

# Lesson 17: The Third Missionary Journey Begins

## Acts 18:23-19:41

Throughout our reading this week, we will meet men whose hunger for the Lord far surpassed their pride. We will meet a man named Apollos who graciously responded to correction. We will meet twelve disciples of John the Baptist who welcomed further revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. We will meet magicians and sorcerers willing to leave their ways for the opportunity to know the God of real power. They were willing to submit their lives to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. They were anxious for a more complete encounter with the Living God. My heart yearns to be that humble. Though my instinct is to fight against it, something deeper longs to be willing to bend graciously under the weight of the Truth of God, to embrace Him even when it means forsaking *me*. Will you join me this week in imploring our Mighty God to break our prides and soften our hearts – that we might more fully and fervently hunger after Him?

*“So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.”*

*Acts 19:20*

### The Gospel at Ephesus

Read Acts 18:23-19:7. Begin to plot Paul’s journey on your map: *The Third Missionary Journey of Paul*.

1. Who spent time in Ephesus according to Acts 18:24? Describe what we learn about him from Luke in Acts 18:24-25.

Apollos apparently had the correct information about Christ. He just didn’t have *all* of it.

2. How did Priscilla and Aquila correct Apollos in verse 26? What do you learn from their example?

From the brothers’ support of his mission to Achaia (Acts 18:27), it seems that Apollos was receptive to the additional teaching from Priscilla and Aquila.

3. How does Luke describe Apollos’ ministry to the Achaians in Acts 18:27-28?

In Acts 19:1, we learn that Paul arrived in Ephesus while Apollos was in Corinth of Achaia (Acts 19:1). This was probably about 52 or 53A.D. Paul remained in Ephesus for approximately three years, until 55 or 56A.D. During the latter part of his time there, he wrote what we know as the first letter to the Corinthians.

4. According to 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 and 3:4-9, what apparently happened after the strong and effective ministry of Apollos in Corinth?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. From 1 Corinthians 4:1, how does Paul exhort the Corinthians (and us) to view our Christian leaders?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. How are you inclined to view the leaders in your life? What would it look like to regard and treat them the way that Paul encouraged?

There is grave danger in following followers as though they are the Leader. And there is sweet freedom (for us and for them) in allowing them to remain human as they lead.

7. Who did Paul encounter when he arrived at Ephesus according to Acts 19:1-4? Into what had those men been baptized?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Read John 1:19-23. For whom did John the Baptist prepare the way? How do you think that might have affected the men's willingness to accept Paul's teaching in Acts 19:5-7?

### **The Power of God at Ephesus**

Read Acts 19:8-22.

Paul's ministry among the Ephesians again moved from the Jews in the synagogue to the Gentiles who assembled in the hall of Tyrannus (Acts 19:8-9).

9. How effective was Paul's ministry in Ephesus according to Luke in Acts 19:10?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. How did Paul describe this time in Ephesus in 1 Corinthians 16:8-9?

11. What was happening in Acts 19:11-12?
  
12. What happened in Acts 19:13-16 when the Jewish exorcists tried to invoke Jesus' name in the way that Paul did? How did God reveal the counterfeit?
  
13. When the counterfeit was exposed, "fear fell upon them all" (Acts 19:17). We tend to shirk from fearing the Lord. But sometimes a healthy dose of holy fear can be a good thing. According to Acts 19:17 and Revelation 15:3-4, what does fear of the Lord lead to?
  
14. From Acts 19:18-19, what else does the fear of the Lord lead to?
  
15. In the midst of the magnification of Jesus' name and sincere repentance, we see the word of the Lord "growing mightily and prevailing" (Acts 19:20). What do the following verses from 1 Corinthians teach you about the power of God?
  - ❖ 1 Corinthians 1:18
  
  - ❖ 1 Corinthians 2:3-5
  
  - ❖ 1 Corinthians 4:20
  
16. In Acts 19:21-22, Luke gives us a glimpse into Paul's plans. Where did Paul intend to travel eventually?

**The Uprising at Ephesus**

Read Acts 19:23-41.

Ephesus boasted the Temple of Artemis – one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.<sup>29</sup> The temple was erected after what was most likely a meteorite landed in Ephesus.<sup>30</sup> The rock became an object of worship, and in Acts 19:35, we learn that the town believed the meteorite fell from heaven – literally *from Zeus*.<sup>31</sup> Visits to this temple were a major source of income for the town of Ephesus.

17. From Acts 19:23-27, what was Demetrius' claim against "the Way," and what seems to have been his motive?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
18. Paul was, not surprisingly, claiming "that gods made with hands are no gods at all" (Acts 19:26). From Psalm 115:4-8, what power do man-made gods have, and what happens to people who make and follow after those gods?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
19. How did the townspeople respond to Demetrius' speech in Acts 19:28-29?

The town was thrown into confusion, and the "majority did not know for what reason they had come together" (Acts 19:32). Confusion is one tool that the enemy of our souls can use to accomplish his purposes for our lives.

20. When is the last time you found yourself embroiled in a battle or project and at some point realized that you didn't even know what you were doing or why you were doing it?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
21. In Paul's later letter to the Ephesians, he wrote to them about spiritual battles. What does he remind us in Ephesians 6:10-12?

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<sup>29</sup> Walvoord, John F. and Roy B. Zuck. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*. Bible Knowledge Series. Colorado Springs, CO: David Cook, 1983. Page 409.

<sup>30</sup> Longman, Tremper, III and David E. Garland, Eds. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007. Page 1017.

<sup>31</sup> Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *diopetēs* (Strong's 1356)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2013. 20 Feb 2013. < <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G1356&t=NASB> >

22. As a result of that, what are the weapons of our warfare to be according to Ephesians 6:13-17?

The town clerk, who held the highest local position in the city and acted as a liaison to the Roman government, would have been held responsible for any uprising in the city.<sup>32</sup>

23. How does the town clerk appeal to the townspeople in Acts 19:35-41?

His appeal must have been fairly effective because in Acts 20, we will see that the uproar did die down.

### Prepare for Life

I love that Apollos was no weakling. He was “fervent in spirit” (Acts 18:25); he was “mighty in the Scriptures” (Acts 18:24); he was “speaking out boldly” (Acts 18:26). Perhaps my favorite detail about Apollos is in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians.

24. What does Paul say about Apollos in 1 Corinthians 16:12?

I’m just saying: if he could stay planted where he was when the apostle Paul “encouraged him greatly” to go to Corinth, he was no push-over. This man had a back-bone, and he wasn’t going to be easily swayed from his conviction. However, when Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos aside to “explain to him the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:26), Apollos seems to have welcomed and received their teaching.

25. What do you think it would look like in your own life to have that kind of a teachable spirit?

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<sup>32</sup> Longman, Tremper, III and David E. Garland, Eds. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007. Page 1018.

**Lecture Notes: Lesson 17**