

Paul's Second Missionary Journey Part VI  
*Paul's Return to Antioch of Syria via Ephesus*  
(Acts 18:18-28)

**Introduction:**

1. The verses (the balance of Acts 18) that we will look at in this lesson provide a glimpse at the transition between the conclusion of Paul's Second Missionary Journey and the beginning of his Third Missionary Journey (Acts 18:23, Acts 19:1)
2. Luke provides the following insight as to what Paul's plan was upon leaving Corinth. (Acts 18:18)
  - After Gallio's ruling, Paul stayed in Corinth "many days longer"
    - 1) The total combined stay by Paul in Corinth was about 1 and ½ years.
    - 2) Paul ministered to the Corinthians and trained and disciplined those who converted to faith in Christ.
    - 3) During Paul's stay in Corinth, he will write the two Epistles to the Thessalonians (I & II Thessalonians).
  - Paul's intent was to leave Corinth and head to \_\_\_\_\_
    - 1) His desire was to report back to the sending church in Antioch (along with the Church at Jerusalem) what took place on his Second Missionary Journey. (Acts 18:22)
    - 2) Priscilla and Aquila left with Paul

- Upon leaving Corinth, Paul heads to Cenchrea
  - 1) This was a sea port located southeast of Corinth



- 2) The purpose in going to Cenchrea was to catch a ship that was heading east toward Syria.
- While in Cenchrea Paul will get a hair cut
    - 1) Luke mentions that the hair cut was connected to a vow that Paul was keeping.
    - 2) We don't know why or when Paul made this vow, but many conclude it was a "Nazirite vow" (see Numbers 6:1-21) and may have been related to the vision that Paul received in Acts 18:9-10.
    - 3) This vow would have been consistent with Paul's character and also consistent with his dedication to the Lord. Even though it was an Old Testament practice, perhaps he considered it important due to the threat of violence he faced at the time. (Acts 18:9-10)

### **Paul's initial visit to Ephesus: (Acts 18:19-21)**

1. Upon leaving Cenchrea the ship that Paul and his group was on; set sail across the Aegean Sea (see map page 305) and landed at Ephesus.
  - We know that Priscilla and Aquila joined Paul on this journey and they will remain in Ephesus for a while (perhaps a few years – see I Corinthians 16:19) then eventually will return to Rome (Romans 16:3-5)
  - It is probable that Timothy and Silas stayed behind and provided oversight and leadership to the churches in Macedonia (Northern Greece) and Achaia (Southern Greece).
2. Paul enters the synagogue there in Ephesus (as was his custom) and begins to \_\_\_\_\_ with the Jews.
  - What do you suppose Paul declared to them?
  - It appears that he was well received since Luke does not record any opposition to what Paul declared to them.
    - 1) Their response seemed to be so favorable that they wanted Paul to stay longer.
    - 2) Paul instead informs them that he must leave but he does say; “I will return to you again if God wills”.
    - 3) Why does Paul choose not to stay in Ephesus at this time?
3. Priscilla and Aquila remain behind (see Acts 18:26) and perhaps provide a Christian witness to those at Ephesus and also will be an influence on a Jew named Apollos (Acts 18:24-26)

## Paul's Return to Antioch (Acts 18:22-23a)

1. Upon leaving Ephesus, Paul will sail approximately 500 miles and land at Caesarea. He will then head up to Jerusalem (although it would have been south in direction it is higher in elevation which is why Luke says they went up), and then down to Antioch (although north of Jerusalem it was lower in elevation which is why Luke says they went down). See map:



2. Paul greeted those at the church in Jerusalem and Luke doesn't record how long he was there nor does he tell us what (if anything) transpired there.
3. Paul then heads to Antioch (of Syria) and Luke tells us that he spent "some time there".
  - His purpose in going to Antioch was no doubt to report the results of his Second Missionary Journey which were enormous! Luke only records a fraction of the souls that were saved, lives that were changed and the churches that were established; but there is no doubt in my mind that even greater things were accomplished for Christ than what is written between Acts 16-19.
  - After his time in Antioch Paul will desire to return to the region of Galatia and Phrygia which **begins his Third Missionary Journey (Acts 18:23)**, but first Luke is going to introduce a man named Apollos.

## The Adventures of Apollos (Acts 18:24-28)

1. The events recorded here (Acts 18:24-28) occur after Paul leaves Ephesus to return to Antioch and before he returns to Ephesus (Acts 19:1) on his Third Missionary Journey.
2. Luke introduces a man named Apollos (Acts 18:24-25):
  - He was a \_\_\_\_\_
  - His birthplace was \_\_\_\_\_ which was (most probably) referencing that city in North Africa (Egypt) that was located at the mouth of the Nile River.
    - 1) History records that there was a large Jewish population there.
    - 2) Apollos (no doubt) would have been raised in the normal Jewish fashion and influenced by Jewish culture.
  - We are also told he was an \_\_\_\_\_ man; meaning he was a “*man of words*” or a “*man of ideas*”.
    - 1) The reference to his being “mighty in Scriptures” would seem to indicate he was well learned (perhaps such as Paul) in the Old Testament.
    - 2) He is not identified as a Pharisee or belonging to any other religious group, nor are we told he held any significant position or status (which may be a good thing) within the Jewish religious system.
    - 3) He apparently was a good debater (also much like Paul) and a good candidate for the ministry of the Gospel.

- He had been “instructed in the way of the Lord” (Acts 18:25)
  - 1) His understanding of the things of God would have been accurate, but very similar to the Apostle Paul prior to his meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus, **his (Apollos) understanding of Jesus was deficient.**
  - 2) He was also “fervent in spirit” indicating he had great passion in what he believed (also a trait Paul shared).
  - 3) He even taught “things concerning Jesus” which based on the phrase, “being acquainted only with the baptism of John”; **most likely means he did not fully grasp the full implication of Christ’s death and resurrection.**
  - 4) It was not unusual for those who followed the teachings of John the Baptist to be slightly confused and over time these followers of John the Baptist are brought into a full understanding of who Jesus is and as such they become followers of Christ. (John 10:40-42, Luke 7:18-30)
  - 5) We aren’t told the full extent of the ministry of John the Baptist, but it clearly impacted the regions of North Africa (specifically Alexandria) and the region of the near East (specifically Ephesus). Perhaps this may be one reason why Paul and the other Apostles were led to those areas to guide these disciples of John the Baptist, as well as all people into the full knowledge of who Christ is.
  - 6) The ministry of John the Baptist is intricately tied to the Old Testament (he was the one who would declare the Messiah had arrived). As such Christianity is a natural outgrowth of the Old Testament since Christians are followers of Christ (by faith) who is the Messiah.
  - 7) Apollos will learn from Aquila and Priscilla; that salvation comes through faith in Christ.

3. The ministry of Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:26)

- What did they (Aquila and Priscilla) teach/explain to Apollos?
  - 1) We aren't told the specifics here but more than likely they explained that the purpose on Christ coming was to die on the cross (make atonement for mans sin once for all) and then to raise from the dead (the glorious Resurrection) as He said He would do.
  - 2) The baptism (an act of repentance) taught by John the Baptist, as well as the offerings by the priests in the Old Testament; was now replaced by accepting God's grace (the free gift of salvation) through faith in Christ's death, burial and resurrection.
  - 3) It is through faith that we (who believe) are now "baptized into Christ" (Romans 6:3-10, I Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:27, Colossians 2:12) and the seal of our redemption is the Holy Spirit who indwells us. (Ephesians 1:13-14)
- Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos aside and taught him these truths and they apparently had quite an influence in his life.

4. The ministry of Apollos (Acts 18:27-28)

- He (Apollos) was now armed with the powerful truth of the Gospel (the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ) and he had the strong desire to boldly declare that to others.
  - 1) He wanted (and was encouraged by the brethren in Ephesus) to go across the Aegean Sea to Achaia and he settled in Corinth. (Acts 19:1)
  - 2) Being a Jew (like Paul) he was naturally drawn to other Jews and wanted to compel them to embrace Jesus Christ.

- Take note of the change in focus of the preaching of Apollos:
  - 1) The fact that he was welcomed by the believers in Corinth is evident that he embraced the teaching that salvation was by God's grace through faith in Christ.
  - 2) He was able to "help those who had believed through grace" which seems to imply they not only believed the same but he was able to continue training and discipling those believers at Corinth.
  - 3) What evidence does Apollos show that he was a follower of Christ? (**Acts 18:28**, see also Matthew 16:13-16, Acts 4:12)
  
- Apollos will continue to minister in Corinth and have an enormous impact there.
  - 1) So much so that the church at Corinth will equate Apollos with Peter and Paul. (I Corinthians 1:12, 3:4-6)
  - 2) This immense love for Apollos by those at Corinth will lead some in the church to cause division and strife. This will prompt Paul to write them at least two letters to help them in knowing how Christians ought to behave toward one another.
  - 3) There is no indication that Apollos was behind the various factions, and in fact I would conclude that the absence of Paul's rebuke toward him is proof of that.
  - 4) It appears that the ministry of Apollos was an tremendous blessing to the church and any division came from others.



### **Concluding Remarks and Summary of Paul's Second Missionary Journey:**

1. Paul's Second Missionary Journey began in the spring of A.D. 51
  - He (along with Silas) passes through the regions of Syrian, Cilicia
  - He will pass through Derbe, Lystra, Iconium – the region of Galatia (where had visited on his First Missionary Journey) and on through the region known as Phrygia. (modern day central Turkey)
    - 1) He and Silas will be joined by a young man name \_\_\_\_\_.
    - 2) Paul wanted to go to Asia but received what we commonly refer to as the \_\_\_\_\_ call which drew him to the region we now call modern day Greece. (Acts 16:9-11)
  - Paul visits 4 major cities on his Macedonian tour:
    - 1) \_\_\_\_\_; where he will minister to a woman named \_\_\_\_\_ and also a \_\_\_\_\_ while he is in prison for preaching the gospel there.
    - 2) \_\_\_\_\_ was his second stop
    - 3) \_\_\_\_\_ was his third stop
    - 4) \_\_\_\_\_ was his fourth stop where he will meet two dear saints named \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Paul makes a brief stop in Ephesus and returns to Caesarea, then to Jerusalem and finally returns to Antioch of Syria where he remains until he begins his Third Missionary Journey sometime around A.D. 54