

these two mentions of Sosthenes reference the same man, or not. However considering that the Apostle Paul never got run out of Corinth, and that later mention is made of other Jews being allowed to preach there at Corinth, and that Sosthenes is mentioned as being familiar to these very same Corinthian's, and noted as a "brother" in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1, it is not hard to believe, nor impossible with God, that this very same Sosthenes who led the persecution against Paul at Corinth, later got saved because of the gospel of Paul, who at Corinth was not afraid to speak, nor held his peace, but with the love of God shed abroad in his heart continued to preach, and lead people to the Lord at Corinth. Recall that the chiefest of sinners, and that great persecutor Saul of Tarsus, himself got saved on day on the road to Damascus, and such a miracle was also possible with Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue of Corinth, who one day was found party to the group of Jews that made insurrection against Paul!

## The Conclusion of Paul's Second Missionary Journey

ACTS 18:18-22 conveys a lot of information in a very few verses, and essentially describes the conclusion of Paul's second missionary journey. The time frame covered in these few verses is about six months.

*ACTS 18:18 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. 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. 22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.*

The main subject of the above verses is, of course, the Apostle Paul. In verse 18 we find that Paul, after staying at Corinth a year and a half, setting sail for Syria, meaning he was returning to Antioch, Syria, and the church there which had sponsored his missionary journeys. We know the Apostle Paul followed the leading of the Holy Ghost in his life, thus we know it was time for him to leave Corinth. Perhaps Aquila and Priscilla had decided now to move to Ephesus, and Paul purposed to be in Jerusalem if at all possible for the feast "*...that cometh in Jerusalem...*" (verse 21), which probably was the annual Jewish feast of Pentecost spoken of in LEVITICUS 23:15-22.

Luke included a little extra information at the end of verse 18, (*...having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow...*), which has led to a lot of different speculation on what he meant to say. Some commentators think that it was Aquila who had taken a vow, and others think it was the Apostle Paul. Unfortunately Luke does not clear up this controversy, and assumes the reader (O Theophilus) will understand the meaning here. When we get to ACTS 21:23-26 we will find another time when Paul becomes associated with a Jewish vow. However we must remember that Paul's preaching never taught about keeping a vow, or keeping the law. Rather in ROMANS 10:4 he stated: *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* Later to these very same Corinthians, whom he is now leaving, Paul writes: 1 CORINTHIANS 9:19 *For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. 20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; 21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. 22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. 23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.*

Having said all of this, let's now consider the following. In ACTS 18:13 we find Paul while at Corinth being brought before the Roman Governor of Achaia, Gallio, accused of the Jews who said: *... This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.* Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, appears to be the leader of those who brought Paul before Gallio. Yet we later read in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1 Paul addressing

the church of Corinth, along with "Sosthenes our brother." Perhaps, and this is just speculation here, for the scripture doesn't specifically tell us this; but perhaps the Apostle Paul won Sosthenes for the Lord by becoming ...*as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law...* (1 CORINTHIANS 9:20), and as a part of this proceedings Paul may have ...*shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow...*

Again the nature of this vow is not told us in scripture, but we do know from scripture that Paul never instructs us to take a vow. In fact Paul wrote in ROMANS 3:28 *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.* Whatever vow Paul took it may have been for the benefit of the Jews at Corinth.

Cenchrea, Corinth's sea port is also found mentioned in ROMANS 16:1. Cenchrea is located about 10 miles from Corinth, and at the time of Paul was a major port in the world, shipping and receiving goods from Alexandria, Egypt, Antioch, Syria, and other closer major ports of commerce, such as Ephesus, and the other ports of the Aegean Sea. Cenchrea means "small, like a millet seed," which also was a grain abounding there. Paul notes in ROMANS 16:1 that there was a church in Cenchrea with some interesting characteristics. Let's look at ROMANS 16:1 for a minute.

ROMANS 16:1 *I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:...* Phebe name means "shinning" or "radiant one." She speaks of the Bride of Christ who will "radiate" the glory of Christ or the glory of God. If you look up the word "servant" here in ROMANS 16:1 you will find that it refers to an attendant, a minister, or a deacon, and is always used of Paul in reference to a minister or a deacon. In this case Phebe was a deaconess. Also note what the Apostle Paul has to say of Phebe in ROMANS 16:2 -- *That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.* The word "succourer" used here this one time in scripture means: a female guardian, protectress, patroness, caring for the affairs of others and aiding them with her resources. Brother Copley also notes that word "succourer" means "a first rank protectress." Brother Copley further notes that Phebe was not ashamed to minister to a little flock. And in doing so she ministered unto many, including the Apostle Paul. She was "radiant" because of an inward glory, and possessed the Spirit of Christ found in HEBREWS 2:18 -- *For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour (help) them that are tempted.* Brother Copley concludes his comments on Phebe by stating: "Phebe always shares with Christ in His service and suffering here, and will share with Him in His radiant glory hereafter."

ACTS 18:19-21 tells us of Paul's first visit to Ephesus, and as we read these verses again, we note that this was a most brief visit. ACTS 18:19 *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.* While Aquila and Priscilla established a residence in Ephesus, Paul, as his manner was, visited the Jewish synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. Apparently the Jews of Ephesus were very receptive to hear what he had to say, and wanted to hear more, but Paul had determined if at all possible to be in Jerusalem at the Jewish feast of Pentecost, so after a very short stay of probably less than one week, Paul sets sail for Jerusalem. Before He leaves Ephesus Paul makes the following statement straight from his heart: *I will return again unto you, if God will.* Paul's focus was always on doing the will of God, thus inspired by the Holy Ghost, Paul states his own intentions, and punctuates it with "if God will." Those of us who knew Brother Hill noted that when he stated his intentions of doing something, he nearly always inserted "Lord willing."

The full overcomers all have this one thing in common, they all want the Lord to have His way in their lives. Jesus Christ, the ultimate full overcomer, as a man cried unto God in the garden of Gethsemane, "*C my Father, if it be possible, let not this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" {MATTHEW 26:39, also see MARK 14:35 and LUKE 22:41 & 42}. In other words the full overcomer wants his or her own life to come into complete harmony with the will of God, thus when they state their own intentions, usually their lips conclude their statement by stating "Lord willing." Paul wanted to see the Saints in Rome, so he wrote them at letter, and stated this in

ROMANS 1:9 & 10 -- *For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; 10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.* Again in ROMANS 15:32 Paul wrote: *That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.* Do you know that the Apostle Paul indeed got to visit these very same Roman Saints, but the "Lord willing" part of this visit was that Paul got to visit them as a prisoner. {Study ACTS 28:30}. In other words, it was Paul's will to visit these Roman Saints, and it was the Lord's will that Paul visit them also, except in Paul's wildest dreams he didn't mean to visit them as a prisoner, yet that indeed was the Lord's will for him in his life. To the Corinthians Paul wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 4:19 *But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will,...* . Again in 1 CORINTHIANS 16:7 Paul wrote: *For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.* JAMES 4:15 pretty well summarizes what we have just noted, by stating: *For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.* May our will be in harmony with the Lord's will. In Jesus words: "*nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" (MATTHEW 26:39).

As for Aquila and Priscilla, let's now note the following points. ACTS 18:18 tells us that after this time Paul left Corinth, *...and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila...* . Note that Priscilla is mentioned here before Aquila. Why? We have in this study already covered many points concerning Aquila and Priscilla, and have noted that they are true Bridal Saints. In ROMANS 16:4 Paul will note that Aquila and Priscilla "laid down their own necks" in aiding the Apostle Paul in his ministry. Priscilla and Aquila "laid down their own necks" like David's mighty men did. Obviously Priscilla and Aquila were "mighty men" in their own right, fighting the good fight of faith right along with the Apostle Paul. True race course runners they were with their attitude toward Jesus being: "Thine are we King Jesus, and on Thy side are we." Even their names point us to qualities that will be found in the Bride of Christ. Priscilla, (once called in scripture by her Latin name Prisca in 2 TIMOTHY 4:19), her name means "ancient." Priscilla points us to the Ancient of days, who in our thinking is God the Son. DANIEL 7:9 *...the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.* {Compare with REVELATION 1:14}. Priscilla in laying down her neck for the Apostle Paul, was in reality laying down her neck for the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who was first in her life. And the same can be said for Aquila, Priscilla's husband, who is always mentioned with her in scripture. Aquila's name means "an eagle." The eagle is the king of birds, and portrays in type Christ as the eternal majestic heavenly one. The Bride of Christ too is a heavenly being, with heavenly characteristics, and Ezekiel and John both saw her heavenly face, *...the face of an eagle.* The full overcomer has an upward heavenly look, a look ascending far above the heights of the cares of this world, always looking unto Jesus. Isaiah stated it this way in ISAIAH 40:31 *But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.* So we see that Aquila and Priscilla, Paul's *...helpers in Christ Jesus...*, (ROMANS 16:3), point us to qualities that will be found in the Bride of Christ. So why is Priscilla's name mentioned before Aquila's here in ACTS 18:18? Priscilla as a type of the Bride of Christ is the one who needs to follow Paul. In order to be in the Bride of Christ we too need to follow the Apostle Paul. Note how the Apostle Paul stated this in his gospel. 1 CORINTHIANS 4:16 *Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.* 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* 2 CORINTHIANS 4:5 *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.* PHILIPPIANS 3:17 *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* 2 CORINTHIANS 11:2 *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

ACTS 18:19 tells us that Paul, and Aquila and Priscilla came to Ephesus, and that Paul *...left them there.* We find Aquila and Priscilla still in Ephesus whenever else they are mentioned in scripture. {For more on Aquila and Priscilla review pages 256, and

420-422 of these notes}. We will study a little more about Aquila and Priscilla at the end of this chapter. {Starting on page 468 of these notes}.

Meanwhile Luke gives us a little more information concerning the movement of the Apostle Paul. ACTS 18:21(b) *...And he sailed from Ephesus. 22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.* Caesarea is located about 70 miles from Jerusalem, and for all practical purposes was the sea port of Jerusalem. It appears from verse 22 that the Apostle Paul didn't arrive in Jerusalem in time for the feast, for no further mention is made of the feast. Brother Copley sheds some light as to why the Apostle Paul intended to be at these Jewish feasts in Jerusalem if possible, stating: "Paul sought every opportunity to bring the glad tidings to his own people, the Jews. Those Jerusalem gatherings afforded him a rare chance to reach many Jews at one time." (End of quote from Brother Copley). History records that these Jewish feast attracted as many as 75,000 additional Jews to Jerusalem in Paul's day; Jews who came from all over the world. Keep this fact in the back of your mind when we get to ACTS 21 & 22.

This was the fourth time Paul has returned to Jerusalem since being saved on the road to Damascus. {See content page for more information on his first three visits.} Briefly in review, recall that the Apostle Paul, though from Tarsus, Cilicia, basically grew up in Jerusalem. ACTS 22:3 tells us that Paul was educated "at the feet of Gamaliel" while a youth in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was Paul's head quarters in ACTS 8:1-3, and 9:1 & 2. Then Paul got saved on the road to Damascus, and didn't return to Jerusalem until ACTS 9:26, some three years later, and then only briefly, (fifteen days according to GALATIANS 1:18). Basically he then was run out of town, and didn't return to Jerusalem again until several years later with Barnabas in ACTS 11:30. Meanwhile after Barnabas had introduced Paul to those of Antioch, Syria, Antioch became his home church. {Study ACTS 11:26 and 12:25 - 13:4}. The church of Antioch, Syria sponsored Paul's missionary journeys, and when Paul and Barnabas finished their missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas went from Antioch to Jerusalem and accomplished the events discussed in ACTS 15, and GALATIANS 2:1-10. This was Paul's third visit to Jerusalem since being saved. Here in ACTS 18:22 Paul was returning from his second missionary journey, sponsored by the church in Antioch, and as we just read in ACTS 18:22 *...when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, (in Jerusalem) he went down to Antioch.* This would then be the fourth time Paul had visited Jerusalem since being saved some seventeen or eighteen years earlier. Such a brief and uneventful visit was this that Luke barely makes mention of it, only stating that Paul "*saluted the church.*" Then just as briefly Luke mentions that Paul once again visited his Christian home church of Antioch, Syria. If you think about it, this was Paul's fifth extended visit back to Antioch, Syria since being saved, and according to scripture this was his last visit to Antioch, Syria. ACTS 18:23 tells us in very few words that Paul "spent some time there" before he departed Antioch, Syria for the last time.

## Paul's Third Missionary Journey Begins

ACTS 18:23 *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.*

With this scripture Paul's third missionary journey begins. Luke, the author of ACTS, again gives us little other information here. Was Paul traveling with someone here? We are not told. What happened to Silas his traveling companion from his second missionary journey? Again we are not told. Where were Luke, and Timothy? Again we are not told this information, but we will catch up with them later in the book of ACTS. What Luke has focused upon since starting ACTS chapter 13 has been the life of the Apostle Paul.

Let's pause here for a moment and consider where we are at this point in time in the life of the Apostle Paul. Scofield, and Conybeare and Howson, all agree that the events of ACTS 18:23 occur in 54 A.D. Most likely it has been around eighteen years since Paul met the Lord on the way to Damascus. At his first mention in scripture (ACTS 7:58) Paul was a young man, probably no older than early twenties. Now here in ACTS 18:23