

The Acts of the Apostles

“A study of the application of theology to the work of the church as a group”

Continuing the Third Missionary Trip of Paul

“Miracles and Mayhem”

“Butt Beating and Book Burning”

Chapter Nineteen

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Acts 19:1 “And it came about that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found some disciples,

Acts 19:2 and he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

And they said to him, “No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”

Acts 19:3 And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” And they said, “Into John's baptism.”

Acts 19:4 And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.”

Acts 19:5 And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying.

Acts 19:7 And there were in all about twelve men.”

The above verses have been used by people to justify a “second” baptism so it is important that we understand them properly. These men had only been baptized in a preparatory fashion as John’s baptism was looking forward to the coming of Jesus Christ and they had no knowledge of the Holy Spirit. The Christian baptism is a consummative baptism in that the work of the Messiah is complete. This baptism is the only rebaptism mentioned in the New Testament. Note that Apollos did not have to be rebaptized because he was already “aglow with the Spirit” (Acts 18:25). These men had been prepared by God by their becoming disciples of John the Baptist, probably by some of his disciples who had continued his ministry after his death. So these men had already had their hearts touched by God and when Paul explained to them that Jesus had already come as the Messiah these men immediately believed and the Holy Spirit came upon them in a mighty way just like He did at Pentecost. There is only one baptism of the Holy Spirit and that happens at the rebirth of a person when he/she becomes a Christian. If a person does not have the Holy Spirit then he is not a Christian:

Rom 8:9 “However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”

The Holy Spirit is directly involved in our salvation:

Titus 3:5 "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,"

He then seals us for the final time of our joining in the glory of Jesus:

Eph 1:13 "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,"

So when the men believed all of the above happened to them with an external witness by the same manner as at Pentecost. Why the external witness does not happen to everyone who is saved, I do not know. I only know what God has told us and that is that the Holy Spirit is directly involved in my immediate salvation and He then seals me for my security so that I will forever be in a state of salvation. The Holy Spirit then dwells within me so that I become a temple of God:

Rom 8:11 "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you."

Rom 8:14 "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

1Cor 3:16 "Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

1Cor 6:19 "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?"

2Cor 6:16 "Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

The acts of the Holy Spirit in our lives are amazing and certainly make me want to praise God in any way that I am able. These men immediately began to praise God by speaking prophecies and speaking in tongues. I can only imagine what happened but it seems logical to me to assume that they were well acquainted with the Old Testament having received the baptism of repentance by John's disciples. With that knowledge and the new revelation that Jesus is the Messiah they could have then been talking about prophecies of Isaiah and other prophets as they pertained to Jesus and making the proclamations in the original languages. There is absolutely no logic in saying that these verses in Acts give credence to the teaching that one may first become a Christian and then later be baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in "unknown" tongues. As seen in the above verses outside of the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit in involved in our salvation and He then dwell within us for the rest of our lives with a seal of protection so that not even we are able to dismiss our salvation.

There is absolutely no possibility of someone turning back after God has regenerated them and they have become a child of God. We have been chosen, regenerated, justified, and adopted into the family of God! He is now working in our sanctification and we

have to go forward. If we grieve the Holy Spirit Who dwells in us He will discipline us and if we grieve Him too much He may just take us home in 1 Cor 1:30, the word “sleep” means to physically die.

1Cor1:27 “Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.

1Cor1:28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

1Cor1:29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly.

1Cor1:30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.”

Acts 19:8 “And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.

Acts 19:9 But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

Three months is a long time for Paul to be allowed to continue teaching in the synagogue so God must have had prepared some of the people to gladly receive his message and to become believers in Jesus Christ. But unbelievers will listen to such ramblings only so long and when their curiosity has been satisfied or their patience has expired, they become hardened and such showed when they became hostile toward Paul. Paul then leaves and takes the disciples with him. We have had a similar experience involving my wife’s ministry when we had to leave a church where she had been teaching on Friday nights for about six years. Some of the church members and the pastor became hostile toward the teaching of Reformed beliefs and we had to go to another church that was receptive.

Paul then took his message to the Gentiles who were the major inhabitants of Ephesus. He went to a lecture hall of a man named Tyrannus. He was probably a Greek philosopher. The Greek word translated “hall” literally means a school. So Paul leased this lecture hall for the times when it was not being used by Tyrannus’ school.

Acts 19:10 And this took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

Acts 19:11 And God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, Acts 19:12 so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.”

Paul’s teaching in the school of Tyrannus lasted for two years, which was a long time in the total ministry of Paul. This was an extraordinary time for the spreading of the Kingdom of God so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord. Some of the older texts tell us that Paul taught in the school every day from eleven in the morning until four in the afternoon. Such would have been in the hottest part of the day when Tyrannus supposedly did not operate his school. In this area people took siestas and it is

said that there were more people asleep at 1 pm than at 1 am. In this era nobody took holidays and there were no five day weeks. Teaching five hours a day for six days a week would be 30 hours of lecture a week. In two years the total hours of lectures would be more than our seminary students have now in their three years of study! So Paul was imparting a tremendous amount of knowledge to these people about the prophecies of the coming Messiah and the fulfillment of those prophecies by Jesus. God was also putting His stamp of approval on these lectures by many miracles. Here then we see another peaking of miracles in time as God was spreading the word of Jesus throughout the region of Asia. It is very likely that all seven of the churches of Asia addressed in the Revelation of John were founded at about this time. This area then became one of the most important areas of Christianity for centuries.

Acts 19:13 “But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, “I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.”

Acts 19:14 And seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.

Acts 19:15 And the evil spirit answered and said to them, “I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?”

Acts 19:16 And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”

Here we see a great warning in the improper use of the name of Jesus and a severe butt beating by the demon (I hope I don't offend you with that word but it is just so appropriate). The practice of “black magic” was very prominent in this area at this time and the people thought that these people had great power. Having seen what God was doing through Paul who was teaching that Jesus was the promised Messiah, these Jewish Practitioners of black magic tried to heal someone by invoking the name of Jesus as just the one about whom Paul preached. Using the name of Jesus when the person is not one of His disciples has no authority at all. Such an attempt would be similar to a person who was not a member of the military using the name of a general in the military as a point of authority. My friend, Pete, is in the military and if I said “I tell you to do this in the name of the general of Pete”, you would have no reason to think that I had any authority at all in this matter. This episode reminds me of the centurion who asked Jesus to heal his daughter. The officer was familiar with the chain of command in the military and knew that since Jesus was the Messiah He then would have authority over illness and even death.

Matt 8:5 “And when He had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, entreating Him,

Matt 8:6 and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering great pain.”

Matt 8:7 And He said to him, “I will come and heal him.”

Matt 8:8 But the centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.

Matt 8:9 "For I, too, am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

Matt 8:10 Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled, and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel."

But these Jews did not have Jesus as their Lord and Savior so they tried to just speak the name of a person whom they thought possessed some sort of power. The result was disastrous for the Jews. The demons know Jesus and tremble at His name but they knew that these seven men were not part of the family of God as was Paul. It is very interesting that the demon knew Paul as one of God's people. Similarly today the demons know me as a member of the family of God and they know you, if you are a Christian. They then have to ask God for permission to attack us. (Read the story of Job and also *Luke 22:31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat;"*)

But the demons need no such permission to attack people who are not under the protection and sealing of God. These seven men were physically beat up terribly and fled naked and wounded as they hopefully learned a bit of a lesson from this adventure.

Acts 19:17 "And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified.

Certainly the event was well known as these seven men were the sons of a Jewish High Priest and the sight of those seven men running down the street bleeding and naked must have been a sight that was remembered by all of the people for a long time! I can hear something like "Aren't you one of the ones who streaked the city ten years ago?" This event made known the fact that the name of Jesus was of great importance and not to be used lightly. We also see that just the knowledge that the name of Jesus was of great significance did not have any saving power but the person using the name of Jesus must be a child of God.

Acts 19:18 Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices.

Acts 19:19 And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of all; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

Acts 19:20 So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing."

Still this event did have some great meaning for the spread of the building of the church of Jesus Christ. We see the book burning promised at the top of this chapter. Some of the books used by these magicians are still available in museums across the world. They mainly consist of gibberish that may be arranged in some "magical" order but, of course, they really are of no use except to the people who sell them to gullible people. In this case the books burned amounted to considerable monetary value. The fact that true miracles were seen and people attempting to misuse the name of Jesus were severely

defeated led to the spreading of the name of the Lord in a mighty fashion. The fact that it was prevailing in this area was particularly important in that the true word was defeating the false word.

Acts 19:21 "Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed in the spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."

Acts 19:22 And having sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while."

Paul now viewed his work in Ephesus and this area finished. Churches were established and people had been thoroughly taught so that he knew he could leave here with the Holy Spirit in charge of continuing the development of the churches. So he began to earnestly think and pray about what he should do next in his missionary work. He had a policy of not building on someone else's base of work:

Rom 15:20 "And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation;"

Paul was an initiator, not a developer and I can identify with that role. There already was a church in Rome so he would not have wanted to go there for his main purpose but he did desire to visit there on his way to spread the Gospel in Spain, the most westerly outpost of Roman civilization. Spain would have been his new Macedonia but we do not know if he went there because Luke's purpose in writing was not to include such a trip. Luke would have known by the time of his writing if Paul's trip to Spain had been successful but he did not choose to tell us so we do not know if such happened. But Luke took the Rome trip to be pivotal to the work of Paul and the development of the church in the Roman area so for the rest of the writing we will follow Paul in his work toward Rome.

Acts 19:23 "And about that time there arose no small disturbance concerning the Way.

Acts 19:24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, was bringing no little business to the craftsmen;

Acts 19:25 these he gathered together with the workmen of similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business.

Acts 19:26 "And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all.

Acts 19:27 "And not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship should even be dethroned from her magnificence."

Luke now chooses to tell us about a severe disturbance that occurred as a result of the effectiveness of Paul's work in Ephesus. The success of Paul meant that the work of idol

makers was producing less profit but rather than totally focus on the loss of their money these idol makers tried to tell the citizens that their great temple would also be seen as worthless and no longer a drawing card for visitors to their city and so the city would lose its status in the area. I would suppose that a similar result would occur if people in Las Vegas were told that money was meaningless in the long run and the people coming there to gamble were thus spending their time on worthless items.

Acts 19:28 And when they heard this and were filled with rage, they began crying out, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

Acts 19:29 And the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed with one accord into the theater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia.

Acts 19:30 And when Paul wanted to go into the assembly, the disciples would not let him.

Acts 19:31 And also some of the Asiarchs who were friends of his sent to him and repeatedly urged him not to venture into the theater.

Acts 19:32 So then, some were shouting one thing and some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and the majority did not know for what cause they had come together."

The cult of Ephesian Artemis dates back before the settlement of Ephesus. The name Artemis is not a Greek name and she was seen as a protector of wild animals. Her temple was seen as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was about four times as large as the Parthenon in Athens and was supported by 127 pillars each of them sixty feet tall. (Picture: <http://www.csanet.org/newsletter/may96/nl059603f2.html>)



The silversmiths made time replicas of the image of the goddess and they viewed Artemis as their protector. If people no longer believed that Artemis was a real goddess then the sale of their statues would plummet. Demetrius was a prominent member of the guild of silversmiths and presumably their president. The goddess Artemis was venerated not only in Ephesus but all over the known world so this attempt at disrupting the worship of Artemis was viewed as a serious threat. The city probably had a population of about 300,000 people and a large number of them made up this mob that was led by the silversmiths. As they progressed through the city, the theater would be a logical place for them to assemble. The theater of Ephesus was cut out of the western slope of Mount Pion and could accommodate about 25,000 people. The theater was used as a regular meeting of the civic assembly that met three times a month. It seems that the mob made it an ad hoc assembly meeting as they dragged two of Paul's companions into the theater. Paul naturally wanted to go defend his friends and his missionary journey but the Christians held him back because of the danger to his life. The Asiarchs were leading citizens of Ephesus and they also asked Paul to not endanger himself. What a statement Luke made in saying that most of the people in the mob did not even know why they were there! This is true of most mobs.

Acts 19:33 “and some of the crowd concluded it was Alexander, since the Jews had put him forward; and having motioned with his hand, Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly.

Acts 19:34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, a single outcry arose from them all as they shouted for about two hours, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

Acts 19:35 And after quieting the multitude, the town clerk said, "Men of Ephesus, what man is there after all who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is guardian of the temple of the great Artemis, and of the image which fell down from heaven?"

Acts 19:36 "Since then these are undeniable facts, you ought to keep calm and to do nothing rash.

Acts 19:37 "For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess.

Acts 19:38 "So then, if Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a complaint against any man, the courts are in session and proconsuls are available; let them bring charges against one another.

Acts 19:39 "But if you want anything beyond this, it shall be settled in the lawful assembly.”

The Jews were especially upset at this turn of events because it was well known that they also were not supporters of the idol worship and they feared a great anti-Jew uprising when the crowd realized what the fuss was about and that the Jews were also against their mode of worship and vocations. They put forward Alexander to try to quiet the crowd but the people were not in a mood to listen to him especially when they realized that he was a Jew. The crowd then started chanting loudly “Go Georgia Bulldogs”!! No they started chanting loudly for their idol, Artemis. Finally the town clerk quieted the crowd and started bringing some logic and order to the situation. He reminded them that none of these people had actually done any damage to their property and therefore there was

no cause for bringing this matter to the assembly. He said that if any of them have some civil charges to bring them forth for the courts were in session and lawyers were available to hear charges concerning destruction of property or any other civic matter. He said that is there were any other problem then such should be handled in a lawful assembly (one of the three held each month).

Acts 19:40 “For indeed we are in danger of being accused of a riot in connection with today’s affair, since there is no real cause for it; and in this connection we shall be unable to account for this disorderly gathering.”

Acts 19:41 And after saying this he dismissed the assembly.”

The clerk told them that Rome would not tolerate any riots that had no real cause and they could face severe judgment from Rome. His logic prevailed and the crowd left as he dismissed the assembly. This last event resembles so much the Jews bringing charges against Paul in chapter 18 when Gallio was in charge and told them to not bother him with religious matters. The Jews should now know that they could only bring civil charges against the Christian missionaries so their work against Paul was made considerably more difficult.

Map of the Third Missionary Trip of Paul



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