

Outline

1. Leaving for Corinth
 1. Meets with Aquila and Priscilla
 2. Silas and Timothy arrive from Macedonia
 3. Paul preaches to the Jews
 1. Faces rejection
 2. Shakes his garments and leaves
 4. Turns to the Gentiles
 1. Reassurance from the Lord
 2. Continues for 18 months
 5. Trial before Gallio
 1. Accusation rejected
 2. Gentiles “punish” the Jews
2. Returning
 1. Departs Corinth via Cenchrea
 1. Destination is Syria
 2. Cuts hair due to vow
 3. Brings Priscilla and Aquila
 2. Arrives in Ephesus
 1. Leaves Priscilla and Aquila
 2. Teaches in the synagogue
 3. Arrives in Caesarea
 1. “Goes up” and greets the church
 2. “Went down” to Antioch
3. Departs again on 3rd journey
 1. Destination is Ephesus
 2. Goes overland
 3. Purpose to strengthen the disciples

4. Apollos

1. Arrives in Ephesus
2. Knows only John's baptism
3. Taught more accurately by Aquila and Priscilla
4. Leaves Ephesus to preach in Achaia, ending up in Corinth

5. Paul arrives in Ephesus

1. Meets disciples who only knew John's baptism
 1. They are baptized again
 2. Paul lays his hands on them
2. Teaches in synagogue
 1. Lasts about three months
 2. Paul withdraws to the school of Tyrannus
3. Miracles performed
 1. By Paul
 2. By others invoking "the Jesus whom Paul proclaims"
 3. Sceva's sons assaulted
 4. Resulting in the name of Jesus being exalted and magicians giving up their practices
4. Paul decides to leave for Jerusalem and then Rome
5. Riot caused by Demetrius

Commentary

There is no reason given for Paul's departure from Athens. It appears to happen before Timothy and Silas arrive from Macedonia, given that they are stated to arrive in Corinth in Acts 18:5.

Regarding the reason for the expulsion of the Jews from Rome, it seems to make little sense to ascribe this to a fight between Jews and Christians. While the Roman historian Suetonius does write "He banished from Rome all the Jews, who were continually making disturbances at the instigation of one Chrestus" (Suetonius, *Claudius*, Ch. XXV), causing "Chrestus" to be

a misspelling of “Christ” (or “Christus”) would cause Acts 28:17-29 to make little sense. There, the Jews appear to know little or nothing of Christianity other than the fact that it is “everywhere spoken against.” Had a conflict between the Jews and the Christians been the cause of their expulsion from Rome (from which they would have only recently been allowed to return), they should have known a great deal more than they state. However, these events likely happen in the mid-50s, placing them approximately 15 years from the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70, which was an event driven by Jewish insurrection.

We see the continuation of Paul’s pattern throughout these chapters. When arriving in a place, he begins by preaching the synagogues and fully turns his attention to the Gentiles only when rejected by the Jews.

Corinth was known as a deeply sinful city:

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And the temple of Aphrodite was so rich that it owned more than a thousand temple slaves, courtesans, whom both men and women had dedicated to the goddess. And therefore it was also on account of these women that the city was crowded with people and grew rich; for instance, the ship captains freely squandered their money, and hence the proverb, “Not for every man is the voyage to Corinth.” (Strabo, 8.6.20)

The Bible Knowledge Commentary further notes:

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When Plato referred to a prostitute, he used the expression “Corinthian girl” (*Republic* 404d). The playwright Philetaerus (*Athenaeus* 13. 559a) titled a burlesque play *Ho Korinthiastēs*, which may be translated “The Lecher.” And Aristophanes coined the verb *korinthiazomai* to refer to fornication (*Fragment*



354). (Lowery, 2504-505.)

Thus, it seems almost incredible for the Lord to announce to Paul that “I have many in this city who are my people” (Acts 18:10).

Much is made by some of the lack of a mention of Apollos being baptized into Christ. All that we know is that things were “explained more accurately” (Acts 18:26) to him. However, given what we read about at the beginning of chapter 19, it does not make much sense that Paul would have those “disciples” baptized “in the name of the Lord Jesus” but that Apollos would not have done something similar when he came to understand better what was needed.

The incident with Sceva’s sons tells us that it is not enough to name names. Rather, there must be some belief attendant. “Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?” There was nothing to what these people had done other than name a few names.

The Romans were known for wanting peace. Thus, when the city clerk says “we are in danger of being charged with rioting today” he was giving a warning of something which would cause the possibility of a loss of city prestige and potentially of occupation.

Thought Questions

Consider the following thought questions

1. Why does it seem that Paul finally gets to work in Corinth only in verse 5?
2. What can we learn about our own evangelistic efforts from the Lord’s statement to Paul in Acts 18:9-10?
3. How could Apollos speak and teach “accurately the things concerning Jesus” if he only knew the baptism of John?
4. Why was the name of Jesus extolled after the incident with Sceva’s sons? How did it help the word of the Lord to increase and prevail mightily?

5. Why was it good that Paul did not go into the theater during the tumult there?