

Acts Chapter 19

- Chapter 18 leaves off with Paul briefly stopping in Ephesus, saying if the Lord willed he would return, then moving on to Jerusalem, then Antioch for a season.
 - After resting up a bit he was last seen heading back into the area of Galatia and Phrygia to strengthen the disciples in those churches that had been birthed.
 - We were introduced to Apollos, a gifted teacher and a passionate disciple who taught in Ephesus and then moved onto Achaia, the area around Corinth.
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V: 1 (Map) While Apollos is ministering in Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts or borders in Galatia and Phrygia came to Ephesus - and he'll be there for a couple of years.

- I like and appreciate the fact that God is working in more than one place at a time. I have my ups and my downs when it comes to multi-tasking, but God's got it down working effectively at all times all around the world.
- We see a little break in the normal pattern here, he came to the disciples first, then moved onto the synagogue and the Jews.

V: 2 Paul begins to sound out the disciples a little bit, asking them about their faith.

- We should as "believers" know what we believe and why we believe it.

1 Peter 3:15 "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

- Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit. He's not just asking them if they're saved, but have you matured, have you moved on to receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the giftings and empowerments that come with that.
- He might have been asking them because of what he saw, or didn't see in their lives.
- The fruit of the Spirit, Love, Joy, Peace, passion, enthusiasm, boldness, a general excitement for the Lord.
- It's OK to be questioned like that, for someone to ask what the Lord is doing in your life? Or, how's your spiritual walk?

2 Peter 1:10 “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.”

- How do we know that Paul is talking about the baptism of the Holy Spirit as opposed to the initial receiving of the Holy Spirit?
- He asks them “have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?”
- We know that when a person believes in Jesus and becomes a born again believer, at that moment the Holy Spirit comes to reside in them.

1 Corinthians 3:16 “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”

Romans 8:9, 16 “⁹But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” - “¹⁶The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”

1 John 5:10 “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”

Ephesians 1:12-13 “¹²That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. ¹³In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,”

- Their response is interesting: “What are you talking about? We don’t know anything about a Holy Ghost...”

V: 3-5 Paul then questions further as to what or how they were baptized - and they responded regarding the baptism of John - who preached repentance, the turning away from sin, and to believing in Christ Jesus.

- Apollos was a gifted and passionate teacher, but not fully instructed himself. Thankfully he was open to instruction and Aquila and Priscilla were able to fill in some of the blanks.

These believers had known about John’s ministry and what he’d said:

Matthew 3:11 “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.”

- So they knew of the Holy Spirit, but they didn’t know that day had come and the promise of John had been fulfilled.

V: 6 These “disciples” took the next step, which was being baptized, indicating that their faith was in Jesus. Then Paul laid hands on them to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit which is different than water baptism.

The initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 was without the laying on of hands.

Acts 2:1-4 “¹And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Acts 8 - We see the Apostles laying hands on the believers in Samaria and they too received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 9 - Ananias laid hands on Paul that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. - Paul already believed, this was the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:44 “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word.” (no laying on of hands)

- As the believers in Ephesus were baptized in the Holy Spirit they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy - practicing or using the gifts they were given.
- It should be noted that speaking in tongues is only one of the evidences of being baptized in the Holy Spirit - there are several others that you can examine in Romans Ch. 12 and 1 Corinthians Ch. 12, but the most powerful evidence of the Holy Spirit overflowing in a persons life is love.

Paul said:

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 “¹Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. ²And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. ³And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.”

- Speaking in tongues is not evidence of anything unless it is accompanied by love. The preeminence of love is the valid witness that a life is filled with the Spirit.

After instructing the Corinthians on the gifts of the Spirit, Paul said this:

1 Corinthians 12:31 “But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” That more excellent way is the way of love!

V: 7 Twelve men may not seem like a lot, but it's what God would use to begin His work in Ephesus. God's work in Ephesus spread to the neighboring cities of Asia, and as he would spend two years there we see other churches founded as the Word of God goes forth from there.

- Pergamos, Smyrna, Thyatira, Philadelphia, Heirapolis, Sardis, Laodicea - churches of Asia that had their beginnings in Ephesus.

Zechariah 4:10 "For who hath despised the day of small things?..."

V: 8 Paul went into the Synagogue "disputing" and "persuading"...

- KJV "**disputing**" is not really the best translation of that word.
- Disputing: (G1256). dialégomai; the word from which we get our English word "dialogue" which means to have an intelligent discourse or to reason.
- Most of the more modern translations say something like "reasoning and persuading..."

"... *the things concerning the Kingdom of God.*" Jesus used the phrase, "the kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of heaven" interchangeably. Both of these phrases present a sharp contrast to the kingdom or kingdoms of this world, presently controlled by Satan.

- According to **John 1:4**, the kingdom of God is light and life, whereas Satan's kingdom is all about death and darkness.
- Every man and every woman lives in one kingdom or the other. You either live in light, walk in life or you live in darkness and walk in death.
- We are either governed by God or you are governed by Satan, there is no third option.
- At present the kingdom of darkness rules this world, we see the reality of that on a daily basis, the evidence is all around us.

Paul describes it:

Ephesians 2:2 "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"

1 John 1:6-7 "6If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we

have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son
cleanseth us from all sin.”

Ephesians 5:8 “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord:
walk as children of light.”

V: 9 Paul sought to reason and persuade the Jews in the synagogue until it was
obvious that they had rejected the Gospel and hardened their hearts to it.

Paul would later write:

1 Corinthians 12:3 “... no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”

- When it becomes obvious that the Spirit is not moving in their hearts, Paul moves on, and so should we.

“... *spake evil of that way*...” They were first called Christians in Antioch (**Acts 11:26**)
but the Christian movement was first referred to as “the way” - because:

John 14:6 “Jesus said that He is the way, the truth, and the life...”

- Paul departed from the synagogue and at the same time he “separated the
disciples...”

The same word is used in:

2 Corinthians 6:17 “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate,
saith the Lord,...”

- Separated physically, but also identified distinctively or distinguishably.
- Church: Ekklesia (G1577) - “called out ones.”
- So Paul turned away from the Synagogue and went to the school of Tyrannus
wherein he “reasoned” (same word) daily.
- Tyrannus was a philosopher who had a school in Ephesus and according to one
account: Tyrannus taught in the school from the early morning until about 11:00
AM. Then Paul took over and taught until 4:00 PM.
- The climate is such in that area that the hottest part of the day is from 11-4, and
most businesses shut down for a siesta break, then re-open at around 4 when
the breeze kicks in and it starts to cool down.

V: 10 Ephesus was a commercial hub there in Asia Minor and we see that God uses
this church to spread the Gospel throughout the area.

- Again it's interesting that at one time the Holy Spirit forbade Paul from going to Asia, but now the door is open wide, it's all an issue of timing on God's part.

V: 11 It was God who wrought the miracles, Paul's hands were only the instruments through which He worked.

- What a thrill it is to know that you've been used of God to do some thing or to speak some thing, or that He'd do a miracle through you.
- Generally we see miracles are either used to validate the messenger and or it's God's sovereign will to glorify Himself and specifically minister to a person or situation.
- People aren't saved by miracles although I believe that each person that comes to salvation is a miraculous event.

People get saved by the Word:

Romans 10:17 "So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

V: 12 People began to take his handkerchiefs / sweat bands, articles of clothing and place them on the sick or demon possessed and they were healed.

- This sounds a little weird to us, but what this is, but is a trigger of faith.

Acts 5:15-16 "15Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 16There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bring sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one."

- There are different aspects of faith; one is that most of us possess what might be termed as "passive faith". We believe that God can heal, but there's a big difference between believing that God can heal and believing that "God will heal..." The latter is "active" faith.
- We see examples of both in scripture where people went from having a "passive" faith to an "active" faith wherein God moved and people were healed.

Matthew 9:20-21 "20And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of His garment: 21For she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment I shall be whole."

- Her faith moved from passive faith to active faith when she made her way through the crowd and touched the hem of Jesus' garment.

John 5:9 The lame man at the pool of Bethesda had to leave his passive faith behind and use an active faith in order to obey Jesus, pick up his mat, and begin walking for the first time in 38 years.

Matthew 8:5-13 It took active faith for the centurion to trust that Jesus could heal his servant by just speaking the word.

- It takes an active faith when people come forward for prayer for healing:

James 5:14-15 “¹⁴Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: ¹⁵And the prayer of faith shall save the sick,...

- It's not about the oil, or the anointing with oil - it's an act of faith. Whether it's the act of asking, or reaching out, or seeing the shadow cross over - it's a trigger to faith that gives the active faith, believing it will happen at that moment.
- There was nothing special or divine about Paul's sweatbands, but God could use them, which means He can use us!

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- (Map) Paul has been in Ephesus for about 2 years, teaching and preaching, ministering to the believers. The church is growing, and flourishing.
 - Whenever the church is prospering it seems that the enemy will always raise up a counterfeit to seek to draw people away, often times it works almost as a way of culling the church or like separating the wheat from the chaff.
 - As we come to the account of the 7 sons of Sceva I'm not sure that it's so much an attempt to draw people away as it is probably a way to profit off the people, and attempt at fleecing the flock.

V: 13-14 “Vagabond Jews...” Wandering Jews, nomadic Jews, almost like Gypsies. Describing a ship with no set course, moving erratically, or in an unpredictable manner.

- A vagabond is a person who wanders from place to place without a home or a job.
- There are many different sects of Judaism; orthodox, ultra-orthodox, hassidic, and many others. For a season in our country “Jewish Kabbalism” was popular with movies stars and other weirdo's.

- Kabbalism is the ancient Jewish tradition of mystical interpretation of the Bible, first transmitted orally and using esoteric / secret methods (including ciphers), they would fit right in with the Masons.
- Kabbalism is still popular in Israel, it has the connotation of “dark arts” and “magic” blended into Judaism, kind of like “Santeria” is combination of “voodoo” and Christianity.
- The sons of Sceva were “exorcists” meaning they specialized in driving out demons.
- They took it upon themselves, (presumed) as opposed to being called of God, to invoke the name of Jesus over a demon possessed man.
- Jesus whom Paul preaches - meaning they don’t know Jesus personally, they’ve just seen the power of His name and are trying to tap into that without any kind of personal relationship.
- There is no such thing as a “second hand” relationship with Jesus, must be first hand and personal.
- This proves to be dangerous to them, but much more so than this event depicts.

1 John 4:4 “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

- If we’re a believer in Jesus Christ, and we’re filled with the Holy Spirit - then we cannot be filled with or possessed by any other spirit; believers cannot be demon possessed.
- Non-believers on the other hand can be possessed by demonic spirits, and there are many gateways into people’s lives through drugs, alcohol, occult practices and so forth.
- I’ve heard testimonies from other pastors who have been called to deal with demon possessed people and when they go to minister to the demon possessed with the purpose of driving the demon’s out - they will only do so in the company of mature, grounded Christians because of the possibility of that demon being driven out of someone but then looking for another host.
- These vagabond Jews don’t know what they’re messing with. Apparently they also enlisted the help of the “¹⁴chief of the priests” to help them

V: 15-16 As these men come against this demonic spirit, invoking the name of Jesus presumably to help the poor individual who is possessed of it - the demon as opposed to the man answers them.

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 “³For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: ⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;”

- Essentially without Jesus they go into this fight without any real or effective weapons, thus the enemy mocks.
- The evil spirit knew of Jesus, and of Paul - “but who are you?” Not what you want to hear.
- The evil spirit beat up the 7 sons of Sceva and at least one priest, possibly more - then fled in defeat, naked, and wounded.
- If nothing else, this episode brings to our attention the reality of spiritual warfare just as Paul would later write back to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 6:10-13 “¹⁰Finally brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. ¹¹Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. ¹³Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

V: 17 We might look at the net result of this incident and not be too impressed, it's kind of a sad failure - the demon seems to prevail.

- But God uses it. Even though generally it was a failure, the fact that the demon acknowledged Jesus and Paul seems to have had an impact.
- This event was known by the whole city, Jews and Greeks - and the name of Jesus was lifted up.

Jesus said:

Matthew 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

V: 18-20 The reality of these things had a purifying effect upon the church, those that believed.

- Many believers came forward confessing their sins openly.

James 5:16 “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

- Many that were involved in “curious arts” - witchcraft, sorcery, occult practices brought their books out and burned them which were of great value.
- Ephesus was known for it's love of magic, but the people had been convinced of the greater power of Jesus Christ, and they acted on their faith.
- Because of all of that the Word of God grew / spread mightily.

V: 21-22 (Map) Paul purposed in the Spirit, being led of the Spirit to head back to Macedonia and Achaia, provinces of Greece - back to the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, then back to Corinth.

- Paul felt confident that the Gospel had truly been established there and that he could move on. True success in missions is when the locals can take over and continue the work.
- Paul sent Timothy and Erastus ahead to pave the way while he finished up in Ephesus. Erastus is mentioned in Paul's letter to the Romans, he was the Roman treasurer in Corinth. In the 1920's an archaeologist discovered a piece of pavement with his name on it, along with his title.
- Paul's desire was to confirm the works already started, return to Jerusalem for the Passover, then he wanted to go to Rome, the center of the world at that time. A great hub from which to send the gospel out to the rest of the world.

V: 23-28 The city is abuzz about “*that way*” - people are talking about Jesus, about the 7 sons of Sceva, about Paul's teachings - it's all having an impact on people's lives, and as a result they are forsaking their pagan ways - and not everyone is happy with that.

- During the Welsh revival in the early 1900's so many people got saved and repented of their sins that all the bars and taverns closed down, which unless the bar or tavern owner themselves got saved I can see why they wouldn't be too enthusiastic.
- It's the same thing for the silver smiths who were profiting from the production of the little silver idols of the pagan deity Diana.
- Ephesus was the center of the worship of Diana, the female goddess of fertility. The temple built to Diana was one of the 7 great wonders of the ancient world.
- Demetrius got a riot started using religion to try to gain back his profit.

Paul warned Timothy about those that would use religion for profit.

1 Timothy 6:5 “Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.”

- In the midst of his argument he gives glory to God in verse 26 declaring that God has used Paul to spread the Gospel throughout Asia. Part of Paul’s message being the truth that these little idols are not god’s at all.
- Demetrius was sort of summarizing Paul’s teachings in general:

The Psalmist expresses the same sentiment:

Psalm 115:3-8 “³But our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased. ⁴Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. ⁵They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: ⁶They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: ⁷They have hands, but they handle not: Feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. ⁸They that make them are like unto them; so is everyone that trusteth in them.”

- The spirit of Demetrius is alive and well today. The truth is a threat to many today, that is why they enact laws to silence the Word of God, which they call “hate speech”, Christians are not “politically correct” - righteousness is always a threat to un-righteousness.
- They were full of wrath, too bad, when I talk about my God it fills me with joy!

V: 29-34 The city being filled with confusion tells us who the author of this mess is.

1 Corinthians 14:33 “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.”

- The ruins of the theatre in Ephesus exist today, it’s estimated to have had a capacity of about 24,000 people - quite a mob.
- ³⁰Paul would have gone in to the theatre address the crowd, but the disciples stopped him - passion vs: prudence, it was probably not a light thing to have stopped a formidable person like Paul.
- Certain of the chief of Asia - were his friends and apparently concurred with the disciples, asking Paul to steer clear of the theatre.
- ³³The Jews push Alexander forward thinking he will promote their cause, but when they saw he was a Jew the crowd began to shout him down with their chanting.

- Alexander is mentioned in Paul's letter to Timothy (**2 Timothy 4:14**) as someone who did him great harm, looks like some of that is coming back to him now.

V: 35-41 The "town clerk" or Mayor comes in and calms the crowd down, seeking to reason with them knowing that if they don't get it under control the Romans will respond forcibly.

- The clerk aptly observed that they haven't spoken directly against Dianna, they had simply proclaimed Jesus Christ.
- I mentioned the Welch revival of 1901 earlier. The preacher that God used was Robert Murray McCheyne. All the bars closed as I mentioned, but he never spoke a single sermon on drinking or alcohol, he preached Jesus and people just walked away from that stuff.
- Some people spend a lot of time trying to deal with the darkness, it is better to simply turn on the light, light always dispels darkness.

John 8:31-32 ³¹... if ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; ³²And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

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- What do you think posed the greatest danger to the church in Ephesus?
 - Demetrius and his persecution, or the protection of the city clerk? Probably the latter.
 - The church has always thrived under persecution, but whenever the church is protected by the government, it becomes weak.

Jesus declared to the Ephesian church:

Revelation 2:4-5 ⁴Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. ⁵Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

- Sadly, that is what happened. If you were to go to Ephesus today, you would see the ruins of a once great city. Nearby, there's a little Muslim village, but there is not one single Christian living in or around Ephesus today.
- The candlestick, the presence of Christ, has been removed from its place. Their once fervent love had waned, giving in to other forces which eventually overtook the church, which is no more.
- A sober warning for us all. We need to maintain our fervent love and excitement about the things of Jesus, we need to keep our eyes on Him, and abide in Him. Lord help us!

