

**The Acts of the Apostles**

**The Journey – 2020**  
Jim Hoffman

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48 AD	The Council at Jerusalem	Acts 15
49 AD	Paul's Second Missionary Journey	Acts 15:36
49 AD	Paul in Philippi	Acts 16
49 AD	Paul in Thessalonica, Berea, Athens	Acts 17
51 AD	Paul in Corinth	Acts 18
54 AD	Paul in Ephesus	Acts 19
57 AD	Paul in Macedonia and Greece	Acts 20
59 AD	Paul Returns to Jerusalem	Acts 21 - 23
60 AD	Paul imprisoned in Caesarea	Acts 24
62 AD	Paul Before Festus	Acts 25
62 AD	Paul Before Agrippa	Acts 26
62 AD	Paul Sails for Rome	Acts 27
62 AD	The Shipwreck	Acts 27:13
62 AD	Paul Ashore at Malta	Acts 28
62 AD	Paul Preaches at Rome	Acts 28:11

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Acts 18:24 Meanwhile, a Jew named Apollos, an eloquent speaker who knew the Scriptures well, had arrived in Ephesus from Alexandria in Egypt. 25 He had been taught the way of the Lord, and he taught others about Jesus with an enthusiastic spirit and with accuracy. However, he knew only about John's baptism. 26 When Priscilla and Aquila heard him preaching boldly in the synagogue, they took him aside and explained the way of God even more accurately.

#### Some time passed between verses #26 and #27

- 27 Apollos had been thinking about going to Achaia, and the brothers and sisters in Ephesus encouraged him to go. They wrote to the believers in Achaia, asking them to welcome him. When he arrived there, he proved to be of great benefit to those who, by God's grace, had believed. 28 He refuted the Jews with powerful arguments in public debate. Using the Scriptures, he explained to them that Jesus was the Messiah. NLT

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- “a Jew named Apollos, an eloquent speaker who knew the Scriptures well, had arrived in Ephesus from Alexandria in Egypt. 25 He had been taught the way of the Lord, and he taught others about Jesus with an enthusiastic spirit and with accuracy. However, he knew only about John's baptism”

- Now we meet a man who could easily be described as an enigma – he at first seems like this dynamic born again preacher of the word until we read, “however”.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- He came from Alexandria in Egypt wherein was the largest library of the day - Alexandria was akin to Athens and known for its intellectuals.
- Apollos was well spoken, he was educated, and he had a relationship with God, but he fell short of being born again.
- What makes Apollos a confusing sort of character was this phrase, “and he taught others about Jesus with an enthusiastic spirit and with accuracy”.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- So, here is this O.T. believer teaching others about Jesus with accuracy – as it turns out, his teaching about Jesus was indeed accurate, but incomplete.
- Here is one of those spots in scripture where we have to guess a bit about this man, Apollos.
- He knew the O.T. scriptures and he had even come to know messiah's name, but where he seems to fall short was knowing the full meaning of the cross.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- This is the phrase that gives many pause concerning Apollos, **“However, he knew only about John's baptism”**.
- In the early days of the church it was the normal experience to be baptized immediately upon conversion. **Acts 2:41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.**
- There is certainly no consensus on what it means to go so far as to know messiah's name was Jesus, teach about him, but still come up short of a new birth.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- **“When Priscilla and Aquila heard him preaching boldly in the synagogue, they took him aside and explained the way of God even more accurately.”**
- Priscilla and Aquila both recognize the ‘lack’ in Apollos and take him aside where they sharpened his focus on the gospel, and fully converted him to Christ.
- I don't know what else it could possibly mean to **“explain the way of God even more accurately”** to him and then to couple that with **“he knew only John's baptism”**.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- What many want to make into a deep dark riddle is probably best explained by saying that Apollos was an old testament believer.
- What made Apollos exceptional was that he believed in the messiah to come AND even knew his name without actually receiving him.
- John 1:11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 **But to all who did receive him**, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

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The Acts of the Apostles

A sobering thought, and yes, I know I am stating the obvious – Apollos is proof that one can know ABOUT Jesus, tell others about him, be enthusiastic about him, and still not KNOW him!

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The Acts of the Apostles

- There are no words in the text to prove that Apollos was an O.T. believer, but neither are there words that offer a better explanation.
- All we are told is that Priscilla and Aquila took him aside, offered him some additional teaching and from that point on he is off and running as a teacher/evangelist.
- The next thing we know Apollos is leaving Ephesus for Achaia to preach the gospel. (Corinth to be exact)

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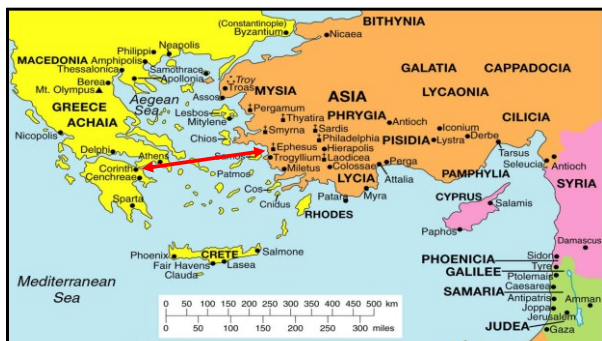
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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Now in fairness there are Pentecostals who believe the teaching Aquila and Priscilla offered Apollos was teaching about the Acts 2 experience.
- And that may be accurate, but if we work just from the text of Acts 19 there is no mention of what they taught him.
- In fact, it seems Luke goes out of his way to use words that are deliberately vague – “**explained the way of God even more accurately**”, which tells us almost nothing.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Acts 19:1 While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions until he reached Ephesus, on the coast, where he found several believers. 2 “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” he asked them. “No,” they replied, “we haven’t even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” 3 “Then what baptism did you experience?” he asked. And they replied, “The baptism of John.” 4 Paul said, “John’s baptism called for repentance from sin. But John himself told the people to believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus.” 5 As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied. 7 There were about twelve men in all. NLT

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### The Acts of the Apostles

• **“While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions until he reached Ephesus, on the coast, where he found several believers.”**

• Now, remember where Apollos was and where he went to – he was teaching in Ephesus when we met him and headed for Corinth in Achaia when we last saw him.

• That is where chapter 19 begins – Apollos is in Corinth and Paul is now revisiting Ephesus.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

• As Acts 19 opens Paul has met some new believers in Ephesus – you remember, Ephesus, the place where he was asked to stay and keep teaching but couldn't?

• But you know who was there in Ephesus teaching?

• That's right – Apollos went to Ephesus from Alexandria in Egypt and started a teaching ministry where Priscilla and Aquila hear him and correct him.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

• Paul didn't have a teaching ministry in Ephesus, but Apollos did and since we know Apollos was under informed on the gospel maybe those he taught were under informed as well.

• I think that might explain what Paul discovers about these new believers he met in Ephesus.

• Again, Luke uses an economy of words so we don't know for sure, but for some reason Paul asks his new friends a rather odd question.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- **“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”**
- Have you ever connected with some new Christian friends and then in rather short order asked them if they received the Holy Spirit when they believed?
- In fact, that might be the last question we would ask because we know our bibles well enough to know that all Christians receive the Holy Spirit the very moment we believe.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- There must have been something these men said to Paul as they conversed that raised some red flags in the mind of Paul.
- My guess is that if we spoke at some length with someone who professed to know Jesus but didn't, that we too would zero in on the problem.
- Maybe they expressed some doubt about their own salvation, or maybe they had no testimony of a time when they committed their lives to Christ.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

**“No,” they replied, “we haven’t even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”** This is the part of today’s text that convinced me that the issue here is salvation and not the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

If they had been evangelized by a Christian who had been at Pentecost you can be sure they would have heard about the wind, fire, and tongues associated with the coming of the Holy Spirit.

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The Acts of the Apostles

• **“No,” they replied, “we haven’t even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”**

• Their answer of course confirmed Paul’s suspicions that he was not talking to Christians, but to Old Testament believers.

• What I said before about O.T. Believers notwithstanding, in our day, close to faith in Christ is not enough – we either believe or we do not.

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The Acts of the Apostles

• Remember the big deal I made about who was where with respect to Paul and Apollos?

• Now you see why these new friends of Paul’s in Ephesus had never heard of the Holy Spirit - because their teacher, Apollos, had never heard of him either.

• Not until Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and taught him the way of the Lord more accurately.

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The Acts of the Apostles

• **“Then what baptism did you experience?” he asked. And they replied, “The baptism of John.”**

• Paul is now drilling down on the problem – their faith was an OT sort of faith where one believed in the one who would come.

• And this was an effective system in the days before the cross, but not now – now believers are baptized in light of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- “Paul said, ‘John’s baptism called for repentance from sin. But John himself told the people to believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus.’”
- This whole sequence raises a question – that of the end of the old covenant and the start of the new and what about the people living through the change?
- What about a guy like Apollos who before he met Priscilla and Aquila was strong in the O.T. scriptures, lived after the cross, and didn’t know Jesus?

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Was Apollos just missing some important information or was he lost?
- 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 **Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.**
- Had Apollos not met Priscilla and Aquila could he have been lost for eternity – only God knows, but this does underscore the transitional nature of Acts.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

Here is an even bigger question with far reaching possibilities – after the cross was it necessary for every O.T. believer to be born again in order to get to heaven?

I think the answer is “no” – if we believe old testament believers in the “gospel they had” in their day could be saved, and they are never informed of the cross, then nothing of any moral significance has changed for them.

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The Acts of the Apostles

• **“As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied”**

• The 12 men were evidently eager to be corrected just as Apollos was and they confessed faith in Christ and received the Holy Spirit.

• The evidence of their receiving the Holy Spirit was the same as it was in Acts 2, Acts 8, and chapter 10.

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The Acts of the Apostles

• **“they spoke in other tongues and prophesied”**

• When the gift of languages was given in the previous 3 examples each one was rather similar but all seemed to have a uniqueness as well.

• In Acts 2 at Pentecost all of the disciples received the gift of tongues and declared the “wonderful works of God” in a new language.

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The Acts of the Apostles

• In Acts 8 (the Samaritans) we are not told specifically that the believers actually spoke in tongues, but the fact that the sorcerer took notice confirms they did.

• In Acts 10, Cornelius and his “band” are actually described as speaking in tongues and “extolling” or “praising” depending on the translation used.

• Here in Acts 19 these believers spoke in tongues and prophesied – forthtelling, not foretelling.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- At this point much of the transition from the old covenant to the new is complete – first the Jews, then the Samaritans, then the gentiles, and finally the old testament believers of all stripes.
- Notice this – the Holy Spirit given with the evidence of tongues is not given to the Samaritans, the Gentiles, or to the OT believers without the aid of a Jew.
- For whatever reason God wanted his chosen people to be involved in each of these breakthroughs.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- The Samaritans were converted at the preaching of Philip, but the Spirit wasn't given until Peter came on the scene.
- The gentiles, Cornelius and company, were converted and given the evidence of speaking in tongues by Peter.
- The old testament believers were fully converted by Paul's preaching and then received the evidence of languages by the laying on of his hands.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- Acts is a history book of the New Testament and it describes the transition that was going on.
- This is why many believe that Acts is a particularly difficult book from which to form doctrine because of the transitional nature of "the acts of the apostles".
- Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in **Jerusalem** and in all Judea and **Samaria**, and to the end of the **earth**.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

Of course the BIG issue that is introduced in Acts is that God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, will come and live in His people. That experience was rolled out in waves or phases.

John 16:12

“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.”

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### Questions

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- And the rest some on boards, some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land (Acts 27:44). The marvelous story of Paul's voyage to Rome, with its trials and triumphs, is a fine pattern of the lights and shades of the way of faith all through the story of human life. The remarkable feature of it is the hard and narrow places which we find intermingled with God's most extraordinary interpositions and providences. It is the common idea that the pathway of faith is strewn with flowers, and that when God interposes in the life of His people, He does it on a scale so grand that He lifts us quite out of the plane of difficulties. The actual fact, however, is that the real experience is quite contrary. The story of the Bible is one of alternate trial and triumph in the case of everyone of the cloud of witnesses from Abel down to the latest martyr. Paul, more than anyone else, was an example of how much a child of God can suffer without being crushed or broken in spirit. On account of his testifying in Damascus, he was hunted down by persecutors and obliged to fly for his life. but we behold no heavenly chariot transporting the holy apostle amid thunderbolts of flame from the reach of his foes, but "through a window in a basket," was he let down over the walls of Damascus and so escaped their hands. In an old clothes basket, like a bundle of laundry, or groceries, the servant of Jesus Christ was dropped from the window and ignominiously fled from the hate **38** of his foes.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Again we find him left for months in the lonely dungeons; we find him telling of his watchings, his fastings, and his desertion by friends, of his brutal and shameful beatings, and here even after God has promised to deliver him, we see him for days left to toss upon a stormy sea, obliged to stand guard over the treacherous seaman, and at last when the deliverance comes, there is no heavenly galley sailing from the skies to take off the noble prisoner; there is no angel form walking along the waters and stilling the raging breakers; there is no supernatural sign of the transcendent miracle that is being wrought; but one is compelled to seize a spar, another a floating plank, another to climb on a fragment of the wreck, another to strike out and swim for his life. Here is God's pattern for our own lives. Here is a Gospel of help for people that have to live in this every day world with real and ordinary surroundings, and a thousand practical conditions which have to be met in a thoroughly practical way. God's promises and God's providences do not lift us out of the plane of common sense and commonplace trial, but it is through these very things that faith is perfected, and that God loves to interweave the golden threads of His love along the warp and woof of our every day experience. ~ Hard Places in the Way of Faith "Streams in the Desert" - LB Cowman **39**

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