

# WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

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## *The Second Journey*

*Acts 18: 1-4*

*After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;*

*And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome) and came unto them.*

*And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.*

*And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.*

In each city that Paul visited he found someone who, as a faithful pupil and disciple, compensated him for all the bitter opposition and persecution which he encountered. In Corinth these faithful friends were Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, tentmakers by trade. Like Jesus and his father, Joseph who were carpenters, they were mystic builders, working on the house not made with hands. By this key we know that Aquila and Priscilla were Initiates, having developed the body of the spirit and learned how to function in it.

An etherealized body will become the common possession of all humanity in the coming age; it is the priceless heritage of the Initiate in this the Piscean Day. Instruction regarding it comprises the principal teachings of mystic Christianity. Paul builds his work around this central theme. He refers to it in every one of his letters and, for the benefit of those who can lay hold of them, he

inserts many hidden keys in relation to the formation of this body of the soul.

Corinth was called the City Beautiful. It was one of the most magnificent in the world—a city of gaiety and frivolity. It was given over to every pleasure-loving device. Gorgeous pageants and elaborate temple processions frequently filled its streets. There were theatrical displays, and extremely licentious temple rites were practiced according to prescribed laws. Even the Christians were not immune to the prevailing immorality.

*Acts 18: 9-11*

*Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:*

*For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.*

*And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.*

It was necessary, therefore, that Paul remain in this most dissolute city for a long period, working both exoterically and esoterically for the people. An Initiate can do much for a place which has become a center of evil by purifying and refining the desire and mental currents which surround it. This constitutes a portion of the night work which is done by Illumined Ones and their pupils who have won consciousness when apart from the body. It has always been a part of inner school training and continues to be so. The populous centers of the world are

constantly benefitting by this work of purification carried on by those who have fitted themselves to perform such communal service.

The center of the life in Athens was the stately Parthenon, the temple dedicated to Minerva, goddess of wisdom. The life of Corinth revolved about the temple dedicated to Venus, the goddess of love and pleasure. Athens represents, symbolically, the path of the head (reason). Corinth represents the way of the heart (feeling). Paul, the true type of Christian Initiate, typifies the blending of the two, and was for that reason eminently qualified to help inhabitants of both these cities. From this viewpoint it is interesting to make a contrast study of the Epistle to the Thessalonians written from Athens and the Epistle to the Corinthians. The keynote of the former is a scientific exposition of preparatory requirements for the time of Christ's return. The pivotal theme of the Corinthian Epistle is the necessity of purity and chastity and the sanctity of the body temple in order that the sacred life force may be conserved for building a new etheric body as a more adequate habitation for the spirit.

No one can study the Epistles written to the Corinthians without realizing that Paul is repeatedly referring to an inner teaching that has not been given to the masses. He included many expressions that are used only by Initiates and their disciples, and which bear a significance for them not generally understood.

*I Cor. 3:10*

*According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.*

In the above passage the term "master-builder" is used the one and only time in the entire Bible. It was well known to Greeks who were connected with the Eleusinian Mysteries. It was applied only to one who had passed the Master's degree or third Initiation, and was thus able to lift his

consciousness above this mundane sphere and focus it as will in realms of the spirit. Paul was advising those who could receive it that he was a true Master Mason.

*I Cor. 5:3, 4*

*For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed.*

Paul here refers to his ability to function apart from the physical body. This is the step in spiritual evolution to be demonstrated by esoteric Christians, requisite for pioneers of the New Age and new religion. Numerous are the allusions to this attainment. Paul points to it in some form or other in his several messages to the churches.

*II Cor. 12:2-4*

*I knew a man in Christ above fourteen year ago. (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.*

*And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)*

*How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*

*I Cor. 3:2,3*

*I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*

*For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

Here Paul is referring to hidden teachings to be found throughout the entire Bible.

(to be continued)

