

Ephesus in Acts

Since we have been enjoying our Pastor preach through the book of Ephesians, today I intend to look at Ephesus in the rest of the scriptures, but primarily in Acts chapter 19. The time line after our Lord's resurrection is helpful to place Ephesus in its historical context. In 30AD, the Lord Jesus Christ is crucified, dead, buried, but gloriously resurrected. The Ascension comes 40 days later, and Pentecost 10 days after the Ascension. In 31AD, the Samaritans are converted, which is recorded in Acts 8. In 34AD, Saul is converted on the road to Damascus in Acts 9. In 37AD, Peter preaches to the Gentiles in Acts 10. In 48AD, Paul takes his first missionary journey which is recorded in Acts 13. In 49AD, Paul visits Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens. In 51AD, Paul goes to Corinth. 22 years after the resurrection, in 52AD, Paul came to Ephesus. Some ten years after his first visit, Paul writes the letter to the Ephesians.

Paul first mentions Ephesus in 55AD in his first letter to the Corinthians 16:8-9

1Co 16:8 But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, 1Co 16:9 for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

Paul recognized that the location of Ephesus was a good base of operation for the spread of the gospel. It had been a Greek colony, but was part of the Roman conquest. It was a capital city and an important harbor. Ephesus served as a commercial center for the population of the rest of Asia Minor. The temple of the goddess Artemis annually drew multitudes of worshipers. It was a vacation destination, if you will.

In 62AD, Luke writes the book of Acts, or the Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles. The first mention of Ephesus in the book of Acts comes in chapter 18, so turn in your Bibles to Acts 18:1-3:

Act 18:1 After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. **Act 18:2** And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them,

Act 18:3 and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade.

Just as Chris, Eric, Rick, and Stas are Christians, they are also truck drivers. Paul shared this same bond with Aquila and Priscilla, and due to spending time together both in worship and occupation, presumably would have gotten to know them well. Paul also “stayed” with them, so they shared a residence. Paul led by example, and “worked”. Remember how he taught the Ephesians in chapter four, verse 28, to:

Eph 4:28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Let’s continue a little further down in chapter 18 to verses 18-21:

Act 18:18 After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow. Act 18:19 And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. Act 18:20 When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined. Act 18:21 But on taking leave of them he said, “I will return to you if God wills,” and he set sail from Ephesus.

So Paul gets to Ephesus for the first time, but doesn’t stay long. He drops off his brother and sister in the Lord, Aquila and Priscilla, and heads for Jerusalem. Why would he leave so soon? Before leaving Corinth, he had cut his hair and had taken a vow. John Gill and others think this vow is most likely a Nazarite vow. The Nazarite vow (like Sampson should have kept, but didn’t), was to separate himself to the Lord by not drinking any strong drink or eating grapes (Num 6:3), separating from the razor, so no hair cuts or shaving until the vow is over (Num 6:5), and separation from dead bodies. (Num 6:6). At the end of the vow, the Nazarite goes to the entrance of the tent of meeting with two lambs, a ram, a basket of unleavened bread, grain offerings, and drink offerings. Then, Num 6:18 says:

Num 6:18 And the Nazirite shall shave his consecrated head at the entrance of the tent of meeting and shall take the hair from his consecrated head and put it on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offering.

So Paul leaves Ephesus to complete his vow in Jerusalem. Perhaps 1 Cor. 9:20 helps explain his actions, when he says:

1Co 9:20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law, that I might win those under the law.

This wouldn't be the last time Paul does this. He shaves his head again in Acts 21. So with Paul gone to Jerusalem, what happens next, sets up our story in Acts 19. Turn to verse 24:

Act 18:24 Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures.

This is the first mention of Apollos in the scriptures, and the first place he appears is Ephesus. I find the name of Apollos very ironic, although short for Ap-ol-lon-ius, its root is Apollo, who was one of the 12 Olympian gods, as was Artemis. The Greeks and Romans shared the same stories of the 12 gods, but used different names, except for Apollo, which stayed the same for both. In mythology, Apollo was the twin brother of Artemis, although Pastor Doug says that Artemis of the Ephesians was very different from this Artemis. This helped me understand why the KJV uses the Roman name "Diana", while the ESV uses the Greek name "Artemis".

Greek	Roman	Description
Zeus	Jupiter	Lord of the sky and supreme ruler of the gods. Known for throwing lightening bolts.
Artemis	Diana	Apollo's twin sister and daughter of Zeus. Lady of wild things and huntsman to the gods. As Apollo is the Sun, Artemis is the moon.
Apollo	Apollo	Son of Zeus. Master musician, archer god, healer, god of light, god of truth, sun god. A busy god who likes the laurel tree, dolphins, and crows.

Act 18:25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. Act 18:26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. .

Apollos taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance looking forward to the one to come, not a baptism of faith in the Lord Jesus. Apollos was educated; he was eloquent; and he was humbly teachable. He let a husband and wife tent maker teach him the way of God more accurately. A disciple of Christ is a learner. As Christians we should always be humbly learning more about the scriptures and our Lord Jesus Christ. Let's continue in verse 27:

Act 18:27 And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed,

This verse reminds us that all the glory belongs to God in salvation. Why have you believed? Through grace is the answer! It means that God divinely enabled you and regenerated your soul to believe. His divine power is the source, while your belief is the result, to the praise of His glory. He overcomes our unbelief, and brings us life through the gospel message.

Act 18:28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

Apollos does something here that I hope all of you can do. He goes to the Old Testament and can show others, by the Scriptures, that the Christ was Jesus. We have it much easier today, as we have the gospels and the letters in the New Testament that do this very thing. In 52AD, Apollo wouldn't have had these books yet. How might he have shown Jesus using the Old Testament? Maybe he did something like this.... Turn to Psalm 22.

Psa 22:1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Jesus said this on the cross. He is the Christ.

Psa 22:7 All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; Psa 22:8 “He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”

People mocked Jesus while he was on the cross. He is the Christ.

Psa 22:17 I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me;

Jesus didn't have his legs broken on the cross as others did. He is the Christ.

Psa 22:18 they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

Jesus had his garments divided and gambled for after the soldiers crucified him. He is the Christ, which means the anointed one, the Messiah.

Isa 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

Jesus died for sinners on the cross. We can have peace with God by His blood. This is what the gospels do. They go to the Old Testament, showing you Jesus as the Christ. Now let's turn to Acts 19.

Act 19:1 And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. Act 19:2 And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” Act 19:3 And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John's baptism.” Act 19:4 And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” Act 19:5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Act 19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. Act 19:7 There were about twelve men in all.

Why does Paul ask the question, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” This question has not come up before in all his travels to other cities. Why here? Why now? It seems reasonable to me that when Paul got back to Ephesus, and as he was catching up with his fellow tent makers, Aquila and Priscilla, that they filled him in on their experience with Apollos, and how he “only knew the baptism of John”. Paul was on the lookout for more followers of John the Baptist, and he found them. But what should we already know about the receiving of the Holy Spirit?

First of all, John the Baptist had some things to say about it:

Mat 3:11 “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Joh 1:33 I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’

John taught that Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Now take a look at what Jesus had to say about the Holy Spirit:

Luk 11:13 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Jesus said we could ask the heavenly Father for the Holy Spirit. After Jesus was raised from the dead, he appeared to his disciples on the first day of the week and gave them the Holy Spirit.

Joh 20:22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

And then just before Jesus ascended into heaven, he baptized them with the Holy Spirit in:

Act 1:5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

In fact it was just 10 days later at Pentecost. But Jesus continues in verse eight with information that sets the stage for the entire book of Acts and gives us important context to help understand Acts 19.

Act_1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Jesus gives four places that the apostles will be sent and will witness of Him: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the end of the earth. Each of these places hear the gospel preached, and have the Holy Spirit confirm the word of the apostles with mighty signs and wonders. First came Pentecost in Jerusalem:

Act_2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues (means languages) as the Spirit gave them utterance.

In Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit confirms the gospel with the miracles of a mighty rushing wind, tongues of fire, and multiple languages. In Peter’s sermon that follows these miracles, He tells everyone they will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit when they repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus.

Act_2:38 And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Now look at how the Holy Spirit works in Samaria in Acts 8:

Act 8:5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. Act 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Act 8:14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John Act_8:15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, Act 8:16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Act_8:17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

As John Gill comments, Philip did not lay on hands, in order that persons might receive the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost; this was particular to the apostles, and therefore Peter and John came down for this purpose. But why didn't they just receive the Holy Spirit when they believed? Remember that Jews don't have dealings with Samaritans. (Joh 4:9) The history of Jews and Samaritans was one of civil war, golden calves, and separation. To bring the church together, the Holy Spirit worked mightily to confirm that both Jews and Samaritans were one in Christ. This delay in the Samaritans receiving the Holy Spirit, let the apostles confirm for both Jews and Samaritans who would doubt, that they were Christians together in the same church.

Even perhaps more amazing than the joining of Jews to Samaritans, is what happens next. The confirmation of Jews and Gentiles coming together into one body, brings Jesus' words to pass about "the end of the earth". Providentially, Saul's persecution of the church in Acts 8 and 9 is what seems to scatter them to the ends of the earth. Then in chapter ten, the mighty works of God to bring them together begins with an angel appearing to Cornelius, having him send men to Peter. The Holy Spirit continues by giving a hungry Peter the famous dream of meat on a sheet, convincing him not to call common what God has made clean. The sheet had to come down three times, echoing the Lord's command to Peter to "feed His sheep". Then Cornelius' men show up, and the Holy Spirit spoke to Peter, telling him to arise and go with them. When Peter reaches Cornelius, he even comments on how incredible this change of relationship with Jews and Gentiles is in:

Act 10:28 And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean.

Peter gives Cornelius the gospel, and then the Holy Spirit amazes everyone:

Act_10:44 While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. Act_10:45 And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.

The Jews were, stunned, shocked, and flabbergasted. The Gentiles get in too? Then the Holy Spirit continues to confirm this as the Jews hear the Gentiles speak in languages, to which Peter brings it to a head by asking:

Act_10:47 “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”

This was such earth shattering news that the apostles had to give a lengthy defense and report when they got back to Jerusalem, because the circumcision party criticized him for going to uncircumcised men and eating with them. (Act 11:3) But Peter explained all the mighty works of the Holy Spirit in:

Act_11:15 As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. Act_11:16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ Act 11:17 If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?” Act 11:18 When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

The connection to John’s baptism is made again. John’s baptism was a precursor, a forerunner. The Holy Spirit was now come in power confirming for Jews and Gentiles that the gospel belongs to everyone, even to the end of the earth. As Cyril (theologian and archbishop of Jerusalem who lived from 315-386) observes, "as he, "who is plunged in water, and baptized", is encompassed by the water on every side, so are they that are wholly baptized by the Spirit. The Gentiles getting into the church continues to be debated in:

Act 15:7 And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. Act 15:8 And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, Act 15:9 and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.

Receipt of the Holy Spirit was the confirming equalizer for Jews, Samaritans, and even Gentiles that Jesus was taking over all the nations now, not just Israel.

Now back to Paul's question to the followers of John the Baptist: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

John Stott says, "This incident has become a proof text in some Pentecostal and charismatic circles, especially when the inaccurate and unwarranted King James Version translation of verse two is followed, namely 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?' (the ESV says "when you believed"). Stott continues: From this it is sometimes argued that Christian initiation is in two stages, beginning with faith and conversion, and followed later by receiving the Holy Spirit. But those twelve 'disciples' cannot possibly be regarded as providing a norm for a two-stage initiation. On the contrary, as Michael Green has written, it is 'crystal clear that these disciples were in no sense Christians', having not yet believed in Jesus. "

From the context of Acts, I argue that these followers of John the Baptist are leftovers at the end of the earth. So when Paul lays his hands on them in verse six, it is confirmation for everyone that followers of John the Baptist get to join the church with the Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles, as long as they believe in Jesus.

So what happens next in Ephesus? Turn back to Acts 19:

Act 19:8 And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.

Notice that Paul doesn't use emotional manipulation, dramatic music, or psychological tactics. He uses reason and persuasion about the kingdom of God. Christianity isn't blind faith in faith. It is rooted in eye witness evidence of a crucified and risen Lord. It is a reasonable faith in the work of Jesus Christ.

Act 19:9 But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus.

Act 19:10 This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

The gospel is like the sun. As the sun hardens clay into brick, or melts away snow, so the gospel may harden some in unbelief, yet soften the hearts of others. Once

unbelievers are speaking evil of the Way of the Lord before the congregation, Paul changes venues. Instead of the synagogue, he finds a meeting place in the hall or school of Tyrannus. The Ethiopic version says, "he taught daily before the court and the governors". Beza adds that he taught for five hours a day from 11am. To 4pm. For two years, those in Ephesus could go and hear Paul teach. What a seminary that must have been. Speaking of extraordinary...

Act 19:11 And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, Act 19:12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them.

Now a miracle is rare by itself. By definition, miracles are rare. So how rare is an extraordinary miracle? Ephesus experienced works of God that other places never will. If Paul wiped his face with a hanky while making tents, folks snatched it up and took it over to the hospital and cleaned out the ward. After wearing his apron while making tents, folks took those over to a brother who was afflicted with evil spirits and they came out of them. This makes me wonder if Catholic relics got started from passages like this. John Calvin points out that worthless things (used aprons and hankies) were chosen so that the people might not fall into superstition and idolatry.

This sets the stage for one of my favorite stories in the scriptures, the seven sons of Sceva. I wonder if Jesus was talking about these guys when He said, "On that day, many will say to me, did we not cast out demons in your name? (Mat 7:22). The KJV starts verse 13 by saying, "certain of the vagabond Jews". The ESV says:

Act 19:13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." Act 19:14 Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. Act 19:15 But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" Act 19:16 And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

These guys, trying to tap into a power they didn't possess, get beat up; clothes ripped off, and run out of the house. They were trying to either make a buck, or impress their friends, but either way, they paid the price. I suppose I have always found this funny, as justice gets served. It seems many false teachers in our day claim to have the power of an exorcist and use Jesus name, and seek to impress with their super spiritual powers. But after studying this passage I think I have been missing the main point for a lot of years.

I noticed first, that this section of chapter 19 has a chiasm. Chiasms are great for finding the main point of the scripture, but they can also help you find parallels that you might be missing. This is the case in the seven sons of Sceva. As we look at the chiasm, the outside verses are 9 and 23, and both talk about the opposition against "The way". As we move closer to the main point in verses 10 and 22, Dwelling in Asia is discussed. Further towards the center are verses 10 and 20, the "Word of the Lord". The last set of parallels before the main point, include the sons of Sceva or traveling exorcists invoking the Name of Jesus in verse 13, compared with those who had practiced magic arts in verse 19.

Opposition against the way (9)

 Dwelling in Asia(10)

 Word of the Lord(10)

 Exorcists invoking the Name of Jesus(13)

 Name of the Lord Jesus extolled/magnified(17)

 Those who had practiced magic arts(19)

 Word of the Lord(20)

 Dwelling in Asia(22)

Opposition against the way(23)

I had never made this connection before. This is where the naturalism of our day really affects us. In verse 12, there are evil spirits coming out of people. In verse 13 there are evil spirits that the sons of Sceva are trying to cast out of people. In verse 15 an evil spirit speaks and names Paul and Jesus as persons "I know". In verse 16 the evil spirit leaps on the sons of Sceva and overpowers them. Seven against one sounds like an Andre the giant wrestling match. This gives evidence

to the identity of an evil spirit. I believe, just as the early church fathers (Justin Martyr, Ir-e-na-eus, Tertullian, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Ambrose, Jerome), and historians Philo and Josephus, that these evil spirits were the disembodied spirits of the giants drowned in the flood. But what Biblical evidence do we have that demons or evil spirits are the disembodied giants drowned in the flood? The Hebrew word Rapha, which is the singular form of Raphaim (giants), is found eight times in the scripture, and is translated as the dead, or the shades:

Job 26:5 The dead (Rapha) tremble under the waters and their inhabitants.

The treasury of scripture knowledge says of these dead, “the giants (Rephaim) are in anguish under the water and their inhabitants,” probably in allusion to the destruction of the earth by the del-uge. Also in Isaiah:

Isa 14:9 Sheol beneath is stirred up to meet you when you come; it rouses the shades (Rapha) to greet you, all who were leaders of the earth; it raises from their thrones all who were kings of the nations.

Evil spirits were dwelling in Ephesus. Do you believe evil spirits are real? Our Bible tells us about demons in all four gospels. Peter casts out unclean spirits in Acts 5:16, Phillip in Acts 8:7, Paul in Acts 16:18. The word demon and unclean spirit, although different words, are used synonymously in Luke 9:42. It says:

Luk 9:42 While he was coming, the **demon** threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the **unclean spirit** and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.

So if you are living in Ephesus, a place that has demons, what is life like? What do you do when a friend or loved one has a demon? You could hire one of these traveling vagabond exorcists like the sons of Sceva to cast them out. Or perhaps you could buy expensive magic books with incantations to ward off these evil spirits.

Act 19:18 Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. Act 19:19 And a number of those who had

practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver.

Ephesus was famous for teaching magic. Apollonius Tyaneus, (A-po-llon-ius ta-nay-us) in the beginning of Nero's reign (54AD), had opened a school and taught magic. There is a six word phrase that is called the "Ephesian letters", still used today in a rite to HEKATE (Hec-a-te), the goddess of magic and witchcraft.

Artemis of the Ephesians was also said to be a magician. The Ephesians had somehow figured out how to get a hold of Paul's used handkerchiefs and aprons and theses would chase the evil spirits out. The power of the Holy Spirit through the apostle was amazing.

That brings us to the main point of the chiasm in verse 17, sandwiched in between Jewish exorcists and magic books:

Act 19:17 And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled.

This is the high point of the chapter. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled (or magnified as the KJV says). These extraordinary miracles, the sick being healed, the evil spirits cast out, all of these were confirming gifts to the power of the Holy Spirit, who was given to those who believed in Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Verse Act 19:20:

20 So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

I love how John Gill puts it, when he comments on verse 20: The Word of the Lord prevailed over conjuring books, over conjurers themselves, yea, even the devils; the power of God going along with it. The increase of it means many were converted; and were delivered from the power of darkness, out of the hands of Satan, and translated into the kingdom of Christ. This increase was so large that it

became the topic of what I call the silversmith's corporate profit and loss meeting. Let's pick up in verse 23:

Act 19:23 About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way. Act 19:24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen.

Act 19:25 These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth.

The love of money continues to be the root of all kinds of evil.

Act 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 great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods.

The Word of the Lord has come to the ends of the earth.

Act 19:27 And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship."

Jesus Christ is taking over the nations given to Him by the Father.

Act 19:28 When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" Act 19:29 So the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's companions in travel. Act 19:30 But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him. Act 19:31 And even some of the Asi-archs, who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theater.

Asi-archs were high-ranking officers of the province of Asia.

Act 19:32 Now some cried out one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together. Act 19:33 Some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward. And Alexander, motioning with his hand, wanted to make a defense to the crowd. Act 19:34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

Notice how it says "they recognized that he was a Jew", and the response was a two hour football cheer for "their" elohim. They knew that Yahweh, the Elohim of the Jews, was in direct opposition to Artemis.

Act 19:35 And when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, "Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky?"

In the KJV, rather than "sacred stone that fell from the sky", it says "the image that fell down from Jupiter". That is a big difference in translation to me. Are we talking about a meteorite or a spirit from Zeus/Jupiter? The entire phrase is a translation of only one Greek word: "diopetes" (*dee-op-et-ace*), and is only found in all of scripture. I asked Doug about this verse, and he said the best translation is the image from Jupiter meaning Zeus. The Latin Vulgate reads, "Artemis, the offspring of Jupiter".

Act 19:36 Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. Act 19:37 For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess.

Act 19:38 If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. Act 19:39 But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. Act 19:40 For we really are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion." Act 19:41 And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

This brings us to the end of the history of Ephesus in Acts, although the city will be mentioned again in chapter 20, just in passing. Paul will mention Ephesus in I Corinthians, 1 Timothy, and 2 Timothy. In the last mention of Ephesus in the scripture, John writes in the Revelation 2:1:

Rev 2:1 “To the angel of the church in **Ephesus** write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands. Rev 2:2 “I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. Rev 2:3 I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. Rev 2:4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

Rev 2:5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. Rev 2:6 Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

I pray this has been an encouragement to you and made you more familiar with the backdrop for the book of Ephesians. Think about these verses in Ephesians that connect with Acts 19:

Eph 1:13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, Eph 1:14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Paul clarifies that the normal receipt of the Holy Spirit comes after belief in Christ, although the Ephesians saw the followers of John the Baptist receive the Holy Spirit afterwards, which was a special exception to show confirmation of them being included in the church.

Eph 1:19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might Eph 1:20 that he

worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, Eph 1:21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

Paul didn't have to shout for two hours to bring to mind that Christ is above Artemis, but perhaps the Ephesians thought of that when they read this.

Eph 4:14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

This makes me think of the magic books being burned.

Eph 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Eph 6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

The wrestling against flesh and blood definitely brings to mind the sons of Sceva taking a beating at the hands of an evil spirit. And finally,

Eph 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

You here today can also be brought near by the blood of Christ. Look to the Savior on the cross, who was dead, but risen again. Believe in Him and receive the Holy Spirit. Lord, please let it be so. Let's pray.