

- A Study in Acts -

Chapter Eighteen – Second Journey of Paul Continued

ACTS 18:12-22:

Upon arrival in Athens, and while he is waiting for Silas and Timothy, he begins to speak in the city's synagogue and marketplace (Paul is uniquely moved by the city being given over to idolatry); his preaching soon gains him an audience with the city's philosophers. Paul's sermon to these philosophers finds some limited success and from Athens he will now come to **Corinth**.

Please use the map provided.

Text #1:

Acts 18:12-17 “When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, ¹³ saying, “This *fellow* persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.”

¹⁴ And when Paul was about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. ¹⁵ But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look *to it* yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such *matters*.” ¹⁶ And he drove them from the judgment seat. ¹⁷ Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things.”

Gallio: Junius Annaeus Gallio, the Roman proconsul of Achaia. He was amicable and loved by many; he additionally had a reputation of fairness.

Jews: The Jews conspired to bring Paul before the judgment seat and attempt to accuse him of “**persuading men to worship God contrary to the law**”; meaning, their own. They had hoped to convince Gallio that Paul was guilty of an offense against a lawful religion, and thus guilty of a crime against Rome.

In his following statements, he would have none of this; in fact he saw this as an internal dispute between sects within Judaism.

Sosthenes: This is the new leader of the synagogue after the conversion of Crispus. Sosthenes had probably led the persecution against Paul. The Gentiles watching the proceedings determined him to be worthy of a beating for this trouble, which was exactly what his intentions were for Paul.

This Sosthenes may have at a later date, obeyed the Gospel, and may be the one Paul refers to in **1 Corinthians 1:1**.

Summary of Corinth: As Paul came to Corinth, he worked side by side with Aquila and Priscilla and reasoned in the synagogue on the Sabbaths. He persuaded many concerning the Christ; however, he did not name Him as Jesus until the arrival of Silas and Timothy. It was during this time that Paul also heard the condition of the brethren in Thessalonica and penned the first letter to these Christians.

When the Jews rejected the Gospel, Paul went to the Gentiles and many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized into Christ (**1 Corinthians 12:12-13**). Paul additionally receives comfort from the Lord and would stay for an additional 18 months; during which time Timothy and Silas delivered the first letter to the Thessalonians, returned to report, and Paul would then pen the second letter and send it back with them.

The Jews tried to have Paul charged and beaten, but failed, and received the very ire that they intended for Paul. Paul is going to remain for a time, but is now going to begin his return, making Corinth the apex, or turn around point of the second journey.

Text #2:

Acts 18:18-22 “So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila *were* with him. He had *his* hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow. ¹⁹ And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. ²⁰ When they asked *him* to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, ²¹ but took leave of them, saying, “I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing.” And he sailed from Ephesus.

²² And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch.”

Taken a Vow: It was common for Jews to make such vows to express gratitude or express devotion to God. Luke does not reveal the reason for this vow of Paul; only that he has taken it. The reason may be determined in Paul’s own words, “**I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem**”. Paul has now and will continue to desire to preach to the Jews in Jerusalem; in spite of what he knows to be his calling by the Lord (**Romans 11:13**).

This vow should not be mistaken, as some have, for a Nazarite vow (**Numbers 6:13-18**), which could only be taken in Jerusalem.

Cenchrea: This is the eastern seaport for Corinth, and a small town on the harbor. We will learn in **Romans 16:1** that a congregation of God’s people in Christ could be found here.

Ephesus: Paul was forbidden to go into Asia (Roman Asia) earlier; this will constitute the first time that Paul is going to come to this capital city of this province. He is going to enter into the synagogue, as was his custom; however, after some success here, he is going to refuse to stay. His desire is to return, but as he has learned well already, “**God willing**”. We will look in more detail at this city when we return in the third journey.

Caesarea: Paul's ship comes to the only harbor reasonably close to Jerusalem, and Luke records that he goes "**up**" and greeted the church (called out), which infers that this is the **Body of Christ** in Jerusalem. There is no mention of whether he was late, or early for the feast, but simply that he greeted the brethren in Jerusalem and then returned to where the journey began; Antioch.

This officially ends the second journey in **verse 22**. In our next lesson, we will begin the third journey with a hiatus in Paul's travels to share with us the work of Aquila and Priscilla with a man named Apollos.