



# GRACE

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

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## THE BOOK OF ACTS

Sermon Notes

### Paul's Second Missionary Journey, Part 8

*Paul Devotes Himself to the Word in Corinth*

Acts 18:1-17

January 20, 2008

- I. Paul Travels to Corinth and Labors with Priscilla and Aquila
- II. Paul Devotes Himself to the Word
- III. Paul Faces Opposition
- IV. Paul is Strengthened by the Lord
- V. Paul is Vindicated by the Romans



## Opposition in Paul's Second Missionary Journey

- ❑ The Apostle Paul began his Second Missionary Journey with noble intentions; with the goal of “strengthening the churches” in Asia Minor (Acts 15:41).
- ❑ Then, in 16:9, Paul received a vision of a Macedonian man, asking that he and the team cross over the Aegean Sea to the Greek mainland.

### Philippi

- ❑ After obeying the Lord’s command and crossing the sea, Paul healed a slave-girl in Philippi who had been possessed by a spirit. This Spirit-wrought miracle, however, sparked a riot and the subsequent beating and imprisonment of Paul and Silas. During their imprisonment, the Lord caused an earthquake which caused the prison to open. Through this process, the jailer was saved and Paul and Silas were released; however, they were still forced to leave the city (16:39-40).

### Thessalonica

- ❑ After leaving Philippi, Paul traveled to Thessalonica. There, he was able to “persuade some to join he and Silas, along with a large number of Greeks and a number of the leading women” (17:4); however, this success led to further persecution, forcing Paul to flee once again to Berea (17:10).

### Berea

- ❑ In Berea “many [in the city] believed” (17:12). However, some of the Jews from Thessalonica agitated and stirred up the crowds (17:13), causing Paul, once again, to flee – this time to Athens.

### Athens

- ❑ In Athens, like he did in previous cities, Paul “reasoned in the synagogues with the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles” (17:17).
- ❑ Then, some of the Epicureans and Stoics conversed with him, bringing Paul to the Areopagus to dialogue with the greatest Athenian minds of the day.
- ❑ After delivering his well-known Areopagus Address, some sneered; yet, others believed.
- ❑ At this point, Paul left once again, heading for Corinth.

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- ❑ Yet, the point remains clear throughout this Second Missionary Journey: every time Paul faithfully proclaims the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, he is severely persecuted.
- ❑ However, as with all men and women in the Scriptures, Paul was just like us in his sufferings, and hurt, and even discouragement. Therefore, we can gain great strength in the midst of our sufferings knowing that Paul [and especially Christ!], endured hardships just like us.

- ❑ In his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul recalls the manner in which he first entered into Corinth: “I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling...” [1 Corinthians 2:3].
- ❑ Everett F. Harrison wrote, “The combination of only limited success at Athens, loneliness, and the prospect of facing this city, with its commerce and vice, accounts for the weakness and fear that gripped the apostle as he arrived to begin his work.”
- ❑ Yet, it is in these times, when we truly get a taste of the grace and power of God. For when we reach the end of ourselves, when we realize that there is **nothing we can do**, we are forced to our knees and to rely upon the strength of Christ at work within us to sustain us.
- ❑ This is why Paul will later write in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 [the “thorn-in-the-flesh” passage]: “And He [the Lord] said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

<b>I. Paul Travels to Corinth and Labors with Priscilla and Aquila</b>
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- ❑ Athens may have been, even in Paul’s day, the intellectual capital of Greece; however, Corinth, located just over forty miles west of Athens, was the commercial capital.
- ❑ Perfectly located on the four mile-wide isthmus [land bridge] separating the Peloponnesian peninsula from the remainder of Greece, Corinth was an ideal port. It was a two-hundred mile, often treacherous, sail around the peninsula, so often times men would place vessels on wheels and push them the four miles across the isthmus.
- ❑ Corinth was located at the crossroads of the east and the west on the Mediterranean Sea. It had two ports: one [Lechaeum] on the Gulf of Corinth [which led to the Ionian Sea and central and western Mediterranean], and the other [Cenchreae], located on the Saronic Gulf [which led to the Aegean Sea and eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea].
- ❑ Because of its usage as a trading and port city, much of Corinth’s population was transient and not native to the city or Greece. One historian wrote [Pfeiffer], “much of the population was mobile (sailors, businessmen, government officials, et al.) and therefore cut off from the inhibitions of a settled society.”
- ❑ Thus, as R.C.H. Lenski writes, “Corinth was a wicked city even as larger cities of the empire went at this period. The very term “Corinthian” came to mean a profligate. *Korinthiazomai*, “to Corinthianize,” meant to practice whoredom; *Korinthiastes* = a whoremonger; *Korinthia kore* [girl] = a courtesan.”

- ❑ Not only this, atop a 1,900 foot hill overlooking the city [Acrocorinth] was the Temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Every night, the 1,000 temple prostitutes would descend on the city in order to practice their trade – which was viewed by the Corinthian pagans as an act of worship to Aphrodite – the goddess of love.
- ❑ No doubt, Corinth was the Las Vegas of its day, known for its prosperity and debauchery. According to Horace [*E.* 1.17.36], it was a town where only the tough survived.

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- ❑ **Verses 2-3** state, “And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers.”
- ❑ Often times, in the midst of our sufferings, one of the greatest gifts God gives us are like-minded friends to help us to bear our burdens. Galatians 6:2 states, “Bear one another’s burdens, thereby fulfill the law of Christ.” This seems to be, at least in part, the role that Priscilla and Aquilla played.
- ❑ Luke writes that the husband, Aquila, was from Pontus, a town in Asia Minor [modern-day Turkey], located on the Black Sea.
- ❑ His wife Priscilla, for some unknown reason, is named first four of the five times the couple is mentioned in Scripture. It is possible that she was a Roman citizen and had a greater rank in society than her husband. Also, it may be that, as John MacArthur speculates, “she was the more prominent of the two in service to the church.” [NOTE: When referring to her, Paul always used her formal name, Prisca [Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19]; however, Luke prefers her less-formal “nickname” – Priscilla.
- ❑ Yet, what we **do know** about Priscilla and Aquila is that they will become valued friends of the Apostle Paul [Romans 16:3].
- ❑ Luke states the reason why Aquila and Priscilla were in Corinth, “because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome.”
  - The Roman historian Suetonius, wrote of this expulsion, “As the Jews were indulging in constant riots at the instigation of Chrestus, [Claudius] banished them from Rome.”
  - Because of the similarity of the names *Chrestus* and *Christus* [meaning Christ] – there is only one letter difference in the Latin – many scholars assert that Suetonius, writing seventy [70] years after the banishment of the Jews from Rome, was referencing “riots” and “instigations” within the Jewish community caused by the proclamation of Jesus as the Christ – *Chrestus*.

- What it seems is that the introduction of Christianity, beginning in the local synagogues, caused great disturbances within these Jewish communities, leading Claudius to banish them in order to maintain proper social order in the city.
- However, Luke’s inclusion of this detail of Claudius’ decree gives us a historically verifiable benchmark by which to date Paul’s entrance for the first time into Corinth – some time after AD 49-50.
- This husband and wife team shared a trade with Paul – they were “tent-makers.”
  - The Greek translated “tentmakers” could also mean “leatherworkers.” In fact, the phrase also could be translated “saddlers” – those who made saddles for horses out of leather.
  - This trade [“tent-making”, “leather-working”, “saddle-making”] was connected to the Apostle Paul’s home region of Cilicia. In fact, one of the chief products coming out of the Cilician region was cloths of goats’ hair, called *cilicium*, which were used for “cloaks, curtains, and other fabrics designed to give protection” against wetness and moisture.
  - Quite possibly the fact that Paul was a “tentmaker” meant that his father had been one as well. Within the ancient Jewish culture, it was common for all boys to apprentice under their fathers, embracing his trade.
  - Paul’s practice here is actually consistent with the rabbinical tradition in ancient Judaism which strongly opposed rabbis receiving payment for their teaching of the Torah.
  - In fact, it was the ancient Hillel who said, “He who makes a profit from the crown of the Torah shall waste away [*Pirqe’Abot* 4.7]. Furthermore, Gamaliel III also said, “All study of the Torah which is not combined with work will ultimately be futile and lead to sin.”
  - Certainly the reason why Paul earned his own living was so that he would not be a burden, financially or otherwise, on anyone [Acts 20:34; 1 Corinthians 9:3-18; 2 Corinthians 11:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8].
  - Yet, given ancient rabbinical tradition, it is quite possible as well that Paul did not want to be a stumbling block to the Jews to whom he was reasoning – that is, he did not want his acceptance of financial support from others to hinder his proclamation of Christ within the Jewish community in Corinth [and elsewhere].
- Then, in **Verse 4**, Luke writes, “And he [Paul] was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.”
  - As had been his practice throughout this missionary journey, Paul found the local synagogue and “**reasoned**” [Greek, *dialegomai*, διαλεγομαι]; that is, “**dialogued**” with the Jews and God-fearing Greeks there.

- Once again, the purpose of this would have been to **persuade** the Jews that **Jesus is the Christ – the long-awaited Messiah and fulfillment of the Old Testament**.

## II. Paul Devotes Himself to the Word

- In **Verse 5**, Luke writes, “But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.”
- The arrival of Silas and Timothy brought with it two blessings: (1) the presence and comfort and strength of two old friends; (2) financial assistance from Philippi [2 Corinthians 11:9; Philippians 4:15], freeing Paul to “devote himself completely to the word...”
  - The manner and form of Paul’s “devotion to the word” was a testimony to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. In other words, Paul was taking the Old Testament text and demonstrating passage-by-passage how Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone fulfilled the identity of the Hebrew Messiah – the Christ.
- This **devotion to the Word** [Luke 24:27; John 5:39, 46; Acts 6:4; 1 Corinthians 9:6] exists as the Apostolic model of all preachers. This must be the heartbeat of all preachers of the Gospel. It must be their love and greatest desire.
- It is no mere coincidence that Paul was the greatest theologian of the Church while also being the greatest preacher of the Church. It was his faithful devotion to the Word that equipped him to so powerfully proclaim the gospel message.

## III. Paul Faces Opposition

- However, once again, Paul, because of his commitment and devotion to the Word, faced strong opposition.
- Luke writes in **Verse 6**, “But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, ‘Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.’”
- Luke writes that the Jews of Corinth “...**resisted and blasphemed**...”
  - The Greek for “resisted” literally means “to arrange in battle array.”
  - In fact, not only did they “arrange” themselves to attack Paul, but they also blasphemed the name of Christ – the gravest of sins against God [Matthew 12:31-32; Luke 22:64-65].

- Then, Luke describes three acts of Paul which underscore the seriousness of his actions: (1) he **shook out his garments**; (2) he said, **“Your blood be on your own heads!”**; and (3) He said **“From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”**

## 1. He shook out his garments

- This gesture was one of the most graphic forms of rejection among the Jews.
- It is derived from the idea of “shaking the dust of their feet.” Jesus speaks of “shaking the dust off their feet” in Luke 10:10-12 when He sends out the seventy [70]: “But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.”
  - Furthermore, the idea behind this act [of “shaking the dust off your feet”] was that the town from which the disciples left was doomed for utter destruction and that the destruction would be so thorough and complete that it included the very dust of the earth. Therefore, even the dust had to be removed.
  - Also, the gesture indicated that the Jews believed that the Gentiles were so unclean that even the dust from their territories could not be brought into Israel. If it were, they asserted, the land would be defiled from the “unclean” Gentile dust. Consequently, when a Jew would return from traveling in a Gentile area, he would “shake the dust of his feet” in order not to bring even dust that had been contaminated from unclean Gentiles into Israel.
  - Therefore, the act by Paul of shaking out his garment indicates that, from the perspective of the Apostle, the Jews of Corinth were no more “clean” than the pagan, “unclean” Gentiles that they [the Jews] so hated. In other words, Paul chose not to “cast their pearls” any longer “before swine” [Matthew 7:6].
  - In his commentary on Matthew 7:6 [“do not cast your pearls before swine”], Leon Morris writes, “But we should keep in mind that for the followers of Jesus there is nothing more holy than the gospel. This message is to be offered to all, but there is a limit to the time that is to be given to its obstinate rejecters. Disciples are not to be judgmental, but that does not mean that they are to lack discernment...**Things of value and beauty will not only not be appreciated by pigs, but will be abused. What is precious is not to be given to people who have no appreciation of it.**”
  - Often times this may be the appropriate response [“shaking out our garments”] that we should have towards men and women who blaspheme the Gospel we treasure and proclaim to them. That is, we at times would be wise to move on, proclaiming the truth of the Gospel as we go.

## 2. “Your blood be on your own heads.”

- The phrase here is derived from the Old Testament [Joshua 2:19; Judges 9:24; 2 Samuel 1:16; 1 Kings 2:33, 37; Ezekiel 33:4-6]. It also appears in the New Testament [Matthew 23:35; 27:25; Acts 5:28].
  - In Ezekiel, the role of the watchmen on the city walls is used to describe those who warn of the coming judgment of God. Ezekiel writes, in **33:4-5**, “...and he [the watchman] sees the sword coming upon the land and blows on the trumpet and warns the people, then he who hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, a sword comes and takes him away, his blood will be on his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet but did not take warning; his blood will be on Himself...”
  - Therefore, what Paul is saying to the Jews at Corinth is that they are the only ones to blame for their coming judgment. Furthermore, since Paul, like a faithful watchman, had warned them, he is “clean” and no longer responsible for their iniquity.
  - Yet, this phrase has an even deeper theological meaning.
  - Since their blood will be on their own heads – **they will have to bear the punishment...the judgment of God for their sins.**
  - **Yet, for all who believe in Jesus Christ, their “blood” was on the head of Christ, and He bore the due penalty for their sins. Also, since Christ was infinite in His divine nature, He, and He alone, had the ability to bear the infinite wrath of God to the end in a finite amount of time.**
  - **For those whose blood remains on their own heads, they bear God’s wrath for eternity, for they will never, in their own finitude, be able to fully satisfy the infinite wrath of God. This is, indeed, what the Bible refers to as Hell.**

## 3. “From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

- This phrase echoes the words of Paul in Acts 13:46: “...behold, we are turning to the Gentiles...”
- Throughout the Old Testament, God had promised that the truth of salvation would go to the Gentiles. It is here in the New Testament that we see the **means by which He would fulfill His promise**. The “means” by which the Gospel would go to the Gentiles was through the rejection of it by the Jews.
  - Another place where this truth is powerfully revealed is in the trials and crucifixion of Christ Himself. He was perfect in every way; however, He did not fit the “picture” of what the Pharisees and Sadducees had in mind. As a result, the



Jewish leadership rejected Christ, having Him crucified. Yet, it is through the death of Christ on the cross that salvation has come to the Gentiles.

- Yet, another place where the Jews' rejection of the Messiah led to the spreading of the gospel to the Gentiles was at Pentecost. It was here that the Holy Spirit descended on the Jewish believers in Jerusalem, and they began to speak in **foreign, Gentile languages!**
- Paul was committed to preaching the Gospel first to the Jews [**Romans 1:16**]; however, once their hearts were shut he went to the Gentiles whose hearts were open.
- Then, immediately after “going to the Gentiles,” Luke writes, **Verses 6-7**, “Then he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshipper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue. Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.”
  - The name “Titius Justus” is Roman, and the phrase “worshipper of God” is no doubt synonymous with “God-fearer.” In other words, Titius would have been a Gentile follower of the God of Israel, much like the Ethiopian eunuch and Cornelius.
  - Then, Luke mentions Crispus, not a Gentile, but a Jew, the leader of the synagogue. He specifically said that he believed in the Lord, along with his whole household. NOTE: Paul mentions Crispus in 1 Corinthians 1:14 as someone he [Paul] baptized.
  - One can only imagine the controversy caused by the leader of the synagogue embracing Jesus Christ as the Messiah – the essence of Paul’s message!
  - So shocking was this event that the Jews would soon bring Paul before the Roman authorities in the city. However, prior to this, Jesus Christ would reveal Himself to Paul in order to strengthen and encourage him.
  - These two men, then, represent individuals from the Jews and Gentiles, both near and far, coming to saving knowledge in the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **IV. Paul is Strengthened by the Lord**

- Then, in **Verses 9 – 10**, Luke records a vision Paul receives from the Lord [no doubt, Jesus Christ Himself]: “And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, ‘Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city.’”
  - This is one of six total visions Paul receives in the Book of Acts.

- The Lord begins by reiterating an ancient command of the LORD to His people: “Do not be afraid!” [Deuteronomy 31:6; Joshua 1:6, 9; Isaiah 41:10; 43:5; Jeremiah 1:8].
  - Fear of men is, quite simply, a sin. The reason for this is that the Scriptures state that it is the LORD alone who is to be feared. Thus, **when we fear men, we are elevating them to the status of God in our life.**
  - Also, **fear grips us and paralyzes us, preventing us to live a life of freedom in Christ that is motivated by love for Him and obedience to His commands!**
  - Lastly, fear is a result of misunderstanding, or even denying the Sovereignty of God in our lives. God is in control, and when we know this, we need not fear any man.
- The second point the Lord makes is “...**go on speaking and do not be silent**”
  - The world sought to silence the message of Paul – the Gospel. If we faithfully proclaim the Gospel, the world will seek to silence us as well.
  - Even professing Christians seek to silence the Gospel at times for practical, pragmatic and “political” reasons.
  - However, the Lord says, in effect, “Do not be afraid of them and their threats towards you...Fear Me and continue to preach the Gospel, for they are completely under my control and can do nothing to you apart from My will!”
  - Remember, the Gospel is the very power of God [Romans 1:16], therefore, **NOTHING** in the created realm can compare with this. Therefore, we too should not remain silent.
- Thirdly, the Lord said, “...for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you...”
  - In other words, Jesus Christ, the Lord of all Creation, tells Paul that He is with him and no one will harm him. Thus, God protects His servant. Just as the Father sovereignly protected His Son until His appointed time in which He was “lifted up”, so God sovereignly protects all of us until our time of suffering comes. In other words, no harm will befall us outside of God’s will.
- Finally, the Lord says, “...for I have many people in this city.”
  - Here is where the doctrine of election and human responsibility meet.

- We, like Paul, are to faithfully preach the Gospel, knowing that in whatever city we are in God has people there. We do not know who they are; yet, we have absolute confidence in God knowing that **His people will be saved**. Therefore, when we preach the Gospel, and someone rejects it, it is not because we failed.
  - We are simply called to “go and tell the good news.” God will use this as the means to save His people.
  - Warren Wiersbe writes, “...divine sovereignty in election is not a deterrent to human responsibility in evangelism. Quite the opposite is true! Divine election is one of the greatest encouragements to the preaching of the Gospel. Because Paul knew that God already had people set apart for salvation, he stayed where he was and preached the Gospel with faith and courage. Paul’s responsibility was to obey the commission; God’s responsibility was to save sinners. If salvation depends on sinful man, then all of our efforts are futile; but if “salvation is of the Lord” (Jonah 2:9), then we can expect Him to bless His Word and save souls.
- Then, as a result of the strengthening of Paul through the vision by the Lord, Luke writes in **Verse 11**, “And he settled there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.”
  - This time in Corinth was likely from the fall of A.D. 50 to the spring of A.D. 52.

## V. Paul is Vindicated by the Romans

- Ultimately, the Jews became so angry at Paul for preaching the Word, that they sought to silence him by handing him over to the Roman authorities.
- This would be the God-ordained event that would prove the words of the Lord true. The Lord had promised that no one would harm him. The great irony here is that the declaration of Gallio, in favor of Paul, is a demonstration of God’s sovereign use of pagan men to vindicate His people.
- Luke writes, in **Verses 12-15**, “But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat, saying, “This man persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.” But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrong or of vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you; but if there are questions about words and names and your own law, look after it yourselves; I am unwilling to be a judge of these matters.”
  - Interestingly, history provides us with a great deal of information concerning Gallio. He was the son of the orator Seneca the Elder (ca. 50 B.C. – ca. AD 40)

and the older brother of the famed Stoic philosopher and tutor of Emperor Nero, Seneca the Younger (4 BC – AD 65).

- Seneca the Younger described his brother as “an intelligent person who hated flattery, and was blessed with an unaffectedly pleasant personality.”
- Gallio was well-liked, it appears, among the Romans and was known to be, along with many other Roman rulers, anti-Semitic.
- We know from historical records that Gallio was proconsul of Achaia from July, A.D. 51 to June A.D. 52.
- So it seems that the Jews were possibly seeking to take advantage of Gallio’s relative lack of experience and drag Paul before his judgment seat.
  - The judgment seat [*Bema*] was a large, raised platform in the *agora*, or marketplace, where the local officials would render verdicts in a public court setting.
  - This scene, as well as the others throughout the New Testament, foreshadows the righteous judgment of Christ on the Last Day.
- The Jews state to Gallio, “This man persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.”
  - Judaism was considered an officially-sanctioned religion within the Roman Empire. As such, it was not perceived to exist as a threat to the stability of the Roman state. However, any unauthorized cult was strictly permitted throughout the Empire. Thus, the goal of the Jews here appears to be that they want Gallio to rule that Christianity is an illegal cult and prosecute those who practice it.
- Then, as Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrong or vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you; but if there are questions about words and names and your own law, look after it yourselves; I am unwilling to be a judge of these matters.”
  - Gallio’s words represent not only an exoneration, as such, of the Apostle Paul, but an incredible recognition – one that the Jews refused to make.
  - This recognition was that Paul’s views were simply an extension, if you will, of Judaism. This was, from Gallio’s perspective, an internal Jewish dispute. A dispute concerning the nature of the Jewish Law – **and He was right!**

▪ **In fact, this was the reason why Paul had spent so many Sabbaths reasoning with the Jews in the synagogue, proving that Jesus was the Christ. He was taking the Torah [the Law], the Prophets, and the Psalms and showing conclusively how only Christ could have fulfilled everything written in them. In other words, Christianity did not contradict ancient Judaism – it fulfilled it. Thus, true Judaism necessarily leads to Christ – and, consequently, Christianity!**

▪ Thus, Gallio spoke better than he knew!

□ After issuing his ruling, Gallio “drove them [the Jews] away from the judgment seat.”

○ Ironically, it was a pagan Roman who proved the Jews wrong and vindicated God’s servant, Paul.

○ Finally, Luke writes, “And they all took hold of Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue and began beating him in front of the judgment seat. But Gallio was not concerned about any of these things.”

▪ What this scene shows is how anti-Semitic the general Corinthian and Greek population was. After ruling against the Jews, Gallio drove them away from his judgment seat, and the Gentile population seized one of their leaders, Sosthenes [likely the successor to Crispus as the ruler of the local Corinthian synagogue].

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□ Therefore, the words of the Lord were true. No harm befell the Apostle Paul. The Lord protected His servant, and He used a pagan ruler to do it!

□ Thus, as a result of Paul’s obedience and commitment to the Word of God, Christianity enjoyed about a decade of protection under the Roman government.

□ F.F. Bruce writes, “[Gallio’s ruling] meant that for the next ten or twelve years, the gospel could be proclaimed in the provinces of the empire without fear of coming into conflict with Roman law.”

□ Just as Christ Himself was “vindicated” by the Romans in his trial: Pilate declared, “I find no guilt in this man,” so all of God’s faithful servants will one day be exonerated!

□ Yet, one of the lasting effects of Gallio’s ruling may have been that it, once again, proved the words of the Lord to be true, and encouraged Paul, as one scholar writes, to appeal “from the petting outlying court of the procurator of Judea, who was always much under the influence of the ruling party in Jerusalem, to the supreme tribunal of the Empire.”

□ In so doing [that is, Paul’s ultimate appeal to Rome at the end of the Book of Acts] the Gospel spread to the heart of the greatest empire on Earth, and consequently, demonstrated God’s supreme rule over all nations, tribes and tongues! The Gospel – the very power of God Himself – will not be stopped...and we will not be silent!