

## PAUL'S WORK FOR CHRIST IN CORINTH

Text: Acts 18:1

INTRO: While Paul's efforts in Athens were with very little visible results, his efforts in Corinth are greatly rewarded. We want to take note of what the N.T. reveals to us about Paul's work in Corinth from late 52 to the spring of AD 54.

### I. HE MAKES HIS HOME WITH AQUILA & PRISCILLA, vs. 1-3.

- A. We cannot be sure whether they were Christians before Paul's arrival or if they became Christians under his influence.
  
- B. Paul had at least 3 things in common with Aquila & Prisc.
  - 1. Ethnically, they were Jews.
  - 2. Occupationally, they were tent makers.
  - 3. Religiously, they were receptive to the will of God.

### II. IN KEEPING WITH HIS UNIVERSAL PRACTICE, PAUL BEGAN HIS TEACHING IN THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUE, vs 4-5

- A. There were in the synagogue in Corinth, just as in other places, some God-fearing Gentiles who came to hear about the God who was worshipped by the Jews.  
Cp. Acts 10:2; 13:42-44; 17:17, etc.
  
- B. Paul's efforts were successful, causing both Jews & Greeks to be persuaded of the truth, vs. 4.
  
- C. About this time, Paul is re-joined by Silas from Berea & Timothy from Thessalonica. Paul writes his first letter to Thessalonica, vs 5.  
  
Acts 17:14-15; 1 Thes 1:1; 3:1-2, 6-7.
  
- D. His 2nd letter to Thessalonica was also written from Corinth apparently not more than a few months later.
  
- E. Shortly after the arrival of Timothy & Silas, the door of the synagogue was closed to Paul, vs. 6.

### III. THE CLOSING OF ONE DOOR OCCASIONED THE OPENING OF ANOTHER, vs. 7.

A. Justus was a God-fearer from among the Gentiles & lived next door to the synagogue.

B. Strangely, it was apparently after departing from the synagogue that Paul was able to convert Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, vs. 8.

C. Many others were also converted at that time, vs. 8. Among Paul's other converts in Corinth, the N.T. names:

1. Gaius: I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus & Gaius, lest anyone say that I baptized in my own name. (1 Cor 1:14-15).

2. The household of Stephanas: And I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. (1 Cor 1:16).

3. There were probably numerous others converted by Paul but baptized by Silas, Timothy or others of Paul's companions, vs 8.

D. God encouraged Paul by a vision in two matters:

1. Paul's personal safety, vs. 9-10a.

2. Positive results of his preaching, vs. 10.

### IV. THE PERSECUTION BACKFIRES.

A. Persecution drove Paul from the synagogue, only to be more successful in the house next door, vs. 6-8.

B. Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue who replaced Crispus after Crispus became a Christian, got the beating he had planned for Paul, vs 12-17.

C. We are not told Paul's response to what happened to Sosthenes, but we would expect it to harmonize with what he later wrote in Rom. 12:18-21.

Rom 12:18-21, If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

D. Did Paul comfort Sosthenes & treat his scrapes & bruises? And if so, was he able to finally impart to him the faith that Crispus, his predecessor had embraced?

E. We only know that about 4 years later (57 AD) when Paul wrote back to the church in Corinth from Ephesus, he wrote: Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ thru the will of God, & Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth... (1 Cor 1:1-2).

#### V. A FEW LESSONS WE PICK UP FROM THESE INCIDENTS.

A. Contacts we make where we work can be among the most fruitful in the cause of Christ.

1. Paul's first contact with Aquila & Prisc was in Corinth as tent makers late in 52 AD, vs. 1-2.
2. When he left Corinth, they went with him as far as Ephesus, 54 AD, vs. 18-19.
3. When Paul returned to Ephesus later the same year, a congregation was meeting in their house, 1 Cor 16:19. Paul stayed in Ephesus for 2 years, during which time he wrote 1 Cor.
4. The next time we hear of A&P is about 58 AD. They are in Rome & once again, their house is the meeting place for a church, Rom 16:3-5.
5. Finally, about 68 AD, just before Paul's execution, we find P&A in Ephesus once more & still

active in the work of God, 2 Tim 4:19.

6. Wouldn't it be great if someone you work with could be favorably influenced by you as A&P were by Paul when he came to Corinth?

B. Potential problems can be potential blessings.

1. Being rejected in the synagogue could have been a stumbling block.
2. Instead, it became a stepping stone to further success
3. Illustrate: Cox Springs/Jonestown.

C. Sometimes those who seem the poorest prospects make the best Christians.

1. Crispus.
2. The Gentiles.
3. Sosthenes.

CONCLUSION: God grant us the wisdom to see our opportunities & the zeal to take advantage of them