

## **THE BOOK OF ACTS**

### **CHAPTER 19**

#### **THE CHALLENGE OF CHAPTER NINETEEN**

Paul never preaches against the worship of the goddess Diana. Instead, he preaches the Word of God, and the Word prevails. So many lives are transformed, businesses which previously had been very prosperous begin to suffer. As long as we are in the world, there will always be opposition to the effects of the gospel. In spite of the opposition, Paul never backs down from the purity and power of the gospel message.

Once again, Paul serves as an example to us. We never need to water down the message of God's Word simply because the world is demanding a different, "more acceptable" message. We must continue to speak the truth by the direction of the Holy Spirit because only the truth sets people free.

#### **THE INFILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EPHESUS (1-7)**

When Paul arrives in Ephesus, he finds disciples who have not yet heard of the Holy Spirit but have been baptized through the ministry of John the Baptist. Paul instructs them and then baptizes them in the name of Jesus Christ, and all are filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues when Paul lays hands on them. After this, Paul enters the synagogue and boldly shares the gospel for three months. When Paul's listeners become hardened against the gospel message, Paul departs and spends two years teaching in the school of Tyrannus.

#### **PAUL FINDS DISCIPLES IGNORANT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Act 19:1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples

The disciples Paul meets will play a major role in the revival in Ephesus. Paul has been gone for a number of months and is now refreshed in his soul and body. He is now ready to give himself completely to the revival that will occur in this key city of Asia Minor. The men he meets are disciples who are born again and will become filled with the Holy Spirit. This revival will be one of the supernatural. Great signs and wonders will accompany the teaching of the Word of God.

Act 19:2 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."

The Holy Spirit can be received at the point of the new birth. Paul asks the believers he met if this has happened to them. Paul must have recognized a deficiency in their Christian lives much the same way Aquila and Priscilla recognized a spiritual deficiency in the life of Apollos. These twelve men had been born again only and not instructed in the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Act 19:3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism."

These men had been born again under the ministry of Apollos when he remained in Ephesus for a brief time (18:25).

Act 19:4 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."

The ministry of John the Baptist brought people to the new birth and water baptism (Matthew 3: 1-3, 11). However, the infilling of the Holy Spirit is their doorway into the church age, the dispensation of grace. They will learn, as did Apollos, of the specialized dispensation we live in today.

Act 19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Although they have already been water baptized, they do not understand its New Testament significance. So Paul has them baptized again, this time in the name of Jesus. Now they can apply the act of baptism to the new birth.

Act 19:6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

These men speak with tongues and then move into one of the utterances gifts: prophecy. This also occurs in the house of Cornelius in Acts 10: 46. In both cases, the people speak with tongues before they move into the gift of the Holy Spirit. Speaking with tongues is the manifestation of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

**19:6 Water Baptism and Holy Spirit Baptism, HOLY SPIRIT FULLNESS.** As in Samaria with Peter and John, here Paul showed the same concern over those in Ephesus. Drawing the distinction between water baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit, he "laid hands on them." When "the Holy Spirit came upon them," similar results attended their experience, just as other miracle signs in Acts. Most significantly, just as in Jerusalem, before long the entire city was awakened to the message of Jesus and the Resurrection (verse 10). This is the greatest sign of Holy Spirit fullness: he enables believers in a penetrating witness that impacts cultures alien to God's Word of Truth (verse 20).

Act 19:7 Now the men were about twelve in all.

This Ephesian revival begins with a core of 12 men.

## **THE REVIVAL IN EPHESUS (8-22)**

God begins to work special miracles through Paul's hands, and handkerchiefs and aprons that had been lain on Paul's body, bring healing and deliverance on those on whom the cloths are placed.

In an attempt to mimic Paul, Jewish exorcists, specifically the seven sons of Sceva, use the name of Jesus to cast an evil spirit out of a man. To their great surprise, the demon speaks and then leaps on them, leaving the seven sons wounded and naked. As a result of this incident, fear falls on the people. Many come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and many bring their books about magic to be burned. The Word continues to grow and prevail.

Act 19:8 And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.

The time is now right. Paul had told the new converts in Ephesus that he would return if it was the will of God (18: 19-21). This will of God is “yes,” and Paul does return with a confidence he did not possess the first time. His words are more anointed and his audience more receptive. Paul has never shared the gospel in any synagogue for a three-month period of time. This is evidence of the degree of success he is having among the Jews.

Act 19:9 But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

Not everyone receives Paul’s message. Some hardened their hearts the more they hear. Not only do some not receive, they set themselves in opposition to the Word. David calls this type of person a “scorner” in Psalm 1:1. Paul went to the Jews first but left them when they rejected the message. He now sets his sights on the Gentiles.

The School of Tyrannus is a medical school. The medical students learn in the mornings, and the building is empty during the day. Paul uses this building during the afternoons and evenings. For two years, this will be one of Paul’s most successful bases of operation.

Act 19:10 And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

The two-year revival spreads throughout the Roman province of Asia. This area includes six other cities which later establish churches. Together these make up the seven churches of Asia found in the first three books of Revelation. All seven churches began from the Ephesian revival. The revival began with the Word of God. Both Jews and Greeks hear the Word. Paul speaks and God accompanies the Word with signs following (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4).

## **MIRACLES THROUGH PAUL’S HANDS**

Act 19:11 Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul,

Again, these miracles are performed in response to the Word of God being preached. This revival begins with the Word. Signs and wonders follow the Word. The revival ends with the Word increasing (verse 20). These miracles, signs, and wonders are not the “usual” miracles. They are exceptional and out of the ordinary.

Special miracles only occurred once in Paul's ministry. The Holy Spirit can minister in a unique way from time to time, but it will be rare. The idea of a "special anointing" for only one area is not true. The anointing will break every yoke of bondage. Jesus declared the Spirit of the Lord was upon him (Luke 4:18) and the end result was the preaching of the gospel to the poor, the recovery of sight to the blind, healing of the brokenhearted, and setting at liberty those who were bruised. One anointing covers all of these needs.

Like Jesus, God's power worked through the hands of Paul. He laid hands on sick people and special miracles occurred. Prayer cloths were taken to the sick and demon possessed, and they were delivered.

Act 19:12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.

The handkerchiefs and aprons carry God's anointing to both heal and deliver (Mark 5:30; Luke 6:19). The handkerchiefs come from the women who attend the meetings during the day. The aprons are work aprons the men wore to their jobs. Most of the employment available in the city is for craftsmen who make statues of Diana (verse 24). These men come to the meetings in the evening to join their wives. When the anointing of God moves strongly in the meeting, handkerchiefs and aprons are taken from Paul's body and delivered to the sick and demon possessed in the city. Great healings and deliverance take place. The same anointing that delivers people from sickness also delivers people from demons.

A greater anointing is not necessary for people to be delivered from demons than for healing. The smaller handkerchiefs are not exclusively for healing and the larger aprons exclusively for deliverance from demons. It is not necessary to use a larger piece of cloth for a person to be delivered from a demon; the anointing breaks the yoke.

## **SEVEN SONS OF SCEVA**

Act 19:13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches."

Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists (exorkistes: enchanters), took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure (horchizo: put on oath, make swear) you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

These "vagabonds" are traveling Jews who cast devils out for money. They have become quite rich by temporarily ridding people of demons. These men are revered in the city and thought to be holy men. People do not know they are working in league with Satan himself.

The word for exorcist means "one who casts out devils by magic formulas and incantations." These men virtually have a monopoly on their trade until Paul comes to town with real power over demons. Apparently, the men attend one of Paul's meetings and notice he uses the name

of “Jesus” over each person. They decided to add the name of Jesus to their formula in an attempt to get their business back. In the past, when these men cast out devils, the results were never permanent. These men know Paul has the greater power and are trying to duplicate or increase it.

Act 19:14 Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.

Sceva is one of the twenty-four ruling priests in the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem. This passage refers to his seven sons who are using their family name and religious affiliation to bring in money. Luke has seen and met Sceva and remembers the address Jesus had given him (Luke 11:14-20). This verse reveals the demonic control that can be attached to religion. Even those practicing the Jewish religion and quoting Old Testament Scriptures, including the chief priests, do not believe in Jesus Christ and open themselves up to demonic activity.

Act 19:15 And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"

The seven sons do not expect this response. They have never experienced a demon speaking to them, especially in an insulting way. The demon knew Jesus and Paul because both were new creations. When Paul was born again, he instantly became a citizen of God’s kingdom and was no longer part of Satan’s kingdom. Every demon knew it.

What is most amazing about this verse is the demon did not know or recognize the seven sons of Sceva, and they worked for the demon! Satan does not know his own, but he does know God’s. The only way to be known in the kingdom of Satan is to become born again. You are then on Satan’s hate-list and God’s love-list (the Book of Life). God knows His own but does not know Satan’s. One day, the seven sons of Sceva will stand before the Lord in judgment and ask “Didn’t we cast out devils in your name?” Jesus will answer them “Depart ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you” (Matthew 7:22).

Act 19:16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed (ischuo: be of strength) against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

This is the supernatural power of one demon. One man leaped on seven. One man overcame the strength of seven. One man prevailed against seven and tore their clothes off before they could reach the front door of the house.

## **REVERENCE FOR THE LORD JESUS INCREASES**

Act 19:17 This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

The sons of Sceva are exposed, and now everyone knows they are working for Satan himself. Great reverence for the true God falls on the entire city and the name of Jesus is magnified. Many unsaved people and backslidden Christians come to the Lord. The ripples of this event spread throughout Asia.

Act 19:18 And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds.

Believers who are out of fellowship with the Lord come and repent of their fear and apathy toward the things of God. They also begin to tell of their involvement with witchcraft and sorcery.

Act 19:19 Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver.

These books taught witchcraft, demon worship, seances and occult operations. This burning is a monument to their renewed life. There were no printing presses then, so these were hand written on scrolls.

Act 19:20 So the **word** of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

So (houto kata: thus, by the same standard) mightily (kratos: power, strength) grew the word of God and prevailed (ischuo: gained strength).

The Word of God began far behind the power and might of Diana and the religion of Ephesus. But during a three-year period of time, the Word continues to grow until it overcomes and prevails. Here Luke is making an analogy to the demon who overcame odds seven times worse than himself. He first jumped on the seven, overcame them, and prevailed. The Word of God also began against incredible odds, but over a period of time becomes dominant in Asia. Because of the power accompanying the signs and wonders, the Word spreads. The purpose of signs and wonders is to confirm the Word.

**19:20 word, *logos*** (log-oss); A transmission of thought, communication, a word of explanation, an utterance, discourse, divine revelation, talk, statement, instruction, and oracle, divine promise, divine doctrine, divine declaration. Jesus is the living *logos* (4:12); and the Holy Spirit utters the spoken *logos* (1 Corinthians 2:13).

## **PAUL PURPOSES TO GO TO JERUSALEM**

Act 19:21 When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."

Paul's ministry does not end in Ephesus. In chapter 20, we see he returns after a few months to admonish the pastors of the churches in this city. What has been fulfilled are the signs and

wonders. These all have done their job by promoting the Word to the place of overcoming the opposition of religion, demons, and Satan.

Although the miracles, signs, and wonders have been fulfilled, they are not completely over. Many more miracles and signs are performed in the days to come, but they are being accomplished by the individual saints in the churches. God's best is for believers to perform the miracles, not just the evangelist or prophet.

God's best is for the people to receive their healings by standing on the Word for themselves. This is taught by the local churches who instruct the people in the Word.

Paul knows his own time is coming to an end, and it will be necessary for him to leave for a time. He now purposes by the Holy Spirit to go to Jerusalem and then to Rome. It will be God's will for him to go to Rome but not to Jerusalem. This will sidetrack Paul for over five years as he will be thrown in jail in Caesarea and Rome before he is released. God will confirm to Paul that Rome is in His will (23:11) as will an angel of the Lord (27:23-24). God will also try to warn Paul that going to Jerusalem is not in His will (21: 3-4, 8-13).

Act 19:22 So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.

So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered (diakoneo: serve, wait upon) unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia (Ephesus) for a season.

Erastus is a Corinthian believer. He came to investigate the Corinthian situation and report back to Paul, resulting in the letters sent to Corinth. Romans 16:23 records Erastus as being a Chamberlain, a member of the city council in Corinth. Paul will stay in Ephesus for a short time to bring a brief period of comfort to the saints who will be experiencing opposition and tribulation for the sake of the gospel.

## **A RIOT IN EPHESUS (23-41)**

A silversmith named Demetrius is unhappy about how all of the conversions are affecting his business, which is predominantly comprised of making silver shrines for Diana. He calls together other workers and businesses that have been adversely affected by the conversions. Demetrius stirs them up until the entire city is filled with confusion and wrath against Paul and his followers. Paul wants to quiet the crowd, but the disciples will not allow him to. Alexander, a Jewish lawyer, is pushed forward by the crowd to quiet them, but when they realize he is a Jew, they loudly cry out to their goddess Diana. The mayor of the city finally silences the mob, pointing out that Paul and his disciples have done nothing unlawful and warns that if the crowd takes the law into their own hands, they will be guilty of violating the law.

## **DEMETRIUS STIRS UNREST**

**Act 19:23** And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way.

During this “same time,” the Word is increasing, but the opposition of Satan is also increasing (Mark 4:17). The Word is always attacked in the life of a believer, a church, or a city.

**Act 19:24** For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen.

Demetrius is the head of the crafts union in Ephesus. This is a huge organization comprised of miners, craftsmen, distributors, wholesalers, and retailers who handle the statues.

**Act 19:25** He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade.

A massive union meeting is called, and Demetrius tells them their jobs, income, homes, and families are in jeopardy because of Paul's gospel. When a business of this size is in trouble, many smaller businesses whose existences depend on it are also jeopardized. When it is announced that sales are way off and layoffs and firings will occur, a riot breaks out, and Paul will be blamed.

**Act 19:26** Moreover you see and hear that not only At Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands.

Paul is well-known throughout all of Asia. To many, he has brought the message of salvation. To others, he is one who has broken the back of a thriving business which employs tens of thousands of people. To them, Paul is responsible for an economic downturn in the city because his teaching has turned many people away from idolatry and Diana worship to Jesus Christ. Instead of seeing this as a blessing to many people who have been in religious bondage, they take it personally because their income is threatened. Paul has faced this previously with the owners of the girl possessed by a spirit of divination (16:19).

**Act 19:27** So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship."

“We are just the ‘little guy’ to this Paul. He is out to destroy our entire religion! He is not only after Ephesus but the whole world!”

## **THE THREE ELEMENTS OF DIANA WORSHIP**

### 1. The Priesthood



These men are eunuchs. They are castrated to keep them from participating in the worship of Diana. They can keep their minds focused on the stories and tell of the exploits of Jupiter, Bacchus, and other gods.

## 2. The Virgins

These girls handle the rituals of the temple. The forms of worship outside sex are conducted by the virgins.

## 3. The Dancers

These women dance to arouse the men and at the end of their dance, give themselves to the nearest man for sex.

### **PEOPLE FILLED WITH WRATH AND CONFUSION**

Act 19:28 Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

This anger and emotion will spread from these few men into the crowds in the street. Demetrius knows exactly what he is doing. He will work the people up into a senseless rage so Paul is either killed or driven out of the city.

Act 19:29 So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions.

Apparently, Demetrius leads the crowd to the house of Aquila and Priscilla where Paul is staying. They protect Paul and will not allow the crowd to have him (Romans 16:2-3). Instead, the crowd grabs two from Paul's team to flush him out, and it almost works. Paul makes mention of fighting with "beasts at Ephesus" (1 Corinthians 15: 32), and this may be what he was referring to.

Gaius is mentioned in Romans 16:23 and 1 Corinthians 1:14. Aristarchus is mentioned in several places (Acts 20:4; 27:2; Colossians 4:10; Philemon 1:24). When they take the two men into the amphitheater, the mob has reached fever pitch. A mob always has an organizer behind it who uses the mob as a weapon. The people are always the pawns. They react quickly and then forget why they are rioting (verse 32).

### **PAUL DESIRES AN AUDIENCE WITH THE MOB**

Act 19:30 And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him.

Paul wants to speak to the crowd, but the disciples see the frenzy and know Paul would be killed before he could speak.

Act 19:31 Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater.

Paul has friends in high places. These are born again, Spirit-filled aristocrats who are powerful in the government of Ephesus. They have been saved under Paul's ministry and are protecting him from the mob. They also know this is not a matter for Paul but for the authorities.

Act 19:32 Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together.

Meanwhile, back at the theater, the mob has gained many followers and everyone is confused as to what is happening. They are all shouting different things because they are being controlled and ruled by their emotions. Most of them do not even know why they are there. They shout along with the rest of the mob, but do not know about Demetrius or Paul.

### **ALEXANDER FAILS TO QUIET THE CROWD**

Act 19:33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people.

Religion is always afraid of mobs but will use them if necessary. Alexander is an excellent lawyer. The Jews hope he can still the mob. He fails when the crowd recognizes he is a Jew. He had previously been a coppersmith and a brilliantly evil man. Paul warned Timothy about him (2 Timothy 4:14). Alexander tries to quiet the people with his hand, but the people cry even more loudly and longer.

Act 19:34 But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

At the moment, national pride is high and their goddess, Diana, is in question. A Jew is not who they want to hear from. A mob will often shout and use noise to cover the real issue.

### **THE TOWN CLERK SPEAKS**

Act 19:35 And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Zeus?"

And when the town clerk (mayor) had appeased (silenced) the people, he said, Ye men (noble men) of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?

The town mayor uses the issue of the law to disperse the mob. This man is the highest office in Ephesus, knows Roman law very well, and uses it. He waits for the people to shout themselves hoarse and then speaks.

He appeals to their ego in three ways:

1. He calls them noble men (anhr).
2. He reminds them of Ephesus' worldwide reputation for the worship of Diana.

3. He tells them the statue was given to them as a gift from the chief god Jupiter.

Act 19:36 Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly.

Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against (contradicted), ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

He reminds them that if they are well aware of the facts, this type of action is unnecessary and below their dignity.

Act 19:37 For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess.

The banks are in the temples. Paul and his team never ran down the false religion and evils of Ephesus. Paul only preaches Christ, and then the people change their own minds about Diana. Most ministers today run down other religions. If there was nothing to run down, they would have no message. They know nothing about the Word.

Act 19:38 Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another.

Gamaliel is advising the council to remove the pressure and opposition they have against the disciples.

Act 19:39 But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly.

In other words, "If you have any other charges against Paul and his men, bring it before a lawful assembly. You are about to take the law into your own hands and become the criminals."

Act 19:40 For we are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering."

Basically, the mayor reminds them, "Rome will call us about this and can pull our city rights. We have no legal leg to stand on."

Act 19:41 And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.