

Please remember that the archives of our IHOP studies can be used as a Bible Commentary. The archives are available at [www.triumc.org/web1/biblestudy](http://www.triumc.org/web1/biblestudy).  
Peace. Pastor Bill

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
IHOP BIBLE STUDY

# 16 Acts 18: 23 – 21: 16, “Paul’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey to Macedonia” – with commentary

Acts 18: 23, “Paul’s meets Apollos;” Acts 19: 1 – 22, “Paul in Ephesus;” Acts 19: 23 41, “The Riot in Ephesus;” Acts 20: 1 – 6, “through Macedonia and Greece;” Acts 20 7 – 12, “Eutychus Raised From the Dead at Troas;” Acts 20: 13 – 38, “Paul’s Farewell to the Ephesian Elders;” Acts 21: 1 – 16, “On to Jerusalem.”

The purpose of the Book of Acts is to record the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Vision and Ministry of Peter and Paul. **Today’s study is the 16th of 20 lessons.**

**A contextual statement:**

Interestingly, *The Interpreter’s Bible* makes the following observation. In the book of Acts, “The Lord is not returned, but in the meantime the word of God is being carried on by the church. The Gentile mission is itself the eschatological action of God.” (*The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1971. p. 730.)

This I want to affirm as our perspective. **We will study this book from the perspective of the in-breaking of the Holy Spirit.** This puts us on the cusp of a deep and foreboding spiritual hole that is eternally deep. The Holy Spirit is that intuited presence within us that urges us to “Jump.” “Jump!” To take this leap of faith means to surrender ourselves to the eternal deeps. The discovery, to which I can personally testify, is that this deep, dark, mysterious hole is the place where God lives within us. As we lose control of everything— our-selves, our relationships to neighbor and to God— then we can discover that God really does sustain us. But the experience is like falling, and it is not entirely comfortable. But it works.

According to our Study Chart we are studying “Paul’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey to Macedonia,” (18: 22 to 21: 16). We’ll review this section in one study.

**Read the assignment in one reading.**

I. **Acts 18: 23, “Paul’s meets Apollos”**

A. **Vs. 24ff, Research who Apollos is and the significance of the “baptism of John.”**

(Reference: Fair use! [BELIEVE1@mb-soft.com](mailto:BELIEVE1@mb-soft.com))

**Saint John's Baptism** was not Christian baptism, nor was that which was practiced by the disciples previous to our Lord's crucifixion. Till then the New Testament economy did not exist. John's baptism bound its subjects to repentance, and not to the faith of Christ. It was not administered in the name of the Trinity, and those whom John baptized were rebaptized by Paul (Acts 18:24; 19:7).

## **Apollos**

(From *Easton's Bible Dictionary*)

Apollos: a Jew "born at Alexandria," a man well versed in the Scriptures and eloquent ([Acts 18:24](#); RSV, "learned"). He came to Ephesus (about A.D. 49), where he spoke "boldly" in the synagogue ([18:26](#)), although he did not know as yet that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. Aquila and Priscilla instructed him more perfectly in "the way of God", i.e., in the knowledge of Christ. He then proceeded to Corinth, where he met Paul ([Acts 18:27](#); [19:1](#)). He was there very useful in watering the good seed Paul had sown ([1 Corinthians 1:12](#)), and in gaining many to Christ. His disciples were much attached to him ([1 Corinthians 3:4-7,22](#)). He was with Paul at Ephesus when he wrote the First Epistle to the Corinthians; and Paul makes kindly reference to him in his letter to ([Titus 3:13](#)). Some have supposed, although without sufficient ground, that he was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

**B. Vs. 25, If you were going to instruct people in "the way of the Lord," what would be your curriculum?**

**WS:**

1. God as Perfect At-One-Ment
2. God as the Guarantor
3. The Will of God as: (from Whitehead - "The Will of God. 1941)  
Intentional  
Circumstantial  
Ultimate

**II. Acts 19: 1 – 22, "Paul in Ephesus"**

**A. Vs. 6, 7, Explain the difference between the Baptism of John and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.**

**WS:** Concerning the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, please read the following:

[I Corinthians 12:13](#). [The Corinthian](#) church was splitting into factions over the issue of [spiritual gifts](#). Paul explains, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit" ([I Corinthians 12:13](#)). We may use whatever words we want to describe our experiences with God. But it is most accurate to say that the Bible uses "baptism of the Spirit" to refer to one of the wonderful things that God does for us the instant we trust Christ and enter His family! (I've heavily edited this document: [Copyright © 1996, Eden Communications](#), All Rights Reserved - except as noted on attached ["Usage and Copyright"](#))

**B. Vs. 11, 12, What is going on in this section concerning *salvation by rags*?**

(Reference: *Gateway Bible Commentary*) The application of *handkerchiefs* (*soudaria*, sweatbands for the head; compare Jn 11:44; 20:7) and *aprons* (better "belts"--*simikinthia*, a loanword from the Latin *semicinctium*; Martial Works 14.153; Petronius Works 94.8; Leary 1990), carried away from contact with Paul's skin during his leatherworking, bring healing and release from evil spirits (compare Lk 8:43-48; Acts 5:15).

The skeptic and the mimic will immediately draw the wrong conclusions about these happenings: either they did not occur, or they should be copied. Neither response is the intention of Luke or the rest of biblical teaching (Stott 1990:306). Paul, by his own testimony, was a miracleworker; this was part of his credentials as an apostle (Rom 15:19; 2 Cor 12:12; Gal 3:5). These healings did occur, but to imitate them--as some media evangelists have been wont to do with "prayer cloths" or other "prayed-over" trinkets sent through the mail--is to reduce miracle to magic, or impersonal manipulation (contrast Lk 8:43-48). **Following James's instructions is still the best way to call on the Lord for healing (Jas 5:14-15—My emphasis.)**

**C. Vs. 13 – 20, What is going on here, and how is this attributed to "evil."**

(Reference: *Gateway Bible Commentary*) So it is not surprising to find *seven sons of Sceva*, a Jewish chief priest, acting as exorcists. Since the high priest was the only one permitted to utter the "unpronounceable name of God" and enter his presence in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, it makes sense that these brothers would use that title as part of their "hype" (*m. Yoma* 3:8; 5:1; 6:2; compare Mastin 1976).

The sons' syncretistic appropriation follows the time-honored practice of piling name upon powerful name so as to create incantations strong enough to require spirits to do one's bidding. One such conjuration goes "I conjure you by the god of the Hebrews/Jesus, IABA IAE ABRAOTH AIA THOTH ELE ELO . . ." (Betz 1986:96). *The name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches* is these men's newest and most potent "power name" (compare Eph 1:21).

As the evil spirit responds to their attempted exorcism, the power encounter is transformed into demonic manhandling. Neither the exalted Lord Jesus nor Paul is directly involved. Yet the results reveal the unquestioned superiority of *Jesus*,

*whom Paul preaches.* The demon displays spiritual insight: he knows both Jesus and Paul (compare Lk 4:34, 41; 8:28), but he does not recognize the magicians.

From the mouth of a demon we learn the valuable lesson that Jesus will not allow his name to be reduced to a magical formula (Ex 20:7). Only those with a personal relationship with Christ and who invoke his name in humble faith are in the correct position to see God act to drive out demons.

**III. Acts 19: 23 41, “The Riot in Ephesus”**

**A. This next always surprises me with its emphasis on commercialism. What do you think?**

**WS:** The IHOPers didn't get around to discussing this question.

**IV. Acts 20: 1 – 6, “through Macedonia and Greece”**

**A. This is Paul's travelogue for your information only.**

**V. Acts 20 7 – 12, “Eutychus Raised From the Dead at Troas;”**

**A. Enjoy this brief interlude. This is one of most humorous episodes in the New Testament, at least for the reader.**

**VI. Acts 20: 13 – 38, “Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders”**

**A. Vs. 22, What is the experience of being “compelled by the Spirit?”**

**WS:** In Gut Trip Analysis, the “Spirit” is associated with our personal freedom. As humans we are called to freedom in Christ which translates, we are free to be obedient to selfless service; that is, we are free to choose to be obedient or disobedient. However, when we choose to be obedient to God, this makes God smile and when God smiles, we smile too.

This is true because Christians have surrendered their entire lives to live in Perfect At-One-Ment; this is all there is for us. My axiom for this is, “When you want nothing then you have everything.” Another way to look at this is, “When we want Perfect At-One-Ment we have everything.”

To be compelled by the Spirit is to experience entire freedom through our dedicated living for the purposes of God.

One IHOPer noted that the word compelled reminds him that people where blinders, or have tunnel vision, or that that will on thing to be done in their life with their life.

**B, Vss. 23, This is Paul's manifesto, and it can be yours as well. Reflect on what is the race to which you've been called and what will it require of you to finish the task?**

**WS:** The race to which I've been called is to translate our Old Christian Code words from Head Trip Analysis to Gut Trip Analysis. To do this job, I will find every venue possible to demonstrate the power of experience over knowledge. As my time gets shorter, there is a bigger reason to be dedicated to his task.

**C. Vss. 28 – 31, From your experience, who are the “shepherds” and who are the “wolves” in today’s world.**

**WS:** The “shepherds” are those who are awake to our central purpose of total surrender and commitment to God. The “wolves” are those who practice a Civil Religion, in which the trinity is Mammon (Greed), Money (riches), and Moloch (the sacrifice of our young on the altars of Mammon.)

**D. Vss. 32 – 35, read this section carefully! How are you committed to God and to the word of his grace? How does this “build you up,” and what is the “inheritance” you are given?**

**WS:** The term “grace” is experienced as our awakening to our spiritual resources found on our inner spiritual altars. It is there spiritual resources (peace, joy, yes-saying, sacrificial giving, etc.) that help us practice living in At-One-Ment with our neighbors, inner-self, and finally Perfect At-One-ment itself. This is the experience of being “built up.” Our “inheritance” is the gift of our awakening.

**E. Vs. 32b, What does it mean to be “sanctified?”**

**WS:** To be “sanctified” is to be spiritually fully awake. (Justification is the gift of being awakened by someone or on some occasion in which we find a new balance between our human/humane existence and our spiritual awakening.

**F. Vs. 35, Read this verse carefully. It ends with a very common expression frequently associated with the offering. Do you think this is what Paul had in mind? Why or why not?**

**WS:** For me, the implication is not on money or giving of financial resources, it is on the dedication (or surrender) of our entire lives to God.

**VII. Acts 21: 1 – 16, “On to Jerusalem.”**

**A. This section concerns the prophecy of Agabus concerning Paul’s death. Speculate on Paul’s response reported in vss. 12 – 14. How is this doing “the Lord’s will?”**

**WS:** “I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” Now, read this again in the context of verse 20: 22, that speaks of our entire surrender to God as the context of our entire freedom. It is important to remember that Christians in their baptism already have died to this world. So, how can our second death have meaning for us? We are already dead people walking?

**Alright folks, talk to me!**