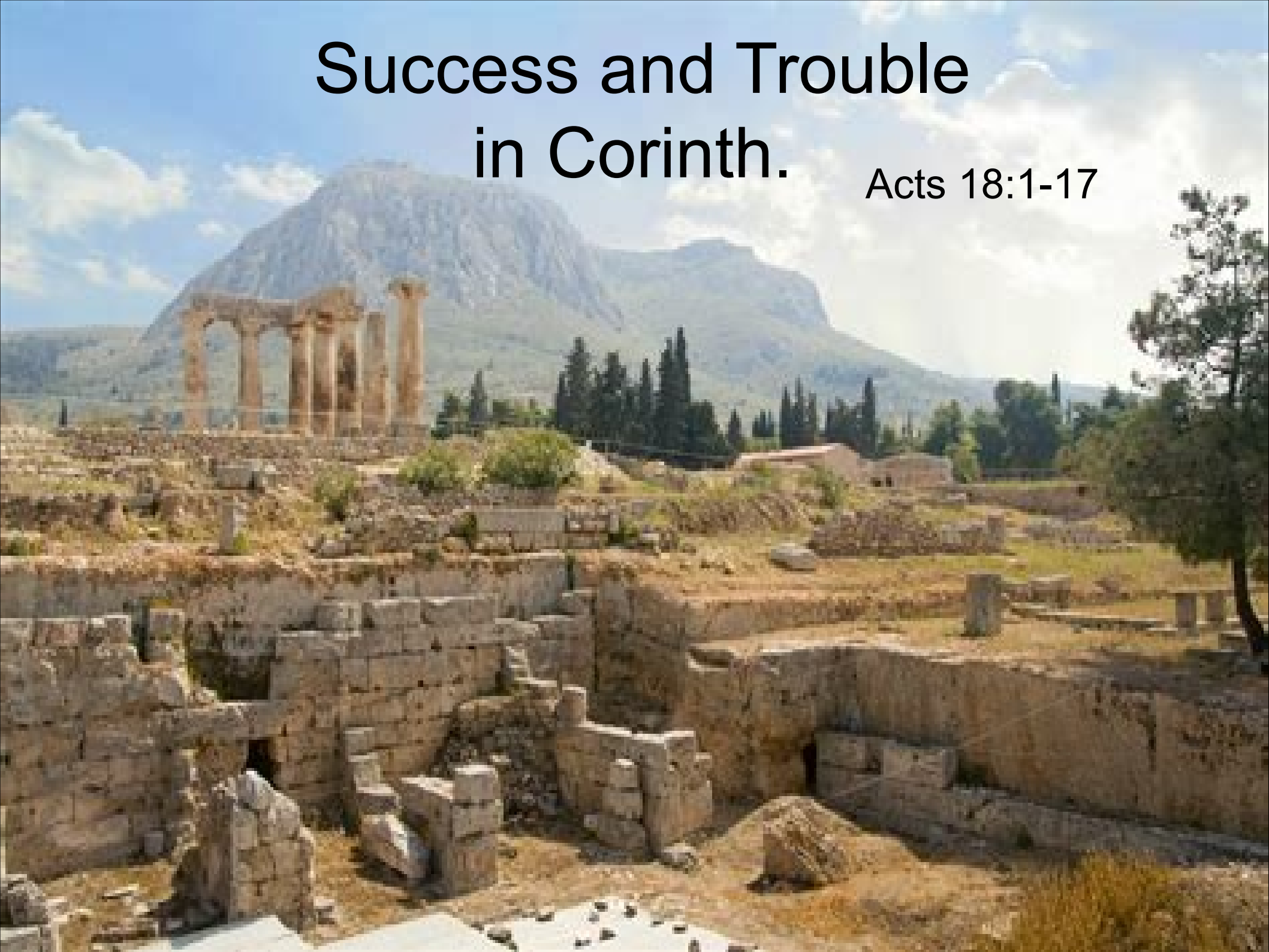


Success and Trouble in Corinth.

Acts 18:1-17



After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.



If Athens was the cultural capital of Greece, then Corinth was the commercial capital. It had two harbours, one east and the other facing west. The short land route between them carried most of the east west trade.

At that time it also had a reputation throughout the empire as 'sin city'.

There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla,



Pontus is on the north-eastern coast of the Black Sea in modern Turkey.

They had been in Italy. This is the first time that we are introduced to the 'dynamic duo'. They may have been believers before they met Paul. They probably met in the synagogue.

He had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, **because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome.**



Claudius was emperor from AD 41 to 54. A later writer says that there had been serious trouble among the Jews in Rome over 'Chrestus'. This may have been a fall out over the Messiah. Whatever the cause, he threw them all out in about AD 49.

So Priscilla and Aquilla had to leave too. God overrules since they teamed up with Paul.

Paul went to see them, and because he was a tent-maker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.



They had a common practical interest – finding a job to do, Paul could support himself.

Aquila and his wife were hospitable folk and offered Paul a place to stay.

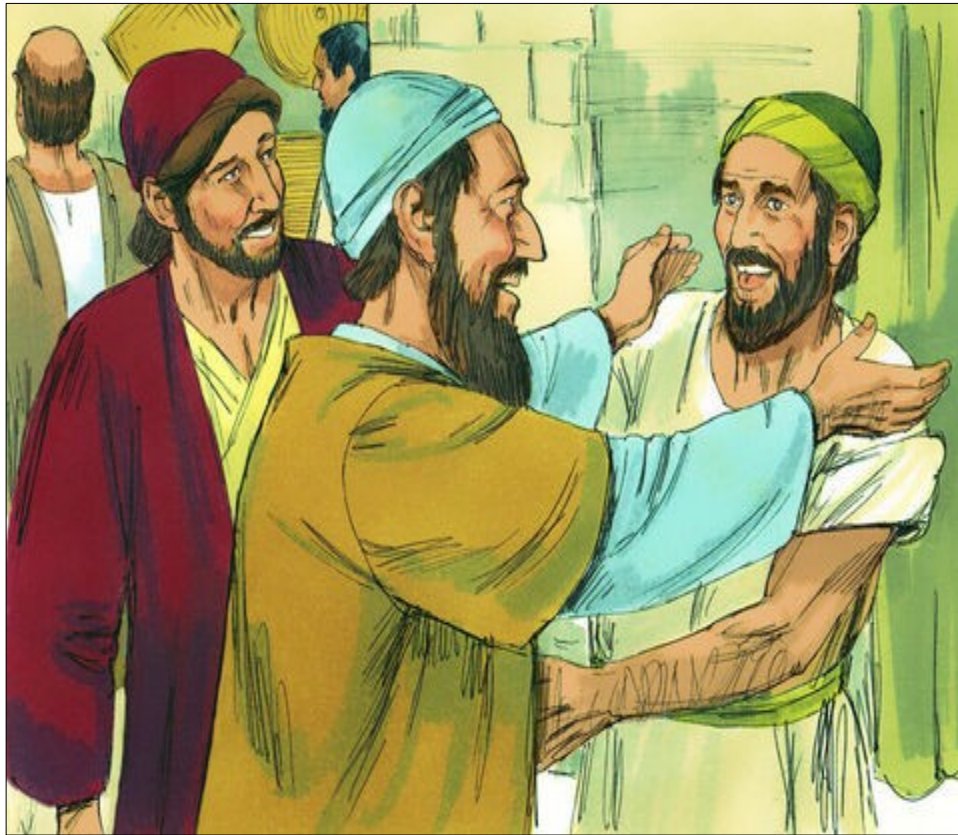
Every Sabbath he **reasoned** in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.



The congregation also consisted of gentiles (Greeks) who had come to worship the true God, the God of Israel.

Faith and facts go together. Paul was appealing to their hearts and minds.

When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia,



Paul had sent his friends, Silas and Timothy to the churches they had left behind in order to see how they were doing. Paul was anxious about them

(1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:2).

Now they had brought him good news about the believers plus some questions, so he wrote to the church.

When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia,
Paul **devoted** himself exclusively to preaching,



Silas and Timothy also brought Paul a gift from the Philippian church.
(cf. Philippians 4:15)

That meant he could devote himself full-time to the ministry.

This was what he really wanted to do!

Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.



His teaching included his own personal testimony of how he had come to know that Jesus really was the Jews' Messiah.

This message was specifically for the Jews. The gentiles didn't appear to have a problem about that.

But when they opposed Paul and became abusive,



Again we see that some rejected the message and then reacted in a hostile way.

When people feel their religious foundation is being questioned and are challenged to open up to a living faith – there can be two opposite responses.

But when they opposed Paul and became abusive,
he shook out his clothes in protest



How do you cope with rejection?
Follow Jesus' instructions in Matthew 10:14-15

he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them,
"Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it."



He was making it clear to them, that they were responsible for what would happen to them now.

Judgement would come.

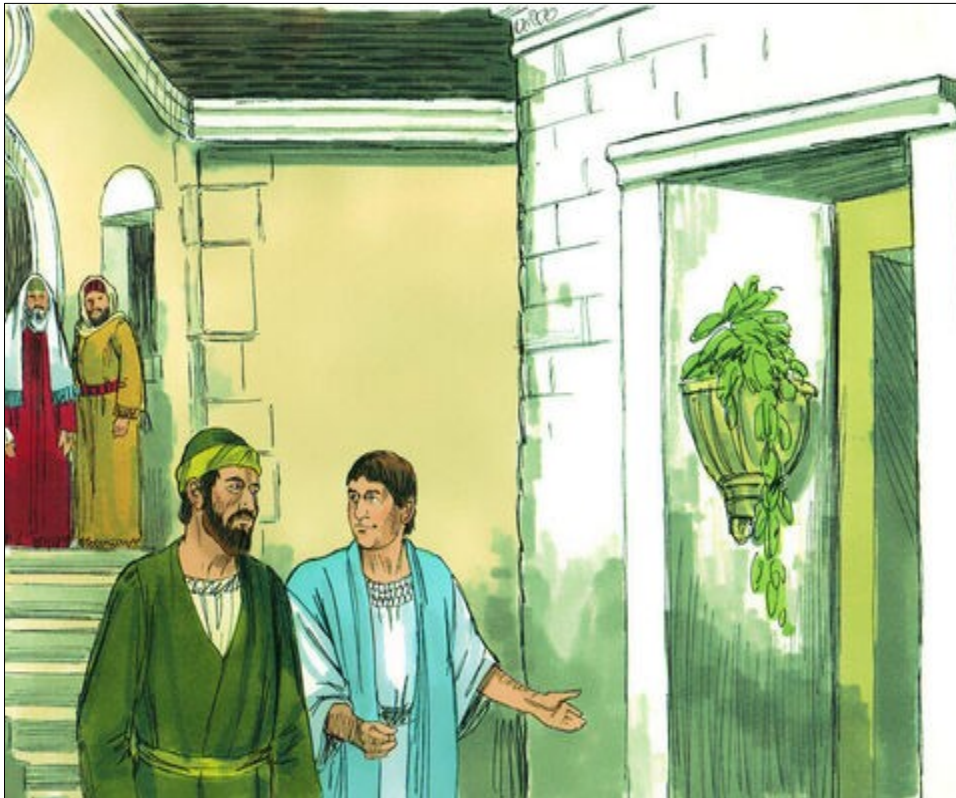
From now on I will go to the Gentiles.



Paul had finished in the synagogue in Corinth. That doesn't mean he stopped trying to reach Jews. He was following the Holy Spirit's guiding as to where he should continue his ministry in Corinth.

The gospel was intended to bring blessing to the nations.

Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshipper of God.

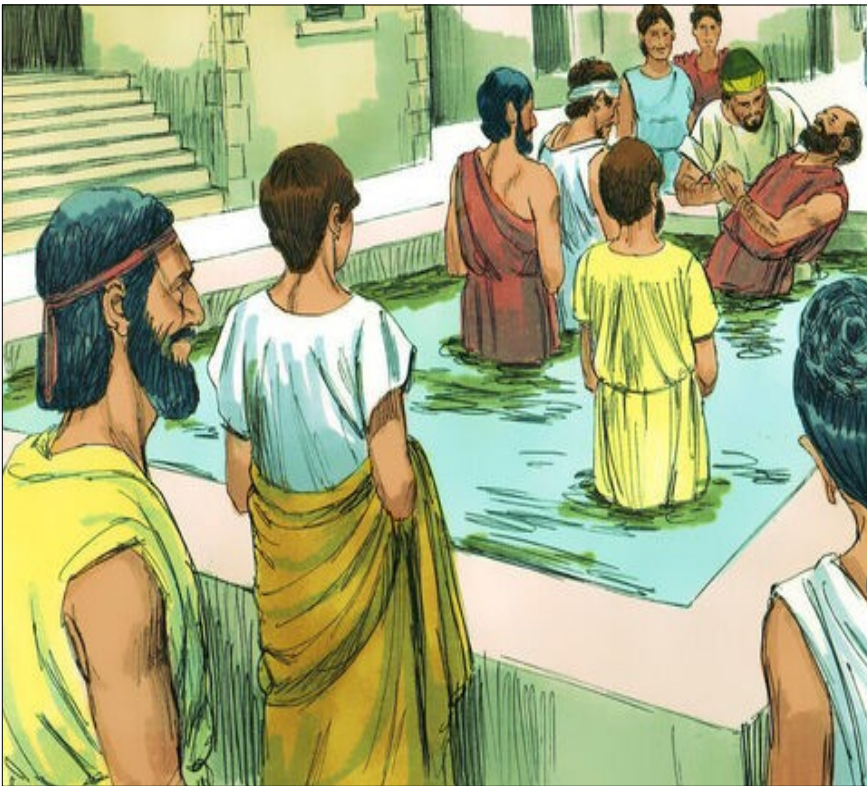


His next stop was NEXT DOOR.

It belonged to a Greek man. He was a convert who had come to believe in the God of the Jews.

He had come to faith in Jesus and welcomed Paul to make use of his home.

Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.



Here we see those who had believed that Jesus is the Messiah and were saved. So they made a commitment by baptism.

Crispus is mentioned as one of the few that Paul baptised (1 Corinthians 1:14)
He was then 'fired' as the synagogue leader.

One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision:
"Do not be afraid."



Why did the Lord choose to appear to Paul at this time?

He was discouraged.

What had happened?

Was it going to be a repeat of his previous experiences?

He was saddened that many of his fellow Jews were rejecting Jesus the promised Messiah.

One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision:
"Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent."



The Lord encourages him to continue in the work he was doing and not to stop.

It's good to know that you are working in God's will.

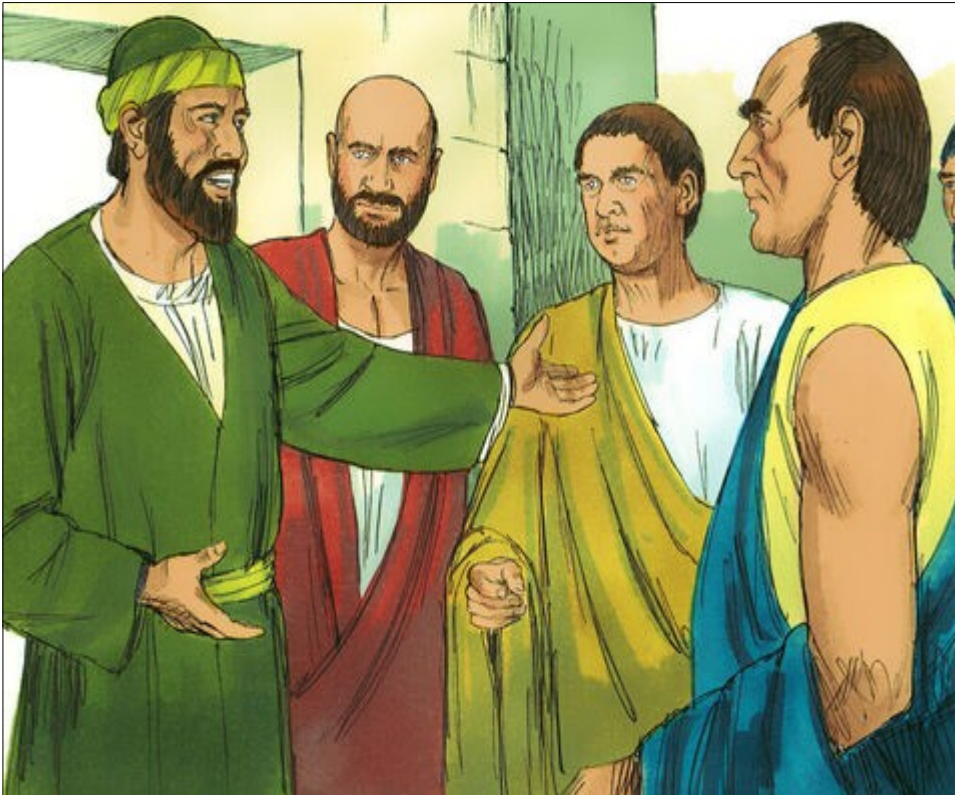
One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision:
"Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent.
For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you,
because I have many people in this city."

The Lord gave him three promises:-

- 1, His personal Presence with Paul
- 2, His protection from harm (even though they may try)
- 3, He will bring good results – many people saved here.

What is the cure for fear and discouragement?
cf. David at Ziklag in 1 Samuel 30:6

So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half,
teaching them the word of God.

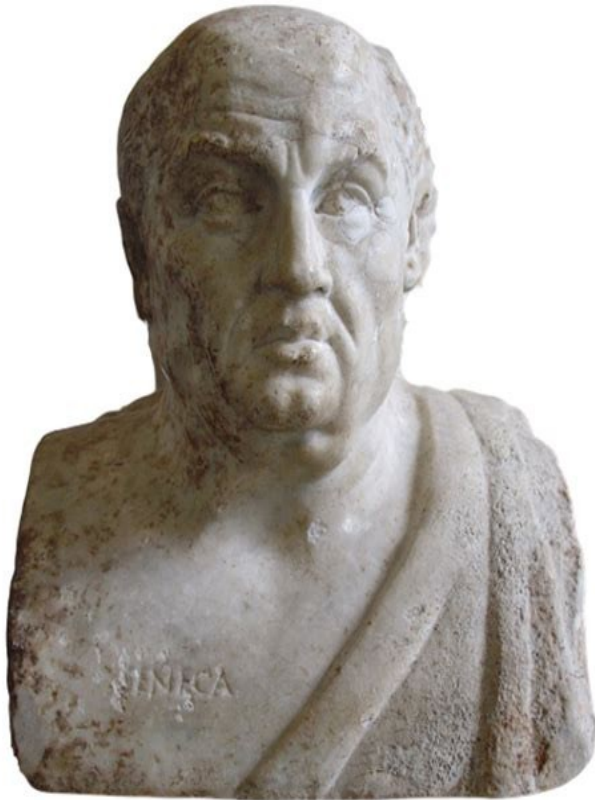


It worked!

He didn't have to
leave town this time.

He did what the Lord
had told him to do
Teach the WORD.

While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia,



Sometime later (about 51AD), Gallio was appointed proconsul, based in Corinth.

The general comments made about him say that he was quite a pleasant man. He arrived from Rome and had seen the troubles that had led to the expulsion of the Jews.

While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia,
the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him into court.



They thought with the arrival of the new proconsul, they might be able to bring charges in order to get Paul banned and silenced.

The Lord hadn't promised that they wouldn't try but - that they would fail!

"This man," they charged, "is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law."



Since Judaism was a religion 'tolerated' by the Romans, they were trying to accuse Paul of starting something different and so get it banned.

They say it doesn't agree with their LAW (ie. their understanding of the Torah + many oral additions)

Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to them, "If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanour or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you."



Gallio realised that this case had nothing to do with Roman law and had no criminal basis.

Since it was not in his jurisdiction – he dismissed the case without hearing Paul's defence (pity!)

"But since it involves questions about words and names
and your own law--settle the matter yourselves.
I will not be a judge of such things."

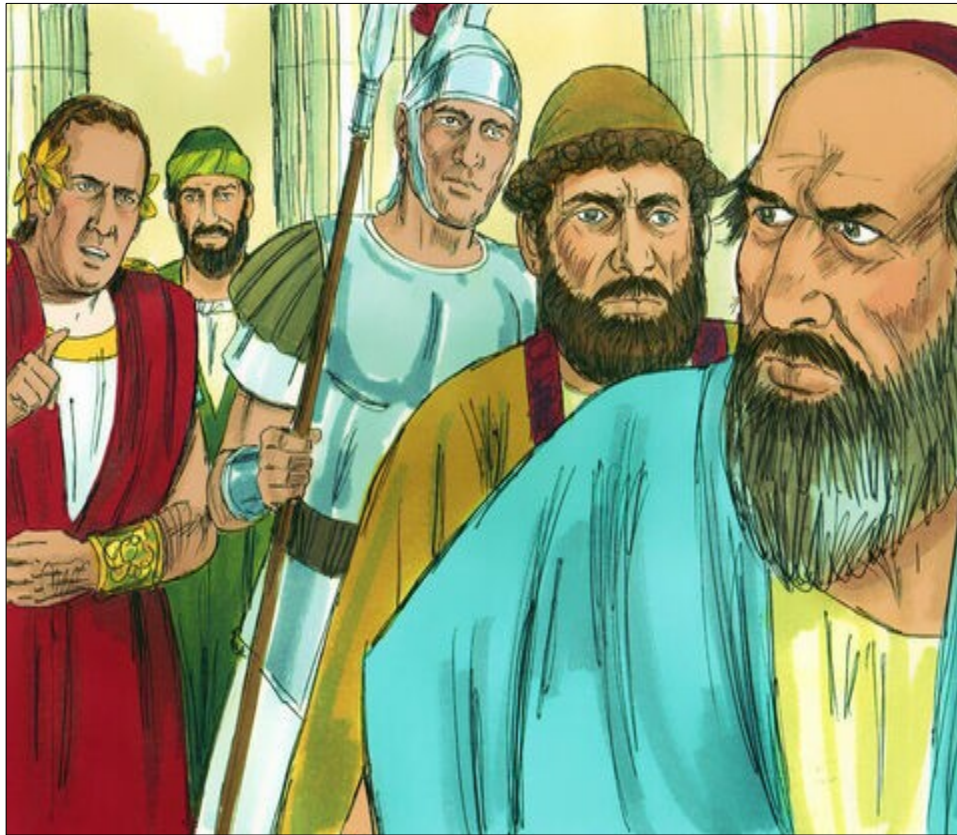


Gallio saw it as a Jewish quarrel,
perhaps not unlike what had
happened in Rome.

He kept the STATE out of this
religious matter.

Sort it out yourselves!

So he drove them off.



He got the stewards to throw them out. Case dismissed!

Then the crowd there turned on Sosthenes the synagogue leader and beat him in front of the proconsul;

It seems that Sosthenes was the newly appointed leader to replace Crispus at the synagogue.

The crowd outside saw this as an opportunity to have a go at the Jews, perhaps following the lead of the stewards.



If it was the same person mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:1, then Sosthenes later became a believer!

and Gallio showed no concern whatever.



Was this his idea of rough justice or
a sign of Roman antisemitism?

After this Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time.

The work goes on!

So in the face of discouragement,
the Lord's presence and
His promises are essential to keep us going.

Near the end of his life Paul wrote



*I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race,
I have kept the faith.
2 Timothy 4:7*