

ACTS: Corinth (*Acts 18:1-17*)

Corinth (v. 1)

- Corinth is about 50 miles from Athens
- Located on an isthmus only 3 ½ miles wide at its narrowest
- Its geographic location made Corinth a commercial center
 - Ships could unload on one side of the isthmus, have their cargo hauled over land, and be reloaded on another ship, saving weeks of dangerous travel
 - Small ships would be drug across a special roadway
 - Nero attempted a canal, but it wasn't finished until the 19th century
- It was destroyed by the Romans in 146 BC and reestablished as a Roman colony in 44 BC
- It was the administrative capital of Achaia and the largest, most cosmopolitan city in Greece in Paul's day
- Due to its commercial nature, the city had a mix of culture, religion and undesirable elements that often plague a maritime center
 - "To live like a Corinthian": To live immorally

New Friends & Old (v. 2-5)

- Upon Paul's arrival, he quickly befriends a Jewish Christian couple Aquila & Priscilla (Prisca)
 - They were fellow tentmakers
 - Aquila was from Pontus on the Black Sea
 - They had recently fled Rome due to Claudius' decree
 - In 49 AD, the Emperor expelled all the Jews from the city due to some infighting over someone named *Chrestus*
- During this time, Paul visited the local synagogue weekly and preached Christ to the Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as was his typical pattern
- But once Silas & Timothy join him, he begins focusing more on preaching
 - This may have been due to a monetary gift they brought with them (2 Cor. 11:9; Phil. 4:15)

Rejection & Acceptance (v. 6-8)

- Some of the Jews reject the Gospel message
 - To which Paul shakes out his robes, a symbolic gesture of disassociation with coming judgment (Neh. 5:13; Luke 9:5; 10:10–11; Acts 13:46, 51)
- Paul then shifts to focusing on ministering to the Gentiles
 - With a base of operation next door to the synagogue, at the home of Titius Justus, a God-fearing Gentile
- Some Jews do believe, including Crispus the synagogue ruler
 - Who supervised sabbath services & maintained order in the Jewish community
- And many Gentiles come to know Christ through Paul's preaching

Promise of Protection (v. 12-17)

- The Lord speaks to Paul in a nighttime vision, giving commands based on promises
 - Do not be afraid & keep preaching
 - Because God is present with him

- Because God will protect him
- Because God is working in people's lives
- Thus, Paul trusted the Lord and stayed for at least another 18 months in Corinth

Promise Fulfilled (v. 12-17)

- After that time, the Jews who rejected Jesus take advantage of the rise of the new Roman proconsul Gallio
 - This would have taken place c. 51 A.D.
- They bring Paul before Gallio and accuse him of persuading people to worship God 'contrary to the law'
 - Gallio's response seems to imply that they meant Jewish law
- However, Gallio rejects the case, stating that it has to do with semantics of their faith
 - And states that he has not judgments over such matters
 - A precedent in the Roman government taking a hands-off approach to the Gospel
 - Neither condoning nor condemning it
 - He has all involved in the case forcibly removed from the tribunal
- The result is an assault upon Sosthenes, the new synagogue ruler
 - This may have been by the Greek crowd as an antisemitic move
 - Or it may have been by the Jews because he was a Christian sympathizer
 - Either way, he seems to have come to faith in Jesus by the time Paul left Corinth (1 Cor. 1:1)
- The whole incident acts as a fulfillment of God's promised protection of Paul
 - He is not run out of town, but continues to minister for some time before leaving (v. 18)

So What?

- We should not be afraid to share Christ with others
 - Because God is present with us, will protect us, and is working in other people's lives
- Do we believe this and act on that belief?

Meditation Verse: *Luke 21:14-15*