

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 18

Spiritual Overdrive

Focus Verse: Romans 10:1

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."

I. Introduction

A. By way of review:

1. Author - Luke
2. Date Written - 63 AD
3. Theme - The acts of the Holy Spirit through the apostles in confirming the word of God, and the spread of Christianity following the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
4. Type of book - Historical Account: not primarily a Doctrinal book.
5. Doctrinally - A Transitional book - covers the emphasis being moved from primarily upon the Jews, to now primarily upon the Gentiles.

B. So far we have covered 17 power-packed chapters in Acts!

II. Lesson - "Spiritual Overdrive"

A. **A New Missionary Team (18:1-4)**

1. Entering the city of _____
 - a. Here is an immoral, pagan, sin-sewer of a town.
 - b. Yet, much more receptive to the Gospel than the "great intellectual" city of Athens.

PRINCIPLE: Where sin abounds, grace "doth more abound."

- c. Worshipped the goddess "Aphrodite" (Venus)
2. A New Team - Paul, Aquila, and Pricilla (18:2-4). *Timothy, Silas, and Luke come and go as they are sent out by Paul for specific tasks*
 - a. Their "trade" - _____. They were not lazy or leeches
 - b. Their goal - Same old goal of getting out the Gospel:
 - 1) To the Jews first
 - 2) Then to the Gentiles
3. Success At Corinth (18:4)
 - a. This Church becomes the most "_____" Church (Cf 1 Cor 12).
 - a. Yet, this Church becomes also the most _____ Church (the theme of the epistles of I and 2 Corinthians).
 - b. Principle: All the blessings in the world, only SPOIL people!

B. **Paul's Renewed Burden (18:5-23)**

1. Seeing Silas and Timothy return just does something to Paul (18:5). He gets encouraged to go a little further, and do a little more! Christians can either discourage you, or encourage you - lets all exhort one another (Heb 10:24,25)!
2. The Four Levels of Commitment to God's Will for your life (18:5):
 - a. Being "*stirred in the spirit*" (17:16)- _____ to do something
 - b. Being "*pressed in the spirit*" (18:5) - _____ to do something NOW, not putting it off!
 - c. Being "*purposed in the spirit*" (19:21) - _____ of what to do!
 - d. Being "*bound in the spirit*" (20:22) - _____ - Never turning back! It leads Paul to being "bound in chains" as we shall see.

APPLICATIONS:

- a. In Dating and Marriage
- b. In friendships
- c. In being a member of a church
3. The Jews "*_____ themselves*" reveals the principle that when a person rejects the Gospel, he really is turning away the best thing that could ever happen to him! They were not opposing Paul, or even God - they were fighting themselves!
4. Paul "*turns to the Gentiles*" AGAIN!!! (18:6)
 - a. _____ time out of three (Acts 13:46; 18:6; 28:28)
 - b. Claims that he is currently "debt-free" from his responsibility (Acts 20:20,21; 26,27).

PRINCIPLE: ALL Christians have a responsibility to warn the wicked of their sins (Ez 3:17-21). If we fail in our task, we will have to give an account for it at the Judgement Seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:9-11; Rom 14:10-12) and our hands will be covered with the blood of those we did not warn that we were responsible for!

Who we are responsible for?

- 1) Obviously our _____ (As with Lot, Gen. 19:14)
 - 2) Obviously those we work with - daily contact with them.
 - 3) Obviously our _____ (Mt 22:37-39).
 - 4) Obviously those whom we can go out and find (Lk 14:23)!
- c. Paul says that he will now turn to only the Gentiles, but he knows that he can't keep this promise (Rom 9:1-3; 10:1,2).

PRINCIPLE: Real love for someone (as Paul has for the Jews here) cannot be broken, no matter how they treat you.

5. In Corinth, Justus (a Gentile) and Crispus (a very devout Jew - lived right next to the synagogue; 18:7,8) get saved! Notice how God takes notice of individual names!
6. God personally encourages Paul (18:9-11)
 - a. Looks like Paul was getting tired of not seeing the Jews saved, and was thinking about quitting. Have you ever been there?
 - b. The Lord "cheers Paul on!" (vs 10) Resembles Jeremiah 20:7-9.
 - c. Reminds Paul of ALL those who have gotten saved recently, not just the few Jews! Keep your eyes fixed on the ___ picture!
 - d. God is trying to prepare Paul for what's up ahead - a battle.

PRINCIPLE: When things don't go the way we want, we get discouraged and think about quitting (See Jonah). Paul here wanted a better response from the Jews than he was getting!

7. The insurrection - Satan "*never gives up*" (18:12-17).
 - a. Gallio - a top-rate civil ruler! As fair and as impartial as a judge could get! Don't you wish all judges were as fair?!
 - b. Sosthenes gets saved (18:17; 1Cor 1:1)- the beating drove him to consider WHY he had gotten in so much trouble with the Jews
8. Paul's ___ (vss 18-23) - He Cannot Give Up On His People
 - a. Paul takes a "_____" vow in vs 18 (Numbers 6). His reason for shaving his head is connected with his Jewish testimony to his own people. He was desperate to prove his sincerity!
 - b. It takes him back to Jerusalem temporarily, and then to Antioch also briefly.
 - c. Ultimately, this is going to take him back to _____ in chapter 21 and pit him squarely against the Pharisees one more time. Paul goes into a sort of "Spiritual Overdrive". In other words, Paul wants to try once more what Stephen attempted to do in Acts 7 - see the Jewish nation saved from the "*wrath to come*":
 - 1) The Roman General Titus destroying Jerusalem in 70AD
 - 2) The Jewish dispersion for the next 1800 years
 - 3) The many holocausts (1300 Black Plague, 1940's, etc.)
 - 4) The coming Tribulation - called "_____*Trouble*"
 - d. See also Acts 28:20 - for the hope of "_____"
 - e. It leads to the "_____"(19:1-21:15).
 - f. Notice how Paul was focused on strengthening Christians (18:23) - they need maintenance (preaching, teaching, prayer)

C. The "Know-Not-All" Man - Apollos (vss 24-28)

1. Background
 - a. A Jew born in Alexandria Egypt - highly educated.
 - b. Eloquent and _____ in the O.T. Scriptures. A rare combination indeed!
 - c. Knew the "way of the Lord" up to the _____ of John (Mt 3:11)
 - d. Fervent in spirit - had a zeal that just wouldn't stop!
 - e. A bold teacher - not ashamed of the truth as he knew it!
 - f. _____! How do we know? Because he only believed as far as John the Baptist taught, but had not trusted *in Jesus*, the very One whom John preached about!
2. Note the role that Aquila and Priscilla play: _____ - See Hebrews 5:11-14
 - a. They took him to Isaiah 52 and 53 and showed him _____ (8:35)

- b. They then took him forward to the cross of Calvary!
 - c. Apollos knew an awful lot, but was not a "know-it-all", and allowed a simple Bible-believing couple to teach him the things of God more perfectly! **Thank God for teachable hearts!**
3. Apollos responds, and immediately dedicates his life to the work of the Gospel... PUBLICLY - right out in public!!!
- a. None of this "Life-style Evangelism" - live it without preaching
 - b. Apollos becomes a Street-Preaching, Bible-Toting, Hell-Raising, Barn-Storming, Shingle-Rattling, Leather-Lunged, Pulpit-Pounding, Soul-Saving, Devil-Hating, God-Loving, Fundamental, Independent, Missionary-Minded, Baptist Preacher!

V. Conclusion - Review of the Principles

- A. Don't be ashamed of the fact that "not many wise" get saved and committed to Biblical Christianity these days.
- B. When a person rejects the Gospel, he really is turning away the best thing that could ever happen to him!!!
- C. ALL Christians have a responsibility to warn the wicked of their sins (Ez 3:17-21). If we fail in our task, we will have to give an account for it at the Judgement Seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:9-11; Rom 14:10-12) and our hands will be covered with the blood of those we did not warn that we were responsible for!
- D. Real love for someone cannot be broken.
- E. When things don't go the way we want, we get discouraged and think about quitting instead of finding God's purpose and direction in the experience.

IV. Study Questions