

**a matter  
of wrong  
or wicked  
lewdness**

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***Acts 18:9 – 19:7***

~ Our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God began considering the eighteenth chapter of Acts in our previous report; and if you have your Bible, you'll want to turn there now. Pray for wisdom, judgment and discernment, and then read the text in your Bible, and then read this report. If you will take the time to do that, you'll be amazed how the Spirit of God speaks to your heart. See, friends, this is a genuine Bible study. This is not random verse grabbing where everyone gives uneducated opinions in incomplete sentences on a Tower-of-Babel like comment thread where said passages may or may not be expounded upon correctly. Most people on this forum will readily admit they only have an opinion. Well, this so-called safari is actually a worthy approach; led and taught with authority by the Holy Spirit Himself. Why not try a sincere, educated, systematic and correct Bible study for a change; you know, since you've never done that before?

We had been waiting with Paul in Athens for Timothy and Silas to return from Thessalonica so they could continue together on this second missionary journey; but they didn't arrive when expected, and Paul isn't going to just hang around doing nothing – he keeps moving. That movement has landed him in Corinth in this report. We were introduced to two very remarkable Jews who had come from Rome: Priscilla and Aquila, as another wave of anti-Semitism had broken out under the reign of Claudius. They fled to Corinth, which was the closest business center in the Roman Empire at the time. We learned a little bit about Corinth in our last report. It was a sinful and sensual place. It was gaudy and bawdy; there was voluptuous luxury and frivolous pass-times of all sorts available. There was a vulgar and ostentatious display of wealth everywhere. Likewise, there was hideous and cruel poverty that they attempted to keep hidden. This city was the vanity fair of that day; we could call it the Hollywood or Las Vegas of the Roman Empire. Well, Paul meeting Priscilla and Aquila was a

divine appointment of the Holy Spirit; and Paul taught them all about the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as a result. This is when tremendous Jewish opposition came against Paul and, from here on out, he is only ministering to Gentiles. This brings Paul into a new endeavor in his missionary, and this is when we see the Lord speak directly to Paul....

## **XVIII**

***9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:***

***10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.***

~ Corinth was probably the last place on earth I would have expected the Lord to have "much people." I have a feeling Paul was questioning this instruction and clarification from the Lord. Paul didn't question God; but he sure did question himself and his understanding of the plan as it was revealed – and I know he questioned the people in Corinth! I am almost sure that when Paul received the opposition as he did in our previous report, he was ready to pack up and skip town - again! I highly doubt Paul was willing to endure another stoning. I think the Lord Himself may have had to restrain Paul at this time. That's a lot to think about, friends; and difficult to accept in a spiritual application to our Christian lives. It's a good thing the Lord kept Paul at this time, because Corinth and Ephesus are the two places Paul performed his most outstanding work....

***11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.***

***12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,***

***13 Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.***

**14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:**

**15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters.**

**16 And he drave them from the judgment seat.**

~ Paul recounts the opposition he experienced in this passage in both his first and second epistle to the Corinthians. The judgment seat in verse sixteen still remains among the ruins of Corinth today. So, Paul is on the hot seat, but not regarding the law of the Roman Empire or the law of Corinth; they are opposing Paul in connection with the Mosaic System of Levitical Law. Gallio is not getting involved in that – at all. He rightly refuses to make their religious arguments his problem.

If you read your theology textbooks, Gallio is condemned in no uncertain terms. Every single commentator I have ever read portrays Gallio as unfeeling and typical of a Roman judge whose drunken mind was clouded with spiritual rot. I think I have a defense for this man, though - because, even though I believe those accusations were true, he took the correct position and action in THIS case. See, this is the first politician who made a proper distinction between church and state. He is telling them that this is a religious matter, so, they need to handle it in the synagogue or church. This is a Roman magistrate who wasn't about to involve himself in nor interfere with religious philosophy.

We need to adopt the same hands-off policy in America today. This country was founded with prayer in school. Taking prayer out of our schools was one of the first steps in our downward spiral. America has a group of secular men and women labeled a "Supreme Court" – but who cannot make a sober, proper judgment as Gallio made to stay out of that which is not their business. I like this man Gallio, personally. He actually did the right thing by refusing to interfere with Paul preaching in Corinth. This is a man who upheld the cause of Christ.

See, "freedom of speech" today is a tired, abused ideology that stands for nothing more than the right to be hateful, rude, violent and vulgar. My "freedom of speech and religion" has been curtailed under the guise of incorrectly attempting to separate church and state. We American's are – well – we're foolish and idiotic people who make absolutely no sense whatsoever anymore. The truth and wisdom of the Lord Jesus Christ according to Holy Writ is not known in America. If it is, it isn't being incorporated into our society, government, schools or everyday lives. It's being perverted, if anything. If the church and state were truly separated then, if a school chose to incorporate prayer, then that would be their local business. We could spend quite a bit of time here, but let's move along....

***17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.***

***18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.***

~ Paul was teaching we are not under the Mosaic Law; and yet here he is making a vow according to Leviticus. Many good Bible teachers have astonishingly found fault with Paul because of this. I have heard someone say we are not under law, so Paul shouldn't have made the vow. What they don't realize is that by saying Paul shouldn't have made a vow, they are making a law themselves. If you want to make a vow – make it. If you want to keep the Sabbath – keep it if you think you can. If you want to abstain from eating meat – no problem. See, this type of criticism only serves as projection. The Bible will make a hypocrite out of us faster than we can say "a-men," friends.

Religion always insists their specific method and program is the only correct way; and they demand we do things that way – or we aren't one of them. That is the burden we have been given marvelous freedom from under grace today. See, it was a rigid ritual required at the tabernacle in the camp of Israel. If you were put out of the camp – you were finished, friends. These super-duper saints today who want to put down a little set of rules

and say do this and don't do that, well, the Lord Jesus said, "if you love Me keep My commandments." Do you keep His commands because you love Him; or because you are trying to work for your salvation? My relationship is with Him – not YOU. I want to have fellowship with Him – not YOU. Whether you eat or drink or WHATSOEVER you shall do, do all things unto the glory of God! How are you doing with that one in your Christian life, my beloved? Gallio and Paul both got into trouble with this subject, but we are going to defend them....

***19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.***

***20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;***

***21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.***

~ So, this was the terminus of Paul's second missionary journey. Cenchræa was the eastern harbor at Corinth, about nine miles east. Here, Paul is sailing home. Priscilla and Aquila started with him, but parted ways at Ephesus. I can only imagine they were going to open up a tent store there. Remember, the Holy Spirit wouldn't allow Paul to come this way before, but now He does. At this time, however, Paul isn't going to stay. Paul isn't bound under a law to keep the feast days but, like Simon Peter, he respects the background of the Mosaic System. I'm sure many of his friends were going to be in Jerusalem for this feast, also. It's reasonable he wanted to be there with them. Either way, Paul saw a door open in Ephesus, and wanted to return there. If you have a good Bible with maps it will be very helpful to you as you read along here....

***22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.***

***23 And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.***

~ Alright, Paul begins his third missionary journey at this time. He is going to return to Ephesus this time. When he gets there, another early church preacher has arrived named Apollo. If we study the record carefully, we discover twelve important facts about Apollo. He was a Jew with a strong belief in the Mosaic Law as a background. He was born in Alexandria, Egypt. Alexandria was a city founded by Alexander the Great, and one of the early centers of Greek culture. They had a university with one of the finest libraries known to mankind. The Septuagint was translated in Alexandria. They had a massive Jewish temple and was one center of the early church. First, there was Jerusalem, then Antioch – then Alexandria, regarding the headquarters of the early church. Athanasius, Tertullian and Augustine; three of the greatest men in the early church all came from Alexandria. Philo, a Greek philosopher who mingled Greek philosophy with Judaism and Platonism had an obvious influence on Apollos.

Apollos is a Greek name, and he was a Hellenist of the Diaspora. We are also told he was an eloquent orator; equal with Paul to be sure. Being a man mighty in Scripture requires possessing a comprehensive understanding of the Old Testament. He was educated and instructed in the way of the Lord. That means formal education - not exclusively by revelation. Apollos was fervent in the Spirit; meaning he had a consuming passion for the things of God. To sum it up: he was an outstanding man. We're told he only referred to the baptism of John; he had never heard of Jesus. He was an expert preacher, but the disposition of law was the extent of his understanding. He spoke boldly in the synagogue and was adopted by Priscilla and Aquila. They told Apollos about Jesus. So, here is a case where a woman helped a preacher advance his understanding; she told him something he didn't know. Subsequently, and lastly, Apollo had a big influence telling the Jews about Christ. This is the man who preceded Paul in the city of Ephesus....

***24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.***

**25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.**

**26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.**

**27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:**

**28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.**

## **XIX**

**1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,**

**2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Spirit when ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit.**

**3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.**

**4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.**

**5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.**

**6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.**

***7 And all the men were about twelve.***

~ These people only knew the baptism of John, which means they were baptized by water in identification with the prophesied Messiah but had not received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. See, the baptism of John was a preparation for the coming of Christ. THIS is the record of turning to Christ and being saved. They were NOT saved under the teaching and preaching of Apollos; because his message was not the Gospel message of the death, burial and resurrection of the Son of God. Further, the “tongues” they were speaking simply allowed them to witness for Christ by speaking the Gospel in a language everyone was familiar with. East and west meet together as our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God ends this report in Ephesus. Corinth and Ephesus were the two greatest cities of Paul’s ministry – and my estimation is that Ephesus was the greater of the two in terms of ministerial success. From Ephesus, the Gospel will spread throughout the entire continent of Asia; and we’ll pick up here in our next report. I hope you can continue with us ~

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