

Chapter Eighteen

Chapter 18

- In verses 1-4, we see Paul arriving in the major city of Corinth, a city steeped in pagan religion. It did possess a number of Jews and a synagogue, however, due to Claudius expelling them from Rome. He found someone of the same trade so he could work to provide for his needs.
 - How important was it to Paul that he does not make financial demands for support from congregations? See 2 Cor 11:8-9.
 - Is there wisdom from Paul that can apply today?
- How did Paul spend his time on the Sabbath?
- Paul experienced much success in his ministry in the synagogue, so much so, that the Jewish element became reactive and opposed him.

- Do you see a pattern emerging regarding Paul's ministry in various locations?
- He has some success and that triggers resistance from those who feel threatened by his message.
- Does resistance to your proclamation of the gospel indicate that your communication is somehow faulty, or does it indicate that you are "hitting the mark" by evoking such reactions?
- In verse 6, apparently Paul had had enough of the attacks and decided to move on to a new focus group, namely, gentiles.
 - His statement, "From now on, I will go to the gentiles!" should not be understood as an absolute statement but was limited to that particular group of Jews. Later, we see him ministering in Ephesus to Jews and gentiles.
- According to verse 7, where did Paul go to next?
- According to verse 8, what happened to the leader of the synagogue Paul had just left?
 - How do you think the remaining unbelieving Jews

have felt about Paul “sheep stealing”, including their synagogue leader, and setting up a competing congregation right next door?

- According to verses 9-11, how was Paul encouraged to remain and teach there?
 - How long did he stay there teaching?
 - What was the content of his teaching? Recall that the only extant written word of God was the Tanach which includes the Torah. The Apostolic writings, later referred to as the “New Testament”, did not yet exist.
 - Given that most of the members of this congregation were gentiles, can it truly be said that they were not taught the Torah?
 - If Paul was against the continuation of the Torah as authoritative for believers in Yeshua, as is often suggested, would this have made any sense?
- In verses 12-13, we see the unbelieving Jews unifying in their opposition to Paul’s ministry and attempting to stop him with appeals to the pagan court system.

- This type of “lawfare” involving politicizing and weaponizing the justice system to silence an opponent is seen in our day as well.
- According to verses 14-16, before Paul could speak, he was interrupted by Gallio, the civil judge.
 - What was the judge’s preemptive decision?
 - In today’s legal procedure, this might be viewed as a bench motion to reject the case as there was no civil or criminal case to answer for but merely questions of a religious nature, to which the court had no interest in addressing.
- According to verse 17, what happened to Sosthenes, the new ruler of the synagogue who had replaced Crispus after he had come to faith in Yeshua and left with Paul?
 - Do you think this may have been because the court felt their time had been wasted or in reaction to Sosthenes attempting to use the legal system to his own ends?
- In verse 18 it is recorded that Paul shaved his head, for he had a vow.

- This could only be the Nazarite vow as detailed in Numbers 6.
- The head was shaved at the start of the time period of the vow and shaved again at the completion, with the length of hair representing the time duration of the vow. The hair was offered as a sacrifice in the temple. We see later in Acts 21 Paul's attempt to fulfill this.
- If Paul was against the continuation of the Torah as authoritative for believers in Yeshua, as is often suggested, would this have made any sense?
- In verse 19, we see Paul arriving at Ephesus.
 - Where did he go?
 - To whom did he minister?
- In verse 20, does it appear that Paul experienced a more receptive crowd than he had in Corinth?
- According to verse 21, what was his reason for needing to depart?
 - The text does not specify which feast Paul was desiring to keep but the Torah lists three pilgrimage

feasts to be kept in Jerusalem, Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot.

- If Paul was so desirous to keep this Torah-based feast, is it fair to claim that Paul was “against the Torah”?
- His statement that, “I will return again to you if God wills”, is a common sentiment and acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God. Ancient and modern Judaism uses the phrase “B’Ezrat Hashem”, meaning “with the help of God”. Also, see James 4:13-15.
- In verses 22-23, we see Paul making the rounds of previously established congregations, following the example of a true shepherd caring for the flock.
- In verses 24-26, who came to Ephesus preaching the gospel?
 - What was his background?
 - Apparently, this man had been working independently and unconnected to the Jerusalem congregation.
 - Since the text states he was already accurately and forcefully declaring the gospel with great fervor in

the Spirit, we recognize his ministry as valid.

- What, according to verse 25, was the only issue in which he was apparently lacking?
- It is a point of accuracy to include the ritual of immersion into Messiah but not as a prerequisite to salvation.
- What did Priscilla and Aquila do to help him complete his understanding?
- Did they offer this counsel publicly or privately?
Why do you think that was wise?
- In verses 27-28, we see the ministry of Apollos continue with much effectiveness.
 - What was the body of Scripture that he used to prove Yeshua was the Messiah?
 - Paul acknowledged the ministry of Apollos in 1 Cor 4:6 and also in 1 Cor 16:12.