

# “THROUGH THE BIBLE”

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## ACTS 17-18

When you think of a European vacation you envision floating through the canals of Venice, or strolling the halls of a London museum, or sipping coffee in a Paris cafe', but when Paul arrived in Europe he had but one thought on his mind, and that was to lead the lost masses to faith in Jesus. At the time Europe was drowning in a sea of idolatry and paganism.

Acts 10 saw a huge breakthrough. Peter was in Joppa when he saw a vision. It resulted in the Gospel being preached directly to the Gentiles. Another breakthrough occurs in Acts 16. Paul is in Troas when he sees a vision. A man from Macedonia, an Eastern European, calls for his help. Paul sails the Aegean. The Gospel moves from Asia to Europe. The first Christians were Asians and Africans, now Europeans join the family of God.

And over the next 1800 years Europe will be the hub of Christian activity. For a thousand years Rome will be its headquarters – until the seeds of Reformation sprout up all over Europe – then in the 19<sup>th</sup> century England will give birth to the modern missionary movement... But it all began in 50 AD when Paul blazed the trail onto European soil to share the Gospel. In Acts 16 Paul goes to Philippi. In Acts 17 he's back on the road!

Verse 1, “**Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica...**” In one sentence Paul travels a hundred miles. Apparently, the apostle was in a hurry to get to Thessalonica... The Greek city of Thessalonica was founded around 300 BC. It was named after the sister of Alexander the Great. It was a commercial center. There was a famous Roman road, **the Via Egnatia**, that ran across the Balkan Peninsula, connecting Europe with Asia. The trade route ran through Thessalonica, and formed its Main Street. Paul figured if the Gospel caught on in Thessalonica it would spread throughout the region.

He came to Thessalonica “**where there was a synagogue of the Jews. Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures...**” In Romans 11 Paul called himself, “**the apostle to the Gentiles.**” But he always went to the Jews first. Here he went to the synagogue and reasoned from the Scriptures.

Paul went on “**explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.”** The term “**Christ**” is Greek for the Hebrew “**Messiah.**” Jewish rabbis read in the OT that Messiah would *suffer* and *reign*. Yet they had a perplexing time reconciling both scenarios in the same person. Some rabbis suggested two Messiahs. “**Messiah ben Joseph**” (*or son of Joseph*) would suffer as his predecessor did in Egypt. On the other hand, “**Messiah ben David**” (*or son of David*), would reign as king of Israel. Paul explained from the Scriptures that there's only one Messiah. Both prophecies were fulfilled in a single person, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus suffered on the cross, rose to glory, and will come again to rule the nations.

Verse 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. But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious...**” The Jews didn't oppose Paul on theological grounds. They were just jealous. Today, Judaism has lost its missionary zeal. For the most part Jews have a “*live and let live*” attitude. But in the first century the Jews of the Diaspora - or Dispersion - eagerly tried to win over Gentile converts. To jealous Jews Paul's persuasiveness was unwelcomed competition.

So they “**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.” The Jews hired a group of thugs and vigilantes to inflame a mob and storm the house Paul occupied. “But when they did not find them...” Paul wasn’t at home! “They dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city...” Imagine, Jason is minding his own business. Probably watching the Braves game on television when a mob storms his house, breaks down his front door, and drags him through the streets of Thessalonica to city hall.

And notice what they mob was “crying out, “These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.” This had to be one of Paul's greatest compliments. He had turned the world upside down for Jesus! If you haven't noticed lately, this world is wrong-side up. It calls evil good and good evil. It mocks the Savior and worships sin. People draw their breath from God, then deny He exists. This world is wrong-side up. That's why it needs to be turned topsy-turvy. We need to shake things up for Jesus. Rather than blend in, we need to live an opposite kind of life.

In verse 7 the mob makes its accusations to the authorities. “Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king - Jesus.” They're accused of political treason. In reality, Jesus was King over a spiritual – not a political – kingdom. The only *coup de' that* Christianity orchestrated was a takeover of the heart!

“And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.” Jason and his friends were released on bail. “Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea.” Paul slipped out of town under the cover of darkness. He and his entourage traveled 60 miles west of Thessalonica to the town of Berea.

“When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded (they were more objective in their thinking) than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.” The people of Berea were into truth! They wanted the truth even if it made them squirm - even if it challenged their preconceived notions. Their question wasn't: “do I like what I'm hearing?” - or “does this sound cool?” or “how will this benefit me?” - or “is this what my former church taught?” No, the only question the Bereans asked was, “is it biblical?” We need to be Bereans! Check out all teaching – *is it true to the Word of God?* Even well-meaning pastors make mistakes. You should check me out. Yes, I have a responsibility to be accurate, but it goes both ways... *If I'm in error you're in danger.* You need to make sure that what I teach is biblical.

Verse 12, “Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men. But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea, they came there also and stirred up the crowds.” The Jews in Thessalonica were particularly militant. They wanted to stop Paul. They hunted him down. *They were like underwear – they kept creeping up on Paul!*

“Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there.” Apparently, Paul was the headliner, the flash point. Get Paul out of town - and Silas and Timothy can quietly continue the work of teaching and discipling the new believers. “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.” It seems the plan was for Paul to lay low a few days until his buddies could catch up. But there was no such thing as “lying low” for Paul. Verse 16, “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.”

Athens, Greece was perhaps the most famous city of the ancient world. It was spectacular - *culturally, intellectually, architecturally.* Athens was home to the Olympic Games, the Acropolis, the colossal Parthenon. It was the birthplace of democracy, and Greek philosophy. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle – as well as a host of wise guys – originated theories in Athens. At the time of Paul's visit, Athens was starting to be eclipsed. Rome was now the *military* capitol of the world, Alexandria in Egypt was the *scientific and literary* capitol, Corinth was now the *commercial* hub. But Athens remained the *intellectual and academic* capitol of the world.

And I'm sure Paul thought the same thing I did after dealing with a few of my college professors, “how can people who are so smart, be so dumb?” As he looked around this beautiful city - renown for its intellectual brilliance - he noticed Athens was littered with countless temples, and altars, and idols. Greek archeologists estimate there were over 3000 shrines in Athens - all dedicated to various members of the Greek pantheon of gods. There were more idols in

Athens than in all of Greece. There was a saying in the ancient world, "In Athens, it's easier to find a god than a man."

Verse 17, "Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there." Paul wasn't content to share the Gospel in the synagogue, a house of worship, he took it to the "Agora" or marketplace. This is what we should be doing today. Taking God's Word to the marketplace of ideas. Invading education, business, entertainment, politics.

Paul certainly didn't sit on his hands while people were dying and going to Hell. It reminds me of DL Moody... One day he was walking the street. A man was moving in the opposite direction when Moody asked him, "Are you a Christian?" The grumpy man snarled, "mind your own business!" Moody answered, "Sir, this is my business." **And it's our business too!** We should never get use to the sound of footsteps marching off to hell.

Verse 18, "Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" The Greek word translated "babbling" means "seed picker." It was a derogatory term. It referred to a bum who picked his food out of the trash. The Athenian philosophers were mocking Paul. They were calling the Gospel, garbage. "Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods," because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection." American politics is a two-party system - Republicans and Democrats. Judaism was a two-party religion - Pharisees were conservatives and Sadducees were the liberals. Likewise, Greek philosophy had two parties - "Epicureans and Stoics."

The **Epicureans** were the materialists, the humanists. Their leader, **Epicurus** lived between 341-270 BC. He taught that the universe was shaped by chance, and that man had no eternal soul. Death was the end. To the Epicurean all that mattered was matter. His goal was to enjoy the here and now. Epicureans lived to *maximize pleasure* and *minimize pain*. They could've borrowed their motto from one of Jesus' parables. When the foolish rich man cried, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

The **Stoics** on the other hand were the New Agers, the pantheists. Their leader was a man named "Zeno." He lived around the same time as Epicurus. He believed God is in everything and that everything is a part of God. Zeno taught that life itself was the *spark of God* in the *spirit of man*. The Stoic felt that nature and circumstances were controlled by fate. He believed, "what will be will be." Rather than shape life - the Stoic's goal was to live in harmony with his surroundings and accept the hand he was dealt. The Stoics were disciplined, austere, solemn. Emotion was their enemy. Obviously, they lived a futile, unhappy life. They were victims of their circumstances. Its no surprise their first two leaders committed suicide.

Author Warren Wiersbe sums up Paul's task in Athens, "The Epicureans said, 'Enjoy life!' and the Stoics said, 'Endure life!', but it remained for Paul to explain how they could enter into life through faith in God's risen Son." Verse 19, "And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus..." The word can be translated "Ares Rock." The Romans called the place, "Mars Hill." It was an outcropping of rock west of the Acropolis where the supreme council of Athens met to examine religious and philosophical matters. Paul was taken to the council for an inquiry. "Saying, "May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak? For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean."

"For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." In Athens, GA football is king - but in Athens, Greece the most popular sport in town was philosophy. Big men on campus were in the philosophy department and on the debate club. The Athenians probably tailgated prior to a big debate. Imagine, Larry Munson calling the showdown with Paul!

"Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." Athens had thousands of idols, but just in case one was forgotten - or there was a unknown god - rather than offend him, they built him an altar. It just goes to show the paranoia produced by paganism and polytheism.

It's interesting, *architects in Athens* built altars to a pantheon of gods, but *philosophers in Athens* were largely agnostic. Plato wrote, "It is hard to investigate and to find the framer and the father of the universe. And, if one did find Him, it would be impossible to express Him in terms which all could understand."

Intellectuals acknowledged the necessity of a prime mover - a first cause - but they viewed him as aloof and distant - impossible to know. This left a vacuum in the soul. Paul draws on their hunger for the one, true God. He uses the altar to the unknown god to proclaim the true God.

Verse 23, "Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you. God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands." Right above Mar's Hill was the Parthenon – a massive temple to the goddess, Athena. It still stands to this day. Yet Paul says the real God needs no temple made with human hands. Heaven and earth is His temple. "Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things..." The real God is self-existent. He needs nada! The true God is the Creator and Giver of life.

*Paul makes a contemporary argument. Life doesn't evolved by chance. There is a Creator.* Philosopher GK Chesterton said, "Evolutionists seem to know everything about the missing link except the fact that it is missing." The theory goes, given enough time fish turn into frogs, frogs into birds, birds into monkeys, and monkeys into humans. But if this were true you would expect to find a fossil record littered with countless transitional forms, like half-fish and hybrid-humans - but the missing links are still missing. I once heard a guy say, "Besides if evolution really worked - if we really adapted and evolved upwards - by now moms would have three arms." Don't buy into the idea that this perfectly ordered universe rose out of chance and chaos. Perfect design requires a designer. It's obvious to an un-bias mind that, as Paul said, "God made the world and everything in it."

"And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings..." Note, God created humans with distinction. The one problem with the global village concept - the one-world idea - is it's not biblical. God created nations, and people groups, and marked out their boundaries. In Genesis 10 God established the table of nations. A one world government will be a tool of Antichrist, not a work of God.

Verse 27, "So that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us..." God made us for Himself. We're restless until we find Him! God is not far away as Epicurus taught. He's *high*, but also *nigh*. And to prove his point, Paul quotes Epimenides, one of Athens own philosophers, "For in Him we live and move and have our being..." God is everywhere. The true God wants us know Him. He's ready to reveal Himself.

Paul continues, "as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'" Here Paul quotes another Greek philosopher, Aratus. Paul does what pastors have been doing every since. He identifies with his audience. He draws on cultural references to emphasize biblical truth.

He explains, "Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising." When Paul says we're "*the offspring of God...*" he's not teaching universal salvation. He's simply saying that as our Creator we derive our life from God. Paul uses reverse logic... Since we're made in God's image, we can get an idea of what God is like by looking at us. I'm *living*, and *personal*, and *knowable* – and so is God. I'm more than a chunk of metal or stone. I've been called "blockhead" on occasion, but I'm alive – and so is the God who made me. He's no idol.

Paul starts to conclude in verse 30, "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent..." The Greeks were very proud of their history. They talked longingly of "*The Golden Age of Pericles*" when Greek civilization reached its pinnacle. Even today, we still marvel at Greek culture. Yet Paul called the hallowed history of the Greeks, "*times of ignorance.*" The Greeks were unenlightened in the truth of God. When it came to what mattered most they were ignorant. Paul is saying the time to debate is over. It's now time to decide. God is calling all men everywhere to repent. "Because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." The Athenians were judging Paul, but one day God will judge them. In resurrecting Jesus, God ordained Him as Lord and Judge over all.

Verse 32, "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked..." It's been said, "An agnostic is a person who says that he knows nothing about God and, when you agree with him, he becomes angry." Folks got mad when Paul told the truth. They tried to laugh him off.

“While others said, “We will hear you again on this *matter*.” The notion of resurrection stunned the Athenians. They needed to think this through... The Greeks considered the human body to be evil - a prison for the soul. According to Greek thought when the body died the soul was set free from its fleshly cage, to fly back into the oblivion from which it came. The idea of the resurrection created a disruption. It halted Paul's message... some Athenians *taunted*, some of them *tarried*, and some *took Paul up* on the offer of eternal life. We're told, “So Paul departed from among them. However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.”

It was probably not the response Paul had experienced in other places, but there were a small group of converts in Athens. *Dionysius* was a council member, an *Areopagite*. He was a leading philosopher who came to Christ. *Damaris* was a female. Since proper Greek ladies seldom entered the male dominated arena of Mars Hill, some think *Damaris* was a prostitute. It's interesting the two named converts in Athens were a philosopher and a prostitute. It proves God saves both *the down and out* and *the up and out*.

Chapter 18, “After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth.” The city of Corinth was a port with access to both the Adriatic and the Aegean Seas. This meant all north-south traffic passed through Corinth. The city was called “The Bridge of Greece.” Corinth was the first century's leading commercial center. Ancient Corinth had a population of 200,000. But Corinth was also known for its unbridled wickedness. Every vice known to man found a home in Corinth. Whenever a Corinthian was shown in a Greek play he was depicted as a drunk. “To play the Corinthian” meant “to party hearty.” “A Corinthian girl” was a prostitute. In Romans 1 Paul describes the moral and spiritual deterioration of a civilization that has divorced itself from God. When he wrote Romans he was living in Corinth. Apparently, the city of Corinth was his inspiration. At the heart of the city of Corinth was a temple dedicated to the Greek fertility goddess, Aphrodite. Every night one thousand temple priestesses flooded the streets and played the prostitute in the name of Aphrodite. Corinth was the Las Vegas of its day. It was a cesspool of immorality – a lewd, perverted city. Yet it turned out to be fertile ground for the Gospel.

Verse 2, “And (Paul) 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.” The Roman historian, Suetonius, dated the Jewish expulsion from Rome as 49 AD. He said it was the result of riots caused by a man named, “*Chrestus*.” It's possible the Gospel had made it to Rome by this time. It was the preaching of Jesus as *Chrestus or Christ* that caused the upheaval. It was at this time that Aquila and Priscilla came south to Corinth.

“So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.” Paul was bi-vocational. He was a pastor who supported himself with a secular job. All Jewish rabbis not only received theological training, but they also learned a trade. Paul had some skill working with leather and made tents. Monday through Friday Paul was in the shop, but on Saturdays he was in the synagogue. “And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks. When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus is the Christ*.” Finally, Paul's pals catch up to him. Evidently, their presence emboldened Paul. This is why Jesus sent the disciples two-by-two. Don't underestimate the power of a Christian friend! We also know Silas and Timothy arrived with financial support from the Philippians. This may've encouraged Paul. He no longer had to make tents. He could devote all his energy to ministry. Paul feels fresh wind in his sails.

“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.” This is how Paul handled opposition. Rather than get *shook up* he *shook it off* and moved on to those who were ready to hear. Don't get hung up on the few who don't want to hear, when there're people right around the corner who are eager to hear!

“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.” Paul set up shop right next to the competition! “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.” How cool! The leader of the synagogue was converted to Jesus.

Verse 9, “Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.” It seems at Corinth Paul's courage waned. He'd been beaten and run out of every town he'd visited except Athens. And when Crispus was converted he knew the Jews would become desperate and resort to violence.

But God fortified him with two vitamins: **His presence** and **His promise**. These are the two vitamins God uses to keep us strong and healthy. *He's with us and He makes promises to us.* One count says there are over 7400 promises in the Scripture. I suggest you claim a couple for yourself!

Notice too, God tells Paul, "**I have many people in this city**". This is an amazing statement considering Paul is just starting his ministry in Corinth. God had many people in the city - at the time they just didn't know they were God's people. What an encouragement to remain faithful to witness. God has many people in your neighborhood - in your office - on your softball team - they just don't know it yet. God has already picked them out. They've been ordained before the foundation of the world. God considers them His own. He's just waiting on you to share the Gospel with them.

"**And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.**" For 18 months Paul was faithful just teaching the Bible. This is how God grew the church at Corinth and how He grows them today. Later Paul writes in 1Corinthians 1:26, "**For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty...**" Perhaps Paul was comparing his success in Corinth with his lackluster ministry in Athens. The *mighty Athenians* laughed off the Gospel while the *lowly Corinthians* embraced it. Men of Athens were too proud to admit their need. Whereas the Corinthians jumped at the opportunity to know God and be forgiven.

Verse 12, "**When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, saying, 'This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.'**" Apparently, a new proconsul gave the Corinthian Jews hope they might persuade the Romans to outlaw Christianity. But their plan backfires...

"**And when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, 'If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such matters.'**" And he drove them from the judgment seat. Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue (Crispus' replacement), and beat him before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things." He pretended not to see. Evidently, the Jews in Corinth had few friends in town, so when the locals saw the indifference of their new ruler, they decided to teach the Jews a lesson. They roughed up Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue.

This makes 1 Corinthians 1:1 in intriguing verse. "**Paul called to be an apostle... and Sosthenes our brother.**" After getting beat up Sosthenes must've believed. It took a beating to convince him of his need for Jesus. This is what it takes for some folk. Maybe not a physical beating, but you have to get beat up financially, vocationally, relationally before you humble yourself and realize how much you need Jesus. It takes a bruise or two. Perhaps, Sosthenes was converted after his beating, when Paul and Crispus came to minister to him. He wanted them beaten - instead they're now loving him - and forgiving, and washing, and bandaging his wounds. It was no doubt love that melted Sosthenes' hardened heart. *This was cool - the synagogue can't keep a rabbi because they're all getting saved.*

"**So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria (or Antioch), and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow.**" Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, but he was always trying to win the Jews. Here he took a Jewish vow in hopes of creating a platform to preach.

"**And he came to Ephesus, and left them there (Aquila and Priscilla); but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they asked him to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, 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.'**" Ephesus was one of the most important cities Paul would visit. It was in the heart of Asia Minor, with a population of 300,000 people – but he had to hurry back to Jerusalem for Pentecost. His ministry in Ephesus will have to wait for his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary venture. "**And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch.**" It had been two years since he and Silas had left. I'm sure the believers in Antioch were overjoyed to see them. But no moss is going to grow under Paul's feet. He sets out again... "**After he had spent some time there, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.**" This begins Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey. His second with Silas.

“Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria (in North Africa), an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus.” This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord (Apollos was a Christian); and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. 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.” Apollos knew the Gospel and the importance of repentance, but he didn’t understand the baptism of the Spirit. He was eloquent and knowledgeable, but Apollos lacked spiritual power! Like many Christians today his experience with God wasn’t *inaccurate* or *insincere*, it was just *incomplete*. And I like how Aquila and Priscilla handle the situation. They don’t confront him, or call him out publically, or embarrass him, or put him on the defensive – they just pull him aside. Take him to lunch, and explain what he’s been missing. I’m sure they prayed that he’d be filled with the Spirit.

Verse 27, “And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.” Apollos went from Ephesus to Corinth - Paul from Corinth to Ephesus. In 1 Corinthians 3:6 Paul says, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.” In Ephesus it was reversed - Apollos planted, Paul watered. Sometimes we sow and plant the seeds of the Gospel. At other times we water seeds someone else planted. But always the seeds sprout as a result of the life-giving Spirit. God supplies the increase! *To God be the glory!*