

Abounding Grace Christian Church

The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Church – Part 56

I. Exposition of Chapter Eighteen.

A. **Verses 1- 17** - Paul goes to Corinth. The city of Corinth was about 50 miles from Athens. It was a very important city in Greece. For some reason Paul went there alone though there's no indication as to why. Stanley Horton simply says: .

“Why did Paul leave Athens when he had intended to wait for Silas and Timothy (Acts 17:16)? Luke does not tell us. But Paul did leave a number of believers behind, and the Greek indicates he separated himself from them with regret.”¹

1. There is also indication that Paul was concerned about going to Corinth (cf. **I Corinthians 2:3**). This was probably due to the fact that he didn't have his team with him and the reputation of the city was not good. Warren Wiersbe writes:

“From Athens, Paul made his way to Corinth, one of the greatest cities of that day. It was famous for several things: its bronze and pottery works; its great sporting events that were comparable to the Olympics; and its immorality and wickedness. From a cultured, refined city like Athens, Paul took the Gospel to the wicked city of Corinth, and by the grace of God established a church there!”²

2. **Verse 2** – **“And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them.”** –

a. **Aquila and Priscilla** – It's not at all clear that this husband and wife were Christians at this time. Stanley Toussaint makes the following statement:

“Whether Aquila and Priscilla were Christians before they met Paul is not known. Because Aquila was called ‘a Jew’ did not mean he knew Christ (cf. Apollos, a Jew; Acts 18:24). Nor can it be argued that Paul lived with them because they were believers; he stayed with them because they were tentmakers (v. 3).”³

b. One thing is for certain, at some point they became strong believers in Jesus Christ. Some suggest that they may have become believers in Rome before they had been expelled from there. They became great helpers in the ministry and lifelong friends of Paul. They're mentioned again in **18:18** and **26**, as well as **Romans 16:3** and **I Corinthians 16:19**.

3. **Verse 3** – **“So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.”** – Most, if not all, Jewish rabbis had some sort of trade in addition to teaching the Scriptures. Dr. Thomas Constable makes it clear:

“Tent-makers’ made and repaired all kinds of leather goods, not just tents. It would be more accurate to describe Paul as a ‘leather-worker’ than as a ‘tent-maker.’ This was a common trade in his home province of Cilicia, which produced a fabric made from goats’ skins called cilicium. It was common practice for Jewish rabbis to practice a trade as well as study and teach the Hebrew Scriptures.”⁴

4. **Verse 4** – **“And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.”** – As seen before, whenever there was a synagogue in a city, Paul would go there first. The word **“persuaded”** means he convinced them. If we compare this with something Paul wrote in his first epistle to the Corinthians, we something more:

“And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”

I Corinthians 2:4-5

5. **Verse 5** – **“When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.”** – It's probable that Silas and Timothy had been sent by Paul to check up on the churches that were established in Macedonia (cf. **Chapters 16-17**). Dr. Robert Utley adds:

¹Stanley M. Horton, *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2001), 303.

²Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1992), 325.

³Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 405.

⁴Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Acts* (<http://www.soniclight.com>: Sonic Light Publication, 2019), 362.

“They apparently brought a love offering from the believers at Philippi, which allowed Paul to preach full time (cf. 2 Cor. 11:9; Phil. 4:15). Timothy also brought news about the church at Thessalonica in response to which Paul wrote I and II Thessalonians (cf. 17:14). It seems that, just as Luke had been left in Philippi to disciple the new believers, Timothy was left at Thessalonica and Silas at Berea. Paul was very concerned with the training of new Christians. He wanted to leave an active, growing, reproducing church in every city he visited.”⁵

a. “...Paul was compelled by the Spirit ...” – The word “compelled” means; “to be seized” or “to press”. Dr. Horton writes:

“When Silas and Timothy came to Corinth from Macedonia, they brought an offering for Paul (2 Cor. 11:9; Phil. 4:14–15). So Paul was able to give himself “exclusively to preaching” (cf. Acts 6:4). That is, the Spirit put unusual pressure on him to preach the Word. Jeremiah had a similar experience when he felt the Word of God ‘like a fire shut up in [his] bones’ (Jer. 20:9).”⁶

6. Verse 6 – “But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook *his* garments and said to them, “Your blood *be* upon your *own* heads; I *am* clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” – We’ve seen this happen before. There will be always those who will oppose your witness and reject the Gospel. Don’t let it affect you! Concerning this verse, Dr. Toussaint writes:

“Once again is seen the pattern of Jewish opposition to the gospel, followed by Paul’s subsequent turning to the Gentiles (cf. 13:7–11, 46; 14:2–6; 17:5; 19:8–9; 28:23–28). Paul’s shaking out his clothes parallels Paul’s and Barnabas’ shaking dust from their feet (13:51). When Paul said, Your blood be on your own heads, he was referring to their destruction and their own responsibility for it (cf. Ezek. 33:1–6).”⁷

7. Verses 7-8 – “And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain *man* named Justus, *one* who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.” – It’s seems amazing that though there were many Jews who opposed and blasphemed Jesus, the very ruler of the synagogue, Crispus and his household, received Christ. Many times when the head of a household gets saved, the rest will follow. Crispus is mentioned only one other time in **I Corinthians 1:14** where Paul mentions that he baptized him. This is the beginning of the Corinthian church where “...many...hearing, believed and were baptized.”

8. Verses 9-10 – “Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, ‘Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.’” – Here we have another example of the Lord speaking to someone. Dr. Stanley Horton asserts:

“The Lord confirmed to Paul that he had done the right thing: In a night vision Jesus told Paul not to be afraid. The form of the Greek used here indicates Paul was beginning to fear that he would have to leave Corinth as he had so many other cities when persecution began. But Jesus told him that he should “keep on speaking” the Word in Corinth and “not be silent.” The Lord was with him, as He had promised His disciples He would be (Matt. 28:20). He promised further that He would not allow anyone to attack him or harm him in Corinth, for He had “many people in this city.” That is, many would yet come to Jesus and become part of the true people of God (cf. Acts 13:48).”⁸

9. Verse 11 – “And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among *them*.” – So with the length of time Paul stayed there, it’s safe to say that he developed a real love for the people there. With the exception of Ephesus, (cf. **19:10 and 20:31**), this is the longest that he stayed in any of the cities he evangelized.

⁵Robert James Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, vol. Volume 3B, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 213.

⁶Stanley M. Horton, *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2001), 306.

⁷Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 405–407.

⁸Horton, 307.