

Acts 18:1-17

- **THE UNKNOWN GOD...**
 - City of Athens...
 - Paul was rushed to the City of Athens after he was forced to leave Berea...
 - When he got there his spirit was stirred because of their IDOLATRY...
 - He began to reason in the SYNAGOGUE - and in the MARKET daily...
 - A group of STOIC and EPICUREAN philosophers were curious about the RESURRECTION...
 - Not because they wanted to be SAVED - they wanted to be ENTERTAINED!
 - Knowing God...
 - Paul began by stated the Athenians were very SUPERSTITIOUS [fearful of demons]
 - They even had an IDOL to an UNKNOWN god - that is who Paul wanted to tell them about...
 - The TRUE god - is the CREATOR and therefore MASTER of heaven and earth...
 - He does NOT dwell in temples - He does NOT need anything from us [He gave us everything]
 - He made us out of ONE blood - hoping we would SEEK after Him [He is NOT far from us]
 - Because we are His children [Greek poet] - made in His image [not of gold - silver - or stone]
 - But we must REPENT - because if we do NOT - the JUDGEMENT is coming!
 - No Church...
 - When the philosophers heard again Paul mention RESURRECTION - they mocked...
 - Only a FEW of the people believed [the drunk] - and NO church was established...
 - Because the ONE thing missing from the MESSAGE - was the name of JESUS...
 - Therefore - Paul determined he would ALWAYS preach Jesus - **I Corinthians 2:1-5**
- **1ST – CHURCH IN CORINTH... vs. 1-5**
 - 1st – City of Corinth... vs. 1
 - Powerful city...
 - After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth!
 - CORINTH [Κόρινθος] was a beautiful - prosperous - and influential city in the Roman Empire...
 - It was a large city with around 100 THOUSAND people [larger than Athens]
 - The capitol city of the province of Achaea [Greece]!
 - Port city...
 - CORINTH sat on the tip of the Peloponnese peninsula - separating the Aegean and Ionian seas...
 - To go around the Peloponnese was a journey of over 300 kilometers [dangerous sailing]
 - In contrast the isthmus of Corinth was only 6 kilometers wide...
 - Separating the gulf of Corinth from the Saronic gulf!
 - Ships would come to Corinth [rather than sailing around] and go OVER land...
 - Caesar Nero did try and dig a canal [67 A.D.] - but it was not completed until 1893...
 - They would pull the ships on rollers from Cenchreae port [east] to Lechaion port [west]
 - Making Corinth a MAJOR trade route between the eastern and western Roman Empire!
 - Immoral city...
 - A city where countless sailors came through – inspired all kinds of wicked vices...
 - The top of the highest hill in Corinth - was called the Acropolis [575 meters]
 - On top of the hill was the temple to Aphrodite [the goddess of love]
 - It was said [Strabo] every night 1000 temple prostitutes would come down filling the city!
 - This helps us understand why the church here had PROBLEMS...

- Paul would end up writing FOUR letters to Corinth [the most of any church]
- FIRST - about avoiding sexually immoral people - **I Corinthians 5:9**
- SECOND - the book of 1 Corinthians - addressing LOT of problems in the church...
- THIRD - a SEVERE letter because the church would NOT repent - **II Corinthians 2:3-4**
- FOURTH - the book of 2 Corinthians - establishing the apostleship of Paul
- Corinth was the GIFTED church [great potential] - that was also the MOST rebellious!
- God sees a LOT of potential in our lives - GREAT things He wants to do...
- But we have LOTS of issues - we are REBELLIOUS - and SLOW to learn...
- It is good to remember that God does NOT give up on us...
- He is more than willing to keep addressing our PROBLEMS - correcting our SINS...
- Because His goal is to bring us - to the blessed life that comes ONLY from Him!
- 2nd - Godly couple... vs. 2
 - Two are better...
 - [Paul] found a certain Jew named Aquila - born in Pontus.
 - Who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla.
 - [because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome] - and he came to them!
 - When Paul arrived in Corinth he met a Jewish couple...
 - AQUILLA [eagle] from the region of Pontus [Black sea] - and his wife Pricilla [ancient]
 - They had recently been kicked out [χωρίζω] from the city of Rome!
 - Claudius Caesar had commanded ALL Jews leave the city [49 A.D.]
 - Because they had caused riots over Chrestus [thought to be a variation of Christ]
 - Aquilla and Pricilla are the greatest example in the New Testament of ministry couple...
 - Every time they are mentioned [six times] they are TOGETHER...
 - And were equals - WHO is mentioned FIRST goes back and forth [3 times each]
 - Because we are STRONGER when our spouse [our equal] is serving with us...
 - If we are having a BAD day - they are there to LIFT us up - and vice versa!
 - **Ecclesiastes 4:9-10** - "Two are better than one... if one person falls the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble." [NLT]
 - Partners...
 - Aquila and Pricilla worked side by side in the ministry with Paul - **Acts 18:18**
 - They became his traveling companions for part of the SECOND missionary journey!
 - There is nothing quite as wonderful as seeing people step up and help in ministry...
 - There is only so much that ONE person can do - so many hours in one day...
 - But as others step up to help out - the work of the ministry expands!
 - Disciplers...
 - When Paul left Aquila and Pricilla in Ephesus - **Acts 18:26**
 - They heard the teaching of Apollos - and saw he needed help...
 - They were willing to come along side - invest in his life - DISCIPLE him!
 - Because it is NOT enough to just give people the Gospel...
 - The job is NOT done when someone puts their faith in Jesus - it is just starting...
 - We are called to INVEST in the lives of others - we are to make DISCIPLES!
 - **Matthew 28:19** - "Go therefore and make disciples [imperative] of all nations."
 - Home church...
 - Aquila and Pricilla made their way back to CORINTH - **I Corinthians 16:19**
 - And from there they would even eventually return to ROME - **Romans 16:3-5**

- In both places they would host a CHURCH in their HOME!
- Church does NOT take place just on a SUNDAY morning...
- Church should be EVERY day - us living out our lives for Jesus...
- In our HOMES - talking to our kids - our neighbors about Jesus...
- Because the greatest need of everyone - the answer to every questions - is found in Him!
- 3rd - Tent maker... vs. 3-5
 - Working... vs. 3
 - So because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked.
 - For by occupation they were tentmakers!
 - Paul met Aquila and Pricilla because they had [imperfect] the same TRADE...
 - TENTMAKERS [σκηνοποιός] - only found here in the NT
 - Therefore Paul continually [imperfect] STAYED [μένω] with them...
 - As they WORKED daily [imperfect] to provide for their NEEDS!
 - The great APOSTLE Paul - writer of THIRTEEN books of the New Testament...
 - Worked at a TRADE to provide for his personal needs!
 - **II Corinthians 12:14** - "I will not be a burden to you. I do not want what you have - I want you. After all children do not provide for their parents. Rather parents provide for their children." [NLT]
 - The typical stereotype of a Christian Pastor is one with his hand held out...
 - Giving the impression that God is broke - that He needs our money...
 - Leaving people with a BAD taste - because the pastor wants their money...
 - But the call is NOT to TAKE - it is to GIVE our lives for others!
 - **Acts 20:35** - "I have shown you in every way by laboring like this that you must support the weak. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus... it is more blessed to give than to receive."
 - Sabbath... vs. 4
 - And [Paul] reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath - and persuaded both Jews and Greeks!
 - So Paul would WORK all week long with Aquila and Pricilla...
 - Then EVERY [πᾶς] Sabbath he would go and PREACH [imperfect] in the synagogues...
 - Persuading [imperfect] both Jews and Greeks to put their faith in Jesus...
 - This was his ROUTINE [5 imperfections] for an extended period of time!
 - When God created the world - He rested on the SEVENTH day - **Genesis 2:2**
 - Not that He needed a BREAK - it was as an EXAMPLE for us...
 - Although we have to WORK - we need to set aside time for the LORD!
 - The practicality is we have to WORK for a living...
 - Not that it is our responsibility to PROVIDE - God is our PROVIDER - **Luke 12:31**
 - And He can PROVIDE supernaturally - dropping MANA from heaven...
 - Yet the most common way for Him to provide is by us working - **II Thessalonians 3:10**
 - But we must also set aside time to SERVE [Sabbath] - give time for the LORD!
 - Support... vs. 5
 - When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia.
 - Paul was compelled by the Spirit - and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ!
 - BUT [δὲ] - when Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia [Philippi]
 - They brought with them SUPPORT [money] from the church there - **II Corinthians 11:8-9**
 - The church of Philippi was a frequent [2x] supporter of Paul - **Philippians 4:15-16**
 - That support freed up Paul to NOT have to work - opening the door for the SPIRIT...
 - To COMPEL [imperfect] him to go into FULL time ministry [preach Jesus daily]!
 - If we hire someone to WORK for us - we must pay their SALARY...

- But if someone else hires them to WORK for us - we are NOT responsible to pay them!
- There are men today that look at ministry as a JOB...
- But being a PASTOR was never meant to be a PROFESSION - it is a calling...
- The CHURCH does NOT hire a pastor - God CALLS him into full time ministry...
- The way to know if someone is CALLED - God PROVIDES for them...
- If a PASTOR has to ask for a SALARY from the church - NOT called!

▪ No charge...

- **I Corinthians 9:14** - "The Lord ordered that those who preach the Good News should be supported by those who benefit from it." [NLT]
- It is true that those who are CALLED to pastoral ministry...
- As much as possible – should be provided for practically by those within the church...
- Because a pastor that works to support himself – has less time for the church...
- But it is NEVER for the pastor to ASK to be supported [rather die] - **I Corinthians 9:15**
- Because the church did NOT hire him - he works for the Lord!
- **I Corinthians 9:18** - "What then is my pay? It is the opportunity to preach the Good News without charging anyone." [NLT]

▪ **2ND - EXTENDED STAY... vs. 6-11**

○ 1st – Shake the dust... vs. 6-8

▪ Rejected... vs. 6

- But when they opposed him and blasphemed he shook his garments and said to them:
- Your blood be upon your own heads - I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles!
- I am sure Paul was excited to go into FULL time ministry...
- But was REJECTED by Jews when he gave them the Gospel...
- REJECTED [ἀντιτάσσω] - same word as when God RESISTS the PROUD - **I Peter 5:5**
- And BLASPHEMED [speak evil] - of the only HOPE of salvation...
- Paul SHOOK [ἐκτινάσσω] his garments - shook off the DUST...
- And told them their BLOOD was on their own heads [their sin remained]
- Paul was CLEAN - because he had done what he could to WARN them...
- But from NOW on - he would [future] go to the NATIONS [ἔθνος]!
- **Matthew 10:14** - "Whoever will not receive you nor hear your words - when you depart from that house or city - shake off the dust from your feet."
- It is NOT our responsibility to convince people they need Jesus...
- We are only commanded to go and give them the CHOICE - **Matthew 28:19**
- And for those who REJECT - we simply kick off the dust - and keep going!

▪ Next door... vs. 7

- And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named Justus.
- One who worshiped God - whose house was next door to the synagogue!
- So Paul left the SYNAGOGUE - no doubt a dramatic scene...
- And went NEXT door - to the house of Justus [Titus] that was connected to the SYNAGOGUE...
- So he did NOT have to go very far to find someone who DID want to listen!
- It might feel sometimes like NO one is interested in the Gospel...
- But often our problem is we are FOCUSING on who we WANT to listen [Jews]
- Rather than looking around us to who WANTS to listen...
- We will NOT have to look far - it is often someone right next to us!

- **John 4:35** - "Lift up your eyes and look at the fields for they are already white for harvest!"
- Revival... vs. 8
 - Then Crispus - the ruler of the synagogue - believed on the Lord with all his household.
 - And many of the Corinthians - hearing - believed and were baptized!
 - But then the LEADER [ἄρχή] of the SYNAGOGUE believed with his whole house...
 - CRISPUS - one of only two people baptized in Corinth by Paul - **I Corinthians 1:14**
 - Word of this got out - and MANY from Corinth believed [imperfect] and were baptized...
 - Because if the RULER of the synagogue that had REJECTED Jesus - now believed...
 - That was enough to convince others that Gospel was the TRUTH!
 - Just because someone rejects the Gospel - does NOT mean there is NO hope...
 - It might just be a matter of TIMING - the Lord is still working on their heart...
 - And often those who are the MOST resistant to message...
 - End up becoming the most POWERFUL witnesses when they do come to the truth!
- 2nd - The vision... vs. 9-11
 - Do not Fear... vs. 9
 - Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision: Do not be afraid!
 - The Lord [κύριος] spoke to Paul in a VISION at night [dream]
 - He must NOT [imperative] continue to be [present] AFRAID [meaning he was]
 - Once the Jews rejected the Gospel - things usually got rough for Paul...
 - In the other cities [Thessalonica - Berea] he was chased out of town...
 - In Lystra the Jews [from Antioch] hunted him down and STONED him - **Acts 14:19**
 - Paul had good reason to be AFRAID of what would happen in CORINTH!
 - Have you ever watched an intense movie - and when it gets to a scary part...
 - You fast skip ahead because you want to KNOW what happens...
 - Because once we KNOW - there is NO longer any FEAR!
 - Do NOT fear - is the most common phrase in the Bible [over 100 times]
 - The reason is because we are ALWAYS afraid...
 - We FEAR because we do NOT know what will happen...
 - But we do KNOW the God who sees the END from the BEGINNING - **Isaiah 46:10**
 - And all we have to do is LISTEN to Him - and we will NOT be afraid!
 - Do not keep silent... vs. 9-11
 - But speak - and do not keep silent.
 - For I am with you and no one will attack you to hurt you - for I have many people in this city.
 - And he continued there a year and six months - teaching the word of God among them!
 - BUT [ἀλλά] - strong contrast - rather than FEAR...
 - Paul needed [imperative] to SPEAK - he was NOT to keep SILENT...
 - FIRST - because God was with him - so NO one could HARM [κακώω] him...
 - SECOND - because God had [present] MANY people in Corinth...
 - Those who needed to HEAR the Gospel - and would BELIEVE in Jesus...
 - Therefore - Paul SAT [continued] in Corinth for a YEAR and HALF teaching the WORD!
 - These are the same TWO reasons why we do NOT share - why we keep SILENT...
 - FIRST - we might FEAR for our Job - or FEAR a family member or friend might get upset...
 - But God is with us - which means we have NO reason to FEAR - **Romans 8:31**
 - SECOND - because we do NOT know how they will respond - they might say NO...
 - But for sure they will NOT say YES if we never give them the CHOICE...
 - And we might be surprised - God has a LOT of people - who are just waiting to HEAR!

- **3RD - ARRESTED AGAIN... vs. 12-17**
 - 1st – Judgement seat... vs. 12-16
 - New governor... vs. 12
 - When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia!
 - When Gallio was the PROCONSUL [governor] over the province of Achaia [southern Greece]
 - GALLIO [Γαλλίων] - was in that office from 51-52 A.D. [Delphi Inscription]
 - He was the adopted son of Lucius Junius Gallio - a Romans senator!
 - Contrary to law... vs. 12-13
 - The Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat saying:
 - This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law!
 - The Jews with ONE accord [ὁμοθυμαδόν] - came against PAUL...
 - And brought him before the JUDGEMENT [βῆμα] seat...
 - Their ACCUSATION was the CONTRARY to what it said in LAW of Moses [τὸν νόμον]
 - Paul was trying to persuade men to WORSHIP God [τὸν θεόν]
 - Because he was teaching the Gospel of GRACE - the LAW could NOT save us!
 - God had given Paul the promise – you will NOT be harmed...
 - But there is a good chance standing there before Gallio - he doubted God!
 - No defense... vs. 14-16
 - When Paul was about to open his mouth Gallio said to the Jews:
 - If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes.
 - O Jews - there would be reason why I should bear with you.
 - But if it is a question of words and names and your own law - look to it yourselves.
 - For I do not want to be a judge of such matters.
 - And he drove them from the judgment seat!
 - Just as Paul was about to SPEAK [his mouth open] - GALLIO addressed the Jews ...
 - IF [εἰ] their accusation had been [imperfect] about breaking the LAW [of Rome]
 - Or something WICKED [πονηρός] - he would have supported them...
 - But SINCE [indicative] is about [περὶ] WORD [λόγος] - NAMES [ὀνομάτων] - and LAW [νόμου]
 - All THREE of these are GENITIVE [possession] - connected by [καὶ]
 - Although the translators ONLY add the YOUR before LAW...
 - It could just as correctly be interpreted as YOUR word - YOUR names - YOUR law...
 - GALLIO was refusing to JUDGE [κρίτης] things that nothing to do with ROME...
 - Paul did not have to defend himself - he was NOT harmed - God was faithful!
 - When Hananiah - Mishael - and Azariah refused to worship the golden statue...
 - They result was they were thrown alive into a raging furnace...
 - But God kept them safe – and it was in the furnace they met Jesus - **Daniel 3:25**
 - God keeping us safe almost never means keeping us from the fiery trials...
 - It means He keeps us safe IN the trial – because it is in the trial we depend on Jesus!
 - Bema Seat...
 - It is worth noting that Paul stood before the BEMA [βῆμα] seat...
 - And when he did - he did NOT have to defend himself...
 - There was another who answered the ACCUSATIONS against him - set him FREE!
 - **II Corinthians 5:10** - “We must all appear before the judgment seat [βῆμα] of Christ.”
 - We will ALL stand before the BEMA seat...

- But NOT so that we can be JUDGED - but to establish that we are FORGIVEN...
 - Jesus will be the one who DEFENDS us - and set us FREE!
- 2nd - Second chances... vs. 17
 - Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes - the ruler of the synagogue.
 - And beat him before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things!
 - Then ALL [παῖς] of the GREEKS to the new leader of the SYNAGOGUE...
 - SOSTHENES - saved [σώζω] by strength [σθενόω]
 - And they BEAT [imperfect] him before the BEMA [βῆμα] seat...
 - GALLIO did NOT take notice [imperfect] of what they did [he deserved it]
 - But this was not the end for Sosthenes – he [likely] ended up believing in Jesus!
 - **I Corinthians 1:1** – “Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ... and Sosthenes our brother.”
 - Some people have a harder time coming to Jesus than others...
 - But God is willing to do anything - to convince us that we need Jesus!