

Jews and the Nations

Acts 18

Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles [Greeks], but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

(NIV 1 Cor 1:22–24, edited)

‘Gentiles’ (ESV, NIV) in the text above is ‘hellen’, Greeks
‘Gentiles’ in Acts 18:6 is ‘ethnos’, ‘nations’

Jews and the Nations

Places, People, Political history, Pauline theology



Places

Achaia: region including southern Greece and Corinth



People

The Hellenistic Jews

Aquila and Priscilla (Latin names)

married and business partners, relocated from Rome

Apollos 'Sent of Apollo' - named for a Greek god!

A scholar from Alexandria

Justus, Crispus (Latin), Sosthenes (Greek)

The Romans

Claudius, emperor from AD41 to AD54

Gallio, proconsul, the brother of Seneca

Political history

AD41: Claudius warns the Jews of Alexandria 'not to receive Jews from Syria'

Perhaps why Apollos did not have all the information

AD49: Anti-Christian riots in Rome (where Paul had never been!) causes Claudius to expel the Jews, thus exporting the problem to Corinth! Gallio was clearly not pleased by this decision.

Pauline theology

Why does Luke focus on Paul?

(The gospel had already reached Rome and Alexandria without him.)

Paul bridged both cultures (see Acts 15, Acts 21)

Saul - A Hebrew name,

a Pharisee, student of Gamaliel

‘a Hebrew of the Hebrews’ (Philippians 3:5)

Born in Tarsus

Familiar with Greek learning

A Roman citizen

Pauline theology

Why does Luke focus on Paul?

Paul was chosen by Jesus as
the apostle to the Gentiles (ethnos), kings and Jews
(in that order, Acts 9:15).

Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the
necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our
fathers have been able to bear? (NIV Acts 15:10)

Words spoken by *Peter*!

Pauline theology

Plan A or Plan B?

To the Jews first! (Verses 8,19)

Malachi's curse acted out in v6.

Out of defeat, God brings victory and the perfect sacrifice. There are new children for Abraham, by grace and new birth.

Pauline theology

A completed Nazirite vow (v18), after which Paul *reasoned* with the Jews.

Persuasion, countering the Jews' attempts to use force (vv12-17). The law requires obedience from the mind and heart, not just outward conformity.

Compare Matthew 5:20

For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Pauline theology

The baptism of John (v25).

Accurately (v25) or more accurately (v26)?
What was missing?

But when he [John the Baptist] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptising, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? *Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.* (NIV Mt 3:7–8)

Pauline theology

The baptism of John (v25).

“I [John the Baptist] baptise you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

(NIV Mt 3:11)

Christian baptism is trinitarian, it signifies *rebirth*. When Apollos had grasped that, he could refute the Jews and proclaim Jesus as Messiah.

Pauline theology

The true apostolic gospel!

Authenticated by the destruction of Jerusalem.

The message of all the apostolic writers.

‘I will go to the nations’ (v5b).

And the nations will come in (Revelation 21:26)

There dwells the Lord our King (Thomas Oliver)...

On Zion's sacred height

His kingdom he maintains

And glorious with his saints in light

Forever reigns