

ACTS 18:18 – 19:7 ARE WE LIMITED BY WHAT WE KNOW – OR DON'T KNOW?

“Your style is your what limits you.”

At one time, the vast oceans were seen as boundaries and obstacles, limiting people as to where they could go. But there were some who were able to navigate and sail – this turned what some saw as obstacles and boundaries into highways. We all have our limitations. (Explain: natural) and there are some we impose on ourselves due to lack of interest, discipline or focus. And sometimes, we simply just don't know because we haven't heard. (Calling Chad about a GM a/c system.)

Today we will run into this issue of not knowing something, of incomplete knowledge and what that can mean, as well as how to handle it.

Paul is, after some time, leaving Corinth on his way back to Jerusalem and eventually Syrian Antioch.

Timeline: after 49 – 51/52 AD. We are now approaching 25v years – a quarter decade after

Pentecost. Hence the people introduced into the narrative.

18 So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow. 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they asked him to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, 21 but took leave of them, saying, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing." And he sailed from Ephesus. 22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch. 23 After he had spent some time there, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

Paul's vow: 3 main ideas –

- 1) Nazarite vow
- 2) Vow of thanksgiving
- 3) secular/ sailor's vow

Answer? No one really knows. I lean towards number 2.

They are left at Ephesus. Paul can't stay, but will return, "Lord willing."

Eventually goes off on his 3rd missionary journey, back to Turkey.

24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. 27 And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; 28 for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

Alexandria: bio. Cosmo, ivy league of the day, one of the largest libraries in the world.

Apollos – eloquent, polished. But has incomplete knowledge.

Baptism of John, what was it? What did it mean? “Repent! For the kingdom of Heaven is at hand!” It’s limitations: A threat, limited by its own declaration! It announced the kingdom that Jesus would inaugurate. It got people ready for what Jesus said. People were baptized into this. We tend to think of it as regular “Christian Baptism.” This creates an issue for people, as we will soon see.

Priscilla and Aquila take him aside and teach him what he doesn’t know. He is teachable. He is then sent to Greece, winds up in Corinth.

1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples 2 he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”

3 And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?”

So they said, “Into John's baptism.”

4 Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. 7 Now the men were about twelve in all.

Paul is now in Ephesus, so even more time has passed. He comes upon some “disciples who only know of John’s baptism.

25 years or so after Pentecost.

Now we have a doublet. Explain. Differences, not similarities.

Paul asks questions, gets answers, gives answers, then baptizes, (water baptism, then Spirit comes upon them. We are told nothing of the sort regarding John learning of the same thing.)

Sometimes we see these things occurring in different order. Can’t build a doctrine from one isolated story.

Baptism formula?

Paul and Apollos missing each other. Apollos beat Paul to Ephesus. Apollos planted and Paul watered. Paul beat Apollos to Corinth. Paul planted and Apollos watered. God gives the increase.

So, is this teaching of some sort of second blessing? No. Technically it is the “first” blessing. Remember what John’s baptism was and announced. Remember what Christian baptism and the Spirit announce and are about.

So, were the disciples and Apollos saved prior to their increased knowledge. I believe so. How? Just as was Abraham. Faith – believing loyalty. The movie, “That Thing You Do!” The first agent/producer. He could only take them so far before handing them off to Tom Hanks, the producer from “Play-tone Records.”

You can only take one as far as you have gone. To the beach or to the sea and beyond?

Without the Spirit, we are incomplete and not empowered or emboldened. We, the church will always be weak limited in effectiveness unless we walk and move in the Spirit.