

## What makes Enduring so Hard?

Acts 18:1-22      October 25, 2020

Acts Series: Taking the Message of Jesus' Kingdom Everywhere

Acts 18 After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. <sup>2</sup> 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 Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, <sup>3</sup> and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. <sup>4</sup> Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

<sup>5</sup> When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. <sup>6</sup> But when they 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 innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

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

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

<sup>12</sup> While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews of Corinth made a united attack on Paul and brought him to the place of judgment. <sup>13</sup> "This man," they charged, "is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law."

<sup>14</sup> Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to them, "If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. <sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> So he drove them off. <sup>17</sup> Then the crowd there turned on Sosthenes the synagogue leader and beat him in front of the proconsul; and Gallio showed no concern whatever.

<sup>18</sup> Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchreae because of a vow he had taken. <sup>19</sup> They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. <sup>20</sup> When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. <sup>21</sup> But as he left, he promised, "I will come back if it is God's will." Then he set sail from Ephesus. <sup>22</sup> When he landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The New International Version. (2011): Zondervan.

## 1. Corinth

Acts 18:1-8

*Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.* Verse 8

### A. Jewish Ministry

Acts 18:1-4

Aquila and Pricilla

Tentmaker – a skill or trade by which Paul supported himself

**Tentmaker** σκηνοποιός (*skēnopoios*) a Greek noun used only this one time in the NT. It means either a tent and/or leather worker. Paul may have followed some rabbinic traditions that encouraged Rabbis' (teachers) to have a trade so they would not be solely dependant on their teaching income. In current Christian usage it often refers to a person who works full or part time to support themselves in ministry and also as a means of conducting ministry.

### B. Gentile Ministry

Acts 18:5-8

Timothy and Silas arrive

Paul goes full-time (2 Corinthians 6:3-13)

Opposition and Abuse

A new group

### C. Conclusions?

Message so far has been: Jesus is "Lord" (Philippi),  
"king" (Thessalonica), and "judge" (Athens)<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Showdown

Acts 18:9-17

*Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. <sup>10</sup> For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.* Verses 9,10

### A. Keep on Speaking

Acts 18:9

Don't be Afraid – What was Paul afraid of? 1 Corinthians 2:3

A New vision

### B. Here's the deal

Acts 18:9, 10

I am with you – Paul would know that

No one will attack or harm you – A relief

I have many people here – Elijah and 1 Kings 19:14-18?

### C. Paul's longest stay

Acts 18:11

A year and a half

<sup>2</sup> Dean Pinter, (2019). *Acts*. (p. 423): Zondervan.



The Temple of Apollo (god of the Sun) is in front. The Acro-Corinth, hill in behind, Temple of Aphrodite (goddess of love – sexuality) towers over (inspires?) the city. There is also a temple to Asklepius (god of healing – some of the artefacts may suggest need for healing from sexually transmitted infections.) The New Testament books (letters) of 1 and 2 Corinthians represent some of the subsequent correspondence Paul had with believers from this city.

## D. A United Attack

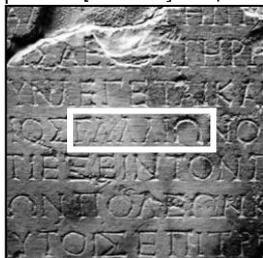
**Acts 18:12-17**

Violating Roman religious law – never is proven  
Gallio throws out the case Verse 16

Interesting to compare this legal doing with the instructions of 1 Corinthians 6:1-11

Gallio ignores a beating Verse 17

**Gallio** [ΓΑΛΛΙΟΝ] is important to biblical studies because his stay in Corinth is generally regarded as providing extra-biblical evidence for establishing Paul's chronology. This inscription discovered at nearby Delphi mentions Gallio as proconsul of Achaia at (between January 25, 52 and August 1, 52) the twenty-sixth accolade (an honor given to Roman officials) of the Emperor Claudius. Proconsul terms begin in July and last two years. This gives a range of 51-53 likely beginning July 1, 51. According to Acts 18:12-17, the inscription, and 1 Corinthians 3:5-15, it appears Paul was in Corinth either March 50 - September 51<sup>3</sup> or late fall 50 to early spring 52<sup>4</sup>. Luke shows historical accuracy distinguishing between senatorial and imperial provinces. Senatorial provinces have proconsuls not propraetors.



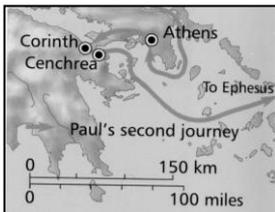
## 3. Home

**Acts 18:18-22**

*But as he left, he promised, "I will come back if it is God's will."* Verse 21

### A. Hair Cut

**Acts 18:18**



This might be the Nazarite Vow from Numbers 6:1-21 (also Samson and John the Baptist) and Acts 21:23-26. Reasons for the vow are: thanksgiving to God, seeking blessing from God, or seeking healing from an illness.<sup>5</sup> Any of these could apply to Paul. Usually the hair is cut at the end of the vow and burnt. This may signal this phase of ministry has concluded (maybe the journey or maybe just Corinth). It is plausible Paul made a vow while in Corinth as a sign of faith for strength or purity with God.

Part of his ethnicity and was helpful to him

<sup>3</sup> CK Barrett, *Acts*: T&T Clark, 2002. p.279.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Longenecker, *Acts: Expositors Bible Commentary*: Zondervan, 1995. pp. 281, 282.

<sup>5</sup> John Polhill, *Acts: New American Commentary*: Broadman Press, 1992. pp 389-391.

## **B. A Strange Stopover**

**Acts 18:19-21**

Ephesus – Acts 16:6-10 is important to keep in mind  
Leaves Priscilla and Aquila  
Went to the Synagogue  
Invited to stay  
What did not happen?  
I might be back if what?  
Why would God prevent Paul from serving in Ephesus?

## **C. Home**

**Acts 18:22**

Home church value  
They identified and commissioned  
The mission was birthed in prayer (Acts 13:1-3)  
Paul honours his home/sending church  
Reporting – Celebration and Accountability

### **What characterizes Paul's endurance?**

Clear sense of mission for Paul

Hard work at times

May have been weary or afraid of another confrontation 18:9, 10

Willing to earn his keep

Willing to include new people

Determined to be an investor not a consumer

What are the key points of mission endurance for us?

Activities, Locations, Duration, Attentive to God

Stayed in Corinth longer

Did not languish in Ephesus

Able to distinguish God's will from (un)favourable events

What questions or challenges do you face as you seek to do God's will and engage in the mission he has given you?