

"The Third Missionary Journey"**Part 3****Acts 18:23-21:26**

Introduction: Last week in our study we came to the end of chapter 18 and as we did Apollos was leaving Ephesus for the city of Corinth. He had come to Ephesus to teach the Word of God and it was there that he met Aquilla and Pricilla. As they listened to him, they realized that his knowledge of the Old Testament was deep, he was mighty in the Scriptures, and his delivery was polished for he was an eloquent speaker. But his message was deficient. Apollos only knew of the baptism of John. Aquilla and Pricilla spent to with Apollos and they taught him the way of God more perfectly. Apollos was now equipped and he now had a desire to go to Achaia which would lead him to Corinth. This then ended chapter 18. Now we have come to chapter 19 where Luke will direct his focus back to Paul.

➤ **Paul's Return to Ephesus**

Notice Acts 19:1-7

I want to take some time to explain some important points here. First of all, these disciples were saved but just like Apollos they would be what we consider to be Old Testament believers. Some say they were not saved at this point but Paul states in verse 2 that they had believed. That is what is required for salvation.

Galatians 3:6

⁶ *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*

Based upon what Paul said we can conclude that they were saved but they did not have the New Testament Truth. Possibly they were disciples of Apollos before he had been educated by Aquilla and Pricilla.

The second thing that we need to consider here is that they did not receive the Holy Spirit until Paul laid his hands upon them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. What we **MUST** know is that Acts is a transitional letter and we **CANNOT** get our doctrine from this letter. Today when a person repents and believes in Jesus Christ, they receive the Holy Spirit instantly.

Romans 8:9b

Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

I point this out because the charismatics believe that Spirit baptism is a second act of grace. I had someone ask me years ago after I was saved if I had received the Holy Spirit yet. I had no idea what they were referring to but now I understand that they were basing their doctrine on the book of Acts. They were basically asking me the same question that Paul asked these believers. Let us notice some verses in Acts that show why doctrine cannot be built upon what is recorded in this letter.

Acts 10:44-48

⁴⁴ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

⁴⁵ And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

⁴⁶ For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

⁴⁷ Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Here in this passage the Holy Spirit came upon the believers before baptism.

Acts 8:12-17

¹² But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

¹³ Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

¹⁴ Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

¹⁵ Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

¹⁶ (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

Here the Holy Spirit came after baptism but not until hands were laid on the believers. Today we receive the Spirit the very moment of salvation.

Notice Acts 19:6

Here is another point to be made. These believers spoke in tongues when they had received the Spirit. There are many today who believe that speaking in tongues is a sign of Spirit baptism and some even teach that if you do not speak in tongues then you are not saved. This is false teaching because the Bible never says that tongues were a sign of salvation. The Bible teaches that tongues were a sign for unbelieving Jews.

1 Corinthians 14:21-22

21 In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

Verse 21 here is a reference to Isaiah 28.

Isaiah 28:9-11

9 Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

The people of Isaiah's day would not listen to Isaiah who was God's prophet and therefore God would deliver them into the hand of the Assyrians who would speak a foreign tongue. In the first century the Jews had rejected their King, Jesus Christ. For this reason, God would deliver them into the hands of the Romans. When the gift of tongues was exercised there was always unsaved Jews present because it was a sign to the unbelieving Jews of what was coming. When the Romans sacked Jerusalem in AD 70 the gift of tongues ceased. There is no longer a need for the gift because the Jews had been warned.

1 Corinthians 13:8

⁸ *Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.*

I point all of this out because there are many pastors who will not for fear of offending people. But the Truth must be told and we **MUST** rightly divide the Word of Truth.

Notice Acts 19:8

Here in this verse, we see that Paul preached in the synagogue for three months. This was unusual because he was often chased out after a brief period of time. While he was there for the three months, he taught them concerning the Kingdom of God. This is interesting and when we stop and consider who he was speaking to we realize why the Kingdom was his topic. He is in the synagogue so he is speaking to Jews and their greatest desire was for the Kingdom. They understood what the prophets had foretold and they were therefore looking forward to the Kingdom. The problem was they had missed their King and they did not see the need for repentance. Therefore, the Kingdom had been postponed. So, Paul would have been explaining to them how everything had unfolded. The Jews rejected their King and crucified Him so the Kingdom was postponed. Through the rejection and the crucifixion of Jesus God had made a way of forgiveness for all men. This is what Paul was preaching in the synagogue and they listened for three months.

Notice Acts 19:9

In this verse there is a chilling warning for unbelievers. The Jews in the synagogue listened for three months. At first the message was something that caught their attention and several believed on the Lord and were saved. But then there were those who refused to believe and as they sat under the Truth of the Word and because they would not believe their hearts became hardened. This is what happens to people who sit in church and listen to the Truth week after week and continue to reject it. The first time they hear they come under conviction and know they need to make a decision. But as time moves forward, they harden their hearts and it becomes easier to turn away from the Truth.

The more a person hears the Truth and rejects it the harder it becomes for them to believe. These Jews were in great danger! If a person has hardening of the arteries in the heart, it can eventually lead to physical death. But if a person hardens their heart spiritually and they continue to go down that path of rejection, this then leads to eternal death and damnation! Some in the audience had soft hearts and

they believed but the others just continued to make their hearts harder. Someone has said, "The same sun that melts the ice, hardens the clay."

2 Corinthians 2:15-16

¹⁵ For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

¹⁶ To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

The scent of incense burnt to the gods in a Roman triumphal parade smelled wonderful to a Roman. The same aroma was an unpleasant smell to a captive prisoner of war in the parade, who would soon be executed or sold into slavery. In the same way, the message of the gospel is a message of life to some and a message of condemnation to those who reject it.

John 3:17-21

¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

²⁰ For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

²¹ But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Notice Acts 19:9 again.

Those who hardened their hearts came under conviction and this was manifest by the way they spoke of the Gospel. Here in this verse Christianity is referred to as "THAT WAY" because Christianity became known in the first century as "The Way." The unbelieving Jews began a smear campaign in which they spoke evil of the Gospel. This was slander as they twisted the message of the Gospel in a way to make it look evil. Their words were the manifestation of what was in their hearts.

Matthew 15:17-20

¹⁷ *Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?*

¹⁸ *But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.*

¹⁹ *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:*

²⁰ *These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.*

Conclusion:

Notice Acts 19:9 again.

Paul made a decision to take the believers and to leave the synagogue. Why did he leave? Because there was false teaching in the synagogue. He did not leave because of a small matter but he departed because there was being taught a false gospel and he would have nothing to do with it. He knew the young believers under him needed the Truth and therefore he separated with them and went to the school of Tyrannus. This was believed to be a room or a hall that was rented out normally for traveling philosophers. Notice the words from the New Daily Study Bible on this school.

"One Greek manuscript adds a touch which sounds like the additional detail an eyewitness might bring. It says that Paul taught in that hall from 11 am to 4 pm. Almost certainly, that is when Paul would teach. Until 11 am and after 4 pm, Tyrannus would need the hall himself. In the Ionian cities, all work stopped at 11 am and did not begin again until the late afternoon because of the heat. We are told that there would actually be more people sound asleep in Ephesus at 1 pm than at 1 am. What Paul must have done was to work all morning and all evening at his trade and to teach in the midday hours. It shows us two things—the eagerness of Paul to teach and the eagerness of the Christians to learn. The only time they had was when others rested in the heat of the day—and they seized that time. It may well put many of us to shame for complaining that things are inconvenient at times."