

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to Acts 19

Let's pray...

[Act 19:1-41 NKJV] 1 And it happened, while **Apollos was at Corinth**, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, **came to Ephesus**. And finding **some disciples**

Here in chapter 19, we have Paul continuing his 3rd missionary journey.

After traveling through the churches in Galatia, he comes to Ephesus.

Now, Ephesus was a major city.

It was the capital of the Roman province of Asia – this was the area that the Holy Spirit prohibited Paul from preaching when he began his 2nd missionary journey.

Ephesus was also famous because there was a huge temple dedicated to the Greek goddess Artemus / or Diana as she was known to the Romans

This temple was one of the 7 ancient wonders of the world.

This is also the place where Paul is going to spend the longest time

He is going to establish a church there and then later on Timothy is going to be the pastor of the church.

Now, in verse one – Luke tells us that Apollos had moved on to Corinth.

Apollos was preaching in Ephesus – however, there were a few gaps in his preaching.

So, Aquila and Priscilla take him under their wings and they filled the gaps and Apollos was an individual who the Holy Spirit used in preaching Christ to the Jews and Gentiles.

So, Apollos is not in Ephesus anymore, Paul shows up and he comes across some disciples.

Now, the word disciple in the scriptures is usually reserved for followers of Jesus, for “believers”.

However, not always because in John 6, as we are going to study it in a few weeks on Sunday morning, we will see that many of Jesus’ disciples abandoned Him when Jesus pretty much told them –

No more free meals – from now on, you will have to eat my flesh and drink my blood (Jesus was telling them “you must take me into you, and you must come into me; and then you will have real life.”)

So, when that happens, many disciples took off.

So Paul finds this group of disciples and he sees there is something wrong,

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."

Why did Paul ask that question?

Because it was evident that these disciples lacked the marks of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Turn Gal 5

When a person is not living a life influenced by the Holy Spirit, their life looks like this:

[Gal 5:19-23 NKJV] 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told [you] in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

When a person is living a life influenced by the Holy Spirit, their life looks like this:

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Church, since we believe the Bible to speak truthfully not only about who God is but who we are, we can therefore have certain expectations about spiritual development in our personal Christianity.

The Holy Spirit's presence in our life – is not like Rogaine where it works on some and not on others.

When we walk with God, He does complete what He began –which means, you and I will bear fruit.

Our lives will be transformed.

Being a Christian means that we are a new creation.

Brand new.

A new mind.

A new heart.

A new purpose.

With new abilities given to us by the Holy Spirit to glorify God and serve Him and others.

So, Paul saw these guys and thought to himself: I'm looking at caterpillars here, not butterflies.

They were missing that spiritual transformation that is promised to Christians.

3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." 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."

So, just like Apollos – this group of disciples, there were gaps in their theology.

They said they were baptized into John's baptism.

However, even John the Baptist spoke about the One who was going to come after him and baptize with the Holy Spirit.

[Mat 3:11 NKJV] 11 "I indeed baptize you with water unto 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.

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.

So here we see the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Remember, when we started the book of Acts –

When we put our faith in trust in Jesus Christ – the Holy Spirit comes inside of us.

However, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is when we have the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Turn your bible with me to John 7

[Jhn 7:37-38 NKJV] 37 On the last day, that great [day] of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

This is not a “one time” occurrence. We need to be continually, over and over again, “filled” with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

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.

So here Paul continued his ministry in Ephesus.

He continues to speak at the Jewish synagogues and after three months – God closed the doors at the synagogue (the Jews rejected his ministry and his message) so Paul moves on and started to meet with the believers in a Greek school.

Now, according to certain historians, during this time (a typical workday was) – people would work in the early morning (7-11) – have a 4- 5 hours siesta time during the hottest portion of the day and then return to work in the evening.

So Paul, would use this time to teach

He was making tents in the morning and at night – and during his time off, he instructed the disciples about the things of the kingdom of God.

And he was doing this every single day.

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.

Paul continued to do this for two years, and his effective teaching equipped believers, who got the word of God out to all who dwelt in Asia.

Think about how long it would have taken Paul to visit all the cities of Asia and preach the gospel – however, he accomplished this by equipping the saints in Ephesus to do the work of the ministry.

Some of the churches that were established during this time were the church in Colosse, Laodicea and some of the churches we find in Revelation 2,3.

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.

The word for handkerchief here is not the piece of cloth that Paul would use to blow his nose – this is the towel that he would use to wipe the sweat from his forehead as he was building tents.

The same thing with the apron – it was a garment that he used for his tent making job. And people would take these sweatbands and aprons that Paul would wear and they would take them home – they would lay them on top of their loved ones that were sick – and they were healed.

Now, there was nothing magical about Paul's sweat towel.

What we see happening here is the same thing we do when we lay hands on someone at church or when we put anointing oil on someone.

There is nothing miraculous or magical about our hands or the oil.

What is happening here is that the handkerchief / the apron – they became physical expressions that triggered the people's faith and they were healed.

Luke gives us another example in his gospel.

The woman who suffered from the bleeding problem for 12 years.

She said to herself – all I need to do is touch the border of His robe and then I would be healed.

Did Jesus have a magic robe – no

By her touching the border of His robe, it triggered her faith (it was a point of contact) and the faith that was bottled up in the woman was released and she was healed.

Now, I think there another reason that we see that the Holy Spirit used Paul's sweaty towel and apron as the point of contact.

You see, it was not only Paul's sweat that saturated the towel and the apron –

It was also his love for the people of Ephesus.

The people in Ephesus knew the sacrifice that Paul was making on their behalf – and this alleviated their misery.

His love for them is what triggered their faith and brought encouragement and healing to them.

Church, as an application – one of the things we have to ask ourselves is “What can I do to encourage others / to love others, so that my sweat towel / my apron can become a point of contact for their faith to be released. Just like Paul.

Never forget, there is One who sweat blood for you and me.

Why? Because He loves us.

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.

These exorcists were not men who believed in Jesus, but simply used words, formulas to cast out demons.

They see that there is power in the name of Jesus.

However, we see that they were trying to cast out demons in the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches.

They didn't even consider Jesus as their Lord.

He's Paul's Lord

Rather than believing and submitting to Christ and receiving the Holy Spirit, they were simply trying to harness His power for their own purposes.

And, if you think about it, this is a terrible compromise on their part.

They're supposed to be priestly Jews, and here they're invoking a man who is seen as a false messiah!

And as we see – this one demon possessed man overpowered and overcame these 7 men.

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. 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.

As a result of what happened to the sons of Sceva, we see the fear of God starting to grip the hearts of the people of Ephesus.

And that is a very good thing because it leads to life change.

They began to bring all their “magic” books and burned them in front of everyone.

They are repenting for what they have done –

Notice that they were doing it publically –

That's what James tells us to do!

(Jas 5:16 NKJV) Confess your trespasses to one another,

And we also see the cost associated with them burning their books –

Why couldn't they just sell them?

Because they didn't want the next person to be involved with these magic books.

And we see the result of repentance – the Word of God began to grow.

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.

As revival was going on in Ephesus – Paul was planning the next place he was going to go to.

He is still being led by the Holy Spirit.

And the route the Holy Spirit is going to take him – is that he is going to take the long way back to Jerusalem – he is going to have to go to Corinth (Greece) because they were having issues there.

Turn to 1 Cor 16

[1Co 16:5-9 NKJV] 5 Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia). 6 And it may be that I will remain, or even spend the winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go. 7 For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. 9 For a great and effective door has opened to me, and [there are] many adversaries.

So Paul writes to the church in Corinth –

I am going to go by there – I don't know how long I will be there – I also don't know exactly when I am going to be there because there are a few things I have to take care of here in Ephesus.

So again, we see God relying on God;s timing for direction and timing.

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."

So here we see one of the problem that arose in Ephesus

Christianity had become a threat to the prosperity of some of the people in Ephesus

Especially those that dedicated themselves to profiting from the Temple of Diana.

Demetrius is worried that Paul is taking away his business.

Remember, earlier we read that the people of Ephesus burned their magic books – that means they also stopped buying the pagan idols that the silversmith made.

28 Now 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.

The theater in Ephesus was the biggest theater in the world during this time – it would hold 25,000 people

So you have a mob of 25,000 people –

The seize two of Paul's travel buddies and take them to 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. 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.

So here again, we see mob mentality – where some people were only there because it was the in thing to do. They didn't even know why or who they were angry against.

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!"

So, things are boiling over

The Jews attempt to get out from in front of the story.

They want to make a distinction between these Christians and the Jews

They don't want the Greeks to come after them

But he failed. The mob didn't want to listen anymore.

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.

So what happens here is that the city clerk, he quiets the mob and then tells them that there is a time and place where this could be resolved.

Demetrius can take Paul to court

If he has a problem with Paul – he can sue him.

And then he warns the mob that if they riot, Rome is going to send in the military and then they will lose their freedoms – you see Ephesus was a free Roman colony, they were self-govern as long as they kept order.

“Let’s all calm down and get back to living how we were so that no one will bother us and we can just do our own thing.”

So here we see the spiritual battle that happened in response to the revival that occurred.

God worked mightily in Ephesus, but so did the enemy.

When Satan saw what God was doing in Ephesus – he responded by bringing chaos to the city.

This may be one reason why Paul wrote so specifically about the spiritual battle each Christian faces against powers of spiritual darkness in his letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 6:10-20).

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

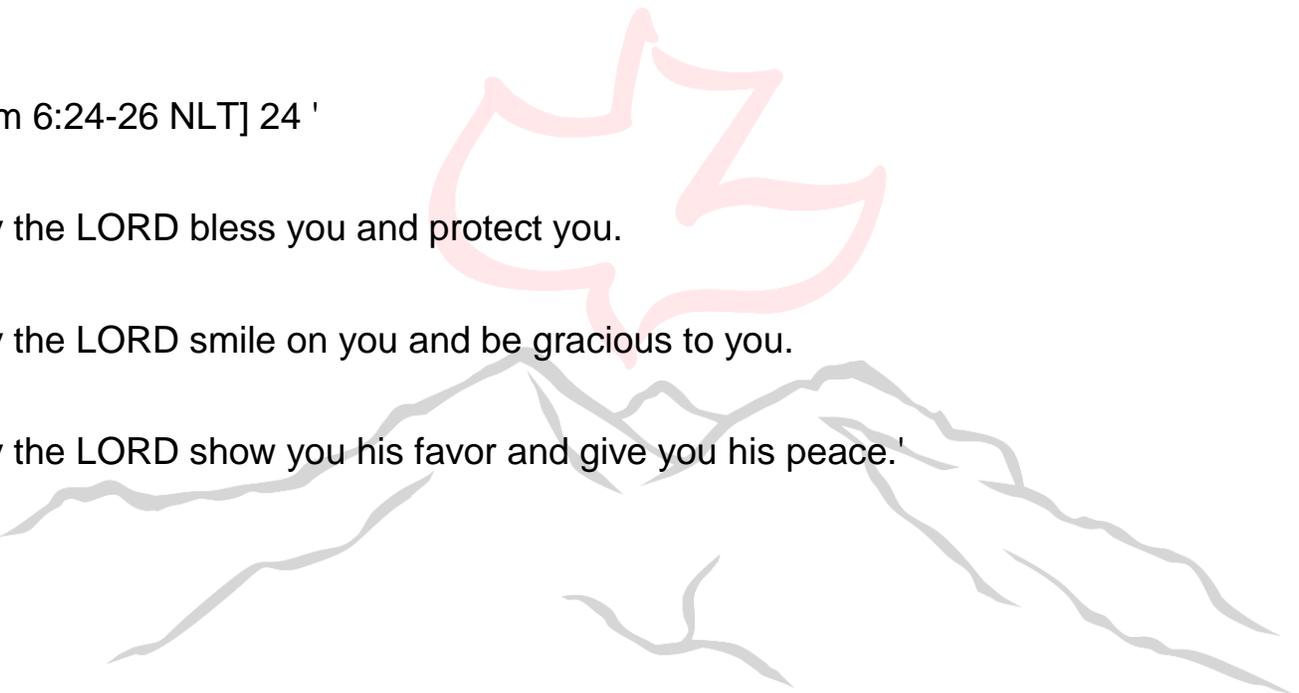
I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.!



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