

Acts 18:1-11 ACTS-[48]-PAUL at CORINTH

PRELIMS. Paul is in **Greece** - in Athens and was horrified at the 'ignorance' of such intellectual people!! He was invited to the Areopagus and lectured before the **philosophers** but there was **ridicule, procrastination** and a little **belief**!! Nothing changes! Despite being **called** to Macedonia, Paul was **driven out** of the **three** main cities, we might ask, 'Was he truly called there?' Yes, he was! Apostles were called to **serve/obey** the Lord, to **teach** the Word of the **Lord** - not to build Empires for themselves or others!

ARRIVAL at CORINTH

Luke simply says that "*Paul left Athens and went to Corinth*". End of story! The intellectual Paul, leaving the most famous city in the world and going to a city 20 times larger, at 200,000 (bigger than Dundee) and Luke tells us absolutely **nothing** about **how** Paul **felt** or **thought**? Was he **excited** at entering in God's good providence, the 3rd largest city in the whole Roman Empire? Next to Rome & Alexandria there was nowhere larger or more interesting for like Athens, it too, was full of culture, religion and philosophy. The inhabitants there, sought, the **wisdom of the wise**. So it **is** surprising that Luke says **nothing** about his entry into this city!

However, Paul himself tells us **exactly** how he **felt** at this point! Whatever high view **we** may have of Paul, **he** did **not** feel strong and **assertive** entering this great city. He was under no misunderstanding how his gospel might be received. It may be hard for us to imagine, but Paul says "*When I came to you brothers ...I was with you in **weakness** and in **fear** and in **much trembling***"[1Cor2:3]

What was there to **fear**? For a start, Corinth was **throbbing** with **temptations**! It was the **Vanity Fair** of the Roman Empire. It was noted for **luxuries, fashion, amusements, gaiety**! The Isthmus Games held there every 2yrs! It addressed itself to the **corrupt nature** within mankind. It was **extremely immoral**. Young men were employed in the 12 temples there, and beautiful girl paraded in front of the altars. Their task was to fulfil the sexual desires of

male and female. Prostitution was rife and of course legalised. In the Empire a prostitute was called ‘a Corinthian girl’! In was in truth ‘Sex and the City’! **Whatever** you were **interested** in, you could find a **version** of it (usually corrupt) in Corinth. The city did **not lend** itself to a thriving **Calvinistic** ministry!!

APP So what are we in Dundee, Scotland complaining about? Might God not be saying to us, in the midst of our fear, as He said to Paul in the midst of his fear, “*I have many in this city who are **My people***”[10] But they need to be ‘**fished out**’! Who would have believed Corinth was full of God’s chosen people, who needed to be ‘fished out’ of the cesspool? Who **will** believe there are many of God’s people in **Dundee**, needing to be ‘fished out’?

Paul **persevered** in the midst of discouragements Paul knew **before** he entered the Corinth, that his gospel was not only “*a stumbling block to Jews*” but also “*foolishness to Greeks*”[1.1:23] And yet he persevered and preached the Word.

Then Luke says “*And he **found** a Jew named Aquila...with his wife Priscilla...he **went** to see them*”[2]! We know from the rest of Scripture they were a great blessing and help to Paul, but at **this** point, they might **not** have been **Xns**! The common **denominator** we are told of was that they were “*of the same trade*”[3]. They got on very well together, for Paul “***stayed** with them and worked*”[3] You don’t usually stay with someone unless there is a **bond** of some sort, or you ‘hit-it-off’ together! Paul, we are sure, took full advantage of any common bond or interest!

Of course there was **another common denominator** – Paul probably ‘fished out’ Aquila/Priscilla **because** they were **put-out** of home and country by Claudius!! Paul knew what it was like to have to seek **asylum**! He could **sympathise** with them! **APP** How can you/I help the **Poles/Czechs** who have come to Dundee?

Paul’s heart, of course, was for the **gospel** and for **people**, especially his countrymen, the **Jews**! So as, you just could not keep him out of the synagogue. “*And he reasoned in the synagogue*”

every Sabbath and **tried to persuade Jews and Greeks**” [4].

Paul was possibly **suffering internally**. He had **worries** about how the situation in Thess was when he left Silas and Timothy to continue preaching under persecution, while he was bundled away to safety! [1Thes 2:17] He makes it very plain that he was extremely disturbed at having to leave Silas and Tim ‘high & dry’ in Thess, as we say! He writes “*when we could bear it no longer*” [1Thes 3:1] So when “*Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia*” [5] Paul was no doubt **elated**. He worried so much about them and now they had finally arrived! Hallelujah!

But Paul had other, yes, **more important, business!** And what would that be? Well, as you might have guessed - he was “**occupied with the Word**” [5]. The way it is written, for all we know, Paul might have been speaking in the synagogue, and who comes in to the meeting but Silas and Timothy!! What a wonderful encouraging thing to happen! As you engaged in ministering the gospel, your best friends whom you feel you have let down, appears in the service to encourage you! If that was the case, – I bet they smiled broadly when their eyes met in the synagogue!!

What a **conscientious** person Paul was – **occupied** with the Word! “*testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus*” [5]! **APP** This seems to have been the most important element in ministering to the Jews, ie, Jesus is the Messiah! **If** you believed **that**, then **everything** else seemed to ‘click’ into place! If you did not believe that, then you were totally **opposed** to the **whole** gospel! Jesus and His teachings would not ‘make sense’! *And that is exactly what happened “*they opposed and reviled him*” [6]!

A time comes when the **correct** thing to do is **leave** a person in their **rebellion**, and **not pursue** them again. Paul “*shook out his garments... Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent*” [7] “*Ephraim is joined to idols, leave him alone*” [Hos 4:17] “*Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you*” [Pro 9:8] Jesus said to Phars “*Let them alone, they are blind guides*” [Mat 15:14] “*Do not cast your pearls before swine*” [Mat 7:6] Don’t obviously waste time!

Paul, of course, did **not give up** on the ministry – just the people! The people, who themselves, wanted to it stop! *So Paul turned his attention to another class of people. He “*went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a **worshipper** of God. His house was next door to the synagogue*”[7]! Corinth, as we said was a **religious** place. So it is not surprising that someone living next door to the synagogue would give it a try! (Wish it on Dens Road!)

“*Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue **believed** in the Lord together with his **entire household**. And **many** of the Corinthians hearing Paul **believed** and were **baptised***”[8] **APP** How **quickly** they seemed to baptise the people? There did **not seem** to be much **instruction prior** to their **baptism!!** Of course the **order** of the Great Commission was to baptise first and then teach them!

Paul was **humble** – he depended on God’s leading hand. So he was willing to leave the synagogue, where presumably there were many people, to minister in a house! But look at the results “*many..*”

Luke tells us that one night God spoke to Paul told him “*Do **not be afraid** but **go on speaking** and do **not be silent**, for I am with you*”[9,10] How **wonderfully encouraging!** Perhaps Paul had been **praying** for guidance and this was the answer.

The answer of course informs us that **preaching** is essential to people’s salvation! Note: “*for I have **many** in this city who are **My people***”[9,10] ‘Many’? Yet it was to **Macedonia**, Paul was called, not Greece? But you see God is leads and guides us in **providence**, in **circumstances**, even when the circumstances are painful and unpleasant!! He leads us to those whom we would never have gone to in the first place! I read in one evangelistic book that we must never stop meeting in **church buildings** because people will come there whom we would **never invite** into our homes!!

Paul asks elsewhere in Scripture: “*how are they to **believe** in Him of whom they have never heard? And **how** are they to hear **without** someone **preaching**?*”[Rom 10:14] **APP** One of the best things a person can do is to hear **Biblical preaching!**