

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for November 13, 2016

The Ministry to the Disciples of John the Baptist
Acts 19:1-10

Acts 18:23-21:16 details Paul's third missionary journey, which centers on the city of Ephesus.

1. The ministry to the disciples of John (19:1-7)

Paul travelled the northern route to Ephesus visiting churches he planted during the first missionary journey.

These disciples of John were similar to Apollos (18:24-26), who was a disciple of John the Baptist but lacked the knowledge of the coming of the Holy Spirit to the church (Acts 2:1-11). John's baptism prepared the way for Christ (Luke 3:16), and these men learn of this from Paul.

In Acts 10, the Spirit came upon the believers prior to baptism, in contrast to Acts 19.

As with Peter in Acts 8:17, the coming of the Spirit occurred with a group of people by the touch of Paul, which connected them to him. Later, Paul taught that those who do not have the Spirit do not belong to Christ (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:13-14).

This is the third instance of speaking in tongues in the book of Acts (cf. 2:3-4; 10:45-46). As evidenced in Acts 2, speaking in tongues is a supernatural ability to speak in languages that the speaker had never learned.

Tongues-speaking is connected with prophecy in the Scripture (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:8; 14:22). This miraculous ability testified to the validity of the prophetic revelation from God.

The number of men has no symbolic significance; it is simply an estimate of the number of people to whom Paul ministered.

2. The ministry to the disciples in Ephesus (19:8-10)

The synagogue of Ephesus allowed Paul to teach for three months, which was longer than most other places he visited.

Our English word "dialogue" is derived from the Greek word for "reasoned" (DIALEGOMENOS). Paul's speaking ministry was beyond just telling, it was an attempt to persuade in the context of a conversation. The best teaching occurs when we

can reason with people about the Word of God, which is why our small group ministry is so valuable.

Christianity in the first century was known as the “Way” (cf. Acts 9:2; 19:23; 24:14, 22). This designation was a rich description of the church as a means to an end, namely the Kingdom of God. We are not a destination but an avenue by which people can come into a relationship with the Lord forever.

The hall that Paul used to teach in was belonging to Tyrannus, likely an instructor whose name meant “tyrant.”

Paul taught daily for two years. A small number of localized ancient Greek texts include the time of day of these daily meetings, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. While this was not in the original text, it does indicate the thinking of Christians centuries later and perhaps is a possible clue into his ambitious ministry (cf. Acts 20:31).

The purpose of this extensive instruction is explained—so that all who lived in Asia (Western Turkey today) heard the Word of God. This would include the planting of the churches of Revelation 2-3 along with the Colossian church. This ministry to Jews and Greeks brought with it the challenge of uniting both groups into one (cf. Ephesians 2:14).

Our teaching cannot be solely for the edification of the church. It must equip the believers for the work of outreach. May we be faithful to God’s Word so that the Lord may use us to reach the lost world for Christ.