

LESSON SIX

(18:23 - 19:41)

The Third Missionary Journey

18:23 - 21:16

In Antioch of Syria, 18:23a

Through the Provinces of Galatia and Phrygia, 18:23b

23 After spending some time there he departed and went from place to place through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

V. 23 - Which church Paul greeted is uncertain, but he evidently wasted little time anywhere, going on to Antioch. After some time, he returned through his earlier places of work, and then back to Ephesus (19:1). Over 1,500 miles were covered on this account by Luke, who does not even mention the long days and weary bones Paul must have experienced. Sometimes God included or excluded the strangest things in his revelation to us.

At Ephesus, 18:24-19:41

24 Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, well versed in the scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and expounded to him the way of God more accurately. 27 And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, 28 for he powerfully confuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

19 *While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. 2 And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." 3 And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." 4 And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. 7 There were about twelve of them in all.*

8 And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, arguing and pleading about the kingdom of God; 9 but when some were stubborn and disbelieved, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them, taking the

disciples with him, and argued daily in the hall of Tyrannus. 10 This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

11 And God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them. 13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to pronounce the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." 14 Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. 15 But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" 16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, mastered all of them, and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 And this became known to all residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks; and fear fell upon them all; and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. 18 Many also of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. 19 And a number of those who practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; and they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So the word of the Lord grew and prevailed mightily.

21 Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." 22 And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

23 About that time there arose no little stir concerning the Way. 24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. 25 These he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, "Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. 26 And you see and hear than not only at Ephesus but almost throughout all Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable company of people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. 27 And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may count for nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship."

28 When they heard this they were enraged, and cried out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" 29 So the city was filled with the confusion; and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's companions in travel. 30 Paul wished to go in among the crowd, but the disciples would not let him; 31 some of the Asiarchs also, who were friends of his, sent to him and begged him not to venture into the theater. 32 Now some cried one thing, some another; for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together. 33 Some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, wishing to make a defense to the people. 34 But when they recognized he was a Jew, for about two hours they all with one voice cried out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" 35 And when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky? 36 Seeing then that these things cannot be contradicted, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. 37 For you have brought these men here who are neither

sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess. 38 If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against any one, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls; let them bring charges against one another. 39 But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. 40 For we are in danger of being charged with rioting today, there being no cause that we can give to justify this commotion.” 41 And when he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

V. 24 - While the beginning of Paul's third journey is taking place, Luke the historian treats us to a notable personage in the life of the Corinthians, Apollos by name. One of the world's great libraries was at Apollos' home city in Alexandria. It was a major center of Jewish learning (Philo the Jewish philosopher was alive at this time). The Greek version of the O.T. (the Septuagint, LXX, in Hebrew) was made there. Many of the great church scholars (like Origen) lived in Alexandria, where Christians came to study. Apollos was a man of learning (i.e. wisdom/words) in the Scriptures - a worthy goal for any of us.

V. 25 - Just how he got this particular combination of knowledge we know not. It is clear, however, how twelve men could be in Ephesus who had been immersed with John's immersion, and not the immersion in the authority of Jesus.

V. 26 - There is a play on words in the Greek where v. 25 has Apollos speaking "accurately" while v. 26 has him being instructed "more accurately".

V. 27 - Here is evidence of a letter of recommendation for Apollos, such as we find in II Cor. 8. Note here II Cor. 3:1ff, Apollos, put together much that was helpful to the believers in Corinth, not only from his own knowledge of the Scriptures but also with new framework provided by Aquila and his wife.

V. 28 - Apollos may not have caused the Jews to believe but he did show that they were incorrect in their position. His influence was so great that some in Corinth made him their leader (I Cor 1:12ff). Paul says that Apollos watered 3:6. Note also 4:6 and 16:12.

We might do well to note that many Jewish teachers might have been better versed in their traditions than in the law. Apollos knew the Scriptures, which may be the reason why he had such success.

19:1 - As Paul begins his ministry, the time is probably A.D. 52 or A.D. 53. The city of Ephesus was the capital of the province called Asia (an area on the western end of modern Turkey, and about 200x 300 miles) which was governed by the Romans senate. All of the cities in Revelation 2 and 3 were located in Asia, Ephesus being described in Revelation 2:1-7. In Paul's day it was a great commercial seaport on the south of the Cayster river. Now the ruins are some seven miles inland, since the harbor has filled up. Some of the ancient ruins can still be seen, including the amphitheater where the crowds went, v. 29. Note I Cor. 15:32.

The basic religion was that of Diana, the goddess of fertility, protectress of all young, a beneficent and helpful deity of the night; to whom the creatures of nature were sacred. The temple that was built was one the world's seven wonders, and employed eunuchs (quite a difference from Greek religions) in the worship. The religion was Asiatic not Greek, though the Greeks called the goddess Artemis. Temples were also there to the Roman emperors Claudius, Hadrian and Severus.

The city was prominent in church history, and said to be the place where John spent his last years. One of the early church councils (A.D. 431) was held there, with the major topic of discussion being about the heresy of Nestorius, who was appointed bishop of Constantinople in A.D. 428. He had become popular in defending Christianity against various heresies then prevalent in that area. Cyril of Alexandria charged that Nestorius did not believe that Christ was really God in the flesh, but had two natures, thus was two distinct persons. Nestorius argued that Mary was only mother of the human side of Jesus, and the two natures were joined Siamese-twin fashion.

One of the points in Revelation 2:7 is a reference to the "tree of life". A date tree was part of the things sacred to the goddess and the religion surrounding her.

V. 2 - The disciples (v. 1) must have been like Apollos, or like the apostles prior to the time they followed Jesus. They may have learned what they knew from Apollos himself, prior to his instruction from Aquila and Priscilla.

We should note that the text in King James is not as accurate as some of the later versions (i.e., "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since you believed? and they said unto him, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost"). The better translation is "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

Your guess is as good as mine as to the reason Paul asked the question. It might be that many people were ignorant of the facts about Jesus, to whom John pointed, even as was Apollos, and Paul had encountered such persons in his travels. Their answer might indicate they had not understood what John preached (either about Jesus, the Holy Spirit, etc.) or had not known much of what he preached. He did mention the Holy Spirit, but they may not have heard/understood.

V. 3 - As Paul's question makes clear, any immersion is "into" something (i.e., purposive, achieving certain results). John's immersion was on the basis of information received, acceptance of that message (i.e., repentance), thus producing a change of mind, and immersion as the commanded response, resulting in remission of sins (Mark 1:4). What differences there were between it and Christian immersion could be summed up in 1) preaching of Jesus as the crucified, resurrected Savior and Lord, 2) immersion into Jesus and his body and church, and receiving the indwelling Holy Spirit. Implicit in this "new" message, would be the fact that John's immersion was no longer valid.

V. 4 - As noted above, a major difference between what was preached/believed was in relationship to “the coming one” whom John preached, but denied that he was, and Jesus, who asserted he was “the coming one”.

V. 5 - Since their immersion was not valid (having been done after the time when it was right “to fulfill God’s righteousness” by being immersed by John, Matt. 3:15), they were obedient by obeying Jesus’ command about immersion. It is pertinent to remark that one’s interpretation of this text will be determined by several things, such as presuppositions, ideas about immersion, the Holy Spirit and the believer, spiritual gifts, etc.

V. 6 - As is evident elsewhere, we know 1) that the apostles could give to others gifts through their hands, and 2) excepting Acts 1 and 10, no one received the special gifts of the Holy Spirit except by the Apostles. The results in these disciples were 1) languages and 2) prophecy.

V. 8 - Because the Jews were already interested (18:20), Paul apparently had a longer time of reception here than elsewhere. We also note that it is still “to the Jew first”. He followed his same procedures: reasoning and (trying to) persuade those listening concerning the kingdom of God, the church.

V. 9 - Some listeners “hardened” themselves, refusing to be persuaded (thus disobedient) and spoke evil of (“blasphemed”) the “Way” (i.e., Christianity) before the crowd.

The Greek text says that Paul “apostasized” from them (i.e., withdrew) and separated the disciples from the rest, setting up shop in the school of Tyrannus. One Greek manuscript reads that Paul taught from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Greek term for school originally meant a place of leisure, then of learning. Many places throughout history have served as meeting places for instruction and learning by the church. I Cor. 16:19 has a group meeting in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. See also Philemon v. 2.

V. 10 - Since from Ephesus roads radiated everywhere throughout the country of Asia, the news about Jesus would soon be carried everywhere in the region. This may well be how the “seven” churches got started, even though Paul did not in person visit some of the various places (Col. 2:1). (It would really be good to read the Ephesian letter at this point in your study. Remember also that both the Corinthian letters were written from Ephesus during this period. Paul received and sent messengers to and from Corinth, and quite possible made a trip there himself during this three-year period, according to his statement in 20:31.

V. 11 - Since v. 12 explains that some of the mighty works were “out of the ordinary,” we may be helped to see why the message had such wide hearing. Demetrius helps us see how effective Paul’s work was, v. 23ff. A Roman governor of the area, Pliny, writing to the emperor Trajan about A.D. 100 gives ample evidence that Christians were numerous and everywhere.

We may note in passing that though it seems somewhat odd to put faith in such things as aprons (i.e., something one worked in), yet Elisha wanted Elijah's mantle, the woman (Luke 8) wanted to touch the hem of Jesus' garment, and Peter's shadow was thought beneficial, 5:15. The way God chooses to work is his wisdom being expressed. Sometimes he works in people's lives despite either foolish beliefs rather than because of such.

V. 13 - The Jews were evidently like others who used an oath to do their work. The word "exorcist" means 'to exact/use an oath' in incantations, etc. These particular Jews traveled about performing for their living.

The work of Paul in Jesus' name evidently was considered powerful, and evidently also thought to be a means of making fame and fortune (what a cruel twist! yet true for many, II Cor. 2:17) by these Jews. They may have considered Paul one of their own people. They evidently thought that success turned on the use of the correct incantation rather than sustaining a right relationship with Jesus.

V. 15 - This remark of the demon is universal throughout the N.T. Never once did demons (K.J. 'devils') fail to recognize who Jesus is. Note also the knowledge of the demons about people.

V. 16 - As is clear from Matthew 8, some people indwelt by evil spirits were unusually powerful - this one obviously was. Doubtless to the chagrin of these Jews, the cause of Christ was magnified by this incident, which lends added impetus to the remark in v. 11. It seems that all seven sons were present, and overcome by the evil spirit. What a spot for the candid camera!

V. 17 - **Fear fell** - We may make little out of it, or quote I John 4:18 to justify our behavior, but Scripture makes much (esp. in Acts) about fear falling upon people with results following. Let us not minimize effect of fear in our preaching. At the end of Paul's description of sinful people in Romans, he said that there was no fear of God in their eyes, 3:18. A proper fear of God is the basis for wisdom. The result was good here, as fear kept falling upon people, motivating repentance and confession of sin, coupled with the magnifying of Jesus' name.

V. 18 - This text gives evidence of how repentance (changing of the mind) is a continuous process in the Christian life. Many things may cause a Christian to become more Christ-like - such as increased knowledge, or better understanding of how a text may apply, etc. Notice too that confession is not related to becoming a Christian, but is often needed in the Christian life.

Many...came - The Greek text indicates that people kept coming as time went by.

V. 19 - This text seems to be speaking about those who were not disciples (as were those in v. 18), but who learned that what they were doing was not right. Some, however, think that believers were also involved, which is surely a possible interpretation.

V. 20 - Change impresses! And as peoples' lives were transformed, God's Word (as it was seen to affect the lives of people) became more of a force in the area, growing and becoming stronger day by day.

We remind the reader that Luke's summary of the work in Ephesus has been considered by some to be a division marker in Acts. The outline by Barclay (see the Introduction) follows this thesis.

V. 21 - From the Corinthian epistles, especially I Cor. 16 and II Cor. 1, Paul apparently had planned to do somewhat differently than our text indicates. As it turned out, he did go from Ephesus into Macedonia, then to Corinth, thence to Jerusalem. As Romans 1 and 15 show, he had long prayed about going to Rome, thence to Spain (the far end of the Roman Empire).

purposed in the Spirit - It is not clear whether this has reference to the Holy Spirit or simply to the fact that Paul decided within himself to go.

V. 22 - As I Cor. 4:17 and II Cor. 12:17-18 indicate, both Timothy and Titus were sent by Paul to Corinth while Paul was in Ephesus. Timothy and Erastus (who was from Corinth, Rom. 16:23) now go to Macedonia to prepare the brethren for Paul's coming, while he remains in Ephesus. Apparently the "great and effectual door" of I Cor. 16:8,9 was the reason. As we shall see, however, Paul left before Pentecost, primarily because of the "many adversaries."

two of his helpers - The Greek term is commonly transliterated as "deacon". Hence, Paul sent two who were "ministering" (serving) him to minister to others.

V. 23- **no little stir** - ("Same song, second verse") - The comments of Alexander indicate just how much success Paul was having. Certainly the epistles to Ephesus and Colossae, and Revelation chs. 2 and 3 shows how great the word of the Lord grew. The riot occurred about the time of Paul's departure from Ephesus into Macedonia, apparently.

"the Way" - Notice again this unique designation for Christianity. In ch. 9:2, Paul was going to Damascus to arrest any of "The Way"; in 16:17, we had "way of salvation"; in 18:26.

the way of God - In 19:9 the Jews spoke evil of the "Way"; in 22:4, Paul in recounting his life told of persecuting "this Way to the death"; and in 24:14 said "after the Way which they call a sect". In 24:22; Felix is described as having a "rather accurate knowledge of the Way." Other texts of interest here would be Romans 3:17; Hebrews 9:8; 10:20; James 5:20 and II Peter 2:2; 15; 21.

V. 24 - The vested interest of people, if contrary to Christianity, invariably caused opposition at some point in time. One's treasure location will determine his loyalty, and

rarely does loyalty go unchallenged. In fact, if Christ is to be Lord, every loyalty will be tested.

From epistles written from Ephesus, consider I Cor. 15:30ff and II Cor. 1:8ff for some feeling about this time on Paul's part.

The name Demetrius is common. He may have been the leader of the silversmiths in Ephesus. We should note in passing that this Artemis (Diana) and the Greek goddess Artemis are not identical, though both were worshipped.

V. 25 - The appeal is made to their living, not to their religion necessarily, though the workmen may have also worshipped Diana.

V. 26 - Paul's preaching had changed many. The message must have been in principle like that in Acts 17. Compare I Cor. 8:4-6.

V. 27 - Now, the additional motivation of the greatness of their religion is brought up, after that major point is emphasized about their own interests. So, their living and their honor were at stake!

V. 28 - Demetrius achieved the desired result! Inscriptions show that this was the usual cry in the worship of the goddess by the multitudes.

We note the mob spirit is frequently seen in the Acts account, that spirit of mindlessness that so often acts before thinking, and sometimes with tragic results. Recall the "mob spirit" in ch. 7 with Stephen, ch. 12 with Herod, ch. 14 at Lystra, ch. 16 in Philippi, ch. 17 in Thessalonica, ch. 18 at the agora, then in ch. 21 in the temple. Christianity does not pander to mob spirit or mob psychology in any form. It is a religion of saneness and soberness, intended for serious and solemn consideration of its claims, and teaches personal responsibility. True, the multitudes can be preached to, and encouraged to individually respond, but that is a far cry from mass methods of getting responses by frenzied singing, and other methods of mass hypnosis.

V. 29 - The crowd was confused (the Greek term means "poured together" as a flooding river) and rushed impetuously into the amphitheater (the ruins are still extant) which seated some 25,000.

Aristarchus and Gaius from Macedonia were taken along with the mob. As is evident in Acts 20, they were helping Paul deliver money to Jerusalem. These men doubtless also helped in the evangelistic endeavors of Paul.

V. 30 - Some think that Aquila and Priscilla may have had a hand in the matter (see also Rom. 16:3,4).

V. 31 - Asiarchs were rulers of the province. These men were generally ten (10) in number, chosen from the various cities in the area. They supervised the emperor

worship, public festivals and games, and from them was chosen the high priest of the emperor cult. They, as well as the disciples, probably considered that Paul would lose his life in the rioting crowds.

V 32- **the assembly - the church.** The Greek term regularly translated church means any assembly, from local to national or in a religious sense, a group of people associated together, having a common bond. The term is used both collectively and individually. There is little reason to use the etymology that some do (i.e., “to call out”). The word simply meant an assembly, whether “called out” or not.

V. 34 - A Jew was not acceptable, even though he tried to give a defense (Greek: apologia).

V 35 - The city of Ephesus had a proconsul (v. 38) who lived there, but the town clerk was an elected official from the local group, who would answer to the proconsul. He would be in charge of the city records and finances, etc. His opening remarks show that he knew how to handle the mob.

V. 36 - **No one can assert differently** he says, and then suggests that they do not rush head-long into anything, since (v. 40) their defense to the proconsul would be weak.

V. 37 - Though the two friends of Paul were not technically guilty of the charges he suggested, they were united with Paul in what he preached, as described by Demetrius in v. 26. The ultimate end of Paul’s message would be opposition (blasphemy) against Artemis.

V. 38 - The place for the trial was the agora (market place) where such things were heard (v. 39, and as in Acts 18), not by such a gathering as this.

V. 39 - This matter, and all others, were to be settled in legal, orderly fashion and at an assembly, the Roman way. (Consider this in reference to the uproar before Pilate’s judgment seat, and the pressure he had, with his background in mind.) This region had the essence of the democratic process, and it was only proper that such matters should be handled therein.

V 40 - He reminded them that they could be accused/charged (as in v. 38) with unlawful proceedings, and should therefore come to their senses quickly. Otherwise the proconsul will demand an account of their disorderliness.

V. 41 - The authority of this man is seen by this verse. We should note that both Gaius and Aristarchus and Luke were together on the journey to Jerusalem. They probably furnished Luke with his information about this event.

QUESTIONS

85. Can you trace the three journeys of Paul, giving Scripture limitations and cities visited?

86. Describe Apollos.

87. What is the meaning of the phrase in 18:27 “those who through grace had believed”?

88. Describe the difference(s) between the immersion as practiced by John and the immersion of Christians.

89. How did Luke describe the activity of Paul in the synagogue in Ephesus?

90. What was the extent of Paul’s work in the two-year span at Ephesus?

91. Describe the men who attempted to do miracles in Jesus’ name.

92. What was the extent of knowledge of the world and people in it that the demon indicated? (Would this indicate how difficult the “war” is in which we are engaged, according to Ephesians 6:10ff.?)

93. What good result came to pass in Ephesus from the victory of the evil spirit?

94. Were the Christians in Ephesus learning what being Christian in both thought and practice meant?

95. How did Luke describe the progress being made by God’s word?

96. Approximately what year is it, as Paul concludes his work in Ephesus?

97. What descriptions of the Church and the Christians did Luke use in Acts?

98. What reasons did Demetrius have for opposing Paul?

99. How many times do you find the “mob spirit” in Acts? (Is it still evident in our time?)

100. What evidence do you see of the “democratic process” in Ephesus? (Remember that some of our government processes come from the Romans.)

101. What term used to describe the church also was used to describe the crowds in the theater?

ABA REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 6

1. Identify Apollos.
2. Discuss the location and history of Ephesus.
3. Discuss the relation of Diana and the temple of Diana.
4. Who was Nestorius and what did he believe about Jesus?
5. What are the differences between the immersion of John and the Christian immersion?
6. True or False: “Luke’s summary of the work in Ephesus has been considered by some to be a division marker in Acts”.
7. Summarize Paul’s ministry in Ephesus.
8. Discuss the terms “the Way” and “the way of God”.
9. Identify Demetruis and Artemis.
10. Describe the “mob spirit” which is frequently seen in Acts.
11. Discuss the Greek term for “the crowd was confused”.

12. Who were the Asiarchs?
13. Discuss the meanings of the terms “the assembly” and “the church”.
14. “Apologia” is the Greek term for what English word?
15. Discuss the responsibilities of the town clerk in Acts 19:35.