

# Acts Chapter 18a

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] All right, if you will take your scripture sheet now, we will get into Acts chapter 18, and we welcome you to our last class for the month of March.

And I cannot believe how quickly these weeks roll around, but here we are facing almost the end of another month. And we are in Acts chapter 18, and if you will look at your scripture sheet, it's down at the bottom of page 556 in the corner there.

And we note that Paul has just delivered the gospel message, and he has got a lot of pushback, a lot of opposition from his Jewish brethren.

The reason that he is so patient with them, although here his patience has just about run out with these people, is that he knows where they're coming from because that's where he was, because before he came to faith in Christ.

But he is signing off on them when they blaspheme the Lord Jesus. And we see that he shook his raiment, which is an Eastern custom.

[ 1 : 1 1 ] And he said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads. I am clean. From henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. And I wish there were some way to explain to you the enormous confusion that surrounds this Jew and Gentile issue.

The scripture breaks down everybody. I think it's in 1 Corinthians 10, 31, something like that, where Paul says, Giving none offense to the Jew, to the Gentile, or to the church of God.

There are three distinct categories. The Jew, those who are direct descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Gentiles, all of those who are not.

And then, Jews and Gentiles who possess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They comprise the church of God. So you've got those three categories here.

And the Apostle Paul, this is another fact that is often lost sight of by evangelicals. The Apostle Paul was raised up by God primarily for the purpose of taking the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles.

[ 2 : 2 4 ] That is such a key issue. He is the apostle to the Gentiles. Israel already had 12 apostles. They were selected by Christ back in Matthew chapter 10.

The Gentiles, which makes up about 99.5% of the world's population, never had an apostle.

Until God raised up Paul, Saul of Tarsus. And he designated him as the apostle to the Gentiles. However, he was also commissioned to go to the Jew and to the Gentiles.

Well, and you'll remember, you'll see this in a number of places in the New Testament where the gospel is referred to as to the Jew first and also to the Gentiles. So that is what he is doing.

He is delivering himself, if you will, of the burden that God laid on him by preaching this gospel, first of all, to the Jew. This is why whenever he got into a new town, he always headed for the synagogue.

[ 3 : 27 ] And there he would proclaim from the Old Testament, because that's all that existed at the time, he would proclaim to these Jews how that Jesus was the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, and he is found in the Old Testament.

And as he would go through it, he would point out all of the places, no doubt Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22, and a host of others beginning clear back with Genesis 3.15, that this one promised by Moses and the prophets was indeed Jesus the Messiah.

That was the burden of his message. You remember in Luke 24, after the resurrection, when Christ confronted the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and he engaged them, but they didn't know that it was he, their risen Lord, and he engaged them, and he revealed to them, he showed them all things in the scriptures concerning himself.

He went through the Old Testament, passages that they were very familiar with, and pointed out his own presence and person in those passages. And after he departed from them, one of these disciples turned to the others and said, did not our hearts burn within us, as he opened unto us the scriptures, by the way.

What a Bible class that must have been. So now, Paul is in this particular city, and he has just delivered the gospel. He's gotten a lot of negative feedback from these people.

[ 5 : 06 ] They blaspheme. They oppose themselves against him. And he says, he shakes his raiment, takes his garment, and shakes it. And this is the equivalent to shaking off the dust of your feet.

When Christ sent the twelve forth, told them, don't go to the Gentiles, don't go to the Samaritans, confine yourself to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach the gospel, heal the sick, raise the dead, etc.

And if they will not receive you, shake off the dust of your feet against them. That's the Eastern custom of saying to a people, I am finished with you.

You are now responsible for your own blood. I've delivered myself. Much like Pilate did. At the crucifixion scene, or when he gave the order for the execution of Christ, remember, he asked for a basin of water.

And in the Roman way, he washed his hands. That was the same thing, the equivalent of saying, I'm finished with this. His blood be upon your heads.

[ 6 : 11 ] He was trying to absolve himself of the responsibility. And Paul says, I am clean from henceforth. I will go unto the Gentiles. And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justice, one that worshipped God.

This is a proselyte. And a proselyte was a Gentile, who came to the conviction that the God of Israel was the true God, and the only true God.

And as a proselyte, he was accepted by the Jews as being one of theirs. And we are told that his house joined hard to the synagogue.

That means it was right next door to the Jewish synagogue. And Crispus, and by the way, you'll see that these names, Justice and Crispus, etc., they are Roman names.

These are Gentiles, or with a Gentile background. And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and he no doubt was what we would call a Grecian. That means he was a Greek-speaking Jew, and influenced by Greek thought, etc.

[ 7 : 24 ] He was the chief ruler of the synagogue. That simply means that he presided kind of like the president of the synagogue. And it was his responsibility to conduct the service and get it underway.

And this man would be the one, if you've ever seen these scenes in a Jewish movie, for instance, they will go, the chief ruler of the synagogue will go to the back of the place, actually it's the front of the auditorium, and there is a large cabinet there.

He will open the cabinet, take out the scroll. It is probably about 18 inches to 2 feet long, and it is all rolled up.

It is a scroll, two scrolls, or two wooden pieces, like dowels between them, and the scriptures are rolled up on that scroll. It's not a book.

Sometimes the Bible refers to it as a book, but it's not. It's a scroll. And they would open that scroll to the certain passage, and he would be the one to go to the cabinet, get out the scrolls, and bring them over, and then if there were a visitor there in the synagogue that day, he would offer the scrolls to the visitor.

[ 8 : 37 ] The visitor would come forth, in this case it's going to be Paul, Paul the apostle. He would come forth, and open the scroll, and read from the portion that he wanted to read, and while he would read, everyone stands for the reading.

Then when he is ready to expound on what he has read, everybody is seated, and he goes on and teaches. This is exactly what Christ did when he returned to his hometown of Nazareth, in Luke chapter 4.

This is one of the very earliest events in the earthly life of Christ. And he opened the scroll to that passage in Isaiah, and read from it, and then began preaching. So this is what Paul is doing here.

And the chief ruler of the synagogue has that responsibility. And we are told that Crispus, who was the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household.

That's his family, and possibly some servants as well. And many of the Corinthians, having believed, and were baptized.

[ 9 : 41 ] And this baptism was, the only baptism they knew, it was the baptism of John. This was the baptism with which John the Baptist entered his ministry.

This is the baptism with which Jesus was baptized. This was the only baptism they knew. Sometimes, I think people are under the impression that this is a Christian baptism.

Christian baptism, Christian baptism, more correctly put, is the baptism of the individual into the body of Christ upon believing.

This is what Paul is talking about in 1 Corinthians 12, 13. He says, For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body and have all been made to drink of one spirit.

That's spirit baptism, and it is the baptism that regenerates. This baptism has no water in it. It is different from John's baptism, which was very much with water.

[ 10 : 47 ] But spirit baptism is when the Spirit of God baptizes the individual into the body of Christ. That's the baptism that regenerates. Spirit of God baptizes you, regenerates you, makes you new on the inside.

Water cannot do that. But this is water baptism here, and it is in keeping with what they were accustomed to. This was just standard operating procedure.

And the Spirit baptism we'll spend more time on later. Then we read in verse 9, Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision.

And he said, Be not afraid, dismiss your fears, but speak and hold not your peace. For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee.

For I have much people in this city. That is, many believers here. So Paul is anticipating a different kind of ministry here in Corinth than what he had had other places.

[ 11 : 55 ] And the proof of it is the fact that he's going to be here in Corinth for a year and a half. And that's rather unusual because he usually could not get away with preaching the gospel for that long in any one city without getting chased out of town.

Somebody said, Everywhere Paul went, he either had a riot or a revival. And most of the time, it was a riot because what would happen, he would go in, start with the synagogue, proclaim Jesus as the Messiah, get a lot of the Jews riled up, and then they in turn would try to turn the Gentiles, the general population, against Paul.

And very often, they succeeded because they were people of influence and familiarity in the area. And they convinced many of the people that Paul was nothing but a rabble-rouser.

He was a deceiver. He preached Jesus with them. He even preached that Jesus of Nazareth came back from the dead. Can you imagine anything as bizarre as that? And they succeeded in turning a lot of the public opinion against him and Paul would be chased out of town.

But here, he is given assurance by the Lord in a night vision that, relax, Paul. Preach the gospel. Enjoy or stay here.

[ 13 : 13 ] I've got many people in this town and they are going to be a lot more receptive. And that's exactly what happens. And later, you can read the 1st and 2nd Corinthian letter that Paul wrote back to these people after having left here.

And in verse 11, it says, he continued there a year and 6 months, 18 months. And when Goliath was the deputy of Achaia, this deputyship is strictly Roman.

Goliath is a Roman pagan and he is a Roman official, government official. And he is put in position there in a position of power and influence.

And we read that the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul. Here again is the Jewish element. And they brought him to the judgment seat.

This is after he's been there for a year and a half, saying, This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law. And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Goliath, and you'll notice I'm just reading here in the bold print, and for those of you who are not familiar with this, the bold print represents the King James Version and the other translations below it are various translations as identified by abbreviation.

[ 14 : 45 ] Goliath said to the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O you Jews, reason would that I should bear with you.

Now look, you see here, do you not see again, a clear distinction between the Jew and the Gentile. This Goliath is a Gentile.

He has no truck with the Jews. All he does is puts up with them. They are a source of irritation and aggravation to him. But he's just tolerating them.

And he is calling them in and he's saying, Listen, if you guys are hassling with this man, Paul, over religious issues, I don't care about that stuff. Your Jewish religion is crazy anyway.

I don't know anything about it. I don't want to know anything about it. You handle that among yourselves. If this is a political issue, if it involves some kind of government action or violation that is under my jurisdiction, then I will get involved.

[ 15 : 47 ] Otherwise, I'm taking hands off of this mess. I have no interest in your religious hassles and problems. You settle them among yourselves. That's what he's telling them. If it be a question of words and names and of your law, technicalities and all this stuff, look ye to it.

In other words, I'm not going to get involved. And then, let's turn over to our next sheet if we will. We're on 558 down the left hand corner. He says, For I will be no judge of such matters.

I guess, here is a guy who, even though he didn't realize it, was acknowledging the legitimacy of a difference between church and state. He's saying, these are religious issues, I'm not involved with that stuff.

That's none of my jurisdiction. If it's a matter of law, breaking the law, or the civil law, or the Roman government, yeah, I'll get involved. But otherwise, don't bother me with this stuff.

In verse 16, he draved them from the judgment seat. In other words, here are these Jews, and here's Paul that they're accusing, and Goliath says, now go on, get out of here.

[ 16 : 55 ] Get out of here. So he chases them off, and they go away mumbling and grumbling, and you can't get justice around here, and so on, and so on. And then we read in verse 17, Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him.

This is obviously a different synagogue, because different name from the other guy. And these Greeks, by the way, these Greeks, and again, I've pointed this out as we've come along, these Greeks are not to be mistaken for Gentiles.

These Greeks are Jews. They are Greek-speaking Jews, but they are very much Jews, and they are involved in the synagogue.

And we are told that they took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. This is the place where they were with Goliath. And Goliath cared for none of these things.

In other words, he wouldn't interfere. He wouldn't make them stop beating. He just dismissed them as just a bunch of crazy, religious, fanatic Jews, want nothing to do with these people, and let them beat on each other all they want to, as long as they don't break the civil law.

[ 18 : 12 ] I don't care what they do with one another. And that's pretty much his attitude here. And Paul, this Sosthenes, who was the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat.

And Goliath, he's the Roman official in charge there, cared for none of these things, took no notice, paid no attention, disregarded, etc. And Paul, verse 18, after this, tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila.

Now, why he is going to Syria is because that was his point of departure. That's where he left from. What he's doing now is concluding his second missionary journey.

He left from Syria. Syria, of course, this is where Damascus is located. That's where his spiritual life began when he was on his way to Damascus, and he was converted there on the road to Damascus.

And he's got Priscilla and Aquila with him. Remember, he picked them up earlier. They were tent makers of the same profession as Paul. And we read that Paul, having arrived in Syria, having shorn his head in Sincrea, for he had a vow.

[ 19 : 40 ] And this has to do with Jewish tradition, and this is strictly Judaism. You see, it's important to note, guys, that when Saul of Tarsus became a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, he became what we would call a Christian.

But, and here's a really important point, he did not stop being a Jew. He died a Jew. This is the real stumbling point for people today, and I'll tell you who it's a real stumbling point for more than anyone else, and that is Jews.

Most of the Jews today think you cannot become a Christian, you cannot become a believer in Jesus Christ, and still be a Jew.

Of course you can. If you are born a Jew, you can't stop becoming a Jew, or stop being a Jew. If you were born of German parentage, and later moved to Ireland, that doesn't mean you are no longer German.

It may mean that you are now Irish insofar as your citizenship is concerned, or whatever, or your location, but whatever you are born as, that's what you are going to die as.

[ 21 : 07 ] If it's a Jew, it's a Jew. If it's German, or Spanish, or whatever it is, because the Jew is somewhat different, because Judaism is not only an ethnicity, and a birth thing, but it is also a religion thing.

So when Paul of Tarsus became a believer in Jesus Christ, he became a Hebrew Christian.

Most Jews that you meet today who have come to faith in Jesus Christ do not refer to themselves as a converted Jew. They refer to themselves as a completed Jew.

They're still Jews. Jews who have embraced Yeshua HaMashiach as their Messiah. And there are many in our midst even today.

So this is an important distinction to make. And he is still maintaining his Judaism. This business here, he had a vow. What's that all about? That's part of the Jewish ritual, part of the Jewish tradition, the taking of a vow, and having his head shorn, that's not something that he had to do, but it is something that he chose to do as a Jew.

[ 22 : 34 ] And that's neither here nor there as regards his salvation or his relationship to Christ. And then we read, and he came to Ephesus and left them there. That is, left Aquila and Priscilla there.

But he himself entered into the synagogue. Fellas, this is one of the most incredible places in the world. If you ever should have opportunity to visit the ruins of ancient Ephesus, it is just mind-blowing.

It is really something. It's right on the coast of Turkey, modern-day Turkey, and the city is there in its ruins, and even the ruins are magnificent.

And as you pour over all of these ruins and the remains of these huge buildings and everything, the excavators went in there and did a lot of excavation work, archaeological work, and they discovered that these people had actually, in Ephesus, they had devised for themselves a system for running water, and they were even able to separate cold water from hot water, and it was extended to certain houses, and you can tell that those houses were the remains of people who had a great deal of affluence.

They were the wealthy neighborhood, if you will, and it's just amazing. You can spend all kinds of times there in ancient Ephesus, and they lead tours there on a daily basis.

[ 24 : 02 ] And when you walk into the city of Ephesus, a lot of the cobblestone is still original, been there for thousands of years, and to just think that as you walk down the main street of Ephesus, it was on these stones that Paul the apostle walked.

a couple of thousand years ago. It's a really cool thing. If you ever have opportunity to be there, don't pass it up. So, he's in Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself entered into the synagogue, and look, reason with the Jews.

This is what he does all the time. It means he argued with them. It doesn't mean that he went in there to pick a fight. He didn't go into quarrel with them, but when the Bible uses the word to argue, it simply means to put forth your case, to state the strengths of your case, set forth your position, and do so in an organized, articulate way, so that people understand where you're coming from, what you're saying.

And he does this every time he gets into town, goes into the synagogue, because he knows that people there are familiar with the Old Testament. Bear in mind, the New Testament did not exist.

He couldn't preach from that. We preach from the Old Testament. And they desired him, verse 20, to tarry longer time with them. He consented not.

[ 25 : 30 ] He had a schedule, obviously, to keep, and he wanted to be in Jerusalem by the time of the feast. So we are told that he bade them farewell, saying, I must, by all means, keep this feast that comes in Jerusalem, but I will return again unto you.

I'll come back, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus. And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and saluted the church, this gone up, by the way, is to Jerusalem, that's understood.

In verse 22, now, he's landed at Caesarea. Caesarea is the Roman capital in Israel.

when Pontius Pilate was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, when Christ was tried before Pontius Pilate, that was the Passover time, Pilate ordinarily would not be in Jerusalem.

Wouldn't want anything to do with it. Ordinarily, he would be in Caesarea. And Caesarea was only what, maybe, 20 miles, possibly 20 miles from Jerusalem.

[ 26 : 51 ] Jerusalem, of course, was inland. Caesarea was right on the coast. It was the Roman headquarters for the whole land of Israel. And that was where Pontius Pilate spent most of his time.

And one reason was because it was a lot cooler there. It was right on the Mediterranean coast. And as you look at your maps of Israel, you can see Caesarea there. And of course, it was named after the Caesar.

And it is a tremendous archaeological site today right there on the coast. So, this is when he returns after his second missionary journey. And then we are told that when he landed at Caesarea and gone up, that going up is where you go to Jerusalem because wherever you are in Israel, wherever you are in Israel, if you are going to Jerusalem, you go up.

And it's not north or south, but it's elevation. Jerusalem was located on Mount Moriah, and it is the highest elevation around in that whole area.

So, you always go up to Jerusalem. He went up to Jerusalem and met there with the brethren. That is the church, and these are all Jews who have come to faith in Christ, probably a sprinkling of Gentiles, but not many.

[ 28 : 12 ] And then it says he went down to Antioch, and that down again is of course just the opposite. It is down in the topography and the elevation. And the Antioch, of course, has to do with Syria where he launched his missionary journeys from, and we are told that the name Christian first came into being in the city of Antioch.

And it was in Antioch that men and women were first called Christians. And by the way, it wasn't particularly a complementary term. It was some regarded as a derogatory term or term of derision to be called a Christian, but we know that that changed over the years.

And that concludes his second missionary journey because he's back from the place that he started from. Food's here. Is there a quick question anybody has? Dan? What law was he referring to that he broke?

Was it Roman law? And if so, why did they prohibit that? No, Paul had not broken any Roman law. He hadn't broken any political law. That's why Goliath wouldn't enter into it.

He says, you guys, you Jews, are just hassling and fighting about this religious stuff. If this man that you are accusing of wrongdoing, if he were guilty of some criminal law violating Roman law, I would get involved and I would dispense judgment.

[ 29 : 36 ] But this is a matter just for you Jews and your religion. I don't want anything to do with this. And he recused himself from any involvement. man. They said it was a law. Was that a Jewish law?

Oh, yeah. Yeah, it was Jewish law. Yeah, that's where he always differed with the Jews. And whenever the Jew talks about the law, he's always referring to the law of Moses.

Because in Judaism, just like Islam, there is no distinction between religious and political. In other words, under the Mosaic law, there was no such thing as church and state.

They were together. They were wedded. It was one entity. Here in the United States, under our government, we have a very definite separation of church and state.

And the reason we do is because that from which we gained our independence in England was very much church and state together.

[ 30 : 39 ] And the state could ride herd on the church, and the church could ride herd on the state, as you will. And it was a mixed bag.

And our founding fathers, when this nation was birthed, said, we don't want anything to do with that. We don't want the church and the state to be intertwined.

We want a separation between them because each has legitimate jurisdiction on its own. water. And that was a recoil from what was existing in England. Yes? In Ephesus, how did they make the water happen?

I don't know. I have no idea how they did that. I have no idea how they did that. But they had a system. And archaeologists are generally of the same opinion that Ephesus and the standard of living there in Ephesus was probably at the peak of the whole Mediterranean world.

This was the place to be. And it was obviously very refined compared to the rest of it.