

=THE BOOK OF ACTS=

Lesson 18

Paul at Corinth - Acts 18

AIM: to teach my pupils the events and facts about Paul's stay at Corinth.

POINT OF CONTACT: Spend some time reviewing the important event in each chapter. You might use the quiz idea, the chalkboard, or the matching game—whichever you think is best. Do your best to see that the pupils know the main story in each of the chapters of Acts we have studied thus far.

INTRODUCTION: Paul leaves the city of Athens and goes to Corinth. Corinth is not far from Athens. It is a little south, but mostly west, probably about 40 to 50 miles. Let us find the conditions that prevailed in this new field.

I. THE CITY ITSELF.

1. Corinth was at this time the political capital of southern Greece. It was under Roman rule but was a Grecian city. It was also the residence of the Roman proconsul.
2. Corinth was a commercial center. It was an international commercial headquarters. People were there from all over the world. (This makes it somewhat like our area, does it not?)
3. Corinth was a city of tremendous luxury. The people lived lives of ease and had, in general, a very high standard of living. (Once again it reminds us of our area, doesn't it?)
4. Corinth was an entertainment center. There were shows of all kinds. There was a vulgar display of wealth mingled with the most corrupt and indecent practices. (It still reminds us of our area, doesn't it?)
5. Corinth was a city of terrible immorality. When people would describe immorality around the world in that day, they would describe it as, "Those people live as Corinthians." In the plays and dramatic entertainment, most of the characters were drunk. It was unbelievably immoral. (This also reminds us of our area, doesn't it?)
6. The most tragic thing of all, however, was the fact that much of the corruption was centered around religion. There was a splendid Temple of Aphrodite in this city. In this temple and in this worship, the most shameful, perverted practices went on in the name of religion. There were a thousand "sacred" prostitutes dedicated in this religion, and the most unnatural, sensual ceremonies were held as a part of their religion. (Once again, it reminds us of our day and our area, doesn't it? The new morality, the sexual looseness, etc. would make you think it was a city in our area rather than Corinth.)
7. The Lord made an interesting statement in Acts 18:10, "...I have much people in this city." What He seems to mean here is there are many people in this city ready to turn to God, turning to God, or already turned to God. It simply means that where grace does abound, sin does much more abound. Where there is much sin, there are many hungry hearts, broken homes, ruined lives, attempted suicides, broken dreams, etc. In other words, the best place in the world to reach people with the Gospel is in an area such as Corinth. Paul had a tremendous ministry here. Actually, he had one of the greatest ministries here of his entire journey, and it is one of the few places where he left peaceably. This certainly was partly due to the fact that where sin does abound, grace does much more abound.

II. GOD'S PROVISIONS FOR PAUL IN CORINTH.

1. God had people waiting for Paul to care for him. Read Acts 18:1-3. One of the most blessed couples in the Bible and one of the dearest couples to the Apostle Paul was Priscilla and Aquila. Aquila was a Jew born in Pontus who, with his wife, had lived originally at Rome. The Emperor Claudius commanded that all the Jewish inhabitants leave Rome. Aquila and Priscilla moved to Corinth, where they met the Apostle Paul. They were of the same occupation as Paul. They provided lodging for him and encouraged him in general in the work. Later, they went with him from Corinth to Ephesus. It was there where they met Apollos and instructed him more completely in the Word of God. They probably later returned to Rome. Thank God for people who help the

preacher! It is interesting here that God includes Aquila and Priscilla in the list of people who were His servants.

2. God's providence and care is evident here. Especially is this true in Acts 18:3. What an amazing thing that God led Paul to someone of the same crowd! Maybe Paul worked for Aquila and Priscilla. Maybe he worked with them. We do not know. We do know, however, that God provided for Paul. At first, he worked daily for his living and spent only the Sabbath preaching. Later, however, when Silas and Timothy joined him with financial help from the other churches, Paul spent his full time preaching. There is a lesson here. A preacher should be willing to work. Christians should be hard workers, but a preacher should do secular work only if he must do so to care for the basic needs of life. Some people think that Paul was a curtain-maker. Others think he made umbrellas. Others think he was a weaver. We do not know exactly what is meant here by the word, "tentmaker." This is not the important thing; the important thing is that God led him to someone of the same vocation and that God supplied his needs.

III. PAUL'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SYNAGOGUE.

1. Paul had disputed and taught in the synagogue. See Acts 18:6. (The fact that they had a synagogue in Corinth meant what? Review what we learned about this in our Acts 16 lesson.) There was opposition, so Paul shook his raiment and withdrew from the synagogue.
2. He started a church next door. Acts 18:7 tells us that he went to the house of Justus, "...whose house joined hard to the synagogue."
3. The chief ruler of the synagogue was saved. Read Acts 18:8. This led to many other Corinthians being saved.
4. God reassured Paul that He was with him. Notice Acts 18:9, 10. There is no opposition so fanatical or so bent toward persecution as is religious opposition.
5. Let us notice God's promise to Paul. In the first place, God said, "Be not afraid." This gives comfort and assurance to Paul. Then He said, "...no man shall set on thee." This means, "No man shall be permitted to lay violent hands on thee." No doubt the Jews had considered conspiring to kill him. God was assuring Paul of His protection and of the fact that a Christian is immortal as long as he is in God's will and until God is through with him. Then God assured him of victory, of converts, and of success when He said, "I have much people in this city."
6. Notice Paul's assurance and God's blessings. Acts 18:11a says, "And he continued there a year and six months." He was so confident that he was under God's special care. He therefore continued teaching the Word. (The "Word" here means "the doctrine of God.") There are those who think he wrote I Thessalonians while here. Also, perhaps the book of Galatians was written while here. Let us notice a few things about Paul's success in Corinth.
 - 1) He wrote the blessed book of I Thessalonians in Corinth.
 - 2) He had many, many people converted.
 - 3) It was here that God gave him special care.
 - 4) He met some precious friends here who were his helpers for life.
 - 5) He started a church here.
 - 6) He was needed here because of the sin problem.

IV. SOME PRACTICAL THINGS TO TEACH THE CLASS.

1. Teach them of God's protecting care. Especially should this be emphasized to those who have problems and burdens, to those who have heartaches and heavy loads to carry.
2. Teach them the importance of being a good friend such as Aquila and Priscilla were. You might discuss some ways to be a good friend to your friends.
3. Discuss the importance of appreciating your friends as Paul did.
4. Discuss the importance of hard work such as Paul's tent-making. Especially stress this with the children. Discuss the integrity involved in working hard, in earning one's pay, in paying one's debts, in caring for oneself.

QUESTIONS: TRUE OR FALSE

- T F 1. When Paul went to Corinth, the city was under Grecian rule.
- T F 2. Corinth was a center of commerce.
- T F 3. The people of Corinth had a low standard of living.
- T F 4. Much immorality went on in Corinth.
- T F 5. The religion of Corinth fought against the wickedness that went on.
- T F 6. Paul had a highly successful ministry in Corinth.
- T F 7. Corinth reminds us in many ways of our present-day cities in this area.
- T F 8. The Temple of Aphrodite in Corinth was the center for Christianity.

- 1. Who were the people God had waiting in Corinth for Paul?
- 2. Where was Aquila originally from?
- 3. What was Aquila's occupation? What was Paul's occupation (besides preaching)?
- 4. Did Paul find opposition in the synagogue in Corinth?
- 5. Name two things that God promised Paul when he was in Corinth.
- 6. How long did Paul stay in Corinth?
- 7. What book of the Bible did Paul write while he was in Corinth?
- 8. Paul started a church in Corinth. Where was the church located in relation to the Corinthian synagogue?

MEMORY VERSE: "For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city," Acts 18:10.