



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## The Greatest Missionary on the Move

JANUARY 24, 2019

Pastor David Andersen / PO Box 2020, Chesterfield, VA 23832 / David.Andersen@capitolcom.org

**Acts 18:18-23** *And 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. 19) And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there. Now he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. 20) And when they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not consent, 21) but taking leave of them and saying, "I will return to you again if God wills," he set sail from Ephesus. 22) And when he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and went down to Antioch. 23) And having spent some time there, he departed and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.* (NASB)

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"A FREE CITY, EPHESUS HAD ITS OWN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY. IT WAS THE CAPITAL OF THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF ASIA. MANY JEWS LIVED THERE ... ITS POPULATION WAS ESTIMATED AT THE TIME TO BE A QUARTER OF A MILLION, ONE OF THE LARGEST CITIES OF THE EMPIRE. IT WILL BE PAUL'S MISSIONARY CENTER FOR HIS THIRD JOURNEY."  
DARRELL BOCK

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Why did Paul continue at Corinth? Did Paul plan such a roundabout way to Antioch of Syria? Had the Jews ever given such a warm reception as Ephesus? Why didn't Paul stay longer? Had Paul always returned to the first and sending churches? Is this the beginning of Paul's third missionary trip? Why did Paul return to all the churches he had planted?

### FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

➤ JANUARY 31: ACTS 18:24-28 *APOLLOS PROVES THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST*

➤ FEBRUARY 7: ACTS 19:1-7 *THE NECESSITY OF BELIEVING IN JESUS CHRIST*

Paul was in the most wicked city in the Roman Empire, known for its worship of the goddess of love and the thousand temple prostitutes who roamed the city at night. Worse, Paul had arrived alone. No doubt the iniquity of this city weighed heavily upon his heart. Worse, he arrived with no money, so he had to immediately find a job. Soon he connected with Aquila and Priscilla, a Jewish couple recently deported from Rome, who shared the same occupation in making tents. Worse, when Paul proclaimed the truth about their Messiah in the Jewish synagogue that Jesus was the Christ, he met the fury and blasphemy of the unbelieving Jews. Worse, he had to distance himself from his own people because of their angry, blind rejection of their Messiah. He had shaken their dust from his garments saying, "Your blood be upon your own heads! I am clean. From now on I shall go to the Gentiles." He would not be judged for neglecting to warn them to flee from the wrath to come upon them for rejecting their own Savior and Lord. Yet Paul was encouraged by the arrival of his teammates, Silas and Timothy. He must have been more encouraged when Titius provided his home next to the synagogue. Soon he would have been thrilled by the conversion of Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, who received Christ with his entire household and with such influence that "many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized." Yet his ultimate delight was seeing his Lord in the night promising many people and protection.

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"THE APOSTLE HAD NOT LOST SIGHT OF HIS OBJECTIVE TO EVANGELIZE THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF ASIA. PROVIDENTIALLY PREVENTED FROM ENTERING THE AREA FORMERLY (16:6), HE SENSED THAT NOW THE TIME WAS RIPE ... HE HAD ALREADY TARRIED LONGER HERE THAN ANY OTHER SPOT." EVERETT HARRISON

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### BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30 AM –PRAYER MEETING – GAB 6<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR SPEAKER'S CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 6<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR SPEAKER'S CONFERENCE ROOM

# Virginia

## The Greatest Missionary on the Move

### I. REASSURANCE AND REMAINING ACTS 18:18

Due to the salvation of Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, and the exodus from the synagogue that followed him next door into the home of Titius Justus, Paul knew that persecution was escalating among the Jews, so he was planning his exit. Jesus personally changed his plans when he appeared to Paul in the night saying, “*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.*” With these words, Paul was so encouraged that he remained a year and six months. Upon seeing Sosthenes fall into the trap that he had laid for Paul, and removed forcefully with rods from the Bema seat and then beaten by the people, Paul must have been amazed at the incredible protection of Christ. In his gratitude both for the great multiplying of the church and Jesus Christ’s personal protection, he probably made a Nazirite vow (Num 6:2-21) of thanksgiving to God. The fulfilling of the vow would have kept him at Corinth “*many days*” and would have provided a date of departure when the vow was fulfilled. Thus Paul began his trip back to his sending church with his friends, Priscilla and Aquila, his hosts.

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“PAUL FOLLOWED THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF MAKING A NAZIRITE VOW WHICH STIPULATED THAT A PERSON CUT HIS HAIR AT THE CONCLUSION OF A SPECIFIC PERIOD. WITHIN THIRTY DAYS FOLLOWING THIS PERIOD, A SACRIFICE HAD TO BE OFFERED IN JERUSALEM.”  
SIMON KISTEMAKER

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### II. RECEPTION AND RETURNING ACTS 18:19-21

Having cut his hair at Cenchrea, the eastern port of Corinth, Paul sailed directly across the Aegean Sea to the great capital of Asia Minor, Ephesus. Though he was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem to offer the sacrifice for his vow, he stayed long enough to present the Gospel to the Jews in the synagogue. These Jews were even more noble

than those in Berea and they requested that he “*stay for a longer time.*” Instead of immediately rejecting their Messiah, as most of the Jews had done, they wanted Paul to teach them more about Jesus Christ! Paul must have been astounded at such a delightful reception! There was still a remnant of Jews who would believe. Yet Paul had to keep his vow and make it to Jerusalem soon to fulfill it, so he was not able to consent to their request. Thus, he made them a promise, “*I will return to you again if God wills.*” As Paul left Ephesus and Priscilla and Aquila, he probably had never been more excited and thankful in his life. Not only had Jesus protected him in Corinth and elected many of its citizens out of their wickedness, now he had experienced a unified request from an entire synagogue for him to teach them about Jesus Christ!

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“IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT, RECOGNIZING THE IMMENSE STRATEGIC POTENTIAL OF THE CITY, THIS WAS HIS FOCUSED GOAL FOR HIS THIRD JOURNEY.”

BRUCE MILNE

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### III. REPORTING AND RESTORING ACTS 18:22-23

Paul’s ship docked at the port of Jerusalem, Caesarea, and he immediately “*went up and greeted the church.*” Not only did Paul fulfill his vow in Jerusalem, he particularly wanted to report to the Mother Church all that God was doing throughout the world in answer to their prayers. They must have become just as encouraged and excited as Paul when they heard all that God had done through him. Their persecutor had now become the mightiest Apostle! Then Paul went down to his sending church in Antioch of Syria and not only reported what God was doing, but he “*spent some time there*” with his faithful friends and prayer warriors. Soon Paul began his third missionary journey and returned to the lion’s lair where the Jews had stoned him, “*strengthening all the disciples.*”

#### Questions to Ponder:

- 1) What things in your life bring your greatest discouragement and what gives you your greatest encouragement?
- 2) How do you show your gratitude to God for all that He has done for you and all that He has given to you?
- 3) Are you a faithful witness for Jesus Christ in this capital as Paul was in the capitals of the world of his day?