

In Corinth



Ice-Breaker

What skill do you have from a hobby or interest that you could use to make money in a full-time job?



Scripture Passage

Acts 18:1-17

1 After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. **2** There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, **3** and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. **4** Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

5 When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.^a **6** But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

7 Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. **8** Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

9 One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. **10** For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city." **11** So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

12 While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him into court. **13** "This man," they charged, "is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law."

14 Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, "If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. **15** But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law--settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things." **16** So he had them ejected from the court. **17** Then they all turned on Sosthenes the synagogue ruler and beat him in front of the court. But Gallio showed no concern whatever.

a [5] Or Messiah; also in verse 28



Bible Study

1. Claudius' order (v. 2) was given in A.D. 50 after a Jewish riot in Rome over the preaching of Christ. What else reveals a Roman attitude toward Christianity (vv. 12-17)? Would this help or hinder Christian witness?

2. How did Paul's ministry change after Timothy and Silas came to him (see 2 Corinthians 11:9)?

3. How might Paul feel about the beginning of his ministry at Corinth (see 1 Corinthians 2:3)? How might the vision from God (vv. 9-10) and the gift from the Philippians encourage him?

Reference Notes

18:1 The next stop for Paul was Corinth, 50 miles from Athens and a prosperous seaport city. Since Timothy had been sent from Athens to Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 3:2), and Silas was apparently still in Berea, Paul probably went on to Corinth alone. Although Paul stayed in the city for a year and a half (v. 11), Luke only gives a brief account of the church's origin and of a case of opposition Paul faced. The point of Luke's account may be to show that the Roman officials did not find Paul's teaching a matter of concern.

18:2 *Aquila / Priscilla.* This couple, apparently converted in Rome prior to meeting Paul, became important coworkers with him (v. 26; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19). ***Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome.*** This is corroborated by the Roman historian Suetonius who wrote that the emperor, in A.D. 49, made this order because of uprisings in the Jewish community at Rome due to the influence of a man named Chrestus; which, in Greek, sounds the same as the word for Christ. By the early 40s, riots broke out in the Jewish community in Rome between those who believed in Jesus as the Messiah and those who did not. To solve the problem, the emperor, who viewed the problem as a dispute between Jewish sects, simply ordered all Jews to leave! While the expulsion order was not strictly enforced, for a time the Jews were forbidden to meet, which led many to leave anyway.

18:3 *a tentmaker.* A leather-worker might be truer to the meaning of Paul's trade. Rabbis were not paid for their teaching, so Paul would have had a trade even in his pre-Christian days as a Pharisaic rabbi.

18:4 *he reasoned.* Paul's method in the synagogue involved far more than simply preaching and waiting for results; instead, he argued from the Old Testament and dealt with questions and objections through discussion and defense (Acts 17:2-3).

18:7-8 Having left the synagogue, Paul made the house next door to it the center of his activity! Since Romans typically had three names, Titius Justus may be the Gaius whose home was the meeting place of the church (Romans 16:23). It must have been galling enough for Paul to be teaching next to the synagogue in a home of a former synagogue member, but tensions undoubtedly became worse when Crispus, the synagogue ruler, professed faith as well (1 Corinthians 1:14).

18:10 *I am with you.* This is the ultimate promise of God's protection, found in similar Old Testament passages and on the lips of Jesus (Matthew 28:20; John 14:18-21).

18:12 *Gallio.* Gallio was a highly respected Roman official who served his year's term as proconsul in Achaia from July 51 A.D. to June 52 A.D.

18:13 *the law.* Whose law is in view? Since the Jews probably did not expect that the proconsul could distinguish between Jews and Christians any better than the Emperor Claudius, it is probable that they, like the Thessalonian Jews (Acts 17:7) accused Paul of violating the Roman laws against advocating religions that threatened either Roman morality or the state.

18:14-16 Before Paul could even make a defense, Gallio simply dismissed the case as a private dispute about religious interpretation between Jews that was not worthy of consideration by a Roman court.

18:17 *Then they all turned on Sosthenes the synagogue ruler.* After Crispus was converted (v.

8), Sosthenes was evidently chosen as the new ruler of the synagogue. It is intriguing to speculate that he may be the same Sosthenes mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:1. they. It is uncertain who "they" refers to. Is it the other Jews who, perhaps in frustration about his failure to gain an audience before Gallio, turned on Sosthenes? Or is it Gentiles who took Gallio's dismissal of the Jews as an invitation to give vent to their anti-Jewish sentiments? In either case, Gallio ignored the incidence as unworthy of his intervention. It was this case that set the precedent for the protection of Christians under Roman law that kept Paul safe in his travels for the next decade until the time of Nero.

Caring Time

1. With what missions or missionaries have you entered into financial partnership? If you were called to the foreign mission field, would you seek such partners, or would you become a "tentmaker"? Why?

2. How could your present job be "tentmaking" to support your family while you engage in God's kingdom work?