

## *Acts of the Apostles - Chapter 19 (NIV)*

In his keynote speech, Obama talked about “a new America.” Here’s what he said back at that time: “Whatever we once were, we are no longer a Christian nation. At least not just. We are also a Jewish nation, a Muslim nation, and a Buddhist nation and a Hindu nation, and a nation of non-believers.”



<https://www.bible-history.com/new-testament/pauls-third-missionary-journey.html>

### *Paul in Ephesus*

*19 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples 2 and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”*

*They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”*

Paul heads back to Ephesus from Antioch. Apollos is back in Corinth. The NKJV says “having passed through the Upper Region came to Ephesus”. Even though it only says “upper regions”, the map shows him going by land through his hometown of Tarsus and the same towns he had visited on his first and second missionary journeys. When Paul arrived in Ephesus, he asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed. Their response was “We haven’t even heard of the Holy Spirit.”

*19:3 So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?”*

*“John’s baptism,” they replied.*

***4 Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus."***

This had to bother Paul. He asked "What kind of baptism did you receive? They replied "John's baptism". Based on Chapter 18, Apollos or some other disciple of John the Baptist may have baptized these believers. Luke 3:16 tells us "*John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."* Apollos "though he knew only the baptism of John" This explains that description of Apollos. He didn't know about the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

***19:5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.6 When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. 7 There were about twelve men in all.***

John's baptism was for repentance so Paul baptized them in the name of Jesus. He told them to believe in Jesus and He was coming back. When Paul placed his hands on them they received power from the Holy Spirit as in Acts 1:8. They received the gifts of speaking in tongues and prophesying.

The Greek word used is 'glōssais' which is translated as 'in tongues' but Thayer's Greek Lexicon defines the word as "the language used by a particular people in distinction from that of other nations."

There were twelve men baptized that day.

***19:8 Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. 9 But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. 10 This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.***

Paul headed for the synagogue which was his norm. When he passed through Ephesus the first time he preached once. This time he preached for three months. The Jews became obstinate (NIV), or hardened and disobedient (NASB) or hardened and did not believe. So Paul left them and took his message to the Greeks or Gentiles. The teaching at the school of Tyrannus lasted for two years. Paul's third missionary journey lasted for about three years which was twice the length of each of the other two journeys.

"One ancient, though not inspired, writing says that Paul held his meetings at the school of Tyrannus from eleven in the morning to four in the afternoon. This was the time most people rested from work, including Paul, who worked to support himself while in Ephesus (Acts 20:34-35). These also may have been the "off hours" for the school of Tyrannus.

Paul did this daily, meaning every day. Considering his extended time in Ephesus, this meant many hundreds of hours of teaching. It is no wonder that the work in Ephesus was so broad and effective.” (Guzik)

***19:11 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.***

Paul did amazing things. Can you imagine the Holy Spirit working through his touch or things that had touched him? In the following verses, what does Jesus tell us about the power of having faith in Him?

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|---------------|--|
| Acts 1:8      | You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.                        |
| John 14:12-14 | We will do greater things than Jesus did   |
| Matthew 17:20 | You can do the impossible  |
| Luke 7:6-9    | If we have the faith of the centurion, just a word from Jesus can heal the sick. |
| Mark 9:23b    | Everything is possible to those that believe (Keep your Bible marked there)      |

***19:13 Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, “In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.” 14 Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. 15 One day the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?” 16 Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.***

The men trying to cast out the demons were Jews. The Jewish exorcists failed because they did not have a personal relationship with Jesus. Jesus was not their God, He was the God of Paul. We have heard of the problem casting out evil spirits. Read Mark 9:17-29 (NKJV). The disciples could not cast out that demon because it required prayer and fasting. The demon-possessed man here in Acts 19 overpowered them, beat them up and sent them home naked and bleeding.

***19:17 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.***

At first, it seems strange that Luke would include the demon-possessed man in his writings but based on what we just read it makes sense to add it. Since the demon knew Jesus and Paul, it gave proof to their power.

Because of what had happened: believers openly confessed Jesus, those that practiced sorcery burnt their scrolls publicly and the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

A drachma was a silver coin worth one day’s wages. The number of scrolls they burned was significant.

***19:21 After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also." 22 He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.***

Paul feels led by the Holy Spirit to go to Jerusalem. It appears that Paul had a vision of things to come. He has been given a specific route through Macedonia and Achaia with his final destination to be Rome. He sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia. I get a distinct feeling that Paul realizes his end is approaching and he is tying up loose ends.

### ***The Riot in Ephesus***

***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. 25 He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: "You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. 26 And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. 27 There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty."***

This is one of those things that you never think about. Without manmade idol worship, the need for silversmiths is significantly reduced. Satan attacks in some of the most unexpected ways. Demetrius did what the Jews have been doing in all of the cities that Paul has visited. He is hiding the true source of his anger with Paul. It is about money or greed. For the Jews, it was personal status or envy. Artemis is also known as the goddess Diana. Paul was doing God's work and not attacking one idol specifically but all idols. As people came to Jesus, they are to leave their old lives which included no longer worshipping Diana and buying shrines associated with the temple.

"This is how we should endeavor to change society. "I wish the gospel would affect the trade of London; I wish it might. There are some trades that need affecting, need to be cut a little shorter...Not by an Act of Parliament! Let Acts of Parliament leave us alone. We can fight that battle alone. But may it come to an end by the spread of the gospel...I have no faith in any reformation that does not come through men's hearts being changed." (Spurgeon)

***19:28 When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" 29 Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and all of them rushed into the theater together. 30 Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. 31 Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.***

***32 The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. 33 The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander to the front, and they shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a***

*defense before the people. 34 But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"*

Paul seems to cause an uproar everywhere he goes. It has been the Jews to attack him but here in Ephesus, it is the Gentiles. It is hard to believe but at the urging of Paul's friends, he did NOT enter the theater with the angry mob. We are told that there are several types of people in the angry mob. There are:

- Silversmiths for financial benefit
- Jews taking control
- Diana worshipers
- people seized
- oblivious mob

When the mob found out that the Jews were trying to take control they shouted: "Great is Artemis of Ephesians!" Some people have trouble making it through an hour and a half worship service but these people just kept shouting for 2 hours.

*19:35 The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: "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.*

The city clerk quieted the crowd by saying not only is Artemis great but Ephesus is the guardian of the temple to the great Artemis. He says that the statue inside the temple fell from heaven.

"The epicenter of Artemis worship was a black meteorite that either resembled or had been fashioned into a grotesque image of a woman. The lower part was wrapped like a mummy...the idol was covered with breasts, symbolizing fertility." (Hughes)

The city clerk finishes the assembly with several warnings. He warns that:

- They should calm down and not do anything rash.
- The Macedonians have committed no legal offense.
- If need be the silversmiths should go through the legal system.
- They are in danger of being charged with rioting.

"This chapter teaches us all a permanent lesson: that when disciples have a true *revival*, society gets a *revolution*. When the Spirit moves mightily upon children of God we may look for other mighty movements among unbelievers, and need not be surprised if the devil himself comes down, having great wrath, as though he knew that his time were short." (Pierson)