

## Acts Chapter 18 Continued

**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."**

“Priscilla and Aquila” (see note on verse 2). That they could accompany Paul means there was sufficient leadership in Corinth, with men such as Gaius, Sosthenes, Stephanas, and Crispus.

“Cenchrea”: The eastern port of Corinth.

“Having shorn his head in Cenchrea, for he had a vow”: To show God his gratitude for helping him through a difficult time in Corinth, he took a Nazirite vow, a special pledge of separation and devotion to God (Num. 6:2-5; 13-21).

The vow generally lasted a specific period of time, although Samson (Judges 13:5), Samuel (1 Sam. 1:11), and John the Baptist (Luke 1:15), were Nazirites for life. In Paul’s day, if someone made the vow while away from Jerusalem, at the termination of his vow he would shave his head, as Paul did, and afterwards present the shorn hair at the temple within 30 days.

In the last lesson, we learned that Paul stayed in Corinth for one and a half years and started the church there. The Jews finally came against him and tried to cause him trouble, but Gallio would not do their dirty work for them. Now we read that Paul stayed there for a while after this incident, and then he leaves and goes to Syria.

Priscilla and Aquila had become very close to Paul. He had lived with them while he was in Corinth. This is undoubtedly Paul that has shaved his head for a vow. It seems this shaving his hair off was so that he could take it to the temple when he goes to sacrifice.

Paul to me, is still fulfilling some of the Jewish customs, even though he is a converted Christian. Why he is doing this is a big question. I have no idea, but I am sure he is doing what he feels is best at the time.

**Acts 18:19 "And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews."**

“Ephesus”: The most important city in Asia Minor.

“Left them there”: Priscilla and Aquila remained in Ephesus to establish their business. Apparently, they lived in Ephesus for several years, a church met in their home (1 Cor. 16:19), before they returned to Rome (16:3-5).

“Synagogue” (see note on 13:5).

He left Aquila and Priscilla here at Ephesus, and Paul continues on after stopping and preaching at the synagogue. It appears that Paul has not completely given up on winning the Jews to Jesus, because here he is again, in their synagogue trying to make them understand.

Two years before this, Paul had been forbidden to go to Asia, but now it seems that it is pleasing to God for Paul to go there.

**Acts 18:20 "When they desired [him] to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;"**

We see that Paul was set for Jerusalem. He just stopped momentarily here. They could not persuade him to stay longer (tarry), because he had something he wanted to do in Jerusalem.

**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."**

We see that Paul was determined to go to Jerusalem. He possibly was going to carry this hair he had cut off there. The feast, he thought it was so important to get to, had to be one of the three important feasts. It could have been Passover, Pentecost or Harvest. This "I must by all means" indicates, that even if the weather is bad, he will go anyhow.

**Acts 18:22 "And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch."**

“Gone up ... went down”: Although Luke does not mention it in detail, his description of the geography indicates Paul went to Jerusalem to greet the church. Because Jerusalem was elevated over the surrounding region, travelers had to go “up” to get there and “down” to any other place. Paul also had to return to Jerusalem so he could fulfill his vow. This ended the second missionary journey.

The second missionary journey ends with Paul going up to visit the church at Jerusalem and then returning to the church at “Antioch” of Syria.

It also says and saluted the church; I believe that is speaking of the church at Jerusalem.

**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."**

“Some time there”: Possibly from the summer of A.D. 52 to the spring of A.D. 53.

“Galatian and Phrygia” (see note on 16:6). Paul’s return to those regions marked the beginning of his third missionary journey.

This is Paul going back and checking on the churches, after he had spent a few months here. Paul had a great deal to do with the formation of these churches. He was going back to make sure that they were still worshipping in the way he established them.

Verses 24-28: When Paul returned to Antioch he left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus. They encounter a follower of John the Baptist named "Apollos."

They inform him of the progress of God's work and revelation through the apostles. Apollos is eloquent and zealous, and ministers successfully both in Ephesus and Corinth (1 Cor. 3:4-6).

**Acts 18:24 "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, [and] mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus."**

"Apollos" Was an Old Testament saint and follower of John the Baptist (verse 25). After further instruction by Aquila and Priscilla (verse 26), he became a powerful Christian preacher. His ministry profoundly influenced the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:12).

Apollos was an Alexandrian Jew who arrived in Ephesus not long before Paul's arrival during his third missionary journey. Apollos had received the message of Christ but knew of the Old Testament. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they informed him concerning all the recent wonderful works and revelations of God.

"Born at Alexandria": Alexandria was an important city in Egypt located near the mouth of the Nile. In the first century, it had a large Jewish population. Thus Apollos, though born outside of Israel, was reared in a Jewish cultural setting.

"Mighty in the scriptures": Used only here, this phrase refers to Apollos' knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures. That knowledge, combined with his eloquence, allowed him to crush his Jewish opponents in debate (verse 28).

Before Paul arrived, Apollos sailed for Corinth and powerfully proclaimed the Old Testament Scriptures proving that Jesus was the Messiah. He became so popular with some that factions arose (1 Cor. 3:1-4). Apollos returned to Ephesus and was with Paul even as he wrote his epistle dealing with the faction (1 Cor. 16:12).

Little else is known about him except for a brief allusion (in Titus 3:13). Martin Luther first suggested, and many have agreed, that Apollos was the author of Hebrews due to his Alexandrian background and his skill in the Old Testament.

We see here, a man who is highly educated, and particularly in the Scriptures. We know that he is a Jew by birth, but a Christian by choice. He has not received the fullness of the Holy Ghost, since he has been baptized in the baptism of repentance only (John's baptism). Ephesus was one of the cities on Paul's second journey where he stayed and preached for a short time.

**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."**

“The way of the Lord”: This did not include the Christian faith (verse 26). The Old Testament uses the phrase to describe the spiritual and moral standards God required His people to observe (Gen. 18:19; Judges 2:22; 1 Sam. 12:23; 2 Sam. 22:22; 2 Kings 21:22; 2 Chron. 17:6; Psalms 18:21; 25:8-9; Prov. 10:29; Jer. 5:4-5; Ezek. 18:25, 29; 33:17, 20; Hosea 14:9).

“Baptism of John”: Despite his knowledge of the Old Testament, Apollos did not fully understand Christian truth. John’s baptism was to prepare Israel for the Messiah’s arrival (Luke 1:16-17; see notes on 2:38; Matt. 3:6).

Apollos accepted that message, even acknowledging that Jesus of Nazareth was Israel’s Messiah. He did not; however, understand such basic Christian truths as the significance of Christ’s death and resurrection, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the church as God’s new witness people. He was a redeemed Old Testament believer (verse 24).

Apollos was from Alexandria, as we read several other times other than in Acts. Paul speaks very highly of Apollos. You may read (1 Corinthians 3:4-7, and 1 Corinthians 16:12, and Titus 3:13). Many expositors believe that he became one of the early bishops.

At any rate, we know that he knew the Scriptures well, and that he believed Jesus to be the Messiah. He not only knew that Jesus was the Christ the very Son of God who came to be Savior of the world, but he proclaimed that good news to everyone he saw.

**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."**

“The way of God more perfectly”: Aquila and Priscilla completed Apollos’ training in divine truth by instructing him in the fullness of the Christian faith.

Perhaps, the only truth about Jesus that Apollos knew was what he had picked up from hearing other believers tell as they had come into contact with him. He knew the Scriptures so well, that he immediately related what they told him about Jesus and he knew He was the Messiah. The Word convinced him.

We see here, where Aquila and Priscilla tell him more fully. The Scripture here does not say so, but we can safely assume they baptized him in the Christian baptism.

**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:"**

“Achaia” (see note on verse 12). Apollos planned to cross from Asia Minor (modern Turkey), to Corinth on the Greek mainland (19:1).

“The brethren wrote”: Such letters of commendation were common in the early church (Rom. 16:1-2; 1 Cor. 16:10; 2 Cor. 3:1-2; Col. 4:10). The Ephesian Christians wrote to inform their Corinthian brethren that Apollos was now a fully informed Christian.

It appears to me, from this verse above, that these believers in Achaia knew very little of the Scriptures. They had received the grace of God, but had not yet been taught in the Bible. The brothers of Ephesus knew what a great Bible scholar he was and wrote a letter recommending him as a speaker at Achaia. He appears, to me, to be a teacher of the Word.

**Acts 18:28 "For he mightily convinced the Jews, [and that] publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ."**

“Jesus was Christ”: The Messiah of Israel.

There are thirty-eight or more specific Old Testament Scriptures which prophecy the coming Messiah. When you join these prophecies with the circumstances of Jesus' birth, life, crucifixion, entombment and resurrection, there is no doubt left who He is.

### **Acts Chapter 18 Continued Questions**

1. Who went with Paul to Syria?
2. What had Paul done in Cenchrea?
3. Why had Paul done this?
4. How long had Paul stayed in Corinth?
5. Where did Paul leave Priscilla and Aquila?
6. Who did Paul reason with here?
7. Where had Paul been forbidden to go two years previous to this?
8. Why was Paul in such a hurry to get to Jerusalem?
9. When Paul sailed from Ephesus, he promised he would return under what condition?
10. Where did Paul land before he went by land to Jerusalem?
11. What does saluted the church indicate?
12. After he had his business in Jerusalem taken care of, where did he go?

13. What two areas did Paul go to when he left Antioch?
14. Why did Paul go back to these places?
15. What was the name of the Jew from Alexandria?
16. In verse 24, we read two attributes of the man, what are they?
17. Where did he come to minister?
18. How and of whom did Apollos speak to the people?
19. What was the only baptism he knew?
20. Name some other places you can read about Apollos?
21. What two people expounded to Apollos more perfectly of God?
22. Where did Apollos go to minister next?
23. How would the Christians there know to receive him?
24. How had the believers in Achaia believed?
25. What did Apollos minister to them?
26. How did Apollos convince them?