves Timothy, in Ephesus to govern that church as their pastor. Remember, Timothy has been with Paul, long soaking up all his teaching and doctrine and remember, too, Paul will later write to him that though he is young, he is more than qualified: don't fear! *'God has not given us a spirit of fear!'* 2Timothy 1:7

Aquila and Priscilla stay in Ephesus, as well, as we will soon see. These three have been with Paul for some time as he has taught them all that he, himself, had been taught by the Lord Jesus Christ when he was taken up into Heaven to be taught all the doctrine for the True Church, the full Truth of the New Covenant: Salvation, the Work of God in each believer's heart as we are chosen, elect and called by God's Grace alone through Saving Faith alone which is, itself, the gift of God ; these three are now among the most learned and prepared leaders in all the True Church.

**Verse 22:** *'And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch. <sup>23</sup> 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.'*

Paul leaves Ephesus and goes back to Antioch for 'some time' and then he is off to his third missionary journey going through many of his previous areas of evangelism and church planting to strengthen and encourage the churches all along the way.

**Verse 24:** *'And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.'*

Apollos is, in some ways, like Paul; although we never learn much about Apollos, Paul does mention him seven times in his first letter to the Corinthians and each time, he elevates Apollos to his own level and in his letter to Titus, he encourages Titus to take good care of Apollos, that his needs should be met.

Apollos is a Jew, like Paul, born in a Roman colony, Alexandria. He's eloquent, knowing and 'mighty' in the Old Testament Scriptures who knows and understands the Truth of the Lord Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah but he does not yet understand fully the New Covenant; he will need to be taught more fully:

**Verse 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.'*

He did not yet fully understand the full scope of being 'born again;' he did not understand the baptism by the Holy Spirit, that the believer is a new creation indwelt by the Holy Spirit; he only understood John's 'baptism of repentance.'

**Verse 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.'*

Like Paul, Apollos began his ministry in a city by going to the synagogue; in fact, like Peter, he may not have fully understood the Truth of the Gospel also being intended for the Gentiles and, so, we see Aquila and Priscilla, together, perhaps taking him home with them, teaching him, 'more perfectly,' how it all fits together: a husband and wife team in ministry together: we can attest to what a blessing that actually is...

**Verse 27:** *'And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia/ ach-ah-ee'-ah, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:'*

These, in Ephesus, wrote letters, for Apollos to take with him, encouraging believers along the way to receive, to care for and to help him financially; it was the same thing that Paul later wrote to Titus about helping Apollos: *'Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, **that nothing be wanting unto them.**'* Titus 3:13 For as little as is written in The Word concerning Apollos, he seems to have had real friends and brothers all along the way... what a blessing that must have been...

Apollos was helped along the way because he was a genuinely effective minister of the Gospel:

**Verse 28:** *'For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.'*

He fearlessly and publicly preached that the Lord Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah, convincing Jews of the Truth from their own Scriptures.