



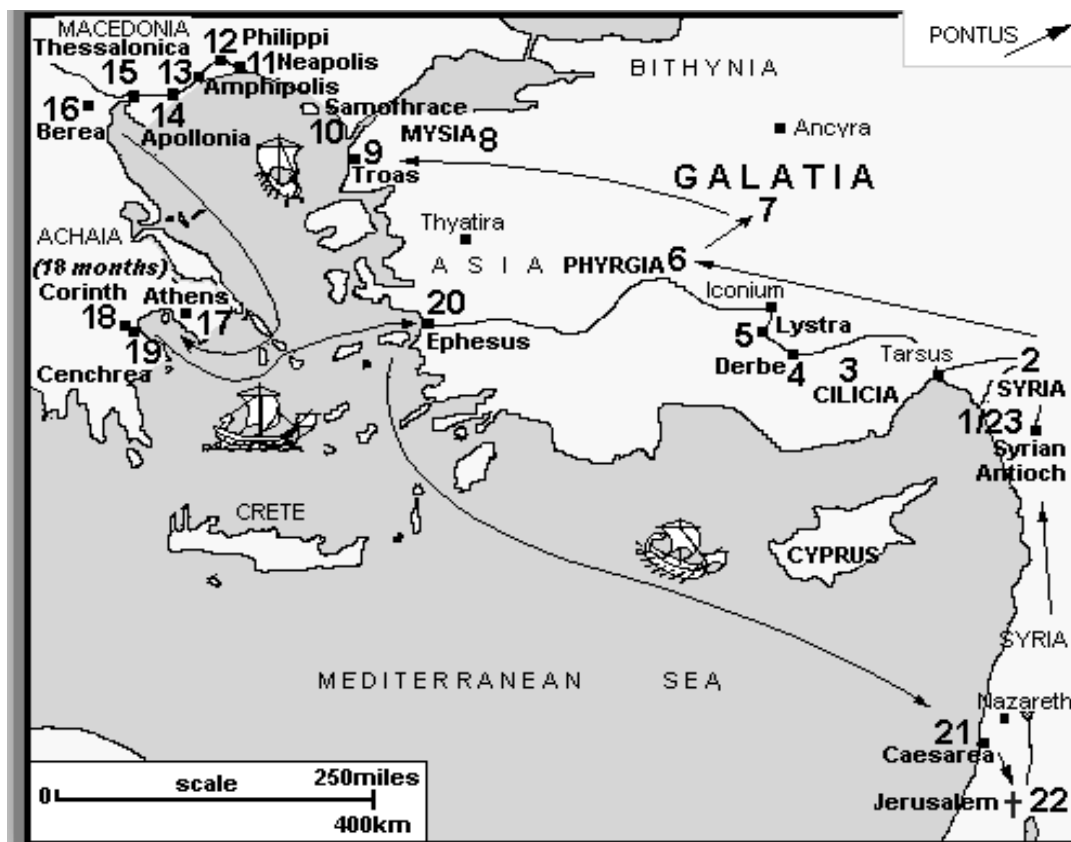
THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

LESSON 15 - STUDY QUESTIONS ACTS 18:1-19

DAY ONE

1. Consider and share with your group the thoughts from the Spiritual Reflection on Lesson 14 (Acts 16 and 17) that stayed with you this week, and the reason they did so.

Below is a map of the 2nd missionary journey of Paul, which is described in Acts 15:40-18:23.



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Read Acts 18:1-8

2a. As today's lesson begins, Paul continued on the 2nd of his missionary journeys, leaving Athens for Corinth, a town famous for its licentiousness. Describe the man he met in Corinth according to verse 2.

b. What brought Paul and Aquila together, according to verse 3?

3a. Each Sabbath, Paul spent time arguing in the synagogue in an attempt to evangelize Jews and Greeks (verse 4). In verse 5, Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus when Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia. According to verse 6, how did the Jews react to his message and what did Paul do and say?

THINK: Does it change your perspective to realize that many of us are Christians today as the result of Paul's faithful preaching in spite of opposition?

b. Refer back to Acts 13:50-51 for another time when Paul (and Barnabas) "shook the dust from their feet" and recall the reason.

4. Where did Paul go when he left the synagogue according to verse 7? Give a complete answer.

5. According to verse 8, what person from the synagogue became a believer along with what other people?

6. CONNECTION: In almost every episode of Paul's missionary travels we see a pattern: Paul arrived in a place, preached and taught, became victim to hostility and persecution, and then left that place. He did, however, have some successes - some Jews and Gentiles believed in the Lord and began Christian communities. That must surely have been what kept him going. Describe a time in your life when you experienced resistance or criticism to your faith. How did you deal with the opposition?

Read and record 1 Corinthians 16:13-14 and let these words help you remain loving and courageous in the face of challenges to your faith in God.

DAY TWO

Read Acts 18:9-21

7a. While Paul was in Corinth, the Lord spoke to him in a vision. With what reassuring words did the Lord speak to Paul in verses 9 and 10 that also speak especially to you?

b. What did Paul do in response to the Lord's words, according to verse 11?

8a. Once again the Jews rose up "in a body" against Paul. They brought charges against him before a tribunal in the presence of Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia (verse 12), a region in Greece. What did the Jews say about Paul (verse 13)?

b. Before Paul could speak, Gallio said "if it were a matter of crime or serious villainy, I would be justified in accepting the complaint of you Jews; but since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves; I do not wish to be a judge of these matters." After this he dismissed them from the tribunal. In your own words, what was he implying (verses 14 to 16)?

9. Verse 17 tells us that one of the Jews who complained, Sosthenes (the official of the synagogue), was seized and beaten, to which Gallio paid no attention. We can surmise that the "all of them" refers to the onlookers. What are your thoughts on why the onlookers would have beaten Sosthenes?

NOTE: Paul's letters from Ephesus are more descriptive of the growth and challenges of the mission in Corinth than in 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians.

10a. After a considerable time, Paul said farewell to the believers, left Corinth and continued his travels with his new friends. What were his friends' names and to what region did they go (first sentence of verse 18)?

b. Paul's vow recorded in verse 18 might have been a temporary one called a Nazarite vow which involved abstinence including, among other things, letting his hair grow for thirty days and then offering the hair as part of a sacrifice. Read Numbers 6:18 and explain how the hair was sacrificed.

11. In Ephesus Paul parted ways with his friends, but first he entered the synagogue to hold discussions with the Jews (verse 19). According to verses 20 and 21, what did the Jews ask of Paul, and how did he respond?

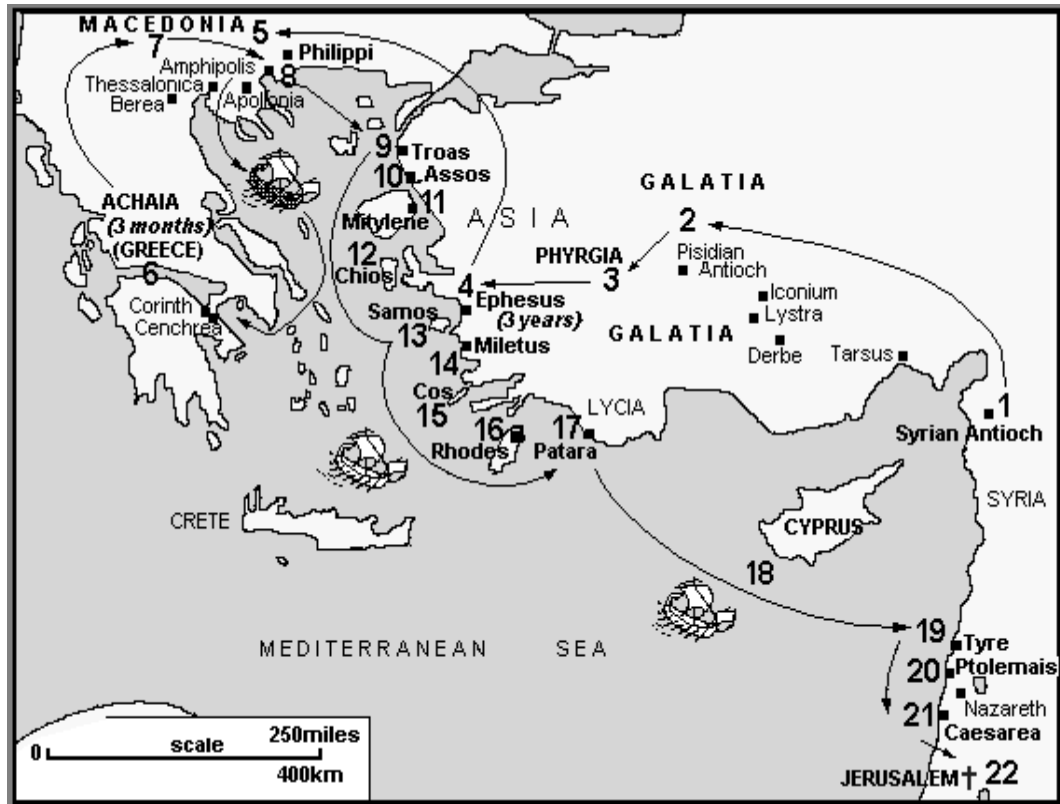
12. CONNECTION: As today's lesson ended, Paul set sail from Ephesus. Paul will later write a letter to the Ephesians that became a book in the New Testament. In this letter he included a prayer for his beloved Ephesians. Read Ephesians 3:16-21 and record the part or parts that you would like to pray for your loved ones today. Briefly explain why this is the desire of your heart for those you love.

Begin your prayer today by rereading Paul's prayer for the Ephesians.

DAY THREE
Read Acts 18:22-28

13. After sailing away from Ephesus, Paul arrived in Caesarea. We learn in verses 22 and 23 that from there, he once again traveled back to many places he had been before (his 3rd missionary journey), strengthening all the disciples. List these places and trace his journey on your map.

Below is a map of Paul's 3rd missionary journey.



14a. In verse 19, we learned that Priscilla and Aquila had remained in Ephesus and Paul went on alone. In verse 24, we read that a new person arrived in Ephesus. Record all you learn about him from this verse.

b. According to verse 25, this man was following “the Way of the Lord” and spoke with “burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus.” Apollos’ knowledge was incomplete, as he knew only the baptism of John. From verse 26, how did Priscilla and Aquila mentor Apollos?

15a. With the support and encouragement of the believers of Ephesus, Apollos went over to Achaia where he “greatly helped those who through grace had become believers” (verse 27). According to verse 28, how did he accomplish this?

b. In retrospect, it seems no accident that Paul left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus but rather it was a part of God’s plan. Why and how did this turn out to be providential?

16. CONNECTION: Like Paul, Barnabas, Priscilla, Aquila and Apollos, all of us are called to be missionaries of God's Word. Priscilla and Aquila mentored a man who was a powerful speaker, who "greatly helped those who through grace had become believers." We are not all great speakers or well-versed in scripture, but by faithful prayer and obedience to God the Holy Spirit can produce great fruit in our lives, and so the Word can be spread to "the ends of the earth." What kind of "fruit" has the Holy Spirit introduced into your life? Share your thoughts with your small group.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:5-6, and write a prayer of thankfulness today for the seeds that are planted and that grow into fruit with God's grace.

DAY FOUR
Read Acts 19:1-7

17a. As today's lesson begins, while Apollos was in Corinth Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus. What did he do there according to verse 1?

b. What did Paul ask the disciples and what was their response according to verse 2?

18. Paul asked them another question. What did he ask and what was their answer (verse 3)?

19a. In verse 4, Paul speaks to these disciples of John's Baptism. Of what does he remind them?

b. John describes his baptism and that of Jesus in Matthew 3:11. Record his words.

20. In verses 5-7 Luke described the baptism of about twelve of the disciples at Ephesus. What additional information do verses 6 and 7 give us about these disciples after they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus?

21. CONNECTION: In today's lesson, we see how the Holy Spirit came to the believers on whom Paul laid hands. Acts is called "The Gospel of the Holy Spirit" because it describes the actions of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the apostles. Our Lord Jesus Christ promised his apostles to send the Holy Spirit to be our counselor and guide (John 14:16-17). Each week in the Creed, we state that "we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets...." Meditate today on these words that we speak each week and then comment on what these words really mean to you.

Select a favorite verse or prayer regarding the Holy Spirit, record it, and let these thoughts lead you into prayer.

DAY FIVE
Read Acts 19:8-20

22a. As today's passage opens Paul has entered the synagogue in Ephesus. For three months all was well ("he speaks out boldly, and argued persuasively about the kingdom of God"); then resistance occurred again. Undaunted, where did Paul take his disciples to continue preaching, according to verse 9?

b. Apparently, this was a venue in which he preached to the Gentiles. According to verse 10, how long did he stay there and what was the result?

23. Describe the extraordinary things that happened through Paul, according to verse 12.

NOTE: Because of these and similar events described in other biblical passages, early Christians developed the practice of collecting relics of the saints.

24. Verse 13 mentions itinerant Jewish exorcists who made a living traveling and claimed to have powers to heal and cast out demons. According to verse 13, what did they try to do and what words did they use?

25a. These men were the seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish high priest. According to verses 15 and 16 what happened to them? Use your own words.

b. Many people heard of this and were deeply affected. According to verse 17 what happened?

26a. It seems that this event prompted many to turn to God. According to verses 18 and 19 what else did they do?

b. What was the result according to verse 20?

27. CONNECTION: In this passage the sons of the Jewish high priest Sceva were traveling “exorcists” who tried unsuccessfully to invoke the name of Jesus in order to cast out a demon. They were not believers in Jesus and they certainly had not been delegated authority to cast out demons (as had Paul and the other apostles). Simply "using" Jesus’ name (but not believing in their hearts) could not give them the divine strength to deal with powerful evil. Yet the contrast between their humiliating and painful failure and Paul's successes brought many people to true faith and others to repent from occult practices..." So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed." Sometimes by allowing us to see bad consequences of hypocrisy or evil habits, God brings us closer to Himself. Think of a time you witnessed a serious consequence of disobedience to God which brought the “fear of the Lord” into your heart.

Read and record Matthew 7:21 and begin your prayer today asking the Holy Spirit to help you keep your thoughts and actions on God’s unfailing presence in your life.

DAY SIX

Read Acts 19:21-41

28a. Paul “resolved in the spirit” to go through Macedonia and Achaia and then to go on to Jerusalem. What did he say he would do after he had gone there (verse 21)?

b. What do you think “resolved in the Spirit” could mean?

29. Paul chose to stay in Asia a while longer and he sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia. Soon after, a disturbance arose involving Demetrius (a silversmith) who made statues of Artemis, the Greek goddess of fertility. Summarize this incident as briefly as you can (verses 23-27).

30. According to verses 28 and 29, what were the people’s reactions to Demetrius’ words? Use your own words.

31. State the two reasons given in verses 30-31 as to why Paul avoided going into the crowd.

32. Briefly give some of the details of the confusion described in verses 32 and 33.

33. When the crowd of rioters recognized that Alexander was a Jew, they shouted for two hours! Their cry, according to verse 34, was “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” Finally, the town clerk quieted them. Summarize what he said and did according to verses 35-40.

34. CONNECTION: Today's passage contains another lesson from Paul. Once again those who stood to lose financially were stirring up the crowd against Paul and the truths that he preached. According to verse 30, he was eager to address the crowd but the disciples would not let him go. Passionate as he was, he had a humble and submissive spirit that enabled him to listen to his followers and yield to their counsel. As a result, the town clerk was able to calm the crowd and prevent harm to him and the other Christians. How do you react when people who love you give you advice, welcome or not? Think of a time when someone warned you and reluctantly you took their advice, and found that their loving words turned out to be just what you needed!

When we feel the need to give advice to a friend or loved one, Paul's letter to the Thessalonians gives us a good thought to keep in mind. Read and record 2 Thessalonians 3:15 and let this thought lead you into prayer.

After completing this lesson, read Chapters 16 and 17 (refer to pages 112-119 in the edition copyrighted in 1992 by Our Sunday Visitor or pages 135-147 in the edition reprinted in 2013 by Saint Benedict Press) in the *Meditation and Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* by Alfred McBride, O. Praem. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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