

"The Third Missionary Journey"**Part 2****Acts 18:23-21:26**

Introduction: Last week in our study of Acts Paul had left Antioch on his third missionary journey. He would go out to meet the people who were saved on the first two journeys and he would strengthen the disciples by teaching them the Word of God. At the conclusion of his second journey, he went to Jerusalem to keep the feast and it was there that he witnessed the poverty of the Jewish believers. What he saw there burdened Paul and as he would travel on this third journey, he would gather finances to carry back to Jerusalem. As Luke writes he is inspired to write about a visit that took place in Ephesus after Paul had left there.

Notice Acts 18:24

Luke introduces us to a man named Apollos who was eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures. Apollos was a man who knew the Old Testament and was eloquent in the way he was able to teach. Last week we considered how the most important point about Apollos was that he was mighty in the Scriptures. This is something that is possible for all of us who are saved. We may not be eloquent but we can be mighty in the Scriptures if we will give our time to learn the Bible. Many people who were not eloquent were used mightily of God because they were mighty in the Scriptures. Notice what Paul said about his critics.

2 Corinthians 10:8-10

⁸ *For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed:*

⁹ *That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.*

¹⁰ *For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.*

Apollos in Ephesus**Notice Acts 18:25**

Apollos was instructed in the way of the Lord and he was fervent in the spirit which means he was on fire to tell others of what he had learned, therefore he taught diligently what he had learned. But we see in this verse that his message was deficient. He knew only of the baptism of John. What does this mean? The baptism of John was a baptism of

repentance. John the Baptist was sent as the forerunner of Jesus Christ to prepare the way of Jesus into the lives of the Jews and to introduce the Kingdom. The repentance was a requirement for the Kingdom to be established.

Matthew 3:1-11

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

² *And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

³ *For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

⁴ *And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.*

⁵ *Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,*

⁶ *And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.*

⁷ *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*

⁸ *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:*

⁹ *And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*

¹⁰ *And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

¹¹ *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

Today when we are baptized, we are publicly identifying with Jesus Christ. We identify with His death (going into the water), His burial (while in the water), and His resurrection (when we come up out of the water). John's baptism was not the same. His baptism was different. It was a baptism that acknowledged one's sins, and a desire for spiritual cleansing preparing to believe on Jesus Christ.

Acts 19:4

⁴ Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

Getting back to Apollos, all he knew was the baptism of John. He did not yet understand the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross nor did he know of Christian baptism.

Notice Acts 18:26

When Apollos spoke in the synagogue Priscilla and Aquilla were there and they heard his message and they realized he did not have the full picture. They therefore took him with them, probably to their home, and there they explained to him that Jesus had come, was rejected by the Jews, was crucified, buried, and rose from the dead on the third day. They explained that while Jesus was rejected and crucified it was part of the plan of God because His death on the cross was the payment for man's sins and now God offered to all men everywhere the free gift of eternal life. Apollos was teachable and humble and he listened to all that Priscilla and Aquilla taught him. Notice the words of A. C. Gaebelien.

"The great, eloquent preacher on whose lips hung the multitudes, was humble enough to sit at the feet of a tentmaker and his wife and receive instructions from them."

Many raise the question, "Was Apollos saved before this?" I believe he was saved. He would have been what we refer to as an Old Testament believer. He believed in the coming Redeemer of Genesis 3:15 and was looking for Him but he just did not know that He had already come. Apollos would have been born again but he was not a New Testament believer until he was given the Holy Spirit. Notice the statement from Collected Writings vol 25.

"This incident illustrates the transitional state which many of the Hellenist Jewish saints were in during those days. Living abroad, like Apollos in Alexandria, and not having the modern communications we have today, they waited in faith for the Messiah to come, not knowing that God had already fulfilled His promise by sending the Messiah, Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus, as to his understanding, Apollos was still very much on Old Testament ground, "knowing only the baptism of John." What Apollos needed, and what Aquila and Priscilla supplied, was the full light of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. J. N. Darby said, "We are ignorant as to how Apollos was fully introduced into the Christian position. He was doubtless baptized, and had received the Holy Ghost, but nothing is said about it. All we know is that he was instructed in the way of the Lord by means of Aquila and Priscilla through the Word"."

I want to go back to the fact that Apollos would have been born again even as an Old Testament believer. Many people would disagree with that and claim that only New Testament believers are born again. But Jesus taught that Old Testament saints were born again also.

John 3:1-7

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

² The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

³ Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

⁴ Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

⁵ Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

⁷ Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

This conversation happened on the Old Testament side of the cross. It was before Pentecost therefore we can conclude that Old Testament saints were born again but they did not have the indwelling Holy Spirit. Getting back to Apollos he believed in the coming Redeemer so he was saved by grace through faith but he did not have the entire picture until the tent makers explained to him the Gospel.

Notice Acts 18:26 again.

There is something here that I want to help you to see. Apollos spoke in the Jewish synagogue and that is where Aquilla and Pricilla heard him. What were they doing in the synagogue since they were saved? I believe this helps us to understand that Judaism was not just a religion but it was a way of life. This was the practice of the Jews.

Application:

When I consider this, I am reminded that there are certain practices in the lives of Christians that die hard. There are things that when we are saved, they fall away at that moment but then there are other "ways" of the old life that are more difficult to separate from. God has provided all we need to escape the "old ways" and it is our responsibility to apply what He has provided.

2 Peter 1:3-4

³ According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

⁴ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The life of victory is not achieved by training the flesh to live a certain way. The victory comes when we live by faith in what the Bible says about us as believers and we learn to depend upon the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:13

¹³ For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

It is the Spirit who gives us power to put to death the deeds of the flesh.

Romans 6:6-11

⁶ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

⁷ For he that is dead is freed from sin.

⁸ Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

⁹ Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

¹⁰ For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

¹¹ Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

With all of this Truth before us it is also important to learn to be patient with new believers as they learn the way of spiritual growth through surrender to the Spirit. Even the Apostle Paul struggled as an Apostle.

Romans 7:15-20

¹⁵ *For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*

¹⁶ *If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.*

¹⁷ *Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

¹⁸ *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*

¹⁹ *For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.*

²⁰ *Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

Notice Acts 18:27-28

It is important to notice in these verses that Apollos was a man whom God used to strengthen the faith of believers. He went to Corinth and there he taught the Old Testament and showed that Jesus Christ was the Messiah. His teaching was mighty because it was grounded in the Word of God. Apollos and Paul complimented one another in their ministries. There was not jealousy between the two. It was all about serving the Lord and being used by the Lord as He would build His church.

1 Corinthians 3:5-7

⁵ *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?*

⁶ *I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.*

⁷ *So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.*