

Chapter 19: Kingdoms Clash Again: Ephesus

Application: Be Willing to Stand Up

Turning the World Right-side Up: Study 16, Acts 19

Acts Studies for Teens by Mike Apodaca, MA



Begin with prayer for wisdom from God and for the presence of the Spirit.

Note: In a Bible Study, as much as possible ask the questions and let the students answer. Where they

cannot, you supply the answer and keep everything flowing.

Introduction: Will We Stand Up for Christ?

Kingdoms Clash Again: Ephesus Chapter 19

Section 1: Acts 19:1-7 Something is Missing

19 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples ²and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

³So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"

"John's baptism," they replied.

⁴Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. ⁷There were about twelve men in all.

This is Paul's second time in Ephesus. When the Ephesians had begged him to stay with them, he had said he would come back, God willing.

When he comes to these believers, Paul notices that something is missing. The Ephesians believe in Jesus, they are a cohesive group, and they are eager to know truth. But they lack power and the presence of God. The spiritual dynamic is missing. Everything that they have can be explained by the natural. There is none of the supernatural that sets them apart, that makes people wonder, "What is that?" There is no divine presence. The gifts of the Spirit are not there. The fruit is not there. The power is not there. We have to wonder how many of our churches would have Paul asking

this same question. Unfortunately, many Christians act as if they had never heard of the Holy Spirit.

These believers had been baptized into John for repentance. In Matthew 3:11 John the Baptist says, "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Paul laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. We have already seen this once before in Acts. The Apostles, Peter and John, had to go to Samaria and lay hands on the people for them to receive the Holy Spirit. Luke, the author of Acts, is showing here that Paul is also an apostle with the same authority as Peter.

Unfortunately, many in the church treat the Holy Spirit as if He were optional to the church. There is no Christianity without Him. J. I. Packer wrote, "...the average Christian is in a complete fog as to what work of the Holy Spirit does...many Christians have really no idea what difference it would make if there were no Holy Spirit in the world."¹ Francis Schaeffer took this a step farther, "In the book of Romans, it is again made very plain that now if we have accepted Christ as our savior, we are in this new relationship with the Holy Spirit, and anyone who is not in a relationship with the Holy Spirit is not a Christian."²

¹ *Knowing God*, pg. 60

² *True Spirituality*, pg. 77

When the believers received the Holy Spirit they spoke in tongues³ and prophesied. The supernatural presence of God was upon them and the Spirit was within them. It is important that we are not surprised by the gifts of the Spirit. The gifts belong to God and are given according to His will. They are not forced or fabricated by the believer. They are the gifts of a supernatural God.

Section 2: Acts 19: 8-12 Sharing the Word with Hearers

⁸ Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

¹¹ God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

³ *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, pg. 1261-2

Can you imagine being taught for three months by the Apostle Paul? He would take the Old Testament and show how the whole thing was pointing to Jesus and was fulfilled in Him. And yet, some of the Jews stirred up trouble. Paul leaves them and goes to the School of Tyrannus⁴ and teaches the word there. This would have been something of a university lecture hall. It would have been a place where ideas are discussed and compared. Paul would have had the opportunity to extend his understanding of the faith and engage in long discussions with those willing to hear. The point here is that Paul was not in the least afraid to put Christianity forward among the competing ideas and systems available to people of his time.

Again we see a comparison between Paul and Peter. Peter could heal people by his shadow falling on them while Paul could heal by clothes that had touched him. The healing was from God, not the Apostles. They were to authenticate the message of the Kingdom.

Section 3: Acts 19:13-22 Unbelievers try to Use God's Power

¹³ Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." ¹⁴ Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁵ One day the evil spirit answered them,

"Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?" ¹⁶ Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

¹⁷ When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. ¹⁸ Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. ¹⁹ A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. ²⁰ In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

²¹ After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also."²² He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

In Ephesians 6:12 Paul writes, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against

⁴ Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary, pg. 1282

the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

Demons⁵ are real. There are angels who abandoned their privileged estate of holiness and joined Satan when he rebelled against God. These beings, and others like them, inhabit the spiritual realm and interact with our world. They actively work to keep people out of the Kingdom of God. They tempt and attack. At times, they oppress individuals and may even come inside of people possessing them.

We see several instances in the New Testament where people are oppressed or inhabited by demons or evil spirits (see Acts 16:18).

There was a group of Jews, the seven sons of the Jewish Chief Priest named Sceva who were going around and casting out demons. They probably used elaborate formulas and rituals to cast these out. They had heard of the power of the name of Jesus and may have even witnessed Christians casting out demons in this name. So they decided to try this formula.

The evil spirit, a conscious intelligent being, responds. It says that it knows Jesus. The word for “know” here is *ginosko*, which means a growing knowledge from relationship. Jesus is known to the demonic realm. James writes, “You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder.” (James 2:19). These beings have known the Word since their creation. At first they knew Him as Lord, now they know Him as their enemy. The evil spirit was also aware of Paul. The forces of evil knew Paul by name. He was a real threat to them and their empire. He was releasing many of their captives and toppling their strongholds over

⁵ Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary, pg. 346

humanity. The spirit then shows that these Jews have no authority over it. It attacks them with overwhelming power and they flee naked and bleeding.

We need to understand our enemy. We do not need to be afraid of demons. They are subject to Christ as all things are. What we need to do is walk in the Spirit of God and when He directs us to cast out demons, we will do it in the name and power of Jesus, not in our own strength. Jesus will cast out the demon through us. Demons may exercise more influence now than ever before. Our modern world looks for materialistic answers to everything. People who present the symptoms of demonic oppression are treated with psychology and medications. It is only the Christian, led by the Spirit, who will command the demon to leave the victim alone.

The people knew that Paul and his friends were casting out demons. They saw that those outside the faith who simply tried to use the name of Jesus like a magical formula would be defeated. They decided to leave behind their reliance on magic and the occult and to come to faith in Christ. They burned their magic scrolls, worth 50,000 days wages (or what a man would earn in 137 years of working every day).

Section 4: Acts 19:23-41 Pocketbook Persecution

²³ About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. ²⁴ A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. ²⁵ He called them together, along with the workers in related

trades, and said: "You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. ²⁶ And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. ²⁷ There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty."

²⁸ When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" ²⁹ Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and all of them rushed into the theater together. ³⁰ Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. ³¹ Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

³² The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. ³³ The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander to the front, and they shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. ³⁴ But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

³⁵ The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: "Fellow Ephesians, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? ³⁶ Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm down and not do anything rash. ³⁷ You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. ³⁸ If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. ³⁹ If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. ⁴⁰ As it is, we are in danger of being

charged with rioting because of what happened today. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it.”⁴¹ After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

There are many people who gain financially from people being enslaved to the satanic world system.

- Drug dealers gain financially from drug addicts
- Casinos gain financially from people addicted to gambling.
- Alcohol producers and bars benefit from those addicted to drinking
- The entertainment industry gains from those addicted to television, movies, and video games
- Pornographers make billions of dollars off those addicted to pornography
- Pimps make money from their prostitutes
- Gangs survive off the loyalty of their members and their illegal activities

When people turn to Christ in great numbers and repent of their addictions and the allegiances of their old lives, these industries who benefited from their enslavement will react. They may respond with violence, or, like in this case, they will use the judicial system to try to stop the Christians. How wonderful it would be if millions of people would give their lives to Christ, become free from their addictions, and put those who had enslaved them out of business.

Those attacking the Christians do not bring up their personal loss in their attacks. They tap into the emotional feelings of the crowd and appeal to their faithfulness to Artemis⁶ (also known as Diana), their goddess. The city clerk finally gets some words in edge-wise. He makes the following points:



1. Everyone knows that Artemis is located in Ephesus. Her image fell to earth (possibly a meteorite) and landed there.
2. If the craftsmen have a case, then they should pursue legal means to get them settled.
3. There is no evidence that these Christians have robbed the temples or defamed their goddess.
4. They are forming an illegal assembly that will draw the attention of Rome. They might end up in prison or worse.

What have we learned?

It is not the word, Jesus, that has power. It is Jesus Himself. Saying, “In Jesus name,” as if it was a magic formula, is incorrect. What we need to do is walk in the Spirit, know the mind of Christ, follow the

⁶ Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary, pg. 514

Spirit's leading and pray according to the will of God. Then Jesus will do the work and it will truly be in His name.

Christians are a disruptive force to those who benefit from the satanic worldly system. When people turn to Christ and give up their addictions, they will put many people out of business. We can expect a backlash from those who lose money because the Kingdom of God is growing.

What the Text Says

Section 1 Acts 19:1-7

When Paul gets to Ephesus, he finds some believers, but he notices that there is something missing. There is no supernatural presence in them. God is not there. Paul finds out that they didn't even know about the Holy Spirit. They were baptized into repentance in John's baptism. He baptizes them into Jesus and lays hands on them and they receive the Holy Spirit. If there is no presence of the Spirit in our church, we are missing the most important ingredient.

Section 2 Acts 19:8-12

After being rejected by the Jews, Paul opens a class at a local school (like a college) and teaches about Jesus. Christianity is not just another system or set of ideas or precepts. It is not another religion. Christianity is God's active rescue attempt, where He pays all in order to secure the freedom of all those who would come to Him through Christ. The presence of the Spirit and the signs and wonders authenticate Paul's message.

Section 3 Acts 19:13-22

Demons are real. The name of Jesus is not magic. It cannot be used in an incantation. Only those filled by the Spirit, who are led by God to cast out demons, will do so by His power.

Section 4 Acts 19:23-41

We can expect a backlash from those who gain from the satanic world system when the Kingdom of God advances.

Connecting to the Scripture

The Kingdom of God is powerful. It turns the world right-side up. People who are oppressed by demons or who are enslaved in the world system are freed to walk in new life. Those who have been walking in darkness, estranged from their God and separated from Him, now may walk in the light and in a beautiful relationship of worship and prayer. Former addictions are repented of and are replaced with the healthy relationship with God. We live for His pleasure and do all for His glory.

This is going to have an impact on those who gain from the satanic world system engineered to keep men and women in darkness and slavery. If the devil can keep people addicted to drugs, sex, entertainment, alcohol, their jobs, etc. then he can exercise control over them.

Billions upon billions of dollars are tied up in these addictions. We can imagine how much better the world would be if all the money tied up in drugs or pornography were used to build up our society. How many schools could we open? How many poor could we feed? How many bridges could we repair?

We must be fully aware that those who lose their livelihoods because the Kingdom of God has advanced and freed their customers from their addictions are going to respond. There will be an attack. Remember, the kingdom of this world does not surrender quietly when God's kingdom moves in. This is a battle and the enemy will fight back when he begins to lose ground. How wonderful it would be to put all those who profit from the enslavement of others out of business.

Questions to Ask During the Study

Section 1 Read Acts 19:1-7

1. What was missing in the believers in Ephesus? How important is the Holy Spirit in the church?
2. What evidence is there that the Holy Spirit is present in us? How do we know when He isn't? How do we walk more fully in the Holy Spirit?

Section 2 Read Acts 19:8-12

1. How is it that Paul could teach the Way of Christ in the local university? How could he stand up against the philosophies and religions being taught there?
2. How can Christians in college stand against professors who promote evolution or worldly philosophies?

Section 3 Read Acts 19:13-22

1. What do you know about demons?
2. What would you do if someone you knew was being oppressed or possessed by a demon?

Section 4 Read Acts 19:23-41

1. How is the lifestyle of one who is owned by God different from those who are owned by Satan and the world system?
2. What industries would be compromised if the Kingdom of God were to take over our community? What would be the reaction of those who lost money and influence because of Christ?