

Acts 18 - 2nd Missionary Journey: Corinth, Ephesus, Jerusalem, Antioch; 3rd Missionary Journey: Galatia, Phrygia; Apollos

III. Outreach to the remote parts of the earth (Acts 13:1—28:31)

C. Second missionary journey (15:36—18:22)

(H) Corinth (18:1-17)

(a) Paul's tent making (18:1-4)

(b) Paul's ministry among the Gentiles (18:5-11)

(c) Unbelieving Jews falsely accuse Paul before Gallio (18:12-17)

(I) Paul returns to Antioch (18:18-22)

(4) Third missionary journey (18:23—21:17)

(A) Paul passes through Galatia and Phrygia (18:23)

(B) Ephesus (18:24—19:41)

(a) Apollos' conversion (18:24-28)

Acts 18

(H) Corinth (18:1-17)

(a) Paul's tent making (18:1-4)

1 After these events Paul left Athens and went to **Corinth**.

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1 After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

- "...Corinth" - the largest city in Greece at the time (20x the size of Athens at this time); pop. 200,000; it was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia. It was 54 miles west of Athens, on the isthmus between mainland Greece and the Peloponnese, separating the Aegean from the Ionian Sea. The Romans destroyed it in 146 BC, but it was rebuilt in 46 BC.

— In the Greco-Roman world, a word developed to describe corruption: *korinthianazomai*. Corinth was known for complete hedonism and corruption. It became known as a center for hedonism and corruption because of where it was located, on the isthmian land bridge between the Saronic Gulf and the Gulf of Corinth and Adriatic Sea.

— Sailors would sail into Corinth, then have their boats placed on wheeled trailers and hauled across the land bridge. This would save them time compared to sailing around the Peloponnese, which was a dangerous trek.

— So sailors would only be in Corinth for a night or two, after a long sail and time away from home. So when you're only going to be somewhere for a short time, and no one knows who you are, no one is there to monitor your reputation, people would go into the pagan Corinthian temple, known for its sexual immorality. It's actually how the Corinthians practiced their religion, by having sex with temple prostitutes.

— So Corinth became known as an ancient Las Vegas. What happened in Corinth stayed in Corinth.

2 And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them,

2 And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them,

2 There he found 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 visit them,

2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

- Emperor Claudius kicked all Jews out of Rome in 49 AD. According to the Roman historian Suetonius, Emperor Claudius issued the edict because "Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus (Christos, or "Christ").

— Apparently a riot broke out within the Jewish community in Rome over the Messiah. The Romans, not knowing what the issues were, expelled the entire Jewish community from the city. Later, however, the Jews did return to Rome (Cf. Rom 16:3).

3 and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them, and they worked *together*, for they were **tent-makers** by trade.

3 and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers.

3 and because they had the same trade he stayed with them. They worked together because they were tentmakers by trade.

3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

- "...tent-makers" - *skēnopoios*, their jobs were more than tent-makers; the Greek means a leather-worker. They made tents of leather, but also used leather to make other things.

4 And *Paul* was **reasoning** in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to **persuade** Jews and **Greeks**.

4 And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

4 Every Sabbath, he would speak in the synagogue, trying to persuade both Jews and Greeks.

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

- As was his practice, Paul started out in the Jewish synagogue. He was in the synagogue preaching the gospel to the Jews every Sabbath; the other six days of the week he was working as a tent-maker.

- "...reasoning" - *dielegeto*, to converse, argue, have discourse, discuss (Cf. 17:2,17; 18:19; 19:8-9; 20:7,9; 24:12,25)

- "...persuade" - *peithō*, to induce one by words to believe; to win one's favor (Cf. 13:43; 19:8,26; 21:14; 26:28; 28:23)

- "...Greeks" - Gentile proselytes who converted to Judaism

(b) Paul's ministry among the Gentiles (18:5-11)

5 But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, **Paul began devoting himself completely to the word**, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

5 But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul *began* devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

5 But when Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself entirely to the word as he emphatically assured the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah.

5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus [is the] Christ.

- Paul had previously left Silas and Timothy in Berea after he was run out of town by the angry unbelieving Jews from Thessalonica (Cf. 17:14)

- Upon receiving this report from Silas and Timothy about the state of the church in Thessalonica, Paul wrote the epistle of 1 Thessalonians (from Corinth). About 6-12 months later, while still in Corinth, he wrote 2 Thessalonians. This was about 51 AD.

— It was at this point that Paul learned about some of the theological misconceptions and hangups that the church in Thessalonica had. One of those misconceptions was regarding the Rapture.

— While Paul was with them, he taught them about the doctrine of the Rapture. After Paul left, the unbelieving Jews persecuted the new Christians, and some of them died. So the church had questions about what would happen to their dead fellow believers in light of what Paul taught them about the Rapture.

— This is why Paul wrote that he didn't want them to be uninformed about their fellow believers who died (Cf. 1 Thess 4:13). Paul basically filled in the missing information about the Rapture, specifically what will happen to believers who die before the Rapture takes place, so they would not be uninformed.

— About 6-12 months later, also from Corinth, Paul wrote the epistle of 2 Thessalonians. The impetus for Paul writing this epistle is that the church in Thessalonica received a letter claiming that the Day of the Lord (the Tribulation period) had begun. The letter was forged with Paul's signature, but he didn't write it.

— This letter caused an uproar and chaos in the Thessalonian church. Paul had taught them that the Rapture would take place prior to the Tribulation, but this forged letter claimed that due to the persecution they were under, they were already in the Tribulation. They thought that if that was true, then everything Paul had taught them was false.

— Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians to negate the forged letter, and tell them they indeed were not in the Tribulation period. Then he gave them five things they would see if they were in the Tribulation:

1. The apostasy (the "departure"; i.e. the Rapture) (2 Thess 2:3a)
2. Advent of the lawless one (the Antichrist) (2 Thess 2:3b)
3. Removal of the Restrainer (2 Thess 2:5-7)
4. Destruction of the lawless one (the Antichrist) (2 Thess 2:8-9)
5. Destruction of the followers of the lawless one (the Antichrist) (2 Thess 2:10-12)

— At this point, the only other epistle Paul had written was Galatians, which he wrote in 49 AD after returning from his first missionary journey and before embarking on his second missionary journey.

- "...Paul *began* devoting himself completely to the word" - upon the arrival of Silas & Timothy from Berea, Paul began going to the synagogue all the time, not just on the Sabbath. And he quit his job as a tent-maker because Silas & Timothy brought him a financial gift (Cf. 2 Cor 11:9).

— Paul often received financial gifts from fledgling churches that he had previously planted. In Phil 4:14-17 he describes the multiple financial gifts that the church in Philippi sent to him while he was in Thessalonica.

— So now that his bills were being paid due to the financial gift, so Paul went full throttle to evangelize the Jews. This is the blessing of full-time ministry. If people are fed the Word of God and support your ministry financially, you are freed up to do things that you otherwise

wouldn't be able to do because you would have to support yourself (and your family) financially.

Paul's Ministry Chronology				
# OF BOOKS WRITTEN	MISSIONARY JOURNEY	ACTS	DATE	BOOKS
1	1	13–14	48-49 AD	Gal
2	2	15:36–18:22	50-52 AD	1&2 Thess
3	3	18:23–21:17	53-57 AD	1&2 Cor, Rom
4	1 st Roman Imprisonment	28:16-31	60-62 AD	Eph, Col, Phlm, Phil
2	Between Roman Imprisonments	Post-Acts	62-66 AD	1 Tim, Titus
1	2 nd Roman Imprisonment	Post-Acts	67 AD	2 Tim

6 But when **they** resisted and **blasphemed**, he **shook out his garments** and said to them, **"Your blood is on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."**

6 But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood *be* on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

6 But when they began to oppose him and insult him, he shook out his clothes in protest and told them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the gentiles."

6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

- "...they" - the unbelieving Jews in the synagogue that Paul began to preach to/evangelize daily (v5)

- "...blasphemed" - *blasphēmēō*, they rejected the Messiah that Hebrew Bible (OT) points to

- "...shook out his garments" - a physical, visible Jewish expression for saying, "I'm done with you."

— Paul also did this on his first missionary journey in Pisidian Antioch (13:51); Jesus told His disciples to do this after they preached the coming kingdom to Israel, if they rejected

their message (Matt 10:14).

- "...Your blood *is* on your own heads!" - many people want to make this into some kind of curse that Paul is casting on these unbelieving Jews. That's not the case at all. Rather, it is a disclaimer of responsibility.

— Paul is saying that he was no longer responsible for their unbelief. He gave them the gospel, and their choice was to not believe in it. Thus, the consequences for their lack of believe rested on them, not Paul.

- "...From now on I will go to the Gentiles" - Paul does not mean that he is done evangelizing the Jews completely, from this time forward. He's saying that he is done evangelizing the Jews in Corinth because they rejected his message.

— This is a local change of ministry philosophy, not a universal change in ministry philosophy.

7 Then he left the synagogue and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, **a worshiper of God**, whose house was next door to the synagogue.

7 Then he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue.

7 Then he left that place and went to the home of a man named Titius Justus, who worshipped God and whose house was next door to the synagogue.

7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

- "...a worshiper of God" - a Jewish proselyte (a Gentile who converted to Judaism)

— After the Jews in the synagogue rejected Paul's message, he just went next door to Titius Justus' house

8 Crispus, **the leader of the synagogue**, believed in the Lord together with his entire household; and **many of the Corinthians, as they listened to Paul**, were **believing and being baptized**.

8 Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.

8 Now Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, along with his whole family. Many Corinthians who heard Paul also believed and were baptized.

8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

- "...the leader of the synagogue" - the guy who organized the services in the synagogue

— So while many of the Jews in the synagogue rejected Paul's message, Crispus and his entire household believed in Christ and were saved

- "...many of the Corinthians" - the beginning of the church in Corinth

- "...as they listened to *Paul*" - faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Rom 10:17)

- "...believing and being baptized" - the normal order: first belief, then baptism. Belief always precedes baptism in the NT (Cf. Matt 28:19; Acts 8:12,34-39; 10:42-45; 16:14-15,30-34; 18:8).

9 And the Lord said to Paul by a vision at night, **"Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent;**

9 And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, **"Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent;**

9 One night, the Lord told Paul in a vision, **"Stop being afraid to speak out! Don't remain silent!**

9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, **Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:**

- "...a vision at night" - this is Paul's second night vision; his first was of the Macedonian man pleading with Paul to come to Macedonia (Cf. 16:9-10). God gave Paul four visions in Acts:

- Acts 9:4: Damascus Road
- Acts 16:9: Macedonian man
- Acts 18:9: God's word of comfort to Paul in Corinth
- Acts 22:17-18: in the Temple, God told Paul to leave immediately because they would not hear his testimony

— God gave Paul here a word of comfort, probably something that Paul badly needed at this time.

- "...Do not be afraid" - a command repeated over and over again in Scripture; see notes on 2 Tim 1:7 (Cf. Joshua 1:7)

10 for I am with you, and **no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many people in this city."**

10 for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city."

10 For I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you or harm you, because I have many people in this city."

10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

- "...no one will attack you to harm you" - a divine promise of protection. Paul had a bounty on his life most of his ministry. But while Paul was in Corinth for 18 months ministering, God put Paul's worry at ease with this promise of physical protection.

- "...I have many people in this city" - what does this mean? Does it mean that God had many people in Corinth who would help Paul? Does it mean that God had many people to protect Paul? Does it mean that God has many people in Corinth who He wants Paul to evangelize?

— It likely means the latter...the Lord could see His children in Corinth even before their conversions

[Is 54:17]

11 And he settled *there* for **a year and six months, teaching the word of God** among them.

11 And he settled *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

11 So Paul lived there for a year and a half and continued to teach the word of God among the people there.

11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

- "...a year and six months" - Paul stayed in Corinth for 18 months; how do we know this number isn't allegorical? Because it's a number attached to a period of time (days, months, years). Every single time in Scripture that a number is attached to a period of time, it should be interpreted literally.

- "...teaching the word of God" - what did Paul do in Corinth? He taught the Word of God. Notice that he doesn't mention fellowship, eating together, serving, or any other "good work"...he simply taught the Word of God.

— People go to church for many different reasons...social contacts, encouragement, to relieve guilt, relationships. None of these things are wrong in and of themselves, but it's important to keep the main thing the main thing.

— The purpose of the church is biblical instruction. If you're in a church that doesn't do that, you're not really in a church. It's a meeting that is no different than the Rotary Club, a TED talk and a light show. But it's not really a church. After Pentecost, the birth of the church, they "continually devoted themselves to apostolic teaching" (Cf. 2:42).

— The priority of the early church was the Word of God because if you don't consult and understand it, how do you know how to do anything else on the list? How do you know how to pray, to fellowship, if you don't prioritize the teaching of God's Word.

(c) Unbelieving Jews falsely accuse Paul before Gallio (18:12-17)

12 But while **Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews rose up together** against Paul and brought him before the **judgmentseat**,

12 But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat,

12 While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jewish leaders gathered together, attacked Paul, and brought him before the judge's seat.

12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,

- "...Gallio was proconsul of Achaia" - the existence of Gallio is well documented. His father was Seneca the Elder (~50 BC to 40 AD), a famous Roman rhetorician from the Iberian Peninsula. He served as proconsul of Achaia for only two years (51-52 AD). His brother, Seneca the Younger said of Gallio: "No mortal is so pleasant to any one person as Gallio is to everybody."

— "proconsul" - the governor of a Roman province

— "Achaia" - the province in southern Greece that included both Athens and Corinth. It also included the entire Peloponnese.

— His legal decisions set precedent for the other proconsuls throughout the empire; consequently, Gallio's decision in Paul's case affected the treatment that Christians would receive throughout the Roman world.

— This was the first time that Paul, or any other apostle (as far as we know) stood trial before a Roman provincial governor

- "...the Jews rose up together" - the unbelieving Jews who kicked Paul out of the synagogue in Corinth (v5-6) rose up as one against Paul. They were jealous of Paul's success in evangelizing the Gentiles (Cf. v8).

- "...judgment seat" - *bema*, a large, raised platform that stood in the agora (marketplace) in front of the residence of the proconsul and served as a forum where he tried cases.





ΤΟ ΓΑΡ ΠΑΡΑΥΤΙΚΑ ΕΛΑΦΡΟΝ
ΤΗΣ ΘΑΨΕΩΣ ΗΜΩΝ ΚΑΘ' ΥΠΕΡΒΟΛΗΝ
ΕΙΣ ΥΠΕΡΒΟΛΗΝ ΑΙΩΝΙΟΝ ΒΑΡΟΣ
ΔΟΞΗΣ ΚΑΤΕΡΓΑΖΕΤΑΙ ΗΜΙΝ

FOR THIS SLIGHT MOMENTARY
AFFLICTION IS PREPARING FOR US
AN ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY
BEYOND ALL COMPARISON

2 CORINTHIANS 4:17





13 saying, "This man is inciting the people to worship God contrary to the law."

13 saying, "This man persuades men to worship God contrary to the law."

13 They said, "This man is persuading people to worship God in ways that are contrary to the Law."

13 Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

- In the Greco-Roman world at this time, you get one religion per people group. When Paul taught that Jesus was the Messiah prophesied by Hebrew Bible, now he was teaching two religions (Judaism & Christianity).

— This was the same charge against Paul as the Philippian and Thessalonian Jews had raised (Cf. 16:21; 17:6-7,13)

— This practice went against Roman law, so these angry, jealous Jews are turning Paul in to Gallio in an effort to put his ministry out of commission

14 But when **Paul was about to open his mouth**, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a *matter of* some crime or vicious, unscrupulous act, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you;

14 But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrong or of vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you;

14 Paul was about to speak when Gallio admonished the Jewish leaders, "If there were some misdemeanor or crime involved, it would be reasonable to put up with you Jews.

14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:

- "...Paul was about to open his mouth" - Paul was very capable of defending himself, which he was about to do before Gallio stepped in. There are times in our Christian lives where God does the fighting for us, and we don't have to lift a finger (or say a word) (Cf. Ex 14:14).

15 but if there are questions about teaching and persons and your own law, see to it yourselves; I am unwilling to be a judge of these matters."

15 but if there are questions about words and names and your own law, look after it yourselves; I am unwilling to be a judge of these matters."

15 But since it is a question about words, names, and your own Law, you will have to take care of that yourselves. I refuse to be a judge in these matters."

15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters.

- Gallio recused himself from ruling on this matter because he just didn't care enough to do so.

— What Gallio is really saying here without directly saying it, is massive for the development and growth of the church. His ruling basically stated that Christianity was a sect within Judaism.

— He is saying that Christianity is not a new religion, rather he categorized it as a disagreement within an existing religion. The moment Gallio said these words, he gave Christianity freedom to travel.

Gallio's actions in the book of Acts will have a profound effect on the growth of Christianity in the Roman world by postponing official persecution...[His] refusal to indict Paul has ramifications throughout the Empire. Had he sided with the Jewish leaders and proclaimed Christianity a new religion, it would be illegal under Roman law. A precedent would have been set that could outlaw the church at a time it is still weak and vulnerable. His refusal to indict Paul protects the preaching of Christianity for a time. [Dr. Mal Couch, A Bible Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles, 348].

16 And he drove them away from the judgment seat.

16 And he drove them away from the judgment seat.

16 So he drove them away from the judge's seat.

16 And he drave them from the judgment seat.

17 But **theyall** took hold of **Sosthenes**, the leader of the synagogue, and *began* beating him in front of the judgment seat. And yet Gallio was not concerned about any of these things.

17 And they all took hold of Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and *began* beating him in front of the judgment seat. But Gallio was not concerned about any of these things.

17 Then all of them took Sosthenes, the synagogue leader, and began beating him in front of the judge's seat. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.

17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

- "...they all" - Gentiles; evidently the Gentiles who were watching this saw how Paul was being unfairly treated by these Jews. So once Gallio issued his ruling and dismissed the case, these anti-Semitic Gentiles used this incident to attack the leader of the synagogue.

- "...Sosthenes" - the leader of the synagogue, who evidently replaced Crispus (Cf. v8) because Crispus got saved. The fact that Crispus, the previous leader of the synagogue, got saved, along with his entire family, could've been part of the reason that these Jews were so upset and jealous of Paul.

— He was beaten right in front of Gallio, sitting on the judgment (*bema*) seat. These Gentiles didn't even wait for Sosthenes, who was obviously in attendance at Paul's trial, to leave the platform. And all the while, Gallio is sitting on the judgment seat not giving a single care about the mini-riot going on in front of him.

— Like Crispus, Sosthenes later converted to Christianity and served as Paul's amanuensis when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 1:1)

(I) Paul returns to Antioch (18:18-22)

18 Now Paul, when he had remained **many days longer**, took leave of **the brothers and sisters** and sailed away to **Syria**, and **Priscilla and Aquila were with him**. Paul *first* had his hair cut at **Cenchrea**, for he was **keeping a vow**.

18 Paul, having remained many days longer, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow.

18 After staying there for quite a while longer, Paul said goodbye to the brothers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. He had his hair cut in Cenchrea, since he was under a vow.

18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

- "...many days longer" - Paul stayed in Corinth for a total of 18 months (Cf. v11)
 - "...the brothers *and sisters*" - the infant church at Corinth (Cf. v8)
 - "...Syria" - Syrian Antioch, his home church and where all of Paul's missionary journeys were launched
 - "...Priscilla and Aquila were with him" - Paul would stop off in Ephesus on his return voyage home where he would leave Priscilla and Aquila and meet a man named Apollos (Cf. v24-28). He would also stop in Rhodes before returning to Caesarea.
 - "...Cenchrea" - east/southeast of Corinth, on the eastern side of the Corinth peninsula (Ancient Corinth is on the western side), directly south from the bay where Paul would've landed from Athens. Modern day Kechries. See photos below from September 2025.
 - "...keeping a vow" - the Nazarite vow; a vow taken by devout Jews that signified that you were serving God in a very unique way.
- This vow is described in Num 6. Part of this vow was having your head shaved and burn the hair under the sacrifice of peace offerings (Cf. Num 6:18). Since Paul is traveling to Jerusalem, he is bringing his hair to the Temple. This is why Luke mentions this vow here.
- By doing this, isn't Paul putting himself back under the Mosaic Law? No.

Freedom from the Mosaic Law means two things:

1. It means that believers are free from the obligation to obey any of the 613 commandments.
2. It means that believers are free to observe those things that they choose to observe as long as they do not contradict the Law of Christ.

Paul saw no contradiction between keeping Jewish customs and living his new faith...The difference between Paul and the Judaizers was that the Judaizers tried to impose these things upon Gentile believers. While choosing to practice many Jewish customs, Paul refused to impose them on Gentiles. [Fruchtenbaum]

There are many examples where Paul adopts Jewish tradition or observes Jewish rites or rituals, but he does so volitionally and never imposes them on anyone else.

- In Acts 16:3, he had Timothy circumcised
- In Acts 21:26, Paul participated in an animal sacrifice

Paul did what he felt was right to minister to the Jews (Cf. 1 Cor 9:20-23).









The harbor at Cenchrea, September 2025.

19 They came to **Ephesus**, and **he left them there**. Now he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

19 They came to Ephesus, and he left them there. Now he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

19 When they arrived in Ephesus, he left Priscilla and Aquila there. Then he went into the synagogue and had a discussion with the Jews.

19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

- "...Ephesus" - at this time, it was the greatest commercial city in Asia Minor, with a population of about 250,000, making it about the fourth largest city of the Roman Empire, after Rome, Alexandria, Egypt, and Antioch, Syria.

— It was a port city, and was known as 'the Gateway to Asia.' It was the center of sorcery and the practice of the black arts. It was also known as 'the Warden of the Temple of Artemis' which will play a key role in Acts 19.

— The Temple of Artemis (also known as Diana) was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was destroyed at least three times. The last version is said to have 127 columns, four to six feet in diameter and 60 feet high. The temple was about 425 feet in length and 225 feet wide, making it nearly double the size of the Parthenon in Athens. It became the center of pagan worship, with sacrifices and religious prostitution.

- "...he left them there" - Paul left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus. Paul had only met them late in his sojourn in Corinth, and brought them with him to Ephesus.

20 When they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not consent,

20 When they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not consent,

20 They asked him to stay longer, but he refused.

20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;

- At first glance, this doesn't make sense. Paul, who always started out ministering and preaching the gospel in the Jewish synagogue in every new city he entered, did so again in Ephesus. Rather than being thrown out, and possibly stoned or physically harmed, these Jews invited him to stay longer.

— Apparently Paul's teaching and reasoning with them struck a cord and caused them to become curious.

— So why would Paul decline their invitation to stay and continue to minister and reason with them? Because the Holy Spirit knows things that human beings do not know. He knows what is going to happen on Paul's third missionary journey, where Paul goes back to Ephesus and stays there for three years. This is where Paul had some of his most fruitful ministry (Cf. 19:10).

— Paul's ministry in Ephesus during his third missionary journey birthed the seven churches of Asia Minor we learn about in Rev 2-3, as well as the church at Colosse.

— This uncommon working of the Holy Spirit is reminiscent of 16:6-7, where at the beginning of his second missionary journey, the Holy Spirit forbade Paul from ministering in Asia or go to Bithynia.

21 but took leave of them and said, "I will return to you again **if God wills**," and he set sail from Ephesus.

21 but taking leave of them and saying, "I will return to you again if God wills," he set sail from Ephesus.

21 As he told them goodbye, he said, "I will come back to you again if it is God's will." Then he set sail from Ephesus.

21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

- "...if God wills" - Paul always lived on God's timeline (Cf. James 4:13-17)

22 When he had landed in Caesarea, he **went upto Jerusalem** and greeted **the church**, and **went downto Antioch**.

22 When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and went down to Antioch.

22 When he arrived in Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem, greeted the church there, and then returned to Antioch.

22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

- "...went up *to Jerusalem*" - any reference to traveling to Jerusalem is always described in the Bible as "going up"; leaving Jerusalem is always described as "going down."

— Ps 120-134 are the "Psalms of Ascent" that the Jews sang as they traveled to ("went up") to Jerusalem

- "...the church" - an obvious reference to the church in Jerusalem; Luke calls it "the church" because that's where it all began.

— Paul was never a "lone ranger" in ministry. He was constantly, as much as possible, reporting back to the church in Jerusalem about his missionary journeys. It's highly likely that's what he's doing on this visit as well.

— In Galatians, after Paul had a personal vision from God, what did he do? He submitted himself to the apostles in Jerusalem to ensure that his doctrine was consistent with theirs (Cf. Gal 1:18).

- "...went down to Antioch" - after visiting the church in Jerusalem, Paul traveled back to Syrian Antioch, the church that sent him

— Upon returning to Antioch, it's probable that Paul gathered the church together and reported to them all the things that God had done through them throughout their second missionary journey (Cf. 14:27).

— Paul traveled about 2,800 miles on this trip, compared to about 1,400 miles on his first missionary journey.

(4) Third missionary journey (18:23—21:17)



(A) Paul passes through Galatia and Phrygia (18:23)

23 And after spending some time *there*, he left and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

23 And having spent some time *there*, he left and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

23 After spending some time there, he departed and went from place to place through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

23 And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

- Luke doesn't record Paul's activities in Antioch, but we can assume he gave another report to the church (Cf. 14:27-28)

— He probably remained in Antioch from spring/summer 52 AD to the spring of 53 AD

— After leaving Antioch, for his third missionary journey, Paul seemed to follow the same route, through Galatia and Phrygia, that he did on his second missionary journey (15:41–16:6)

- Paul's main mission on his third missionary journey was to revisit the churches that he planted on his first two journeys, to strengthen and encourage them
- The raising of contributions was a key part of cementing the Jewish and Gentile factions (Gal 2:9-10; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8-9; Rom 15:25-26)
- Timothy, Erastus, Gaius, Aristarchus (and probably Titus) accompany him on this journey

(B) Ephesus (18:24—19:41)

(a) Apollos' conversion (18:24-28)

24 Now a Jew named **Apollos**, an **Alexandrian** by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was proficient in the Scriptures.

24 Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures.

24 Meanwhile, a Jew named Apollos arrived in Ephesus. He was a native of Alexandria, an eloquent man, and well versed in the Scriptures.

24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

- The scene briefly changes to what had transpired in Ephesus since Paul left
- "...Apollos" - parenthetically mentioned here in anticipation of 19:1-7 (Cf. 1 Cor 1:12; 3:4-6,22; 4:6; 16:12; Titus 3:13)
- Apollos likely arrived in Ephesus after Paul left for Jerusalem on his previous journey
- Apollos was an apologist, eloquent, good understanding of the OT, and a gift for communicating and defending the faith (Cf. Rom 12:11)
- "...Alexandrian" - located on the southern shore of the Mediterranean in Egypt
- Founded by Alexander the Great, it was a major Greek and Hebrew cultural center; source of the LXX

25 This man had been instructed in **the way of the Lord**; and being **fervent** in spirit, he was accurately speaking and teaching things about Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John;

25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John;

25 He had been instructed in the Lord's way, and with spiritual fervor he kept speaking and teaching accurately about Jesus, although he knew only about John's baptism.

25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

- "...the way of the Lord" - another description of Christianity (Cf. 9:2; 16:17; 18:26; 19:9,23; 22:4; 24:14,22)

- "...fervent" - boiling hot
- John the Baptist taught three great truths:
 - Forgiveness of sins (only) on the basis of repentance
 - Expression through baptism
 - One was coming who would complete their salvation
- Missing:
 - Cross
 - Resurrection
 - Holy Spirit's baptism

26 and he began speaking boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the way of God more accurately to him.

26 and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him home and explained God's way to him more accurately.

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

- It was providential that Priscilla and Aquila were left in Ephesus (right people, right place, at the right time)

— They wisely took Apollos aside and privately instructed him "more perfectly" in subsequent revelations about the "way of God" that he did not know

— How impressive that Apollos was open to correction. The teachable will be humble...Apollos received this correction and became a mighty evangelist, he then went on to Achaia.

27 And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace,

27 And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace,

27 When Apollos wanted to cross over to Achaia, the brothers wrote to the disciples there, urging them to welcome him. On his arrival he greatly helped those who, through God's grace, had believed.

27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:

- Armed with new understanding, Apollos headed west to Corinth and Achaia, to water the seed of the gospel that Paul had planted (Cf. 1 Cor 3:6)
- Apollos was so effective at instructing the Corinthian believers, and refuting Jewish objections, that he developed a strong personal following (1 Cor 1:12; 3:4)

28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

28 He successfully refuted the Jews in public and proved by the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah.

28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

- Apollos was a mighty apologist, debating the Jews in public, and publicly proving, by using Scripture, that Jesus was the Messiah

— He becomes the subject of schisms (1 Cor 1:10-17), but was not the cause (1 Cor 3:6; Titus 3:13)

— He resists Paul's requests to revisit (1 Cor 16:12)