

Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey 2 - Acts 18:1-10- 1-2 Thess.

Paul Arrived in Corinth and met Aquila and Priscilla

For the first time in the book of Acts, we have a letter written by Paul to fill in many details of the work of Paul, Silas and Timothy were doing. It gives us a better idea of the emotions and feelings Paul held toward the brethren who were suffering as well as his own feelings.

Luke let us know that Paul arrived at Corinth after his work at Athens. The personal pronoun is now "he" because Paul arrived alone. He found a Jewish husband and wife who had been forced to come to Corinth because the emperor had banished all Jews from Rome. So they had only recently come to Corinth and in this respect were little different from Paul who had just arrived himself. Paul not only began working with them as tentmakers, but also stayed with them.

After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. 2 And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. 3 So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. Both Aquila and Priscilla are Christians when we read about them in Ephesus taking aside Apollos and teaching him the word of God more accurately, and later from Ephesus when who wrote the letter to the Corinthians they have a church in their home. Even later, they are back in Rome in and have a congregation in their home there as well. Acts 18:1-6

So the question arises, were they Christians when Paul met them in Corinth, or did he convert them in Corinth. There really isn't any way to decide with certainty. But the one thing that would seem to weight it in favor of the latter(not Christians when Paul met them) is the fact that Luke introduced them to us as Jews from Rome. But that can be countered with the fact that this was the reason they were in Corinth, because Caesar had banished Jews from Rome. Since Luke mentions Pontus in Acts 2 and again here, it is also possible that these were Jews converted by Peter in the first sermon.

18 Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. ... So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. Acts 18:18, 26-27

The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. 20 All the brethren greet you. 1Cor. 16:19-20

Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. 5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Rom. 16:3-5

Although Luke recorded that Paul was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath, he made it clear that it was not until Silas and Timothy came to him that he became more insistent that Jesus was the Christ and was forced to stop working exclusively with the Jews and begin working only with the Gentiles.

And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks. 5 When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. 6 But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." Acts 18:4-6

He later told the Corinthians that he had initially been with them in fear and trembling which fits well with the time before Silas and Timothy came and after they left again with the first letter.

I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 1 Cor. 2:3-4

But "when Silas and Timothy came, he was compelled by the ..." This passage contains a textual issue that has led to several different renderings. In the Textus Receptus Paul was compelled in his own spirit(KJV), or by the Spirit(Holy Spirit), NKJV. In the Wescott & Hort / Nestle & Aland Paul was constrained by the word(ASV) devoting himself completely to the word(NAS) occupied with the word(ESV) or devoted exclusively to the word(NIV).

*Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified KJV
Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified NKJV
Paul was constrained by the word, testifying ASV
Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying NASB
Paul was occupied with the word, testifying ESV
Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying NIV*

Some of the differences have to do with the definition of the word constrained.

sunecho ... 1. to hold together; any whole, lest it fall to pieces or something fall away from it: ... 2. to

hold together with constraint, to compress, i. e., a. to press together with the hand: ... b. to press on every side: ... 3. to hold completely, i. e. a. to hold fast: properly, a prisoner, Luke 22:63 ... metaphorically, in the passive, to be held by, closely occupied with, any business ...” (Thayer’s NT:4912)

There were three things that occurred at the same time that led to this difference. The first centered on the moral support of their arrival. The second on the money they brought when they arrived.

for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, Phil 1:5-6

Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. 16 For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Phil 4:15-18

Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? 8 I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you. 9 And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia. 11 Why? Because I do not love you? God knows! 12 But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. 2 Cor 11:7-13

The third was the good news they brought from Thessalonica.

Paul wrote the First Letter to the Thessalonians

We learned from Luke that Paul was forced to leave Thessalonica before he was ready.

4 And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas. 5 But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. ... 10 Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. Acts 17:4-6, 10

After being forced to leave, Paul tried again and again to get back to Thessalonica but Satan kept putting up obstacles and roadblocks that hindered it from happening.

But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. 18 Therefore we wanted to come to you — even I, Paul, time and again — but Satan hindered us. 19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? 20 For you are our glory and joy. 1 Thess 2:17-20

When Paul was forced to leave Berea by these same Jews and was brought alone to Athens, he was so concerned for the fate of the brethren he immediately sent for Silas and Timothy, but when they (either Timothy alone to be sent immediately to Thessalonica, or both and Silas sent to Berea), he thought it better to be left alone in Athens than to endure his concerns any longer.

So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they departed. Acts 17:15

Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, 2 and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, 1 Thess 3:1-3

For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain. 1Th. 3:5

After Paul completed his work in Athens, he still had not heard back from them and went on to Corinth alone and waited for Silas and Timothy to come. When they arrived they brought great news.

After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. 2 And he.... When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was Acts 18:1-2, 5

But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you — 7 therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. 8 For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord. 9 For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, 10 night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith? 1 Thess. 3:6-10

So Paul is now comforted with the financial help he has received from the churches in Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea). He has the support of his two friends, Silas and Timothy, and is

greatly comforted by the news of the faithful work of the Thessalonians.

First, Paul rejoiced over their faithful work and the sterling reputation they had. The reverberations of their faithful trials under persecution had become great examples for the churches in Macedonia and even in Achaia(Corinth).

We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, 3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, 1Th. 1:2-3

And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. 8 For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. 1Th. 1:6-9

Paul then reminded them that they were following both his own example as well as their brethren in Judea.

For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. 2 But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. 1Th. 2:1-3

For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans, 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, 16 forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost. 1Th. 2:14-16

For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. 1Th. 3:4-5

Paul then moved to those areas of concern either in his own mind or brought to him by Silas and Timothy. That they seek to live a good and upright life of the gospel.

Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; 2 for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. 1Th. 4:1-2

They centered on their moral integrity, brotherly love, their work ethic as influenced by a false understanding regarding the Lord's return. He also reminded them that the Lord's return would be without warning and there was no knowledge of when. Finally he warned them to submit to the elders who had been appointed and were then over them.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. 7 For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. 8 Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit. 1Th. 4:3-8

But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; 10 and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; 11 that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, 12 that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing. 1Th. 4:9-12

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 1Th. 4:13-14

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. 1Th. 5:1-5

And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. 1Th. 5:12-13

Since Paul sent it with all three names it is impossible to determine whether Timothy alone brought it back to them or whether Paul sent both of them.

Paul's Work In Corinth

Paul came to Corinth and began working there alone after sending Timothy back from Athens to

check on the Thessalonians. He stayed with Aquila and Priscilla who were fellow Jews and fellow tentmakers. The work was greatly boosted with the arrival of Silas and Timothy, but was not without controversy as Paul's increased zeal led to the need to leave the synagogue and begin working with the church. Paul gave his customary warning that he had done all he could and their blood was no on their own head. This time he did not go far as the people he sought to work with lived right next door to the Synagogue. Not only did the people right next door become Christians, but so also did the ruler of the Synagogue, along with man of the Corinthians.

When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. 6 But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." 7 And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named Justus, one who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. 8 Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized. Acts 18:4-8

Note how Luke now sums up Paul's work as "hearing, believed and were baptized." It was during this busy time that Timothy and probably Silas left with the first letter to the Thessalonians. As Paul continued to work with the church, something happened. Perhaps he decided that since many had believed it was time to move on, or the rumblings among the Jews led Paul to decide it was time to leave before a repeat of Philippi or Thessalonica. Jesus Himself intervened to change Paul's decision.

Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; 10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city." 11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. Acts 18:9-11

Jesus reveals to Paul that there is no need to feel any fear, but to preach boldly and openly. Jesus promised Paul that there were still many more people in Corinth who were His. This led Paul to remain working in Corinth for 18 months.

Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians

At some point during Paul's work in Corinth Timothy returned from Thessalonica with both good and bad news. The good news was that the church continued to grow in both faith and love to such a degree that Paul can even boast about them to other congregations.

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, 4 so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, 2Th. 1:3-5

The bad news is that a false doctrine has taken root in the church and Paul's first letter did not contain it. The issue regarding the timing of the Lord's return had been dealt with clearly. Paul had reminded them of what he had already taught and they already knew. "But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, 1Th. 5:1-2

But when Timothy returned he brought news that this error had grown and that there were now brethren in Thessalonica who were convinced that the Lord's return was so close that they should quit work and just wait for His return. Paul first revealed that the Lord's Second coming would not occur until a great falling away occurred and reminding them "Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?" 2Th. 2:5

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 2:1-3

Paul had made them fully aware that something was at that time holding this back, but would soon be removed, "and now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time." 2:6 As long as the apostles and prophets and/or the power of the Roman Empire remained to keep the "mystery of lawlessness" in check these things could not occur. But after they were removed, the restraint would be gone and the falling away would occur. Other passages give further information about this:

For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Acts 20:29-31

the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with

a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods 1 Tim 4:1-3

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 2 Tim 4:3-5

Paul chose to use the terrible nature of this future falling away to strongly warn and rebuke some there in Thessalonica who were caught up in the similar vise of error and who only by a love for the truth could remove themselves from it.

and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2Th. 2:10-12

He then made the direct application to the problems there at Thessalonica. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. 2:15

As he would later write to the Corinthians, the time had come for the church there to take a stand against the behavior of some in their midst. As a result of the false teaching about the second coming, some were not working. Paul called this "disorderly" conduct for a Christian. Something that must be repented and removed, or dealt with by church discipline.

But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks **disorderly** and not according to the tradition which he received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not **disorderly** among you; 10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. 11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a **disorderly** manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. 14 And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. 2Th. 3:6-8; 10-12; 14-15

After this letter was sent, Paul continued to work in Corinth.

A Miscalculation by the Jews

Luke recorded an event that might have led to disaster, but did not impact Paul or the brethren in Corinth. Paul is brought before the Proconsul Gallio by the Jews in hopes of having Paul killed, imprisoned, or banished. Gallio is another time stamp in the book of Acts.

"In 1909 a whitish grey limestone inscription from the Hagias Elias quarries near Delphi was found which immortalized a letter from the emperor Claudius to the citizens of Delphi, which contains not only the name of Gallio, "Lucius Junius Gallio, my friend and proconsul of Achaia," but also most valuable dates: the 12th tribunician year of Claudius, for the 26th time acclaimed Emperor. This places us between January 25 and August 1 of the year 52. (NT Commentaries, by R. C. H. Lenski, © 1961)

An inscription from Delphi makes it probable that he acceded to the office of proconsul of Achaia ca. A.D. 52. (ISBE revised edition, 1979)

Gallio is not impressed with their concerns and drives them from the judgment seat. We have a minor textual problem here with the term "Greeks" which the Textus Receptus used, but which is lacking in many of the ancient manuscripts and Nestle/Alan gives a {C} rating ("considerable degree of doubt"). Either the judicial personnel themselves, the Jews, or some Greeks were involved in this beating.

Even this event did not cause Paul to leave and he "remained for many days."

Paul Comes to Ephesus then returns to Jerusalem and Antioch

Paul took "Priscilla and Aquila" when he left Corinth on his way to Syria. Evidently the ship stopped at Ephesus, or they had gone their first by design. Paul stayed long enough to speak in the Synagogue, but told them he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem by the feast day and left them promising to return. Priscilla and Aquila remain in Ephesus and Paul goes to Jerusalem. Luke does not record what the vow was about, nor which feast day and why he wanted to be at Jerusalem for it. But it is clear that Paul continued to keep some of the Jewish customs as a part of his work for the Lord and his own purposes.

Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow. 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they asked him to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, 21 but took leave of them, saying, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing." And he sailed from Ephesus. 22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church, he went

down to Antioch. Acts 18:18-23

After completing his plans at Jerusalem and Antioch, Paul began his second missionary journey when he "*departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.*" Acts 18:23