SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

Acts

Chapter Eighteen, Verses 1–28

Do Not Be Afraid; Go On Speaking — tentmakers in Corinth, a night vision, a proconsul who would not judge, and a preacher who learned more

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

In wicked, wealthy Corinth Paul makes tents with Aquila and Priscilla, is rejected by the synagogue, and hears the Lord say, “Do not be afraid … I have many people in this city”; Gallio throws the case out of court, and in Ephesus a tentmaking couple quietly takes an eloquent preacher aside and teaches him more. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind Luke’s key words.

THE PASSAGE

Acts 18:1–28

Corinth · vision · Gallio · Apollos

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

Contents

Six movements from Athens to Corinth, around the eastern Mediterranean, and back to Ephesus

—	**How to Read This Study** · *the four voices & their colors*	3
—	**Before the Passage** · *from the hill of Ares to the crossroads of the empire*	3
I	**Tentmakers in Corinth** · *Acts 18:1–4 · Aquila and Priscilla*	5
II	**Your Blood Be on Your Own Heads** · *Acts 18:5–8 · the break with the synagogue*	6
III	**I Have Many People in This City** · *Acts 18:9–11 · the Lord's encouragement*	7
IV	**Gallio at the Judgment Seat** · *Acts 18:12–17 · Gallio*	8
V	**If God Wills** · *Acts 18:18–23 · the journey's end and start*	10
VI	**Apollos, Mighty in the Scriptures** · *Acts 18:24–28 · Apollos*	11
VII	**The Passage in the Whole Bible** · *cross-references*	13
†	**At a Glance** · *the four voices side by side*	15
†	**Key Insights & Questions for the Table** · *discussion*	15
†	**Sources** · *where each voice comes from*	17

"And when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace." — Acts 18:27

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

Acts 18:1–28

Do Not Be Afraid; Go On Speaking — Paul plants the church at Corinth, closes his second journey, and Priscilla and Aquila disciple Apollos

† How to Read This Study

This study walks Acts 18 in 6 movements, in Luke's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where Luke is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle — MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions; Command / instruction; Key repeated word; Sin / warning; Promise / blessing; Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · ACTS 18:9–10

"And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city."

† Before the Passage

Acts 17 ended on Mars Hill with a few believers and many sneers. Paul now goes about fifty miles west to Corinth, alone, while Silas and Timothy are still in Macedonia. Corinth stood on the narrow isthmus between two seas, with a port on each side — Lechaeum to the west and Cenchrea to the east (v. 18). Guzik: "Corinth was a major city of the Roman Empire, at an important crossroads of trade and travel." He adds, "It was also a city notorious for its hedonism and immorality."

This chapter is one of the anchors of New Testament chronology. Aquila and Priscilla had come from Italy "because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome" (v. 2); Guzik notes, "Chronology is often a tricky matter, but it seems that this expulsion of Jews from Rome occurred at about A.D. 49." Gallio,

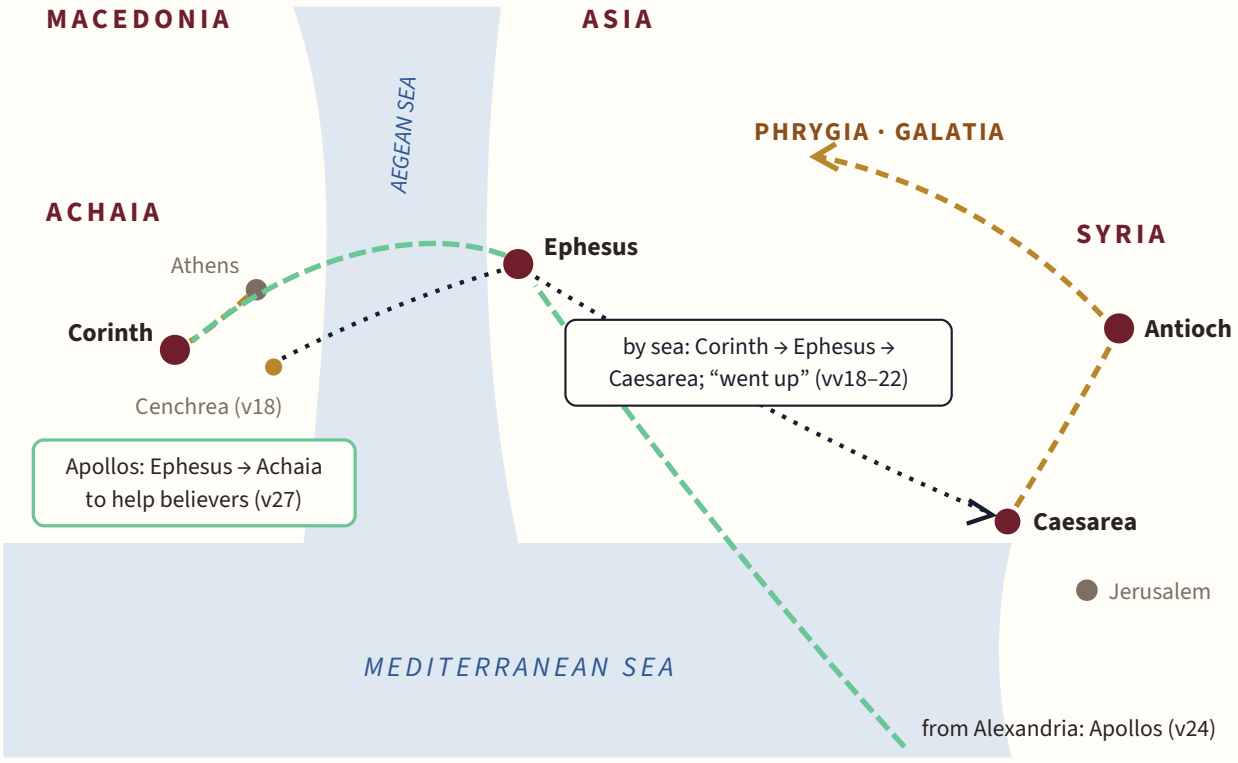
"proconsul of Achaia" (v. 12), is named in an inscription found at Delphi that is usually dated to his term around AD 51–52. So Paul's eighteen months in Corinth (v. 11) fall about AD 50–52.

Paul wrote to this church more than to any other, and his letters fill in Luke's outline. He came to them "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling" (1 Cor 2:3), which helps explain the vision of verse 9. He baptized very few of them himself, but "Crispus and Gaius" were among them (1 Cor 1:14). And he summed up the work this chapter describes: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth" (1 Cor 3:6). His letters to the Thessalonians were very likely written from Corinth after Timothy's report (v. 5).

Verses 18–23 close the second missionary journey and open the third in a single breath: Cenchrea, Ephesus, Caesarea, Antioch, and then out again through Galatia and Phrygia. The chapter ends with a new character, Apollos of Alexandria — eloquent, fervent, mighty in the Scriptures — and with two tentmakers who were humble enough to teach him and wise enough to do it privately.

FIGURE · CORINTH TO ANTIOCH AND BACK

Schematic, not to scale · north at top · gold = by land, dark = by sea, green = Apollos



Trace Paul from Athens to Corinth, by sea to Ephesus and Caesarea, by land to Antioch and out to Galatia and Phrygia; the green line follows Apollos from Alexandria to Ephesus and on to Achaia.

I
MOVEMENT

ACTS 18:1–4

Tentmakers in Corinth

A city at the crossroads, a couple expelled from Rome, and an apostle who works with his hands

[1] *After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth.* [2] *And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla,* *because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome*. *He came to them,* [3] *and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for* *by trade they were tent-makers*. [4] *And he was reasoning in the* *synagogue* *every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.*

ACTS 18:1–4

"You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me."

ACTS 20:34

σκηνοποιοί

SKĒNOPOIOI · "TENT-MAKERS" · G4635

From *skēnē*, tent, and *poieō*, to make — found only here in the New Testament. Whether they worked in leather or goat-hair cloth, it was hard, common trade work. Every Jewish boy, rabbis included, was expected to learn a trade. Henry: "Though he was bred a scholar, yet he was master of a handicraft trade." Paul later reminds the Ephesians, "these hands ministered to my own needs" (20:34).

διελέγετο

DIELEGETO · "WAS REASONING" · G1256

The same verb as 17:2, 17 — Paul's steady method of discussion and argument from the Scriptures. Here the imperfect tense, with "every Sabbath," pictures a weekly habit while he worked the other six days. Beside it Luke puts *epeithen* (G3982), "trying to persuade": Paul aimed not only to inform Jews and Greeks but to win them.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik sets the scene: "Corinth was a major city of the Roman Empire, at an important crossroads of trade and travel." "It was also a city notorious for its hedonism and immorality." Into that city God sends Paul two friends, Aquila and Priscilla, Jews expelled from Rome — and Guzik dates the edict: "Chronology is often a tricky matter, but it seems that this expulsion of Jews from Rome occurred at about A.D. 49." He sees Paul's trade as strategy, not a sideline: "Paul's tentmaking was an important part of his ministry," for it kept anyone from suspecting him of preaching for profit.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul preached Acts 18:1–17 on 16 January 2005 ("Paul at Corinth"). Ligonier's summary says the sermon asks why Corinth made Paul's ministry hard at times and what problems he met there, and it opens with a reminder for those who romanticize the early church: "Many people today might wish they had been alive during the days of the Apostles." Corinth shows what those days were actually like.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry stops at the picture of "Paul working for his living." "He was a tent-maker, an upholsterer," and "Though he was bred a scholar, yet he was master of a handicraft trade." Why did he do it? "he therefore maintained himself with his own labour that he might not make the gospel of Christ burdensome." Henry treats honest manual work as honorable for any servant of God, and he notes that Paul still gave his Sabbaths to the synagogue, reasoning with Jews and Greeks.

II
MOVEMENT

ACTS 18:5–8

Your Blood Be on Your Own Heads

Silas and Timothy arrive, the synagogue resists, and the house next door fills up

5 *But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.* 6 *But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."* 7 *Then he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue.* 8 *Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.*

ACTS 18:5–8

"then he who hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, and a sword comes and takes him away, his blood will be on his own head."

EZEKIEL 33:4

"I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,"

1 CORINTHIANS 1:14

συνείχετο

SYNEICHETO · "DEVOTING HIMSELF COMPLETELY" · G4912

From *synechō*, to hold together, to press in on, to grip. The interlinear gloss is "was occupied"; the KJV says Paul "was pressed in the spirit." The same verb describes Jesus "distressed" until His baptism of suffering (Luke 12:50) and the love of Christ that "controls us" (2 Cor 5:14). When Silas and Timothy came with news and gifts from Macedonia, Paul was free — and gripped — to give himself wholly to the word.

ἐκτιναξάμενος

EKTINAXAMENOS · "SHOOK OUT" · G1621

To shake off or out. Jesus told the Twelve to shake the dust off their feet from a town that would not hear (Matt 10:14), and Paul and Barnabas did so at Pisidian Antioch (13:51). Here Paul shakes his garments and says, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean" — the watchman's language of Ezekiel 33. He had warned them; their blood was not on him.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes what Silas and Timothy brought: “When Timothy came, he brought news about how the Christians in Thessalonica were remaining steadfast in the faith.” Encouraged, Paul gave himself fully to the word, and when the synagogue resisted he made his rejection of their rejection visible: “Paul did this so that not a speck of dust from the synagogue would remain on his clothes, much less his sandals.” Yet he did not stop loving Jews — he moved next door, and the synagogue leader believed: “Crispus was one of the few in Corinth whom Paul personally baptized.”

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry reads the arrival of friends as fuel: “then Paul was more than before pressed in spirit, which made him more than ever pressing in his preaching.” When they blasphemed, “he shook his raiment, shaking off the dust from it,” and said, “Your blood be upon your own heads.” But Henry insists the break was not a retreat: “Having given them over, yet he does not give over his work.” And he marks the fruit next door in Crispus: “Not only he, but his house, believed.”

III
MOVEMENT

ACTS 18:9–11

I Have Many People in This City

A night vision, a promise of presence, and eighteen months of teaching

9 *And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid any longer, but*
go on speaking and do not be silent; 10 *for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you,*
for I have many people in this city.” 11 *And he settled there a year and six months, teaching the word of*
God among them.

ACTS 18:9–11

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you.”

ISAIAH 43:2

“I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.”

JOHN 10:16

μὴ φοβοῦ

MĒ PHOBOU · “DO NOT BE AFRAID” · G5399

Phobeomai, to fear, in the present imperative with a negative — usually “stop being afraid,” which is why the NASB adds “any longer.” Paul was already afraid; he later told the Corinthians he came to them “in weakness and in fear and in much trembling” (1 Cor 2:3). The Lord gives two commands (keep speaking, do not be silent) and three reasons: I am with you; no one will harm you; I have many people here.

λαός

LAOS · "PEOPLE" · G2992

The ordinary word for "people," and in the Greek Old Testament the regular word for Israel as God's people. Here the Lord uses it of Corinthians who had not yet believed: "I have many people in this city." They were His before they knew it, like the "other sheep" Jesus said He must bring (John 10:16). Spurgeon: "The purpose embraces the means for the carrying out of the purpose." Election did not make Paul quiet; it kept him in Corinth a year and a half.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik puts the promise first: "This promise was the basis for God's command to not be afraid and to keep preaching." The Lord's presence and His people in the city were reasons to stay, and Paul stayed: "Paul was in Corinth a year and a half, which seems to be longer than in any other city where he founded a church." That says something about the man and his method: "He was no 'in and out' evangelist, but a man committed to making disciples."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon preached these verses as "Cheer for the Worker, and Hope for London" (28 Oct 1880). "Even Paul was not without his tendency to fear," and fear makes Christians silent. But faith speaks, and God stands with the speaker: "When a man speaks for God, God speaks in him." "We never go a warfare for God at our own charges: he is sure to be with the man who is with him." Election is a spur, not a sedative: "The purpose embraces the means for the carrying out of the purpose." "If there are so many fish to be taken in the net, I will go and catch some of them." And for wicked cities: "The worse the men the more they need the gospel."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry hears Christ say to His servant, "Be not afraid, for I am with thee," and finds the reason for the long stay in the words "For I have much people in this city." Those people were not yet gathered: "The people Christ has at Corinth must be called in by degrees, some by one sermon, others by another;" so Paul "continued at Corinth a year and six months," teaching the word of God among them.

IV
MOVEMENT

ACTS 18:12–17

Gallio at the Judgment Seat

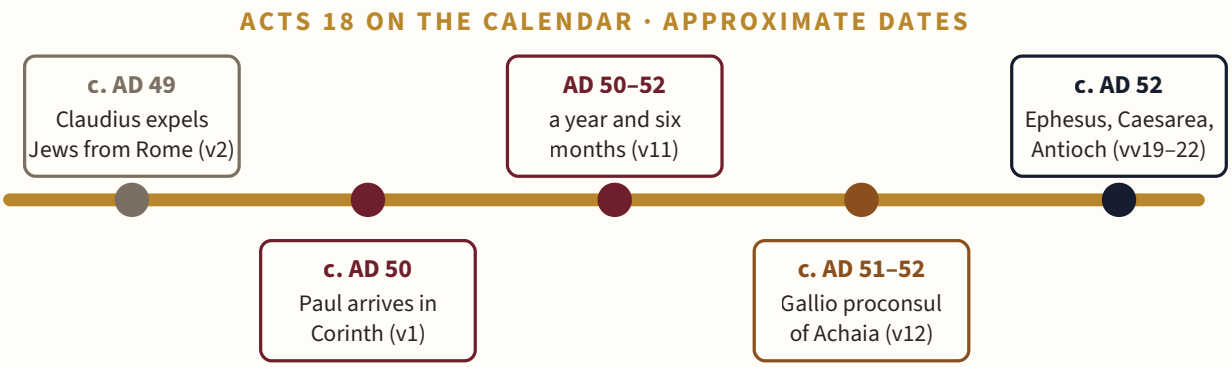
A charge of illegal religion, a proconsul who throws it out, and a synagogue leader beaten

12 But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat, 13 saying, "This man persuades men to worship God contrary to the law." 14 But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrong or of vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you; 15 but if there are questions about words and names and your own law, look after it yourselves; I am unwilling to be a judge of these matters." 16 And he drove them away from the judgment seat. 17 And they all took hold of Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and began beating him in front of the judgment seat. But Gallio was not concerned about any of these things.

ACTS 18:12–17

> *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."*
>
> 2 CORINTHIANS 5:10

FIGURE · ACTS 18 ON THE CALENDAR



Claudius: c. AD 49 (Guzik). Gallio: dated by an inscription at Delphi.
1 and 2 Thessalonians were very likely written from Corinth in these months.

Two outside facts — Claudius's edict and Gallio's term — pin Paul's Corinth years to about AD 50–52; the dates are approximate.

βῆμα

BĒMA · "JUDGMENT SEAT" · G968

A raised platform, a tribunal from which a magistrate gave judgment; the remains of Corinth's bēma still stand in the old forum. Luke uses the word three times here (vv. 12, 16, 17). Paul later used the same word when he wrote to this city: "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor 5:10; also Rom 14:10). Gallio refused to judge at his bēma; Christ will judge every man at His.

ἀνθύπατος

ANTHYPATOS · "PROCONSUL" · G446

The governor of a senatorial province, ruling "in place of a consul." Luke's titles are precise: Sergius Paulus is proconsul of Cyprus (13:7), the officials of Thessalonica are "city authorities" (17:6), and Achaia has a proconsul. Gallio, brother of the philosopher Seneca, held the office briefly; an inscription at Delphi names him and is usually dated to AD 51–52.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik gives Gallio his due: "He correctly saw that the government has no role in attempting to decide religious matters." The charge that Paul was teaching worship "contrary to the law" failed, and the ruling protected the gospel's freedom in Achaia. But Guzik also sees the dark side of Gallio's detachment: "Gallio looked the other way when angry Gentiles beat Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue." The scene ends with a flat sentence: "But Gallio took no notice of these things."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry is fair to Gallio on the first point: "He looked upon the matter to be not within his jurisdiction, and therefore would not meddle in it." In matters of "a question of words and names, and of your law," the magistrate was right to say "look you to it." But when Sosthenes was beaten before the court and Gallio did nothing, "it carries his indifference too far, and gives us but an ill character of him." Henry adds of this Sosthenes, "It is certain that there was one Sosthenes that was a friend of Paul, and well known at Corinth" (1 Cor 1:1), whether or not this is the same man.

V
MOVEMENT

ACTS 18:18–23

If God Wills

A vow at Cenchrea, a promise at Ephesus, and the long loop home and out again

18 *Paul, having remained many days longer, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow.* 19 *They came to Ephesus, and he left them there. Now he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.* 20 *When they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not consent,* 21 *but taking leave of them and saying, "I will return to you again if God wills," he set sail from Ephesus.* 22 *When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and went down to Antioch.* 23 *And having spent some time there, he left and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.*

ACTS 18:18–23

"After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.""

ACTS 15:36

εὐχήν

EUCHĒN · "VOW" · G2171

Euchē means both a prayer and a vow; James uses it for prayer (Jas 5:15). Here it is a vow, most likely of the Nazirite kind (Num 6), marked by letting the hair grow and cutting it at the end. Guzik: "By tradition, a Nazirite vow could only be fulfilled in Judea." Paul, apostle to the Gentiles, still kept Jewish devotions freely, not to earn grace but out of thanks (compare 21:23–26).

θέλοντος

THELONTOS · "IF GOD WILLS" · G2309

Literally "God willing" — a genitive absolute from *thelō*, to will or wish. Paul made real plans and held them loosely. James writes the same habit into every plan: "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that" (Jas 4:15). God did will it: Paul came back to Ephesus and stayed more than two years (19:1, 10).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik reads the haircut as consecration: “He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow,” and “By tradition, a Nazirite vow could only be fulfilled in Judea.” Paul’s Jewish practice did not make him less the apostle of grace; he was free to keep such customs. At Ephesus he reasons briefly, promises to return if God wills, lands at Caesarea, greets the church and goes down to Antioch: “They must have been pleased to have Paul return and tell of all his work over the previous three years or so.” Then the third journey begins.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry notes the vow plainly — “Having shorn his head at Cenchrea; for he had a vow” — and draws his lesson from Paul’s words at Ephesus: “Our times are in God’s hand; we purpose, but he disposes.” Paul visited the church to “refresh himself with the sight and conversation of the ministers there,” and then went through Galatia and Phrygia “strengthening all the disciples.” Planting churches was never the end of Paul’s work; strengthening them was the rest of it.

VI
MOVEMENT

ACTS 18:24–28

Apollos, Mighty in the Scriptures

An eloquent preacher who knew only John’s baptism, and a couple who taught him more accurately

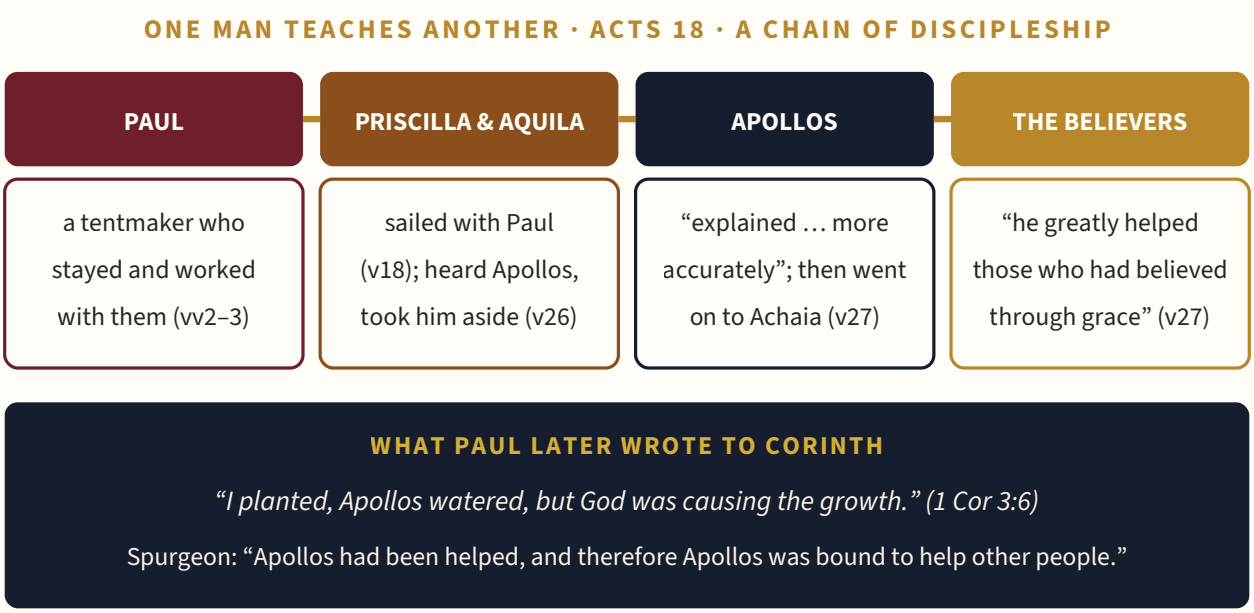
24 *Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures.* 25 *This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John;* 26 *and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.* 27 *And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace,* 28 *for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.*

ACTS 18:24–28

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.”

1 CORINTHIANS 3:6

FIGURE · ONE MAN TEACHES ANOTHER



Read left to right: Paul worked beside Priscilla and Aquila, they took Apollos aside, and Apollos went on to help the believers Paul had left in Achaia.

λόγιος

LOGIOS · "ELOQUENT" · G3052

From *logos*; a man of words — learned and able in speech. Only here in the New Testament. Alexandria was the great center of learning in the Jewish world, and Apollos had both gifts: "eloquent" and "mighty (*dynatos*, G1415) in the Scriptures." Henry: "he was famous for speaking pertinently and closely, fully and fluently, upon any subject." His eloquence later became a party badge in Corinth ("I am of Apollos," 1 Cor 1:12) — which grieved Paul, not Apollos.

ζέων τῷ πνεύματι

ZEŌN TŌ PNEUMATI · "FERVENT IN SPIRIT" · G2204

Zeō means to boil, to be hot. Paul uses the very phrase in Romans 12:11, "fervent in spirit." Apollos was boiling over — and still incomplete, "acquainted only with the baptism of John." Luke uses *akribōs* (G199), "accurately," twice: Apollos taught "accurately" what he knew (v. 25), and Priscilla and Aquila explained the way of God to him "more accurately" (v. 26). Zeal was not the problem; it needed fuller light.

διακατηλέγχετο

DIAKATĒLENCHETO · "POWERFULLY REFUTED" · G1246

A triple compound (*dia* + *kata* + *elenchō*, to convict, expose), found only here: to refute thoroughly, point by point. Luke adds *eutonōs* (G2159), "vigorously," and "in public." His tool was the same as Paul's — "demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ" (v. 28; compare 17:3).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes how far John the Baptist's influence had reached: "We see again that the reputation and work of John the Baptist was widely known throughout the Jews of the Roman Empire." Apollos was sincere and zealous but incomplete: Apollos "didn't know much about Jesus, but what he did know genuinely excited him." So Priscilla and Aquila "took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately" — privately, not by correcting him in front of the synagogue. Guzik counts that quiet teaching a real contribution to the kingdom, because Apollos went on to strengthen the church in Achaia.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon preached verse 27 as "The Shank-Bone Sermon; or, True Believers and Their Helpers" (23 Mar 1890). He begins with the men: "APOLLOS is not Paul, and Paul is not Apollos" — each has his own gift. Then the phrase "believed through grace": "Salvation is all of grace from first to last," and "'Through grace' is the hall-mark upon the precious metal of believing." "Faith which is born of self will die of self; but that which is the child of grace will live for ever." Such believers need help, and "Apollos had been helped, and therefore Apollos was bound to help other people." The true help: "in Christ crucified there is every help that a soul can want."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry admires both the man and his teachers. Apollos was "an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures," and "He was a lively affectionate preacher; as he had a good head, so he had a good heart." Yet "he was instructed in the gospel of Christ as far as John's ministry would carry him, and no further." His humility shows when two tentmakers take him aside: "he was glad to receive instructions from them, to be shown by them his defects and mistakes." Then in Achaia he helped believers — and Henry adds, "Those who believe in Christ, it is through grace that they believe."

VII
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

The watchman's warning, the Lord's presence, the preacher sent, the judgment seat, and the grace that gives faith

> *"then he who hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, and a sword comes and takes him away, his blood will be on his own head."*
>
> EZEKIEL 33:4

> *"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you."*
>
> ISAIAH 43:2

> *"How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!""*
>
> ROMANS 10:14–15

> *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."*
>
> 2 CORINTHIANS 5:10

> *"Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;"*
>
> ROMANS 16:3–4

> *"The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house."*
>
> 1 CORINTHIANS 16:19

> *"I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth."*
>
> 1 CORINTHIANS 3:6

> *"Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus."*
>
> 2 TIMOTHY 4:19

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry's note on verse 27 carries into every letter where these names return: "Those who believe in Christ, it is through grace that they believe." The couple who taught Apollos are greeted by Paul to the end of his life (2 Tim 4:19).

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, one chapter. Guzik supplies the city, the dates and the steady discipleship; Sproul's Ligonier sermon on verses 1–17 is known here only through its published summary; Spurgeon preaches the two great encouragements — God's presence for the fearful speaker and grace for the helper; Henry is fair to Gallio, warm toward Apollos, and firm that "we purpose, but he disposes."

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · Tentmakers	Corinth: crossroads and hedonism; Claudius c. AD 49; tentmaking as ministry.	The apostles' days were harder than we imagine — Corinth shows it.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	A scholar with a trade; he would not make the gospel burdensome.
II · The break	Timothy's good news; not a speck of synagogue dust; Crispus baptized.	— (sermon page summary only; see I)	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Pressed in spirit, pressing in preaching; he gives them over, not his work.
III · The vision	The promise grounds the command; no in-and-out evangelist.	— (sermon page summary only; see I)	God speaks in the man who speaks for God; election spurs labor.	Christ's people called in by degrees, sermon by sermon.
IV · Gallio	Right not to judge religion; wrong to ignore a beating.	— (sermon page summary only; see I)	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Would not meddle — good; indifference too far — bad.
V · If God wills	A Nazirite vow; three years' report at Antioch; journey three begins.	—	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	We purpose, but He disposes; strengthening the disciples.
VI · Apollos	Excited about what he knew; taught privately; a real gain to the kingdom.	—	Believed through grace; helped, so bound to help.	Good head, good heart; glad to be shown his defects.

ACTS 18:1–28 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **God's man had a day job.** Henry: "Though he was bred a scholar, yet he was master of a handicraft trade." Paul made tents so the gospel would not be "burdensome" — and gained two lifelong co-workers at the workbench (vv2–3). HENRY
- **Encouragement fuels the work.** When Silas and Timothy came with good news from Thessalonica, Paul "began devoting himself completely to the word" (v5). Guzik: Timothy "brought news about how the Christians in Thessalonica were remaining steadfast." GUZIK
- **A warned man is responsible for himself.** "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean" (v6) is the watchman's language of Ezekiel 33. Faithful warning frees the messenger, but Paul still moved only next door. THE TEXT
- **Even Paul was afraid.** Spurgeon: "Even Paul was not without his tendency to fear." The Lord did not scold him; He gave him His presence and His purpose (vv9–10; 1 Cor 2:3). SPURGEON
- **Election is a reason to preach.** "I have many people in this city" (v10). Spurgeon: "If there are so many fish to be taken in the net, I will go and catch some of them." Henry: they are "called in by degrees, some by one sermon, others by another." SPURGEON

- **Stay long enough to make disciples.** Guzik: "He was no 'in and out' evangelist, but a man committed to making disciples." A year and six months, "teaching the word of God among them" (v11). GUZIK
- **Gallio's bēma and Christ's.** Gallio would not judge "questions about words and names" (v15). Paul later told this city, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor 5:10). Indifference here does not escape the judgment there. THE GREEK
- **We purpose, but He disposes.** Henry on "I will return to you again if God wills" (v21). Paul made real plans and held them in God's hand (Jas 4:15). HENRY
- **Zeal needs accuracy.** Apollos taught "accurately" what he knew and was taught "more accurately" (vv25–26). Fervent spirit and fuller truth belong together. THE GREEK
- **Take him aside.** Priscilla and Aquila corrected a gifted preacher privately and humbly (v26), and he went on to "greatly help" the believers (v27). Spurgeon: "Apollos had been helped, and therefore Apollos was bound to help other people." THE TEXT

† Questions for the Table

1 **Paul worked a trade and preached on the Sabbath. How does my ordinary job — or my daily routine — become part of my ministry rather than a break from it?**

Paul's tentmaking was an important part of his ministry (Guzik).

18:1-4; Acts 20:34

2 **When the synagogue rejected him, Paul moved next door and kept going. When people reject my witness, do I quit, get bitter, or move next door?**

Having given them over, yet he does not give over his work (Henry).

18:5-8; Ezek 33:4

3 **The Lord told a frightened apostle, "Do not be afraid any longer … I am with you." What fear keeps me silent about Jesus, and what would change if I believed He is with me?**

Even Paul was not without his tendency to fear (Spurgeon).

18:9-10; Isa 43:2

4 **"I have many people in this city." Who in my city, my facility or my family might be one of God's people not yet called — and what is my part in calling him?**

The purpose embraces the means (Spurgeon).

18:10; John 10:16; Rom 10:14-15

5 **Gallio "was not concerned about any of these things." Where am I tempted to be fair-minded but indifferent about the things of God?**

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

18:14-17; 2 Cor 5:10

6 **Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos aside and taught him. Who has done that for me — and whom could I take aside, humbly and privately, this month?**

Apollos had been helped, and therefore Apollos was bound to help other people (Spurgeon).

18:24-28; 2 Tim 2:2

Acts 18 is a chapter about ordinary faithfulness: making tents, staying put, speaking when afraid, and teaching one man at a time. The Lord stands with His frightened servant, Rome's court cannot stop His

word, and two tentmakers help shape a great preacher. Do not be afraid; go on speaking — He has many people in this city.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

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