

Who were Priscilla and Aquila?

The story of these two friends of the apostle Paul is told in Acts 18. Aquila, a Jewish Christian, and his wife, Priscilla, first met Paul in Corinth, became good friends of his, and shared in his work. These two remarkable people belong in the pantheon of Christian heroes, and their ministry is both an encouragement and an example for us.

When we first meet Aquila and Priscilla, we are told that they had come to Corinth from Italy as victims of Roman persecution, not for their Christian faith but because Aquila was a Jew. The Emperor Claudius expelled all Jews from Rome, and no doubt Jews deemed it unsafe to remain in any part of Italy. Aquila and Priscilla found their way to Corinth and settled there, pursuing their trade as tentmakers. When Paul, a tentmaker himself, came to Corinth, he went to see them, no doubt having heard of their faith in Christ. Paul lived and worked with them while founding the Corinthian church.

After a year and a half, Paul left for Ephesus and took Aquila and Priscilla with him. The couple stayed in Ephesus when Paul left and established a church in their home (1 Corinthians 16:19). Then an eloquent preacher named Apollos came through Ephesus. Apollos was mighty in the Scriptures, but he only knew the baptism of John. This means Apollos knew Christ had come and fulfilled John's prophecies, but he didn't know the significance of Christ's death and resurrection, the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit, or the mystery of the church containing both Jews and Gentiles. Priscilla and her husband took Apollos aside and explained these things to him (Acts 18:24-26). Both Aquila and Priscilla possessed an in-depth understanding of doctrine learned from Paul, and this husband and wife team was able to pass it on to another Christian and build him up in the faith.

These two remarkable people set an example for us of hospitality, seen in opening their home to Paul and using their house as a meeting place for the church. We are also impressed by their passion for Christ and their hunger for knowledge of Him.

Another hallmark of the lives of Priscilla and Aquila is their desire to build others in the faith. Paul's last reference to them is in his last letter. Paul was imprisoned in Rome and writing to Timothy one last time. Timothy was pastoring the church at Ephesus, and Aquila and Priscilla are there with him, still faithfully ministering (2 Timothy 4:19). To the end, Aquila and Priscilla were offering hospitality to other Christians, spreading the gospel they had learned from Paul, and rendering faithful service to the Master.