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The End of Paul's Second Missionary Journey 18: 18-22

51-52 AD

The end of Paul's Second Missionary Journey DIG: About how long did Paul minister in Corinth? Why did Paul sail from Corinth at that time of year? What kind of a vow did Paul take? Why wasn't this a Nazarite vow? What did taking the vow show about his faithfulness to his Jewish roots? Where did Paul sail to next? Why didn't he stay very long? Where was he destined to go?

REFLECT: What is your gauge for determining whether a particular ministry opportunity is yours to accomplish or somebody else's? Thinking of a time when you said yes to something but should have said no, what resulted from your decision to barrel ahead? Did you end up getting burned? Explain?

This section provides a transition between **Paul's Second** and **Third Missionary Journeys**. On the one hand, it concludes **the Second**, with Paul returning to **Antioch** where **his** missionary journey began (**to see link click Bv – Disagreement between Paul and Barnabas**). On the other hand, **Paul's** brief visit to **Ephesus** looks toward **the Third**, which would be spent primarily in that **city**.[434]

Paul, having stayed many more days, the court of **Gallio** freed **Paul** to continue **his** ministry in **Corinth** (**to see link click Cc – Many Respond to the Good News in Corinth**)**. Yeshua** had kept **His** promise to protect **him (18:10),** and the chief means of protection would be Roman law. That was in addition to the **one-and-a-half years** mentioned in **18:11**. **Second Thessalonians** was probably written during this period. So it seems that **Paul** was in **Corinth** about two years. Then **Paul** decided it was **God's** will for **him** to leave **Corinth** and return to **his** home church in **Antioch**. **He said farewell to the brothers and set sail to** the province of **Syria** that included the land of Isra'el**, and with him were Priscilla,**

Aquila, and presumably Timothy **(18:18a).** Since **Silas'** arrival in **Corinth** is the last time **he** is mentioned in **Acts (18:5), he s**eems to have stayed there to minister. The trial in the court of **Gallio** probably took place in July or August of 51 AD. It may be that that Jewish leaders wanted to take advantage of **Gallio** while **he** was still new at **his** post, and before **he** heard anything negative about them (if this was their aim, **Gallio** disappointed them). If this was the correct timing, it meant that **Paul** stayed another month, leaving **Corinth** before the shipping closed down for the year.[435]

At Cenchrea, their point of departure and the Aegean harbor of **Corinth**, **Paul had his hair cut off, for he was keeping a vow (18:18b). Yeshua** rules out oaths for believers but not **vows**, although the distinction between them is not clear **(Matthew 5:33-37)**. What kind of **vow** did **Paul** take, and what did **cutting his hair** have to do with it? Nothing is said of what **he vowed** to do, but **Numbers 6:1-21** describes the Nazirite vow, which involves allowing **the hair** to grow during **the vow**; **and the Oral Law** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ei – The Oral Law**) **tractate Nazir spells out the details of such vows, including their minimum length, thirty days.** Strictly speaking, however, this could not have been a Nazirite vow; for if it had been, **Paul** would not have been shaved in **Corinth** but would have waited till **he** arrived in Yerushalayim to shave **his** head and offer the proper sacrifice in the Temple. **Furthermore, if we assume that the patterns described in the Oral Law, compiled around 220 AD, were already being followed in Paul's day, he would have had to spend at least thirty days in Isra'el to validate his vow (Nazir 3:6 and 7:3), since a Nazirite vow undertaken in the "land of the Goyim" was invalid.**[436] Perhaps it was in connection with **his** vision **(18:9-11)**, a means of expressing thanksgiving and seeking the continued blessing of **the Lord** in **the Corinthian** mission. But no matter what the details of **Paul's vow** were, this verse proves that **he** did not abandon **his** Jewishness and the Torah, on the contrary, even when **he** became as a **Gentile among the Gentiles he** continued to observe Jewish practices **(First Corinthians 9:20-22)**.[437]



When they arrived at Ephesus (once again, **Luke** subtly introduces that main city of **Paul's Third Missionary Journey, Paul left Priscilla and Aquila**. **They** undoubtedly continued to evangelize in **the city** until **Paul's** return. Now, **Paul's** plan was simply to change ships and continue on to **Jerusalem**. Nothing more. But since there was some time between ships **he** continued to follow the principle of **Romans 1:16 and went into the synagogue and debated with the Jewish people. When they asked him to stay longer, he declined, instead taking leave of them while saying, "God willing, I'll return to you again." Then he set sail from Ephesus (18:19-21).** Thus, the stage was set for **Paul's Third Missionary Journey.** Art by Sarah Beth Baca: see more information on Links and Resources.

After landing at Caesarea (back within the borders of the Promised Land)**, he went up and greeted Messiah's community** in **Jerusalem. Each of Paul's missionary journeys began, and ended in, Jerusalem.** It appears that the direction of the prevailing winds made it easier for ships to reach **Caesarea** than Seleucia, the port for **Antioch (13:4)**, which was about 250 miles to the north. **Then he went down to Antioch** and reported to **his** home church all that **God** had done on **his Second Missionary Journey (18:22)**. **He** had been gone from **Antioch** perhaps two years or more, and the believers there were overjoyed to see **him** and hear about the work of **ADONAI** among the Gentiles. **Paul** rested up and spent some time in **Antioch** before beginning **his** new missionary journey. **His** goal was **Ephesus**.

Lord, Your *Word says that people without* ***knowledge*** *are doomed* ***(Hosea 4:1-6)***

– doomed
to making continuous mistakes, doomed to finding ourselves separated from ***Your*** *will and purpose. May I walk so closely to* ***You*** *and in step with* ***Your Spirit*** *that whenever I turn to the right or to the left,* ***my ears will hear this command behind me, saying "This is the way, walk in it" (Isaiah 30:21). Teach me good judgment and knowledge, Lord, for I rely on Your mitzvot (Psalm 119:66).***[438]