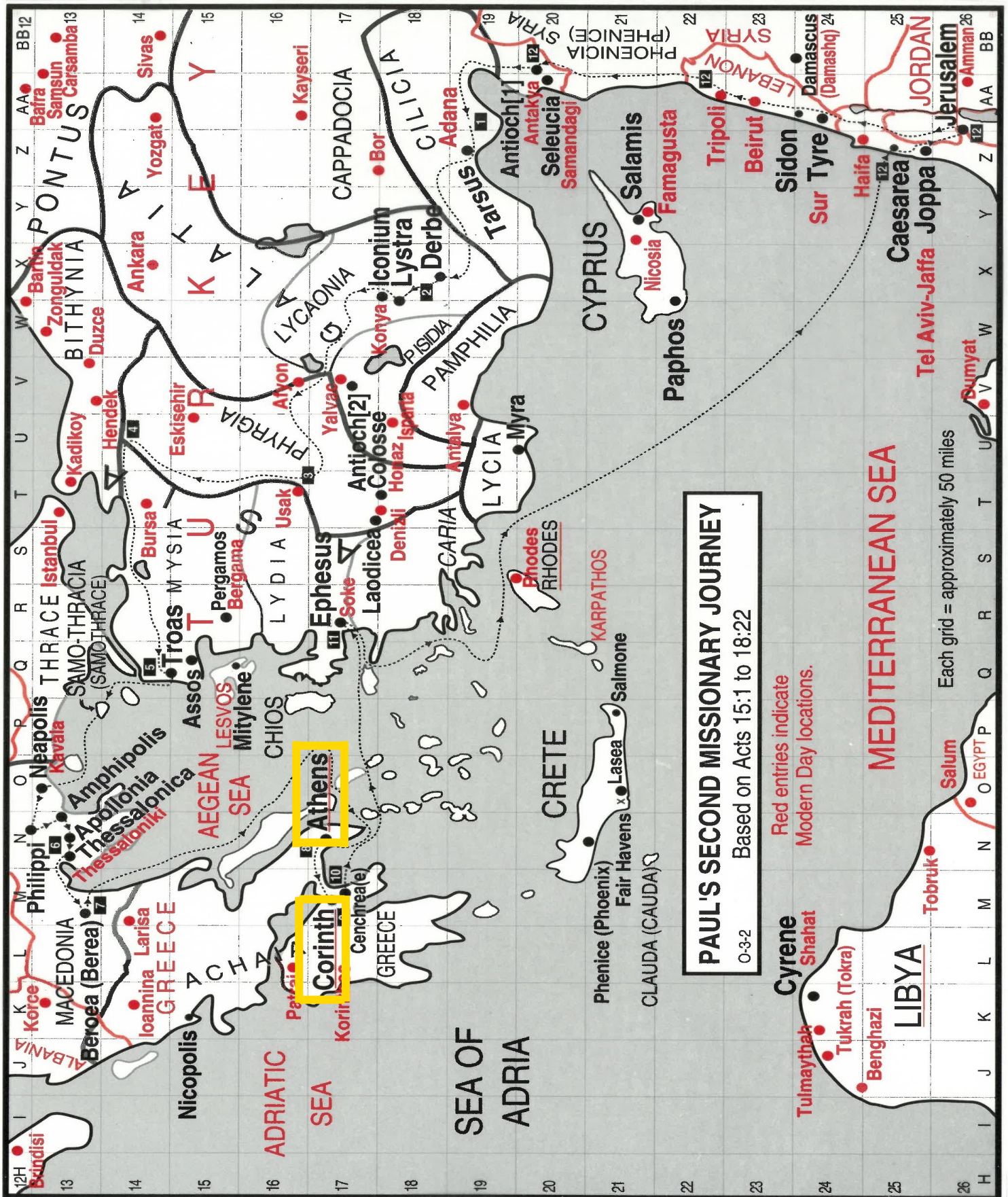


ACTS 18:1-8



Introduction: Remember, Acts shows us the stumbling, diminishing, and eventual temporary fall of Israel.

Paul is saved Mid-Acts, beginning the transition from Israel's Prophetic Program to the Body, Dispensation of Grace Program. Acts 18 is in that transitional period and a number of things that happen in Acts 9-28, that Paul writes to the Body Church about, are not the **norm**. Examples of this would be: to the Jew first, synagogues first, signs and wonders to the Jews, healings and the miraculous, and not making Gentile ministry Paul's main priority.

Acts 28:26-28 - Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: Acts 28:27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Acts 28:28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.

A.

Acts 18:1 - After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

1. After being in Athens for about a month, after encountering those at Mars Hill and their human wisdom rejecting Paul's resurrection message, and after waiting on Silas and Timothy to hear their report on the churches in Berea and Thessalonica (from where he had **fled**), Paul goes to Corinth.
2. Corinth was probably exactly the opposite of Athens. Corinth was becoming a great political, commercial, and religious center. It was the most **prominent** city in that part of the world. Corinth actually had two ports, one on each side of the city.
3. Corinth had been burned by the Roman armies in 146 B.C. They then came under Roman rule and security. Corinth became a new and greater city, having access both by sea and land. It had been **rebuilt** by Julius Caesar and restored to wealth and luxury under Augustus.

*In Paul's day, Corinth had become the Roman providence of Achaia.
4. Corinth also became one of the leading centers of athletic **games**. The famous Isthmian games (similar to the Olympics) drew thousands to Corinth's stadium to watch the races, boxing, and wrestling matches. The stadium held **18,000+**.
5. Corinth's reputation for **immorality** was well known (like Sodom). Corinth's religion centered on the goddess Aphrodite, who was the goddess of love and especially **sensual** love. Their belief was pagan and godless.
 - a. Aphrodite's temple dominated the city of Corinth and employed **3000** prostitutes. Corinth's religion centered around **sex**, which attracted men.
 - b. So here, Paul arrives alone and somewhat overwhelmed by the many things taking place by its 700,000 inhabitants. For Paul to establish a church here is a testimony of the grace and power of the Gospel.

* Also, it is a testimony of how the Christian faith has **influenced** many aspects of civilized
* life around the world!

|

- B. Acts 18:2-3 - 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. Acts 18:3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

1. Paul meets an unbelievable Jewish couple, Aquila and Priscilla. They were in Corinth because of the anti-Semitism that was like a wave going over the earth (God is setting them aside). This was a wonderful couple who had gotten out of Rome, Italy to come and live in Corinth.
2. Paul and this couple had the same trade, being "tentmakers". In a Jewish home, if the parent did not teach their son a craft or trade, it then was considered that they would be teaching him to be a thief (Mike Rowe). **Paul is mentioned in scriptures, on several occasions, of working with his hands to supply his needs. Paul did this so he would not be a burden to these new start-up churches. But also, so no one could accuse him of being in ministry because of the money.
3. It is wonderful to see in Paul's travels the providence of Almighty God working. God often uses the natural order of events to fulfill His purpose. Before Paul had even left Athens, God had moved Claudius to decree that all Jews had to leave Rome. That brought Aquila and Priscilla to Corinth, where they would help Paul - give him food, lodging, and employment. But also, Paul would reveal his Christ-given ministry message to them. They, in turn, would help him with the ministry!

Romans 11:33 - O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

4. Question? Were Aquila and Priscilla believers in Christ when Paul met them, or did Paul present the gospel and they believed?
 - a. Personally, I believe Paul looked for fellow Jews who were tentmakers. He came across Aquila and Priscilla. Striking a deal to work together, they invited Paul to stay with them. This couple evidently were saved upon hearing Paul's gospel. They worked with him day in, day out. They went to the synagogue to hear Paul preach and not only got saved but also were established in the Body faith. They became tremendous helpers to Paul.
 - b. After all Paul had been through, what a comfort Paul has in this newfound friendship. No doubt, their home became the talk of truths never known before. Being Jews, it must have been electrifying to Aquila and his wife. Aquila and Priscilla came to know and understand the mystery revelations given to Paul, and they became faithful co-workers.

Acts 18:18 - 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.

Acts 18:26 - 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.

Romans 16:3-4 - Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Rom. 16:4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

* So do we get the setting? A man and wife had opened up a "little shop" of tent making, or
* leather workings. Into their shop walks a little Jewish man who needs employment, food, and
* housing. They become acquainted and they invite Paul to stay with them - and the rest is
* history!

- C. Acts 18:4-5 - And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. Acts 18:5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus was Christ*.

1. As Paul's custom was, he attends the local synagogue to present the Messiah **to** Christian truths. Paul's **new** friends labor with him as Paul shares the power of Christ's D.B.R. to save.
2. As Paul reasoned and preached, Silas and Timothy **re**join him. Paul had been so concerned for all the believers that he had been forced to leave behind. Were they okay, being afflicted, or persecuted? Were they **still** standing for their new-found faith?
 - a. Note: Picture this joyful scene! As he is working and ministering with Aquila and Priscilla, he sees Timothy and Silas approaching. They had to smile, hug, shed some **tears**, and then hear the **wonderful** news that the churches still stood!

I Thessalonians 3:6-8 - But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also *to see* you: 1Thess. 3:7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: 1Thess. 3:8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

- b. Also, Silas brought good news from Berea and a **gift** from Paul's beloved Philippians (Asia Minor).

II Corinthians 11:7-9 - Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? 2Cor. 11:8 I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. 2Cor. 11:9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself*.

Philippians 4:15 - Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

3. It is no wonder that, with Paul's teammates' arrival and upon hearing their good news, Paul preaches with **new** fervor. He is now more determined than ever to show the Jews that Christ was Messiah: Who died, was buried, and **rose** from the grave for their sins.

It does not always tell us everything that Paul preached. We must remember the **difference** in Peter's kingdom gospel, that the Jews needed to repent of their national sin.

*But Paul presented Christ as the sacrifice for man's sin and that

Remember: Christ lives to prove claims "Debt **Paid**"!

His sacrifice was enough. The Father pro-

- a. Peter: Acts 2:36-38 - [Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Acts 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.]

- b. Paul: Acts 13:38-39 - [Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: Acts 13:39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.]

*Note: In these synagogues, if the Jews denied that Jesus was the risen Messiah, how could they believe that Jesus Christ the Messiah was also the Lord of grace in the gospel?

**At this moment in time, Paul's gospel message of grace was just beginning to take hold and was still secondary to Israel's fall (Acts 28:28).

D.

Acts 18:6 - 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.

1. Paul's new gospel of grace message was opposed and even blasphemed by the Jews. Paul's gospel wasn't just rejected, but it was opposed in a defiant and final manner.
2. [they opposed themselves] means they set themselves in opposition to Paul's words with bitterness and stubbornness (evilly mean).
 - a. By rejecting Paul's message, they were putting the true Word of God (new revelation) from themselves, thus judging themselves as unworthy of everlasting life. They were on their own and one day would be judged for not receiving His grace. Remember all the years they were favored!
 - b. Paul was saying they were to blame [Your blood be upon your own heads]. When they perished in their sin, it wasn't because Paul hadn't warned them.

*The Jews did this:

Ezekiel 33:4-6 - [Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. Eze. 33:5 He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. Eze. 33:6 But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take *any* person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.]

Matthew 27:23-25 - [And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. Matt. 27:24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Matt. 27:25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.

3. Paul, because of their rejection of Christ, tells them he was leaving them and going to the Gentiles (transition was beginning to conclude).

**It should be noted here that Jesus had told/warned the Jewish nation:

Matthew 12:31-32 - [Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. Matt. 12:32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come.]

- a. The first time this unforgiven sin was committed was by Israel's religious leaders at Jerusalem when Stephen was stoned in Acts 7. Paul was saved and raised up in Acts 9.
- b. Then again in Pisidia by the Jews: Paul turned from them and went to the Gentiles. Acts 13:45 - [But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.]
- c. Now here, we see that the Jews in Greece-Corinth blasphemed. For the second time, Paul turns to the Gentiles.
- d. Later, we will see the dispersed Jews in Rome (Acts 28:24-28), for the final time, blaspheme. Paul pronounces blindness upon the Jews and declares salvation is sent to the Gentiles, the main ministry to the Body Church.

****Acts 28** brings the transition from Israel to the Body, and the book of Acts to an end.

E.

Acts 18:7 - 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.

1. Here we see the Church begins in a Gentile's home, right next door or close to the synagogue! Can you imagine this?

*The man's name is Titus Justus. It seems he was a Roman citizen and God-fearing proselyte, who now turned his home/house over to Paul and his team for a meeting place. Evidently, hearing Paul at the synagogue, he had come to faith in Paul's message. This, no doubt, impacted Paul's proclamation, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles and they will hear"!

2. Why would Paul start a church right next to the synagogue. Was that unkind or unethical?

Answer: Paul's purpose: Romans 10:20-21 - [But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. Rom. 10:21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.]

Romans 11:11 - [I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.]

F.

Acts 18:8 - 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.

1. The conversion of "the chief ruler of the synagogue" had to have created an explosive and unbelievable impression upon the community. No doubt his conversion to Christ not only helped the cause of Christ in Corinth, but also made great enemies among the Jews.

****Imagine the synagogue seeing and hearing the Christian Church worshipping God...Jews and Gentiles together!**

2. Many Corinthians, hearing and believing, were water baptized. Always remember, since Acts had not completely finished and closed, at that time water baptism was not out of order, just as circumcision, tongues, healings, and supernatural signs to the Jews, etc. were not. These things were still operative where mainly Jews were present.

- a. **We know that when Paul turns completely/totally to the Gentiles after Acts 28, water baptism was not in his commission.

I Corinthians 1:17-18 - For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 1Cor. 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

- b. As this "transition period" was coming to a close, the Body of Christ would become the primary message. Water baptism, which was so vital to the Jews (Israel-Mark 1:4, 16:15-20; Acts 2:38), was becoming less and less important in the ministry of Paul.