

Introduction

Acts 18:1-17

1Corinthians 1:1-7

2:1-5

18:1 Paul arrives in Corinth. Was it from here that he wrote his letters to the church at Thessalonica? As Athens was the cultural Capital of Greece Corinth was the corruption capital. Corinth, located about 50 miles east of Athens was (is) situated an isthmus commanding the sea routes east and west and the land routes north and south. It was supposedly the richest city in Greece. It had deep roots in many of the “mystery religions”. Corinth was famous worldwide for its immorality. The central object of worship was Aphrodite, goddess of love - the temple was enormous! It was rumored to have 1,000 temple “priestesses” or religious prostitutes. Every evening they would go forth into the streets to ply their trade. All over the empire Corinth became a byword for sensuality. To “Corinthianize” or to “act like a Corinthian” became a description for someone loose or immoral. “Corinthian girls” meant harlots or loose women. But the Lord seems to delight in what we call “tough cases” - seemingly tough to us! This was also a time of spiritual low for Paul.

18:2 Paul doesn’t sound too confident at first 1Corinthians 2:3. But the Lord delights to exhibit His power through our weakness 2Corinthians 12:9,10. Emperor Claudius had banned all Jews from Rome. Aquila and Priscilla - were they already Christians? If not, they would become believers in Christ. They were of the same guild as Paul. One could travel anywhere and work in one’s own trade. Rabbis often supported themselves by secular employment.

18:3 Paul wasn’t interested in taking up collections for himself - he wanted to preach the gospel without charge. 1Thessalonians 3:7-9

18:4 Paul at first reasoned with Jews and God-fearing gentiles.

18:5 But now when Silas and Timothy arrive the message picks up new impetus. See 1Corinthians 2:1,2;4,5. A different tactic is used than was used with the intellectuals of Athens.

18:6,7 Probably a reference to Ezekiel 3:17-21. Paul’s conscience was clear concerning them. Now Paul moves in right next door to a synagogue!

18:8 Notice the order: 1) Hearing 2) Believed 3) Baptized

Corinth compare Romans 1:24-32. The relevance of Corinthians for today. The church established at Corinth in a decadent society - yet expected to function under the authority of the risen Christ.

Corinthian society:

Arrogant Lesbians	Proud	Hate God	“Creation worshippers”
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Homosexual men	Promiscuous (fornicators)	Greedy	Murderers	Liars
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Malicious; slanderers	Rebellious children		Promise breakers		Violent
Adulterers (religiously)	Male prostitutes	Swindlers	Thieves		Pluralistic

What approach? 1Cor. 2:1-5 1:18 1:23 1:25

Result? 1Corinthians 1:2 (& 1:6,8,9) cp. 6:9-11

Problems? You Bet! 1:11 3:1 5:1 6:1;5-6 11:17-21

Romans - written from Corinth - a pattern for the gospel

1 Corinthians - written from Ephesus - a pattern for the church

18:9,10 God here encourages His servant with a vision - tells him to speak - nobody would hurt him. He obviously needed it. One wonders what Paul thought when we get to verse 12!

18:11 One of Paul's longest stays - one and a half years. So no matter how tough things may appear God can bless in the toughest of situations! Even though there were many problems later on in the Corinthian church there was much fruit there also.

18:12-17 Jews bring Paul up hoping to have him silenced but their plot is foiled as the gentiles take the synagogue ruler and beat him! This could be the same Sosthenes of 1Corinthians 1:1. But none of this moved Gallio.

18:18 This doesn't appear to be a Nazarite vow. (?) Seems as even though Paul would not tolerate any gentile to be forced to subjection under the law it took him quite a few years to entirely shed himself of certain Jewish rituals. Vincent (Vincent's Word Studies) says that it was a private vow such as Jews would often take.

vow. Greek. *euche*. App-134. Only here, [Act 21:23](#), and [Jam 5:15](#). It has been questioned whether these words refer to Paul or to Aquila. The facts point to Paul, for whichever it was, the ceremonies connected with the vow could only be completed at Jerusalem, and while Paul was hastening his journey thither ([Act 18:21](#)), Aquila appears to have remained at Ephesus ([Act 18:26](#)). (Bullinger)

It was not a Nazarite vow which could be absolved only in Jerusalem. (Roberston)

He had a vow

A private vow, such as was often assumed by the Jews in consequence of some mercy received or of some deliverance from danger. Not the Nazarite vow, though similar in its

obligations; for, in the case of that vow, the cutting of the hair, which marked the close of the period of obligation, could take place only in Jerusalem.
(Vincent)

“We see to what extent. He Paul was still bound to Jewish customs. He takes a vow and shaves his

head In Cencrea. He feels obliged in his heart to observe the feast of Jerusalem and gives this to the

Jews as his motive for not then remaining in their city. He is a true Jew, and acts like one; and the

Spirit records these facts that we may understand the bonds which still held the spirit of the apostle.

The state of a soul with regard to religious habits is a different thing from the energy of the Spirit of

God in the declaration of the truth. We shall see the effect of these bonds strongly pronounced at the

end of his career, whether toward the Christians at Jerusalem, or in his submission to their wishes.” Meditations on the Acts of the Apostles, J.N.Darby

The second author has written, “But the great apostle went far in compliance with an in condescension Jewish forms in certain circumstances which left the grace of the gospel untouched.

It was the effort to impose the law on the Gentiles who believed, which roused a tempest of feeling

and irresistible argument... Grace was bringing out its new and hitherto unrevealed wonders in Christ

and in the church to God's glory; but the most deeply taught and fully furnished witness of heavenly

truth hardly loved the ancient people of God and never forgot that he too was an Israelite of the seed

of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin; and this not only within the precepts of Jerusalem and the land,

but as we see here, among the Greeks.” An Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles”, William Kelly

“In other words, when one's faith rises above that, which still exists in the heart owing to traditional

upbringing, one must act carefully to those who are still motivated by such tradition and one must

seek that other should not be brought within this tradition at all. Christian love bears with men just as

they are found and seeks their development without stumbling.” John Heading; Acts

18:19 Paul's usual procedure

18:21 This should be our attitude - “if God will...” James 4:15

18:23 This begins the third missionary journey. Second missionary journey began at Antioch to Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Antioch Pisidia, from Troas, Neapolis, to Philippi. (? What happened next? Where to after that? Thessalonica? Berea? Athens? Corinth?) Here third missionary journey begins with ministry of exhortation.

18:24,25 This verse seems to add proof to the fact that if one is faithful to the light he has, God can use him, in spite of, not because of, his ignorance. (Explain how it was possible for him to know only about the baptism of John)

18:26 Titus 3:10,11 2Timothy 2:24-26

18:27 A good practice to carry a letter of commendation with you when going to some place you are not known.

18:28 Here was a man that convinced or refuted Jews through Scripture! Apollos evidently became quite an evangelist with quite a following - only too many were following a man! 1 Corinthians 1:12,13 1Corinthians 3:3-7