

## Wednesday Evening Bible Study

July 14, 2021

Series - *The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul*

Lesson One - *Paul's Crossings – The Conclusion of the Second and the Commencement of the Third Journey*

Text – Acts 18: 18 - 28

So far on this second missionary journey, we have followed the Apostle Paul and Silas, along with Timothy for most of the journey, and for a short period, Luke.

Paul and Barnabas started out in Antioch.

They travelled through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches.

Next, they went to Derbe and Lystra, which are in the region known as Galatia.

At Lystra, they picked up Timothy who would travel with them.

They continued through Galatia and Phrygia, and intended to stop in churches in Asia, but were forbidden of the Holy Ghost.

They next went to Mysia, and intended to go northeast into Bythinia, but once again the Holy Spirit closed the door.

They continued travelling westward, and ended up at Troas, where two things happened:

- 1 Paul saw a vision of a man in Macedonia that was calling for help.
- 2 They met up with Luke, (Acts 16:10) who travelled with them into Macedonia.

They sailed across the Aegean Sea, stopping for the night at the island of Samothracia, and then on to Neapolis. From Neapolis they travelled inland to Philippi, which was “the chief city” of that part of Macedonia.

There they went to a prayer meeting, and preached the gospel to Lydia, a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira. She was gloriously saved along with the rest of her household, and Paul had the privilege of baptizing her whole family. Paul and his companions lodged with Lydia.

Next, we find Paul incarcerated in the jail at Philippi because he had cast a devil out of a woman that was “possessed with a spirit of divination”. She was a “soothsayer”, or fortuneteller that had made some businessmen in town a lot of money. They trumped up charges against Paul and Silas, and had them thrown into the jail.

After being beaten, and while being incarcerated, an earthquake occurred which opened all of the doors of the prison. However, neither Paul nor any of the other prisoners attempted to escape. The jailor was so moved by the testimony of these men that he also trusted Christ as His savior; and he, along with his household were also baptized.

From there, Paul, Silas, and Timothy (not Luke) travelled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, and eventually stopped in Thessalonica, seemingly because there was a synagogue there. He

preached there for three weeks, and was able to see some Jews, and many Gentiles saved; but there were also many Jews that were angry with Paul, and eventually he was run out of town.

He went down to Berea where he was also able to preach to a receptive audience, where the people “searched the Scriptures daily, [to see] whether those things were so” Eventually, however, the persecutors from Thessalonica caught up to him in Berea, and again he was forced out of town.

Next, we saw Paul in Athens by himself. He preached to the Athenians on Aereapogus (Mars Hill), where he had a few people saved, but no church was established.

In the first part of Acts 18, we learn about Paul’s ministry in Corinth, a very wicked place. Silas and Timothy rejoin him here. He is “pressed in the spirit” and testifies about the Lord Jesus. He has a fruitful ministry in Corinth, and stays there for at least 18 months while getting the church established. He meets up with a couple of fellow tentmakers while in Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla who will provide a place for him to stay, and even give him a means to support himself through their tent making business. During his stay in Corinth, Paul wrote both of his letters to the Thessalonians.

In Acts 18:18, the folks at Corinth will bid farewell to Paul, and he will travel back across the Aegean Sea into Ephesus, in the western part of Asia Minor.

## **Read the Text**

### **I The Conclusion of the Second Journey (18:18 – 21)**

*“took leave of his brethren”*

Paul stayed in Corinth for 18 months, and “took his leave of the brethren”. Paul most likely left Timothy and Silas in Corinth. Silas (also known as Silvanus) is not mentioned again in reference to Paul’s journeys. We don’t know what ultimately became of him. He is mentioned in both of Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians, and in Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians, but no clear indication is given as to where Silas went immediately following his time spent in Corinth. A Silvanus is mentioned in 1 Peter as being the writer (penman) of 1 Peter, and though we assume it is the same Silas that travelled with Paul, we cannot be sure.

Timothy is mentioned in Acts 19 as being sent from Asia (Ephesus) into Macedonian, but again, we are not sure if he remained with the Apostle Paul as he travelled back to Jerusalem.

*“sailed into Syria”*

It is interesting the way this is worded. Syria was not the next stop, but it was the final destination on the second journey, and the launching place for the third journey. Antioch in Syria was where the home church was. He had to report to them on what took place in Greece, and he had to let them know of his plans for the next journey.

*“and with him Priscilla and Aquila”*

You will notice that Paul started out with just Silas on this journey, but as his ministry expanded, God gave Paul some likeminded men and women who co-labored with him as he established and strengthened churches.

Illustrate – Brother and Mrs. Stahl – we started out together in OCBC – co-labored together in the Christian Bible Church – both went to Bible College together – both came back to New Jersey – and now we are both serving the Lord here. Brother and Mrs. Stahl have been great friends to my wife and I, and have stuck by us through the difficult days.

I love to see God raise up teams of laborers – people whose hearts are knit together in the Lord.

Illustrate – Paul Chappell’s article on “Developing Friendships with Co-Laborers in the Ministry” We will see in a few verses just how valuable this married couple were to Paul’s ministry, and to the cause of Christ in Ephesus.

*“having shorn his head in Cenchrea, for he had a vow”*

Cenchrea is the port city of Achaia. Corinth was inland approximately 10 miles west of Cenchrea. Paul’s ship sailed from Cenchrea.

Paul’s head was shorn (his hair was cut) because he had a vow. In Numbers 6:1 – 21, the vow of a Nazarite was discussed. A Nazarite was a voluntary and temporary vow that either a man or a woman could participate in, and involved:

- 1 hair could not be cut
- 2 a dead body could not be touched
- 3 no wine, or even grape juice, grapes, or raisins could be consumed

This vow was voluntary, temporary, and was a vow that separated the person participating “unto the Lord”.

Some have criticized Paul for making this vow, saying that he was no longer under the Law; but if you and I try to force Paul not to do this vow, aren’t we putting him under a new law. Under grace, if Paul chose to do this vow, he could, and if he chose not to do it, that was his business.

Vs. 19 – 21, Paul travels into Ephesus with Aquila and Priscilla, but will not stay long, because he wants to make it back to Jerusalem for the “feast”, which was possibly the Passover. If it was then this was probably in the winter of 53 or 54 AD.

Paul leaves Aquila and Priscilla behind and travels on further. Priscilla and Aquila probably continued to work as tentmakers while they were there; but as we will see, their main employment was serving the Lord.

Paul did promise to return to Ephesus, the Lord willing. He wrote to the church at Corinth later on that “a great door and effectual” was opened unto him at Ephesus. (1 Corinthians 16:18 – 19)

## **II The Commencement of the Third Journey (18:22 – 23)**

Caesarea is on the coast. Jerusalem is inland, and up on a mountain. They went up the mountain from the coast to salute (greet) the church. Then he went down the mountain and travelled north to report to his home church in Antioch.

After reporting to the church at Antioch, he then travels back through Galatia and Phrygia, on his way back to Ephesus. (See map of third journey.

### **III     The Continuation of the Work at Ephesus (18:24 – 28)**

In this section we are introduced to a very bold preacher, named Apollos. He was a good speaker (eloquent), and he knew the Old Testament Scriptures very well; but his knowledge of the Scriptures was limited, and he needed to be given additional training in New Testament doctrine.

Aquila and Priscilla disciplined him so that he would know the way of God more perfectly. Notice it says “the way of God” not the word of God. The New Testament canon of Scripture was not yet written, with the exception of a handful of letters. The Apostles were in the process of putting in writing the Word of God as the Holy Spirit gave it to them. (See 2 Peter 3:16) Priscilla and Aquila had been disciplined by one of the men who had been given the privilege of recording a portion of the body of doctrine in the New Testament. Now they were pouring into Apollos what had been given them.

*"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:2)*

They then sent him into Achaia (Corinth), where he became one of the leaders of the church at Corinth.





