

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**ACTS 18****Acts 18**

Acts 18 is the story of the Apostle Paul's leaving the storied city of Athens, the academic and philosophical epicenter of the Greco-Roman world, and making a short journey to Corinth. Corinth was located on the Adriatic shore of the Greek Isthmus that separated the mainland of Greece and the Peloponnesian land mass, which jutted out into the Mediterranean. I encourage you to look at the maps in the back of your Bible or to access the internet and look at the nation of Greece during the days of the first century to get a perspective of the importance of Corinth.

Corinth was the most cosmopolitan city in the Mediterranean world of the first century. It would have been a city much like the city of San Diego, California, in that there was a beautiful harbor, it was ethnically very diverse, and people from all over the Mediterranean basin and beyond came through the city of Corinth. The Isthmus, where Corinth was located, separated the Adriatic Sea to the west and the Aegean Sea to the east by a distance of approximately four to five miles. I have stood more than once at ancient Cenchrea on the Aegean side of the isthmus and looked through the canal now there (not in Paul's day) to the azure blue Adriatic/Ionian Sea just a short distance away.

In the days of the Apostle, people came from the area around the Black Sea and as far away as Persia in the east and from what is the continent of Europe, as far away as Tarshish or Spain, to Corinth to live and work. So, there were people there from every part of the world. They came to Corinth not only for the work but the sports and athletic complexes that were built there, as the "Isthmian Games" were only second to the Greek

Olympics in lure and prestige. They were the training grounds for the Olympic competition. The Isthmus, being so narrow, became a place where mariners would put ashore at either Corinth (on the Adriatic) or Cenchrea (on the Aegean) and unladen their ships and would be pulled by ropes and a pulley system across the narrow isthmus to the other side on what would look very much like a railway system. Once on the other side, they would put the ship back in the water, laden it again, and sail away to their destination. This took thousands of workers, so there was work and wealth abounding in Corinth and Cenchrea. This attracted businesspeople from around the world. The emphasis on the body and athleticism led to debauchery of every sort. In the ancient world, one who was involved in lustful, sensual behavior as a way of life was said to be a "Corinthian," and everyone knew that as an erotic connotation. The wealthy, talented, disciplined person was drawn to Corinth, along with the vilest of passions being lived out in public display with the emphasis on the body and sensuality.

This was the fertile soil for the life-transforming presence and power of the Lord Jesus and the gospel of Salvation and deliverance that Paul preached. Paul had just come from Athens and realized that just talking about Jesus in a philosophical manner would never change the wicked heart of man or fully tell the story of redemption from sin. So, he determined to not only preach Jesus, but that Jesus was crucified as a substitute to pay for man's sin, He was buried and rose again on the third day to prove He was indeed the Son of God and Messiah/Redemer of all who would repent and acknowledge Him as such. Please read in conjunction with Acts 18, I Corinthians 1:18-2:5.

Prayer and Action Steps

Lord, thank You that the Gospel is still the power of God unto salvation to all who believe, to the Jew first and then to the non-Jew. Thank You that the message of the Good News is not to just one class or socio-economic group, or race, or gender, but is the same for everyone. Please help me to be mindful in telling people about Jesus that I do not draw back or succumb to fear in telling the truth in love, that Jesus is the only way of Salvation. Amen