

Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey - Acts 18:22 - 20:1: Ephesus

Luke leaves Paul in the midst of his journeys and evidently since nothing different from what has already been recorded occurred, passes over the events of Paul with the simple phrase: "*strengthening all the disciples.*" (Acts 18:23). While Paul is involved in traveling from congregation to congregation in this work, Luke returns to Ephesus and sets the background for what will occur there.

Apollos met Priscilla and Aquila

Luke implies that it was after Paul had left Priscilla and Aquila that Apollos came to Ephesus. His arrival must have made a great impression on the Jews at the Synagogue. He was eloquent, mighty in the Scripture, fervent in spirit, taught accurate the way of the Lord, and spoke boldly. Everyone of these a very important quality of a good preacher and minister. Luke is very clear that there was nothing inaccurate or false about his preaching. The only deficit was the extent of his knowledge.

Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. Acts 18:24-26

The hearts of Paul's two friends must have been lifted with joy and excitement to hear such preaching, but soon a shadow came into their minds as they realized that Apollos' education had not progressed beyond the baptism of John. As soon as they realized this they taught him the way of the Lord more accurately. Note the play on words. Although he "*taught accurately the things of the Lord,*" "*they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.*"

When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. Acts 18:26-27

Not long after this teaching Apollos made the decision to go to Achaia. Luke doesn't tell us if this was part of his business, or if he just wanted to go and preach there. But the congregation already in existence in Ephesus (probably the one in Aquila and Priscilla's home) sent him a letter of commendation (similar to the Roman letter for Phoebe).

And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; 28 for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ. 1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, Acts 18:27-28; 19:1

The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. 1 Cor 16:19

Paul Returned to Ephesus

After Paul had completed his travels through "*the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples,*" "*having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus.*"

Luke simply recorded that Paul found some "disciples." Either taught by Apollos or holding to the same doctrines. They had not been taught any further than the baptism of John and his warnings about repentance. The reception of the Holy Spirit that Paul referred to would have been the miraculous measure first sent forth at Pentecost, again with Cornelius, and through the laying on of the apostles' hands like those in Samaria.

John had never discussed the coming of the Holy Spirit or the role he would play. That being the case they had not even heard about the Holy Spirit being given. This gave Paul the opening he sought to gently help them learn the truth. The baptism of John had been used right up to Jesus' resurrection, but after that and just prior to His ascension Jesus revealed baptism in all its glory as it was to be used not "*for the kingdom was at hand,*" but to be "*born again of water and the spirit to enter the kingdom of heaven.*" John's baptism had been a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins pointing forward to the coming Messiah in preparation for the coming of His kingdom. As soon as they heard this they chose to be baptized "*again in the name of the Lord Jesus.*" Thus John's preparatory baptism was not sufficient. This is exactly the same reason why Peter insisted all who heard his sermon and wanted to do something about their sins commanded them to be baptized, not in the name of John, but in the name of Jesus.

finding some disciples 2 he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." 3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." 4 Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Acts 19:1-6

Then Paul laid his hands upon them and they received the Holy Spirit in the form of speaking in

tongues and prophesy. This perfectly fits with what Simon saw Peter and John do in Samaria.

Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, Acts 8:17-18

For the next three months, Paul preached each week in the synagogue and used the prophets to preach the kingdom of God. Things finally came to a head and he was forced to separate the disciples of Jesus from the Jews. This evidently was done only because the Jews no longer would hear the truth. Clearly the church was already established and meeting on the first day of the week. But when the *hardening* of their hearts into *unbelief* led them to *speak evil* about *the way*, Paul left them as he had in all the other cities and began working only with the church.

And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. 9 But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. Acts 19:8-10

After moved to the School of Tyrannus Paul began teaching daily. Although Paul never left Ephesus, but stayed there teaching every day, "*all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.*" Acts 19:10

Unusual Miracles and the seven sons of Sceva

Once again when things are out of the ordinary, Luke recorded it. For a reason not revealed, God chose to work special and out of the ordinary miracles (Acts 19:12). These miracles consisted of "*Handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.*" Perhaps the reason Luke recorded this was as an introduction to the seven sons of Sceva

Luke then recorded the chasm between the miracles done by Paul and those who sought to copy them. "*some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches."* Hoping to cash in on the name and the authority, they sought to use them to prove their own power, but things horribly backfired when "*the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"* This evil spirit was under no obligation to heed the name of Jesus from the mouth of an unbeliever. Things got completely out of hand when "*the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.*" As this story was so amazing it "*became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.*"

Not only did this cause people to respect the name of Jesus, but it also caused those who practiced magic to reevaluate what they were doing and leave it behind. This was not just those who were in the world for "*many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds.*" The magnitude of what was done is set forth in the price of the books that were burned. A piece of silver was a days wage. Using only minimum wage as a days pay today would be about \$50.00. That would be 2.5 million dollars today. Truly "*the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.*"

After the two years, Paul "*purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem.*"

When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." 22 So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time. Acts 19:21-22

This passage is important because it gives us important insight into Paul's plans. First, this trip to Jerusalem was not Paul's idea. The Holy Spirit had revealed it to him. This trip to Jerusalem would be the trip where he took the collection to the needy saints. This dates the time frame we know that both 1 & 2 Corinthians and Romans were written.

Paul wrote his First Letter to the Corinthians

We can date this book to this passage by two Scriptures. First, as Luke recorded above "*he himself stayed in Asia for a time.*" Paul's first letter to the Corinthians had to be written about this time because he was already planning to go to Jerusalem, but was also still planning on staying in Ephesus until Pentecost.

But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. 9 For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. 1 Cor 16:8-9

This had to have been before "*there arose a great commotion about the Way.*" (Acts 19:23) since Paul was then forced to leave Ephesus, his letter to the Corinthians was written prior to this event.

The second Scripture that helps date the letter are Luke's words about Timothy and Erastus, who

were sent by Paul to Macedonia, and could easily have gone through Corinth on the way.

So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time. Acts 19:22

For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church. 1 Cor 4:17

Two things had occurred to precipitate the writing of the letter. First was some information given to him by the household of Chloe and secondly a letter they had written to him.

For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. 1 Cor 1:11

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, 5:1-2

Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 7:1

Apollos had left for Achaia just prior to Paul's arrival in Ephesus

And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; 1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. Acts 18:27-28; 19:1

8 And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, ... 10 And this continued for two years, Acts 19:8, 10

Apollos had therefore been in Corinth for at least two years and three months. During that time he made a name for himself at Corinth. But this had caused him to leave Corinth and he was not yet willing to return.

Now I say this, that each of you says, I am of Paul, or I am of Apollos, or I am of Cephas, or I am of Christ. 1 Cor 1:12

For when one says, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are you not carnal? 5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 1 Cor 3:4-6

Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. 1 Cor 4:6

Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to come to you with the brethren, but he was quite unwilling to come at this time; however, he will come when he has a convenient time. 1 Cor 16:12

Information from Chloe, Apollos and the letter they wrote

Paul wrote the letter as a result of information from Chloe, Apollos and the letter they wrote to him.

For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. 1 Cor 1:11-12

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, 1 Cor 5:1

Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: 1 Cor 7:1

We don't know if was Chloe's household or Apollos who brought the information about the fornicator and the going to law with one another. But Paul dealt with those subjects in chapter 5-6. The question in their letter centered on marriage(7). But they may also have covered everything else written in the book.

Chapter 1-4	Church preacher relationships/problems
Chapter 5	Church Discipline
Chapter 6	Lawsuits
Chapter 7	Marriage
Chapter 8-10	Expediency/Eating in idols temples
Chapter 11	Public worship: Women and the Lord's supper
Chapter 12-14	Problems with Spiritual Gifts
Chapter 15	Errors on the Resurrection
Chapter 16	General Exhortations

Paul had already given the information to the churches of Galatia where he had just been before he came to Ephesus(18:23). The collection was already in his mind as well as his plan to go to Jerusalem(19:21).

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: 2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he

may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. 3 And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. 1Cor 16:1-3

FOR IT HAS BEEN DECLARED TO ME CONCERNING you, my brethren, **by those of Chloe's household**, that there are contentions among you. 1:11-13

Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." 1:12

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God 2:12

Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 3:8

Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 3:12

Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, 4:6

Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? 4:7

Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you shortly, if

But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, 5:11

Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. 6:7

It is **ACTUALLY REPORTED** that there is sexual immorality among you, 5:1-2

Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 6:13

Now CONCERNING THE THINGS OF WHICH YOU WROTE TO ME: 7:1

Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord 7:10

Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; 7:25-26

Now concerning things offered to idols: 8:1

Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you. 9:23

Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 10:6-7

Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 10:11

Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you. 11:2-3

Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. 11:17-18

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: 12:1-2

But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 12:18

But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. 12:20

Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. 12:27-28

But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, 14:6

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain. 15:1-2

Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 15:12

But **now** Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 15:20

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 15:50-51

Now concerning the collection for the saints, 16:1

Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia 16:5

Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to come to you with the brethren, but he was quite unwilling to come at this time; however, he will come when he has a convenient time. 16:12

Paul's Trial at Ephesus

About that time infers that it was soon after Timothy and Erastus had left with the letter to Corinth. This section reveals that there were other reasons for the persecution of Christians. This persecution was made to be religious, but there was clearly a component of greed and the anger of unbelievers who are directly impacted by the moral consequences of those who turn to the Lord.

*For a certain man named **Demetrius, a silversmith**, who **made silver shrines of Diana**, brought no **small profit to the craftsmen**. 25 He called them together with **the workers of similar occupation**, and said: "**Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade**. 26 Moreover you see and hear that **not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned***

away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. 27 So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship." Acts 19:24-27

These words created a riot that quickly spiraled out of hand. All these silversmiths were filled with wrath and began a shouting chant "great is Diana of the Ephesians." As the voices filled the city there was great confusion about the cause and man others came together. Evidently hoping for a great catharsis to the movement that had entered among them through Paul, they grab Paul's two companions and bring them in possibly as hostages.

Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" 29 So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions. Acts 19:28-29

Paul knew what was happening and hoped to save his friends. At that time the main rulers in Ephesus pleaded with Paul not to enter. Then the Jews hoped to use this powerful emotion to destroy Paul, but when they perceived he was a Jew and they knew they too opposed Diana the emotions rose to a tumult.

And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. 31 Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater. 32 Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together. 33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people. 34 But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" Acts 19:30-34

Order was finally regained when the city clerk warned the people that Rome could become suspicious and angry over this riot because the truth was that there was no reason for it.

Paul leaves Ephesus and Writes his Second Letter to Corinth

Immediately after the riot, Luke continues his narrative of Paul's plans and actions. Paul has to leave Ephesus, and goes into Greece and thus to Corinth. It is at this time that he writes his second letter to the Corinthians.

After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to himself, embraced them, and departed to go to Macedonia. 2 Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece 3 and stayed three months. Acts 20:1-3

Remember, that when Paul sent the first letter, he was going to remain in Ephesus because a great door had opened to him.

But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. 9 For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. 1 Cor 16:8-9

Yet right after Paul sent this letter the problems in Ephesus occurred and in the second letter he makes reference to this event as though it had just happened. He adds many details that Luke did not. First, Paul believed it was going to be his last days on earth. He was so convinced he was going to die that he had already passed the death sentence upon himself.

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, 10 who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us, 2 Cor 1:8-10

As noted above, the manner in which Paul was forced to leave left a strong emotional impact on him. He had truly believed he was going to die. It was still bothering him when he wrote the second letter to the Corinthians. But there was something much more difficult that Paul was dealing with.

Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia. 14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 16 To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? 2 Cor 2:13-16

For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears. 6 Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more. 2Cor 7:5-7

So not only was Paul troubled by his near death experience in Ephesus, but when he got to Troas and expected to find Titus, he did not come. Paul was so moved by that experience that he even

passed up an open door at Troas to go and find out what happened to him. When he finally saw him, his joy was so great that it was a comfort beyond his expectations.

6 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. 2 Cor 1:3-5

The real problem centered on the writing of the first letter and the concern Paul had that the letter might have been too strong or that he should have gone instead of writing.

For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you. 5 But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but all of you to some extent-- not to be too severe. 6 This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, 7 so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. 8 Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him. 9 For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. 2 Cor 2:4-9

Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more. 8 For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. 9 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. 12 Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you. 13 Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. 14 For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I am not ashamed. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting to Titus was found true. 15 And his affections are greater for you as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. 16 Therefore I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything. 2 Cor 7:6-16

Clearly Paul had some serious doubt about the spiritual strength of the church at Corinth and was afraid that this powerful test would break them. He was so happy that they had risen so far above his expectations that it made a new man out of him.

There are two other themes moving throughout the book. The first are the charges of the false teachers that Paul is fickle and does not always keep his word.

And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit-- 16 to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea. 17 Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No? 18 But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No. 2 Cor 1:15-18

Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. 24 Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand. 1 But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow. 2 For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me? (NKJ) 2 Cor 2:3 3 And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all. 2 Cor 1:23-2:3

This will be the third time I am coming to you. "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." 2 I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare-- 3 since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you. 2 Cor 13:1-3

The second is the collection for the needy saints in Jerusalem. Which we will cover in our next Class on the book of Romans.