

## **I. The Third Journey Starts (Acts 18:23-19:41)**

- Paul spends some time in Antioch (in Syria) after concluding his second missionary trip. From there, he departs on his third trip, heading back into Asia. He travels through Galatia and Phrygia (perhaps having stopped in hometown of Tarsus to start the trip), bringing strength and encouragement to the Christians living in the various cities of those regions.
- We learn of a man named Apollos, a man praised as well-spoken and possessing a strong knowledge of the scripture. He is, however, not learned in the baptism of Christ, only the baptism of John. Upon hearing his teachings in the synagogue, Aquila and Priscilla politely take Apollos aside and explain the way of God more accurately. This begs the question: was Apollos a Christian before this conversation, or was he baptized as a result of the correction? Apollos is then sent into Achaia (southern Greece) along with letters of recommendation from the brethren in Ephesus. We know he worked well there based on Acts 18:27-28 and I Corinthians 1, 3, 4 and 16.
- Paul arrives at Ephesus after Apollos leaves. There he finds (what we may assume to be Apollos' pupils) some "disciples" who have not heard of the Holy Spirit and like Apollos, only know about the baptism of John. Paul's short speech, assuming there must be more explained that we don't have recorded, compels them to be baptized in the name of Jesus. Repentance of their behalf is assumed since they went through John's baptism. Paul lays hands on them (12 in all) and they receive a measure of the Holy Spirit that gives them the gifts of prophecy and "tongues".
- Paul continues to speak in the synagogue for three months before moving to the school of Tyrannus (assumed to be a school of philosophy). He teaches there for two years.
- God works many miracles through Paul, including healing and casting out evil spirits. This inspires some unbelieving Jewish exorcists to try it themselves, invoking the name of Jesus and Paul. The group included the seven sons of Sceva, the local chief priest. The evil spirit mocks their feeble effort, admitting knowledge of Paul and Jesus, but not recognizing them. The possessed man whips up on all of the would-be exorcists and they are forced to flee naked and wounded.
- All things working for good in the plan of God, news of this incident spreads and Christ is magnified as a result. Many believe and confess sin, including burning books of magic worth 50,000 pieces of silver.
- After sending Timothy and Erastus on to Macedonia, Paul faces some trouble in Ephesus. A local silversmith named Demetrius (named after Demeter, the Greek goddess of the harvest), whose main profit comes from making silver shrines of Artemis, is losing money because of Paul. Artemis (same Roman goddess is Diana) is the goddess of the hunt, animals, childbirth and virginity. The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. He and his fellow silversmiths are losing business from converted Christians who used to be customers. Paul's preaching is also casting doubt on the validity of the Greek gods.
- It is interesting to see the order of Demetrius' gripes: Money loss first, harm to sacred goddess second (19:27). They stir up the people into a chanting mob praising Artemis. The mob seizes Gaius and Aristarchus of Macedonia. Paul wants to help, but is restrained by the other disciples. Alexander is drawn out and tries to give a defense to the people, but upon learning he was a Jew, the mob chants even louder for two solid hours. Finally, the city clerk quiets the crowd and restores order. He says that if there is no charge to be brought against these men in a civilized court, the crowd needs to calm down and disperse. The clerk is concerned that the stir will draw unwelcome intervention by the authorities. His plea works and the mob disperses.

## **II. Rounding the turn for home (Acts 20)**

- Paul bids farewell to the disciples in Ephesus and heads into Macedonia. After encouraging the Macedonians, Paul travels south into Greece, stays three months and plans to set sail for Antioch. Upon learning of a plot against him, Paul instead retraces his steps back through Macedonia.
- Paul is accompanied by Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychichus, Trophimus and Luke (see "we" and "us" in vv. 5 & 6) when returning to Asia. These men go ahead of Paul and Luke and wait at Troas. Paul remains in Philippi for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, then moves on to Troas.
- On the first day of the week, the disciples came together to break bread and Paul, planning on leaving the next day, delivers a lengthy message. Around midnight, a young man named Eutychus falls asleep while sitting in a third floor window and falls out. He is either dead, or appears to be dead. Paul rushes down, falls upon Eutychus with an embrace. Paul reassures those gathered around that Eutychus is not dead. It is unclear as to whether Paul restored life to the boy, healed him of injuries or simply comforted the crowd. This story is somewhat similar

to the story of Jarius' daughter in Mark 5:35-43 & Luke 8:41-42, 49-56. The nature of the story and the relief spoken of in v. 12 suggests that Eutyclus was dead.

- Paul journeys to Miletus via Assos, Mitylene, Chios, and Samos. Paul had decided not to stop in Ephesus and therefore sent word ahead to the elders there to meet him in Miletus. He shares great words with these elders before parting ways to sail back to Tyre:
  - 20:18-24: See the focus Paul gives on service, teaching and testifying for the cause of Christ. He states that he remained steadfast in this work despite being told by the Holy Spirit many times that one day Paul would find himself in chains as a result of God's Work.
  - 20:25-31: Paul will not be returning to support the congregation @ Ephesus. The charge of watching over them is laid on the elders there. It is their duty, just as it is today. Paul warns about two things they will face: "savage" (Gk. "burdensome, heavy") wolves will come in to hurt the flock AND men already among you will try to encourage others to follow after their own perverted version of the Gospel. This warning is similar to Jesus' in Matthew 7:15-20.
  - 20:32-35: Live out the example Paul has shown them. He provides them with a teaching from Jesus not recorded elsewhere.
  - 20:36-38: We see the Ephesian elder's great love for Paul, praying with him and weeping over his departure and concern over the words Paul has given them. The three years spent together (v. 31) have made Paul and these men close.

### III. "Welcome" back to Jerusalem? (Acts 21)

- Setting sail from Miletus, the team passes through Cos, Rhodes and Patara before docking in Tyre on the Phoenician coast. They stay there seven days with some disciples. Paul is warned by these inspired disciples not to go to Jerusalem. Being sent off by the disciples and their families, they depart and sail down to Ptolemais. Staying only one day, the group goes into Caesarea to stay with Philip, one of the seven men chosen to help with the Grecian widows in Acts 6 and preached in Samaria (Acts 8).
- A prophet named Agabus arrives from Judea (probably the same one who predicted the famine in Acts 11:28). He symbolically foretells that Paul will be bound by the Jews in Jerusalem. Paul is undeterred by this prophecy, despite the pleading of others, explaining why in 21:13 & 14.
- They travel to Jerusalem and receive a warm welcome from James and the elders there. Paul reports all of the great work the Lord has allowed him to do among the Gentiles. In 21:20-25, the men in Jerusalem express a desire to conduct an assembly for Paul to address some confusion. Apparently there is some concern about exactly what has been preached to the Jews among the Gentiles.
- They want Paul to enjoin himself with four men who have taken a vow. In doing so, Paul will demonstrate that he is still walking orderly and keeping the law. This request (and Paul's fulfillment of it in 21:26) seems to go against the teachings about the Law of Moses being made void at the cross. Why did Paul not refuse to follow this request based on that fact?
- When these days of purification had nearly ended, some of Paul's old adversaries, Jews from Asia, arrived and began framing Paul as an enemy of the Jews and the Temple. The people are stirred up and drag Paul out of the Temple. The mob begins to beat Paul and news of the trouble reaches the ears of a Roman garrison commander. The commander has his men seize Paul and chain him up. After retreating into the barracks to get away from the crowd, Paul requests a discussion with the commander. The commander asks if Paul speaks Greek and accuses him of being the Egyptian troublemaker who led a rebellion with 4,000 assassins.
- Paul states who he is (no idea why the commander thought him to be Egyptian), where he is from, infers that he is a Roman citizen, and requests permission to address the crowd. The commander grants the request and Paul stands before the people, silencing them and beginning to address them in their native tongue of Hebrew.