

ACTS

Chapter 19

Note from Kathy

This chapter is a window into the life of one of the greatest men who ever lived, the apostle Paul. He longed to share the gospel everywhere he went, and, yet he met with opposition at every turn. Later in his ministry this same man would share the secret to his perseverance in Romans 5:1-5, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."



Observation

It has been several chapters since my last reminder to read the chapter several times before starting your study guide. I love the YouVersion Bible app. I set it to read the chapter aloud to me while I'm getting ready in the morning or doing dishes during the day or driving my car. By the time I sit down to study, I am very familiar with the events of the chapter.

1. Paul had begun his third (and final) missionary journey. In Acts 18:23 we read how Paul left Antioch and traveled throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia strengthening the disciples. In Acts 19:1 he had arrived in Ephesus. There Paul met some of the disciples and asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit. What did they say?
2. The apostle Paul took time to help them understand. After hearing Paul share with them the good news of Jesus' finished work, what did they do?
3. These 12 men began to speak in tongues and prophesy just as the believers in Acts 2:4. Speaking in tongues was not intended to be the

John 3:2

...a man named Nicodemus... he came to Jesus at night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs that you do unless God is with him."

Mark 16:20

They went out and proclaimed everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through the accompanying signs.

Acts 14:3

So they stayed there for a considerable time, speaking out courageously for the Lord, who testified to the message of his grace, granting miraculous signs and wonders to be performed through their hands.

Acts 19:17-20

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.

focus of the book of Acts. The primary message of Acts is the giving of the Holy Spirit. Read John 3:2 to see the purpose of the miracles Jesus did. What did Jesus' miracles authenticate?

Now read Mark 16:20 and Acts 14:3. What is the purpose for the supernatural acts done by the believers of Paul's day?

4. The synagogue was where one would most often find the apostle Paul. How long did Paul stay in this area teaching in the synagogue and boldly sharing the good news?
5. Sadly, there were those who became obstinate and publicly opposed Paul. Paul did not want to argue continually when he knew there were those who would love to hear the gospel and respond. So, he left the synagogue and taught the people in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. How long did Paul continue doing this?

What extraordinary things happened that pointed to the very real power of God?

6. Acts 19:13 mentioned a group of men who were casting out evil spirits. They may have had an amount of success doing this, but when they attempted to use Jesus' name, were they successful?
7. What did you learn about the sons of Sceva?
8. The sons of Sceva were impressed by Paul's power to cast out demons. They tried to do the same thing. What did Paul have that these men did not?

Exorcism was no new thing, but it was rarely effective. That is why the people were so amazed when Jesus commanded evil spirits and they obeyed. They also marveled when Paul had power over them. It seemed too good to be true. What happened when the sons of Sceva tried to cast out a demon?

9. Sorcery was prevalent in that day. Ephesus was a center for black magic and other occult practices. According to verse 17, when the people of Ephesus heard what had happened to the sons of Sceva, what was their reaction and the result?
10. Let's not miss the significance of the events described in verses 18-20. True repentance will involve change. What was thrown into the fire? What would this mean for many of these new believers?

■ Acts 19:23

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.

■ Matthew 3:1-2

"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.

11. After all this happened, where did Paul decide to go?
12. Paul made it very clear that he would only be there a little while because his heart was set on Rome. Paul was concerned for the believers living in Macedonia. It had been a very long time since he was there. Who did he send to check on the churches of Macedonia?
13. The Scripture says a great disturbance broke out. A silversmith named _____ was quite successful at making and selling silver _____ of Artemis.
14. What was the basis of this disturbance created by Demetrius?
15. The angry crowd did not see Paul, so who did they seize instead?
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16. The crowd went wild for a long period of time. Alexander motioned for silence, but they would not stop because he was a Jew. The city clerk then reasoned with them. What were the facts he shared?
17. According to Roman law, there could be no assembly of people without reasonable cause. Did the Jews have a good reason? _____ Without a reasonable cause, this angry, unofficial gathering could cause the Roman government to charge them all with rioting. What did the crowd do?

Application

1. God had permitted Paul to return to Ephesus. When he arrived, he met some disciples who had never heard of the Holy Spirit. Paul took time to meet with them and share the gospel. Are you willing to take the time to get to know others and find out if they know Jesus?

If they do not have full understanding of the gospel are you able to share with them the truth and simplicity of salvation?

Are you willing to take time with them so that they too can experience a real relationship with their heavenly Father?

John 1:5

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 12:46

I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

Acts 19:19

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.

Matthew 19:23-24

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven.²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

2. The Jews in the synagogue at Ephesus became obstinate toward Paul and the message he was sharing. What have we seen Paul do time and time again when the good news he was sharing was rejected?

Paul did not get discouraged, and neither should we. There are those who plant the seed and those who water, but it is God who gives the increase. Have you ever felt like you were wasting your time and energy trying to share the gospel? What did you do?

3. As we studied this chapter, we read about the seven sons of Sceva who tried to mimic God's work. They thought they could simply say the same words Paul said, as if it were an incantation. They were missing the power of God. We must remember that as believers we have the power to overcome darkness. Read John 1:5. It is by the power of God that we pull down the strongholds of sin, such as unbelief, pride and hardness of heart with the light of truth. Light always overcomes the dark. No amount of darkness can extinguish even the faintest of lights. Read John 12:46. Are there strongholds you would like to see pulled down? What are some ways believers overcome darkness with light?

Do not rush past this question—it can be a life changer. Strongholds are a military term, meaning a fortress with high walls. Spend some time in your small group discussing ways we can by the power of God pull down these walls and enjoy the freedom God longs for us to have.

4. True repentance calls for a change of direction. When we come to Christ it is by faith alone, but if we are to enjoy a close relationship with the Lord it will require some changes in our thinking as well as in our actions. In Acts 19:19, the men who had previously practiced sorcery brought their scrolls and burned them publicly. Are there things or people in your life that are keeping you from wholly serving Christ?
5. As we look at the last scene in this chapter, we see a man named Demetrius stirring up the people of the city. What do you believe is the motivation for his actions?

The expression, "follow the money," is often used in today's culture to reveal the motive and parties behind a conflict. In what ways can wealth and lifestyle impact spiritual growth?

Read Matthew 19:23-24 to learn what Jesus said about the power and hold wealth can have on a person. How might wealth and lifestyle prohibit spiritual sight?

Jesus said it is hard for a rich man to be saved. Why? What are they trusting in?

Everyone is trusting in something. What are some of the things that people place their trust in today?

6. The assembly was in a state of confusion. They were shouting all kinds of things. Many did not even know what all the commotion was about. The crowd was unwilling to take the time to hear both sides. Have you ever chosen a side in an argument before truly hearing both sides?

Have you ever given an answer too quickly?

What advice does Proverbs 18:13 and 18:17 give us that we would do well to apply?

■ Proverbs 18:13

The one who gives an answer before he listens—this is foolishness and disgrace for him.

■ Proverbs 18:17

The first to plead his case seems right, until another comes and examines him.

7. There are many characters in chapter 19. Some examples we might do well to follow and others we would do well to avoid. Choose a character, and list some of their qualities that you would like to see in your own life.

Choose another character and list some qualities you want to avoid.

8. What do you remember most from studying Acts chapter 19?

