

Lesson 12 – Paul’s Third Missionary Journey

Text: Acts 18:23-21:17

Main Characters: God, Paul, Apollos, Aquila, Priscilla, seven sons of Sceva, Demetrius, Eutychus, Luke, Agabus

Key Passages:

- Acts 20:7 – The disciples came together on the first day of the week to take the Lord’s Supper.
- Acts 21:10-14 – Agabus prophesied that Paul would be bound and delivered into the hands of the Gentiles by the Jews in Jerusalem; despite this, Paul resolved to go to Jerusalem.

Main Storyline:

After again spending some time with the church in Antioch (in Syria), Paul left for the regions of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples in the area. Meanwhile, Apollos, an eloquent and faithful Jewish Christian, came to Ephesus and began to teach there. Though he was very zealous, he only knew the baptism of John. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him preaching, they took him aside and taught him the way of God more accurately. Armed with the truth, Apollos went to Corinth (in the region of Achaia) and greatly helped the brethren there as he vigorously refuted the Jews, showing that Jesus was the Christ.

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul journeyed to the city of Ephesus, where idol worship was rampant. At one point, he found about twelve disciples together and began to speak with them. He found that they did not fully understand Jesus’ teachings. After understanding, the men were baptized in the name of Jesus. Paul laid hands on them, and the Holy Spirit came upon them so that they began to speak in tongues and prophesy.

Paul went into the synagogue at Ephesus and preached about the kingdom of God for three months. While many believed, some of the Jews hardened their hearts and began to speak evil of Christ’s doctrine. As a result, Paul withdrew from the synagogue and began to teach in the school of Tyrannus; this continued for two years. While there, God performed many unusual miracles through Paul. Some of the Jewish exorcists there tried to imitate Paul by casting out demons, “by the Jesus that Paul preaches.” In one case, the seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, tried to do this, and the demon said to them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” The demon-possessed man then proceeded to attack them and beat them badly. Through Paul’s teachings, many people came to believe in Jesus, and many of those who practiced sorcery and idolatry abandoned their false beliefs. Paul decided at that time that he needed to eventually go to Rome.

Around that time, a great commotion began regarding the church due to the fact that Demetrius, a silversmith who made idols, had incited the other craftsmen against Paul and the church, proclaiming Diana, a false goddess, as deity. There was great chaos until the town clerk (a prominent public official) called everyone to order and dismissed the mob. Paul called the disciples together, encouraged them, and left for Macedonia. After passing through there, he arrived in Greece (likely Corinth), where he stayed for three months before returning through Macedonia to Troas (Luke and others joined Paul along the way), staying for seven days.

On the first day of the week, the disciples gathered together to break bread (take the Lord’s Supper), and Paul preached until midnight. In the window of the place they were meeting was a young man, Eutychus. During Paul’s preaching, he fell asleep and fell out the third-story window and died. Paul went down and embraced him, and he came back to life. He and his companions left Troas and journeyed through various cities until they came to Ephesus. At Ephesus, Paul called for the elders of the church and told them that he would not see them anymore, as he was to face tribulation in Jerusalem, but encouraged them.

Paul continued his journey toward Jerusalem, passing through various cities. In some cities, disciples, including Agabus, prophesied about the tribulation Paul would face in Jerusalem. They urged Paul not to continue his journey. Despite this, Paul was resolved to do the Lord’s will and die, if he needed to, for Jesus. Eventually, Paul arrived in Jerusalem, where the brethren received him gladly.

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) Christians in Acts took the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week; we must follow this example.
- 2.) Despite difficulties that we might face in life, we must always seek to do and follow God’s will.