

Dr. Craig Keener, Acts, Lecture 19

Acts 18, Paul Comes to Corinth

© 2024 Craig Keener and Ted Hildebrandt

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Acts. This is session 19 on Acts 18. Paul comes to Corinth.

Happily, usually, even when we suffer at times, there are times of reprieve afterwards. Macedonia was very rough on Paul, and Silas, physically and probably emotionally. But when they get to Corinth, things are calmed down a lot.

Athens, there's verbal opposition, but there's no persecution in terms of beatings or things like that. And the same with Corinth. At least for 18 months, he's going to have it pretty nice.

And the Lord's going to actually speak to him in the night vision and encourage him that way in Corinth. Well, let's look at Corinth. Corinth was near Athens.

Corinth was the capital of Achaia. Actually, the gospel must have spread out from there because, in 2 Corinthians, Paul speaks of the churches of Achaia. Well, in verse 2, we read that the reason he meets Aquilla and Priscilla there, they've been expelled from Rome.

It says that the emperor Claudius had expelled Jews from Italy. This is also attested by Suetonius. There's a debate about when this happened.

It's normally dated 41 or more often and more probably, and I've written on this, the year 49. Dio Cassius in the third century doesn't attest to an expulsion. That part of Dio Cassius is actually missing.

But he attests instead that the Jews under Claudius couldn't meet. And that may have been in 41. It may have been earlier, lesser restriction.

And then in 49, they were expelled. That they were expelled is virtually certain because Suetonius and Luke both independently attest to this. Luke is writing before Suetonius.

Suetonius definitely did not get it from Luke. He gives us details that Luke doesn't give and Luke probably wouldn't have wanted to have given. But Suetonius is writing in the early second century.

He's writing long before Dio Cassius, about a century before Dio Cassius is writing. So, we have good reason to believe it's an expulsion. There was a similar expulsion

under Tiberius when actually a number of young men were not only expelled but they were drafted into the Roman army to go fight and probably lose their lives.

It's estimated, based on those references about the expulsion under Tiberius, it's estimated that there were about 40 to 50,000 Jews in Rome, which would be perhaps 5% of the population of Rome. Now when we speak of an expulsion, by expulsion we mean officially they were expelled, not that everybody actually left. Often the Romans would make official popular pronouncements, this group was expelled from Rome.

Did everybody actually leave? Probably not. It would be very hard for them to regain their property after the expulsion was over and some of them would come back. These things weren't enforced as much as they were decreed.

So, most scholars think it wasn't really all the Jews who left, despite the language of Suetonius and especially Luke. But remember Luke sometimes uses all hyperbolically, like in Acts chapter 19, all of Asia received the word through Paul's ministry in Ephesus. Well certainly it did spread to all of Asia, but does that really mean literally every individual person? It's just like Matthew and Matthew 4, all those who were in Syria who were sick were brought to Jesus and he healed them all.

If he healed everybody in Syria who was sick in Matthew chapter 4, where do we get all the sick people in the rest of Matthew? Where do we get all the sick people in Acts? So, there's an element of, and it wasn't just biblical writers, I mean it was writers in general who would use all in this way. It didn't necessarily mean every individual, but it meant very widespread. Suetonius says that this happened on account of one Crestus.

Crestus was a common slave name, so it was a common name in Rome. It actually was a Greek word meaning kind. But it was also a common Roman misspelling of Christus because Romans weren't familiar with that name apart from Christ.

Suetonius knew the name Christ, but his source may not have done so. And the majority of scholars here think that Suetonius' source misunderstood Crestus, and that the expulsion of the Jewish community from Rome, the disturbances, had to do with one Crestus. Well, that would make sense, because what was a Christ? A Christ was a king, and that wouldn't go over too well in Rome.

And also, what would the Jewish community be debating over? Well, they probably wouldn't be debating over a slave so much as they would be debating over the identity of Christ. So, most scholars think that that's what they were debating over, and at least some Jews had to leave. Certainly, the instigators would be wise to leave town after the decree was made.

Those who were involved in the disputes would be wise to leave. Why wouldn't Luke mention this? Remember, Luke is writing an apologetic. When you write an apologetic, as Josephus did, you mention the good precedents.

You don't mention the bad ones. And if this had anything to do with debates about Jesus as the Christ, there was good reason for Luke not to want to emphasize that point. But there was also a good reason for Aquila and Priscilla, who were Jewish believers probably.

They may have been one to Christ by Paul, but they may have already been Jewish believers in Rome. We read about people from Rome already in Acts Chapter 2. Rome didn't have all that they needed with Paul getting there or others as the heart of the empire. But there were some believers there.

And anyway, they were expelled probably around the year 49, which would fit this narrative because, for reasons that we'll see, this is happening somewhere around probably 51, give or take a year. Aquila and Priscilla or Prisca. Paul uses in his letters the formal names Prisca and Silvanus, formal Latin names.

Luke uses the more informal names Priscilla and Silas, but these are the same people. These are the informal versions, informal Latin versions of the formal Latin versions that Paul uses. And we find that elsewhere.

There are four of six New Testament references that mention Prisca before they mention Aquila, which suggests that she was of higher status. Often in antiquity, there were exceptions to this, but often it would be like the husband was slave born and the wife was free born. Then it would name the wife first.

Normally, otherwise, it named the husband first if she wasn't of higher status. With Roman names, Roman names were common for Greek and Latin-speaking Jews in Rome. Not everybody had one by any means, but it was common.

Again, there were Roman citizens in Rome too. Some think that Aquila was probably the freed member of the Gens Achillea in Rome, and that's where he got his name. Although Luke says he was from Pontus, so maybe it was a family name from an earlier generation.

Anyway, it's disputable. Prisca may have been a Roman citizen, a Jewish Roman citizen, belonging to the Roman Gens Prisca, the Roman family name or clan name Prisca. We read in Paul's letters, Romans 16, 3 through 5, 1 Corinthians 16, and we read elsewhere that they had a house church.

They led a house church. That was pretty common. We've already mentioned house churches back in chapter 12.

What was the economic base of Aquila and Priscila or Priscila and Aquila? Well, they had a lot of mobility, which most people didn't have. I mean, there were a lot of people who traveled, but the majority of people lived their whole lives in one village or one place. They moved from Pontus to Rome to Corinth to Ephesus to Rome.

We see that, well, at least Aquila did, but the two of them at least were from Rome, Corinth to Ephesus back to Rome. We could see that in Paul's letters. They were craftspeople and traders.

Craftspeople and traders sometimes had to move. Traders often did. Often migrants, as they would travel, whenever they would go to a new city, would have to live by the laws of that host city.

They could meet together for business. Foreigners of different groups would meet together and sometimes were recognized as a semi-autonomous palatuma, a trade group that had some political independence of its own, recognized as different from, or an ethnic group recognized as its own, a community of resident aliens in a city. I shouldn't have said a trade group, an ethnic group.

We also see that they must have had some economic means because they functioned as patrons. I mean, the average person lived in cities, lived in upper stories where they actually couldn't do any work. They didn't, in the upper stories, the rooms in which they lived would be just large enough to sleep.

And sometimes they'd have a charcoal brazier on which to cook. But normally it'd be not very large. So, most people were poor.

They couldn't afford to be patrons and to sponsor people in their home. You could have some homes where you could sponsor people. If some of your neighbors got together in these larger tenements on the upper floors, there would be a long hallway that would connect the different rooms.

And so, you could have like a long place where you could have a meeting. But your neighbors would have to agree to that, of course. And that may be where some of the house churches in Rome met.

They may have been apartment churches. But on the first floor, sometimes they had, well, normally they had more space. They had better apartments on the first floor.

And Aquila and Priscilla, if they're hosting churches in their homes, presumably had homes large enough for that purpose. They are Eastern provincials and thus Jews. That wasn't a favorable status, but they're somewhat assimilated culturally.

They're artisans, which was a low urban occupation, but it was far beyond. It was low status, but it was far beyond what peasants had. Their independence, relatively, and mobility show that they had some income.

In Corinth, you have significant class disparity. And probably as in Rome, you could have some wealthy people living on bottom floors with poor people living above them. But you also had some segregation in terms of economic class.

The wealthy in Corinth lived especially near the cranium, a special neighborhood in Corinth. Probably more of the house churches were there and people would walk there. Although the first house church is going to be probably in a Jewish area next to the synagogue, the House of Titius Justice.

Maybe Gaius Titius Justice, some think. Some women were artisans. More often, they helped in selling.

Husbands and wives sometimes formed business partnerships. Sometimes with the wife's money in this period. The partnership was called a *societas* or *societas*.

Why were they in Corinth to begin with? And why was Paul in Corinth to begin with? Well, it was a very significant city and it probably had the most significant Jewish community in Greece, or in Achaia, south of Macedonia. The Roman element is prominent and even dominant. Eight of 17 names of Christians that we have from Corinth, names in the Corinthian church, are Latin.

You have Crispus, Titius Justice, Erastus, if Erastus was actually a member. Sosthenes is Greek. But many of the names, almost half the names, are in Latin.

Well, Corinth had a very high population of people with Roman names and people who spoke Latin. Many Jews had Roman names, but not this percentage. One-third of the people named in Paul's letters have Roman names.

So, this is ten times higher than expected among non-Romans. So probably they're making some inroads into the community of Romans as well. If you were a citizen of Corinth, you were an honorary citizen of Rome.

It had been founded as a veterans colony earlier. And because of that, they had a whole class of *nouveau riche*. Many people who were, besides veterans actually settled there.

You had a lot of Roman freedmen who settled there. But they were advancing economically. Rome had been destroyed, I think around 146 somewhere BC.

It had lain dormant for a long time, although archaeology shows there were Greeks who moved back and lived there. But it was officially restarted as a city under Caesar in the first century BC. And maybe around the year 44.

And at this point, a lot of Romans moved in. So, you have the Roman colonists. But Greeks were also moving in from the countryside to this newly founded city.

And you also had a lot of foreigners there because it was a place with a lot of trade. It was right on the Isthmus of Corinth. The Isthmus, they actually tried to dig a canal.

Nero tried to dig a canal and didn't succeed. But they had what was called a dialkos, where you could drag the cargo through. So, you didn't want to go around the southern tip of Greece because it was not very navigable.

Too rocky and so on. So, if you were coming from Italy, you could either go north and take the land route that I mentioned earlier, the Via Egnatia. Or you could sail from Italy.

You could sail to, well, there are other ways to sail to further south. But if you wanted to go through Greece and you wanted to go to Asia Minor, you could sail across the Adriatic and into this body of water until you got to the Isthmus of Corinth. And then the cargo could be dragged in something like wagons across.

Sometimes you could even use small, you could even drag small boats across. In putting them on something with wheels, drag them across the dialkos. And then on the other side of the dialkos, you had the Aegean Sea.

And from there you could sail directly to Asia Minor. Asia Minor was the most prosperous Roman province in this period. So, there was a lot of intercourse between Asia Minor and Rome.

So, it was a very prosperous town. It also had a lot of, well, you can guess if you've read 1 Corinthians, it also had a lot of sexual immorality, which was natural in port cities with often sailors who go for months without being at home, although the sailors themselves were often slaves. That's often how they got people to do those kinds of things or very, very poor people.

But it had been said of old Corinth that not for every person is the voyage to Corinth. And to Corinthianize was said to act like a Corinthian sexually. It had been famous for prostitution dedicated to Aphrodite in an earlier period, although archaeology shows that on the Acro-Corinth, the Temple of Aphrodite couldn't have really held a thousand cult prostitutes.

Maybe they were just living in the city below and dedicated to Aphrodite. But that was in old Corinth. But new Corinth still had a reputation for immorality.

We still find it in documents from this period, and it was just natural as a port city. Ephesus had a lot of that as well. In any case, something else that Corinth had, because it was a port city on the Isthmus, well, actually it had its own ports on the Isthmus, Lycaon on one side and Cancrui on the other, where Phoebus from in Romans 16, verses 1 and 2, and Cancrui is also mentioned.

Paul sailed from there in Acts 18, around verse 18. In any case, you had a lot of people, a lot of foreigners coming in there. So Corinth had become diverse.

A lot of the foreigners from the Eastern Mediterranean naturally spoke Greek, although the people around the city spoke mainly Latin. They used Latin in their inscriptions. This underside of the city, you can see it from broken pottery fragments and so on, what they wrote in was Greek, and what they probably often spoke was Greek, which came into vogue again in the 2nd century.

In any case, they had Asclepius was very big, Cancrui, well, Isis and Serapis, and then the Asclepius, which was a Greek cult, was big in Corinth and just outside of Corinth. But a lot of foreigners, including a number of Jewish people. So, again, it was a natural place for them to settle.

Now, we see that Paul works with them in the same trade. This is the first time we find out that Paul works a trade. Maybe that's something that Luke wants to mention more than necessary, because it was despised by the elite, and Paul actually lists it among his sufferings in 1 Corinthians 4.11 and 12, working with his hands.

But manual labor was despised by philosophers, and it was especially despised by elites. There were four ways that a sage could earn wages. You could charge fees, that is tuition.

That's how some of us make our living now. We work for schools that charge tuition. You could have a patron.

You could be hired as a household sage, used for entertainment at banquets or something, and the person would say, well, I'm a patron of the arts. Well, I'm a patron of education. I have my own household sage who lectures to me, and I do whatever he says, as long as what he says is what I agree with.

And if he doesn't say what I agree with, then I may get another, you know. Those were not always known for, sometimes they were known for flattery. But in any case, another was begging.

Most philosophers didn't approve of that. It was considered too low class, but that's what the cynics did. The cynics would stand in the street corner.

They had little except their clothing. You know, one cloak. They would have a pouch for begging, although it's said that one of them when he saw a boy scooping water with his hands, he threw away his cup.

But they'd have a pouch for begging, and they'd have a staff. Now, they sometimes were entertaining to people, but some of them could be very harsh and very mean. It's said that in one of the cases of the cynics, this one cynic philosopher said that he would practice, and he advised others to practice, begging from statues so that you could get used to being refused.

But also, sometimes, and this may be, we have this in ancient literature, but it may be an exaggeration. They could use their staff. What if they bop you if you didn't give them money? But if you did give them money, they might insult you anyway just to show you that they didn't care what you thought about them, and that's the way the cynics were.

One cynic was invited to a banquet, and everything was so fine around him. And after a while, he spat on the lap of the host. And he said, why did you spit on my lap? We said everything else here was so fine.

It didn't have anything else to spit on. They were also known sometimes for stimulating themselves sexually or excreting in public because they didn't care what anybody thought about them. Well, Paul was clearly not in that tradition of, you know, cynic philosophers.

Some of his thinking, like the thinking of some of the Stoics, there are some areas of correspondence, but Paul doesn't, you know, do things like that. But preaching openly, cynics were among those who did that, but so did other philosophers, especially those who couldn't get jobs somewhere. So he was begging.

Some people would beg, but then there was one kind that was probably the most despised. Cynics didn't want to do it, and other philosophers didn't want to do this or begging, but sometimes some of the others would regard this as better than begging. Manual labor.

In aristocratic ideology, that was just very demeaning. Only, you know, there were certain crafts that were considered better. A silversmith was better than, say, an ironsmith, but in any case, there were exceptions like Stoics, Cleanthes, and Missonius Rufus, who did value work, the Stoic idea of self-sufficiency, but it was more valued by manual laborers themselves.

They wouldn't disrespect Paul for that, and it was praised in Jewish sources. Shemaiah. I've talked earlier about Hillel and Shemaiah.

Well, the previous generation of sages said to have been Shemaiah and Abtalion. And Shemaiah says, Love labor, Mishneh Abot, 110. Rabbi or Rabban Gamaliel ben Judah Hanasi, much later rabbi, he said, Study of the Torah is good along with the way of earth.

In other words, working. For their labor causes sin to be forgotten. Sometimes today we say an idle mind is the devil's workplace or whatever.

Rabbi Eliezer ben Azariah. If there's no Torah, there's no way of earth. If there's no way of earth, there's no Torah.

Later rabbis warned against dependence on others. But on the other hand, you have Rabbi Nehunya ben Hakanah. If you take on the yoke of Torah, you're freed from the yoke of Rome and from the way of earth.

Later sources also mandate the teacher should be paid. So eventually it became more of a profession and it included more of those who weren't independently wealthy already or had some other means of support. Early Jewish sources, however, despised some base crafts.

But there were some crafts that they praised. Sandal makers, bakers, carpenters. We know of a Jewish teacher who was a carpenter and raised by a carpenter, Jesus of Nazareth.

Leather workers and scribes. Scribes is kind of obvious. But leatherworking is also pretty interesting because Paul may have been doing that and we'll talk more about that in a few moments.

Artisans worked hard. Their production was mainly small-scale in homes, often with mezzanine apartments on the ground floor, and small shops. Most businesses employed family members or household members including slaves.

The largest businesses, however, could employ up to 100 slaves. But most businesses were smaller operations, family businesses. On average they'd have six to 12 workers.

The workday could be from sunrise to sunset. But it gave them many opportunities for conversation, which will be important and we'll talk more about that. Some shops were loud and dangerous.

Some smiths' shops and sculptors' shops. I remember one time I used to do manual work at some apartments and the one that I hated most was when I was chiseling out between the bricks, I was chiseling out where the mortar was uneven, trying to make it even. And I was doing that all day long and all night long and my ears were still ringing with the same sound.

It didn't stop until a while after I'd finished doing that. But some shops were loud and dangerous. For others, like leather workers and sandal makers, it was quiet in their shops and so you had the ability to talk.

Felicius, the shoemaker, stitched while someone read aloud. Some people took naps there. Sometimes people came in just to talk so you'd have a conversation going on.

While somebody wasn't buying something, you'd still at least have a conversation. Shops were usually single rooms. People did work there.

They stored their supplies there. They displayed and sold wares there and families often slept upstairs or in a mezzanine apartment in the same single room. Leather workers and I'm going to suggest that that may be what Paul was, leather workers had at least a table, stool, awls, and knives, sharpening stones to keep their other tools in shape, and oil and blacking for treating the leather.

Ronald Hawk points that out. He's done a lot of research on that. Shops were usually near the agora or the marketplace.

Not, well, yeah, near the marketplace. In Corinth, that would be near the Roman Forum also with the bema there. The bema would be the rostrum.

Well, it would include the rostrum, the place from which the governor could give his judgments and decrees. Artisans, that was an economic bracket that was intermediate between the minute upper class and the massive lower classes. They weren't usually as poor as peasants.

They weren't usually as poor off as peasants, but at least among urban residents, they were better off than the poorest there. But they didn't belong to the very small upper class either, or upper wealth class. Learning trades.

Apprenticeship, usually within the family or other families of the same trade, could start at ages 10 to 13. Sometimes girls as well could do that in Egypt. But it could start even as late as the age of 25, according to one inscription.

Rabbis urged Judean and other eastern Mediterranean and further east fathers to train their sons in the same trade as themselves. So, Paul very well may have learned

this trade from his father in his earlier days. Alongside the study of Torah, you were expected in that period often to do both.

Even though he probably came from a fairly well-to-do family, he also was learning a trade. Now, some think that what Paul was as a tentmaker was a cloth worker. Usually, cloth workers were not citizens of Rome, as Paul was, nor were they citizens of Tarsus.

In fact, cloth workers in the first century AD raised protests in Tarsus. Linen workers raised protests in Tarsus because they weren't citizens of Tarsus, which may suggest that Paul's family were not cloth workers, per se. Artisans were despised by the elite as slavish.

Cicero said that no workshop befits a free person. The elite considered them incapable of virtue and uneducated. But again, if you look at how manual laborers describe themselves in the inscriptions on their tombstones, they're often proud of their work, that they did good work.

So probably it shouldn't be— much of the congregation wouldn't view that negatively, that Paul does that. But the elite members, that would be a reason for them to be embarrassed about Paul. You know, you shouldn't be working.

Let us support you. Because if you're working and doing this manual labor, then it's going to be an embarrassment. We don't want to invite our peers to this.

Paul has to deal with that in his letters to the Corinthians. Tents were important in Corinth. You need awnings for the Isthmian games.

One of the points where Paul is probably in Corinth, is the Isthmian games that happened every other year, he's there when they happened in April or May in the year 51. But also tents and things like tents were used for the theater and so on. The linen industry was very big in Tarsus.

Linen tabernacles were used by merchants for market stands and by individuals as sunshades so they could also be used in the markets in Corinth. Tarsus' tent-making was renowned throughout the Mediterranean world. It even appears transliterated for Tarsian linen.

It appears transliterated into Hebrew in the rabbis. Cilician wool from Goetia was famous. Tarsus was famous for that.

Goetia was so prominent that warm cloaks made there were called collicium or cilicium, imported to Italy from the time of Augustus. Some think that Paul's father

may have worked there, maybe for the army. Some have suggested that that's how they got the Roman citizenship.

But given probabilities from what we know from ancient literature, it's far more likely that they got Roman citizenship from being descended from freed slaves. But others have argued, and I tend to think they're right, although the debate has not yet been completed, but I think that they've made a stronger case. At least that's my current opinion.

Paul probably was not a weaver of tents from Goetia or linen. That required tools that were too large for travel. Paul was very mobile.

He had to move often, especially before he got to Corinth. But we know he also worked in Thessalonica. So probably he's got a bag of tools he would make and repair tents and other leather products.

The term that's used here for tent-making had also come to be applied widely to leatherworking in general. You could also make tents out of leather. In Corinth, those needing leatherworking, especially civilians who traveled a lot, means that these conversations in the workshop, he would be reaching travelers, merchants, etc.

It's interesting, that of 17 Corinthians known by name in the New Testament, nine of them were on travels, probably for commercial reasons. Probably these were people of some means and status. They were ones that most Judean believers in Jesus couldn't reach.

But Paul's able to reach them. Ronald Haack has done the most work on this. Here I'm just following Ronald Haack and at some points quoting Ronald Haack in terms of leatherworking.

There were two tasks in leatherworking, cutting and sewing. You would learn how, quote, to cut the leather pieces so that their placement would take advantage of the natural strengths of the leather and thus best withstand strains and pulling. And also, how to sew them together with a basting stitch, seam stitch, or felling stitch.

The last two, if the seams needed to be waterproof. After completing an apprenticeship, an apprentice might get his own tools for leatherworking. Well, leatherworking certainly had an advantage over tentmaking in terms of linen making.

Tentmaking, again, could be done either way. But over cloth, textile industry, in that it wasn't as loud, the tools weren't as loud, and you could also have more conversation there. The religious milieu of the marketplace.

Well, there were public statues throughout Corinth's marketplace. Poseidon, Apollo, Aphrodite, Hermes, and Zeus. If you live in a majority Christian culture, keep in mind that Christians can flourish in other cultures as well.

And if you live in a majority non-Christian culture, you can remember that the first Christians, well, the first Christians who were spreading the gospel had to do that as well. We can live at peace with people who disagree with us, at least from our end. Most sanctuaries in the Agora, had a sanctuary, most sanctuaries were in the Agora, they had the sanctuary of the Ephesian Artemis, even though, you know, Artemis was a Greek goddess, the Ephesian version of Artemis was particularly famous, and so there was actually a sanctuary of the Ephesian Artemis, even in Corinth.

There were images of Dionysus, Athena was in the middle. Above the Agora, you had the temple to Augustus' sister Octavia. So, you would be surrounded with reminders of paganism everywhere you turned.

But that doesn't mean Christians can't be good Christians in a setting like that. Talking at work. People would work all day long so they'd have conversations.

There are stories about Socrates and others discussing politics and philosophy in a cobbler's shop, or shoemaker's shop. It was a culture that valued talking and gossip. People would be leaning out windows to talk with their neighbors.

In the streets, customers or shopkeepers next door, people were drinking together in taverns and eating together in taverns. In Rome, most people couldn't cook in their homes, so they'd have to go down to the street level and go into taverns to get most of their meals, apart from bread in the marketplace or things that they would buy in the marketplace and could eat that way. People would be doing business lunches with co-workers at tavern restaurants and so on.

Cynics engaged in intellectual discourse in such locations and so did some other philosophers. Well, missionary preaching at work. Paul talks about his long hours, in Acts 20 verse 34.

28, 30. 1 Thessalonians 2.9, 1 Corinthians 4.12, 2 Corinthians 12.14. Some texts talk about him ministering day and night. Some texts talk about him working day and night.

He may have been doing some of either one at the same time. Day and night doesn't mean all night long didn't sleep, but if you do something a part of the day and part of the night, it counts. And I'm sure Paul when he wasn't working, he was doing other things.

But this was what he did only part of the time. He may have been doing this a lot before some funds came in. But trade groups, sometimes families who were working in the trade would organize together as guilds, and they might control the whole street or section of a city.

Thus, you'd have in ancient cities sometimes Glass Street, Incense Street, Perfume Street, Jewelers' Plaza, Cobbler's Marketplace, Fishmonger's Forum, and so on. I'm getting this from Ramsey McMullen, Yale historian. One of the most basic questions people asked was, where do you live? Because that would also identify the person's occupation.

What do you do? And the answer that people would often ask is, among the barbers, or so on. And this was put in people's inscriptions or gravestones as well. There were some everything emporiums or general stores, but usually, you knew which section of town to go to in order to get the particular merchandise you wanted to get.

And in this period, it's hard for many people, at least in the West, to believe, and perhaps many other places, I don't know. But there often was friendly cooperation from people of the same occupation, the same profession. They had common supply lines, and they worked together instead of cutthroat competition.

They also had trade guilds. These were mainly social bodies. They met roughly once a month.

And sometimes they'd have a somewhat nicer meal and wine than they'd normally get on their own when they came together for this. They might come together to celebrate the birth of a founder, a patron or a patron deity. And also, as an association, they would band together so they could provide for the burial for any of their members.

If somebody died, well, everybody's chipped in to take care of their burial. You don't have all these expenses right when you die. Ramsey McMullen points out that all assemblages, whether the assemblage was of the butchers or of the youths or whatever, opened their meetings, this is quote, with a prayer to the deity they had inevitably chosen at the moment of their incorporation.

For woodcutters, that might be Silvanus. For restaurant owners, it might be Bacchus. In any case, Aquil and Priscilla, you know, it's one thing, there are idols around, but it's another thing to participate in a meal that's been offered to a pagan deity or you've given thanks to a pagan deity for it.

So, they were probably not participating in the leather workers' guild. Whether they lived in a leather workers' part of town, probably they'd prefer to live in the Jewish section of town, but with the number of people expelled from Italy, you know, the

housing might depend on what you got. But in any case, they would be happy, given that circumstance, to have another Jew staying with them, especially if they're all believers in Jesus.

Living conditions. Well, these are somewhat better known from Rome than from Corinth, but Corinth being a Roman colony followed Roman architecture in many respects. So, some of the living conditions.

In Italy, you often had tenements with the wealthier living on the bottom. Less wealthy would live higher. The poorest would live in tiny rooms on the top or small lofts above workshops.

And actually, as they got higher, they got a little bit less steady, too. The apartment buildings could get kind of rickety. They didn't have very strong building codes back then.

And a juvenile, mocking different things in Rome, he was a satirist, says that any given day you'll hear a building collapsing somewhere in Rome or burning down. Watch out for those charcoal braziers. Of course, what they did for sanitation.

Rome was famous for its drains, but the water only ran to the bottom floor at best. So, it wasn't pumped upstairs. So, what people in the upper-level apartments did, was they had containers in which to put their things.

Often, they would store it under the stairs. It was supposed to be taken to the city dump, but if you went to the bathroom, you put it in your chamber pot. People were known for emptying it out the window.

And if it happened to hit a passerby, which it sometimes did, you could actually be prosecuted for that if they could figure out whose window it came out of. But in any case, it was often thrown onto the streets. And there also were public toilets, so you could go use the public toilet facilities.

But if you didn't want to go that far or didn't have time to go that far, you had your chamber pot. So, you also had some slumlords with hit squads to take out troublesome tenants. So, you didn't want to complain too much.

That was practiced more in rural areas with tenants on big estates. In Egypt, where we have the most detail in terms of business documents that have survived in the papyri, sometimes you'd have 20 people crowded into a single-room home. Childhood mortality, and sometimes people would rent or own one-quarter of a room, according to the business documents.

A lot of people were very poor. Those aren't the ones we normally read about, but a lot of people were very poor. Childhood mortality in Egypt, insofar as we can reconstruct it from the papyri, may have been close to 50%.

A lot of babies were abandoned, although Egyptians didn't believe in that and would take up the babies and adopt them, or they could be raised as slaves under Roman law. The synagogue in Corinth, we read about in verse 4. The inscription speaks of the synagogue. There's an inscription that's been found from Corinth that says, Synagogue of the Hebrews, written in Greek.

But it's of uncertain date, and almost certainly of a later date than Paul's time. It was found near the Agora, although that may just be where the lentil was dumped. But we do know of Jews there.

Second century, Trypho was a Jewish teacher there. If Justin didn't just make him up, I think he probably didn't make him up, although he probably wrote the dialogue on his own. But it would make sense that there was a Jewish community there, and we have attestation for it, although we don't have enough details from Corinth to know a whole lot about it.

What Roman historians often do, is they'll often use the book of Acts as a source to get details in some of these cities that they don't have more narrative details about, except from inscriptions and so on. Acts 18 and verse 5. We know a lot about Corinth, but just not a lot about the Jewish community there. Acts 18 and verse 5. Silas and Timothy came, bringing word to the Thessalonian believers that they were actually doing well.

Paul was overjoyed about that, and that's when he wrote for the Thessalonians. And they also brought a gift from Philippi. And we read about that in 2 Corinthians 11.

Some of the Corinthians are complaining that he's not depending on them, and they find out that he's accepted support from Philippi. And he says, look, I robbed other churches to do your service. He's speaking hyperbolically, ironically, whatever.

But he didn't want to let the Corinthians support him because they wanted to act like they were his patron, and he was their client. He wanted the freedom to say what he was supposed to say. Actually, as a pastor and as an associate pastor, I've never taken a salary, but I get paid for plenty of other things.

So, I'm not saying pastors and associate pastors shouldn't get paid salaries. I get paid for teaching. I get paid more for teaching than I get paid for writing, even though the writing takes me more work, the research, and the writing.

But then they expect that to carry over into the classroom. And then I blab on like I'm blabbing on now about all these kinds of details. But anyway, don't tell them not to pay me, please.

Because anyway, it's nice to have some support, right? But anyway, Paul gets a gift from Philippi, and then he's able to stop doing this work so much, at least full-time, and he's able to devote himself fully to the work of ministry. And in the synagogue, things are kind of divided. Some people believe what he says, and they agree with him, and some people don't.

And some of the ones who don't, well, Paul doesn't take over the synagogue. He leaves. But they go next door to the house of Titius Justice, who was apparently a wealthy, gentile, God-fearing donor to the synagogue.

And you don't want to take people as donors. They get upset if you take them as donors. Anyway, the synagogue is split, but Paul is convinced he's speaking the truth.

They're convinced they're right. So, some people think that Titius Justice is the same person as Gaius, who's mentioned in Romans 16:23 as the host of the whole church in Corinth, although it's debated what that means. Perhaps it means he was the original host, in which case that could be here, or perhaps it just means he hosts people who come, like Paul.

Perhaps it means he's so wealthy he has an estate, and maybe just outside of the city of Corinth, a wealthy enough place where everybody can gather periodically. There are debates about exactly what's meant in Romans 16:23. But Gaius was a familiar prenominal rather than an official narrative title like Titius Justice. So, Paul can call him that on a familiar level.

Luke is going to use the official title of, say, Titius Justice. It's not for sure that this is the same person, but it could be. Remember, they had three names.

The Roman nomen incognitum, Titius Justice, probably indicates that this one is a Roman citizen. Perhaps he's from one of the Roman families settled in New Corinth under Julius Caesar. The home where they would have initially met.

Well, the average triclinium, which was the best room for banquets in a spacious Roman home, was on average, including in Corinth, about 36 square meters. And it would hold, well, ideally, it held about nine people. It could hold 12 people.

It could really hold more people if you crammed them in, but in terms of reclining them on couches for banquets, nine to maybe 12. First-class seating or reclining would be in the triclinium. Well, what if you had other people who wanted to come? Well, you still had your atrium.

With normal furniture, you could put about 30 to 40 people in there, although you'd still have the impluvium, which collected the rainwater right in the middle of the floor because you had the open ceiling in the middle. But you could have 30 to 40 more people in there. So, Jerome Murphy O'Connor has particularly emphasized this.

Others have said, well, you know, not all homes were exactly the same. But this at least gives us kind of a ballpark to think of. If you add up all the named Corinthians in Acts and Paul's writings, plus their families, you might have about 50 people.

But probably there were way more than 50 people, but some of these people were named are leaders in the churches or people of high status. But even with 50 people, probably you had multiple house churches, and there's reason to believe that as well, except perhaps when you have them all together in Gaius' whole church, depending on how we read that in Romans 16.23, which was written from Cancree just outside of Corinth. Meeting in a home provided a family-type atmosphere, and that's really useful.

I mean, it's not just useful because that's all they had available. It's also useful because you build relationships in what we call small groups today. There's a dynamic there, and the dynamic of some of what Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 14, where you may all prophesy one by one.

Well, you can't do that in a church of 1,000 people. There's a dynamic of each having our own gifts from God where we can minister to one another and get to know one another in a more face-to-face way in a house church than even in a church of 100 or 200 people. So that's why even some megachurches will have small groups so that that dynamic can be recovered in a way because the church isn't the building.

We are the church. We are God's people. And so, when we meet to do church, what we're doing is relational.

And if it's not relational, we're missing a key part of the dynamic of what the early church had. It doesn't mean we shouldn't meet, but there's something else we can add to it. In Chapter 18 and Verse 8, Crispus, he's one of the leaders of the synagogue.

He comes over. As leader of the synagogue, he's probably well-to-do. Often synagogue leaders use their own means for the upkeep of the synagogue.

That's often how they became synagogue leaders or rulers of synagogues. In Chapter 18, Verses 9 and 10, and by the way also when it talks about him being baptized, Paul in 1 Corinthians 1, he's like, well, I baptized Crispus and Gaius. I don't know if I baptized anybody else.

Oh, yeah, I baptized this person. And he's dealing with those who are thinking he baptized in his own name. And it's like, no, you missed the point of the baptism.

This is for Jesus. They got divided. That's one disadvantage sometimes of house churches the more small groups you divide people into, the more different directions it can go.

But Acts 18:8, it talks about his baptism also, Crispus being baptized. And they had, I'm just saying this because this is one of the things archaeology informs us of, but they had plenty of places where they could have done baptism. They had fountain houses.

They had pools all over the place in Corinth. Some of them were dedicated to deities. And then you're also right there on the Saronic Gulf, and you have the Aegean Sea.

I mean, baptizing people would not be difficult by any means of baptism you wanted to use. So, Acts 18:9-10, biblical visions and dreams, especially most often involved God or angels speaking, especially in the New Testament, but not exclusively. I mean, of course, Joseph's dreams, Pharaoh's dreams, Daniel had some interesting dreams, and Nebuchadnezzar.

But in any case, in pagan and often early Jewish sources, there were dreams of deceased persons appearing. We don't have that in the New Testament. We don't have that in the Bible.

You do have this guy from Macedonia saying, Come over here, but there's no indication he's deceased. So, in any case, Paul has one of these prototypical, ideal, the best kind of vision and dream where God or an angel appears. Here the Lord Jesus appears to him, as happens some other times in Acts.

Those are my favorite dreams, the ones where I've seen Jesus himself. He's just so kind. He's so gracious.

It just makes me love him all the more. But anyway, the Lord says to him, Don't be afraid. This is common in statements of assurance, and it's very common in oracles.

Often when God or an angel would appear to somebody, whether in a waking vision or in a dream, the first thing they'd say is, Don't be afraid. And you can see why. It's one thing when I'm seeing Jesus in a dream, but some people say they've seen angels.

Well, I believe some people have seen angels in real life who appear to them in glory of some sort. I've never experienced that. If I ever do experience it, I will probably

want the angel to say to me, Don't be afraid, too, because this is just outside the ordinary realm of experience for most of us.

But in any case, in Acts chapter, then again, it does say, Your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. I just dream dreams. Well, I'm old, but anyway, I haven't had visions where I actually saw something with my eyes open.

But in any case, those are things that are biblical, too, provided that the vision is in keeping with what we know from Scripture, which gives us a measuring stick for all of the claims to Revelation. Acts chapter 18 and verse 11. Paul spent 18 months there.

So later on when Paul writes to the Corinthians, I mean, they've already had some of Paul's teaching, although some things have changed since he left. In Corinth, he would have been there for breezy summers. There were currents of air that met there.

It's said of one cynic that since he lived on the street, he'd go back and forth between Athens and Corinth depending on the season. The Ismythian Games took place in April to May of 51, so Paul would have been there most likely for that. In 1812, Paul is in Achaia.

Corinth is the capital of that. And 2 Corinthians 1, we know things spread beyond Corinth to some other parts of Achaia as well, the churches of Achaia he speaks of. The governor of Achaia was a proconsul.

They had their own proconsul from 27 B.C. to the year A.D. 15, and then from A.D. 44 onwards, so they would have had one at this time. Somebody who was on the fast track politically, they would go from being a praetor to a governor, like a proconsul to a consul, who was one of the people who would be in charge of Rome, under the emperor, of course. Galio is identified here in 1812.

We know of Galio elsewhere in Roman literature. He was the brother of Seneca the Younger, the famous Stoic philosopher whom I mentioned before. He was the son of Seneca the Orator, Seneca the Elder.

He was born in Cordova in Spain, where Seneca was from, but adopted by the wealthy rhetorician I've just mentioned, and his name was changed. Originally, he was Marcus Aeneas Novatus, but now his name is Galio. And he was known for his charm and wit, more for his wit in this passage than his charm, but he was known for his charm and his wit.

His friends liked him. Apparently, he was sent in April of the year 51 to Corinth, and he took up his office, as you were supposed to, on July 1st of the year. So, in the year

51, that's one reason we can date when Paul was in Corinth, because he appears before Galio.

Paul probably arrived in late 49, after Claudius' decree expelling Jews from Rome, and that's why he finds Priscilla and Aquila already there or arrived in late 49 or early 50. Before July 52, normally the proconsul would be there for a couple of years, but Galio didn't finish his term of office. He didn't even finish one year of his office.

Before July 52, he became ill and had to go away. So, Acts is very precise. These things fit very well.

In 49, the expulsion under Claudius, and now in 51, when Galio is governor. There was no way somebody like Luke could have had some reference work where he could have looked these things up. This is known to us with modern archaeology, but there was no volume Luke could have pulled off the shelf in the library and said, okay, well this was the governor at this date, and so this fits Paul.

This would be something instead he would have learned from Paul. And so A. N. Sherwin-White, who was an expert in Roman law, wrote a book on Roman law and Roman society in the New Testament and was very excited about the accuracy of Acts on details like this. Also, it was a time of unrest, though, in the year 51.

We know that there was a food shortage there and there was a lot of unrest in Corinth at that time. So, this was a piece of that unrest. He's brought before the bema.

At the eastern end of Corinth's forum, overlooking the lower terrace of Corinth's forum, like the Roman rostra, there was a bema in front of colonnaded shops. It was nearly 500 feet long, this raised platform. It was the largest tribunal in the empire.

So, when Paul speaks of why you take things before Gentile courts in 1 Corinthians 6, they're probably envisioning the bema. It was built under the emperor Augustus. Some say, however, that this was used only for ceremonial and a few official matters, and so probably this tribunal was instead not there but held in an administrative building.

In any case, Paul certainly was familiar with the bema. He writes about the bema, the judgment seat of Christ, the judgment seat of God, he writes about in Romans 14 when he's writing from Corinth. In 2 Corinthians 5, he writes about the judgment seat of Christ.

Law courts were known to be very loud, with angry shouting on both sides, and that's what we're going to be in for in the next session as Paul is hauled before the court of Galileo.

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Acts. This is session 19 on Acts 18. Paul comes to Corinth.