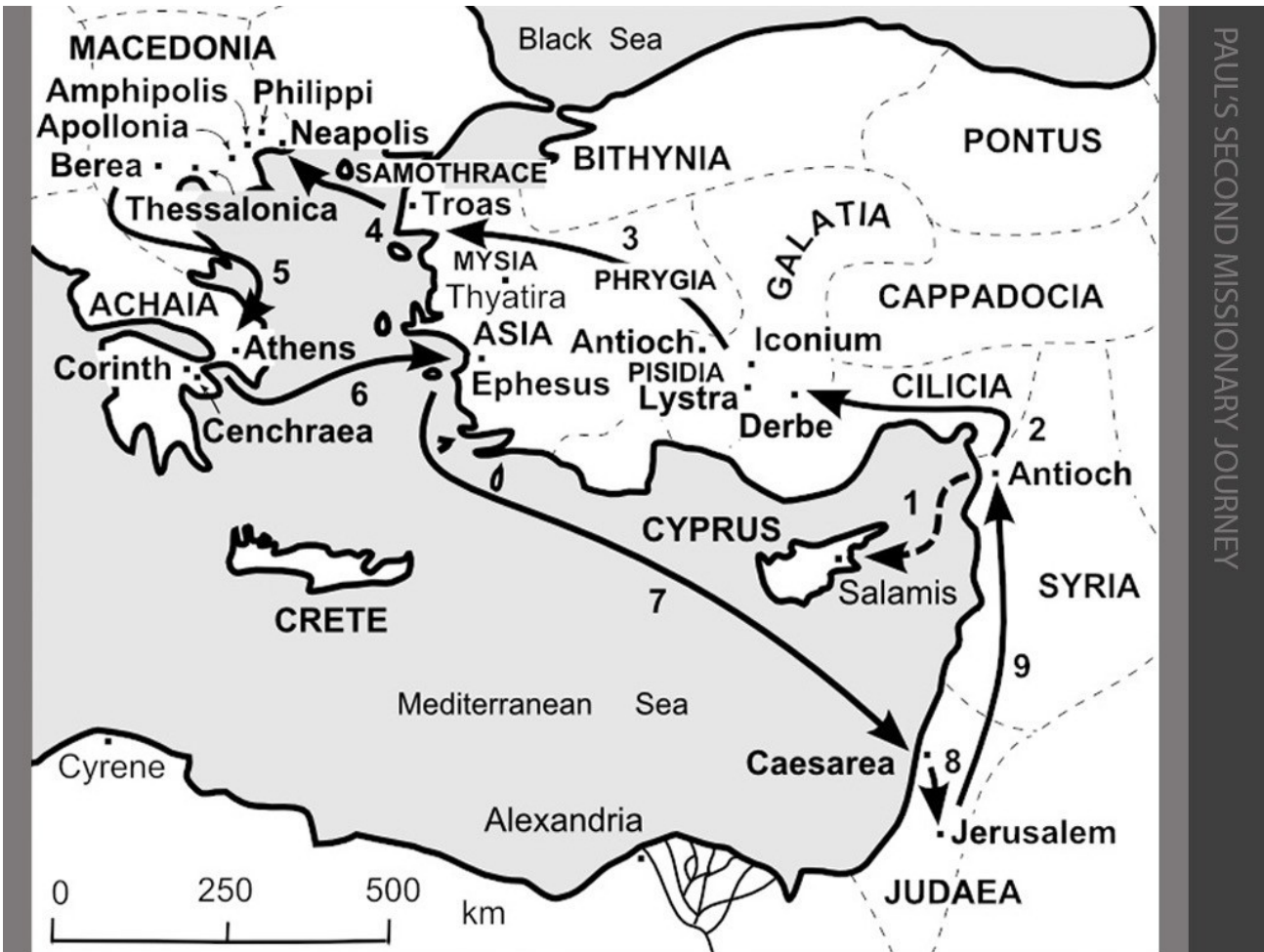


FINISHING WELL!
ACTS CH18:12-28

INTRODUCTION

We are 6 weeks and 2 days, or 44 days away from celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour! How are the 6 mince pies going? How is it going with the 2 mature Christians, the 2 wobbly Christians and the 2 non-Christians? How is it going with the “intentionality” of praying for them, meeting and serving them and loving them by sharing the Gospel with them to strengthen and encourage them? How is that going? How are we preparing for Christmas?



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PAUL'S VISION AND VINDICATION! V12 – 18a

V10+11 – Is really crucial in understanding this next section, as Luke portrays it as the fourth section (Ch18:1-4 Sect 1, Ch18:5-8 Sect 2, Ch18:9-11 Sect 3 + Ch18:12-18a Sect 4) of Paul's stay in Corinth. God promises Paul (v10+11) through a vision that he will be protected and no harm will come to him. The context of verses 12-17 relate specifically to a change in governor, or proconsul. The new person in charge is “Gallio” known for his fairness and rational and the Jews think that this is an opportunity to have Paul dealt with.

V12 - 14 – The place in question could be an elevated stage area in the market-place, where Gallio would sit and judge certain cases. Cases that specifically called into question Roman Law! The Jews are alleging that Paul is breaking the law, by persuading people to worship God contrary to the Law! But what Law? Paul is about to defend himself, when Gallio steps in.

V15 – Gallio reveals that the Law in question relates to Jewish Law and not Roman Law, and therefore he sees it “as a squabble between two parties, squabbling over Jewish Law” refusing to

get drawn into a matter that, as he sees it, does not fall under his jurisdiction!

Gallio dismisses the case, resulting in the vision that Paul had coming true, he is not harmed!

V17 – The Jews who brought the case are so angry with the ruling that they turn on Sosthenes, the new Jewish Synagogue Ruler (v8+v17), who is then beaten up by them. Gallio shows no interest in this beating! Gallio proved to be a friend of justice and truth, and provided an example to the Jews of what could happen in other areas should Jews bother Governor's over such matters!

PAUL'S VOW AND VISIT! V18b – 23

Here for the second time we find Luke's fascination with details of sea travel (Ch16:11; Ch18:18-22; Ch20:5-6, 13-17; Ch21:1-8; Ch27:1-Ch28:16). Bird watcher's are known as "Twitchers" but those whose passion is the seas and voyages, what are they known as? "Squids!"

Luke records for us that Paul leaves Corinth via Cenchreae, heads to Ephesus (v19), then lands at Caesarea (v22), goes to Jerusalem (v22), before arriving at Antioch, Syria (v22).

But in the midst of that journey we hear about:

1. Aquila and Priscilla (Ch18:2 + Ch18:18)
2. Paul cuts his hair, because of some vow (Numbers Ch6:1-21)
3. He visits the synagogue in Ephesus
4. The Ephesians want him to stay but he has to return to Jerusalem and Antioch, Syria
5. He leaves both Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus

V18 – Luke records that Paul continued for "many days longer" on top of the 18 months (v11). Paul was not forced out of Corinth, unlike other cities, but left of his own accord when he believed it was right for him to leave, accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla, leaving Silas and Timothy behind to continue in the work with the Christian Corinthians!

But what about this "vow" business? It was customary for Jews to make vows to God, either for thanking Him for past blessings, or indeed as part of petitions for future blessings. Paul, although a truly born again Christian, was still Jewish, and although Luke does not say what the vow is in connection with, it is reminiscent of Numbers Ch6:1-21. So, Paul with his new hair style, heads by sea to Ephesus!

V19-21 – Paul had a practice of preaching in the Jewish synagogues first (where there were ones) before preaching to the Gentiles – **Ch13:14; Ch14:1; Ch17:1; Ch17:10; Ch17:17; Ch18:4; Ch18:19; + Ch19:8** and enters the Jewish synagogue in Ephesus, reasoning with them (remember as was his custom Ch17:2), no doubt showing them from the Scriptures that the Christ had to suffer and that the Christ was Jesus of Nazareth! They wanted Paul to stay, but Paul had in mind the "will of God" and knew he had to return to both Jerusalem and Antioch, Syria, but promised to return if it was God's will.

What is our "custom" for sharing the Gospel, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ?

V23 – The new mission starts! After spending time at both the Jerusalem Church and the Church in Antioch, Syria, the 3rd missionary journey starts – Ch18:23 – Ch21:17.

PAUL'S VITAL VOLUNTEER! V24 – 28

Luke now records for us, whilst Paul is in Antioch, Syria, for around a year, that a new guy, a "vital volunteer", turns up in Ephesians. What do we learn about him:

1. His name is Apollos!
2. He is a Jew!
3. He is an Egyptian Jew, from the City of Alexandria!

4. He was born again!
5. He was an eloquent speaker!
6. He knew his Scriptures!
7. He was passionate!
8. He taught accurately the Scriptures!
9. HE NEEDED TO BE DISCIPLED!

V26 – Priscilla and Aquila, disciplined him! They spent time with him, teaching him more about Christ, in the areas of the ways of God, before he was ready for his next Chapter! The Reverend John Stott (died – 27.7.2011) became a Christian in February 1938 when Eric Nash (known as Bash) came to evangelise, Stott said of him ***“I thank God for the man who led me to Christ and for the extraordinary devotion with which he nurtured me in the early years of my Christian life. He wrote to me every week for, I think, seven years. He also prayed for me every day. I believe he still does. I can only begin to guess what I owe, under God, to such a faithful friend and Pastor”*** (Cited in The Message of 2 Timothy, John Stott, pg29).

As a Christian, you are never alone, there will always be a Christian friend to pray, to support, to help (mince pies)!

At The Mission Church, we endeavour to be Biblical. That means that as we see certain things in the Bible, which is the inerrant Word of God and our authority for truth as revealed in the Bible. In the Bible we see that a Pastor should be male, that Elders should be males appointed by other Elders and that Deacons should be both male and female appointed by the Church members, and membership we also believe is Biblical.

Within that we see clearly that women teach other women (Titus Ch2:3-4), women teach children (2nd Timothy Ch1:5 + Ch3:14), and women along with men can teach other men in a private context (Acts Ch18:26). At The Mission Church, we are both Eldership and Congregational in our Church Governance.

V27-28 – We see how the fellowship supported Apollos in his next move, after helping him with crucial discipleship, after encouraging him, after sending a supportive letter, Apollos goes off back to Corinth to help with the work there, one of the most difficult Churches in the New Testament!

APPLICATION

Paul was not breaking the Law, but some Christians in some countries have to, to remain faithful to God! What do you think about that (Remember Ch5:29)?

Notice Paul's commitment to God's will in v21! How aware are we of God's will and purpose in our lives?

How can we discover God's will for our lives and be more sensitive to God's will? (Rom Ch12:1-2)

Is your discipleship intentional?

How is it going?