

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

BACK TO THE BOOK OF ACTS (BBA)

RLJ-1148

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PART 37: PAUL ARRIVES IN CORINTH

THE CITY OF CORINTH

"In 44 BC Julius Caesar reestablished Corinth as a Roman colony. The new Corinth flourished and became the administrative capital of the Roman province of Achaëa. The city is known to readers of the New Testament for the letters addressed to its Christian community by the apostle Paul. It enjoyed some prosperity under Byzantine rule but declined in the later European Middle Ages. After the Turkish conquest in 1458, it was reduced to a country town.

The remains of the ancient city of Corinth lie just north of the Acrocorinthus, with which it was joined by a circuit wall about 6 miles (10 km) in circumference. The city was connected with its principal port, Lechaëum, by two parallel walls and a paved highway which led to the propylaea, the entrance to the agora (the city's main marketplace). Most of the substantial remains in the agora are works from the Roman period, but it acquired its present extent much earlier, in the 4th century BC, with the construction of an enormous stoa (portico), 525 feet (160 m) in length, that enclosed its southern side. Immediately behind the south stoa began the road leading to the city's other port of Cenchreae, on the Saronic Gulf. On a small rise northwest of the agora stand seven Doric columns, which are the remains of the Temple of Apollo (c. 550 BC). The remains of other temples, villas, a theatre, shops, public baths, pottery factories, a gymnasium, a large triumphal arch, and other buildings dot the site, which since 1896 has been extensively excavated." (Encyclopedia Britannica)

Corinth is located 50 miles west of Athens with the road leading to Corinth built upon a small strip of land separating the Mediterranean Sea. **Acts 18:1**

A DIVINE APPOINTMENT

Luke gives us great insight into the Roman Empire at this time. Aquila was a Jew, who was born in the Asian province of Pontus, which was located on the northern boundary of Turkey, on the south side of the Black Sea. We also learn from this verse that the majority of the Jewish people at this time did not live in Palestine, but were spread out in the Roman Empire, and that they had the means and permission to travel freely throughout it. Aquila was born in Asia but had moved to Rome. Because of the Roman history that was recorded, we know that the Senate and different emperors were bitter enemies and that the Jews also meddled in the political affairs of Rome. If they lined up with the losing party, they would usually be punished, and in this instance, Emperor Claudius not only drove out all Jews from Rome, but from Italy as well. There is no exact date found in the Bible or in Roman archives but we do know that Claudius reigned



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from A.D. 41-54, he was married twice, his first wife conspired against him and she was executed and his second wife murdered him by poison.

Luke doesn't tell us where Priscilla, Aquila's wife was born. **Acts 18:2**

God had a divine appointment for Paul to meet Aquila and Priscilla, who would play a significant role in the early phase of the apostolic church. It is not clear if they had accepted Jesus as the Messiah when they met Paul, but it was their common trade, and the fact that all of them were Jewish that brought them together. **verse 3**

REJECTION BY THE JEWISH LEADERSHIP

Paul had a burden for his own people and was determined to continue preaching Jesus as the Messiah in the synagogue. He had some initial success. **verse 4**

Once Silas and Timotheus joined him in Corinth, Paul had a tremendous burden to push hard in the synagogue. **verse 5**

We can see again how the Devil was determined that no Jews were going to be saved and Paul's ministry in the synagogue was finished. **verse 6**

We get a glimpse of Paul's personal life as he made a decision to move out of the home of Aquila and Priscilla and rent from a Gentile that lived right next to the synagogue building. If the decision was to show the Gentiles that he was through with the Jews or if he wanted to place his headquarters next to the synagogue is something we'll have to find out when we come to heaven. **verse 7**

There must have been a huge commotion in the Jewish community at Corinth, particularly since the chief rabbi of the synagogue accepted Jesus as the Messiah along with his family (children, their spouses and grandchildren). It must have stirred up the ungodly Jews when this powerful Jewish clan made a public statement by being baptized into Christ. **verse 8**

PAUL HAD FEAR

Luke doesn't verify that Paul had fear at this time in his life but he does record the vision given to Paul. This tells us that Paul was not a super human but could have fear just like anyone of us. God would not have given this vision to Paul unless he was not able to shake this fear by himself. **verses 9-10**

God is always faithful to His Word and Paul was able to stay for a year and a half to establish the church in Corinth. **verse 11**

JEWISH PERSECUTION BACKFIRES

Luke tells us that the Jews who rejected Jesus as the Messiah had organized themselves and tried to use the Roman court system to get rid of Paul. It is interesting to note that the satanic forces behind the Jews at the time used the same program of separation of religion and state that they would use 1,950 years later in the United States. **verses 12-13**

The Roman proconsul (governor) of the province Achaia, Gallio was well aware of Jewish political intrigues and outright rejected the Jewish leadership and threw them out of the court. **verses 14-16**

As Luke continued to write things down, we learn that the Jews had elected a new chief rabbi by the name of Sosthenes, who was severely beaten by a mob of Greek men outside the courthouse. There must have been a lot of commotion but the Gallio didn't intervene and allowed the mob to beat the rabbi until they got tired. **verse 17; Galatians 6:7-9**

PAUL SEEKS RELIEF AND FORGIVENESS FROM GOD

Paul must not have been satisfied with his life, but Luke doesn't tell us what bothered him. My personal understanding is that Paul was disturbed by the people he had had killed prior to his conversion to Christ and did not feel forgiven at this time; the intense guilt drove him back to the sacrificial law to take away the terrible guilt. **1 Corinthians 15:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:11-17**

Paul must have felt that his ministry in Corinth was over and took with him Aquila and Priscilla and left for Ephesus. My personal understanding is that Paul was driven more by guilt than of the Holy Spirit in leaving Corinth. They left Corinth and traveled eight miles by land to the seaport of Cenchrea where Paul shaved his hair and took the vow of a Nazarite. **verse 18; Numbers 6:1-21**

PAUL GOES BACK TO JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE

Paul still was preaching the Gospel and working with the churches but his heart was bent on going back to Jerusalem and receiving relief in the temple. **Acts 18:19-23**

APOLLOS, THE JEW FROM ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT

Apollos was a disciple from the followers of John the Baptist and preached repentance and the coming of the Messiah. Here was another man that God had prepared who would become a strong preacher of the Gospel to the people of his time. His first assignment was the city of Corinth which Paul had just left. **verses 24-28**

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS CHAPTER?

1. You will have a number of divine appointments during your life on this earth. Make sure that you don't miss them! **Acts 9:10-18**
2. God will take care of the wicked. **Psalms 27:1-6**
3. There is full forgiveness and relief in Christ, and when we are forgiven, there is no more guilt. **Psalms 103:1-17**

It's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

DO YOU HAVE AN EAR TO HEAR WITH?