

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for June 26, 2016

The Commencement of the Ministry in Corinth
Acts 18:1-4

Acts 15:36-18:23 records Paul's second missionary journey to Greece. In Acts 18, Paul arrived in Corinth, a good 1,500 miles from where he began in Syrian Antioch.

1. Travel to Corinth (18:1)

Unlike previous locations, Paul left Athens and travelled fifty miles west to Corinth for greater ministry opportunities. Corinth was at least ten times larger than Athens and was a thoroughfare for commerce.

Paul would spend the next eighteen months in Corinth (18:11) and would write both of his epistles to the Thessalonians while in Corinth.

2. Teaming with a coworker (18:2)

It is apparent that Aquila and Priscilla had become followers of Christ prior to their encounter with Paul. Most believe this occurred in Rome. However, the inclusion of Aquila's being from Pontus was likely to provide us the place where he came to Christ. Luke earlier noted that natives of Pontus were at Peter's address on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:9).

There are historical accounts of Claudius banning Jews from Rome in 49 A.D., which help us to date the events in Acts. Paul's time in Corinth was from the early spring 51 A.D. to the early autumn of 52 A.D.

Aquila and Priscilla departed Corinth with Paul and were left at Ephesus (18:19), where they remained in ministry (18:24-26). When Paul wrote to the Romans four years later, he greeted Prisca (her formal name) and Aquila and noted the church of Rome met in their house (Romans 16:3-5).

3. Tent-making for Christ (18:3)

With his background as a rabbi, Paul would have a trade skill. The phrase "tent-maker" specifically refers to working with leather as the material by which tents were made. There might have been an increase in demand for tents due to the Isthmian Games held in the spring of 51 A.D.

Paul saw great value in working (Acts 20:32-35; 1 Thessalonians 2:9-12; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9). There is no greater standing for those who are supported in ministry as opposed to those who are not.

Seven reasons to value working and ministry include:

- Avoiding conflict of interests (2 Corinthians 2:17).
- Avoiding a hindrance to the gospel (1 Cor. 9:11-12).
- The ministry potential at the work (Colossians 4:5).
- An example for people to follow (2 Thessalonians 3:8-9).
- Serving the church (Ephesians 4:11-12).
- Serving the Lord (Colossians 3:23-24).
- It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

4. Task of convincing (18:4)

Paul's ministry approach involved reasoning and persuading (Acts 17:2, 17; 19:8, 26). Reasoning can also be translated more aggressively as "disputing" or "debating" and pointed to an active participation of engaging in discussions with the Jews about Jesus. We ought to actively engage the mind of man in a dialogue about Jesus Christ.

Both "reasoning" and "persuading" are in the imperfect tense, meaning this activity was ongoing. When we engage people regarding Jesus Christ, we should not consider it to be a singular conversation.

May we patiently continue to help others understand the significance of Christ's death and resurrection on their behalf.