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Acts 18

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Acts 18.

Topics.

- Paul has a vision while in Corinth.
- The Jews make a united attack on Paul and bring him before Gallio.
- Sosthenes the ruler of a synagogue is beaten by the Jews.
- Paul cut his hair for he was under a vow.
- Priscilla and Aquila explain to Apollo's the way of God more accurately.
- Apollo's powerfully refutes the Jews in public.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter jealous Jews drove Paul, Silas and Timothy out of Thessalonica so they travelled to Berea, but Jews from Thessalonica came and drove them out of Berea so they sailed to Athens. Paul is stunned at the multitude of idols he sees in the city of Athens, but seeing an idol to the unknown God he (in great wisdom) uses it as the beginning of a brilliant exhort in the Areopagus of Athens that leads into Christ's death and resurrection. The chapter ended with Paul peacefully leaving the crowd with those that believed.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

ACTS 18:1-6

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All Jews are Commanded to Leave Rome.

- **Acts 18:1-6:** After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ²And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them, ³and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. ⁴And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks. ⁵When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. ⁶And when they opposed and reviled him he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

After leaving Athens Paul went to Corinth and stayed with Aquila a Jewish man and his wife Priscilla making tents. On every Sabbath as was his custom Paul would go to the synagogues attempting to persuade Jews and Greeks to believe in Christ. Paul was fully aware of the danger he faced by proclaiming the Gospel to the Jews, but he was motivated by love.

We know this because in the book of Romans he says:

- I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom 9:3).

But eventually the opposition of the Jews became so great Paul gave up trying to save them and turned his attention toward the Gentiles. It is most likely tension arose for Aquila and his wife because of the opposition of the Jews toward Paul making it difficult for Paul to stay so he leaves the home of Aquila and Priscilla and goes and lives with Titus Justus whose house was next to a the synagogue in which Crispus the ruler and all his family believed in Christ.

A practical lesson: there is a lesson we can all learn from Paul's experience, when witnessing there can come a point in which it is better to give up and move onto others who are open to hearing the word of the Lord.

ACTS 18:7-11

Paul has a Vision while in Corinth.

- **Acts 18:7-11:** And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue. ⁸Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized. ⁹And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, ¹⁰for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people." ¹¹And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Normally if things got life threatening in where Paul was ministering, he would move onto another city, but here in Corinth the Lord in a vision tells him not to be afraid, but continue proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel because there are many of the Lord's people throughout the city.

Vision: can relate to a spectacle gazed at by the eyes or a movie played out in the mind. In most cases God gives the picture or vision then the prophet speaks or writes it in their own words. Sometimes the same biblical event or experience is spoken of as an actual and real event, while at other times the same event maybe recorded as a vision (an image or mental experience within the mind). A biblical vision is always under God's control and can appear as a movie played out on the screen of the imagination of the mind (similar to a dream) or it may appear as a hologram appearing in the air that is actually seen by the eyes of the prophet or to whoever God chooses to give the vision to. The vision communicates the LORD'S will or future events to the prophet who then proceeds to tell the vision to the people, sometimes in their own words and at other times in the exact words the LORD has spoken to them in the vision.

Many are baptized: Paul stays one and a half years teaching the word of the Lord and many Corinthians believed and were baptized. Some today believe that since the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ water baptism was done away with, but these verses clearly show that Paul did not consider this theory to be true.

NOTICE: both Jews and Gentiles were attending the synagogues and Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia (v5).

ACTS 18:12-17

The Jews make a United Attack on Paul and Bring Him Before Gallio.

- **Acts 18:12-17:** But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, ¹³saying, "This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law." ¹⁴But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint. ¹⁵But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things." ¹⁶And he drove them from the tribunal (Judgement seat in KJV). ¹⁷And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.

The rage and fury of the Jews against Paul proclaiming the word of the Lord throughout Corinth had been building to such an extent that they united and took Paul before the tribunal of Gallio the governor of Achaia. The following shows how true the words of the Lord were in Paul's vision (v9-10), after being accused of persuading people to worship God contrary to the law and customs of Moses, Paul begins to open his mouth to make his defence, but much to the Jews horror and Paul's surprise Gallio cuts him short and tells the Jews his appointment is to judge criminal acts and vicious crimes not religious doctrines and Jewish customs and then has them driven out from his Judgment seat.

Sosthenes the ruler of a synagogue is beaten by the Jews: Sosthenes was a ruler of a synagogue in Corinth and a man who had received the word of the Lord, we know this because Paul begins his first letter to the Corinthians by saying, "Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, to the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:1-2).

NOTE: this shows us that not all synagogues and their rulers were against the word of the Lord.

ACTS 18:18-23

Paul leaves Ephesus and sails to Syria with Priscilla and Aquila.

- **Acts 18:18-23:** After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow. ¹⁹And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. ²⁰When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined. ²¹But on taking leave of them he said, "I will return to you if God wills," and he set sail from Ephesus. ²²When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch. ²³After spending some time there he departed and went from one place to the next through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

NOTE: Cenchrea was a haven of the Corinthians.

A few days after Paul was taken before the tribunal of Gallio (v12) he left Corinth and sailed to Syria with Priscilla and Aquila, when they arrived in Ephesus as was Paul's custom he went to the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews who unlike most Jewish synagogues resulted in them persecuting him these Jews ask him to stay, but for whatever reason Paul leaves and sails to Caesarea and goes to the church that he had established at Antioch and then travels throughout the region strengthening the churches that had sprung up throughout the region.

THE GLOBAL AND WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

There is in the secular global world today a mindset that the church is a Sunday meeting in a religious building but the church should never be limited to the established religious institutions, denominations or church buildings though they may form a part of the body of Christ they are not the only part. There are many individual Christians in all countries of the world who meet in coffee bars, social outings and mostly their own homes (as the early church did) to give thanks to Christ and share their discoveries of God's word and their spiritual experiences with Him. Many of these people are helping others and simply manifesting the reality of their faith to the people that come into their lives. God is not limited to any one pattern or organisation; He is far too creative for that. Jesus church is global and is manifested in a vast variety of ways across the face of the earth. In many third world countries church is held outside under a tree (for shade) with its members sitting on the dusty ground

often with dogs, chooks and other animals roaming around. It is also important to be aware that the word church does not embrace everyone simply because they confess to be Christians (Matt 7:21-23). When the Bible uses the term church it primarily refers to those who belong to Christ and those who do the will of his Father. The will of God in this context is summed up in Jesus words:

- Love your neighbour as yourself (Matt 22:37-39) (Mark 12:29-31).

In the New Testament this is called the, Royal Law (James 2:8) and means do-good to others. Those (especially those who belong to Christ) who deliberately harm people physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally or spiritually and those who use others for their own selfish gain and greed are referred to by Christ himself as workers of iniquity. The Bible teaches that some will be cast out of God's Kingdom which means not everyone who confesses to know Christ is part of his church there are those in his present Kingdom who he calls wicked servants. They use God's grace, Jesus good name and his Gospel for their own selfish gain and line their own greedy pockets with the wealth and riches of this world by making merchandise of those who do belong to Christ. Nevertheless, Jesus knows those who are his and those who are not and will not only reject anyone who uses his message of grace, mercy, compassion and love for their own selfish gain, but when he returns will deny them entry into his eternal Kingdom. (Matt 8:12) (Matt 22:13) (Matt 25:30).

- Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. (John 10:14) (John 10:26-27).

For further information concerning the church, see the title:

- The Definition of a Church
- In Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Paul cut his hair for he was under a vow: the words, "At Cenchreae Paul had cut his hair, for he was under a vow" (v18) throughout the years have caused much confusion amongst Christians, many wonder why Paul who clearly knew he was under grace would shave his hair. Perhaps the best place to begin seeking the answer is to firstly look at what the verse maybe referring to. A vow refers to making a solemn promise to God the most valued vow was that of a Nazarite which involved shaving the hair. To solve the mystery some say the vow refers to Aquila rather than Paul and support this theory because according to the laws of a Nazarite vow Paul could not possibly fulfil all the required conditions because of his travelling time table, but to apply the verse to Aquila one has to twist the verse since Paul is clearly the man in focus. It has to be Remembered the Jews were very zealous for the customs of Moses and Paul knowing this would willing shave his hair if it meant he would be received by the Jews and able to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel therefore it is more likely Paul acted according to Jewish Law so as not to offend Jews that were zealous for the law and in so doing would be able to proclaim Christ (a similar situation is recorded in Acts 21:20-24).

It is not wrong or against God or grace to keep a law, a custom or a tradition for the purpose of appeasing the anger of those opposed to Christ or for the purpose of sharing the Gospel. Paul tells the Corinthian Church that:

- Even though he is free from all, he has made himself a servant to all, that he might win more of them. To the Jews he became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law he became as one under the law (though not being himself under the law) that he might win those under the law. To those outside the law he became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that he might win those outside the law. To the weak he became weak, that he might win the weak. He became all things to all people that by all means he might save some. He does it all for the sake of the gospel, that he may share with them in its blessings" (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

Thus, it appears that Paul for whatever reason was caught up in the custom of making a Jewish vow and shaving the head and simply went along with it for two reasons:

1. To avoid strife and contention.
2. So, the Jews he was with would be far more accepting of him and his message.

ACTS 18:24-28

Priscilla and Aquila explain to Apollos the way of God more Accurately.

- Acts 18:24-28: Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. ²⁵He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus (Lord in KJV) though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and explained to him the way of God more accurately. ²⁷And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, ²⁸for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

What a great testimony for Apollos; an eloquent Jewish man, competent in the Scriptures (referring to the Old Testament Scriptures) who though he knew only the baptism of John was zealous in the Spirit and spoke accurately of the things concerning Jesus in the synagogues. He arrives in Ephesus and speaks in the synagogue the things he understood concerning the Christ. Priscilla and Aquila (who Paul had lived with) (v1-3) after hearing Apollos realised, he only understood the baptism of John (v25) so they took him aside to explain to him more accurately the way of God. This most likely means that Apollos was still proclaiming John's message of repentance and baptism because the Christ is coming thus Priscilla and Aquila would have explained to him the death and resurrection of Christ and the Good News of the Gospel and that God has poured out His Spirit on Jews and Gentiles alike.

The Gospel: is about believing in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, recognising that one falls short of God's Glory and absolute Holiness. It is about repentance, baptism and abiding in the faith. Throughout the entire history of mankind there has only been one man who has ever been able to attain to God's perfect standard. Salvation is recognising this reality, repenting before God and accepting His foreordained plan of salvation. Salvation is about trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, looking forward to his return and being raised to eternal glory.

Apollos powerfully refutes the Jews: Apollos after having the Good News of the Gospel explained to him not only greatly strengthened those who believed but also powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus (27-28). He used Old Testament Scriptures to show that Jesus was the Christ (27-28) the following verses are just some of the Scriptures Apollos may have used:

Everything that is written about the Son of Man will be Accomplished.

- Taking the twelve, he said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished (Luke 18:31).

Everything that is written about Jesus applies to all things prophesied and spoken of him in the Old Testament, because the Jews held Moses in high esteem, they should have recognised Christ when he came, especially since Moses wrote the following amazing verse that states:

- God would put enmity between the serpent and the woman, and between the serpent's seed and the woman's Seed and that the seed of the serpent would bruise the heel of the woman's Seed, but the Seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent's seed." (Gen 3:15). (The woman's Seed in this verse refers to Christ).

For greater detail of this fantastic and prophetic verse see:

- Genesis 3:15 in, Commentary Old Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Moses also wrote:

- The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—And I the LORD will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak all that I command him, it is to him you shall listen." (Deut. 18:15-19).

The prophet like Moses is Christ then in the New Testament Philip said to Nathanael:

- We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph (John 1:45).

And Paul said:

- He testifies both to the small and the great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass (Acts 26:22).

FOLLOWING ARE A FEW OTHER VERSES SHOWING THE PROPHETS WROTE OF JESUS

Isaiah prophesied, saying:

- There will come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge with equity for the meek of the earth (Isaiah 11:1-4) (the shoot that came forth from Jesse refers to Christ).

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Isaiah also prophesied that:

- A virgin will conceive and bear a son, and call his name Immanuel, (Isaiah 7:14) he will grow up before God like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground and have no form or majesty that we should look at him or beauty that we should desire him. (Isaiah 53:2) but the Spirit of the LORD GOD will be upon him because the LORD will anoint him to bring Good News to the poor; and to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;(Isaiah 61:1). At the end of his ministry he will give his back to those who strike, and his cheeks to those who pull out the beard; he will not hide his face from disgrace and spitting (Isaiah 50:6) (Isaiah is of course speaking of Christ).

Jeremiah said:

- The days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness (Jer. 23:5-6) (the righteous Branch is Christ).

Daniel wrote:

- I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came One like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. To him was given dominion and glory and a Kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his Kingdom one that shall not be destroyed (Dan. 7:13-14) (the came one like a Son of man refers to Christ).

Hosea prophesied of Christ calling Israel to:

- Return to the LORD their God that He may heal them; Hosea proclaims in his prophetic message, “After two days the LORD will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. Let us press on to know the LORD; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth. (Hosea 6:1-3) (His going out is echoing Christ’s death and as the dawn he will come is echoing his return).

Micah prophesied:

- Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days (Micah 5:2) (the one to come forth is Christ).

Zechariah writes:

- If one asks him, 'What are these wounds on your back?' he will say, 'The wounds I received in the house of my friends.' (Zech. 13:6) and writes that “A man whose name is the Branch will extend out from his place, and build the Temple of the LORD (Zech. 6:12).

Zechariah also tells Jerusalem:

- To rejoice greatly because their King is coming to them; righteous and having salvation, he is humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey (Zech 9:9). Later in his letter he pens the beautiful words, “The LORD will pour out on Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.” (Zech. 12:9-10) (Zechariah clearly writes of Christ).

Malachi prophesied:

- The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his Temple; behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts, but who can endure the day of his coming, he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and refine the sons of Levi like gold (Malachi 3:1-3) (It is Christ who will suddenly come to his temple).

Paul when speaking of Jesus says:

- The religious rulers of Israel did not recognize him (Christ) nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him (Acts 13:27).
- See also (Psalm 22) and (Isaiah 53) naturally there are many more Old Testament Scriptures concerning the Lord.

Jesus himself said:

- I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book (Heb 10:7) (The scroll of the book refers to the Old Testament writings).

And he said to the Jews:

- You search the Scriptures (Old Testament) because they think that in them they have eternal life; but it is they that bear witness about me. (John 5:39).

It is very clear that the religious rulers of Israel should have recognised their Messiah when he came especially since he was performing supernatural miracles that could only be done by a man who God’s power was flowing through in such a majestic and awesome manner.

NOTE: these most celebrated and famous prophecies that the faithful prophets of old spoke thousands of years before Christ appeared stunningly show that the Bible is the inspired word of God for the following three reasons:

1. Who from their own mind could ever imagine that God’s own Son the promised Messiah, the Christ and Saviour of the world would ever have to suffer such a humiliating brutal, bloody and cruel death?

2. Who could imagine from their own mind that a man born of a woman would be raised from the dead to eternal life and everlasting glory? Certainly, generations of old believed in life after death, but it was in the form of a conscious spirit being, not a human raised from the grave to immortality and eternal life.
3. Many Old Testament Scriptures give exact details of Christ's birth, his life and his suffering long before he appeared.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

Bible House of Grace