

# Paul's Co-Worker Couple in Corinth

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

## Introduction:

A. There are only a limited number of verses that speak of Aquila and Priscilla

1. Acts 18:1-3, 18-19, 24-26; Rom. 16:3-5; 1Cor. 16:19; 2Tim. 4:19

B. Background

1. Priscilla and Aquila were a first century Christian missionary married couple described in the New Testament. They lived, worked, and traveled with the Apostle Paul, who described them as his fellow workers in Christ Jesus. Their example and influence strengthened the early New Testament churches.
2. Priscilla was a woman of Jewish heritage and one of the earliest known Christian converts who lived in Rome. Her name is a Roman diminutive for Prisca which was her formal name. Some historians believe she was Paul's amanuensis in the writing of the book of Hebrews. She is the only Priscilla named in the New Testament.
3. Aquila, husband of Priscilla, was originally from Pontus and also was a Jewish Christian. History reports that Aquila may have served as an elder in Ephesus..
4. Priscilla and Aquila were tentmakers, as was Paul. Nearly every Jew, including those with classic Jewish or Hellenistic education, were given training in a labor trade.
5. Priscilla and Aquila had been among the Jews expelled from Rome by the Roman Emperor Claudius in the year 49 AD as written by Suetonius. They ended up in Corinth where Paul lived with Priscilla and Aquila for approximately 18 months. Then the couple started out to accompany Paul when he proceeded to Syria, but stopped at Ephesus in the Roman province of Asia Minor, now part of modern Turkey.
6. They are mentioned six times in four different books of the New Testament, always named as a couple and never individually. Of those six references, Aquila's name is mentioned first three times and Priscilla's name is mentioned first on three occasions, which shows them as equal in their service to God, even though the man is usually mentioned first; e.g., Adam and Eve, Ananias and Sapphira, et al.
7. Jesus demonstrated that he valued women and men equally as being made in the image of God. Luke clearly indicates Priscilla's relationship with her husband. She is certainly not Aquila's property, as was customary in Jewish and Greco-Roman society, but rather his partner in ministry and marriage.
8. Their joint role in teaching Apollos is believed by some to be in conflict with 1Timothy 2:12, "I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor."

9. The fact is that women did indeed teach men in some limited circumstances. Priscilla instructed the evangelist Apollos, Lois and Eunice taught Timothy, and Phoebe is named as helper of the church at Cenchrea, Euodia and Syntyche were Paul's co-workers in Philippi, and Mary Magdalene, Joanna Chuza, and Susanna financially support Jesus Christ in His ministry.
10. History records that Aquila and Priscilla's lives ended in martyrdom.

## **I. AQUILA AND PRISCILLA, A MODEL MARRIAGE**

### **A. Their mission**

1. They were Jews expelled from Rome - Acts 18:1-2
2. Paul lived and worked as a tentmaker with them in Corinth - Acts 18:3
3. They traveled with Paul from Corinth to Ephesus and stayed there
  - a. Acts 18:18-19
4. They hosted a church in their home in Ephesus - 1Cor. 16:19
5. They risked their lives for Paul - Rom. 16:3-4
6. Later, back in Rome, they hosted a church in their home - Rom. 16:5
7. They are mentioned in Paul's last epistle shortly before his death; they were back in Ephesus sharing in Paul's work for the Lord - 2Tim. 4:19

### **B. Their means**

1. They attended the synagogue - Acts 18:26
  - a. Perhaps they saw it as an opportunity to teach - Acts 17:1-2
2. They heard Apollos speak - Acts 18:26
3. They took him aside - Acts 18:26
  - a. Talking to him privately was conducive to constructive dialogue; their goal was to reason and persuade - Acts 17:17, 4
4. They explained to Apollos the way of God more accurately - Acts 18:26
  - a. They sought to build on what he already knew with the goal of saving him and all of his future hearers

### **C. Their message**

1. They loved the Lord and the brethren more than life itself. The passage in Rom. 16:3-4 demonstrates that they were willing to lay down their life, not only for the service of Christ, but in the service of His servant Paul.
2. They gave of their means to promote the gospel of Christ.
  - a. They opened their home for travelling preachers - Acts 18:1-3
  - b. They opened their home to provide a place for the church to assemble - Rom. 16:5; 1Cor. 16:19
3. They zealously shared the gospel with their friends - Acts 18:24-28
  - a. Aquila and Priscilla taught Apollos even though they were not full-time preachers supported by the church to spread the gospel.
  - b. Acts 8:4-5; Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; 2Tim. 2:2
4. They were heirs together of the grace of life - 1Peter 3:7

Conclusion: May we work together as husbands and wives, parents and children, friends and brethren like Aquila and Priscilla to do the work of the Lord today. let us work together in our service to God as did Aquila and Priscilla.