



Study Guide: Acts – Chapter 18

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This study guide provides an educational overview of Acts Chapter 18 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

Acts Chapter 18 marks a significant phase in the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul, highlighting both the challenges and progress of early Christian evangelism. This chapter contributes to the broader narrative of Acts by showcasing Paul's strategic ministry approach, his interactions with key individuals, and the expansion of the gospel into new cultural contexts. Readers should watch for the interplay between Jewish and Gentile responses to the gospel, the role of partnership in ministry, and the divine guidance that underpins Paul's mission.

Context

The immediate literary context places Acts 18 within the second missionary journey of Paul, following his travels through regions such as Philippi and Thessalonica. The chapter opens with Paul arriving in Corinth, a major urban center in Achaia, known for its diverse population and moral complexity. The historical frame includes the tension between Jewish opposition and Gentile receptivity to the gospel. Key figures in this chapter include Paul, Aquila and Priscilla—tentmakers who become crucial ministry partners—and Apollos, an eloquent preacher who is later mentored by Paul's associates. The setting shifts from Corinth to Ephesus, illustrating the geographic and cultural breadth of early Christian witness.

Outline

The chapter can be divided into several movements that trace the progression of Paul's ministry. It begins with Paul's arrival in Corinth, where he reconnects with Aquila and Priscilla and establishes a tentmaking ministry alongside evangelistic efforts. This is followed by his bold proclamation in the synagogue, facing opposition but also gaining converts. The narrative then shifts to a divine encouragement that sustains Paul amid challenges. Subsequently, Paul's ministry expands as he remains in Corinth for an



extended period, teaching the Word. The final section introduces Apollos in Ephesus, highlighting the ongoing development of the early church through teaching and discipleship.

Verse-by-Verse Study

Verses 1–3: Paul arrives in Corinth and meets Aquila and Priscilla, fellow tentmakers recently expelled from Rome. He stays and works with them, demonstrating the integration of vocational labor and ministry. This partnership underscores the practical and relational aspects of early Christian mission.

Verses 4–8: Paul reasons in the synagogue every Sabbath, seeking to persuade both Jews and Greeks. Despite opposition from some Jews, Crispus, the synagogue leader, and many Corinthians believe and are baptized. Paul’s ministry faces conflict, leading to a divine command to continue boldly, and the Lord’s presence is affirmed through miracles.

Verses 9–17: A vision encourages Paul to persevere, promising protection and success. Paul remains in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching the Word. Opposition culminates in a legal challenge before Gallio, the proconsul, who dismisses the case, allowing Paul to continue unhindered. Paul’s continued ministry is marked by both divine favor and human resistance.

Verses 18–22: After completing his time in Corinth, Paul sails to Syria, stopping in Ephesus where he leaves Aquila and Priscilla. He visits the synagogue briefly before continuing to Caesarea and then Antioch, completing this phase of his journey. This movement highlights the network of early Christian communities and the strategic placement of ministry partners.

Verses 23–28: The chapter closes with the introduction of Apollos, an eloquent and knowledgeable Jew from Alexandria who fervently teaches about Jesus but knows only the baptism of John. Aquila and Priscilla provide further instruction, enabling Apollos to more accurately proclaim the gospel. This episode emphasizes the importance of sound teaching and mentorship in the growth of the church.

Key Themes

One key theme is the integration of work and witness, as seen in Paul’s tentmaking alongside preaching. This reflects a model of ministry that is both self-sustaining and relational. Another theme is divine guidance and encouragement, which empowers Paul to



persist despite opposition. The chapter also highlights the role of partnership in ministry, with Aquila and Priscilla serving as vital collaborators and mentors. Additionally, the expansion of the gospel into diverse cultural settings underscores the universal scope of the Christian message. Finally, the importance of sound doctrine and correction is evident in the instruction given to Apollos, ensuring the integrity of teaching within the early church.

Cross-References

Paul's tentmaking ministry here echoes his similar approach in 1 Corinthians 9:6–15, where he defends his right to support himself while preaching. The opposition he faces recalls earlier synagogue conflicts in Acts 13 and 17, illustrating a consistent pattern of resistance. The divine encouragement in verse 9 parallels God's reassurance to Joshua in Joshua 1:9, emphasizing courage in mission. The legal incident with Gallio connects to Roman governance and the principle of religious freedom, which is further explored in Acts 25. The mentoring of Apollos finds a parallel in 1 Corinthians 3:6–9, where Paul describes the cooperative nature of ministry work. Together, these references deepen understanding of the chapter's themes and historical setting.

Application

Modern discipleship can draw from Acts 18 the example of combining faithful work with evangelistic witness, encouraging believers to see their daily vocations as platforms for ministry. The chapter challenges Christians to persevere amid opposition, relying on God's presence and promises rather than human approval. It also invites believers to value partnership and mentorship within the church, recognizing that growth often occurs through shared teaching and correction. Furthermore, the story of Apollos reminds the church today of the necessity for continual learning and doctrinal clarity. Finally, the narrative encourages openness to cross-cultural mission, trusting that the gospel transcends social and ethnic boundaries.

Summary

Acts Chapter 18 presents a dynamic portrait of Paul's missionary strategy, marked by industriousness, bold proclamation, divine encouragement, and collaborative ministry. Through his time in Corinth and brief visit to Ephesus, the chapter illustrates the challenges of opposition and the power of partnership in spreading the gospel. The introduction of Apollos highlights the ongoing need for sound teaching and discipleship.



Overall, this chapter underscores the resilience and adaptability required for effective ministry, grounded in God's guidance and the support of the Christian community.