

## **We Wrestle Not Against Flesh & Blood**

### **Acts 19:1-41**

#### **Introduction:**

In this chapter the Apostle Paul continues his ministry into the Roman Province of Asia. He finally arrives at Ephesus where Priscilla and Aquila as well as Apollos had ministered. Through Paul God ministers in amazing ways to the people of that important city. Nonetheless, it is easy to see that this is not a project of simply teaching new ideas to the people. There is a spiritual battle happening for the souls of these people. The promise at the start of the Book of Acts is that the Christians would receive power when the Holy Spirit came on them. In this chapter we see once again why this was so important. The Christian faith cannot be lived in one's own strength for there is an ongoing battle taking place for the souls of all people. This chapter reminds us that "if God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)

#### **The Holy Spirit in Ephesus – Acts 19: 1-10**

1. Paul is traveling back along the route he had taken on his second missionary journey, but this time is allowed by the Spirit to enter Ephesus. There he encounters some believers. What question does he ask of them (v. 2)? What is their response?
2. Realizing the believers in Ephesus were not fully instructed in the things of God, what question does Paul ask in verse 3? Why would this be important? What is their answer?
3. How does the response of these believers in Ephesus compare to the response of Apollos in the previous chapter (18:25)? What might we conclude about the carriers of the Gospel to Ephesus?
4. Paul instructs the Ephesians to look beyond John to Jesus (v. 4). What is the difference this shift makes?

5. In verse 5 what do the believers in Ephesus do? This is the only New Testament instance of Christians being re-baptized. Are there any lessons we can learn here about the practice of baptism?
6. Once they were baptised into faith in Jesus, what does Paul do for the believers? (v. 6). What was the result of this ministry in their lives?
7. Verse 7 says there were twelve men who were baptized and Spirit-filled that day. Do you think that is significant?
8. For three months Paul spoke in the Synagogue. What did he teach about? (v. 8)
9. Why did Paul stop speaking in the Synagogue (v. 9)? What is “Christianity” called in verse 9? Where might that name come from? Where does he go to continue his teaching? How long will he teach there? (v. 10)
10. What was the effect of this school of ministry Paul held in Ephesus (v. 10)?

### **Imitation – Acts 19:11-20**

11. According to verse 11, who was at work in Ephesus? And what was He doing? Describe the ministry in Ephesus (v. 12).
12. This ministry in Ephesus was quite unique. Why might these extraordinary works take place in this location?
13. In verse 13 we have some people trying to imitate Paul’s ministry. Who are they and what are they doing?
14. In verses 14-16 we meet the seven sons of Sceva, the High Priest. What do they try to do? How well does it go for them? What do we learn about spiritual power in this story?

15. What happened to the sons of Sceva had quite the impact on the community (v. 17). How did God use this event for the sake of the Gospel? (v. 17-18)
16. Verse 19 shows the “fruit of repentance.” What was it? How might the worldly look at this event? How do we as believers?
17. Verse 20 is a summary verse about the spiritual conflict taking place in Ephesus. Who is winning?

### Push Back – Acts 19:21-41

18. Paul is getting ready to make another trip. What are some of the destinations he wants to visit? (v. 21) Which might be the most important but difficult?
19. Who did Paul send into Macedonia (Greece)? (v. 22) Where did Paul minister?
20. Who is Demetrius and what is his problem (vss. 23-27)? What is at the heart of his concerns? Can this focus influence decisions today as well?
21. In what ways is Demetrius correct when he talks about the disruption of the temple of Artemis?

Actually two goddesses in Asia Minor were named **Artemis**. The one, a goddess worshiped in Greek culture whose counterpart in Rome was Diana, was the virgin goddess of the hunt. The other was Artemis of the Ephesians, a many-breasted goddess of fertility. Probably the original “statue” was a meteorite that resembled a woman with many breasts (cf. 19:35).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Toussaint, S. D. (1985). [Acts](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 411). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

22. How does the crowd respond to Demetrius' concerns? (vss. 28-29) Who wants to join in the crowds (v. 30)? Who stops him and why? (vss. 30-31)
23. Verse 32 perfectly describes what happens in a mob setting. Describe what happens there in the theatre.
24. Why will the crowd not listen to Alexander? (vss. 33-34)
25. Who takes control of the situation in verse 35? What is his opinion of what is happening that day in the theatre (vs. 36)? What does he suggest Demetrius should do (v. 38).
26. What is the city clerk afraid could be the charge against the city that day (v. 40)? Why would this concern him? So how does he deal with the crowd and their issue (v. 41)?

### **Conclusion:**

What an amazing ministry in Ephesus. Lives are being transformed and people are turning away from superstition to the living God. Of course, with each person that turns to faith in Jesus, Satan is losing a follower. So we see in this chapter that Satan fights back, but is quite unsuccessful in his battle. This is what Bible Scholar Warren Wiersbe says about this situation:

“Satan still hinders the work of the Lord in these three ways: false believers with an inadequate spiritual experience, counterfeits, and open opposition. But we may overcome the adversary if we trust God, depend on the power of the Spirit, and preach the Word of God.”<sup>2</sup>

But as the chapter closes it is clear who is triumphing. It is Jesus and the Gospel He brings through His Spirit filled believers. So no matter what the spiritual battle we face today, remember, “we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” (Romans 8:37)

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<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). [\*Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament\*](#) (p. 331). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.