

Woodland Baptist Church

September 18, 2012 - Wednesday Night in the Word

Acts 18:1-17 - Paul and the Metropolis of Corinth

- a) **1 Corinthians 2:1-4** - And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. 2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. 4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

2) INTRODUCTION

- a) Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-17, notice the names mentioned:

- i) Sosthenes - v. 1
- ii) Crispus, v. 14
- iii) Gaius, v. 14

- b) Read Philippians 4:14-19, notice what the Philippians did:

- i) Shared Paul's troubles - v. 14



- ii) Giving and receiving - v. 15, 18,
 - c) Read 1 Thessalonians 3 - hear Paul's heart as he speaks of what he has been through.
- 3) **ACTS 18:1-17**
- 4) **Verses 1-2 Paul meets Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth**
- a) **1 After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. 2 There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, 3 and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.**
 - i) Corinth- One of four prominent centers (Jerusalem, Antioch of Syria and Ephesus) in the NT account of the early church. Paul's first extended ministry in one city was at Corinth where he stayed for at least 18 months and Paul's three longest letters are associated with Corinth.
 - (1) Prominent Christian leaders associated with Corinth include Aquila, Priscilla, Silas, Timothy, Apollos, and Titus.
 - (2) Located on the southwest end of the isthmus that joined the southern part of the Greek peninsula with the mainland to the north, the city was on an elevated plain at the foot of Acrocorinth, a rugged hill reaching 1,886 feet above sea level.
 - (3) Corinth was a maritime city located between two important seaports: the port of Lechaion on the Gulf of Corinth about two miles to the north and the port of Cenchreae on the Saronic Gulf about six miles east of Corinth.
 - (4) For a century (about 350 to 250 b.c.) Corinth was the largest and most prosperous city of mainland Greece. Later, as a member of the Achaean League, Corinth clashed with Rome. Finally, the city was destroyed in 146 b.c. L. Mummius, the Roman consul, burned the city, killed the men, and sold the women and children into slavery. For a hundred years the city was desolate.
 - (5) Julius Caesar rebuilt the city in 44 b.c., and it quickly became an important city in the Roman Empire. An overland ship road across the isthmus connected the ports of Lechaion and Cenchreae. Cargo from large ships was unloaded, transported across the isthmus, and reloaded on other ships. Small ships were moved across on a system of rollers. Ships were able, therefore, to avoid 200 miles of stormy travel around the southern part of the Greek peninsula.

- (6) Religion of Corinth - The inhabitants continued to worship Greek gods; temple of Apollo, seven of the original 38 columns still stand. In the city were shrines also to Hermes, Hercules, Athena, and Poseidon. Corinth also had a temple dedicated to Asclepius, the god of healing, and his daughter Hygieia. Several buildings were constructed around the temple for the sick who came for healing. The patients left at the temple terra cotta replicas of the parts of their bodies that had been healed. Some of these replicas have been found in the ruins.
- (7) The most significant pagan cult in Corinth was the cult of **Aphrodite**. The worship of Aphrodite had flourished in old Corinth before its destruction in 146 b.c. and was revived in Roman Corinth. A temple for the worship of Aphrodite was located on the top of the Acropolis.

ii) Aquila, native of Pontus and Priscilla (recently moved from Italy) -

- (1) Aquila (ak'wi-luh), according to Acts 18:2-3, a Jewish Christian from Pontus in Asia Minor who, like Paul, was a tentmaker (or leatherworker) by trade. Along with his wife Prisca (in Paul's Letters) or Priscilla (in Acts), he was expelled from Rome by the edict of the emperor Claudius, probably in a.d. 49/50.
- (2) Being of the same faith and occupation, Paul lodged with Aquila and Priscilla during his stay in Corinth, and they became among the most trusted of his co-workers. As owners of property and giving evidence of an ability to travel widely, Aquila and Priscilla apparently had considerable financial means.
- (3) For the writer of Acts, they are models of the ideal Christian: friendly, hospitable, and generous with their wealth. According to Acts (18:18-19), Aquila and Priscilla left Corinth with Paul, accompanied him to Ephesus, apparently established a house-church there (see 1 Cor. 16:19), and later instructed Apollos when he came to Ephesus (Acts 18:24-26).

iii) Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome:

- (1) Claudius I, Rome's fourth emperor (A.D. 41-54), the son of Drusus, and the nephew of Tiberius. Proclaimed emperor by the praetorian guard in the wake of the murder of Gaius (Caligula), Claudius sought to resolve the political problems of his predecessor, revived Rome's religious practices, and led a successful expedition to Britain which resulted in the annexation of a major part of the island to the Roman Empire.
- (2) Recent scholars have emphasized Claudius' devotion to, and competence in, governing the empire. He attempted to rectify Gains' anti-Jewish policy

by permitting the Jews, especially those at Alexandria, to live according to their religious customs as early as A.D. 41. This conciliatory move may have been partly due to his early friendship with Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great. Yet, his attitude toward the Jews at Rome remained contrary: he not only forbade them to assemble but also **expelled all Jews from the city (ca. A.D. 49/50) on account of disturbances**. As a result, Aquila and his wife Priscilla were forced to leave Rome and settle at Corinth (Acts 18:2).

- (3) According to Acts 11:28 the prophet **Agabus** predicted that a famine would plague the empire, which Luke assigns to the reign of Claudius. Roman historians in general depict this period as one of worldwide hardship (Dio Cassius Hist.. lx.11; Suetonius Claudius 18).

iv) Paul the tentmaker

- (1) The occupation of Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila (Acts 18:3). While the Greek term means lit. "maker of tents," it is probable that it actually was used of leatherworkers and, therefore, that Paul was a leatherworker. Older commentaries suggest that Paul was a weaver of goat's hair, a trade particularly associated with Cilicia, the apostle's home, but Paul probably learned his trade in Jerusalem (22:3).
- (2) Rabbis were not supposed to be paid for their instruction in the word, they were encouraged to learn a trade for self-support.

