

## Priscilla (and Aquila)

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a **Acts 18:1-3**

b P&A meet Paul.

*<sup>1</sup> Later Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. <sup>2</sup> Here he met a Jew named Aquila who had been born in the country of Pontus. But Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, had recently moved to Corinth from Italy, because Claudius commanded that all Jews must leave Rome. Paul went to visit Aquila and Priscilla. <sup>3</sup> Because they were tentmakers, , he stayed with them and worked with them. (Acts 18:1-3)*

See a New Testament map of Paul's travels -- 2nd Missionary Journey.

c What is their profession?

*...they were tentmakers, just as he [Paul] was...*

This is the only statement in the Bible that reports Paul's profession -- making tents.

d Where are they from?

Aquila's home town was in Pontus - today northern Turkey. But we don't know what was Priscilla's home town. They had been living in Rome before Paul met them in Corinth.

e Why did they leave Rome?

*...because [the Roman Emperor] Claudius commanded that all Jews must leave Rome...*

The Bible does not give the reason Claudius gave this order. But we can look to Roman history for this information. Dr. Paul Maier points out that according to the ancient historian, Tacitus, the Emperor Claudius expelled all Jews from Rome because the Jews were arguing publicly about a "leader named *Crestus*." This was, no doubt, Tacitus' misspelling of the name of Christ (in the Greek language it is *Christos*).

f **Acts 18:18-23**

g Paul leaves P&A in Ephesus.

*<sup>18</sup> Paul stayed with the believers for many more days. Then he left and sailed for Syria, with Priscilla and Aquila...*

What is in Syria? The city of Antioch. The church in Antioch was Paul's "home base" for his three missionary journeys. If you look at a map, you see that for Paul to go from Corinth to Syria, he must sail east.

The city where they get on the ship to sail east is Cenchrea. (See Bible map. Cenchrea is near Corinth.)

*<sup>18</sup> ...At Cenchrea Paul cut off his hair, because he had made a promise to God.*

We see in the verses that follow, that Priscilla and Aquila do not go all the way with Paul to Syria. Priscilla and Aquila get off at their first stop: Ephesus.

*<sup>19</sup>Then they went to Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. While Paul was there, he went into the synagogue and talked with the Jews. <sup>20</sup> When they asked him to stay with them longer, he refused. <sup>21</sup> But as he left, he said, "I will come back to you again if God wants me to." And so he sailed away from Ephesus.*

*<sup>22</sup> When Paul landed at Caesarea, he went and gave greetings to the church in Jerusalem.*

*h* **Acts 18:24-28**

*i* P&A meet & teach Apollos.

*<sup>24</sup> A Jew named Apollos came to Ephesus...*

*j* Where is he from?

*<sup>24</sup> ...He was born in the city of Alexandria...*

You will find this on a Bible map in Egypt. Alexandria was named after the Greek emperor, Alexander the Great. It was a university town, with a large library. There was also a large Greek-speaking community of Jews in Alexandria. They were responsible for translating the Old Testament into the Greek language. (The Greek OT is called the *Septuagint*, and is often identified by the Roman number 70: *LXX*.)

*k* What is his skill?

*... and [he] was a good speaker who knew the Scriptures well.*

Apollos was a good Bible teacher. But...

*l* What was wrong with his information about Jesus?

*<sup>25</sup> He had been taught about the way of the Lord and was always very excited when he spoke and taught the truth about Jesus. But the only baptism Apollos knew about was the baptism that John taught.*

John the Baptizer preached, "Christ is coming!" Apparently Apollos learned that message from John (or John's disciples), but he did not know that Christ already came and fulfilled prophecy by dying on the cross and rising again. (Imagine meeting someone who heard about Paul Revere's announcement, "The British are coming!" but didn't know America won the Revolutionary War.)

*<sup>26</sup> Apollos began to speak very boldly in the synagogue, and when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him to their home and helped him better understand the way of God.*

Priscilla and Aquila had the joy of leading Apollos to faith in Christ.

Apollos already knew Old Testament prophecy about Christ. Now he could preach and teach effectively to Jewish people about Christ from their own Scriptures.

*<sup>27</sup> Now Apollos wanted to go to the country of Southern Greece.*

Apollos went to the city of Corinth, where Paul first met Priscilla and Aquila.

*So the believers [in Ephesus] helped him and wrote a letter to the followers there, asking them to accept him. These followers had believed in Jesus because of God's grace, and when Apollos arrived, he helped them very much.<sup>28</sup> He argued very strongly with the Jews before all the people, clearly proving with the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.*

## *m* **Acts 19**

*n* Paul comes back to Ephesus and stayed almost 3 years.

Priscilla and Aquila are not mentioned in Acts 19, but we learn from a letter that Paul wrote in Ephesus that they continued to work in team ministry with Paul and Apollos, who returned to Ephesus. (1 Corinthians 16:12,19)

It is interesting that Paul also met other disciples of John the Baptizer's message. Paul was able to lead them to Christ, just as Priscilla and Aquila had done for Apollos (Acts 19:1-8).

## *o* **Other references to Priscilla & Aquila**

### *p* **1 Corinthians 16:19**

*q* Paul wrote this letter to Corinth while he was with P&A in Ephesus (same time as Acts 19).

***<sup>19</sup> The churches in the country of Asia send greetings to you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you in the Lord, as does the church that meets in their house.***

See a New Testament map of Paul's missionary journeys to see where is "the country of Asia." This is a province in western Turkey, not the continent that today we call Asia (China, India, Japan, Korea, etc.)

Notice that Christian churches in the New Testament don't own buildings. They met in member's homes. Aquila and Priscilla offered their home as the meeting place for the Ephesian church.

**r Romans 16:3-4**

**s *Paul probably wrote this letter to Rome while he was in Corinth after he left Ephesus.***

***<sup>3</sup> Give my greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, who work together with me in Christ Jesus <sup>4</sup> and who risked their own lives to save my life. I am thankful to them, and all the non-Jewish churches are thankful as well. <sup>5</sup> Also, greet for me the church that meets at their house.***

It appears that after Paul left Ephesus to tour Greece and Macedonia, Priscilla and Aquila returned to Rome. Again, they offered their home as the meeting place for the church.

**t 2 Timothy 4:19**

Many years later...

**u *Paul wrote this letter to Timothy from prison in Rome, while Timothy was serving the church in Ephesus.***

***<sup>19</sup> Greet Priscilla and Aquila...***

So Priscilla and Aquila moved back to Ephesus to resume ministry there.

For more about Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos, go to [www.christdeaf.org/bible](http://www.christdeaf.org/bible). Click on the link to "Great Unknown People of the Bible."