

Acts 18.24 – 19.20

Mission in Ephesus

3rd missionary journey.

Paul has revisited Galatian churches and come to where the HS wouldn't let him come on second journey.

vv.24-28 Apollos

Jew

Native of Alexandria (in Egypt)

“came to Ephesus”

- Eloquent (trained in rhetoric)
- Competent in the Scriptures
- Had been instructed in the way of the Lord (i.e. Jesus)
- Fervent/zealous in spirit
- Spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John (confirming v.25 “fervent in spirit”, not “the Spirit”)

Spoke boldly in the synagogue, but not accurately enough for Priscilla and Aquila, who explained it to him “more accurately”. Presumably re Pentecost and coming of HS.

When he wished to cross to Achaia (Corinth – see 19.1), the brothers in Ephesus encouraged him and gave him letter of endorsement.

Was a great help to the believers, for “he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.”

19.1-7 Paul in Ephesus: Holy Spirit

Paul arrives inland and connects with c. 12 disciples (see v.7).

Asks if they have received the Holy Spirit when believed – they hadn't even heard of HS. Baptized into John's baptism.

Paul explains John's baptism as preparation for Jesus' coming.

Baptized “in/into the name of the Lord Jesus”, laying on of hands, spoke in tongues and prophesied.

vv.8-10 Paul in Synagogue -> Hall of Tyrannus

For 3 months spoke boldly in synagogue, “reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God”.

Some became stubborn, continued in unbelief, and spoke evil of the Way before the congregation.

Paul withdrew from the synagogue, with the disciples, and reasoned daily in the Hall of Tyrannus

Continued for 2 years, "so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks."

vv.11-20 Miracles of healing and deliverance

God... at the hands of Paul – "extraordinary miracles" = healings and exorcisms, even via handkerchiefs v's record of 2 years in Corinth

Some of itinerant Jewish exorcists tried delivering demons "in the name of the Lord Jesus", incl. 7 sons of a Jewish HP Sceva.

Issue = authority. The demons know Jesus and Paul, but not these exorcists.

50k drachma of books burnt = 50,000 days wages = 137 years working 7 days/week

"So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily."

- Satan/demons are very powerful and no match for humans. But Jesus and Paul are much more to be feared.
- Spiritual practices, even within Judaism, are forbidden for Christians. They must be renounced absolutely (everything associated with them burnt). Includes practices/rituals of astrology, 'faith healing', Freemasonry.

Lessons:

1. Be aware of the limits of what we know and don't know, and don't build doctrine on speculation, e.g.
 - Don't know how Apollos came to faith or who discipled him, but this = c.20 years after Pentecost so plenty of time for this
 - Don't know what Apollos actually knew about the way of the Lord, and what "the things concerning Jesus" were that he knew
 - Don't know what he didn't know apart from the baptism of John.
 - If knew about the baptism of John, why did he not know that John proclaimed that the one coming after him would baptize with the HS and with fire?
 - Did Priscilla and Aquila baptize him in the name of Jesus? If not, why not? On the basis of what happens with Paul, presumably they did.
 - If Paul has preached in Ephesus, then Priscilla and Aquila for a year, how come Paul found there were "disciples" there "who had not even heard of the HS"? Who were these disciples and in whom did they believe (19.2)?
 - What happened to the demon-possessed man? Did Paul deliver him?
 - Did those who practiced magic need delivering, or was simply renouncing their occult practices enough?
2. Importance of discipleship and sound teaching and doctrine; training up preachers and teachers
3. Centrality of Holy Spirit to being a Christian, a disciple of Jesus, i.e. word and Spirit.
 - a. Not a second blessing: water baptism of repentance, in the name of Jesus, and reception of Spirit should go together. Anything else is an anomaly. Cf. Samaritans who had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus but hadn't received the HS! (8.14-17).
Cornelius and household – HS before baptism (10.44-48)
 - b. Apollos - eloquent and fervent to effective (in Corinth once filled with the HS). Anointing of HS = power to convict, defeat and transform.
4. Danger of syncretism: see too Acts 8 (Simon the Magician)
 - Satan more powerful than us: only God/authority = defeats
 - Absolutely forbidden, and must break with it completely.

5. Paul's apostolic authority and for God to do extraordinary miracles through him. Spiritual authority in ministry.
6. Collegial approach to mission – Silas and Timothy in Macedonia; Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus; Epaphras in Colossae; Apollos in Corinth (though not at Pau's instigation). No rivalry- 1 Cor 3.1-9, but fellow workers