

## Acts 19

Paul's third journey actually began in chapter 18 when Luke tells that he "went through the regions of Galatia and Phrygia, establishing all the disciples" (18:23), but it is in chapter 19 that we find much rewards from his labors. He had left Prisca and Aquilla in Ephesus at the end of his second journey and had been asked by Jews to abide a longer time with them. He declined, yet he promised, "I will return unto you again, if God will" (18:21). God did will and the 19th chapter is a record of his three years working in this Asian city.

Paul found certain disciples in Ephesus upon his arrival there. He asked them, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" and they responded, "Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given" (19:2). Immediately Paul knew there was a defect with these disciples. Even had they not received the Holy Spirit, if they had been properly instructed, they would have known of the giving of the Holy Spirit. So Paul asked, "Into what then were ye baptized?" "Into John's baptism" was their response (19:4).

John had come baptizing in Jordan near Salim because there was much water there. He was the harbinger of Jesus and God had sent him to baptize (Jn. 1:33; Mt. 21:25f). He baptized for the remission of sins and those who rejected his baptism, rejected God's counsel (Mk. 1:4; Lk. 7:30). He who had instructed these in their knowledge of Jesus is unknown although strong inference points to Apollos who had earlier been in Ephesus, who was mighty in the Word but knowing only the baptism of John (18:24f). Whether these were Apollos' converts or not, the fact remains that, like him, they were deficient in their knowledge. John pointed the people to Christ who was to come, the baptism of the Great Commission pointed men back to believe on Him who had already come. These disciples (twelve men) were baptized again (19:5). The purpose of their baptism was the same, unto remission of sins, but their faith was deficient (Mk. 1:4; Acts 2:38). A person may be baptized for the right reason, but if he had the wrong faith, he would need to be baptized again. When these were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, Paul laid his hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit, and spake in tongues and prophesied (19:6). They thus received a gift of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:1-4), but not the gift of the Holy Spirit. They had received that already when they were baptized (Acts 2:38f). There is a difference between (1) "The gift of the Holy Spirit;" (2) a "spiritual gift" and (3) the "baptism of the Holy Spirit."

Paul entered into the synagogue and preached boldly there for three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God. The inevitable clash between unbelieving Jews and Paul came: "some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the way" (19:8f). This is the second instance in Acts in which Christ's teaching and His people are identified as the "way" (Acts 9:2; 19:9). Jesus said of himself, "I am the Way...", and His disciples identified his doctrine as the "Way of truth," the "way of holiness," the "right way" and the "way of salvation" (John 14:6; 2 Pet. 2:2; Isa. 35:8; Acts 13:10; 16:17). So, when the contention arose, Paul separated the disciples. By this we understand that until this time they had continue to meet on the Sabbath with the Jews but, without doubt, they already were separately meeting on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7).

Having separated himself from the synagogue and thus the teaching opportunities available to him there, he taught daily for two years in the school of one Tyrannus of whom nothing more is known (19:9). This offered other opportunities for him to spread the word, not only in Ephesus, but in all Asia for, "all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of God" (19:10). Some of the Asian cities in which churches were found and to whom Paul later wrote letters (Colossians, Laodicea, Col. 4:16), may have had their origin at this time although the historian records no record of visits Paul made to either city.

Just as the miracles wrought by the twelve Apostles caused widespread interest, so miracles from the hand of Paul produced similar reaction. Handkerchiefs and aprons were carried from Paul to those who were sick and the disease departed from them (19:12). Luke records an interesting incident of a certain Jewish exorcist who, having heard Paul cast out demons, apparently thought there was some mystical power in saying "the Lord Jesus." Certain sons of a Jewish priest named Sceva attempted to cast out an evil spirit from a man saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." But their efforts "backfired"! The evil spirit said, "Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are ye?" (19:11). Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on these men, prevailed against them and they fled from the house naked and wounded (19:16).

This above incident caused Jesus' name to be magnified. It impressed those who were not yet Christians and deeply impressed also those who had become Christians but who still held to their magical arts. Many came, confessed their deeds, and brought their books concerning magical arts and burned them. The worth of those books was fifty thousand

pieces of silver (19:18f).

About this time another disturbance arose. This time it had to do with certain craftsmen who made silver images of the goddess Diana. Ephesians had erected a magnificent temple to this goddess and Demetrius and other silversmith were worried about the danger Paul's teaching posed for them. Demetrius told his fellow craftsmen: "Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: so that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at naught; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth" (19:23-25).

Worship of "Diana" had continued in Ephesus for many hundreds of years. Her temple had been destroyed and rebuilt a number of times and the temple of Paul's day was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. We are told it was 220 years in building! It was 425 feet long and 220 feet wide. It was supported by 127 columns of Parian marble, each of which was 60 feet high. The expense for building this structure was imposed upon all of Asia. Of this goddess Albert Barnes wrote the following: "This was a celebrated goddess of the heathen, and one of the twelve superior deities. In the heavens she was Luna, or Meni, (the moon;) on earth, Diana; and in hell, Hecate. She was sometimes represented with a crescent on her head, a bow in her hand...She was also represent with a great number of bread, to denote her being the fountain of blessings, or as distributing her benefits to each in their proper station. She was worshipped in Egypt, Athens, Cilicia, and among heathen nations generally; but the most celebrated place of her worship was Ephesus--a city peculiarly dedicated to her" (Commentary on the New Testament, p. 494). The statue of the goddess was made of elm or ebony and said to have been made by one Canitias, though believed to have fallen from heaven.

Demetrius feigned horror that worship of Diana shall fall in to neglect but his primary motive was money. As more and more turned to worship the true God, less and less would desire images of Diana. Demetrius's spirit is still alive today for many seek to capitalize from religion thinking that godliness is a way of gain. Paul might have suffered injury had he adventured himself into the mindless mob but friends stayed him from going before them. The city's town clerk allowed the cries, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" to continue for two hours, then he silenced and

dispersed the crowd by reminding them Paul had not robbed their temple nor blasphemed their goddess and that they were liable to be called in question for their uproar.

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