

Acts 19:1 ¶ And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

Acts 19:2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

Sometime after Apollos reached Corinth, Paul returned to Ephesus as he had intended. He evidently encountered some disciples who were not connected with the body of believers that included his friends. Interesting to me is that he asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost. We know that scripture does not contradict itself and that every believer receives the indwelling Holy Spirit when he/she is saved. The Holy Spirit is our “earnest,” our guarantee of our future inheritance.

Ephesians 1:12–14 “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

John 14:15–17 “If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

In his letter to the Romans, Paul emphasized the truth that it is the Spirit’s indwelling presence that identifies one as a child of God.

Romans 8:9–11 “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

It is obvious to me from the context of the whole passage that Paul is referencing the special empowerment of the Spirit that often manifested its presence in the early church through the gift of tongues. The interesting thing to me is that something in their conversation caused Paul to ask this question.

These disciples had no clue what Paul was talking about and said so.

Acts 19:3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism.

Acts 19:4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

Acts 19:5 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 Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Acts 19:7 And all the men were about twelve.

Paul continued to question the foundation of their faith and found out that they were only familiar with John's baptism. Maybe they had responded to the message Apollos had preached before receiving further instruction from Aquila and Priscilla. Because they are identified as "disciples," we know they identified themselves as followers of Jesus; but they obviously did not have complete understanding about salvation.

Paul went on to clarify that the message of repentance preached by John was intended to point the way toward recognizing Jesus as the Messiah. These men were truth seekers and immediately responded to Paul's message with obedience and were baptized. After they were baptized, Paul laid his hand upon them in consecration to the Lord and they received the power of the Holy Ghost as evidenced by their speaking in tongues and prophesying.

Luke then notes that Paul's ministry at this time resulted in changed lives for about a dozen men. Whether they were truly saved to begin with or not might be questioned by some, but there was no doubt that they were true believers after their encounter with Paul.

Acts 19:8 ¶ And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

Acts 19:9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

Acts 19:10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

We find Paul in the synagogue once again spending a good three months trying to persuade the people of the truth regarding the kingdom of God. The "kingdom of God" is made up of those who have placed their faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. So Paul would be sharing the gospel message and how to live so as to honor the Lord.

It seems that the longer he taught, the more evident it became that to accept Paul's message would mean making drastic changes in their lifestyle. Eventually, there were some that rose up against him and began causing trouble to the point that Paul decided not to go back to the synagogue. Instead, he took with him those that identified themselves as disciples and established a teaching base at a school run by a man named Tyrannus. Evidently, the atmosphere there encouraged him to continue for two more years. Luke declares that "all they which dwelt in Asia"—both Jews and Greeks—heard the message of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus as Lord. Implied would be through the testimonies of those who heard Paul teach. Ray Stedman notes that it was probably during

this time that the churches of Colosse and Philippi were established, and eventually resulted in other churches being founded throughout the region, including Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea—the churches to whom John addressed the letters of the Revelation.

The fact that Paul taught every day for two years testifies to Paul's dedication to and love for His Lord.

Acts 19:11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

Acts 19:12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

Luke tells us that not only did Paul teach, God used him to perform special miracles. Evidently, even the handkerchiefs and aprons that he used while making tents brought about healing or deliverance when given to those who were sick or possessed of evil spirits. The Greek for "handkerchiefs" actually defines them as "sweat-cloths."

I believe the items were just the means by which those who were healed were given a focal point for their faith. It is faith that God uses to heal and deliver.

*Matthew 9:19–22 "And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples. And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; **thy faith hath made thee whole.**"*

*Matthew 15:22–28 "And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil....Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, **great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.** And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."*

*Mark 10:46–52 "And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus....began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me....And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; **thy faith hath made thee whole.**"*

*Luke 17:11–19 "And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us....And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks....And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: **thy faith hath made thee whole.**"*

Note that these miracles are described as "special," not common, extraordinary.

It was a crucial time of growth for the early church, and God chose to use special miracles to affirm the truth of the message Paul was teaching.

There are many so-called “faith healers” today who take advantage of those who are hurting or in need by offering hankies, etc., which they claim will work the same type of miracles if sent back with seed money. Those who do such things are perverting the truth of God’s word for their own greedy purposes.

Acts 19:13 ¶ Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

Acts 19:14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

Acts 19:15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

Acts 19:16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

It seems that there was a group of Jewish conjurers/magicians (from the Greek for “exorcist”) who traveled about the area. One group consisted of seven brothers identified as sons of Sceva, a chief priest of the Jews. These brothers evidently decided that if Paul could cast out demons, then they could also if they did so in the name of “Jesus whom Paul preaches.” When they attempted to cast out an evil spirit by using the name of Jesus, with whom they had no personal relationship, the spirit talked back to them. He admitted that he knew Jesus and Paul, but he did not know them—implied, or recognize any authority they had over him.

Ray Stedman adds a bit more insight: “Our translation misses it a bit. There are two words which he used for “know.” He said, ‘Jesus I know...’ (using a word that means, “I know him with a deep, instinctive, innate knowledge.”), ‘and Paul I am acquainted with...’ (i.e., I know his name, I know who he is. I don’t know him as well as I know Jesus, but I am acquainted with him.), ‘...but who are you?’

Then the possessed man attacked the brothers and sent them running away naked wounded.

Think of the power of that evil spirit to be able to inflict such injury on seven men in the person of just one man! To attempt miracles in the name of Jesus when operating outside the will and purpose of God is dangerous. These brothers were dishonoring God by trying to use His name for their own fame and fortune.

Acts 19:17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

Acts 19:18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

Acts 19:19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all *men*: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand *pieces* of silver.

Acts 19:20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

It seems that the news of what had happened to the sons of Sceva spread quickly throughout Ephesus. The name of the Lord Jesus was suddenly a name to provoke fear and awe. It even caused many that had made professions of faith to examine themselves and confess their sins publicly. Many who practiced magic determined to get rid of their books and brought them together for a public book burning; in fact, the value of the books was calculated to be 50,000 pieces of silver, today worth between \$1-5 million according to Guzik.

The truth of the word of God continued gaining great influence among the people.

Acts 19:21 ¶ After these things were ended, 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.

Acts 19:22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

Having done much to establish the church in Ephesus, Paul felt led by the Spirit to travel back to Jerusalem via Macedonia and Achaia and then on to Rome. He sent Timothy and Erastus to minister in Macedonia while he stayed in Asia for a while.

Acts 19:23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.

Acts 19:24 For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

Acts 19:25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

Acts 19:26 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:

Acts 19:27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; 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.

Acts 19:28 And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

“That way” was a recognized reference to the gospel message of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Acts 9:2 “and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Dammesek, authorizing him to arrest any people he might find, whether men or women, who belonged to “the Way,” and bring them back to Yerushalayim.” (CJB)

The growing influence of the word of God began to be felt by those that made

their living making idols. Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver items in honor of Diana (also known as Artemis), was one such businessman. He called together his fellow craftsmen and pointed out that Paul's teaching was causing them to lose a lot of money. He was teaching people that a god made with hands was no real god. He argued that this was not only affecting their livelihood, but was also casting dishonor on the goddess Diana. Demetrius succeeded in provoking the craftsmen to anger and causing them to break out in praise of Diana saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

Note: The temple of Artemis in Ephesus, built around 350 BC, was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Eerdman's Dictionary defines Artemis as follows: "The patron deity of Ephesus. Artemis Ephesia — a local manifestation of the Greek goddess Artemis and the Roman Diana — is a form of the native Anatolian Mother Goddess, a fertility and lunar deity known for her protection of new life, especially animals and women in childbirth.... her image was minted on silver coins and the statuettes carried in civic processions."

Acts 19:29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

Acts 19:30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

Acts 19:31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring *him* that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

The anger of the craftsmen spread throughout the city inciting a mob. Two of Paul's traveling companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, were captured by the mob and taken to the theatre. Paul wanted to go and rescue them or suffer with them if need be, but the disciples wisely would not let him. The disciples were supported in their action by "certain of the chief of Asia," which I assume to be a reference to civic leaders who were believers and/or friends of Paul. They all agreed that he should stay away from the theatre.

Acts 19:32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

Acts 19:33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

Acts 19:34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

Most of those that were part of the mob didn't even know what the ruckus was all about. The Jews tried to put forth Alexander to make a defense of Paul and the captured men before the people; however, once it became known that he was a Jew, the crowd began a chant in support of Diana that lasted for two hours.

Acts 19:35 And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, *Ye men*

of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter?

Acts 19:36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

Acts 19:37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

Acts 19:38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another.

Acts 19:39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

Acts 19:40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

Acts 19:41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

The townclerk, the most important official of the city not appointed by Rome, was finally able to quieten the people. He emphasized that everyone knew that the Ephesians worshipped the great goddess Diana and her sacred stone that had fallen from the heavens from Jupiter. He basically said that they were acting irrationally by taking captive these men that had broken no laws; they hadn't robbed the temples or blasphemed the goddess. He declared that if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen had accusations to make against these men according to the law, they should file charges with the deputies. He also pointed out that they were themselves in danger of facing charges for causing a riot. Evidently, the crowd decided to listen to reason and dispersed.

Note from IVP New Testament Commentary: "While a meteorite at Taurus was worshiped as an image of Artemis (Euripides *Iphigenia in Taurica* 87-88; 1384), no extrabiblical source reports such at Ephesus. The clerk may be speaking of the ancient age of the image, which was so old that it was viewed as fashioned in heaven."

John MacArthur posits something different: "See this big, black, ugly image of Diana that they assumed had fallen from Jupiter; it probably was some sort of a meteorite."