

Acts 19:1-41 **Paul at Ephesus – Sons of Sceva - Demetrius** (Third missionary journey continued)

Paul arrived at Ephesus

1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples 2 he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." 3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism."

Baptism of John and baptism in Christ – Receiving Holy Spirit

4 Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. 7 Now the men were about twelve in all.

Paul boldly reasoning in the synagogue for over two years

8 And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. 9 But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. 10 And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Miracles done through Paul – handkerchiefs and aprons for healings

11 Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.

Jewish exorcists and sons of Sceva

13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." 14 Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" 16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds.

Burning books of witchcraft

19 Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

Paul planned to go to Macedonia, Achaia (Greece), Jerusalem and Rome

21 When these things were accomplished, 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 those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.

Demetrius stirred the crowd to defend Diana

23 And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. 25 He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. 26 Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. 27 So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship."

Riot begun

28 And when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" 29 So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions.

Paul prevented from entering the theater

30 And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. 31 Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater.

Alexander overpowered

32 Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together. 33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people. 34 But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

City Clerk quieted and dismissed the crowd

35 And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Zeus? 36 Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. 37 For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess. 38 Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. 39 But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly. 40 For we are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering." 41 And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly. NKJV

Facts Revealed:

Paul arrived at Ephesus

- ✚ Paul had gone from Antioch of Syria through western Turkey including Galatia, and Phrygia, to the churches he had planted on his first and second missionary journeys strengthening all the disciples. [Acts 18:23]
- ✚ Then Paul went through Asia and came to Ephesus. [Acts 19:1]

- ✚ Apollos had come to Ephesus preaching the Baptism of John, and after learning from Aquila and Priscilla about Jesus he vigorously proved from Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah (Christ) then he went on to Achaia (Greece) and came to Corinth. [Acts 18:24-28, 19:1]
- ✚ And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." [Acts 19:1-3]
 - ✧ The upper regions is a reference to Galatia and Phrygia. [Acts 18:23, 19:1]
 - ✧ In Ephesus Paul found believers in Messiah who had been baptized into John's baptism but had not been instructed in the Holy Spirit.
 - ✧ They were probably disciples from the teaching of Apollos who heard of the coming of the Messiah as prophesied by John the Baptist as the One coming after him.
 - ✧ Their baptism would thereby have been one of Repentance in preparation for the Kingdom of Heaven, and looking forward to the Messiah who was to come.
 - ✧ John had introduced the one coming after him as one who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and with fire [Matthew 3:1-12, Mark 1:1-8, Luke 3:1-18, John 1:25-28], however they were not aware that the baptism in the Holy Spirit had already come.

Baptism of John and baptism in Christ – Receiving Holy Spirit

- ✚ Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Now the men were about twelve in all. [Acts 19:4-7]
 - ✧ Paul explained the difference between the **baptism of John** and **baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus**.
 - ✧ They were then baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
 - ✧ When Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they **spoke with tongues and prophesied**.

Paul boldly reasoning in the synagogue for over two years

- ✚ And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. [Acts 19:8-10]
 - ✧ As was Paul's custom, he went into the Synagogue of the Jews that the word of the Lord might go first to the Jews.
 - ✧ Paul continued speaking boldly in the Synagogue for three months until opposition arose from the unbelieving Jews who spoke evil concerning the Way of the Gospel message.
 - ✧ It was then that Paul withdrew himself and the disciples from the Synagogue of the Jews, to the School of Tyrannus, where he continued daily, reasoning from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel. [Acts 17:2, 19:9]
 - ✧ Paul continued teaching in the school of Tyrannus for two years until all who lived in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles.

Miracles done through Paul – handkerchiefs and aprons for healings

✚ Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. [Acts 19:11-12]

✧ The unusual miracles God was doing through Paul were done by God to confirm the message of the Gospel of Jesus and his stand against the traditions of the Jews. [Acts 14:3]

Jewish exorcists and sons of Sceva

✚ Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. [Acts 19:13-18]

✧ The religious activists were Jewish Exorcists, standing on Jewish traditions and attempting to control the spirit world by their own words.

✧ The practice of coming against evil spirits without knowing the heart of the message of Jesus is folly.

✧ Exorcism is a form of witchcraft.

✧ Casting out demons by the finger of God is God's doing and at His command, not ours. [Luke 11:18-20]

✧ Because it was their religious practice of exorcism, delving into spiritual warfare as human works, as some do today, attempting to command Satan and his demon hordes around, they failed and were overcome.

✧ Paul was successful because he knew the Lord Jesus and was working from the basis of faith in His name, with God confirming his message by various miraculous signs.

✧ These failed because; though they used the name of Jesus, they did not know Jesus personally, but referred to Him as "the Jesus whom Paul preaches." Second hand faith does not stand the test. Jesus wants us to know Him personally and to stand in faith without doubt.

✧ This incident became well known to everyone in Ephesus, and caused them to fear taking the name of Jesus lightly and arrogantly practicing exorcism.

✧ It was a sobering event and demonstrated the danger in irreverent use of the name of Jesus.

✧ The Name of Jesus was magnified, and many were called to repentance and confession of their deeds.

Burning books of witchcraft

✚ Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. [Acts 19:19-20]

✧ Exorcism is a form of Witchcraft, and as such the practitioners saw the failure of the exorcists and acknowledged the folly of the practice. In response they publicly destroyed their books of magic which also is witchcraft.

✧ This is evidence that they truly were in fear regarding the practice. [Acts 19:17]

✧ Witchcraft is not something to toy with. [Deuteronomy 18:10-14]

Paul planned to go to Macedonia, Achaia (Greece), Jerusalem and Rome

✚ When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia (Greece), to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there,

I must also see Rome." So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time. [Acts 19:21-22]

- ✧ Paul's plan was to go from Ephesus to Macedonia, then to Achaia (Greece), then to Jerusalem, and after that to go to Rome in his missionary work.
- ✧ To prepare the churches for his arrival, Paul sent Timothy and Erastus on ahead, similar to what Jesus did when He sent the seventy ahead of His arrival. [Acts 19:22, Luke 10:1]
- ✧ So much for human planning, but clearly in the purpose of God for Paul to follow that exact sequence, only he went from Jerusalem to Rome in chains instead of his own choice.

Demetrius stirred the crowd to defend Diana

✧ 23 And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. 25 He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. 26 Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. 27 So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship."

[Acts 19:23-27]

- ✧ When the message of God comes against idolatry, those who profit from idolatry are offended because it is a direct blow against the source of their income.
- ✧ To combat the threat to their income, they stir up the masses who were kept under bondage to their superstitions, and persuade them to riot against what is godly.
- ✧ The pagans did it then, and the Muslims and Humanists do it today.
- ✧ It is the same complaint that the wicked will do in the Great Tribulation. [Revelation 18:3, 11-16, 17-19]

Riot begun

✧ 28 And when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" 29 So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions. [Acts 19:28-29]

- ✧ The gullible and deceived masses follow the agitators in their violence.
- ✧ Torn between their established loyalty to the idolatrous ways, and the evidence of the power and persuasiveness of the Gospel message, they are filled with confusion.
- ✧ Seeking to defend their religion of worshipping Diana of the Ephesians, they seized Gaius and Aristarchus who were Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and dragged them into the theater.

Paul prevented from entering the theater

✧ And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater. [Acts 19:30-31]

- ✧ Paul wanted to help his friends and save them from, the mob, but officials of the area who were his friends pleaded with him not to enter into the theater.
- ✧ Christian believers are not always able to calm a mob that has been incited to violence to defend their religious beliefs from Christian influence.

Alexander overpowered

✧ Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together. And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted

to make his defense to the people. But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" [Acts 19:32-34]

- ✧ There was a lot of confusion with most of the people not knowing why they had been called together
- ✧ Alexander was a Jew at Ephesus who did not receive Paul's ministry but was set forward by the Jews to quiet the riot, probably to demonstrate that the Jews did not support Paul and his ministry.
- ✧ Alexander motioned with his hand and desired to make his defense to the people.
- ✧ When the mob realized that Alexander was a Jew, they were the more excited and hailed Diana of the Ephesians for two hours.
- ✧ Both Judaism and Christianity reject the idolatry of the pagan Diana of the Ephesians, and therefore the Jews were as offensive to the idolaters as was Paul and his message, both were a threat to the idolaters income.

City Clerk quieted and dismissed the crowd

- ✧ And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Zeus? Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess.

Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly. For we are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering." And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly. [Acts 1:35-41]

- ✧ **The city clerk** was able to quiet the crowd by first acknowledging that Ephesus was the city appointed as guardian of the goddess Diana, thereby placing himself on the side of the idolaters.
- ✧ After he received the attention of the mob, he called for quiet saying, "you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly."
- ✧ Then he reminded them that the men they had brought to the theater were neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of their goddess.
- ✧ Then focusing on the source of the problem, being **Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen**, he called for a lawful assembly and lawful charges.
- ✧ He then warned the people that they were in danger of being called in question for the uproar, and there was no legal reason to explain the disorderly gathering.
- ✧ At that point he dismissed the crowd (assembly).