

Acts of the Apostles
Week 9 Summary
Acts 18:1–19:41

When Paul comes to Corinth, he meets Priscilla (wife) and Aquila (husband). This couple is an important couple for Paul, continuing with him in Acts but also featuring in letters like Romans. Note that while introduced husband then wife, they are usually found in the order above, wife first. This indicates that it was her who had the larger ministry gifting and activity. They have been ejected, with all Jews, from Rome (capital) by Claudius. According to the historian Suetonius this was due to a “Chrestus”. Most scholars agree that this spelling is produced by the fact that the “i” and the “e” sound so similar in Latin. Therefore, it is likely there was unrest due to “Christus” or Christ. It seems likely that there had been such sharp disagreement between Christian Jews and non-Christian Jews over whether Jesus was the Christ that Claudius simply expelled them all. In any case they have the same trade as Paul so build a friendship and ministry together.

Paul is able to devote himself to ministry once Silas and Timothy arrive because they bring with them support from the Philippian church. Paul, as usual begins with the Jews then turns to the Gentiles. He follows the symbolic mandate Jesus gave to his disciples of shaking off the dust. Paul also receives a word from the Lord that he will be safe in this location, so he stays.

The scene with Gallio is important because it sets down a precedent. Will Christianity be recognized as a sect of Judaism and therefore keep the privilege of not having to offer worship to the emperor, or not? Gallio concludes it is to remain within Judaism.

Paul has fulfilled his vow so it is time for him to go back to Jerusalem for the appropriate worship. On his way he stops in Ephesus where they want to hear more, but he needs to go hoping to return again.

Luke summarizes Paul’s return and setting out for the third missionary journey, but then shifts the narrative back to Ephesus when he left Priscilla and Aquila. They meet Apollos who is filled with the Spirit but has only had the baptism of John. He was mighty in Scriptures and speaking and teaching accurately the things of Jesus. However, when you spoke in the synagogue (following Paul), Priscilla and Aquila need to teach him more. Apollos then moves off stage being better equipped and continuing his good work.

Paul returns to Ephesus. In one part he finds a group who had only received John’s baptism, but unlike Apollos, were not filled with the Spirit. So they are instructed, baptized into Jesus’s name, and receive the Spirit. They Paul returns to the synagogue which wanted him to stay originally. But, within three months they begin resisting and defaming the movement, so, again, Paul moves to the Gentiles.

Luke, again, shows parallels between Peter’s ministry and Paul’s ministry. So now his sweat bands and aprons are being used to bring healing to the people. Paul also has an encounter with practitioners of magic, leading to mass conversion and the abandoning of those practices. The ministry is so successful in Ephesus that it impacts worship and economics. This leads to a revolt by those who make idols. This riot is calmed by the city clerk who warns them, if they have a real charge, it can be brought to proper authorities. All this riot will result in is Rome coming to put it down. The assembly go out peacefully.

Faithful Presence
“Chapter Seven”

1. "When you receive a child into your presence, you also receive the presence of Jesus" (135). Do you agree or disagree? Why?
2. Being with children is not a gift, but a place of ministry where our gifts are used (137). What do you think?
3. Fitch claims that by being with our children we can jointly attend to Christ's presence we can resist the competitive practices of today's parenting and resist the idolatry of children. How does that description sit with you?