

### Act 18.23 – 21.17 Paul's Third Missionary Journey

(we will start at Acts 18.18 for convenience)

This journey is more open-ended than the rest, since Paul never returns to 'home' (Antioch). For our purpose we can take it as far as Acts 21.17 when Paul arrives in Jerusalem. After this Paul is in prison most of the time so it's not a missionary journey as such.

If Paul arrived home from Corinth in late 51 or 52, then this journey would have started in Spring of 52 or 53 (it's extremely unlikely that anyone would begin this type of journey any time of year other than Spring).

The final itinerary comes out as:

- Overland through Turkey
- 2 ¼ years in Ephesus.
- Macedonia then Greece for three months (from where the initial plan was to sail home to Syria, presumably Antioch). Change of plan to . . .
- Overland up through Macedonia, over to Troas, Greek islands, Miletus (near Ephesus), then by ship to Tyre and on to Jerusalem
- Arriving in Jerusalem probably Spring of 57 AD



Much of this section is simple historical narrative; however there are two extremely important incidents right at the beginning. These are very similar to one another, and Luke has put them side by side to draw attention to the theological issue raised.

## Acts 18. 24 – 28 & 19. 1 – 7

These two incidents concern two persons or groups who would have probably called themselves Christians, but who had an experience that is portrayed here as incomplete or defective. We need to consider this very carefully, and its implications for today.

### 1. What can we say about Apollos?

- Had he understood, intellectually, the gospel message?
- Had he repented?
- When it says, “He knew only the baptism of John,” what does this signify exactly. What was the baptism of John and how does it relate to Christianity?
- So what was the problem?

### 2. The group in Ephesus. This is more specific. They had

- Received the baptism of John
- Believed
- Accepted John’s teaching about ‘the one who was to come’
- But . . . what is missing?
- Is it an optional extra, or is it an integral part of what constitutes ‘being a Christian’?

### In the present day, how do these incidents relate to us?

- Do we meet people today in this kind of situation?
- Are they Christians?
- Does it matter?

(I’m not sure that we can give absolute 100% answers to all these questions, but we can certainly consider them and apply our minds to the issues)

### Main events of the rest of the passage:

- Paul in Ephesus
- Macedonia and Troas (note the group is a lot bigger now that just the two of them on the first journey) and the story of Eutychus in Troas.
- Paul’s speech in Miletus. The ‘ravening wolves’. How do we deal with the wolves issue in practice?
- The final journey to Jerusalem and the rather strange episode of the prophecies. Actually we have quite a lot of ‘prophets’ in this section, including the 12 in Ephesus, Philip’s daughters, Agabus. What do we make of this? Still for today?

### And finally, Jerusalem.