ACTS 18

Do Not Be Afraid; Go On Speaking

tentmakers in Corinth, a night vision, a proconsul who would not judge, and a preacher who learned more

> *"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."*
> ACTS 18:9–10

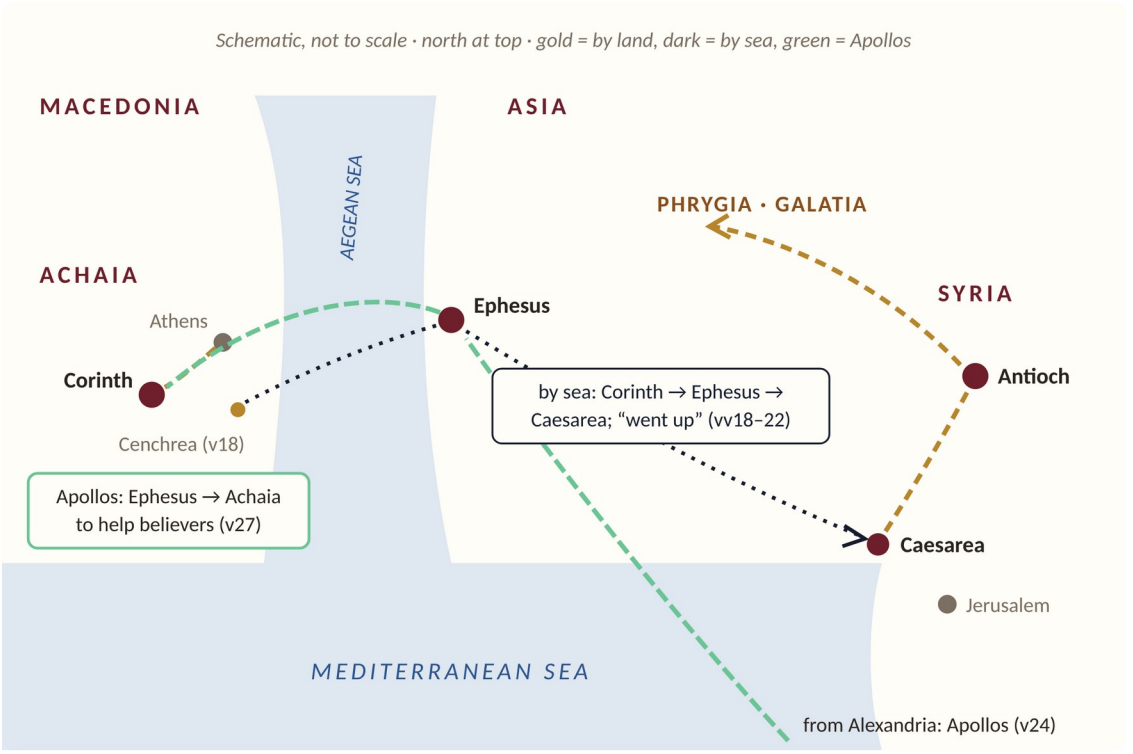
A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

Where Luke has brought us

1. Acts 17 ended on Mars Hill with a few believers and many sneers.

2. This chapter is one of the anchors of New Testament chronology.

3. Paul wrote to this church more than to any other, and his letters fill in Luke's outline.



Tentmakers in Corinth

A city at the crossroads, a couple expelled from Rome, and an apostle who works with his hands

ACTS 18:2

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,

DAVID GUZIK

Corinth: crossroads and hedonism; Claudius c. AD 49; tentmaking as ministry.

R.C. SPROUL

The apostles' days were harder than we imagine — Corinth shows it.

MATTHEW HENRY

A scholar with a trade; he would not make the gospel burdensome.

σκηνοποιοί

SKĒNOPOIOI · "TENT-MAKERS"

From skēnē, tent, and poieō, to make — found only here in the New Testament.

Your Blood Be on Your Own Heads

Silas and Timothy arrive, the synagogue resists, and the house next door fills up

ACTS 18:6

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."

DAVID GUZIK

Timothy's good news; not a speck of synagogue dust; Crispus baptized.

MATTHEW HENRY

Pressed in spirit, pressing in preaching; he gives them over, not his work.

συνείχετο

SYNEICHETO · "DEVOTING HIMSELF COMPLETELY"

From synechō, to hold together, to press in on, to grip.

I Have Many People in This City

A night vision, a promise of presence, and eighteen months of teaching

ACTS 18:9

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;

DAVID GUZIK

The promise grounds the command; no in-and-out evangelist.

C.H. SPURGEON

God speaks in the man who speaks for God; election spurs labor.

MATTHEW HENRY

Christ's people called in by degrees, sermon by sermon.

μὴ φοβοῦ

MĒ PHOBOU · "DO NOT BE AFRAID"

Phobeomai, to fear, in the present imperative with a negative — usually "stop being afraid," which is why the NASB adds "any longer."

Gallio at the Judgment Seat

A charge of illegal religion, a proconsul who throws it out, and a synagogue leader beaten

ACTS 18:12

But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat,

DAVID GUZIK

Right not to judge religion; wrong to ignore a beating.

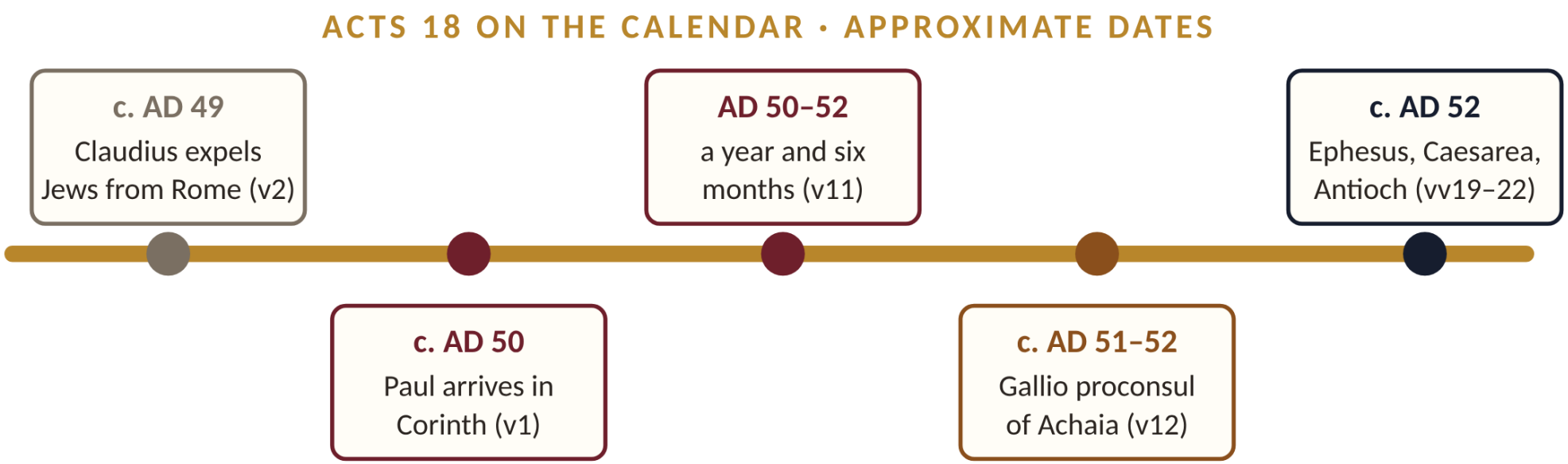
MATTHEW HENRY

Would not meddle — good; indifference too far — bad.

βῆμα
BĒMA · "JUDGMENT SEAT"

A raised platform, a tribunal from which a magistrate gave judgment; the remains of Corinth's bēma still stand in the old forum.

Acts 18 on the calendar



Two outside facts — Claudius's edict and Gallio's term — pin Paul's Corinth years to about AD 50–52; the dates are approximate.

If God Wills

A vow at Cenchrea, a promise at Ephesus, and the long loop home and out again

ACTS 18:18

Paul, having remained many days longer, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow.

DAVID GUZIK

A Nazirite vow; three years' report at Antioch; journey three begins.

MATTHEW HENRY

We purpose, but He disposes; strengthening the disciples.

εὐχήν
EUCHĒN · "VOW"

Euchē means both a prayer and a vow; James uses it for prayer (Jas 5:15).

Apollos, Mighty in the Scriptures

An eloquent preacher who knew only John's baptism, and a couple who taught him more accurately

ACTS 18:25

This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John;

DAVID GUZIK

Excited about what he knew; taught privately; a real gain to the kingdom.

C.H. SPURGEON

Believed through grace; helped, so bound to help.

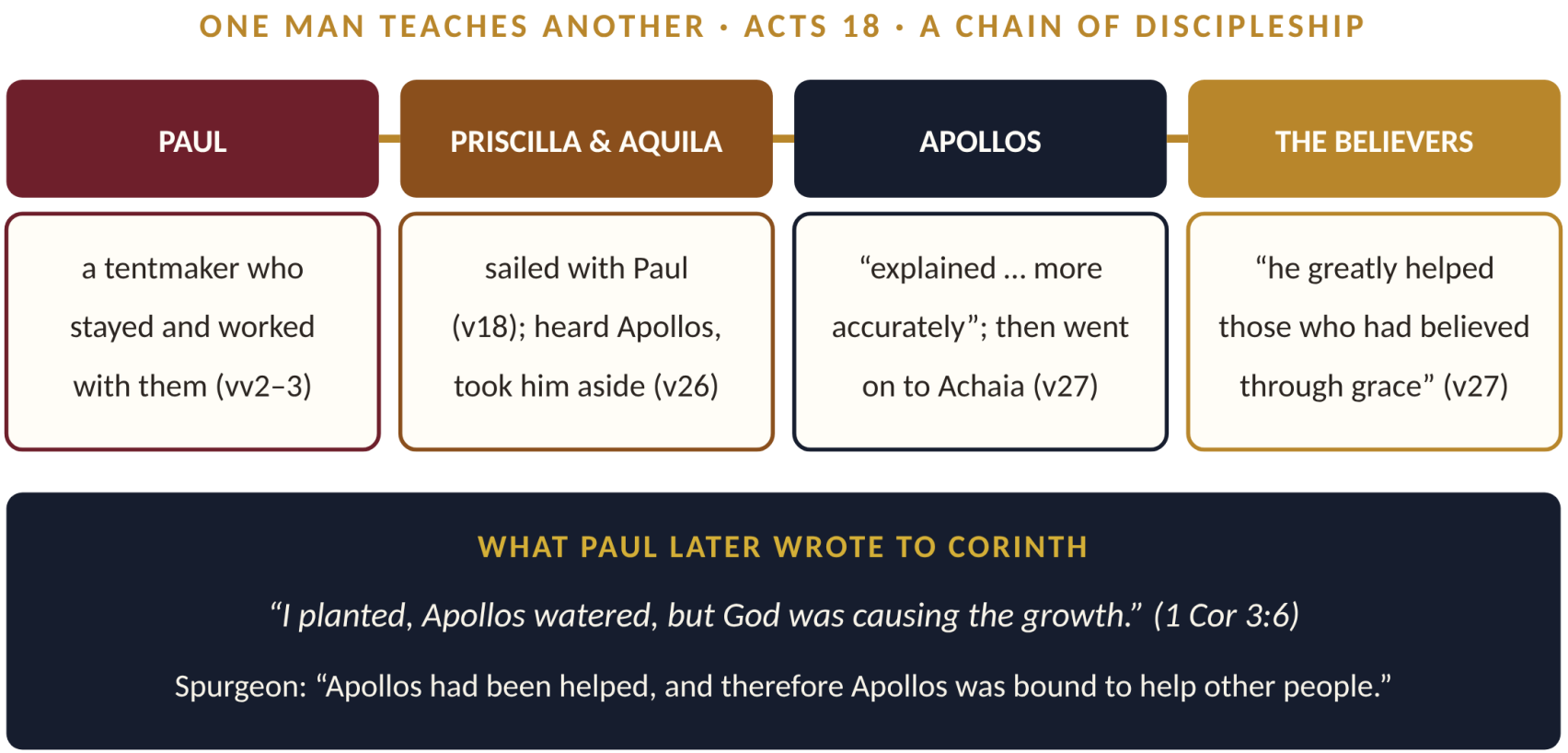
MATTHEW HENRY

Good head, good heart; glad to be shown his defects.

λόγιος
LOGIOS · "ELOQUENT"

From logos; a man of words — learned and able in speech.

One man teaches another



Read left to right: Paul worked beside Priscilla and Aquila, they took Apollos aside, and Apollos went on to help the believers Paul had left in Achaia.

What to carry from this chapter

1

God's man had a day job.

Henry: "Though he was bred a scholar, yet he was master of a handicraft trade."

2

Encouragement fuels the work.

When Silas and Timothy came with good news from Thessalonica, Paul "began devoting himself completely to the word" (v5).

3

A warned man is responsible for himself.

"Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean" (v6) is the watchman's language of Ezekiel 33.

4

Even Paul was afraid.

Spurgeon: "Even Paul was not without his tendency to fear."

More to carry

5

Election is a reason to preach.

"I have many people in this city" (v10).

6

Stay long enough to make disciples.

Guzik: "He was no 'in and out' evangelist, but a man committed to making disciples."

7

Gallio's bēma and Christ's.

Gallio would not judge "questions about words and names" (v15).

8

We purpose, but He disposes.

Henry on "I will return to you again if God wills" (v21).

Talk it through

1. Paul worked a trade and preached on the Sabbath. How does my ordinary job — or my daily routine — become part of my ministry rather than a break from it?

2. When the synagogue rejected him, Paul moved next door and kept going. When people reject my witness, do I quit, get bitter, or move next door?

3. The Lord told a frightened apostle, “Do not be afraid any longer … I am with you.” What fear keeps me silent about Jesus, and what would change if I believed He is with me?

4. “I have many people in this city.” Who in my city, my facility or my family might be one of God’s people not yet called — and what is my part in calling him?

5. Gallio “was not concerned about any of these things.” Where am I tempted to be fair-minded but indifferent about the things of God?

CLOSING

Acts 18 is a chapter about ordinary faithfulness: making tents, staying put, speaking when afraid, and teaching one man at a time. The Lord stands with His frightened servant, Rome's court cannot stop His word, and two tentmakers help shape a great preacher. Do not be afraid; go on speaking — He has many people in this city.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study and reflection journal: see the Acts study page.