

Christ Proclaimed in Corinth

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Acts 18

An Outline of Paul's life from conversion to death.

- Paul's Conversion (AD 35) Acts 9
- Paul's first visit to Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-29) AD 38
- Second visit to Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30) AD 45
- First Journey (Acts 13:1-14:28) AD 46-48, about 1.5 years
- Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-35)
- **Second Journey (Acts 15:40-Acts 18:22) AD 49-52 about 2.5-3 years**
 - Antioch (Syria) – Acts 15:35-40
 - Syria and Cilicia – Acts 15:41
 - Derbe and Lystra (modern-day Turkey) – Acts 16:1-5
 - Phrygia and Galatia – Acts 16:6
 - Troas – Acts 16:8-10
 - Neapolis and Philippi (Macedonia) – Acts 16:11-40
 - Thessalonica – Acts 17:1-9
 - Berea – Acts 17:10-15
 - Athens – Acts 17:16-34
 - **Corinth – Acts 18:1-17**
 - Ephesus – Acts 18:19-21
 - Caesarea and Jerusalem – Acts 18:22
- Third Journey (Acts 18:23-21:24) AD 53-57 about three years.
- Arrest & Imprisonment in Caesarea (Acts 21:15-26:32) AD 57-59
- Voyage to Rome (Acts 27:1-28:31) AD 60-63.
- Release and further work (AD 63-67)
- Final Imprisonment and death (AD 67-68)

I. The Emporium of Corinth

- A. Corinth was a Greek city near the isthmus connecting Greece to the Peloponnesian peninsula.
- B. As a result, Corinth commanded trade routes in every compass direction.
- C. Its strategic location allowed the operation of two seaports on two gulfs. It was a city of seafarers and maritime merchants, and Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea (Neptune in Rome), was worshiped.
- D. Paul must have seen that if commerce sprang forth in every direction, so could the gospel.
 - 1. Paul followed his playbook of beginning in the synagogue (Acts 18:4-5)
 - 2. Paul responded to Jewish rejection again by turning to Gentiles (Acts 18:6-7)
 - 3. Paul was privileged to see many hear and believe the Gospel (Acts 18:8)
 - 4. Paul was encouraged by the Lord (Acts 18:9-10)
 - 5. Paul was "protected" by Roman authorities (In Ephesus, also) (Acts 18:12-17)

II. The Culture of Corinth

- A. Sexual immorality (including incest, prostitution, sex acts as worship) (1 Corinthians 5/6)
- B. Idolatry (as a seaport, Corinth was a melting pot of pagan gods & idols, the worship of which included immoral acts (1 Corinthians 8/10)
- C. Divisions and Factionalism (1 Corinthians 1:10-13)
- D. Pride and Boasting (1 Corinthians 4:6-7)
- E. Legal Disputes (1 Corinthians 6:1-8)
- F. Abuse of the Lord's Supper (Sacred things) (1 Corinthians 11:17-34)
- G. Spiritual Gifts and Disorder in Worship (1 Corinthians 12-14)
- H. Lack of Love and Concern for Others (1 Corinthians 13)

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- I. False Teachings, including the denial of the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15)
 - J. Greed and Covetousness (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)

III. The Resolve of Paul

- A. Corinth was home to a proud population (Sage, Sturdy, Successful).
- B. Corinth was host to flagrant, open immorality. (The people of Corinth lived in open sin)
- C. Paul wrote of his anticipation of this journey, **1 Corinthians 2:1–5**, *And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*
 - 1. Paul, while in Athens, shared the gospel with intellectual prowess on Mars' Hill.
 - 2. In Corinth, he reminds us that the gospel is not about lofty speech or wisdom (human).
 - 3. The Gospel is Jesus Christ and him crucified. Period.

IV. The Relationships of Paul

- A. An exciting study of every personal contact of the Apostle Paul in Scripture (A cursory reading reveals more than 35 significant people mentioned in connection with Paul. The list easily doubles with including those in Romans 16).
- B. Crispus – Ruler of the synagogue in Corinth, converted to Christ (Acts 18:8, 1 Corinthians 1:14)
- C. Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:1-3; Romans 16:3-5; 1 Corinthians 16:19) – Married couple who were textile workers (tentmakers) and co-laborers with Paul, helped instruct Apollos).
- D. Sosthenes – a synagogue leader who later joined Paul (Acts 18:17; 1 Corinthians 1:1)

V. The Light for Our Path

- A. The depth of sin and depravity is no more significant today than in Paul's day. Share the gospel!
 - 1. Our "motivations" for sharing the gospel.
 - a) Level 1 – obedience to the great commission (**Matthew 28:18-20**)
 - b) Level 2 – compassion for the lost (As Jesus laments over Jerusalem's condition, our hearts should be moved with compassion for our neighbor) (**Matthew 23:37**)
 - c) Level 3 – our zeal and love for the Lord Jesus Christ and his kingdom (**John 14:15**).
 - 2. As Paul was provoked in Athens by the idolatrous practices of the Athenians, God is provoked, and as believers, we should be "provoked" into action
 - a) God was 'provoked' by making the golden calf in Exodus by Israel & Aaron.
 - b) God was 'provoked' by the immorality with Baal of Peor
 - c) God was 'provoked' when the Northern Kingdom made another calf to worship Lord.
 - (1) **Isaiah 65:2–3**, *I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices; 3 a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens and making offerings on bricks;*
 - (2) **Deuteronomy 9:7**, *Remember and do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD.*
Deuteronomy 9:18, 22
 - (3) **Psalms 106:28–29**, *Then they yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor, and ate sacrifices offered to the dead; 29 they provoked the Lord to anger with their deeds, and a plague broke out among them.*
 - (4) **Hosea 8:5**, *I have spurned your calf, O Samaria. My anger burns against them. How long will they be incapable of innocence?*
- B. No matter the culture, economic level, or social strata of a geographic location, Paul built personal relationships! Be like Paul!
- C. The answers to a lost and depraved society are not found in the White House but in Christ!