

## **SBCOD Bible Study Notes**

**4-22-26**

**Acts 19**

### **Paul Finds Some Disciples Who Had Not Yet Received The Holy Spirit – Verses 1-2**

**<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, <sup>2</sup> He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.**

**19:1-2** Ephesus was the capital and leading business center of the Roman province of Asia (part of present-day Turkey). A hub of sea and land transportation, it ranked with Antioch in Syria and Alexandria in Egypt as one of the great cities on the Mediterranean Sea. Paul stayed in Ephesus for a little over two years. There he wrote his first letter to the Corinthians to counter several problems the church in Corinth was facing. Later, while imprisoned in Rome, Paul wrote a letter to the Ephesian church (the book of Ephesians).

### **Paul Distinguishes Between The Baptism Of John And Baptism In The Name Of The Jesus – Verses 3-4**

**<sup>3</sup> And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. <sup>4</sup> Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.**

**19:2-4** John's baptism was a sign of repentance from sin only, not a sign of new life in Christ. Like Apollos (18:24-26), these Ephesian believers needed further instruction about the message and ministry of Jesus Christ. They believed in Jesus as the Messiah, but they did not understand the significance of his death and resurrection or the work of the Holy Spirit. Becoming a Christian involves turning from sin (repentance) and turning to Christ (faith). These believers were incomplete. In the book of Acts, believers received the Holy Spirit in a variety of ways. Usually the Holy Spirit would fill a person as soon as he or she professed faith in Christ. Here that filling happened later because these disciples' knowledge was incomplete. God was confirming to these believers, who did not initially know about the Holy Spirit, that they were a part of the church. The Holy Spirit's filling endorsed them as believers. Pentecost was the formal outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the church. The other outpourings in the book of Acts were God's way of uniting new believers to the church. The mark of the true church is not merely right doctrine, but right actions, the true evidence of the Holy Spirit's work.

### **The Twelve Ephesian Disciples Believe On Jesus, Are Baptized, And Receive The Holy Spirit With His Gifts – Verses 5-7**

**<sup>5</sup> When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup> And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. <sup>7</sup> And all the men were about twelve.**

**19:5-7** When Paul laid his hands on these disciples, they received the Holy Spirit, just as the disciples had at Pentecost, resulting in outward, visible signs of the Holy Spirit's presence. This also had happened when the Holy Spirit had come on Gentiles (non-Jews, see 10:45-47). Much has been

made about this passage and others in Acts that depict believers speaking in tongues. Some have uncomfortably downplayed or dismissed these historical events. Others have tried to duplicate them. Few issues have prompted more argument and confusion or split more churches. We should remember that tongues-speaking is not the central theme of the book of Acts. The point of Luke's history is the faithful communication of the gospel to the ends of the earth. If we want to be doers of the Word (James 1:22), we will faithfully be involved in the same process of evangelism. Seek to share your faith in the power of the Holy Spirit (1:8) and leave it up to God to give you whatever experiences he thinks you need.

### **Paul Leaves The Synagogue And Begins Teaching In A Borrowed School Building – Verses 8-10**

**<sup>8</sup> And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. <sup>9</sup> But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. <sup>10</sup> And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.**

**19:9-10** Paul spoke in a lecture hall at this school. Such halls were used in the morning for teaching philosophy, but they were empty during the hot part of the day (about 11 AM to 4 PM). Because many people did not work during those hours, they would come to hear Paul's preaching. "The province of Asia" refers to Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey. During this time, Paul and his coworkers spread the gospel throughout the land.

### **Unusual Miracles In Ephesus – Verses 11-12**

**<sup>11</sup> And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: <sup>12</sup> So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.**

Now God worked unusual miracles: Luke states these were unusual miracles, and gives an example; that Paul's handkerchiefs or aprons (literally, "sweat-bands") could be laid on a person even without Paul present, and that person was healed or delivered from demonic possession. We don't really know how this worked, other than the same way that the shadow of Peter (Acts 5:15) or the hem of Jesus' garment (Matthew 14:36) might heal: the item became a point of contact by which a person released faith in Jesus as healer. God seems to like doing things in new and different ways. Therefore we receive whatever is proven to be from the hand of God, but we pursue only that which we have a Biblical pattern for.

### **A Rebuke To The Seven Sons Of Sceva, The Hopeful Jewish Exorcists – Verses 13-16**

**<sup>13</sup> Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the LORD Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. <sup>14</sup> And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. <sup>15</sup> And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? <sup>16</sup> And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.**

**19:13** These Jews traveled from town to town making a living by claiming to heal people and drive out demons. Often they would recite a whole list of names in their incantation to be sure of including the right deity. Here they were trying to use Jesus' name in an effort to match Paul's power.

**19:13-16** Some Ephesians engaged in exorcism and occult practices for profit (see 19:18-19). The sons of Sceva were impressed by Paul, whose power to drive out demons came from God's Holy Spirit, not from witchcraft, and was obviously more powerful than theirs. They discovered, however, that no one can control or duplicate God's power. These men were calling on the name of Jesus without knowing Jesus personally. The power to change people comes from Christ. It cannot be tapped by reciting his name like a magic charm. God works his power only through those he chooses.

### **Many In Ephesus Renounce Objects Associated With The Demonic – Verses 17-20**

**17** And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. **18** And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. **19** Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. **20** So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

**19:17-19** Ephesus was a center for black magic and other occult practices. The people cooked up magical formulas to give them wealth, happiness, and success in marriage. Superstition and sorcery were commonplace. God clearly forbids such practices (Deuteronomy 18:9-13). You cannot be a believer and hold on to the occult, black magic, or sorcery. Once you begin to dabble in these areas, you may become obsessed by them because Satan is very powerful. But God's power is even greater (1 John 4:4; Revelation 20:10). If you are mixed up in the occult, learn a lesson from the Ephesians and get rid of anything that could trap you in such practices.

### **Paul's Companions Leave Him Alone In Ephesus – Verses 21-22**

**21** After these things were ended, 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. **22** So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

**19:21** Why did Paul say he had to go to Rome? Wherever he went, he could see Rome's influence. Paul wanted to take the message of Christ to the world's center of influence and power. Paul later wrote letters to Timothy that are now known as 1 and 2 Timothy. Erastus was a committed follower of Christ who was not only Paul's helpful assistant but also Corinth's director of public works (see Romans 16:23).

### **Demetrius, A Maker Of Idols, Opposes Paul – Verses 23-28**

**23** And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. **24** For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; **25** Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. **26** Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: **27** So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. **28** And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. Romans 16: 23).

**19:23** “The Way” refers to those who followed the way of Christ— the Christians. Artemis (Diana) was a goddess of fertility. She was represented by a carved female figure with many breasts. A large statue of Artemis (which was said to have come from heaven, 19:35) was in the great temple at Ephesus. That temple was one of the wonders of the ancient world. The festival of Artemis involved wild orgies and carousing. Obviously the religious and commercial life of Ephesus reflected the city’s worship of this pagan deity.

**19:25-27** When Paul preached in Ephesus, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen did not quarrel with his doctrine. Their anger boiled because his preaching threatened their profits. They made silver shrines of the goddess Artemis. The craftsmen knew that if people started believing in God and discarding the idols, their livelihood would suffer.

**19:27** Demetrius’s strategy for stirring up a riot was to appeal to his fellow workmen’s love of money and then to encourage them to hide their greed behind the mask of patriotism and religious loyalty. The rioters couldn’t see the selfish motives for their rioting; instead, they saw themselves as heroes for the sake of their land and beliefs.

### **The Riot Builds Momentum – Verses 29-34**

**29** And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre. **30** And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. **31** And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre. **32** Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused: and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. **33** And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. **34** But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

**19:29-31** Paul often sought others to help him in his work. On this occasion, his traveling companions were Aristarchus (who would accompany him on other journeys; see 20:3-4 and 27:1-2), and Gaius (probably not the same Gaius mentioned in Romans 16:23 or 1 Corinthians 1:14). Paul wanted to go to the amphitheater to defend his companions, but the other believers wouldn’t let him go, fearing for his safety. The officials who begged him not to risk his life were government officials, responsible for the religious and political order of the region. Paul’s message had reached all levels of society, crossing all social barriers and giving Paul friends in high places.

**19:33-34** The mob had become anti-Jewish as well as anti-Christian. This Alexander may have been pushed forward by the Jews as a spokesman to explain that the Jews had no part in the Christian community and thus were not involved in the economic problem of the silversmiths.

### **The City Clerk Is Able To Calm The Passion Of The Crowd – Verses 35-41**

**35** And when the town clerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye 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? **36** Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. **37** For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. **38** Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another.

**<sup>39</sup> But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. <sup>40</sup> For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse. <sup>41</sup> And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.**

**19:40** The city of Ephesus was under the domination of the Roman Empire. The main responsibility of the local city leaders was simply to maintain peace and order. If they failed to control the people, Rome would remove the appointed officials from office. The entire town could also be put under martial law, taking away many civic freedoms.

**19:41** The riot in Ephesus convinced Paul that it was time to move on. But it also showed that the law still provided some protection for Christians as they challenged the worship of the goddess Artemis in the most idolatrous region in Asia.