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Paul's Ministry in Corinth

Acts 18:1After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

Anyone remember the Greek term for “after these things”?

“Metatouta”.

So, Paul and his team leave Athens after quite some time it appears. He had spoken repeatedly in the Synagogues and with the Governing Elites on Mars Hill. We are told that some Believed and followed the teachings of Paul and the Disciples, but most did not.

Remember this from Jesus in Matthew, it was true then and is true now.

Matthew 7: 13Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

15Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19Every tree that

bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. [20](#)Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

[21](#)Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. [22](#)Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [23](#)And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

[2](#)And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

Aquila is declared to be a Jew here, so he is likely of one of the tribes that were forcefully relocated out of Israel at one of its conquering's. His family settled in Asia Minor at the southern end of the Black Sea in Pontus, where Aquila was born. He apparently ended up in Rome and married Priscilla. It is believed that they were both educated and were either in Jerusalem at Pentecost or were taught about Jesus by other Jews from Rome that had been there at Pentecost.

*Acts 2:9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in **Pontus**, and Asia, (*

[3](#)And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

The same craft refers to both Paul and Aquila as being tent makers or at least using goat hair cloth for making of various articles including tents.

4And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

As was his usual methods of operation, Paul would go to local synagogues and speak, persuading both Jews and Gentiles that he was a scholarly man and knowledgeable of the Law and Prophets. It appears from the context that he did not get into specifics until the arrival of Silas and Timotheus.

5And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus was Christ*.

A couple of things to consider. When Paul wrote what we call his Epistles, those were letters to whom he had previously shared the Good News in person. As we have learned in studying those letters Paul would hear that a problem had occurred and not being able to go in person, he would write letters (Epistles in Greek). He would then send these letters with trusted associates to these newly formed congregations.

But right now in this verse, Paul had continued onto Corinth later joined by Silas and Timotheus.

It is believed that Paul would write his first letter to the Thessalonians soon after Silas and Timothy arrived in Corinth. He would write his second letter to the Thessalonians just prior to leaving Corinth. Read those two letters to get the context of what issues had come up in Paul's absence from Thessalonica.

It would also seem from the previous two verses that Paul was laying the groundwork to delivering the Good News but had not gotten to the controversial claims that Jesus was the Messiah. At this point "Paul was pressed in the spirit". The Spirit pressed on Paul to now deliver the entire Truth to those in Corinth. The Spirit knew full well of the uproar this Truth brings with it. It always upsets those in power whether Romans, Greeks, or Jews. It declares the God of the Universe and His Son the Messiah Jesus Christ.

6And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

We could lose count on how many times the God of the Word has been rejected by the nation of Israel and specifically the Jewish Religion. God has not lost count and the number continues to rise.

The frustration from Paul at the continued rejection of the Truth by the Chosen of Israel must have been infuriating. If Paul's heart was broken to frustration imagine the heart break of our God in that rejection.

Jesus had given instruction to the apostles as to their response if rejected:

Luke 9:5 And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

Matthew 10: 5These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: 6But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. 8Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. 9Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, 10Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. 11And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. 12And when ye come into an house, salute it. 13And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. 15Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. (emphasis mine)

Even though Paul had not been a part of the original 12, he knew what Jesus had told them to do about the Jews who would reject Him.

7And he departed thence, and entered into a certain *man's* house, named Justus, *one* that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

We know that Paul had been staying with Pricilla and Aquila. At the event in vs 6, Paul goes a short distance away and enters Justus's home which is attached to or adjacent to the synagogue. Justus is a devout Jew and undoubtedly welcomed Paul in as a guest.

8And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

The impact of the Good News was great in some of those in high positions of the local synagogue. Again, we see that these household leaders bring their entire family and employees into hearing the Good News and all are saved and baptized. Praised God His Word does not return void and salvation spread throughout Corinth.

9Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 11And he continued

there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Paul may have experienced what we all do and that is a hesitancy to teach God's Word in boldness with one caveat "In Love". It is a human anticipation of rejection of something that we hold as the most precious thing in our lives; Jesus Christ. And to have someone reject what we say is often taken personally as a rejection of us. God tells Paul to hold tight, do that which God has sent him to do and God would protect him. That assurance is only given if we are sharing God's Word in Love, covered in Mercy and Grace. How many times did each of us reject the message over our lifetime. If the person delivering the Good News, did it in LOVE, we may have rejected the message but usually not the person.

However, if the Good News is given as a mandate from us that we are the deliverer of the Word and therefore you must accept it then we are not doing it in LOVE but out of arrogance. God forbid we would do that, and don't count on protection from God if we are outside His Will in the delivery of His Word.

Paul Before Gallio

12And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,

Under Roman rule there were two types of provinces; Imperial provinces; under King Caesar direct rule and Senatorial provinces: under the Roman Senate rule. Senatorial Provinces which Achaia was under was governed by a senate appointed proconsul. In this case by a man last named Gallio.

Those Jews offended by Paul's claim of Jesus being King, God and Messiah brought their grievance to the local judgement seat of Gallio. The emphasis being that Paul had encouraged the Jews to worship God contrary to Roman Law.

13Saying, This *fellow* persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. 14And when Paul was now about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: 15But if it be a question of words and names, and *of* your law, look ye *to it*; for I will be no judge of such *matters*.

In short Gallio was not interested in getting involved for Rome in a fight over names and words.

Wish we had that kind of wisdom today, but today that seems what matters most is using the right word or even pronoun.

Gallio goes on to say that if the matter involved some criminal behavior he would address it, but it only involved words and the Jewish Law which he was not involved in.

16And he drave them from the judgment seat.

In today's legal vernacular the judge heard the preliminary case and overruled the affiant, dismissing the case with prejudice.

17Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

The Greeks, meaning the gentiles after seeing what the Jewish leadership had tried to do to Paul, took Sosthenes the chief ruler of the synagogue and beat him right in front of the judge! The judge's response; lunch time.

Paul Returns to Antioch

18And Paul *after this* tarried *there* yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn *his* head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

Quite a lot in this verse. Paul stays put doing as directed by the Holy Spirit as we had earlier seen. Most commentators agree that this additional stay was calculated in months not days. It was toward the end of this stay that Paul wrote his second letter 2nd Thessalonians to the church in Thessalonica.

A bit of a rabbit trail but an important one. It appears that when Silas and Timotheus had come to Paul in Athens at the beginning of Acts 18, they brought news of Thessalonica and concerns

from them about life after death and the return of Jesus. Some other teachers had misled those in Thessalonica after Paul left and told them that Jesus had already returned. Those of the Thessalonian church were afraid they had missed the Lord's return so Paul pens 1 Thessalonians as we call it. He encourages them in love and Love of one another. Paul in chapter 4 responds to their concern and gives assurance even about what we call Rapture.

*1 Thessalonians 4: [13](#)But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. [14](#)For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. [15](#)For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. [16](#)For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: [17](#)Then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:** and so shall we ever be with the Lord. [18](#)Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (emphasis mine)*

Vs 17 the words “caught up” according to Strong’s Concordance

Transliteration: harpazó

Phonetic Spelling: (har-pad'-zo)

Definition: to seize, catch up, snatch away

Usage: I seize, snatch, obtain by robbery.

The Latin word for caught up or snatched away is “rapio” or “raptura” where we get our English word Rapture; a catching away.

From bible.org

“Elsewhere it is used to describe how the Spirit caught up Philip near Gaza and brought him to Caesarea ([Acts 8:39](#)) and to describe Paul’s experience of being caught up into the third heaven ([2 Cor. 12:2-4](#)). Thus there can be no doubt that the word is used in [1 Thessalonians 4:17](#) to indicate the actual removal of people from earth to heaven.”

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Back to our vs 18 to finish unpacking it.

[18](#)And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

Paul leaves Corinth to Syria and Priscilla and Aquila go with him. Paul had shaved his head in a vow. In Jewish Law a vow of the Nazirite to God had to be culminated in the Temple so their journey would eventually get Paul to the Temple for Pentecost and Paul could complete his vow there if it were a vow of the Nazirite. We are not told any more about the vow.

Most scholars do not believe it was a Nazarite vow that Paul took. They lean more to a vow of thanksgiving for his delivery in Athens

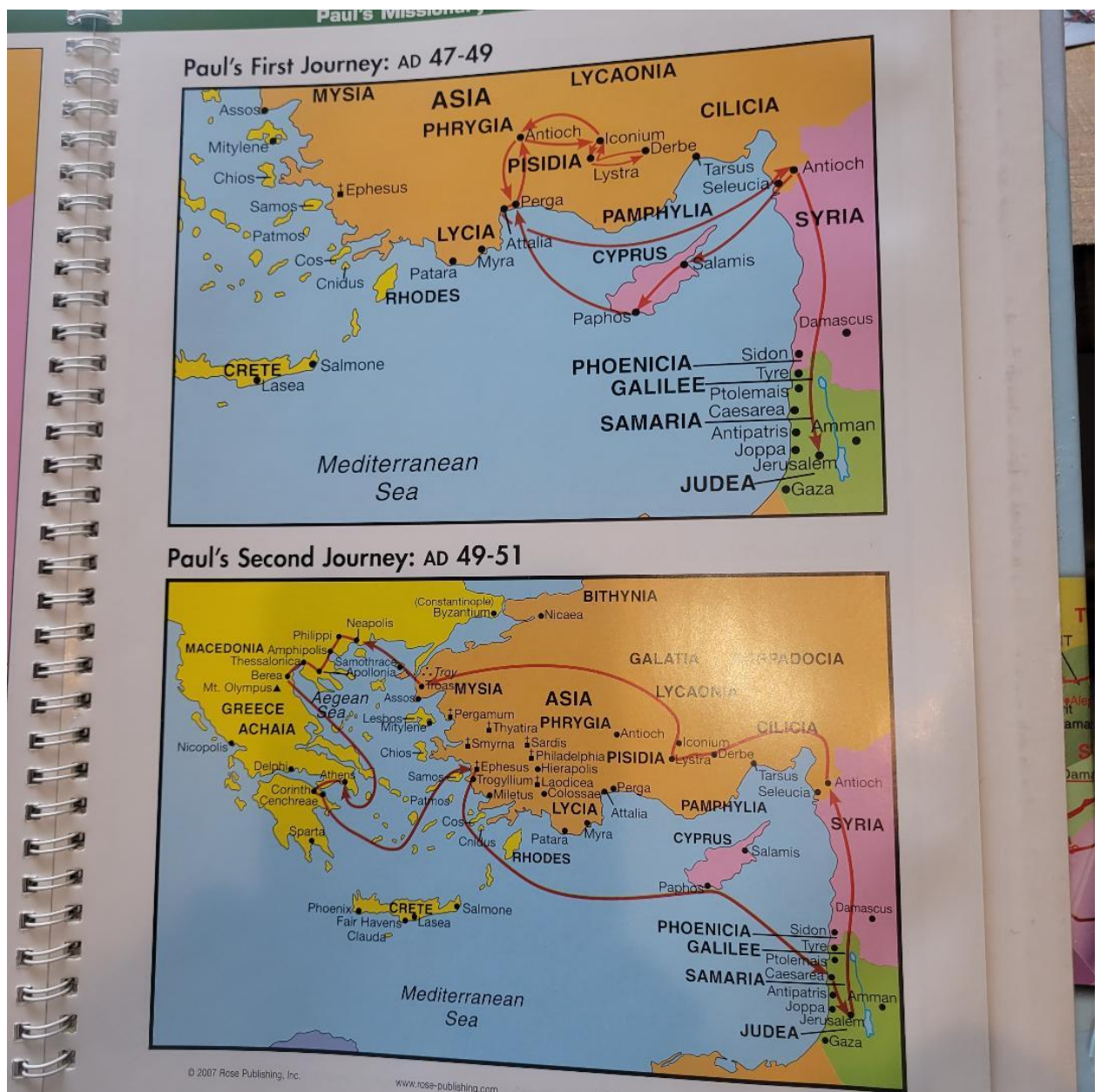
and Corinth. Paul still wanted to go to Jerusalem to bring alms he had collected for the Jerusalem church and to share all that God had done.

Numbers 6:18 And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.

19And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

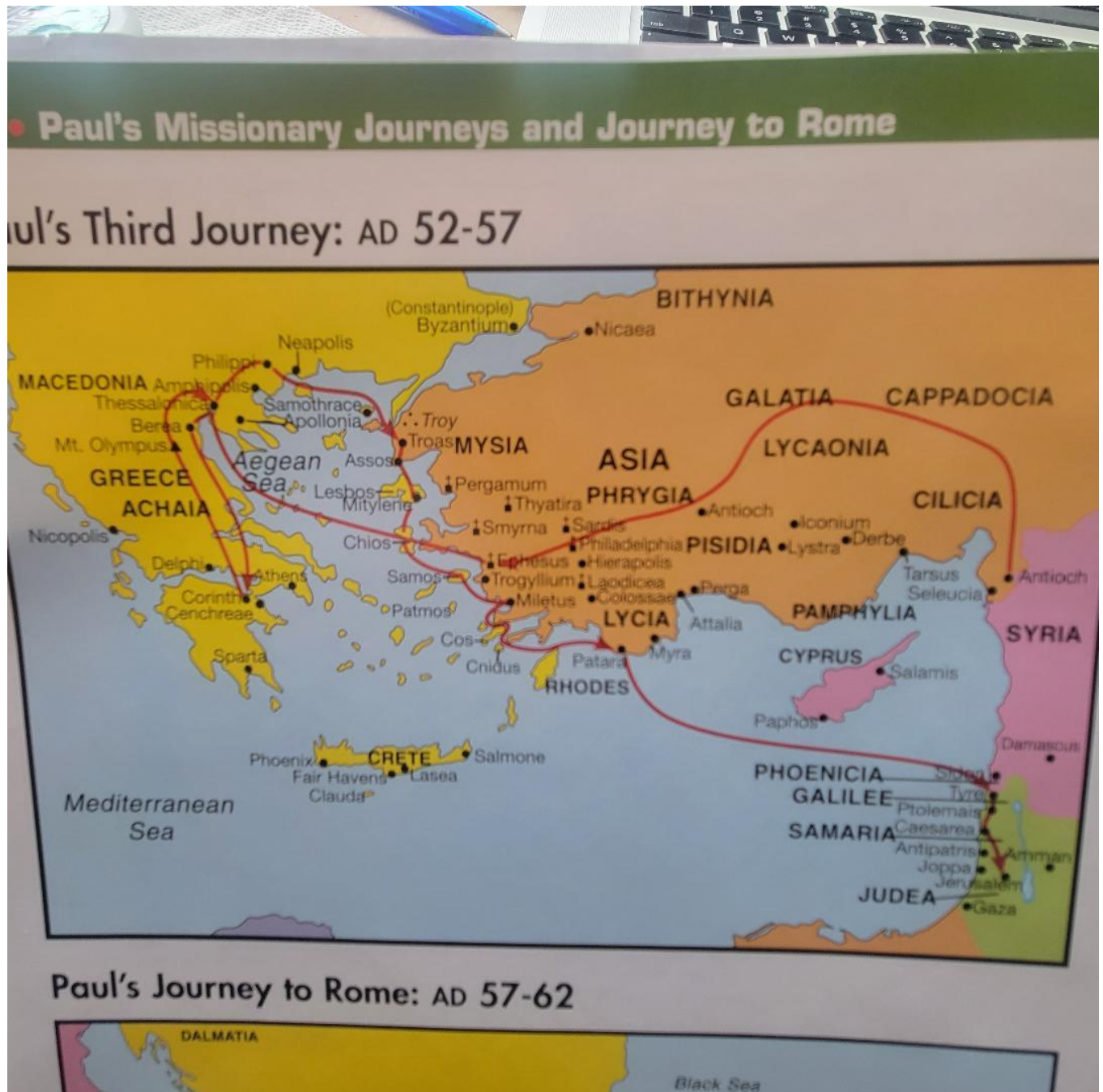
The journey from Corinth to Ephesus was across the Aegean Sea and took from 10 to 15 days. Upon arrival, Paul left Aquila and Priscilla and went to the nearest synagogue to engage them in discussions of God.

20When they desired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; 21But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus. 22And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.



According to the map embedded here Paul boarded a ship in Corinth in Greece, sailed to Ephesus in today's Turkey, then onto Caesarea in Israel, walked up to Jerusalem and then left north

bound for Antioch. The trip to Antioch will begin Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey.



([Acts 13:1-3](#); [Acts 15:36-41](#))

23And after he had spent some time *there*, he departed, and went over *all* the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

After leaving Jerusalem at the likely Feast of Pentecost, Paul goes north to Antioch and spends some time there, before leaving on foot for the country of Galatia and points west.

24And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

Alexandria is in Egypt, so the distance to Ephesus is quite some distance. There was a large population of Jews in Alexandria. About 72 Jewish Scholars whether local or traveled from Jerusalem at the direction of the Pharaoh Ptolemy II Philadelphus in about 250 BC translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek as the Hebrew language was fading away. There is a lot of legend tied to this event but the manuscript that came out of the effort is called the Septuagint meaning (70). It is identified as such with Roman numerals LXX. So, if you see an abbreviation in your Bible of LXX it is saying that the Septuagint was used in that part of the translation carried out in Alexandria Egypt.

25This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently

the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

Some believe Apollos was highly educated in the Hebrew Bible and basic Christianity, others believe this verse means that he was very eloquent in his speech. In either case it is found that he had missed an important point in the Resurrection of Christ relating to being baptized into Him. Johns' baptism was with water as is even today the dominate notion. However:::

Matthew 3:11 [11](#)I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

Paul clears this up in Acts 19:

Acts 19: [1](#)And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, [2](#)He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. [3](#)And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. [4](#)Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should 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 his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. [7](#)And all the men were about twelve.

We come again to the notion that in order to be baptized in the Holy Spirit one must then speak in tongs, prophecy etc. Those

occurrences were specific to this early church growth. That is not to say that people do not speak in tongs when given utterance by the Holy Spirit today. However, God gives clear direction on how and when that is to be employed, it is definitely not intended to make others who do not speak in tongs to feel inferior. Just like any other gift of the Spirit. Those gifts lead us to Love, Mercy and Grace.

God through Paul when he addressed the issue of gifts of the Holy Spirit puts great clarity in what is important in God's Kingdom. The KJV uses the word "charity" instead of Love. But if you do a word study the Greek translates this word in Strong's Concordance like this:

Transliteration: *agapé*

Phonetic Spelling: *(ag-ah'-pay)*

Definition: *love, goodwill*

1 Corinthians 3: [8](#)Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. [9](#)For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. [10](#)But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. [11](#)When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. [12](#)For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. [13](#)And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Entire religions have been based on the misunderstanding of the Gifts of the Spirit. The very presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Believers is a sign from God of the Covenant that He presented and we as Believers cling to. Jesus Himself told us, the Believers, that if He did not go then the Paraclete the Comforter would not come. This Paraclete/Comforter is the Holy Spirit Jesus spoke of. The Holy Spirit does not bring division but unity within the Believers in the Big C Church. One of our jobs as Believers is to be obedient to Jesus.

John 14: [15](#)If ye love me, keep my commandments.

[16](#)And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; [17](#)Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

[18](#)I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. [19](#)Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. [20](#)At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

[21](#)He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. [22](#)Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? [23](#)Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. [24](#)He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

25These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. 26But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The presence of the Holy Spirit was evident in Paul and the other Apostles and new Believers as they boldly shared the Good News of Jesus Christ.

26And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

Once Apollos understood the true meaning of Baptism after the Resurrection of Christ he was filled with the Holy Spirit and taught in fullness of Truth on that issue.

27And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: 28For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

The brotherhood of Believers was strong and when someone came with a letter of recommendation they were quickly taken in by other Believers.

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