

ACTS 18:9-28

A. Acts 18:9-11 - Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: Acts 18:10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. Acts 18:11 And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

1. God knew Paul's thinking. Usually on Paul's missionary journeys God would bless Paul's ministry, but the unbelieving Jewish sector would rise up in opposition against Paul and his message. We've seen him having to flee Thessalonica and Berea for preaching the gospel of grace.
2. Paul's pattern was to stay for a short time and win a group to the Lord, then make a quick departure for his life - avoiding persecution.

**Paul, as any human, fought discouragement and even fear.

I Corinthians 2:3 - And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

II Thessalonians 3:2 - And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all *men* have not faith.

3. It is in the midst of, or even prior to, coming trying events (again) that God speaks to His faithful warrior:

- | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| a. "Then spake the Lord to Paul...vision" | → | God's <u>Word</u> |
| b. "Be not afraid" | → | God's <u>Encouragement</u> |
| c. "but speak" | → | God's <u>Message</u> |
| d. "hold not thy <u>peace</u> " | → | God's <u>Challenge</u> |
| e. "For I am with thee" | → | God's <u>Presence</u> |
| f. "And no man shall <u>set on thee to hurt thee</u> " | → | God's <u>Protection</u> |
| g. "for I have much people in this city" | → | God's <u>People</u> |

**One of the main reasons people want to give up serving Christ, especially in the ministry, is discouragement. Satan's tactics are to attack the message and then the messenger.

II Timothy 2:9 - Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, *even* unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

II Timothy 4:14 - Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works:

I Thessalonians 2:18 - Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

Galatians 5:7 - Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

4. Remember, God speaking to Paul in this way is not the **norm** for today - since we have the **completed** Word of God. You and I do not get direct revelation from God today. This is the Lord's Word to Paul, designed to provide encouragement for Paul to **stay** the course.
- a. *God does this for us through His Word, removing fear and worry so we will continue on.

Examples:

Romans 8:18, 28, 32 - For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Rom. 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. Rom. 8:32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Ephesians 3:20 - Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Philippians 2:12-13 - Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Phil. 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

Colossians 1:29 - Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Galatians 6:9 - And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Philippians 1:6, 4:13 - Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ: Phil. 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

- b. No doubt, this **promise** to Paul helped him to stay in there, for the gospel's sake, in Corinth. Paul remained in Corinth for one and a half years!
5. Paul was told the reason for him to remain in Corinth was that God had "much people in this city". There was a **harvest of souls**, and much fruit, waiting to hear the gospel of grace.

Acts 13:48 - And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Also notice that Paul not only evangelized, but he also **taught the Word.

B.

1. Again we see the opposition (evil system) against the gospel. The Jewish opponents were frustrated,

Acts 18:12-17 - And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, Acts 18:13 Saying, This *fellow* persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. Acts 18:14 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: Acts 18:15 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*. Acts 18:16 And he drave them from the judgment seat. Acts 18:17 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.

seeing people come to faith in Christ, and acted as a **mob** against Paul.

2. This Gallio, now ruler of Achaia (Greece 50-51 A.D.), evidently was a very gracious man. Here we will see God's promise to Paul being **ful**filled, as He uses Gallio to help Paul's ministry!
 - a. With this new governor, the Jews thought they could capitalize on his newness in this position to their advantage. Maybe they thought he would want to please his subjects (Corinthians), so they took Paul to the judgment seat hoping Paul would be punished. Their effort was to **leg**ally try to drive him out of town.
 - b. The Jews' complaint was that Paul was having his followers "worship God **contrary to the law**". The Hebrew religion was then protected by the Roman government, as well as other religions. Their complaint was that Paul was setting up an **un**licensed religion, or one not permitted under Roman Law.
 - c. After hearing the Jews' charges against Paul, Gallio **shocks** the Jews (even before Paul said a word), by not even hearing the case and **throwing it out!**

****Perhaps Gallio knew, or experienced, how the Jews had stirred up trouble in Rome and that they had been ordered to leave. So his view of the religious Jews wasn't one of friendliness. This made it even easier for Gallio to have a hands-off policy. Gallio simply said that it was not his business to settle **rel**igious arguments. He said that if Paul were a criminal, he would try him, but he had not done **any**thing criminal.**

- d. Gallio's lictors, armed with whips, drove the Jews from the judgment seat. Perhaps by seeing this punishment, it would prevent further complaints from **un**happy Jews. So Gallio dismisses their complaint with emphasis! He is saying, "get **out** of here!"

****Paul is completely vindicated.**

3. The Greeks, who were standing by and already had disdain for the Jews, saw this as an opportunity. They took "the chief ruler of the synagogue", Sosthenes (he had replaced Crispus and probably **led** the charge against Paul), and **beat** him. The Jewish attack **backfired!**

***Remember, Crispus (ruler of the synagogue) had been converted by Paul's gospel of grace. Now notice this new "chief ruler of the synagogue", Sosthenes!**

I Corinthians 1:1 - Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother,

Paul's Continued Evangelistic Travel: Verses 18-23

C.

Acts 18:18-23 - 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 18:19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. Acts 18:20 When they desired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; Acts 18:21 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. Acts 18:22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch. Acts 18:23 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.

1. After being in Corinth for one and a half years (perhaps longer) and establishing the church in **the** faith, Paul says goodbye to the brethren. He then sails to Syria, having Aquila and Priscilla with him.
2. The question is: **Why** did Paul shave his head and make a vow?
 - a. A vow was when a Jew made promises to God and then it was his obligation to **keep** his vow. To vow was a very serious thing.
 - b. We know that the Nazarite vow would require one to let his hair grow for a period of time. Then at the **end** of that time period, he would shave his hair off. This was a period when one would **consecrate** himself to the Lord in a special way (Num. 6:1-21).
 - c. Remember, taking a vow was not a commandment, but a voluntary matter. It was customary when one's vow was completed to take one's hair, with a blood sacrifice, to the **door** of the tabernacle in Jerusalem. So we know why Paul is going by Jerusalem on his way to Antioch (his sending church). ****It is said that after cutting your hair off, you would have 30 days to get to Jerusalem if you were out of town.**
3. Paul, to keep the feast (Tabernacles?) in Jerusalem, does not stay in Ephesus. Also, probably because of business reasons and to help the new converts in Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla do **stay** at Ephesus. They continued there for a few years and had the Ephesian Church meet in their house. They eventually **returned** to Rome (I Cor. 16:19; Rom. 16:3-5).
4. Interestingly, Paul's visit to Jerusalem was brief and Luke does not reveal much about Paul's visit.

****Remember, Paul is under grace, and if one wanted to make a vow he could. Paul did not force anyone else to make a vow. For one to make a vow under grace is his own business and no one else's. That is the liberty and freedom of being under grace. What Paul committed to the Lord from himself was important to him.**

I Corinthians 9:19-20 - For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. 1Cor. 9:20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

5. As Paul finally returns to Antioch (vs. 22), that concludes his second missionary, evangelizing, and church-starting journey. No doubt Paul gave his home church of Antioch a **report** on how God had opened doors, saved Jews and Gentiles, and graciously protected his team. What a **trip** Paul had been on!
6. In vs. 23, after spending some time at Antioch, Paul leaves with his **goal** being to return to Ephesus. As he travels inland, Paul **revisits** some of the churches he had started in Phrygia and Galatia.

****Visiting these young churches must have been an emotional reunion. Paul visits and sees friends he had won to Christ. Those are special times! As he visits, Paul strengthens the believers further into the truths of God, especially about the mystery. As Paul receives more revelation from God, he is excited and burdened to share it so that these believers may be built up in the faith and eventually themselves share its truths.**

II Timothy 2:2 - And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

D. Acts 18:24-28 - And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. Acts 18:25 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. 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. Acts 18:27 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: Acts 18:28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

1. The mighty Apollos arrives at Ephesus, then Corinth. Apollos was a Jew from Alexandria, Egypt (which had a large Jewish population). He was raised in a city that was famous for schools and colleges.

*Many of the most eloquent **orators** in the world were heard there. Apollos came from a background, or environment, that had given him a tremendous knowledge of the O.T. scriptures and thorough understanding of God's ways.

2. Apollos was also excellent and gifted in **public speaking**. He was so powerful when speaking that he would command **large** audiences almost everywhere. The listeners were enthralled, for they had never heard such a speaker. Apollos had passion and taught everything he had learned.

But Apollos only knew up to John's baptism (Kingdom message). He did not know that the Spirit had come, or that Israel had **rejected the Kingdom offer - thereby being temporarily set aside. He did not know that God had raised up the Apostle Paul with a **new** message. This is **20** years after the cross!

*Great lesson for today: There are some mighty men of God who are thorough in their study of scriptures and powerfully used by God. This is because of their good hearts and zeal to share God with others, and some even at great cost.

Often God has used believers who are in ignorance of revealed truth. But, when truth **shines and they say **no**, God pulls the plug on that **unbelief**.

3. Evidently, Apollos had visited Palestine or some disciples had reached Egypt. Whatever way it happened, John the Baptist's Kingdom message had found fruit in his heart and he began to speak about it, especially in the synagogues. Apollos had a **heart** for God.
4. As Apollos speaks, Aquila and Priscilla hear him and they see his great giftedness. However, they also notice he can go **no** further than John's baptism and Christ's teachings while He was on **earth**.

Acts 1:2-3 - Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: Acts 1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

Romans 15:8 - Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: