

NOON BIBLE STUDY: ACTS 18

ACTS 18:1 — PAUL TRAVELS FROM ATHENS TO CORINTH



ACTS 18:2-4 - AQUILA & PRISCILLA

"CLAUDIUS HAD COMMANDED ALL JEWS TO LEAVE ROME": "THIS INTERESTING PIECE OF INFORMATION TALLIES REASONABLY CLOSE WITH TWO PARALLEL REPORTS IN LATER PAGAN HISTORIANS. THE EXACT DATE OF THIS EXPULSION IS UNCLEAR. WE MAY WELL BE RIGHT IN ASSUMING THAT "ALL JEWS "ACTUALLY MEANT "MOST USE QUOTE, BUT IT IS STILL A FACT OF SOME IMPORTANCE...THE ROMAN HISTORIAN SUETONIUS EXPLAINS THAT CLAUDIUS EXPELLED THE JEWS BECAUSE THEY WERE RIOTING, AND HE GIVES AN EXPLANATION FOR THE RIOTS: IMPULSORE CHRESTO. THE CRYPTIC LATIN PHRASE COULD MEAN "AT THE INSTIGATION OF CHRIESTUS" (POSSIBILITY REFERRING TO CHRIST). WAS SUETONIUS, PERHAPS, AWARE OF A DIM OR SECOND HAND REPORT THAT SOME PEOPLE IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY HAD BEEN SQUABBLING, AND THEN RIOTING, BECAUSE A MESSAGE ABOUT A MESSIAH, A CHRISTUS, HAD ARRIVED IN ROME AND CAUSED THE SAME KIND OF UPROAR THAT

IT DONE IN ANTIOCH, THESSALONICA, AND OTHER PLACES? THIS IS TYPICAL OF THE KIND QUESTION EGYP THE JEWISH COMMUNITY HAVE BEEN SQUABBLING, AND IN WRITING, BECAUSE A MESSAGE ABOUT A MESSIAH, THE KRISTIS, HAD ARRIVED IN ROME AND COST THE SAME KIND OF UPROAR THAT IT DONE IN ANTIOCH, THESSALONICA, AND OTHER PLACES? THIS IS TYPICAL OF THE KIND QUESTION ANCIENT HISTORIANS HAVE TO DEAL IN ALL THE TIME. IT MAY JUST BE COINCIDENCE, BUT IT MAY BE JUST A TELLTALE HINT. - NT WRIGHT, "ACTS FOR EVERYONE" BOOK 2, PG 97-98

PAUL IS WORKING AS A TENT MAKER WITH AQUILA AND PRISCILLA AND ALSO "REASONING IN SYNAGOGUE EVERY SABBATH"

ACTS 18:5-11 - PAUL, SILAS, & TIMOTHY IN CORINTH

V. 5 - PAUL RETURNS TO FULL TIME MINISTRY

V. 6 - RESISTANCE, BLASPHEMERS, REJECTION CAUSES PAUL TO PHYSICALLY DEMONSTRATE HIS CHANGE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH SUCH PEOPLE/THINGS. HOWEVER, HE DOESN'T COMPLETELY GIVE UP ON THE JEWS, AND MOVES INTO THE HOUSE NEXT TO THE SYNAGOGUE!

V. 8 - CRISPUS, LEADER OF SYNAGOGUE, BELIEVES & MANY CORINTHIANS BAPTIZED.

V. 9-11 - PAUL STAYS IN CORINTH 1 AND A HALF YEARS AFTER RECEIVING VISION THAT HE WILL BE SAFE THERE.

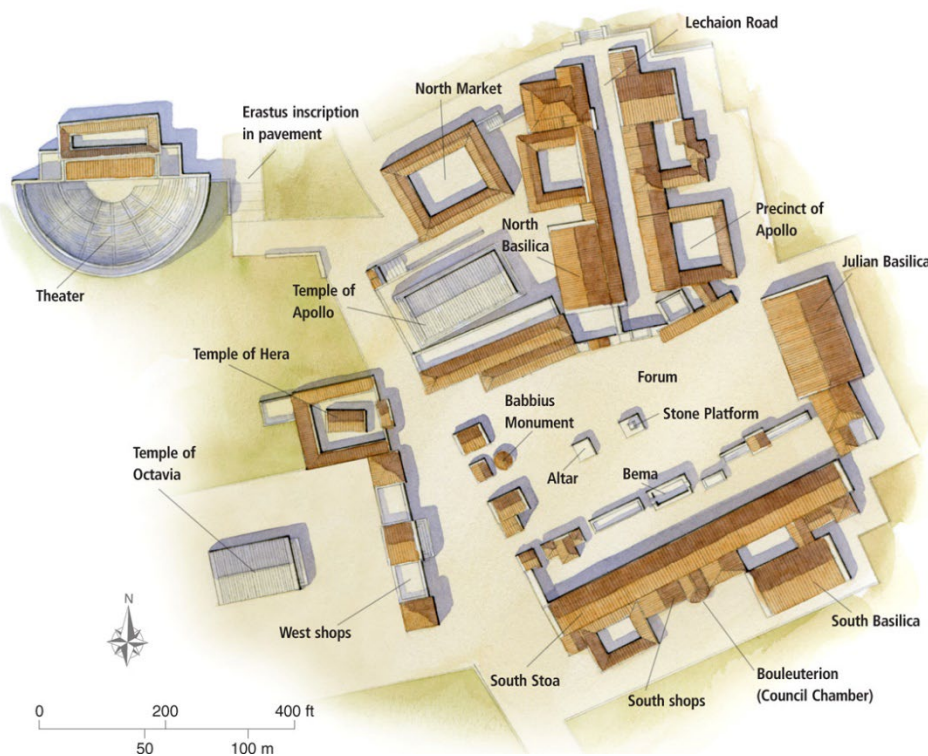
CORINTH: CORINTH SAT ON THE ISTHMUS CONNECTING THE GREEK MAINLAND WITH THE PELOPONNESIAN PENINSULA. THIS LOCATION MADE IT A FLOURISHING CROSSROADS FOR SEA TRAFFIC BETWEEN THE AEGEAN REGION AND THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN. IT WAS A PLACE WHERE MANY CULTURES AND RELIGIONS MINGLED. SINCE IT WAS A ROMAN COLONY, ROMAN LAW AND CUSTOMS WERE IMPORTANT, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE UPPER CLASSES, BUT "MANY 'GODS' AND MANY 'LORDS'" FOUND A HOME IN CORINTH. THE WORSHIP OF THESE GODS WAS FULLY INTEGRATED INTO GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS, CIVIC FESTIVALS, TRADE GUILDS, AND SOCIAL CLUBS, AND EVERYDAY LIFE IN GENERAL. CORINTH WAS ALSO A DESTINATION FOR TRAVELING PROFESSIONAL ORATORS WHO CHARGED A FEE FOR ATTENDANCE AT THEIR ENTERTAINING RHETORICAL DISPLAYS AND ADVISED PEOPLE ON HOW TO ADVANCE SOCIALLY. INTO THIS MILIEU PAUL BROUGHT THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, AND SOON A CHURCH WAS ESTABLISHED.

THE ACROCORINTH IS A SMALL BUT STEEP MOUNTAIN 1,886 FEET (575 M) HIGH ON THE PELOPONNESIAN PENINSULA IN SOUTHERN GREECE. ANCIENT CORINTH WAS BUILT AT THE MOUNTAIN'S FOOT, BENEFITING ALSO FROM THE NATURAL SPRING THAT PROVIDED WATER FOR THE TOWN. IN PAUL'S DAY CORINTH, THOUGH A COUPLE OF MILES INLAND, OVERSAW THE TERRITORY CONNECTING THE ADRIATIC PORT OF LECHAION ON THE WEST WITH THE AEGEAN PORT OF CENCHREAE TO THE EAST (SEE ACTS 18:18). SHIPS WERE OFTEN PORTAGED BETWEEN THESE SEAPORTS ACROSS THIS NARROW STRETCH OF THE PELOPONNESIAN ISTHMUS, APPROXIMATELY 3.7 MILES (6 KM) WIDE AT ITS NARROWEST. SEVERAL RULERS IN THE FIRST CENTURY AD FOOLISHLY ATTEMPTED TO CONSTRUCT A CANAL ACROSS THE ISTHMUS, BUT THIS WAS NOT SUCCESSFULLY ACCOMPLISHED UNTIL THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

THE FAMED GREEK CITY OF CORINTH, RENOWNED FOR ITS ARTISTRY IN BRONZE, ITS WEALTH, AND ITS WANTON SEXUALITY, WAS DESTROYED IN 146 B.C. DURING A WAR WITH ROME. THE CITY WAS RE-FOUNDED AS A ROMAN COLONY IN 44 B.C. BY ROMAN FREEDMEN, AND THE DISTINCT ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRATA IN THE CITY CENTER TESTIFY TO THIS GAP IN ITS HISTORY. INSCRIPTIONS

FROM THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS OF THE NEW COLONY WERE MOSTLY IN LATIN, ALTHOUGH STRONG MARKS OF GREEK CULTURE WERE ALSO EVIDENT IN THE ART AND LIFE OF THE CITY.

CORINTH IN THE TIME OF PAUL (C. A.D. 60)



FIRST-CENTURY CORINTH FOLLOWED A ROMAN CITY PLAN BASED ON A RECTANGULAR GRID. TYPICAL URBAN STRUCTURES WERE BUILT (OR RECONSTRUCTED), SUCH AS SHOPS, STOAS, BASILICAS, A BOULEUTERION (FOR THE CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS), A GYMNASIUM, BATHS, LATRINES, AND A THEATER. A FEW LARGE HOUSES FROM THIS PERIOD HAVE ALSO BEEN EXCAVATED. THE CENTER OF TOWN BOASTED THE REFASHIONED PEIRENE FOUNTAIN AS A PLEASANT PLACE FROM WHICH TO DRAW SPRING WATER. TO THIS DAY A RAISED SPEAKER'S PLATFORM

STANDS IN THE MAIN FORUM, AND A NEARBY INSCRIPTION REFERS TO THIS PLATFORM AS THE ROSTRA (EQUIVALENT TO A BEMA OR TRIBUNAL); THIS IS PROBABLY THE VERY LOCATION WHERE GALLIO JUDGED PAUL TO BE INNOCENT (ACTS 18:12–17). SOME OTHER SIGNIFICANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS DATE FROM POST-NT TIMES, SUCH AS THE ODEION (A SMALL COVERED THEATER).

IN PAUL'S DAY THE GREAT DORIC-STYLE TEMPLE (TO ATHENA OR APOLLO) FROM THE SIXTH CENTURY B.C. REMAINED A CENTRAL FEATURE IN CORINTH, AND MULTIPLE TEMPLES TO OTHER DEITIES DOTTED THE CITY. INDEED, WHEN THE AUTHOR PAUSANIAS WROTE ABOUT CORINTH IN THE MID-SECOND CENTURY A.D., HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY READ LIKE A TOUR GUIDE OF PAGAN MONUMENTAL SACRED SITES. CORINTH BOASTED AN IMPORTANT SANCTUARY OF ASKLEPIOS (THE GOD OF HEALING), WHERE PEOPLE WOULD COME TO OFFER SACRIFICES TO THE GOD AND TO SEEK MEDICAL CARE. MARKS OF THE IMPERIAL CULT WERE EVIDENT,...(DURING) ROMAN TIMES WANTON SEXUALITY WOULD HAVE BEEN COMMON AT SUCH A PORT CITY. — (ESV STUDY BIBLE, INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS)

ACTS 18:12-17 - PAUL BEFORE GALLIO

- GALLIO DISMISSES ANY CASE/CHARGE AGAINST PAUL BECAUSE HE FEELS IT IS A JEWISH-LAW MATTER, THUS INSIGNIFICANT AND NOT WORTH HIS TIME. THE PRESENCE OF GALLIO IN THIS TEXT IS ONE OF THE BEST PIECES WHICH HELPS US DATE PAUL'S LIFE.
- THEY BEAT THE LEADER OF THE SYNAGOGUE "SOSTHENES" AS A RESULT (THIS MAY BE THE NEW LEADER APPOINTED AFTER CRISPUS' CONVERSION.) SOSTHENES IS ALSO MENTIONED IN 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1, WHICH MAY MEAN HE LATER CONVERTS TO CHRISTIANITY OR THIS IS JUST A COMMON NAME.

ACTS 18:18-21 - PAUL MAKES HIS WAYS TOWARDS HIS STARTING POINT, THE SYRIAN CITY OF ANTIOCH. HE LEAVES PRISCILLA AND AQUILA IN THE CITY OF EPHEBUS, WHERE HE BRIEFLY STOPS TO PREACH. HE WILL RETURN THERE IN ACTS 19.

ACTS 18:22 - PAUL LANDS IN CAESAREA. GREETED "THE CHURCH" - "MOST INTERPRETERS UNDERSTAND TO MEAN THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM, WHICH IN THAT REGION COULD BE CALLED "THE CHURCH" WITHOUT FURTHER SPECIFICATION, AND WHICH WAS THE LOCATION TO WHICH ONE WOULD "GO UP" FROM CAESAREA, GIVEN THE HIGHER ALTITUDE OF JERUSALEM. THEN PAUL "WENT DOWN" (FROM JERUSALEM) TO ANTIOCH." ESV STUDY BIBLE ACTS 18:22

ACTS 18:23 - THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY BEGINS (MORE ON THIS IN ACTS 19)

ACTS 18:24-28 — APOLLOS

- ELOQUENT MAN
- MIGHTY IN SCRIPTURES
- INSTRUCTED IN THE WAY OF THE LORD (JESUS)
- FERVENT IN SPIRIT
- SPEAKING AND TEACHING ABOUT JESUS, "BEING ACQUAINTED ONLY WITH THE BAPTISM OF JOHN"

IT SEEMS MOST PROBABLY THAT APOLLOS WAS UNAWARE OF THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND POSSIBILITY ABOUT JESUS DEATH AND RESURRECTION. PRISCILLA AND AQUILA HEARD HIM AND "TOOK HIM ASIDE". PRIVATE CONVERSATION RATHER THAN PUBLIC DISAGREEMENT. APOLLOS THEN TRAVELS TO ACHAIA TO THE CITY OF CORINTH (ACTS 19:1). THIS WILL SERVE AS THE BACKDROP TO 1 CORINTHIANS, WHICH WILL BE WRITTEN A FEW YEARS LATER.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-17 - NOW I EXHORT YOU, BRETHREN, BY THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THAT YOU ALL AGREE AND THAT THERE BE NO DIVISIONS AMONG YOU, BUT THAT YOU BE MADE COMPLETE IN THE SAME MIND AND IN THE SAME JUDGMENT. 11 FOR I HAVE BEEN INFORMED CONCERNING YOU, MY BRETHREN, BY CHLOE'S PEOPLE, THAT THERE ARE QUARRELS AMONG YOU. 12 NOW I MEAN THIS, THAT EACH ONE OF YOU IS SAYING, "I AM OF PAUL," AND "I OF APOLLOS," AND "I OF CEPHAS," AND "I OF CHRIST." 13 HAS CHRIST BEEN DIVIDED? PAUL WAS NOT CRUCIFIED FOR YOU, WAS HE? OR WERE YOU BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF PAUL? 14 I THANK GOD THAT I BAPTIZED NONE OF YOU EXCEPT CRISPUS AND GAIUS, 15 SO THAT NO ONE WOULD SAY YOU WERE BAPTIZED IN MY NAME. 16 NOW I DID BAPTIZE ALSO THE HOUSEHOLD OF STEPHANAS; BEYOND THAT, I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER I BAPTIZED ANY OTHER. 17 FOR CHRIST DID NOT SEND ME TO BAPTIZE, BUT TO PREACH THE GOSPEL, NOT IN CLEVERNESS OF SPEECH, SO THAT THE CROSS OF CHRIST WOULD NOT BE MADE VOID.