

## THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 59 ACTS 18:17-25

### ACTS 18:12-22 | THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY: CORINTH, PART 2

- Verses 12-16 – see session 58
- Verse 17 –
  - Who are **the Greeks**? It was very likely the *hellenist Jews*, who, being of the same logical thinking heritage as Gallio, were upset with **Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue** (who evidently had replaced Crispus, v. 8).
  - Had these Hellenist Jews warned Sosthenes that this was going to be a humiliating loss? What was the outcome of this beating? We do not know for sure.
  - There is an intriguing mention of **Sosthenes our brother** in 1 Corinthians 1:1. Perhaps this event caused Sosthenes to remove himself from the Synagogue and join with Paul?
- Verse 18 –
  - After **a good while** Paul took a boat headed for Syria, with stops first in Cenchrea (not far from Corinth) and Ephesus (v. 19).
  - What kind of vow was Paul keeping?
    - The only Biblical vow we know of that involves cutting hair was the Nazarite vow, which was a temporary vow taken as a dedication vow to the Lord for a particular time period.
    - During the vow, the “nazarite” was not to cut his hair, but it was to be cut upon completing the vow.
      - The problem with this view is that the hair was to be presented with a sacrifice on the altar, which Paul could not do (not being in Jerusalem).
      - Some have said that the hair could be cut and retained for the next arrival at the Temple, which is possibly why Paul rushes to Jerusalem in vv. 19-21 (see v. 21, KJV only due to a textual variant).
    - In the end, we only know what is said in the text, and the type and meaning of the vow is speculation.
- Verses 19-21 –
  - In this passage, we have the first introduction of Ephesus, and gives us insight to the audience we should expect to see in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians.
  - While Paul had left ministry in the synagogue in Corinth, he has not left that ministry altogether.
    - In Ephesus, **he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.**
    - No doubt, his *logic* concerns the identity of Jesus as the Messiah.
    - His logic seems to be well received, for **they desired him to tarry longer time with them.**
    - Paul, however, was in a rush to get to Jerusalem, saying, **I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem.** These words are left out of modern versions.
    - Paul’s presence likely had something to do with the vow seen in Cenchrea.
    - We do not know which feast Paul was desiring to keep.
- Verse 22 –
  - It is interesting that Paul makes a very quick trip to Jerusalem, simply summarized with the words that Paul had **gone up** (Jerusalem is the only place to which one *goes up* in the New Testament).
  - As quickly as he arrived, he left for Antioch, and thus the second missionary journey comes to a conclusion.

- Verse 23 –
  - We do not know how much time that **some time** is. Some speculate that Paul spent as much as a year in Antioch.
  - Now Paul begins to backtrack his previous journeys in order to strengthen **all the disciples**.
    - Note that some argue that **disciples** is a word that is only used of those of the previous dispensation.
    - However, those of Galatia (as we know from the book of Galatians) were Gentile believers, not kingdom-Gospel believers.
- Verse 24 –
  - Here, Luke takes a diversion. While Paul is on this journey, Apollos comes to Ephesus. Paul is not there but Aquila and Priscilla live there (as we saw in vv. 18-19).
  - Apollos was **an eloquent man**.
    - The Greek is λόγιος [logios], which is related to speech. By implication it involves knowledge of the facts.
    - The word *apologetics* comes from the prefix *apo* (from) *logios* (speech).
      - Any training in *apologetics* should involve, by nature, training in *speech*.
      - Furthermore, the old practice of teaching *elocution* was training in *eloquence*.
      - These are things which should be more valued in the Christian community than they are today.
  - Foundational to eloquence is a knowledge of the facts.
    - Apollos was **mighty in the scriptures**, no doubt a reference to his knowledge.
    - If one is eloquent but has no substance of speech, he is just a “talking head.”
- Verse 25 –
  - The teaching of Apollos was not unbiblical, it was simply uninformed about the new dispensation.
    - Apollos was **fervent in the spirit**. If this refers to the Holy Spirit, then Apollos was (as it appears), part of Peter’s flock.
    - The things he taught were **of the Lord**. However, they were *dispensationally dated*, because they remained in the era of **the baptism of John**, which was one of repentance.
  - First, this verse seems impossible from a non-dispensational point of view.
    - Those who believe the church started with John (or any time during the **baptism of John**) must reconcile their theology with this verse.
  - Second, this also implies that there is *another baptism* that is *not of John*.
    - This could be the Spirit baptism, though that baptism was also present from the days of Pentecost.
    - It could also be, in my estimation, a symbolic water-baptism of testimony rather than a water-baptism of repentance.