Witnesses to Christ

The Mighty Word of the Lord
Lesson 16
Acts 18:24-19:41

Trinity Bible Church Sunday School
April 17, 2016
Acts – a Major Transition

- The completed work of Christ – a new order
- The Law of Moses ended (Gal 3:24-25)
- The nation Israel set aside (Rom 11:15)
- The ministry of the Holy Spirit enlarged
- The Gospel sent to the world
- The establishment of churches
Outline – Acts 1:8

- Witnesses in Jerusalem (1-7)
- Witnesses in all Judea and Samaria (8-12)
- Witnesses to the remotest part of the earth (13-28)
- Witnesses of Jesus Christ
- Witnesses by the power of the Holy Spirit
Witnessing to the World (13-28)

- Three missionary journeys
  - #1 (Acts 13-14)
  - #2 (Acts 15:40-18:22)
  - #3 (Acts 18:23-20:38)

- Christian ministry
  - Proclaiming the Word of God – reasoning and persuading
    - Jesus is the Christ
    - The Way
    - The Kingdom of God
  - Opposition and persecution
  - The Word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed
  - The work of the Holy Spirit – guide; teach; enable; do (authenticating) miracles
Third Missionary Journey, Part 1

- Flashback – Apollos in Ephesus (18:22-28)
- 12 Disciples in Ephesus (19:1-7)
- Paul’s ministry in Ephesus (19:8-12)
- Jewish exorcists in Ephesus (19:13-20)
- Paul’s plans (19:21-22)
- Riot in Ephesus (19:23-41)
- Observations
  - Emphasis on Holy Spirit
  - No sermons here – Antioch, Athens, Ephesus
  - Anecdotal structure
  - The Word of the Lord (18:28; 19:10, 20)
Apollos and the Twelve Disciples

- **Apollos (18:24-28)**
  - Eloquent man - mighty in the Scriptures
  - Instructed in the way of the Lord and fervent in spirit
  - Speaking and teaching accurately the things of Jesus
  - Only acquainted with the baptism of John
  - Priscilla and Aquila “explained to him the way of God more accurately.”
  - Departed to Corinth – teaching by Scripture that Jesus was the Christ

- **12 disciples (19:1-7)**
  - Never heard that there was a Holy Spirit
  - Baptized into John’s baptism – disciples of John or Christ?
  - Paul: John’s baptism of repentance; teaching faith in Jesus
  - Baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus
  - Holy Spirit came on them – spoke in tongues and prophesied
What did John teach?

- Prepare for the way of the Lord (Isaiah 40:3; Matt 3:1-12)
- Call to repent – for forgiveness of sins (Luke 3:3)
- Flee from the wrath to come
- Baptism of repentance: repent - be baptized - bear fruit
- A preparation, not a destination!
- A coming One
  - He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (wheat and chaff)
  - He is greater, mightier and more worthy than John (Mark 1:7; John 1:30)
  - The Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world
- The work of the Holy Spirit
What did Apollos and the 12 disciples miss?

- Apollos
  - The truth of the baptism of the Holy Spirit
  - Repentance necessary to prepare for Christ

- 12 disciples
  - The existence and work of the Holy Spirit
  - The necessity of faith in Jesus – not just repentance
What did Apollos and the 12 disciples learn?

- The baptism of the Holy Spirit
  - Union with Christ in his death and resurrection
  - Rom. 6:3-11 – united to Christ in His death and resurrection
  - 1 Corinthians 12:13 – baptized by the Holy Spirit into one Body

- Forgiveness comes by faith in Jesus Christ
  - Jesus is the Lamb of God Who takes sin away
  - John taught that salvation comes by faith in Jesus
  - The Holy Spirit is the Agent of the work of salvation
  - SL Johnson: “The essential evidence of Christianity is the possession of the Holy Spirit” (cf. Rom. 8:9)
  - Paul did not teach faith in the Holy Spirit
What happened next?

- Apollos taught that Jesus was the Christ
- The 12 disciples spoke in tongues and prophesied
- Paul taught about the Kingdom of God
  - Salvation (John 3)
  - The reign of Christ up on the earth – 1000 years & eternal
Paul’s Ministry in Ephesus (19:8-12)

- Teaching and persuading about the Kingdom of God
- Opposition – hardened Jews
- Daily ministry for the disciples
- Miraculous works – healing and casting out demons
Jewish Exorcists in Ephesus (19:13-20)

- Counterfeit authority
  - A spiritual warfare
  - Not a mere name – not a magic formula
  - The necessity of the power of God

- A house divided
  - Children of the devil seeking to cast out demons
  - Demon overpowered and injured the false exorcists
  - A house divided will not stand (Matt 12:25-28)
  - A vanquished foe
Paul’s Plans (19:21-22)

- Plan to go to Rome by way of Achaia and Jerusalem
  - Wanted to take the Gospel to Rome (Rom 1:11-12; 15:24)
  - Collecting a gift for Jerusalem saints (Rom 15:25-28; 1 Cor 16:1-3; 2 Cor 8:1-9)
- Sent Timothy and Erastus ahead (1 Cor 4:17; 16:10–11)
- Stayed to minister in Asia “awhile.”
Riot in Ephesus (19:23-41)

- Ministry in Ephesus
  - Extraordinary miracles (19:11)
  - Magic repudiated by believers
  - Word of God growing mightily and prevailing
- “No small disturbance concerning the Way”
- The problem
  - Success of the Gospel
  - Threat to economic prosperity (19:25, 27a)
  - Common motive: hindrance to personal aspirations
  - Preaching
The Near Riot

- Filled with rage
- “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians”
  - An imaginary god
  - Confusion
- Great is a Divine attribute
  - Good – includes all God’s benevolent attributes (Charnock)
  - Great – includes God’s power and sovereignty (Psalm 104)
- Jews try to separate themselves from “the Way”
The Assembly Dismissed

- The town clerk
- A deceived defender
  - The greatness of Artemis
  - The harmless servants of God
- Appeal to self interest
- He dismissed the assembly
The Mighty Word of the Lord

- The need to know the truth – “more accurately”
- The need for the ministry of the Holy Spirit
- The rule of God
  - Over demons – they do His will
  - Over men – they do His will
- The mighty Word of the Lord
  - Study – 2 Tim 2:15
  - Meditate – Psalm 1
  - Proclaim – 2 Tim 4:2