

A SURVEY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

12. PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY Acts 18:23 – 21:17

Adult Sunday School
Gethsemane Baptist Church
H. David Nichols

PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Acts 18:23 – 21:17

Upon the completion of his second missionary journey, Paul returned to the church at Jerusalem. The use of the expression to “go up” in Acts 18:22 suggest the return was to Jerusalem. Returning afterward to Antioch it is said, “he went down to Antioch.” The Holy City was located on a hill so as one came or went they actually did “go up” and “come down”. It was supposed also that to go to Jerusalem was to go up spiritually and to go down was to go down spiritually.

Paul remained at the Antioch church for “some time.” *“And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.”* (18:23) “After a stay of indeterminate length at Antioch, Paul set out again on his third extended tour. Although this trip, commonly known as Paul’s third missionary journey, occupied more time than his previous ones, it took Paul to no new areas. Thus it was more of an instructing and confirming mission than a pioneering venture.” (KENT. P. 147)

Luke gives us several length reports of incidents in the city of Ephesus. The first thing that Luke includes in his record is the appearance of Apollos. “He was an Alexandrian Jew who was a learned and powerful expounder of the OT Scripture. He himself had previously been instructed in the way of the Lord, and was able to teach accurately many things regarding Jesus. However, his information stopped short with the ministry of John the Baptist.” (IBID.) He was taken aside by Pricilla and Aquila who *“took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.”* (Vs. 26) There is a need for mature believers to come alongside the less mature Christian to help them better understand the things of the faith. Christian discipleship is very important in the church.

In chapter 19 Paul meets a group of 12 disciples. They were like Apollos in that they had an incomplete understanding of the finished work of Christ. They understood the teachings of John the Baptist but had a very vague understanding of Jesus. Paul taught them and they were saved and received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. This completed their journey from Old Testament believers to New Testament Christians.

Paul first preached the Gospel in Ephesus in the Synagogue. God validated Paul's ministry by granting that miracles be done "by the hand of Paul." (Vs. 11-12) Other people tried to emulate the ministry of Paul but failed. The end result of all of this is summed up in verse 17. *"And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."* When Paul preached some people believed. Other people became hardened to the message. However, in Ephesus he caused a riot with his preaching to the silversmiths when people stopped buying the silver statues of Diana. *"And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia"* (20:1) In chapter 20 we see God use Paul in several ways. He taught the believers the truth of the Scriptures. In Troas he raised Eutychus back to life after he had fallen from a third story window. He meets with the elders from Ephesus where he tells them that he must go to Jerusalem. He will not see them again.

TO AID OUR LEARNING:

1. On this third journey, why did Paul feel it was necessary to return to the same cities he had already visited?

2. Discuss the importance of Christian discipleship in the church.

3. The people that Paul met and won to Christ in chapter 19 received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. How is that different from what happen when a person gets saved today?

Notes:
