

“A Growing Ministry And An Effective Leadership Team”

Acts 18:18-28

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Teaching Aim: To examine Paul’s Nazarite vow and his decision to move on from the church at Corinth to fulfill his vow to the Lord in Jerusalem. To realize the Lord expects each of us to fulfill our vows today, whether to Him or to someone else. To recognize the giftedness of Apollos and see how Aquila and Priscilla used their discernment to help him have an even a more effective ministry. To recognize the humble way in which Apollos’ (this great man of God) received their instruction.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: A brief review and Paul’s vow to the Lord at Corinth (Acts 18:1-18)

1. After having just a few individuals come to faith in Christ at Athens, Paul traveled 46 SW to the city of Corinth. In wicked Corinth, Paul found the field ripe for spiritual harvest. Paul remained in Corinth for at least a year and a half and led many people to the Lord there. What famous couple did Paul meet shortly after arriving at Corinth (**vv. 1-2**) Why did this couple move from Rome to Corinth? What made the three such a great ministry team?
2. How did the Jews at the synagogue respond to Paul (**vs. 6**)? What did Paul do as a result? Where did Paul minister after being forced out of the synagogue (**vs. 7**)? Whose house did Paul minister in? Why would this anger the Jewish religious leaders?
3. What significant Jewish religious leader came to faith in Christ (**vs. 8**)? What was his previous role? Who else came to faith in Christ with him? What should every Christian do shortly after coming to Jesus? (See **Acts 8:26-40**) Why might the conversion of the synagogue ruler put Paul in harm’s way? What did the Lord Jesus do because of Paul’s fear and concerns (**vv. 9-10**)? Would a special meeting with Jesus comfort you in times of trouble? How long did Paul stay at Corinth following this vision (**vs. 11**)?
4. What did the Jews decide to do while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia (**vs. 12**)? Do you think they were trying to take advantage of his new appointment (**vv. 12-13**)? Why would they do this? How did the proconsul Gallio respond to the Jewish attempt to use him? Who was Sosthenes and what happened to him as a result of this attempt (**vs. 17**)? What appears to have happened to Sosthenes at some point following this incident? (See **1 Cor. 1:1-3**)

5. How long did Paul remain in Corinth after the Jewish attempt to bring him before Gallio (**vs. 18**)? What did the Lord lead Paul to do in **verse 18**? Who did he take with him as he set sail? Why did Paul have his hair cut off at Cenchrea? What kind of vow do most scholars believe Paul took? (See **Num. 6:1-8**) Why would Paul (a Christian) take this kind of vow?

6. Why is it important for every Christian to keep his or her vows to the Lord and to others today? Make a list of the kinds of vows that Christians make today? Have you every failed to keep a vow (or promise) that you've made to the Lord? If so, what was it? Can you still fulfill that vow? If not, what truth can you learn from **1 John 1:9**?

Part II: Paul's return to Jerusalem as his Second Missionary Journey ends (Acts 18:19-23)

1. What major city did Paul sail to first on his way to Jerusalem (**vs. 19**)? Ephesus was the largest city in Asia Minor (or modern Turkey) with a population of over 300,000 people. What was the most famous temple found in ancient Ephesus? (See Commentaries) Note: This was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Who did Paul leave in Ephesus as he continued on to Caesarea? Why did he leave this couple in Ephesus?

2. Where did Paul go on his first Sabbath Day in Ephesus (**vs. 19**)? Was this his usual practice in a new city? Why did Paul always go to the synagogue first before taking the gospel to the Gentiles? (See **Rom. 2:1-11**) How did the Jews in the synagogue at Ephesus react to his visit (**vs. 20**)? What was Paul's response? Why (**vs. 20**)? Which feast do most scholars believe Paul was traveling to? What did Paul promise the Jews who asked him to stay?

3. Today we are quick to tell people what our plans are for the future, but it is important to remember that all of our future plans are in God's hands. What can we learn from the following two Bible verses about future plans? (See **1 Cor. 4:19; Jam. 4:13-15**)

4. As Paul sailed away from Ephesus towards Jerusalem, he left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus. What can we learn from **1 Cor. 16:19** about the role they played in Ephesus? What did Paul immediately do upon arriving in Caesarea (**vs. 22**)? Why? Note: This officially ended Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey which lasted from A.D. 53-57 and covered approximately 2,700 miles.

5. Since Caesarea is located north of Jerusalem, why did Luke describe Paul as going up to Jerusalem? (See Commentaries) What did Paul do once he had fulfilled his Nazirite vow in Jerusalem (**vs. 22b**)? What was the significance of Paul returning to the church in Antioch? (See **Acts 13:1-3**) Do missionaries still return to their sending churches today to give reports? If so, why?

6. What can we learn about the length of Paul's stay at Antioch from **verse 23**? As Paul left Antioch, he officially began his 3rd Missionary Journey. Which regions did Paul return to first? Why is it important for us to follow up on new converts to Christ? How faithful was Paul at doing this? This was the third or fourth time that Paul had visited most of these churches. Note: On his 3rd Missionary Journey, instead of being stopped by the Holy Spirit (See **Acts 16:5-6**), Paul was allowed to travel directly to Ephesus.

Part III: The ministry of Apollos in Ephesus and later Achaia (Acts 18:24-28)

1. What famous Bible character do we meet for the first time in **verse 24**? What can we learn about this man here? What do we know about the ancient city of Alexandria? (See Commentaries) What can we learn about Apollos' speaking abilities from **verse 24**?

2. **Verse 25** tells us that Apollos had been "*catechized*" (or instructed) in the faith up until the time of John's baptism, but no further. Apollos was a tremendous preacher and teacher, but he did not know about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus at this point. He also did not know about the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, although he probably expected the Spirit to come. Note: John the Baptist had promised that someone greater than himself was coming and would baptize people with the Holy Spirit and fire. (See **Matt. 3:11**)

3. How was John's baptism different from Christian baptism today? Have you followed the Lord in water baptism? If not, why not? Why should every Christian follow the Lord in water baptism shortly after coming to faith in Jesus Christ? (See **Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21**)

4. What do we find Apollos doing in **verse 26a** before he had learned the full truth about Jesus? How did Aquila and Priscilla respond to his teaching at the synagogue (**vs. 26b**)? Why do you think Aquila and Priscilla (as Christians) were attending the Jewish synagogue in Ephesus at this time? What principle can we learn for today from the way Aquila and Priscilla instructed Apollos? What can we learn about the great humility of Apollos from the way he responded? (See **Prov. 21:11b**) Why should every Christian be instructible so long as the instructions are in line with the Word of God?

5. According to **verse 27**, what burden had God placed upon Apollos' heart? What two major Greek cities were located in Achaia? What did the brethren in Ephesus do to help Apollos? What are some ways that we still use letters of recommendation today? Notice the brethren wrote to disciples in Achaia. This meant these individuals were already believers in Christ and most likely were located in the city of Corinth since that is where Paul had the greatest success. How did Apollos affect the church in Achaia once he arrived (**vs. 27b**)?

6. What is a Christian "*apologist*?" In **verse 28** we find Apollos "*vigorously*" refuting the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ. What can we learn about the instruction Apollos received from Aquila and Priscilla through the message he preached at Achaia (**vs. 28**)? Apollos appears to be the first Christian apologist (besides Paul) to really use his spiritual gifts to defend the Christian faith. Why is it so important for each of us to study the Bible in depth today?

7. The Jews could not stand up against the spiritual giftedness of Paul and Apollos. What spiritual gift (or gifts) has God given you? (See **Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-31; 14:1-40; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Pet. 4:10-11**) What do you see as your strongest spiritual gift? How are you using your spiritual gifts in ministry today? What is God's purpose in giving you spiritual gifts?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- It is important for every Christian to understand the importance of keeping our vows to the Lord and to other people; this includes our wedding vows.
- Whenever we get persecuted as Christians, it is important for us to get back in the saddle as soon as possible and to continue ministering in the name of Jesus; Paul did this repeatedly.
- Paul prioritized the ministries that he would be able to do and so should we; he learned to choose between the good and the best.
- Apollos was a great speaker; however, he was initially limited in his knowledge of Jesus.
- Aquila and Priscilla gently instructed Apollos in a more accurate knowledge of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus along with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.
- Rather than embarrassing Apollos publicly, they invited him into their home to talk.
- It is to Apollos' credit that he graciously received the instruction from Aquila and Priscilla.