

‘Acts’ - Extra Teaching Points #26

Acts 18:18-19:10^(NASB)

Acts 18:18-28 (NASB)

Paul, having remained many days longer, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow. ¹⁹ They came to Ephesus, and he left them there. Now he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. ²⁰ When they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not consent, ²¹ but taking leave of them and saying, "I will return to you again if God wills," he set sail from Ephesus.

²² When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and went down to Antioch. ²³ And having spent some time there, he left and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

²⁴ **Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures.** ²⁵ This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, **being acquainted only with the baptism of John;** ²⁶ and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. **But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.** ²⁷ And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace, ²⁸ for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.



Q: Who was Apollos?

- We don't know much about Apollos, other than where he was from—Alexandria.
 - Alexandria, (founded in 331 BCE by Alexander the Great), was famous for its lighthouse and its library.
 - Jews had lived in Alexandria from the earliest of times, and maintained influential synagogues ([Acts 6:9](#)).
 - The Septuagint, (the earliest translation of the Old Testament into Greek, used by Jesus and His apostles), came from Alexandria.
- We know he was an evangelist with impressive gifts in understanding and speaking, which led him to Ephesus, and later to Corinth ([Acts 19:1](#)), and later to Crete ([Titus 3:13](#)).

Q: What was it that Apollos didn't know, and had to be taught by Aquila and Pricilla?

- Apollos was *acquainted only with the baptism of John*. ([Vs. 25](#))
- This probably means that Apollos preached repentance and faith in the Messiah, but he did not know the full magnitude of Jesus' death and resurrection.
- Apparently nobody had told him that, from Pentecost, the church had welcomed people into its full fellowship through baptism in the name of Jesus ([Acts 2:38](#)), or in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit ([Matt 28:19](#)).
- Apollos may have been in the same situation as the people we are about to meet in [Acts 19](#).

Q: What can we learn from this short introduction to Apollos?

- Some people begin their journey with God with incomplete information, and only need better teaching.
- When a real follower of Jesus hears "*the way of God more accurately*" ([vs. 26](#)), they learn from it and use it to help others!
- As a side lesson, the role Pricilla played in helping her husband teach Apollos, should help inform our opinions of the role of women in ministry.

Acts 19:1-7 (NASB)

It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. ² He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." ³ And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." ⁴ Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." ⁵ When they heard 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 began speaking with tongues and prophesying. ⁷ There were in all about twelve men.

Q: How could these 12 men be disciples if they had not been baptized into Jesus?

- I think we can safely assume they were committed to being a part of the Kingdom-of-God movement John the Baptist had launched, since they had submitted to John's baptism.

Q: What prompted Paul to ask if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed?

- We aren't told, but Paul must have seen something irregular about them... either in their understanding, or in the way they were living.

Q: Was Paul asking them about the indwelling of the Spirit that is promised at baptism?
([Acts 2:38](#); [Romans 8:9-11](#); [1Tim 1:14](#))

- Probably not at first... his first question was probably about the work of the Spirit in their lives ([John 16:5-15](#); [Romans 8:1-17](#); [Gal 5:16-26](#)).
- But when they said they didn't even know there was a Holy Spirit, that's when Paul started to ask about their baptism.

Q: What was the difference between John's baptism and baptism into Jesus?

- Paul said that John's baptism was a baptism of repentance and a commitment to believe in the One who was coming.
 - They obviously had not heard that Jesus was the one they had committed themselves to believe in.
 - Some have concluded that John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, but did not include the forgiveness of sins... possibly because the gift of the Holy Spirit was promised along with forgiveness of sins by Peter in [Acts 2:38](#).
 - However [Mark 1:4](#) says John's baptism was a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
- The biggest and most obvious difference is the Holy Spirit – the agent of God's creative power – was not given to those who had only received John's baptism.
 - There is real power when you are in Jesus, and have the authority of His Name! ([Mark 9:39](#); [John 20:31](#); [Acts 3:6](#); [Acts 16:18](#))

Q: What is the significance of Paul laying hands on these guys, the Holy Spirit coming ON them, and them speaking in tongues and prophesying?

- The same significance we saw in [Acts 2:4](#) at Pentecost, and [Acts 10:46](#) with Cornelius' household: These men became the functioning temple of God, full of His presence and power.
- **The main thing Luke is doing in this story is introducing us to Paul's work in Ephesus, and to show how concerned Paul was with the power of the Spirit working in people's lives and out into the wider community.**

Acts 19:8-10 (NASB)

*⁸And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the people, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, **reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.** ¹⁰ **This took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.***

School of Tyrannus in Ephesus



Q: These last 3 verses work as a kind of summary of Paul's work we are going to read about next. What is different about Paul's time in Ephesus, compared to the other places he had been?

- Paul stayed longer in Ephesus than any other place, and he stayed in the center of the ring to slug it out with the hostile Jews... instead of running!
 - Paul referred to this as fighting "wild beasts" in [1Cor 15:32](#).
 - Paul spent a total of 3 years in Ephesus ([Acts 20:31](#)), the first two years of which he argued daily in the school of Tyrannus.
 - Some western texts tell us Paul lectured and reasoned *every day* from 11AM to 4PM.
 - If this is correct, Paul took advantage of the hottest hours of the day, when most people rested after the midday meal.
 - The hall would normally be vacant, and perhaps rent cheaper, after Tyrannus, or whoever the teacher was, lectured in the cooler morning hours.
 - This would allow Paul to work at his own trade during business hours ([Acts 20:34](#)). Then, instead of resting, he engaged in mission work and apologetics when those in trades and business were at leisure to hear him.
 - As a result, "all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks" ([Acts 19:10](#)).
 - Everything we know about Ephesus indicates it was a place where social, civic, religious, and spiritual power was concentrated.
 - This may be part of the reason why Luke wants to begin his account of Paul's work there with a story about a fresh outpouring of the Spirit.
 - To put a dent in this crowd was going to require a serious display of the Spirit's power!
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Follow Up Assignment

Q: How would you respond to Apollos if you had been the one who met him in Ephesus?

- Do you know anyone like Apollos today?
- Are you willing to push through the intimidation factor to "explain the way of God more accurately"?

Q: If Paul were to speak at your church, would he be likely to ask you if you had received the Holy Spirit when you believed? Why or why not?

- How would you answer him if he asked you this?

Q: Paul was very strategic and brave in taking the gospel to the Ephesians. He used his "lunch break" to take the gospel to anyone who would listen, instead of resting and waiting for people to come to him. How do you use your free time?